

MEDIA RELEASE – EMBARGOED UNTIL 12NOON ON THURSDAY 13TH OCTOBER 2016

Report No. 105 – Karnet Prison Farm

The latest inspection report from the Inspector of Custodial Services on Karnet Prison Farm found the prison to be delivering a good service in a complex, changing and challenging environment.

Acting Inspector Natalie Gibson said that Karnet had generally risen to the challenge to provide good re-entry services in a more crowded environment with limited resources:

‘At other prisons we have frequently found that the continuously increasing prisoner population has put severe stress on the ability to provide training and work skilling opportunities for prisoners. Comparatively, Karnet has managed this very well, maintaining high participation rates in these vitally important areas.’

The report identifies some notable infrastructure improvements at the prison in the past three years. In particular, improvements to the medical centre had improved quality of care. However, while some work had been done on accommodation areas, this had not addressed the risky temperature extremes that we identified in our 2015 report *Thermal Conditions in Cells*.

The report identifies two key areas – education and offending programs - where services were of an excellent standard but fell far short of demand. Ms Gibson said:

‘Therapeutic programs were particularly frustrating. Too many prisoners who had been assessed as needing programs could not access them before their earliest release date. This meant they were less likely to be granted parole and would therefore be held in prison longer than necessary.

Our prison system is crowded, costly and over-populated. It would therefore be logical and cost-effective to resource these programs better so that prisoners can be released as quickly as is safely and responsibly possible.’

Karnet has set itself the goal of being a ‘centre of excellence in pre-release management’. Ms Gibson said:

‘We believe Karnet is doing well, and that it could achieve this goal if it maintains current gains and strives for further improvement. But this may be difficult as even

more transportable accommodation has already been dropped in and further expanded the population.

The prison now has to service the needs of a further 32 prisoners. It is vital that Karnet gets additional resources to meet gaps in existing demand as well as to cater for additional prisoners.'

Natalie Gibson
A/Inspector

For more detail, please see the Inspector's Overview to the Report and Key Findings (copies attached).

For Further Media Information

The Acting Inspector, Ms Natalie Gibson, will be available for comment from 12 noon on Thursday 13th October and can be contacted on 0409 294 926.

The full report will be available on the Inspector's website (www.oics.wa.gov.au).