



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR
OF CUSTODIAL SERVICES

FEBRUARY 2015

REPORT OF AN ANNOUNCED INSPECTION OF
WORK CAMPS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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Report of an Announced Inspection of Work Camps in Western Australia

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The Inspector's Overview

WORK CAMPS: WASTED ASSETS BLOT AN OTHERWISE A-POSITIVE SCORECARD

AIMS OF WORK CAMPS

Western Australia has five work camps, all of which cater for male prisoners in regional areas. Work camps are small, low-security facilities which hold only highly selected low-risk prisoners. The objectives of such camps are reflected in a number of 'R words': reparation, rehabilitation, responsibility, reintegration and reducing recidivism. Work camps are open to all suitably qualified prisoners but are seen as having particular benefit to Aboriginal men in the regions.

Work camps achieve reparation through prisoners undertaking work in the local community. They contribute to rehabilitation by enhancing prisoners' skills and self-esteem. They enhance responsibility and discipline because prisoners must respond to the trust that has been placed in them and live together collectively and collaboratively, with limited staff supervision. Reintegration is enhanced in that work camps are, in effect, a half-way point to freedom. The intended outcome, of course, is to reduce the social and financial costs of recidivism.

LOCATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Key facts about the five camps are set out below. With the exception of the Roebourne camp, which is at the front of the main prison, they are located some distance away from their host prisons:

- Walpole (current buildings added in 2010; capacity 12; host prison Pardelup);
- Wyndham (opened June 2011; capacity 40, host prison West Kimberley Prison in Derby);
- Warburton (opened August 2011; capacity 24 minimum-security prisoners and six secure cells; host prison Eastern Goldfields);
- Dowerin (opened February 2012; capacity 20 prisoners; host prison Wooroloo); and
- Roebourne (opened June 2014; capacity 30 prisoners; host prison Roebourne).

All the camps consist of high quality buildings, with most of the infrastructure having been approved for construction and completed within the last six years.

Work camps, however, are not a new phenomenon. Dating back to the late 1990's, more than ten other camps previously operated. Some lasted only a few months, others lasted over a decade. These now-defunct camps always had a temporary feel to them, most being based in old buildings that had previously served very different purposes. For example, the original Walpole camp was a disused Main Roads camp, the Bungurun camp near Derby was an old Leprosarium, and the Kellerberrin camp was a disused school. Those camps that were built from scratch were also low-budget and temporary in form; for example, the old Wyndham camp consisted of vans and dongas.

Inevitably, the infrastructure at the defunct camps was basic, and sometimes it was poor. However, inspections by this Office and a 2008 evaluation by the Department of Corrective Services ('the Department') concluded that work camps were making positive contributions to the correctional system.ⁱ On the back of this success, the Department developed successful business cases for new purpose-built infrastructure. Its objectives were to provide a better range of services to a larger number of prisoners in locations closer to their home country, to contribute positively to local communities, and to reduce recidivism.

THE GOOD NEWS AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

We have previously inspected individual work camps when inspecting their host prisons, but this is the first independent review of work camps as a whole. Broadly speaking, it is a good news story: the evidence is clear that proactive, well-run camps have delivered a bonus to local communities and positive opportunities for prisoners.

Work camps have made tangible and valuable contributions through their community work. For example, prisoners at Bungurun restored some of the old leprosarium buildings as well as the adjoining cemetery. This helped to ensure the preservation of a moving, important, and largely unknown part of Kimberley history. Prisoners from the Walpole camps made a huge contribution to the construction of the Bibbulmun and Minda Biddi long distance trails. The Millstream Work Camp played a significant role in the upkeep of the Chichester National Park, including the control of toxic weeds and construction of tourist amenities.

There is no doubt that the work conducted by work camps has carried a positive reputational value for the Department as well as a dollar value. Far from being negative towards the prospect of work camps in their 'back yards', regional communities now vie for the chance to host a camp. The camps have also provided a good testing ground for prisoners who are coming up for release. Inevitably, some prisoners have abused the trust but escapes have been infrequent and short-lived, and none have involved serious threat to community safety.ⁱⁱ

The findings of this report suggest that there is a great deal on which to build for the future. In particular, there is a strong case for developing new work camp models to meet the needs of women and juveniles. To date, apart from two very short-lived experiments in the mid-1990's and the early 2000's, work camps have been limited to adult men. There is also scope for work camps to increase the amount of accredited job-training that occurs at the camps, and to link more prisoners directly to employment on release. The opening of the Roebourne camp in mid-2014 has already led to some valuable initiatives in this regard.

i Department of Corrective Services (DCS), *10th Anniversary of Work Camps in Western Australia, commemorative booklet* (2008); DCS, *Work Camps Future Directions* (2008).

ii Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (OICS), *Escapes and Attempted Escapes from Corrections in Western Australia* (2015).

THE BLOT: EXPENSIVE, UNDER-UTILISED ASSETS

The decision to establish larger, purpose-built facilities instead of re-purposing old buildings was understandable. However, the up-front construction costs were high and the use of camps has generally been only 50 to 70 per cent. In fact, despite a total of \$40 million being spent on the new camps, they have generally housed fewer prisoners than the defunct camps they replaced.

The problem is especially acute at Warburton (over \$13 million) and Wyndham (around \$8 million): Wyndham is only around 50 per cent full and Warburton is even emptier. This has been the situation for almost the entire period that the two camps have been open. Both camps are at risk of becoming white elephants. Valuable assets of this sort must be fully-utilised if the Department is to maximise its opportunities for reducing recidivism. Crowding pressures in the mainstream prisons add to the urgency of the Department fully using all its assets.

The main reason that is given for the under-use of the camps is that there are too few suitably qualified prisoners. However, this begs a series of questions about the Department's planning and priorities, especially from 2008 to 2010. If there were not sufficient prisoners to access the camps, why were they built? If there were sufficient prisoners to justify building the camps in 2009, what had changed by 2011 when they opened? And why were work camps for male prisoners prioritised for funding over major pressure points such as women's imprisonment.ⁱⁱⁱ

Quite apart from the initial construction costs, camps that are half-empty or worse will cost more per head to run and will never meet their full potential.^{iv} There is also a cost to reputation and credibility, especially at Warburton. Funding for Warburton was approved when the community was reeling from Mr Ward's death in the back of a prisoner transport vehicle, described by the Coroner as a 'terrible death that was wholly unnecessary and avoidable'.^v The community had long been arguing for a facility in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands and, despite the distressing context of its announcement, they warmly embraced it. Their patience is admirable and they remain extraordinarily optimistic, but they feel badly let-down. It is to be hoped that the Premier's 2014 commitment to reducing Aboriginal incarceration, and the 2015 opening of the new Eastern Goldfields prison will provide fresh momentum and ensure that the camp is fully used for culturally relevant justice-related services.

This will also require whole of Department support and drive. This has not always been there. Successive Ministers and Commissioners have been supportive of work camps but some of their senior officials have been ambivalent at best and unsupportive at worst. Some have argued, in effect, that work camps are an expensive and unnecessary distraction, and that prisoners should either be in mainstream prisons or under community supervision.

iii Investment was clearly needed in women's prisons by 2008/2009 and the situation has now reached crisis point: see OICS, *Female Prisons in Western Australia and the Greenough Women's Precinct*, Report No. 91 (July 2014); OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Bandyup Women's Prison*, Report No. 93 (October 2014).

iv See below on costs.

v Hope AN, *Record of an Investigation into Death, Ref 9/09*, Inquest into the death of Mr Ward, Coroner's Court of WA (12 June 2009) 5.

This flies in the face of their own Department’s policies and broader government positions. It is also naïve and wrong. First, work camps do not pose major risks if the correct risk assessments are carried out. Secondly, work camp prisoners are not under community supervision orders; if they were not at work camps, they would be in mainstream prisons where the costs are likely to be higher, not lower.

The following table shows the operating costs of the camps. With the exception of Walpole, the cost per prisoner per day at work camps is certainly more than the state-wide average cost per prisoner per day. However, this is to be expected: prison sites in regional areas will always be smaller and more expensive per head than the large metropolitan prisons, and the only comparison is the cost at a work camp versus the cost at the host prison. In fact, it generally costs less per prisoner per day at work camps than it costs at host prisons. The cost would also reduce if the camps were used to capacity, as promised five years ago.

Costs per prisoner per day: 2011-2012 figures (excluding some costs)^{vi}

Work camp	Total prison system cost per prisoner per day (\$)	Work camp cost per prisoner per day (\$)	Host prison cost per prisoner per day (\$)
Millstream	171	248	336
Walpole	171	122	177
Wyndham	171	282	327
Warburton	171	461	216
Dowerin	171	245	139

In examining the question of costs, it should also be noted that the table does not fully factor in three other important considerations: the dollar value of the community work undertaken by work camp prisoners; the reputational value of work camps; and the fact that if work camps are reducing recidivism as intended, they will reduce long term costs.

WHY ARE THE CAMPS UNDER-UTILISED?

I cannot intelligently or adequately explain the camps’ under-utilisation. Unfortunately, there appear to be only two possible explanations. Either the Department’s original planning was flawed (and its commitments at the time undeliverable), or it has failed to follow through on deliverables.

From the Department’s point of view, the explanation for under-utilisation is simple: too few prisoners are considered suitable for work camp placement. To be placed at a work camp, a prisoner must be assessed as minimum-security and also as suitable for camp placement. However, this needs further scrutiny. The Department’s modified assessment and classification tool, introduced in 2009, increased the number of non-Aboriginal people at minimum-security but impacted adversely on the number of Aboriginal people reaching minimum-security and work camp suitability.^{vii}

vi See also Chapters 4 and 5 of this report.

vii OICS, *Report on the Flow of Prisoners to Minimum Security, Section 95 and Work Camps* (January 2013).

This was bound to impact on the viability of the work camps in which it had invested so heavily, but when we undertook a review in 2012, there was no evidence that the Department had been monitoring the impact of the revised assessment tool or examining potential changes.^{viii} In addition, over the past 18 months, the number of people that the Department rates as minimum-security has declined, thereby reducing the potential pool.

It may be true that there are too few people who currently qualify for work camp placement but technical ‘explanations’ of this sort are fundamentally unconvincing. Certainly, over time, changes will occur in the prison population but circumstances cannot have changed so much that facilities considered viable in 2009 could have become unviable by 2011. In fact, the sad reality is that the overall makeup of the prison population is depressingly constant, especially when looking at the circumstances of regional Aboriginal men.

CONCLUSION

Work camps have been a very positive feature of the Western Australian correctional system for many years. The Department has good reason to be proud of what has been achieved and can now build positively for the future. This report recommends developing new work camp models for female prisoners and juveniles. The Department has supported these recommendations in part and has committed to a feasibility study.

Unfortunately, however, there are significant human, financial and reputational costs in the Department not using costly assets for which it developed business cases only a few years ago. Half-filled camps also impact on its ability to improve public safety by reducing recidivism. If the camps are to be maximised, all key parties must support and drive them. Mechanisms must also be found to increase the flow of prisoners to the camps. The Department has supported in part our recommendations in this regard and is due to complete a review of its assessment and classification system in June 2015.

I look forward to tracking progress, and hope to be able to report in the future on vibrant, successful justice programs operating out of all the existing work camps, and the expansion of the concept to new areas.

Neil Morgan

24 February 2015

viii Ibid.

Chapter 1

METHODOLOGY AND INSPECTION THEMES

- 1.1 This was the first inspection by the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services ('the Office') of work camps as a discrete custodial service. To date work camps have been reviewed as part of announced inspections of the prisons that are administratively responsible for each of them. This review provides an assessment not only of each individual camp, but also of the overall role of work camps within the Western Australian prison system.¹
- 1.2 Throughout the period of the inspection (November 2012 to October 2014) there were six separate work camps operational at different times. As of October 2014, the number of camps stood at five. The inspection activity included visits to all six sites, meetings with management of the regional prison with responsibility for each camp (the 'host prison'), meetings with staff and prisoners, and analysis of work being undertaken. Where appropriate, local and state government agency staff and community representatives were also interviewed to determine attitudes to the location, philosophy and operation of the camps.
- 1.3 Meetings were also conducted with Department of Corrective Services ('the Department') head office management throughout 2013 with respect to policy informing work camp philosophy and operational procedures at that time. Archived documentation recording Departmental decisions to do with work camp development, placement, function, evaluation and closure was sourced and analysed.
- 1.4 Since the 2013 consultation period with Departmental management, a full change in the Executive Management team has occurred. During 2014 there have been fundamental shifts in the Department's structure, organisation and policies, and this has affected all areas of operation including work camps. It is not yet clear how the new Executive plans to incorporate work camps into its core objectives of 'to protect, to rehabilitate and to serve'. Although the Minister and senior Department officials have made very positive comments about the value of work camps at events such as the opening of the new Roebourne Work Camp in June 2014, a number of camps remain severely under-utilised. The appointment in December 2014 of a new Manager of Work Camps will no doubt impact on the direction and operation of the camps.

CONTEXT

- 1.5 The early stages of the inspection coincided with an evaluation by the Office of the progression of prisoners to minimum-security, Section 95 work release and work camps.² That study focused on the outcomes of the assessment and classification system then used by the Department, and the capacity of the system to facilitate progression to minimum-security, Section 95 work programs, and work camps.
- 1.6 The inspection period for this report spanned the first anniversaries of three new purpose-built work camps, Wyndham (opened June 2011), Warburton (opened August 2011) and Dowerin (opened February 2012). It also saw the opening of a new purpose-built work camp operating directly adjacent to Roebourne Regional Prison in June 2014. Commissioning of those camps marked a shift in Departmental investment policy, with significant infrastructure cost.

1 For example: Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (OICS), *Report of an Announced Inspection of Broome Regional Prison*, Report No. 6 (June 2001); OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 14 (April 2002).

2 OICS, *The Flow of Prisoners to Minimum Security, Section 95 and Work Camps in Western Australia* (December 2012).

WORK CAMPS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

- 1.7 Western Australia's first work camp opened in 1998. Work camps were established as external facilities of host prisons under Section 23 of the *Prisons Act 1981 (WA)* to give prisoners increased work and rehabilitation opportunities. The Department has operationalised the scheme through *Policy Directive 60*, which states that it:
- [P]rovides low-risk prisoners with opportunities to make reparation to the community and to develop needed skills and work ethic, as well as providing considerable benefits to regional communities.³
- 1.8 The location of work camps has been determined by:
- [E]valuation of community acceptance, appropriateness to the Department's goals of the rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners, and consideration of demographic, economic and geographic factors.⁴
- 1.9 Access to work camps by prisoners was determined by a number of factors. The core of these are for a prisoner to have been: classified minimum-security; to have engaged successfully in Section 95 community work while at the host prison; be deemed 'work camp suitable' by the superintendent of the host prison, and have made voluntary application for transfer to the work camp.
- 1.10 When the inspection commenced in 2012, work camps were located at Walpole on the South Coast, Dowerin in the Wheatbelt, Warburton in the Central Desert, Millstream in the Pilbara, and Wyndham in the East Kimberley. In February 2013, the Millstream work camp closed, and work commenced on the new Roebourne work camp, which opened in June 2014.

INSPECTION THEMES

- 1.11 Each of the work camps was inspected across a range of measures. These included the capacity of the host and other prisons to supply appropriately classified prisoners and suitably skilled work camp officers; the adequacy of accommodation, workshop infrastructure and equipment, transportation and recreation facilities; and issues of security and prisoner management.
- 1.12 The capacity of each work camp to provide meaningful employment and certificated skills training to prisoners was a fundamental issue as it is central to the ability of the camps to reduce recidivism and enhance community protection. In addition this inspection evaluated engagement with local communities, both in terms of general acceptance of the work camp and of the capacity of camp staff to secure suitable work contracts.
- 1.13 In a system-wide context of cost minimisation, the economic rationale for work camp operation was also a focus. This was of particular interest given the shift in Departmental policy since 2011 away from 'found' infrastructure towards purpose designed and built work camp facilities. Much of the review of archived Departmental documentation around decisions to do with work camp development, placement, function and evaluation consequently had a cost-benefit focus.

3 Department of Corrective Services (DCS), *Policy Directive 60, Work Camps* (2010).

4 Ibid.

METHODOLOGY AND INSPECTION THEMES

- 1.14 While financial considerations were acknowledged as relevant to the inspection, the Office did not lose sight of the function of work camps to assist in the rehabilitation of prisoners and to provide restitution to the community at large.⁵ As work camps have always been badged as having particular benefit to Aboriginal prisoners, another key focus was the ability of those prisoners to access the camps.⁶
- 1.15 Given the considerable expense associated with construction, staffing and operation of the newer work camps and the difficulty experienced by the Department in maintaining prisoner numbers in work camps at capacity, the inspection has needed to weigh future options. Strategies for maximising the benefits and minimising the risks associated with work camps have therefore also been considered.

5 DCS, *Policy Directive 60, Work Camps* (2010).

6 OICS, *Inspection Standards for Aboriginal Prisoners* (2008). See especially 'Aboriginal prisoners' access to work camps' (preamble to Standards A32 & A33) 23–24.

Chapter 2

ROLE OF WORK CAMPS IN THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN CUSTODIAL ESTATE

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIVE SERVICES' VIEW OVER TIME

2.1 The Department of Corrective Services ('the Department') has, over many years, extolled the benefits of the progression of prisoners to minimum-security, and has commended the further option whereby a minimum-security prisoner might be deemed suitable for supervised or unsupervised work camp placement, and might successfully apply for transfer to a camp.

2.2 As early as 2000, Department staff reported some very positive outcomes from the early work camps:

Based on current correctional thinking and the most recent research into risk reduction approaches to recidivism and restorative interventions Western Australia's work camps are leading the way in providing community reparation outcomes, contributing to reducing recidivism and increasing a prisoners chance of making a successful transition from prison to the community on release.

We also know that successful rehabilitation programs depend not only on the treatment offered but also on the conditions under which they are delivered. There is now strong evidence available that suggests that programs delivered in community settings produce better outcomes than those delivered in prisons.

Based in small rural communities work camps provide select minimum-security prisoners who would normally be doing time in a minimum-security prison, the opportunity to live in the bush away from the prison environment, work on rewarding community projects and interact with the general community on a daily basis.⁷

2.3 The Department's 10th Anniversary Commemorative Booklet in 2008 was equally positive: [W]ork camps have made a positive difference to many Western Australian communities through environmental, tourism and other projects while offering positive, meaningful work opportunities for the rehabilitation of low-risk, minimum-security offenders...

Over the past 10 years, staff and prisoners have contributed over 488,000 hours of work to regional communities valued at \$8 million. Work camps carry out valuable work that would otherwise be neglected due to the isolation of many communities.

Work camps have a strong future in the Department, and I look forward to ongoing collaboration with regional centres as we continue our core business of contributing to a safer Western Australian community by providing effective rehabilitation to positively change offender behaviour.⁸

2.4 In a similar vein, the Department's 2012 Handbook states:

Work camps give low-risk, minimum-security prisoners the opportunity to develop work-ready skills while undertaking valuable work projects in local communities.

7 Csaba K, *Work camps – a better option for minimum-security prisoners in Western Australia*, Paper presented to the Australian and New Zealand Society of Criminology Conference, Sydney (3 October 2003).

8 DCS, *10th Anniversary of Work Camps in Western Australia*, Commemorative Booklet (2008) 2.

The aim of the Department's work camp program is to re-socialise and re-integrate prisoners into communities through community and family support.

Each year, prisoners based at the work camps undertake about 75,000 hours of work in regional communities, repaying WA with about \$1 million worth of work.⁹

- 2.5 In a written submission to the Office in 2013, and prior to the corporate overhaul of late 2013 and 2014, the Department outlined a New Strategic Direction for work camps. Much of this revolved around the decision to move away from the past practice of establishing work camps in pre-existing unused community facilities, and focus on providing a wider range of services in purpose built camps. The submission emphasised that this would improve correctional outcomes:

The role and function and philosophy of work camps now places greater emphasis on the provision of services that have not generally been a component of a traditional work camp model.

The purpose built facilities and their unique design now ensures that a boarder range of correctional services can be offered leading to better outcomes for participants. In particular, there is now a focus on the provision of vocational skills and other programs targeted at reducing offending, in particular the high rate of offending among Aboriginal prisoners. Large workshops, commercial quality catering facilities, classrooms, kitchen gardens and horticultural programs ensure that better opportunities now exist for on-site employment, training and self-sustainable outcomes.¹⁰

- 2.6 It was also stated that the new facilities would allow for greater numbers to be accommodated at camps. The submission suggested a growing emphasis on training and vocational skilling, on-site employment and a focus on Aboriginal prisoners, while retaining community-based reparative and rehabilitative functions. The Department's 2013 submission was important as it involved the development and articulation of a New Strategic Direction Policy for work camps.
- 2.7 Although it is not yet clear whether the new Executive Management team will continue to support this model, in principle support for work camps remains strong. On opening the new Roebourne Work Camp in July 2014, The Minister for Corrective Services, Hon Joe Francis MLA, said:

This is a great result for both the community and for prisoner rehabilitation. Taxpayers also benefit because the average daily cost of a work camp prisoner is far less than for an inmate in the mainstream prison system. Recidivism rates are also much lower among work camp prisoners.¹¹

9 DCS, *2012 Handbook: A guide to services provided by the Department* (2012) 43.

10 DCS, *Written submission relating to performance and future plans for work camps* (2013) 1.

11 Ministerial media statement (Friday 20 June 2014). See: <<http://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Pages/StatementDetails.aspx?StatId=8419&listName=StatementsBarnett>>

OICS' VIEW OVER TIME

- 2.8 The first evaluation of a work camp by the Office came in the context of an announced inspection of Broome Regional Prison in 2001. The Bungarun work camp near Derby was cited as:

[A]n additional avenue for the Department to contribute to prisoners' rehabilitation and preparation for their reintegration into the community.¹²

- 2.9 Despite this, the Inspector in his Overview cautioned:

[T]he establishment of the Bungarun work camp has fortified ... community links, and the foreshadowed opening of another work camp in the Wyndham area in principle will strengthen them further. Of course, as with all such developments, it will depend on how it is done...The temptation – especially strong at a time of budgetary pressures – to do things on the cheap must be resisted.¹³

- 2.10 In April 2002, in the context of an announced inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison, the Office summarised the Millstream work camp as:

[A]n excellent example of the Department working in partnership with another agency to achieve outcomes that both develop community assets and improve the rehabilitation prospects for prisoners. Prisoners at Millstream enjoy being there; they have a clear and purposeful lifestyle and they are treated with respect...It is a model re-entry project.¹⁴

- 2.11 In September 2002, the Office offered a statement as to the purpose of work camps:

Work camps have two principal purposes. First, they are intended to provide prisoners with meaningful work experience in a comparatively normalised environment in preparation for imminent release. Second the camps provide a focal point for prisoners to be organised to provide reparation to the community.¹⁵

- 2.12 Five years later, the Inspector's Overview to the third inspection report on Broome Regional Prison reflected that:

At the time of the 2007 inspection Bungarun was an exemplar of how this kind of custodial management should be carried out. Community links were strong, with a Community Reference Group meeting monthly to review progress and make inputs. Consequently the work output was relevant to local needs. ... Western Australia needs more of this approach to custodial management.¹⁶

- 2.13 The report of the 2009 inspection of Albany Regional Prison concluded, in respect of the Walpole and Pardelup work camps:

The significant amount of reparation undertaken by the work camps and their acceptance and importance to the local community was impressive. However, it was disappointing to note the lack of investment in infrastructure at both sites and the fact that there were very few Aboriginal prisoners placed at either southern work camp.

12 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Broome Regional Prison*, Report No. 6 (June 2001) 63.

13 *Ibid.*, 7.

14 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 14 (April 2002) 97.

15 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Albany Regional Prison*, Report No. 18 (September 2002) 40.

16 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Broome Regional Prison*, Report No. 46 (October 2007) iii.

The Department's 'Work Camps Future Directions' paper states that 'regional work camps are well suited to Aboriginal offenders who often struggle to cope with imprisonment in a standard custodial environment'. It was therefore disappointing that there have been very few Aboriginal prisoners placed at either southern work camp. Unfortunately, there is no specific work camp for Nyoongar Aboriginal prisoners from the South West region of the state, which is a missed opportunity for the Department'.¹⁷

- 2.14 These findings led to a recommendation that '[T]he Department implement a strategy ensuring a proportionate number of Nyoongar Aboriginals are placed in work camps'.¹⁸ This recommendation reiterated a core theme in the Department's own policy positions as well as this Office's inspections, namely, that Aboriginal prisoners from the regions are likely to derive particular benefit from completing their sentences at a work camp, particularly if it is close to their home community. However, the Department rejected the recommendation and showed no inclination to take positive initiatives to increase Noongar representation.¹⁹

INTERSTATE EVIDENCE SUPPORTING WORK CAMPS

- 2.15 Some of the strongest evidence of the successful utilisation of work camps within Australia comes from Queensland, with 13 camps operating since 1990.²⁰ The program, originally known as the Work Outreach Camps (WORC) program – had its origins in the floodwaters of the Warrego River that inundated the western Queensland town of Charleville in early 1990. The first crew of officers and prisoners left Brisbane in April that year to provide assistance to the flood-stricken region.
- 2.16 The Queensland Corrective Services Work Camp Program injects around \$2.5 million a year into regional Queensland through community service.²¹ It is a valuable source of labour, while also providing prisoners with an opportunity to make reparation to communities and gain valuable skills.²² The State's work camps are aligned to local correctional centres:
- Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre manages the women's work camp at Warwick;
 - Capricornia Correctional Centre manages the work camps at Clermont, Blackall and Springsure;
 - Darling Downs Correctional Centre manages the work camps at Mitchell, Dirranbandi, St George and Charleville;

17 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Albany Regional Prison*, Report No. 60 (April 2009) vii–viii.

18 Ibid., viii.

19 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Albany Regional Prison*, Report No. 78 (June 2012) iv, 34 & 42 and DCS, *Capital Works Business Case, Gnowangerup Work Camp and Prison Farm* (2011).

20 <http://www.correctiveservices.qld.gov.au/About_Us/The_Department/Custodial_Corrections/index.shtml> and <http://www.correctiveservices.qld.gov.au/About_Us/The_Department/Key_Initiatives/Work/index.shtml>

21 Ibid.

22 Queensland Corrective Services, *Work Camps* (2007).

- Lotus Glen Correctional Centre manages the work camp at Innisfail; and
- Townsville Correctional Centre manages the work camps at Boulia, Julia Creek, Winton, and a women's work camp at Bowen.²³

2.17 The Northern Territory Department of Correctional Services opened a minimum-security work camp in September 2011. The Barkley Work Camp at Tennant Creek provides reparation activities, work placements, rehabilitation programs, Elders' visits and structured recreation. No sex offenders or 'prisoners of public interest' can access that camp.²⁴

23 Ibid.

24 Northern Territory Department of Corrective Services, <<http://www.correctionalservices.nt.gov.au/CorrectionalCentres/BarklyWorkCamp/Pages/default.aspx>>

Chapter 3

OCCUPANCY, COST AND FUNCTIONS

ACCESS TO CAMPS

- 3.1 The avowed purpose of work camps has been to provide enhanced rehabilitation and reparation opportunities for prisoners approaching release. Access to placement in work camps has been by progression through the security classification, beginning at one of the higher security levels (that is either maximum, medium, or minimum within the mainstream prison system). Upon reaching minimum-security classification, a prisoner is able to seek placement on a Section 95 work party operating outside the prison. By sustained and successful placement on Section 95 work parties, the prisoner may demonstrate sufficient personal responsibility and work readiness for further progression.
- 3.2 Consideration for work camp placement has typically followed extended Section 95 work. It has required a specific request by the prisoner for transfer to the camp, a matching of the prisoner's history to any caveats imposed by the host community, a risk assessment process, and sign-off by the prison superintendent and Deputy Commissioner Adult Custodial.²⁵

OCCUPANCY RATES 2009–2014

- 3.3 Occupancy of work camps in Western Australia has declined markedly since 2009. Despite an increase in work camp capacity, and the investment of around \$40 million in new infrastructure, the camps now house only two thirds of the number of prisoners they housed in 2009.
- 3.4 This generates serious questions about the adequacy of Departmental policies, planning and priority setting: the simple fact is that the public has paid a great deal for expensive, high quality assets which are being grossly under-utilised.

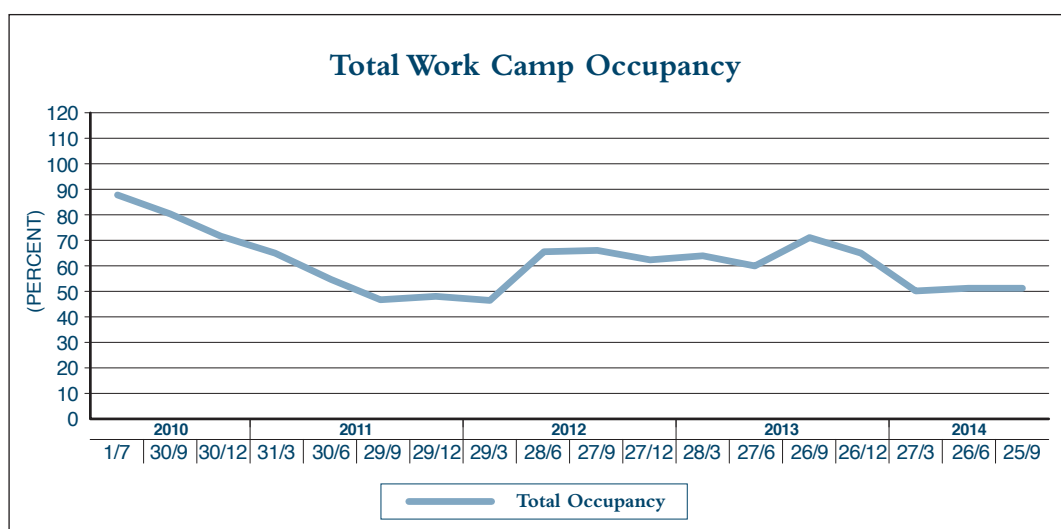


Figure 1: Trends in total work camp occupancy July 2010 – September 2014

25 DCS, Policy Directive 53.

OCCUPANCY, COST AND FUNCTIONS

- 3.5 In March 2009, six work camps were operational, with a total capacity of 104 prisoners.²⁶

Bungarun	Kellerberrin	Millstream	Mt Morgans	Pardelup	Wyndham
Capacity 20	Capacity 12	Capacity 8	Capacity 24	Capacity 20	Capacity 20

Occupancy of these camps was maintained at around 90 per cent of capacity (or 94 prisoners) for most of 2009. In February of 2010, Pardelup work camp closed, and Walpole work camp opened, with a net loss of eight work camp positions.²⁷

- 3.6 Despite the reduction in available work camp places, occupancy rates declined from June 2010, to 71 per cent in December 2010, and 63 per cent in March 2011. Closure of Bungarun in June 2011 coincided with the opening of the new purpose-built camp at Wyndham, with no net change in the number work camp positions. The occupancy rate however had fallen by this time to just 55 per cent.²⁸
- 3.7 Following the opening of the second purpose-built camp at Warburton (August 2011), the overall occupancy rate fell again. It reached a new low of 45 per cent in September 2011 and remained below 50 per cent for the next six months. The Department attributed this to the slow fill of the Warburton facility.²⁹
- 3.8 In November 2011, the camp at Kellerberrin closed and 10 of the 12 positions were re-located temporarily to Wyalkatchem. Overall work camp capacity dropped temporarily to 98.
- 3.9 In February 2012, the third purpose-built camp was opened at Dowerin, returning overall capacity to 108 positions.³⁰

Walpole	Millstream	Wyndham	Warburton	Dowerin
Capacity 12	Capacity 12	Capacity 40	Capacity 24	Capacity 20

- 3.10 By May 2012 occupancy had built up to 75 per cent. Warburton, Walpole, Millstream and Dowerin were at or close to capacity, and Wyndham was approaching capacity.³¹ However, by September 2012 Warburton had fallen back to 50 per cent capacity, dragging the overall work camp occupancy down to between 60 and 65 per cent. That situation continued into 2013.³²

26 On 26 March 2009 there were a total of 4,103 adult prisoners in WA prisons: <http://www.correctiveservices.wa.gov.au/_files/about-us/statistics-publications/statistics/2009/cnt090326.pdf>

27 Pardelup closed as a work camp in February 2010, to be expanded and re-opened as Pardelup Prison Farm.

28 DCS, *Weekly offender statistics 2011 – 2013*. Available at <<http://www.correctiveservices.wa.gov.au>>

29 Ibid.

30 On 23 February 2012 the total adult prisoner population for WA was 4887: <http://www.correctiveservices.wa.gov.au/_files/about-us/statistics-publications/statistics/2012/cnt120223.pdf>

31 Staffing levels at Wyndham limited occupancy at that time to 24 prisoners, despite a build capacity of 40.

32 DCS, *Weekly offender statistics 2011 – 2013*. Available at <<http://www.correctiveservices.wa.gov.au>>

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- 3.11 Before this inspection commenced, management and staff of the Department mounted a concerted effort to raise the profile of work camps amongst prisoners across the state. The work camp manager visited regional and metropolitan prisons and posters extolling the benefits of the camps had been distributed. However, this did not improve overall work camp occupancy.
- 3.12 Millstream closed in February 2013, in early anticipation of the opening of a new camp adjacent to Roebourne Regional Prison. The Roebourne Work Camp, the fourth purpose-built camp, opened in June 2014.³³ This \$15 million facility had 30 beds available to male prisoners. At the end of the first week of its official opening, the facility accommodated 15 prisoners. In that week the total work camp prisoner population for the camps was 65 with 126 beds available, being less than 52 per cent occupancy rate.³⁴
- 3.13 At the time of completing the final draft of this report, the number of prisoners at work camps had changed very little. There were just 68 prisoners at the camps, not much over 50 per cent of potential capacity.³⁵
- 3.14 In summary, while most mainstream prisons are crowded, the work camps are way under capacity. In mid-2009, over 90 prisoners were held, generally in inexpensive work camps, at a 94 per cent occupancy rate. In the interim, four new purpose-built work camps have opened (Wyndham, Dowerin, Warburton and Roebourne) at a combined cost of around \$40 million. At the end of 2014, the camps had an occupancy rate of just over 50 per cent and housed fewer than 70 prisoners.

ABORIGINAL ACCESS TO CAMPS

- 3.15 Previous inspections and Departmental policy documents have identified work camps as particularly appropriate for Aboriginal minimum-security prisoners. The Department's 2008 *Work Camps Future Directions* paper stated that:
- [R]egional work camps are well suited to Aboriginal offenders who often struggle to cope with imprisonment in a standard custodial environment.³⁶
- 3.16 Overall, Aboriginal men have been well-represented in terms of work camp placement. They have occupied around 50 per cent of available places, while comprising around 40 per cent of Western Australian prisoners. This has been partly attributable to the remote location of the work camps, as between 70 and 75 per cent of available placements have been in the Pilbara, Kimberley and Goldfields regions.³⁷

33 See: <<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-06-21/new-compound-opened-for-low-risk-inmates-at-roebourne-prison/5540974>>

34 <http://www.correctiveservices.wa.gov.au/_files/about-us/statistics-publications/statistics/2014/cnt140626.pdf>

35 DCS, *Weekly Offender Statistics Report* (6 November 2014). Note that this excludes prisoners accommodated at Broome Annexe site that is included within the same table as work camps, as the annexe is not a work camp location.

36 DCS, *Work Camps Future Directions* (2008). See also: OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Albany Regional Prison*, Report No. 60 (April 2009) vii–viii; OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Albany Regional Prison*, Report No. 78 (June 2012) Recommendation 5; OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Pardelup Prison Farm*, Report No. 82 (December 2012) Recommendation 3.

37 OICS, *The Flow of Prisoners to Minimum Security, Section 95 and Work Camps in Western Australia* (December 2012) 13.

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- 3.17 While the capacity for Aboriginal prisoners to access those remote camps has been laudable, Noongar men from the South West of the state have had less success. Despite the principles espoused in Departmental policy documents, the Walpole and Wheatbelt work camps have only had between 10 and 15 per cent Aboriginal occupancy.³⁸
- 3.18 Despite the high proportional rate of Aboriginal occupancy of the remote work camps, the overall capacity for Aboriginal prisoners to access a minimum-security rating and work camp approvals has long been of concern. The situation has been highlighted by the fact that work camp occupancy rates as a whole are just 60 per cent capacity, and rates at Wyndham and Warburton have been especially low.³⁹ This leads to questions as to why, when targeted investment has been made, more Aboriginal prisoners are not progressing through the classification system to be assessed as suitable for work camp placement.
- 3.19 During 2007 and 2008, the Department reviewed and modified its security assessment and classification instrument ('the instrument') with the intent of enhancing the objectivity and transparency of assessments, and improving the prospect for individual prisoners to progress through the system.⁴⁰ The modified instrument was applied from June 2009.
- 3.20 In 2012, this Office reviewed the impact of the new instrument. One of the most striking findings was that while the number of male non-Aboriginal prisoners acquiring minimum-security status had increased by 62 per cent, the number of Aboriginal male prisoners attaining minimum status had increased by less than 5 per cent.⁴¹ Between 2009 and 2012, the proportion of Aboriginal prisoners at minimum-security fell from 37 per cent to 27 per cent.⁴² It followed that access for Aboriginal prisoners to work camps was being restricted by the modified instrument.

38 DCS, *Work Camps Future Directions* (2008); OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Albany Regional Prison*, Report No. 60 (April 2009) vii–viii; OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Albany Regional Prison*, Report No. 78 (June 2012) Recommendation 5; OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Pardelup Prison Farm*, Report No. 82 (December 2012) Recommendation 3.

39 Aboriginal prisoners accessing work camps reached a peak of 36 in April 2013: DCS, *Weekly offender statistics 2011 – 2013*. Available at <http://www.correctiveservices.wa.gov.au/_search/result.aspx?srchQuery=statistics&srchSubmit.x=7&srchSubmit.y=5>

40 This Office also published a review of prisoner assessment and classification; OICS, *Report into the review of assessment and classification within the Department of Corrective Services*, Report No. 51 (April 2008). However, while the new instrument drew on some of the OICS report, it was the Department's document.

41 OICS, *The Flow of Prisoners to Minimum Security, Section 95 and Work Camps in Western Australia* (December 2012).

42 Ibid.

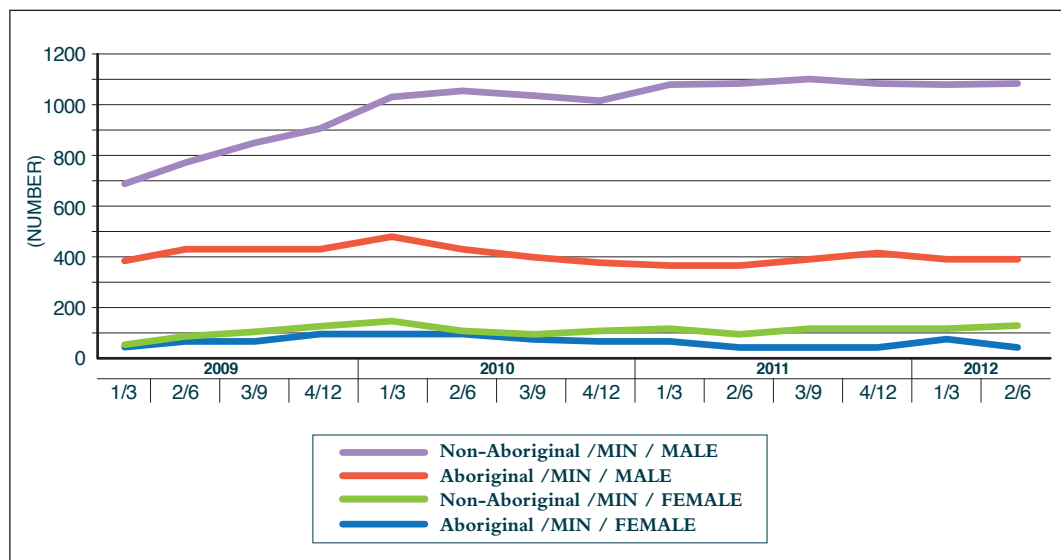


Figure 2: Trends in minimum-security demographics March 2009 – June 2012 ⁴³

WORK CAMP COSTS

Cost of Construction

3.21 Until 2011, work camps in Western Australia were located on previously-developed sites, using existing infrastructure. This minimised establishment costs.

- The first camp at Walpole (1998) re-purposed Main Roads accommodation at minimal cost.
- The Badgingarra camp (1999) used the old Warramia Group Home accommodation facilities.
- The then Department of Conservation and Land Management provided land, buildings and facilities for use by the Millstream camp (2000) at no cost.
- The only (and short-lived) women's work camp, at Toodyay (2000), used the Wandoo Hills Educational Retreat buildings at a cost of \$18 per prisoner per day.
- The first Wheatbelt camp (2000) occupied Kellerberrin's old Iris Litis School at minimal cost.
- The Bungarun camp (2001) took over an old leprosarium near Derby.
- The first of the Wyndham camps (2002) was constructed on an \$85,000 budget, using six caravans and five skid-mount 'dongas'.
- The Mt Morgans camp (2005) utilised existing Shire of Laverton historic buildings at no cost, later adding dongas, cool-rooms and an elaborate solar electricity array.
- The second, interim Wheatbelt work camp at Wyalkatchem (2011) occupied disused railway workers' barracks, previously refurbished by work camp prisoners.

43 Ibid.

- 3.22 In 2008, national attention was drawn to the tragic death in custody of an elder from the Warburton community. A Coronial Inquest into circumstances surrounding that death commenced in March 2009. This generated discussion about the contributing factors that lead to the tragedy, including the lack of local justice and custodial facilities to meet the need of surrounding communities.
- 3.23 In May 2009, the then Minister for Corrective Services announced \$25 million to fund the construction of work camps at Warburton and in the Wheatbelt to complement the proposed new Wyndham work camp. In a statement, the Minister said the new work camps would:
- [F]or the first time, offer opportunities for community-based offenders to undertake their community work. Not only will this government provide more beds for the prison system but we will also deliver a service focused on rehabilitation and breaking the offending cycle whilst helping with community projects.⁴⁴
- 3.24 Work camp officers and many community representatives expressed the view that the decision to construct the Warburton work camp had been politically driven, and an act of atonement for the death in custody.
- 3.25 The Department embarked on a substantial program of investment in work camp infrastructure. Guided by the Kimberley and Goldfields Custodial Plans,⁴⁵ architects were engaged to develop culturally appropriate and site-responsive custodial infrastructure. Building modules were constructed off-site. The camps provided quality accommodation for prisoners and staff, excellent kitchen and dining facilities, and large workshop and storage areas. Prisoners enjoyed single cells, and these were air conditioned where local Aboriginal community standards demanded. The new Wyndham camp, design capacity 40, cost \$7.8 million. The Warburton camp, design capacity 24 (and an additional 6 security cells) cost \$13.3 million. The Wheatbelt camp at Dowerin, capacity 20, cost \$4.4 million.⁴⁶
- 3.26 There was no doubt that these new work camps were a vast improvement on facilities at the old work camps. However, it was obviously necessary to ensure that they were used, and that such high value investments were balanced by improved correctional outcomes.

Operational Costs

- 3.27 Compounding the high build cost associated with the new purpose-built work camps was a significant increase in staffing costs. Walpole, the first of the adult work camps, had functioned for 15 years with a rostered staff of three, and a single officer on-site at all times. By contrast, under an enterprise bargaining agreement between the Department and the prison officers' union, the new Warburton camp required a senior officer (SO) and a work camp officer on-site at all times. Based on a system of fly-in-fly-out shifts of 15 days, this necessitated a total roster of three SOs, three shift officers and one relief shift officer.

44 Minister for Corrective Services, *2009-10 Budget Media Statement* (14 May 2009).

45 Kimberley Aboriginal Reference Group, *Kimberley Custodial Plan* (October 2005); DCS Strategic Services, *Goldfields Custodial Plan: Project Concept Report*.

46 DCS, Information provided by Program Manager, Strategic Asset Services (19 February 2013).

- 3.28 The original intent was that the high build and operational costs of the new camps would be offset by low infrastructure maintenance costs flowing from quality build standards, and by having consistently high occupancy rates. Based on the data, the issue of low occupancy rates had been identified as a very real risk by this Office.⁴⁷ At the time of writing, low occupancy rates were reducing the cost-effectiveness of the Wyndham and Warburton camps. Compounding the long-term economy of the Warburton camp, the Department actually reduced its operational capacity from 24 to 12 in July 2013, while retaining its staffing level.⁴⁸

PROMOTION OF WORK CAMPS

- 3.29 As early as 2000, the then Ministry for Justice had recognised the potential shown by the success of the two pilot work camps at Walpole and Badgingarra, but acknowledged the likelihood of public resistance to having prisoners housed in the community. The public was at that time particularly sensitive about law and order issues, and particularly alert to the situation in prisons. There had been a record 87 escapes from minimum-security prisons, seven recent deaths in custody, and a riot at Casuarina Prison on Christmas Day 1998.
- 3.30 A comprehensive public relations campaign reversed the potential negatives relating to the expansion of the work camp program. Rather than fighting the initiative, the situation developed whereby communities were actively bidding for the opportunity to host a prisoner work camp.⁴⁹ The 10th Anniversary Work Camps Commemorative Booklet of 2008 detailed the development of work camps across the State, and enumerated the many benefits to host communities during that period.⁵⁰
- 3.31 The Department continued promoting the positive contribution of work camps to the community at large. Frequent references were made to the many projects completed by work camp prisoners, and those projects were routinely costed, using a notional hourly rate. Thus, for example, in 2012 the Department could claim that:

Each year, prisoners based at the work camps undertake about 75,000 hours of work in regional communities, repaying WA with about \$1 million worth of work.

Prisoners participate in community work and activities that add value to community life and enhance community infrastructure and facilities. The work must provide benefits to prisoners and the broader community and be work that would otherwise not be done due to lack of community resources or volunteers.⁵¹

- 3.32 A communications strategy was developed later in 2012 to:

[S]ystematically restore any loss of confidence in the program (following much recent media and Parliamentary scrutiny on its cost effectiveness), as well as further improve awareness of work camps at the prison level and attract more suitable applicants.⁵²

47 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison*, Report No. 72 (June 2011) vii.

48 OICS, *Liaison Visit, Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison* (13 August 2013).

49 Ministry for Justice, *Adult Prisoner Work Camps – Community Communications* (2000): <<http://www.lib.uts.edu.au/gta/13729/adult-prisoner-work-camps-community-communications>>

50 DCS, *10th Anniversary of work camps in Western Australia Commemorative Booklet* (2008).

51 DCS, *2012 Handbook: A guide to services provided by the Department* (2012).

52 DCS, *Work Camps 2012–2014 Communication Strategy* (September 2012).

OCCUPANCY, COST AND FUNCTIONS

- 3.33 This strategy recommended countering claims that work camps were not economically viable by highlighting the benefit of project work to host communities, pointing to the reduction of Aboriginal disadvantage achieved by having those prisoners working on country, and emphasising the quality of rehabilitative and re-entry services that encouraged positive behavioural change.
- 3.34 Community approval of the work camp program had been strong across regional Western Australia. When work camps were closed at Mt Morgans and Kellerberrin, public displeasure was expressed in letters to State and Federal Government Ministers. It was necessary for the Department to provide advice to those Ministers as to appropriate responses.⁵³

53 Deputy Commissioner Department of Corrective Services, *Letter to Barry Haase, MHR, Federal Member for Kalgoorlie*; Briefing Note for Minister for Corrective Service Porter (16 September 2009); Deputy Commissioner Department of Corrective Services, *Diana Gorfin writes regarding the decision to relocate the work camp from Kelleberrin to Dowerin*; and *Briefing Note for Minister for Corrective Services Redman* (8 July 2011).

Chapter 4

WORK CAMP INFRASTRUCTURE 2012: THE OLDER CAMPS

WALPOLE

Host Prisons: Albany Regional Prison and Pardelup Prison Farm

Capacity: 12

Opened: January 1998

Overview

- 4.1 Opening in January 1998, Walpole work camp was the first adult custodial work camp facility in Western Australia. Opened originally with one officer and eight prisoners and at minimal cost, it set the tone for work camp development over the 12 years that followed. An existing Main Roads accommodation site was re-purposed, and the development of the Bibbulmun Track, a Department of Conservation and Land Management project, provided constructive and ongoing work opportunities from the outset.
- 4.2 This inspection found that Walpole had consistently maintained near-capacity occupancy for the 16 years to January 2014, with the relatively small size (never over 12 prisoners) not requiring more than one officer. Community acceptance of the camp had been overwhelming and community safety had not been compromised. Walpole residents cited numerous civic projects over many years that could not have proceeded without input from the camp. Reparation and rehabilitation outcomes had been outstanding. While the trend since 2011 had been towards developing purpose-built work camps at remote and regional sites for 20 to 40 prisoners, the example of that first camp remained strong.

Staffing

- 4.3 Staffing at Walpole Work Camp was undertaken by a roster of three officers, and one relieving officer. One officer was with the work team at all times. Officers overlapped to handover their duties on Fridays. At the time of the inspection, the duty officer had worked at the camp for eight years, and was nearing a month-long stint at the camp. Records completed by the duty officers included movement sheets, transfer and discharge sheets, and external activities sheets. Day to day accountability for activities was by a daily work sheet provided to the superintendent at the host prison, Pardelup, and supported by a monthly superintendent visit to the camp.

Prisoner Numbers

- 4.4 Prior to February 2013, prisoner numbers at Walpole had remained close to its capacity of 12. Numbers dropped to six and seven in February and March 2013, before building again towards the end of that year.

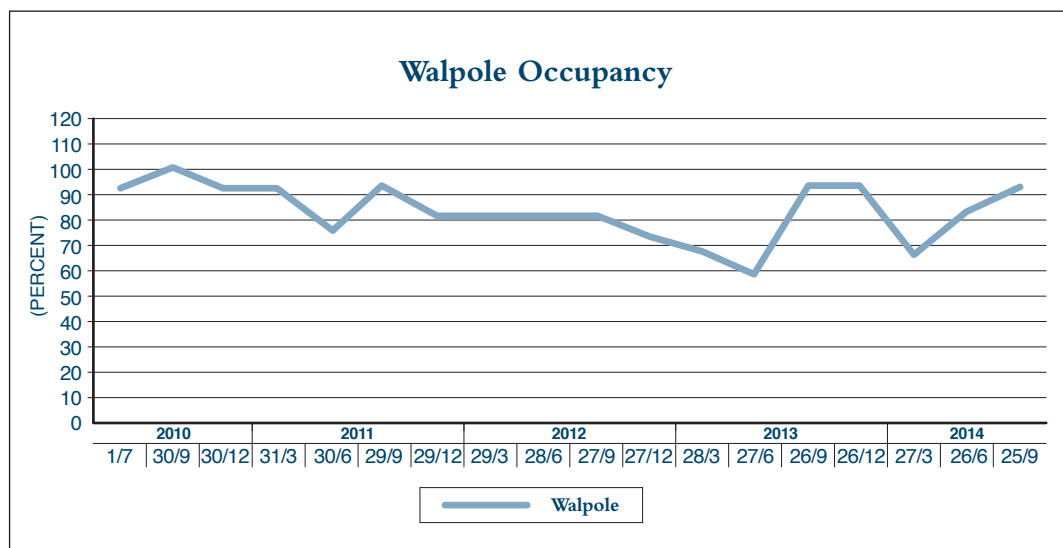


Figure 3: Occupancy of Walpole Work Camp, July 2010 – September 2014

Security

- 4.5 Walpole Work Camp was found to operate on a level of earned trust from the prisoners it accommodated and to provide an appropriate level of supervision. Prisoners transferring to Walpole were made aware of the zero tolerance regime regarding substance abuse and other offences, with any security breach resulting in immediate return to the maximum-security Albany Regional Prison or to Pardelup Prison Farm. Prisoner accommodation was relaxed and communal. Prisoners worked unsupervised in the community, some cycling to a workplace before dawn. Before being eligible for transfer to Walpole, prisoners had to successfully participate in Section 95 work outside Pardelup Prison Farm for some time, to be ‘tested’ for suitability for the camp.
- 4.6 Prior to September 2013, the host prison, Pardelup Prison Farm, had maintained a policy of permitting prisoners with more than two years still to serve the chance of transferring to Walpole. At that time, locating prisoners at Walpole with considerable time left to serve was considered appropriate, providing stability for the camp and the town community. Subsequently, the policy was changed to restrict transfer to prisoners with less than two years to serve, prioritising the value of rehabilitation and resocialisation closer to the time of release.

Community Engagement

- 4.7 The work camp took on projects for community and government, and had a longstanding involvement with the Walpole community. Work sites included the golf course and the community recreation centre. One prisoner was on the Prisoner Employment Program,⁵⁴ and one on permanent Section 95. A third was permanently rostered to the Walpole Community Recreation Hall as manager/maintenance/event coordinator.

54 The Prisoner Employment Program (PEP) provides minimum-security prisoners with the opportunity to engage in meaningful and sustainable paid employment, work experience, vocational training and education in the community prior to release. PEP is defined by DCS *Policy Directive 68*.

- 4.8 Community work had included construction of the new gazebo and front entrance structure at the Community Resource Centre, with prisoners continuing to work through winter, fashioning raincoats from garbage bags and taping carpet to their knees. The value of that work was estimated at \$35,000, for which the Centre paid \$7,000 for materials.
- 4.9 The Department of Environment and Conservation ('DEC') Bibbulmun Track pre-dated the Walpole work camp, and had been instrumental in its location at Walpole. Since 1998, most of the work on the southern section of the track had been done by prisoners. The DEC Manager would typically email the camp, providing information on sections of the track needing upgrade, and the nature of the work. DEC was encouraged to schedule a year of works in advance. The work camp officer compiled a weekly statistics report sheet, detailing locations and hours worked, and the number of prisoners involved. As at all camps, the work was valued by DCS at \$15.98 per prisoner per hour, but no charge was levied. Work camp projects had been completed as far afield as Northcliffe, Manjimup and Denmark.



Photo 1 : Walpole prisoner accommodation units

Infrastructure

- 4.10 At the time of the inspection infrastructure at the camp consisted of the officers' accommodation and administration cottage, two prisoner accommodation cottages, workshop sheds and hardstand. Each prisoner accommodation cottage had six bedrooms, two bathrooms, and a kitchen and living area. The cottages had been assembled in Northam and transported to Walpole in 2010. Prisoners had constructed a substantial veranda linking the cottages. Prior to this, prisoners had resided in caravans.



Photo 2 : Verandas between units

Prisoner Services and Facilities

- 4.11 Prisoners were able to receive visitors on weekends only, except when exemptions were granted, with an average of two visits per weekend. A single shed was used for visits, gym and computer work. Funding through the Royalties for Regions program⁵⁵ had been secured to develop the visits facility. Phone calls were by Woolworths card purchased by the prisoners, with officers checking numbers called retrospectively.
- 4.12 Recreation on weekends included tennis, fishing and bushwalking. Prisoners could ride a bike to work or to the coast for fishing. Following a complaint from the community, prisoners' access to a bush track behind the camp for jogging had unfortunately been suspended.

55 Royalties for Regions is a state government funding program reinvesting 25 per cent of mining and onshore petroleum royalties into rural Western Australia each year. See: <<http://www.drd.wa.gov.au/royalties/Pages/default.aspx>>

- 4.13 Prisoners attended the Walpole Community Clinic for ongoing health care. As a result the standard of access to health care was assessed to be good. Prisoners did complain that dental care was basic, with extractions performed when root canal treatments were indicated. This was consistent with dental health care provided within the prison system generally. Applicants for the Walpole camp required Section 95 work experience from their prison and the capacity to work unsupervised, but did receive additional relevant training on arrival at the camp. This included being given permission to attend computer skills courses in town, bobcat operation training on-site, and fire fighting skills and the re-watering of fire fighting planes were taught.
- 4.14 Prisoners could be transferred temporarily to Pardelup to access specific skills training or education courses. The Pardelup Education Coordinator would provide a schedule of upcoming courses and Pardelup management decided whether a particular prisoner would be permitted to travel for training. This had been taken up by only a few Walpole prisoners in the past. Another possibility was that TAFE could theoretically run courses at Walpole, however a minimum of eight participants would be required, making it difficult to actually attain.
- 4.15 Historically the camp had experienced very few idle days, with work generally being consistent. There had been occasions when the threat of bushfire had resulted in total fire bans and work outside the camp was suspended. That situation could arise quickly, and alternative work activities were not always available. Prisoners valued the relaxed atmosphere, the single accommodation and the opportunities for community interaction that Walpole offered. Infrastructure was adequate, and work projects were varied and meaningful. Walpole fulfilled the work camp objective.



Photo 3 : Walpole vegetable garden and officers' unit

Cost

- 4.16 In 1998, when the Walpole work camp took over disused Main Roads accommodation, infrastructure costs were minimal. In 2012, buildings were transported from the Wheatbelt work camp to replace the old cottages, with prisoners providing site works and constructed verandas, again minimising cost.
- 4.17 Departmental records showed Direct Prison Operating Expenses at Walpole as \$449,000 in 2011/2012, coming in at \$122 per day per prisoner – the least expensive of the work camps, and less than any of the prisons.⁵⁶ Low overheads and consistently high occupancy, along with the constructive and worthwhile activities for the prisoners and community alike, contributed to excellent value for money.

Future

- 4.18 Despite the basic infrastructure at Walpole, particularly by contrast with the four new work camps, the future looked bright. It had achieved a great deal, had very strong community support, and appeared financially viable. The newly imported cottages had provided improvements to the living conditions for prisoners and would last some time into the future. New water catchment tanks installed late in 2012 have guaranteed future supply, and community work undertaken by the camp has been valuable in both social and financial terms.

MILLSTREAM

Host Prison: Roebourne Regional Prison

Capacity: 8 (2000 – 2010); 12 (2010 – 2013).

Opened: January 2000

Closed: February 2013

Overview

- 4.19 Prior to its closure, Millstream had operated as a work camp for 13 years, providing reintegration, reparation and training opportunities for selected minimum-security prisoners from Roebourne Regional Prison (RRP), with a particular focus on Aboriginal prisoners. Work focused on maintenance of the Millstream National Park, and was highly valued by the Department of Environment and Conservation ('DEC'). That Department provided land, buildings and facilities at no cost. Millstream operated close to capacity until the year before its closure.
- 4.20 During 2012 a number of factors led to a decision to close Millstream. First, it was identified that the staffing costs associated with the camp were high compared with other work camps. Secondly, Royalties for Regions funding had been secured for construction of a minimum-security facility located directly outside the front gates of RRP, meaning prisoners could continue to access Section 95 opportunities in the Pilbara without the

⁵⁶ DCS, *YTD Actual as values* (19 February 2013). Note: Direct Prison Operating Expenses do not include prison based administration costs.

costs associated with a more remote location.⁵⁷ These factors suggested that the closure of Millstream could provide a net saving to the Department. The Commissioner advised the Minister accordingly⁵⁸ and Millstream closed in February 2013.

Staffing

- 4.21 In November 2012 three permanent work camp officers worked to an eight days on, 13 days off roster at Millstream. One officer was onsite at all times. On Fridays two officers were onsite during shift change and handover. RRP had provided an additional officer to cover leave periods, but that position had been recently vacated with no replacement plans because of the imminent closure of the work camp.
- 4.22 Staff training was limited. First aid training was offered, but officers identified 4WD driving skills and life skills (cooking) training as desirable. Staff at Millstream, having served at the camp for more than a decade, felt that their success was dependent on basic common sense and a sense of humour. Formal trade skills were not seen as essential, as handyman skills were sufficient for the role. The staff had learned about Aboriginal culture from joining the prisoners around the campfire and listening to their stories.
- 4.23 Staff accommodation was satisfactory. Staff members shared a cabin containing a bedroom, bathroom, laundry, kitchen and living area. The relationship with RRP was positive, and there was a strong and cooperative relationship with the RRP Business Manager, to whom the staff reported.
- 4.24 At the time of the initial inspection, Millstream work camp officers were unsure about their future. Two of the three officers owned homes in Karratha and preferred to stay in the region. They were sceptical that the new town work camp, co-located at the prison, would continue to work to the same eight days on, 13 days off roster, suggesting it would mostly likely be staffed as a minimum-security prison, meaning a substantial change to their working conditions.

Prisoner Numbers

- 4.25 Millstream had maintained prisoner numbers approaching capacity for all but the last year of its operational life. When the camp finally closed in February 2013, the four remaining prisoners were transferred to RRP. A new purpose built work camp outside Roebourne Regional Prison opened in June 2014.

57 Commissioner of Corrective Services, *Update on the potential closure of Millstream work camp*, Briefing Note for Minister Redman (2 April 2012).

58 Ibid.

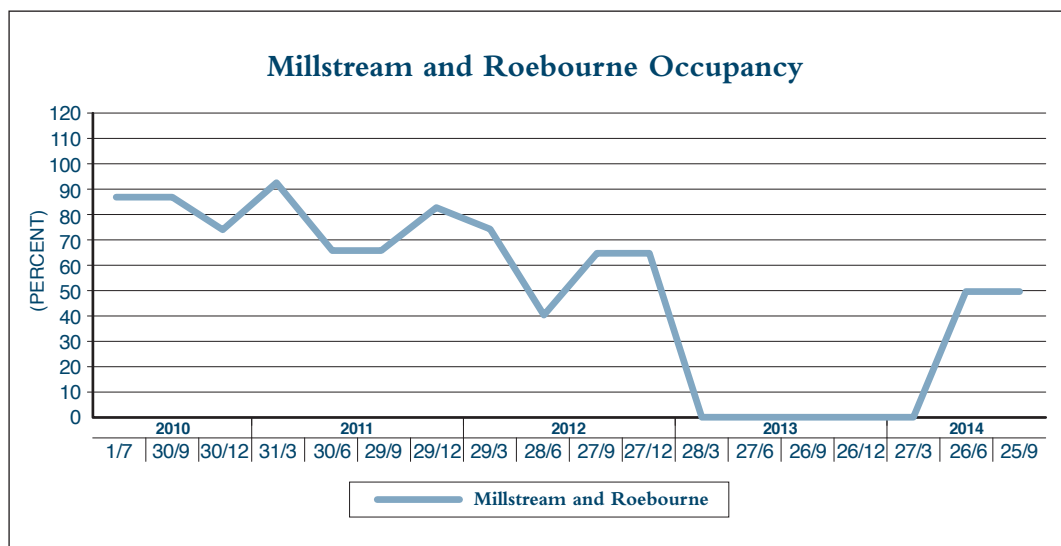


Figure 4: Occupancy of Millstream and Roebourne Work Camps, July 2010 – September 2014
 Note: The Millstream camp closed in February 2013, and the Roebourne camp opened in June 2014.

Security

4.26 During the last 12 months of its operation, prisoners at Millstream could only recall two instances where prisoners were returned to RRP, both for arguing with the work camp officers. Serious infractions of local rules resulting in transfer back to RRP had been rare. There had been no escapes during the review period.

Community Engagement

- 4.27 Millstream National Park is visited by 120,000 visitors each year, and is popular with residents of Karratha. The park hosts many events and is becoming a popular location for adventure races, such as the Red Dog Festival Relay. Prisoners were assisting with these events, providing water and cleaning up rubbish.
- 4.28 Work opportunities for prisoners at Millstream focused on maintenance of the national park. Recent projects had included restoration of the park kitchen adjacent to the old Millstream homestead; reticulating of lawns; removal of damaged eco-huts near the homestead; remediation of flood damage throughout the park; construction of timber bridges and benches around the water hole; construction and installation of metal bollards to demark parking areas; effecting weed control in and around the oasis and throughout the park; laying concrete access pathways at Deep Reach in Millstream and at Python Pool, and the installation of camping and day visitor amenities at Deep Reach, including shades, BBQs, picnic tables, cleared areas for camping and providing access steps to waterways.

- 4.29 Prisoners woke at 6.00 am. They were permitted to choose their own work schedule but most worked from 7.00 am until lunch time, before the afternoon heat set in. Dinner was at 6.00 pm and prisoners returned to their rooms by 10.00 pm. Prisoners were originally scheduled to take the weekends off, but were getting bored and preferred to work.



Photo 4 : Millstream prisoner accommodation

Infrastructure

- 4.30 The work camp was located adjacent to the office and accommodation facilities used by DEC rangers. In November 2012 there were six prisoners at the work camp, as temporary sewerage problems had restricted numbers. At that time, the work camp had capacity to hold 12 prisoners in air conditioned rooms. One of the rooms had been converted into a study, bringing actual capacity to 11. A prisoner was studying for a Bachelor of Business through Open Universities Australia and used the computer and printer in the study room to complete his assignments. Staff were reluctant to move the computer to the common games room as it was not air conditioned, and it would make studying uncomfortable.



Photo 5 : Millstream prisoner accommodation

Prisoner Services and Facilities

- 4.31 Between lunch and dinner each day prisoners had recreation time when they could ride bikes (provided by the prison), go running, fishing, watch television, play darts or simply relax. There was a 20 km running track available nearby. The work camp received satellite television, viewed in the common room.
- 4.32 If prisoners were sick or injured and the situation was not life threatening, they would travel back to RRP with the work camp officer on Fridays to access health services. At the time of the inspection, prisoners claimed that none of them had ever been sick at the camp. In an emergency, they could call the park ranger for assistance, who kept medical supplies at his office close to the work camp. Emergency services would then be called for assistance.
- 4.33 Millstream provided bobcat training, chainsaw use, chemical handling, welding, fencing, weed control and fire safety training. Prisoners stated that the education officers at RRP genuinely took their work seriously, and often provided a service beyond that which was expected of them.



Photo 6 : Prisoner 'dining room'

Cost

- 4.34 Although the majority of infrastructure costs at Millstream were covered by the Department of Environment and Conservation, and occupancy rates were good, staffing costs were relatively high. Departmental records showed Direct Prison Operating Expenses at Millstream as \$779,000 in 2011/2012, coming in at \$248 per day per prisoner. This was in the midrange of the work camps, and above the midrange of the state's prisons. However, it should be noted that Millstream's costs were in fact significantly less than the cost per day at Roebourne Regional Prison itself (\$336 per day).⁵⁹
- 4.35 Although the cost per prisoner per day at Millstream was lower than the cost at Roebourne Regional Prison, in 2012, Departmental analysis suggested that closure of the camp and relocation of the officers to Roebourne could save up to \$330,000 per annum.⁶⁰ That, combined with the prospect of continuing Section 95 works out of the cross-funded new work camp outside Roebourne Regional Prison, provided a cost-benefit analysis to support closure of Millstream. The Commissioner provided an update briefing to the Minister recommending bringing forward the closure of the camp.⁶¹ A Communication Strategy had been developed to explain the closure to the community, as:

59 DCS, *YTD Actual as values* (19 February 2013). Note: Direct Prison Operating Expenses do not include prison based administration costs.

60 Commissioner of Corrective Services, *Update on the potential closure of Millstream work camp*, Briefing Note for Minister Redman (2 April 2012).

61 Assistant Commissioner Department of Corrective Services, *Updated Briefing regarding the Millstream work camp*, Briefing Note for Minister Cowper (5 December 2012).

The closure of Millstream is likely to be a sensitive issue for some local government agencies and community groups, especially the Department of Environment and Conservation ('DEC') and traditional landowners.⁶²

Future

- 4.36 Millstream has now closed but it needs to be placed on record that budget constraints, not performance, were the primary reason for closure. The park ranger and staff of the DEC office in Karratha were particularly disappointed that the camp would close, valuing the work provided by the prisoners and noting the strong public support for the project. Effective weed control throughout the park was cited as an important contribution, and one that DEC might be unable to replace. Prisoners and staff at Roebourne also felt the camp had operated as an effective and relatively inexpensive incentive.

62 Assistant Commissioner Department of Corrective Services, *Communication Strategy for the closure of Millstream and the opening of Roebourne work camps*, Briefing Note for Minister Cowper (22 October 2012).

Chapter 5

WORK CAMP INFRASTRUCTURE 2012: THE PURPOSE BUILT CAMPS

WYNDHAM

Host Prisons: Broome Regional Prison (June 2011 – June 2013) and West Kimberley Regional Prison (from July 2013)

Capacity: 40

Opened: June 2011

Overview

- 5.1 The Wyndham work camp was the first of the purpose-built camps in Western Australia. The inspection found prisoners and officers valued the high standard of the infrastructure, particularly the air conditioned cells. The old Wyndham camp had suffered from the historic lack of a community consultative committee, and plans to develop a community advisory structure for the new work camp were under discussion at the time of the inspection.
- 5.2 Although Wyndham has a capacity of 40, prisoner numbers had been restricted by staffing levels. Occupancy reached a high of 29 in the second quarter of 2013 but on 6 November 2014 the population of the camp was just 22, barely over 50 per cent of capacity. This Office has identified significant numbers of Kimberley prisoners at all three security classifications in Perth metropolitan prisons, many of whom expressed the strong desire to return north. The Department should work towards ensuring as many Kimberley prisoners as possible attain a status enabling them to access the opportunities provided by the new camp.
- 5.3 Staff reported that the facility was excellent, that they enjoyed good relations with prisoners, and that the camp was a great place to work. Substantial work and training opportunities were available, and a range of recreational activities popular with Kimberley prisoners was enjoyed. They valued learning traditional and local practices from prisoners such as fishing, hunting and gathering bush fruit. Staff thought that prisoners were generally happy to be at the camp, perceiving it as a privilege.

Staffing

- 5.4 At the time of the on-site inspection in November 2012 two senior officers worked eight hour day shifts Monday to Friday, leaving no senior officer coverage on nights or weekends. Three work camp officers worked to a rotating roster, eight days on and 13 days off. Overlap days at the beginning and end of the shift facilitated handover. Work camp officers worked 16-hour shifts and overnighted at the camp. The remoteness of the Wyndham work camp made extended time on-site an unattractive option for staff seeking to spend more time with their families. Subsequently, senior officer shifts changed to permit weekend presence. Staff also put forward a proposal to Departmental management for an additional senior officer to be appointed, allowing for 24 hour senior officer coverage, similar to Warburton work camp.

- 5.5 Subsequently, additional work camp officers were appointed, making seven in total. At least two work camp officers were on-site at all times. One work camp officer remained on stand-by Monday to Friday. One life skills Vocational Support Officer (VSO) was appointed Monday to Friday, and taught occupational health and safety ('OH&S'), laundry, grounds, workshops, and was responsible for the kitchen.
- 5.6 Staff received adequate on the job training, but reported that the initial three week Academy based training seemed 'slight'. There was a suggestion that more tailored, work-camp specific training could incorporate both custodial training, vocational skills training and dynamic security training. Staff felt that their skills were more diverse than the standard custodial officer, as their role encompassed a wider range of tasks.

Prisoner Numbers

- 5.7 At the time of the on-site inspection the work camp had a prisoner population of 25, well below its build capacity of 40. At that time it was expected that prisoner numbers were likely to increase once increased staffing came on line. However, this did not come to fruition: an examination of the prisoner population throughout 2014 shows a peak of 25 in March, with numbers in the low 20's being the norm.⁶³
- 5.8 The prisoner population appropriately consisted predominantly of prisoners from the East Kimberley, with some from the West Kimberley, some from the South West, but rarely any from the Pilbara.

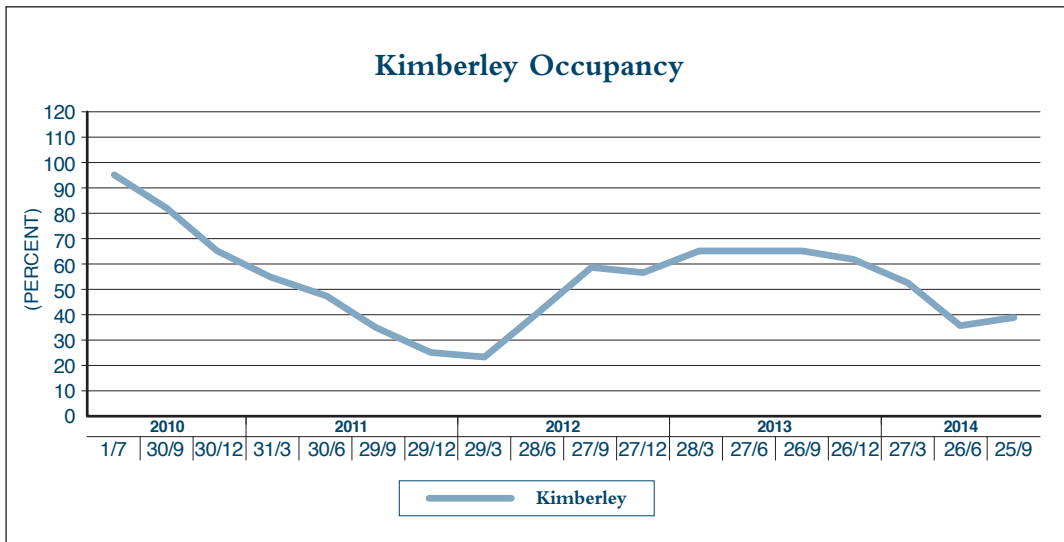


Figure 5: Occupancy of the Kimberley Work Camps, July 2010 – September 2014
 Note: The new purpose built camp at Wyndham opened in June 2011

63 Numbers drawn from: DCS, *Weekly Offender Statistics (WOS) Report*.

Security

- 5.9 Minimal-security infrastructure necessitated reliance on zero tolerance of inappropriate behaviour, and dynamic security. The work camp was close to town and required risk management for trafficking and inappropriate relations. Staff acknowledged that having only one officer rostered on during the evenings magnified that risk. Prisoners were given a personal induction session outlining work camp rules, regimes, behavioural expectations and OH&S issues. There was no 'lock down' but prisoners were expected to be back on the verandas by 9.00 pm and in bed by 10.00 pm. The work camp had 36 swags, and prisoners were permitted to sleep on the verandas.

Community Engagement

- 5.10 Staff reported that the Wyndham community valued the work camp, but that previous tensions around the liaison committee and the issue of sex offenders in the camp had left a negative legacy and damaged trust. At the time of the inspection, Wyndham work camp had not had a community liaison committee meeting for 10 years.
- 5.11 The view that Departmental management had not maintained good relations with the community in the past was born out by discussions with Wyndham Shire Council staff and local police during the inspection. The community liaison committee process was being reinstated, but concerns persisted over the quality of communication from the Department, and over the rejection of some candidates from committee membership.
- 5.12 Prisoner work in the community had included extensive grounds works at numerous sites, including cemeteries, Joongari House, the Women's Shelter, the police station, the child care centre and the museum. The Shire had not enjoyed a close relationship with the work camp, as concerns persisted around unsupervised prisoners and work quality. Despite this, the work camp had assisted the Shire to cover a temporary staff shortfall at the Wyndham pool.
- 5.13 Prisoners had cleaned and repaired the local war memorial in preparation for Remembrance Day. During the work a local resident volunteered his time to train prisoners in the use of his sandblaster to clean the cannons which had become degraded over time. The community greatly appreciated that particular work camp contribution. Prisoners stated that they enjoyed being able to 'give back' to the local community. One prisoner played guitar at a local church, he being one of four prisoners regularly attending services in Wyndham on Sundays.



Photo 7 : Wyndham Work Camp

Infrastructure

- 5.14 Wyndham was the first of the new purpose-built work camp facilities. Architect designed and built off-site at a reported finished cost of \$7.8 million, the camp provided quality accommodation for prisoners and staff, excellent kitchen and dining facilities, and large workshop and storage areas. Prisoners enjoyed single cells with air conditioning.
- 5.15 Prisoners valued having their own rooms, which appeared to be well kept and homely. Single cell accommodation promoted better relations amongst prisoners as they enjoyed privacy at the end of the day. Single rooms also reflected community standards of self-responsibility, with prisoners retaining their own keys.
- 5.16 The work camp had two phones and might need more if the planned increase in population occurred. Prisoners stated that the phone card system was good value for money. The work camp may also need another appropriate vehicle if the prisoner population were to approach capacity.



Photo 8 : Wyndham prisoner accommodation

Prisoner Services and Facilities

- 5.17 The camp did not have a dedicated visits area, but staff reported that a TAFE trainer was prepared to work with prisoners to construct one, using the build as both training and employment. A business case had yet to be developed for that project.
- 5.18 The gym area was outdoors and unprotected, needing a concrete pad and a roof. The prisoners had been involved in external sports with local community teams, playing basketball and football. They had also been invited to play soccer and touch rugby.
- 5.19 Fishing was popular with prisoners, and they appreciated being able to store fish in the freezer, and give part of their catch to visitors. Overnight fishing trips had been discussed. The camp had successfully run overnight work programs, having prepared grounds at Mt. Barnett for a community meeting. Men's Outreach in Wyndham was willing to participate with prisoners on overnight activities.
- 5.20 Small injuries and illness were attended to by on-site first aid kits. Any emergency healthcare required transport to Kununurra.
- 5.21 At the time of the inspection, most training at the camp was overseen by TAFE, but difficulty arose around the minimum course requirement of 10 attendees each of whom needed to have more than three months of their sentence remaining. The planned increase in prisoner population would thus enable more TAFE courses to run. Training had included welding and mechanics (small engines). One prisoner had used his welding skills to help another prisoner make a cross for his mother's unmarked grave in the local cemetery.

The camp was shortly to receive eight computers for education and training. Since the inspection, accredited training programs had been successfully conducted at the camp.⁶⁴



Photo 9: Workshop at the Wyndham Work Camp

- 5.22 There had been a focus on music and art, following prisoners' preferences. The Broome Regional Prison Education Manager planned to bring an innovative program to Wyndham, involving ukulele kits which prisoners would construct and decorate. Music lessons and the opportunity for a performance would follow. The program had run successfully at Broome Prison, and had resulted in a performance of songs from the musical *Bran Nue Dae*.
- 5.23 Ngnowar Aerwah were the local re-entry service providers, with involvement in the Transport of Prisoners Scheme (TOPS), transition management, and provision of life skills and outreach programs for prisoners. They were well regarded and staffed locally, ensuring good community connections. Ngnowar Aerwah had secured funding to run art, music and computer classes at the camp. While the courses were not accredited, they provided opportunity to improve prisoner self-esteem and facilitate reparation activities. At the time of the inspection, the workspace for the new education program was being finalised.

64 Interview of DCS Work Camp Manager, Personal communication (29 August 2013).

Cost

- 5.24 Construction cost of the Wyndham work camp, the first of the purpose-built facilities, was \$7,831,000.⁶⁵ The high build cost reflected not only the remoteness of the location but also the high standard of the facility and the consideration given to culturally appropriate design. Wyndham signalled a fresh approach by the Department to minimum-security custodial infrastructure in the regions.
- 5.25 Departmental records showed Direct Prison Operating Expenses at Wyndham as \$1,379,000 in 2011/2012, coming in at \$282 per day per prisoner. This was in the midrange of the work camps. Although Wyndham's costs exceeded the midrange of all the state's prisons, it is important to note that its costs were significantly lower than the cost per day at Broome Regional Prison (\$327 per day).⁶⁶
- 5.26 Furthermore, the cost of \$282 per day was based on low numbers. If the Wyndham work camp had run at full capacity in 2011/2012, the daily cost per prisoner would have been \$94, making it the least expensive work camps, and well below the average on-site operational cost of all WA prisons – \$171.⁶⁷

Future

- 5.27 Development of the new Wyndham work camp was dependent on growing the number of prisoners, and attracting funding and personnel to lift staffing levels. Links with the West Kimberley Regional Prison (WGRP) were strong. The Office had identified significant numbers of Kimberley prisoners at all three security classifications in Perth metropolitan prisons, many of whom expressed the strong desire to return north.
- 5.28 The Department has invested heavily in new infrastructure in the Kimberley, and prisoners from that region would benefit from the opportunity to progress from WGRP to Wyndham. The Department must work towards maximising occupancy of the camp.

WARBURTON

Host Prison: Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison

Capacity: 24, and six secure cells

Opened: August 2011

Overview

- 5.29 Warburton work camp, opened in August 2011, was the second of the purpose-built facilities. The build cost exceeded \$13 million, making it by far the most expensive of the five operational sites at that time.
- 5.30 Since opening, the camp has not used the six secure cells that were included in the build and has not maintained adequate work camp prisoner numbers. The number of work camp prisoners climbed from three in September 2011 to six in March 2012, then to a high of 19 in June 2012. It then fell back to 11 in September 2012 and eight for the three summer

65 DCS, Information provided by Program Manager, Strategic Asset Services (19 February 2013).

66 DCS, *YTD Actual as values* (19 February 2013). Note: Direct Prison Operating Expenses do not include prison based administration costs.

67 Ibid.

months of 2012/13. It has continued to struggle in 2014. In September 2014, the prisoner population at the camp was just five.

- 5.31 The evidence is that prisoner numbers at the camp were restricted by a lack of suitable minimum-security prisoners at its host prison, Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison (EGRP) and elsewhere within the estate, and also by the location of the camp. Warburton and the surrounding area has its own distinct history, languages and cultural identity, and it is a place where Aboriginal law is still strong. Many non-Ngaanyatjarra prisoners might not be willing to come to the desert, and even some prisoners from the Ngaanyatjarra Lands might avoid coming to Warburton for individual social or cultural reasons.
- 5.32 Concern over the high build cost of the Warburton work camp was compounded by the fact that an additional accommodation block had been constructed at considerable expense to maximum-security standard – ostensibly to permit custody of up to six remandees from the Warburton Magistrate’s Court. As it was maximum-security, this structure had been gazetted as a prison and, as such, required staffing by officers with prison officer status, rather than by work camp officers with a status similar to non-security prison officers. The Western Australian Prison Officers’ Union was of the opinion that staffing of the secure unit at Warburton would entail a 24-hour watch, and thus require up to nine officers once rosters and relief staff were considered. The cost of an operation of that scale to service the occasional remandee was clearly prohibitive. That situation did call into question the adequacy of prior planning and consultation. If it was not feasible to use the secure cells, why were they built?
- 5.33 Operationally, the Warburton Work Camp had been successful in winning strong community support and engaging constructively with the several civic entities servicing the community. Off-site work projects undertaken by prisoners provided improvements and ongoing maintenance to community amenities, and were completed competently. The Warburton Community Store benefited from sales of perishables to the camp, and the Warburton roadhouse and airstrip sold fuel for vehicles and charter flights. Community safety was not compromised. Families of prisoners valued the opportunity to maintain contact, and the inter-generational experience of witnessing the ‘men in green’ going about a regular work program gave the lie to years of talk that ‘prison is all about watching videos and playing football’ somewhere far away, and unseen.
- 5.34 The Work Camp Management team at the Department had engaged in a concerted effort to attract suitable minimum-security prisoners to the Warburton facility. Posters extolling the benefits of work camps generally were observed by this Office’s staff at Wooroloo Prison Farm and elsewhere in February 2013.

Staffing

- 5.35 Both officers on duty at the time of the inspection had been stationed at the Mt Morgans Work Camp when it closed in June 2011. Other officers came from the Wheatbelt and Walpole work camps. Officers were stationed at the Warburton camp prior to the arrival of prisoners in September 2011 specifically to prevent vandalism of the site.

- 5.36 Staff at the camp particularly valued the shift arrangements, whereby three teams of two (one senior officer and one work camp officer) work two weeks on, four weeks off. Both officers had 16-hour shifts (6.00 am – 10.00 pm) and eight-hours stand-by. Effectively, each team ‘went to work’ seven times a year. A relief officer (Section 95 officer) was available from EGRP as required.
- 5.37 Officers at the camp were not provided with specific training for the position. The two officers on duty at the time of the inspection both had many years’ experience in diverse custodial roles. Training received did include workplace assessor and senior first aid, but remote first aid would have been useful.

Prisoner Numbers

- 5.38 As discussed, the Warburton Work Camp has not maintained adequate prisoner numbers.⁶⁸ This appears to be due to a lack of suitably qualified minimum-security prisoners at EGRP and elsewhere, and by the location of the camp. Some officers contrasted the situation with that at Mt Morgans, which they saw as having been located in ‘no-man’s land’, and therefore benefiting from wider appeal. However, despite that wider appeal, the Mt Morgans camp had also suffered from low prisoner numbers.⁶⁹

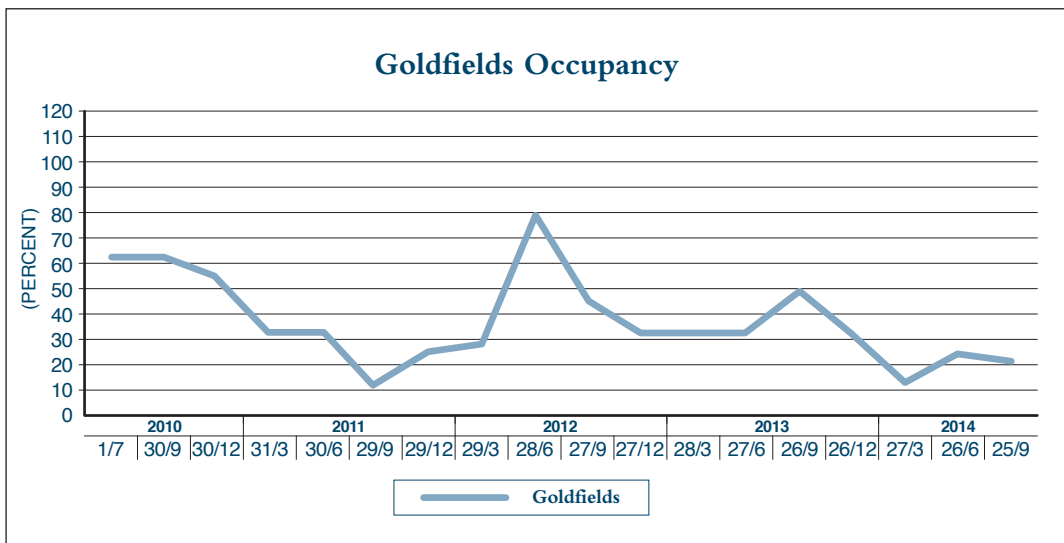


Figure 6: Occupancy of Mt Morgans and Warburton Work Camps, July 2010 – September 2014
 Note: The Mt Morgans camp closed and the Warburton camp opened in August 2011.

Security

- 5.39 Security was not seen as problematic at Warburton. An early incident of absence without permission had been dealt with swiftly and decisively to deter similar acts. A prisoner was apprehended returning to the camp after a night away, and an officer drove up from Kalgoorlie to return him to EGRP. A second incident occurred in 2014, with two work camp prisoners absent without permission. One returned voluntarily after half an hour,

68 See [5.30].
 69 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison*, Report No. 72 (June 2011) vi.

and the other was apprehended an hour later. One USB stick had been found in the possession of a prisoner, but it only held family photographs. Seventeen urine tests had been conducted, with three results positive for cannabis.

- 5.40 Security checks were being carried out fortnightly at the camp. The secure computerised prisoner database TOMS was available to officers on-site. Monthly grievance meetings had been convened at the work camp, with the superintendent of the host prison making final decisions.
- 5.41 Warburton community retained the right to veto the transfer of prisoners deemed undesirable, and had specifically requested that prisoners with a history of IV drug use be not permitted to come to the camp.
- 5.42 In the event that a work camp prisoner became noncompliant during the fortnight between regular prison charter flights, that prisoner would be returned to EGRP by road. If the safety or health of staff or prisoners was threatened, emergency air charter evacuation flights would be made available.

Community Engagement

- 5.43 Warburton community members had been universally positive about the presence of the work camp, but disappointed in the fact it has been so under-utilised.⁷⁰ Engagement between officers and prisoners and the community had been strong. Activity had focused on work within the facility, but several days each week had been devoted to community projects.
- 5.44 Prisoners had worked at the Warburton oval, and had developed the grounds of the Warburton playgroup centre. Regularity and high work standards had impressed staff at the Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku. Prisoners had improved the grounds of the Warburton Park next to the pool, had regularly cleaned up around the community buildings, and had retrofitted the community hall.
- 5.45 The Shire Office Manager had been in contact with the senior officer over a contract to upgrade the grounds of the multifunctional administration facility, implementing the landscape design provided by the University of Western Australia Design Studio. This would require plant nursery preparation, reticulation and planting. A prisoner with landscape gardening experience had been brought to the camp. The camp had taken care not to perform tasks that would deny employment opportunities to others.

⁷⁰ Letters of support for the Warburton Work Camp from the Ngaanyatjarra Council, the Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku and Warburton Community were sent to the Commissioner for Corrective Services in April 2014.

- 5.46 The community had benefited socially and economically from having prisoners use the Warburton Store for spends, and for general supplies for the facility. Wherever possible, consumable and durable goods for the camp been bought from the store. Despite the Department enjoying exemption from local government rates, the Shire environmental health officer had the opportunity to inspect the camp. Work camp officers maintained detailed records of work projects conducted in the community. Work projects outside the camp were permitted unsupervised, but prisoner recreation at community facilities was supervised.
- 5.47 Shire and community staff had informally received positive reports from community members about the presence of the camp. The fact that the prisoners were low-security and low risk, combined with the constructive work they perform created a good impression.



Photo 10 : Warburton Work Camp

Infrastructure

- 5.48 The Warburton work camp was designed and constructed to a high standard, using similar build techniques to those at Wyndham and Wheatbelt work camps. The build quality was excellent, and the final hand-over inspection was successfully conducted in early December 2012. At that time, Warburton was observed to have been in 'a much better state' than the Wyndham camp at the equivalent stage.
- 5.49 Work camp officers did see the need for more construction, maintenance and transportation equipment. At the time of the inspection one of the two Toyota Land Cruiser personnel carriers was in Kalgoorlie being serviced, and the one remaining

vehicle was insufficient for moving prisoners around the community. Should prisoner numbers at the camp approach capacity, and should the proposed program of works at other Ngaanyatjarra communities be developed, then a 4wd bus might be required. Relocation of the EGRP bobcat to the camp would expand training opportunities.

- 5.50 Warburton Community, situated east of the Gibson Desert, is subject to extremes of temperature and aridity. Although the accommodation units at the camp were triple-insulated, the inspection found that when they heated up over several hot days, they were slow to cool back down. The decision not to provide air conditioning to the accommodation units at Warburton had been based on a ‘wider community standard’ concept. At the time of design, community housing at Warburton had not been air conditioned, so the camp was similarly equipped. This was in contrast to the Wyndham work camp, situated as it was adjacent to air conditioned community housing in that region. The fact that community housing in Warburton was being converted to air conditioning at the time of the inspection did suggest that the camp might be retro-fitted with air conditioners in the future. Such a change would necessarily increase the electrical power load drawn by the camp. At the time of the inspection, electrical generation capacity provided by a bank of PV cells on the camp workshop roof had reduced the running cost of the facility by selling wattage back to the Warburton grid.



Photo 11 : Prisoner accommodation at Warburton



Photo 12 : Basketball court and service facilities at Warburton

Prisoner Services and Facilities

- 5.51 Casual visits for prisoners took place at the community oval, at the community park adjacent to the pool, and at a specified point along the perimeter fence. Prisoners had welded a bench seat to be used by family members during those perimeter fence visits. Regulations governing the visits process were specified by the EGRP superintendent.
- 5.52 Prisoners at the work camp were approved to participate in cultural activities as part of their Section 95 approvals, with some restrictions. Prisoners had been permitted to participate in traditional Ngaanyatjarra ceremonies at Warburton Community. Their engagement had extended over four days. This permission was said by officers to have been very well received by prisoners and by the community.
- 5.53 The Department had an MOU in place with Ngaanyatjarra Health, the regional supplier of primary and clinical health services. The MOU permitted access to the Warburton Clinic for emergency health care if required by staff or prisoners at the camp. Pharmaceutical supplies were obtained from the dispensary at Hakea Prison, via Kalgoorlie. The Warburton Clinic had the capacity to manage prisoners with chronic medical conditions. Prisoners on regular medication were responsible for complying with their medication regime, with meds distributed weekly. Failure to comply could result in return to EGRP. Prisoners presenting with high risk medical management needs could be excluded from the camp. The presence of a doctor at the Warburton Clinic had been beneficial. For prisoners suffering diabetes, heat stress was an ongoing concern.

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- 5.54 Officers noted the complexity around finances at the camp. Money was not permitted to directly enter the camp. Prisoners' spends were allocated and recorded. The Warburton store kept records of prisoner purchases and camp fuel purchases. In an emergency, camp staff could resort to an order book process. Payment of final earnings to prisoners was effected by deposit to a personal bank account, or payment by cheque after release. Prisoners purchased Woolworths phone cards from the store, and a \$10 card would buy 20 minutes of mobile phone calls, or many hours of local (Ngaanyatjarra Lands) land line calls. The use of Skype for social communication was not provided.
- 5.55 EGRP had maintained its status as a Registered Training Organisation. Every prisoner at the work camp had completed the certified OH&S training and Food Stars courses prior to arrival. Prisoners came to the camp following six weeks of Section 95 work out of EGRP. Other prerequisites included training in whipper snipper, mower and chainsaw skills, and work safety in the construction industry. The camp had a designated cook, selected by the cook instructor at EGRP, much as other host prison trainers considered selection of all prospective transferees to the camp. Prisoner clothing was issued by EGRP before transport to the camp.
- 5.56 On arrival at the camp, prisoners received orientation and induction to the camp within 24 hours. Personal property remained at EGRP, and if the prisoner was to be released from the camp, then the prisoner's property was brought to the camp on the regular fortnightly air charter.
- 5.57 One officer noted that while the idea of having work camp officers trained as trainers, and thus equipped to deliver certified training at the camp had been floated, no progress towards that outcome had been made at the Departmental level. Individual officers were engaging in further training.

Cost

- 5.58 Construction cost of the Warburton work camp, the second of the purpose-build facilities, was \$13,300,000.⁷¹ That high build cost reflected the remoteness of the location, the high standard of the facility, the inclusion of a number of secure cells and the consideration given to culturally appropriate design.
- 5.59 Departmental records showed Direct Prison Operating Expenses excluding indirect expenses at Warburton as \$998,000 in 2011/2012, coming in at \$461 per day per prisoner – by far the most expensive of the work camps, more expensive than any of the prisons, and around twice the cost of its host prison, Eastern Goldfields (\$216).⁷²
- 5.60 The high cost was driven by low prisoner numbers (daily average population has generally been around eight prisoners) and higher staffing costs than at the older work camps. Had the Warburton work camp run at full capacity for the 273 days of operation in 2011–12, the daily cost per prisoner would have been \$152, placing it amongst the least expensive work camps, and well below the average operational cost of all WA prisons – \$171.⁷³

71 DCS, Information provided by Program Manager, Strategic Asset Services (19 February 2013).

72 DCS, *YTD Actual as values* (19 February 2013). Note: Direct Prison Operating Expenses do not include prison based administration costs.

73 Ibid.

Future

5.61 Community acceptance of the camp is very strong. With structured delivery of certified training, Warburton could match sound infrastructure with appropriate service delivery. The long term success of the Warburton work camp always depended on economies of scale: in other words, running a full and busy camp. However, this has never happened.

5.62 In a recent report on Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison, the Inspector stated:

One assumes that the decision to build Warburton (and ... Wyndham...) was based on a robust business case, and that this included issues such as projected prisoner demand, staffing needs and running costs. If the business case was robust in May 2009, one would have to ask how things could have changed by the time the camp opened in August 2012. Certainly, when I inspect prisons I see the same broad cohort of prisoners with the very same issues as I saw five years ago. The problems which are now said to face Warburton were all foreseeable and should have been factored into planning.⁷⁴

5.63 The communities want the work camp to function as such, but the situation has generated some frustration and disillusionment. Refreshing the focus on the work camp, providing more training and skills programs, and achieving near-full occupancy offer the best guarantee for longevity. However, as the Inspector said in the recent Eastern Goldfields report:

Warburton's future is most uncertain. This report made two recommendations, both of which directly reflected the government's stated intent in 2009: to make accredited training available and to examine ways to maximise the flow of prisoners to the camp. The Department has supported the recommendations 'in principle' but has made no concrete commitments. It says, rather cryptically, that the future use of the camp is under review in conjunction with other agencies. No other details are provided.

What this means, and where it leads, remains to be seen. But right now, Warburton is a white elephant. Understandably, communities in the Lands feel let down by government once more. And all Western Australians should be concerned that so much money was spent for so little. It is not as if the characteristics of the offenders or the underlying social problems have changed: they are depressingly constant.⁷⁵

74 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison*, Report No. 92 (August 2014) vi.
75 Ibid.

WHEATBELT (DOWERIN)

Host Prison: Wooroloo Prison Farm

Capacity: 20

Opened: February 2012

Overview

- 5.64 The work camp at Dowerin was the third iteration of a Wheatbelt camp. The first, at Kellerberrin's old Iris Litis School, was opened in February 2000 with a capacity of 12 prisoners. Sponsored by the Kellerberrin Centennial Association, it permitted prisoner input to a range of civic and landcare projects in Merredin, Tammin, Wyalkatchem and the host town. Late in 2011, the camp moved to Wyalkatchem (capacity 10), before the new purpose-built facility was opened at Dowerin in February 2012 at a cost of \$4.4 million, and with a capacity of 20.
- 5.65 The new Wheatbelt camp had maintained near-capacity occupancy, drawing prisoners from Wooroloo Prison Farm. Community and civic work projects across a 200 km diameter stretch of country had been identified contracted and completed. Despite the high build cost, operational funds had been restricted, necessitating a creative recycling ethos. Building materials and equipment had been ingeniously re-purposed to maximise benefit to the camp.

Staffing

- 5.66 The Wheatbelt Work Camp at Dowerin was allocated two shifts comprising one senior officer and one work camp officer. Senior officers worked eight days on six days off, with 10-hour days and an overlap on Friday. Officers worked eight days on 13 days off, with 16-hour days. At the old Kellerberrin Work Camp, a single officer had had responsibility for 12 prisoners. At Dowerin, the work camp senior officers reported to the superintendent and the assistant superintendent offender services at Wooroloo Prison Farm, and had little direct contact with the work camp management team at the Department. Prisoners could be released directly from the camp, and could be transported as far as Merredin by an escorting officer on release. More frequently, family members collected the released person from the camp. Dowerin was said by the duty officer and by prisoners at the camp to be 'the pinnacle' of the WA custodial estate, for prisoners and officers alike.

Prisoner Numbers

- 5.67 The camp catered for 20 prisoners in two blocks of 10, and occupancy rarely fell below 15. It maintained one full-time cook, and one assistant cook. In November 2014 the camp population was 18, with a 2014 high of a full complement of 20 prisoners having been reached in October of that year. The capacity for 20 prisoners had necessitated the presence of two officers. Adequate provision of vehicles had permitted split work shifts, with development of both on-site facilities and the many off-site projects. Community engagement had been strong, and demand for contracted works continued to grow. Direct financial input to businesses in Dowerin had been significant.

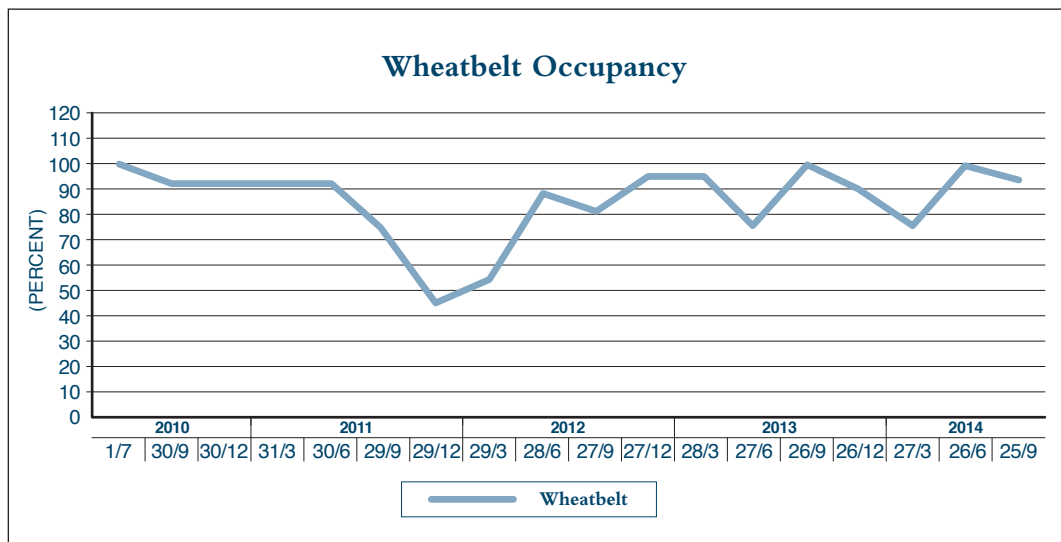


Figure 7: Occupancy of the Wheatbelt Work Camps, July 2010 – September 2014

Note: The new Wheatbelt camp at Dowerin opened in February 2012.

Security

5.68 The Wheatbelt camp was an example of minimum-security infrastructure, relying on responsible behaviour. Despite this, substantial doors on the prisoner accommodation rooms contrasted with that philosophy, as did the all-night floodlighting. The camp had only seen one disciplinary incident, where an Aboriginal prisoner had threatened an officer following the refusal of a funeral application.

Community Engagement

5.69 Prisoners at the camp worked on a variety of projects at sites across the central Wheatbelt. Contracts came by word of mouth. The work camp officer inspected prospective work sites, conducted a risk assessment, and if favourable, approved the job. Work far from the camp was restricted to two days a week, as extended travel times made for long work days – for example, it was a 90-minute drive each way to Merredin. One Prisoner Employment Program prisoner had been employed after release by the Shire of Dowerin. The Shire had gone so far as to provide accommodation for the new employee. He was still employed at the time of the inspection, some three months after release.

5.70 The Work Camp Community Liaison Committee met regularly. Members included two representatives from the Shire of Dowerin, and one each from the Shire of Wongan Ballidu, the Dowerin School, from Community Works, and from Community Justice Services. The camp operated two accounts at the Dowerin IGA – one for camp needs and a second for prisoner spends. Those accounts were paid monthly by the Business Manager at Wooroloo Prison Farm. Vehicle maintenance was scheduled as required, and the work undertaken by local mechanics where possible. Occasional major or technical vehicle repair work went to Northam.



Photo 13 : Wheatbelt Work Camp at Dowerin

Infrastructure

- 5.71 The Wheatbelt Work Camp was designed and constructed to a high standard, using similar build techniques to those at Wyndham and Warburton work camps. It had been constructed by Badge, with problems arising around completion dates and finish details. At the time of the inspection, the guarantee period had recently expired, with a flurry of works completed at the last minute. Accommodation was to a high standard, although the logic of providing a ‘\$1000 prison door’,⁷⁶ and no flyscreen for each cell was questioned.
- 5.72 The inspection team were told that the officers building had been oversupplied – lights, fans, air conditioning – at too much expense. That comment may have reflected the perception that the new work camps were over-specified, especially compared with the older work camps. The inspection found that the build quality at the new Wheatbelt camp was appropriate.
- 5.73 The kitchen and dining room were excellent, with industrial strength catering equipment, cool- and freezer-rooms, and dining facilities. The electric cooktop was the exception, said to be too small. Water supply to the camp had been secured, following connection to the rural scheme water supply. The final element, a generator to guarantee pump capacity, was commissioned in March 2013. The existing emergency supply generator was dedicated to supporting the kitchen freezer and cool room, and was tested weekly. A small laundry had been situated in the corner of one shed, but it was makeshift. No adequate chemical

76 All three purpose-built work camps were equipped with the standard cell door as specified across the custodial estate since 2011. That standard was necessary for maximum-security facilities, but over-specified for minimum-security.

store was provided. Television reception at the site had been problematic. The receiver was overly complex, and at the time of the inspection could not be adjusted, and could not receive ABC or SBS. The camp had use of a 20-seat bus and a Toyota Land Cruiser Personnel Carrier – adequate for the transport of work crews to several sites, and adequate for a full evacuation of the facility.

- 5.74 The work camp site was exposed to wind, particularly from the east, and could be very cold in winter. Three hundred trees had been sourced to provide a strategically placed “sawtooth” style windbreak. The cell units were oriented “sideways” to the wind, which generated a disturbing audible tone. Screens had been constructed at the ends of the block verandas to block the wind and reduce the noise. Drainage across the site was poor, but prisoners had set channels and soak areas. Gravel had been moved around the site to cover subsidence. As-constructed plans were not available for the site, making earthmoving hazardous. Electrical connections underground suffered from flooding. Prisoners, however, were well equipped, with work boots and work clothing appropriate to the season, and caps.



Photo 14 : Prisoner accommodation at Dowerin

Prisoner Services and Facilities

- 5.75 The original build at the new Wheatbelt camp had not made provision for visits. The exposed nature of the camp site and the extremes of temperature, rainfall and wind did make visitor shelter necessary. Officers and prisoners had constructed four shelter sheds with bench seats and tables, café-style transparent blinds, half-height wind-break walls and insect screening. The sheds were linked by concrete paths, and a BBQ was provided. Visits took place on weekends, and 30 visitors including 10–12 children attended each weekend.

- 5.76 One end of the workshop shed had been dedicated as a gym, and equipped with a combination of refurbished and improvised gym machinery. A full set of weights and several mirrors complemented the space. Plans were in place to construct a stud wall to better separate the gym from the rest of the workshop. Prisoners were encouraged to produce two dimensional artworks. One prisoner was completing a tertiary degree in fine art. Prisoners had been constructing a scale model of “old Dowerin” for the Police Club.
- 5.77 Basic first aid requirements were being met on-site by a first aid kit. Any emergency health care required transfer back to the host prison at Wooroloo, or contact to the local emergency services for transport to hospital.
- 5.78 TAFE accredited courses offered at the new Wheatbelt camp included small engine maintenance and horticulture. Training in bulldozer operation had been planned, contingent on clarification of the necessity for participants to hold a current Motor Driver’s License.



Photo 15 : Workshop at Dowerin

Cost

- 5.79 Construction cost of the Wheatbelt work camp, the third of the purpose-build facilities, was \$4.37m, considerably less than the more remote Wyndham and Warburton camps.⁷⁷ Again, the relatively high build cost was reflected in the high standard of the facility and the consideration given to appropriate design.
- 5.80 Departmental records showed Direct Prison Operating Expenses at Wheatbelt as \$434,000 in 2011/2012, coming in at \$245 per day per prisoner – in the midrange of the work camps, and above the midrange of the prisons.⁷⁸ However, had the camp run at full capacity for the 143 days it operated during 2011/2012, the daily cost per prisoner would have been \$152. This would have made it slightly more expensive than its host prison, Wooroloo (\$139) but well below the average operational cost of all WA prisons – \$171.⁷⁹ If the value of the work undertaken out of the camp and the strong community support were factored in, the Wheatbelt Work Camp would stand as a positive example of correctional services in the state.

Future

- 5.81 As with the other new work camps, Dowerin could anticipate long service from sound infrastructure. Prisoner numbers had approached full occupancy since June 2012. Work project opportunities were abundant. Community relations were well developed. With enhanced, structured and certified training, the camp could expect to retain its strong reputation.

ROEBOURNE TOWN WORK CAMP

Overview

- 5.82 The Millstream work camp closed in February 2013, in early anticipation of the opening of a new camp adjacent to Roebourne Regional Prison (RRP). The Roebourne Work Camp, the fourth purpose-built camp, opened in June 2014.⁸⁰ Construction cost of the 30 bed facility was \$14.9 million,⁸¹ defrayed in part by the Royalties for Regions fund.⁸² At the end of the first week of its official opening, the facility accommodated 15 prisoners.
- 5.83 On opening the work camp, the Minister for Corrective Services said the camp was designed to keep low-security prisoners out of the cells and get them used to life on the outside:
- ‘What we’re trying to do is to ensure as many prisoners as possible are job ready when they get out, so they can get on with their lives and not come back ... it’s all great that they go out and paint fire hydrants and bench seats and things like that, but we want them to get a skill that is actually worthwhile and will get them employment’.⁸³

77 DCS, Information provided by the Program Manager, Strategic Asset Services (19 February 2013).
 78 DCS, *YTD Actual as values* (19 February 2013). Note: Direct Prison Operating Expenses do not include prison based administration costs.
 79 Ibid.
 80 See: <<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-06-21/new-compound-opened-for-low-risk-inmates-at-roebourne-prison/5540974>>
 81 DCS, Information provided by the Program Manager, Strategic Asset Services (12 December 2014).
 82 Royalties for Regions is a state government funding program reinvesting 25 per cent of mining and onshore petroleum royalties into rural Western Australia each year. See: <<http://www.drd.wa.gov.au/royalties/Pages/default.aspx>>
 83 See: <<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-06-21/new-compound-opened-for-low-risk-inmates-at-roebourne-prison/5540974>>

Staffing

- 5.84 Roebourne Work Camp was staffed unlike other work camps. Two senior officers worked 12-hour days, alternating shifts over seven-day weeks, while two VSOs worked eight-hour days, alternating three days on, three days off. A chef instructor worked an eight-hour five-day week.

Prisoner Numbers

- 5.85 The new Roebourne camp has capacity to accommodate 30 prisoners in three 10-cell units. Ten prisoners had transferred from RRP to the camp in May 2014. In the week of the opening, the camp housed 15 men. During an inspection of RRP in December 2014, occupancy had fallen to 12.

Security

- 5.86 Although the camp was surrounded by a high fence, perimeter security was not exaggerated. The front gate was open, light industrial tools and machinery were unsecured in workshops, and staffing at the site was light. On the day of the inspection, two VSOs were off-site with the external work team, and one senior officer and the chef instructor remained at the camp.
- 5.87 RRP had implemented a zero-tolerance policy concerning substance abuse and behavioural non-compliance. At the time of the inspection, prisoners reported that two of their number had recently tested positive to substance abuse, and had been returned to the prison.

Community Engagement

- 5.88 At the time of the inspection, seven prisoners were engaged in supervised Section 95 work outside the camp, refurbishing the Yaburara walk trail on the outskirts of Karratha township. The Minister for Corrective Services has commented that regional communities benefited directly when prisoners engaged in meaningful work in the conservation, tourism, cultural, heritage and construction sectors.⁸⁴
- 5.89 In addition, the camp is contributing directly to the region's economy as many of the goods and services needed to run the facility were purchased locally. For Pilbara residents, the work projects carried out by prisoners also demonstrate the positive operation of the justice system.⁸⁵

84 Ministerial media statement (Friday 20 June 2014). See: <<http://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Pages/StatementDetails.aspx?StatId=8419&listName=StatementsBarnett>>

85 Ibid.



Photo 16 : Visits area and administration at Roebourne Work Camp

Infrastructure

- 5.90 The Roebourne Work Camp was designed and constructed to a high standard, built in similar fashion to the other three purpose built work camps. Accommodation is in three units, each containing 10 single-bed cells. Cells are equipped with ceiling fans and ducted air conditioning. Each unit has two ablutions rooms and a spacious tea station.
- 5.91 The camp has excellent kitchen and dining room facilities, with commercial quality food preparation equipment, adequate cool storage and office space for the chef instructor. The dining area is spacious, air conditioned, and looks onto a central landscape and recreation area.
- 5.92 Large workshops cater for woodwork and cabinet making, metalwork, and small engine maintenance and storage. The workshop structure also contains two classrooms, complete with computer work stations, data projectors, and large television screens. An office is provided for trainers.
- 5.93 At the time of the inspection, two sea containers were storing older workshop and landscaping equipment brought from the old Millstream work camp. Prisoners were installing aquaponic tanks and raised vegetable beds, and were building a part-shaded nursery. They had already constructed and installed shaded visits sheds in a grassed area beside the entrance to the facility. Colourful children's play equipment was positioned nearby. Two Toyota Land Cruiser Personnel Carrier vehicles and two heavy duty trailers supported the external work parties. A small tractor with trailer remained on-site at the camp.

WORK CAMP INFRASTRUCTURE 2012: THE PURPOSE BUILT CAMPS



Photo 17 : Basketball court and prisoner accommodation at Roebourne Work Camp



Photo 18 : Workshop at Roebourne Work Camp

Prisoner Services and Facilities

- 5.94 Vocational education and training at the work camp was provided by the RRP education centre, and by the VSOs. Two large well equipped classrooms had been included in the workshop structure. Commercial cooking training was being delivered in the camp kitchen, with one prisoner completing Certificate III and a second on Certificate I, but likely to have prior experience recognised. Staff at the education centre were anticipating cuts to education funding in 2015, commencing with a five week shut-down after Christmas 2014.
- 5.95 An extremely positive initiative, demonstrating the huge potential of an innovative approach to work camps, was announced in November 2014. The Department and Fortescue Metals Group (FMG) have combined to deliver a so-called ‘sentence to a job’ initiative called the Vocational, Training and Employment Centre (‘VTEC’) Fresh Start program.⁸⁶ At the time of the launch it was proposed that up to eight selected minimum-security prisoners from the camp would enrol in a six-month training program, earn mining related qualifications, and be guaranteed long-term employment with FMG.
- 5.96 Recreation was well provided for at the camp. An air conditioned recreation room with darts, pool, table tennis and a small library was complemented by an open-sided gym shed with isometric bars, free weights, punch bags, a speed ball, and one spin cycle. A full-size basketball court was adjacent to the gym shed. Weekday recreation was between 3.45 pm and 5.00 pm, and weekend recreation was from 9.30 am to 11.45 am.
- 5.97 Visits were between 1.15 pm and 3.30 pm on weekends. A dedicated audio visual room had not been fitted out at the time of the inspection. Telephone and mail facilities were in place, and unproblematic.



Photo 19 : Covered gym at Roebourne Work Camp

86 Joint statement, the Minister for Corrective Services and Fortescue Metals Group Chairman. See: <<http://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Pages/StatementDetails.aspx?StatId=8833&listName=StatementsBarnett>> Ibid.; see also Ministerial media statement. Friday 20 June 2014: <<http://www.mediastatements.wa.gov.au/Pages/StatementDetails.aspx?StatId=8419&listName=StatementsBarnett>>

Cost

5.98 The \$14.9m cost of construction of the camp was high, particularly by comparison with the other three purpose built work camps, but the infrastructure did have to comply with Building Code of Australia requirements for construction in cyclone affected regions. As previously pointed out, the now defunct Millstream Work Camp cost less per head than its host prison and the new camp should also be less costly, especially if its positive programs continue to evolve.

Future

5.99 The Roebourne Work Camp has benefited from strong investment in sound infrastructure. Sadly, patterns of offending amongst Pilbara community members have suggested an ongoing requirement for custodial facilities in the region. If Pilbara prisoners are supported to progress to minimum-security and work camp status, the future of the camp will be assured, and the rehabilitative programs it can provide will benefit the region. If initiatives such as the VTEC Fresh Start Program can be maximised, this site has enormous future potential in terms of maximising human capital in the region, as well as reducing financial costs.

Chapter 6

HISTORY OF WORK CAMPS

KURLI MURRI

March 1995 – August 1996

42 persons admitted

27 persons completed

- 6.1 Kurli Murri was conceived as a work camp for young adult male offenders aged between 16 and 21. It operated as a ‘special facility’ under section 119 of the *Young Offenders Act 1994* (WA) (‘the Act’), and opened at the time the Act came into operation. The camp was established near Laverton in the northern Goldfields at a reported cost of \$1.7 million, with the aim of diversion from the justice system, rehabilitation and behaviour change.⁸⁷
- 6.2 Suitability for placement at Kurli Murri required that the young person be on his first sentence term, that the sentence be of sufficient duration, that the crime not involve violence, and that the young person and their family consent to the placement.⁸⁸
- 6.3 The camp was initially proposed as an American style ‘boot camp’, but soon moved away from ‘first generation boot camp’ precepts involving drills, humiliation and harsh discipline, towards a so-called ‘third generation boot camp’ process, offering work skills, therapeutic programs and the like.⁸⁹
- 6.4 In November 1995, the then Attorney General announced a review of Kurli Murri, to be conducted by retired Judge Kingsley Newman. In his Report, Judge Newman recommended closure of the camp, citing low referrals, the unusual co-locating of juveniles and adults, high cost, lack of suitable work or vocational training opportunities, and inadequate staff training.
- 6.5 Judge Newman’s Report was delivered in July 1996. State Cabinet moved swiftly and closed Kurli Murri in August 1996.

WALPOLE

January 1998 – ongoing

Capacity 12

Host: Albany/Pardelup Prisons

- 6.6 As discussed in Chapter 4, Walpole was the first adult custodial work camp in Western Australia, originally operated as a pilot camp. Taking over a disused Mains Roads camp, requiring only one officer, and accommodating no more than 12 prisoners, it has maintained near full occupancy from its inception. It has earned, and benefits from, strong community support.

87 Omaji P, *Critical issues in managing young offenders: A review of Western Australia’s recent initiatives* (June 1997).

88 Ibid.

89 *Report of his Honour Kingsley Newman into the Kurli Murri work camp, Laverton, Western Australia and the management of young offenders* (July 1996).

HISTORY OF WORK CAMPS

BADGINGARRA

January 1999 – 2000

Capacity 12

Host: Wooroloo/Greenough Prisons

- 6.7 The Badgingarra work camp, situated some 200 km north of Perth, was the second pilot camp. It occupied the old Warramia Group Home, a 4,000 acre farming property owned by the Department. The Badgingarra camp was hosted by Wooroloo Prison Farm in 1999 and 2000, at which time management was transferred to Greenough Regional Prison.
- 6.8 This Office's inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm in 2002 reported community dissatisfaction with that change.⁹⁰ Despite a recommendation⁹¹ in that Report that Badgingarra be re-opened, the camp was closed soon after. Responsibility for care and maintenance of the camp returned to Wooroloo until its future could be determined. Badgingarra never reopened as a work camp, and the site was disposed of by government.

MILLSTREAM

January 2000 – February 2013

Capacity 8, and later 12

Host: Roebourne Regional Prison

- 6.9 As discussed in Chapter 4, Millstream work camp, located in the Millstream Chichester National Park, provided reparation, reintegration and training opportunities for prisoners from Roebourne Regional Prison, the majority of whom were Aboriginal. Although the majority of infrastructure costs at Millstream were covered by DEC, operational costs were high and the camp closed in February 2013. During its life, it had contributed labour to the equivalent of some \$1.5 million on work projects identified in cooperation with DEC rangers.

TOODYAY WOMEN'S WORK CAMP (AND GARDEN ISLAND)

February 2000 – September 2001

Capacity 8

Host: Nyandi Women's Prison

- 6.10 There has only ever been one work camp for female prisoners. It was established at Toodyay in early 2000 and lasted just over 18 months. Opened with strong support from the Shire of Toodyay, the camp occupied accommodation at the Wandoo Hills Educational Retreat, at a reported cost of \$18 per prisoner per day. The camp was originally scheduled to operate in conjunction with a second camp, at Garden Island. It was intended that Toodyay would function for two months of the year, and Garden Island for 10.

90 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm*, Report No. 17 (October 2002) 17.

91 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison*, Report No. 72 (June 2011) Recommendation 6 & 17.

- 6.11 In April 2000, negotiations to establish the camp at Garden Island had not progressed, Toodyay had exceeded its two month brief, and the owners of Wandoo Hills had decided to sell the facility. The Shire of Toodyay proposed construction of a purpose-built facility in return for guarantee of long-term occupancy. The Department declined that offer, stating that the rationale of work camps was to keep costs to a minimum.
- 6.12 By January 2001, occupancy of the Toodyay camp had fallen to four. In a report to the Attorney General in August of that year,⁹² the Department's work camp manager recommended closure of the camp, citing retraction of the Royal Australian Navy offer of Garden Island as a work camp site, substance abuse amongst prisoners at Toodyay, difficulty attracting suitable women to the camp as the location precluded ready visits, and the logistical issues around the five-day week, and the need to maintain beds at Nyandi for weekends.⁹³

WHEATBELT (KELLERBERRIN)

February 2000 – November 2011

Capacity 12

Host: Woorloo Prison Farm

- 6.13 The first Wheatbelt work camp, at Kellerberrin's old Iris Litis School, was opened in February 2000 with a capacity of 12 prisoners. A range of civic and land care projects in Merredin, Tammin, Wyalkatchem, Narembeen, Trayning and the host town were undertaken.
- 6.14 Community acceptance of the camp was strong across the district. Prisoner behaviour and the quality of work undertaken was praised. Prisoner labour to the equivalent of over \$1.5 million was acknowledged. However, few prisoners were from the Wheatbelt, and Aboriginal prisoners were in the minority. Access to accredited training was also limited by lack of capacity at the Kellerberrin TAFE.
- 6.15 Late in 2011, the camp moved to Wyalkatchem (capacity 12), before the new purpose-built facility was opened at Dowerin in February 2012 at a cost of \$7.8 million, and with a capacity of 20. The Dowerin camp is discussed in Chapter 5.

BUNGARUN

January 2001 – May 2011

Capacity 20

Host: Broome Regional Prison

- 6.16 The Bungarun work camp provided placement for minimum-security prisoners from Broome Regional Prison, the majority of whom were Aboriginal, and from the Kimberley. Accommodation was dormitory style, using part of the heritage-listed Old Derby Leprosarium. The site was leased by the Department from the Aboriginal Lands Trust under the auspices of the Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA).⁹⁴

92 Department of Corrective Services Work Camp Manager, *Review of Toodyay work camp performance 2001 and other work camp issues*, Briefing Note for Attorney General McGinty (3 August 2001).

93 *Ibid.*, 2.

94 Cant R, *Social Systems and Evaluation: Outcome evaluation of the operation of work camps* (September 2008) 60–62; and Department of Corrective Services A/Deputy Commissioner, *Bungarun work camp – current issues and options*, Briefing Note for Minister Porter (20 October 2010).

- 6.17 Prisoner employment projects focused on maintenance of the Old Leprosarium, although civic amenities in the township of Derby had received attention. Prisoners assisted the Derby Shire with tourist infrastructure, and preparation for and clean-up after major community events. Accredited training had been available through the Derby TAFE, but fluctuating numbers and the relatively short periods that prisoners typically remained at the camp had challenged TAFE course viability.⁹⁵
- 6.18 Occupancy of Bungarun camp fluctuated over the years. While the Department's 2008 evaluation of work camps found Bungarun 85per cent full,⁹⁶ an inspection of Broome Regional Prison by this Office in 2007 noted only 50per cent occupancy of Bungarun and Wyndham work camps.⁹⁷ The report of that inspection also included a recommendation, that:
- [T]he Department review the limitations placed on the eligibility of prisoners to be placed at a work camp and the current incentives and disincentives for prisoners towards filling all available work camp places.⁹⁸
- 6.19 Lease arrangements between the Department and the Aboriginal Lands Trust and DIA soured in 2010. Shortage of funds was said to have driven DIA to demand site upgrade and upfront rental costs in excess of previous agreements. Despite the acknowledged benefit to Kimberley prisoners, and in light of the new West Kimberley Regional Prison and Wyndham work camp builds, Department management recommended Bungarun be closed.⁹⁹

PARDELUP

February 2002 – February 2010

Capacity 20

Host: Albany and Karnet Prisons

- 6.20 Pardelup was originally established as a prison farm and penal outpost to Fremantle jail in 1927, and remains one of the oldest custodial facilities still operating in Western Australia. From 2002 to 2010 Pardelup operated as a work camp with a capacity of 20 prisoners. It became a prison again in 2010.
- 6.21 Pardelup work camp was managed by Albany Regional Prison until 2008, at which time control passed to Karnet Prison Farm. Pardelup was not subject to an inspection in its own right prior to it becoming a prison in 2010, but it was considered as part of three inspections of Albany Regional Prison.¹⁰⁰ The reports of these inspections found that Pardelup had functioned effectively with high prisoner satisfaction. Prisoner engagement in work projects in the nearby town of Mt Barker had encouraged skills development, and had developed positive community engagement, with appreciation for appropriately

95 Cant R, *Social Systems and Evaluation: Outcome evaluation of the operation of work camps* (September 2008) 60 & 66.

96 *Ibid.*, 63.

97 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Broome Regional Prison*, Report No. 46 (October 2007) 26–27.

98 *Ibid.*, Recommendation 17.

99 Department of Corrective Services A/Deputy Commissioner, *Bungarun work camp – current issues and options*, Briefing Note for Minister Porter (20 October 2010).

100 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Albany Regional Prison*, Report No. 18 (September 2003).

OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Albany Regional Prison*, Report No. 38 (November 2006).

OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Albany Regional Prison*, Report No. 60 (April 2009).

chosen work projects, quality and timeliness of work done, good prisoner behaviour and significant benefit to the community.¹⁰¹

- 6.22 Both the Department's Evaluation and this Office's inspection reports noted that few Noongar men had been transferred to the Pardelup work camp.¹⁰² That observation gave rise to a recommendation in the 2009 Albany inspection report that:

The Department implement a strategy ensuring a proportionate number of Noongar Aboriginals are placed in work camps.¹⁰³ The same report noted that infrastructure at Pardelup was in poor repair, to the extent that it provided a disincentive to prisoner applications for transfer.¹⁰⁴

- 6.23 In 2009 the Department commenced investment in appropriate refurbishments at Pardelup, permitting prisoner numbers to rise. In March 2010, Pardelup formally regained its status as a prison with capacity for 84 prisoners. It also assumed responsibility for the Walpole work camp, with capacity of 12 prisoners.

WYNDHAM

July 2002 – June 2011

Capacity 20

Host: Broome Regional Prison

- 6.24 The original Wyndham work camp opened in 2002. It served both to alleviate the crowded and degraded situation at Broome Regional Prison, and to provide a means whereby Aboriginal prisoners from the East Kimberley might be accommodated closer to their home communities. The camp was constructed on a budget of \$85,000, and comprised six vans and five skid-mounted dongas. A cyclone-proof shed served as a workshop and gym. Provision for visits was minimal.
- 6.25 Proximity to the township of Wyndham posed a security risk, with alcohol and female visitors found occasionally on-site. The frequency of unauthorised absences was above average, even for work camps. Conversely, location close to town had permitted prisoner involvement in community sport and recreation activities. Short, unaccredited skills training courses had been available, and suited the relatively short average periods of detention at the camp.
- 6.26 At the time of the announced inspection of Broome Regional Prison in 2005,¹⁰⁵ Wyndham camp could accept prisoners directly from the Wyndham Court and lockup, thereby avoiding arduous transportation to the distant Broome Regional Prison.¹⁰⁶ This provided a very intelligent and beneficial use of the camp. However, by the time of the 2007 inspection, that function had ceased due to complications around data entry onto TOMS.¹⁰⁷

101 Cant R, *Social Systems and Evaluation: Outcome evaluation of the operation of work camps* (September 2008) 104.

102 Ibid., 103; and OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Albany Regional Prison*, Report No. 60 (April 2009).

103 Ibid., Recommendation 7 & vii.

104 Ibid., iv

105 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Broome Regional Prison*, Report No. 27 (March 2005).

106 Ibid., 64.

107 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Broome Regional Prison*, Report No. 46 (October 2007) 26.

- 6.27 Both Wyndham and Bungarun work camps struggled over the years to maintain high occupancy, although both were at capacity in July 2010. At that time, planning for the new work camp at Wyndham was well under way. The original camp closed in June 2011, and operations moved to the new site.

MT MORGANS

October 2005 – July 2011

Capacity 24

Host: Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison

- 6.28 Following negotiations with the Shire of Laverton, the work camp at Mt Morgans opened in 2005. Buildings at a disused mining campsite were complemented by additional donga-style accommodation and ablution facilities, and an elaborate solar electrical array. In its report the following year,¹⁰⁸ this Office welcomed the camp as:

[A] positive addition to the custodial management alternatives in the Eastern Goldfields region.¹⁰⁹

Recommendation 13 of that Report observed, in part that:

The Department and EGRP management should continue to support the Mount Morgans work camp initiative.¹¹⁰

- 6.29 In its response to the report, the Department pledged continued support for the camp, noting the range of services provided to the Shires of Laverton and Leonora. The *Evaluation of work camps* document of 2008 similarly noted wide community support for the camp, and the variety and quality of civic services undertaken by prisoners.¹¹¹
- 6.30 By 2011, the Office had identified deficiencies in the operation of the camp, with a lack of accredited training, and too little by way of positive community work.¹¹² Occupancy of the camp had fallen, leading the Office to speculate that under the assessment and classification system in use at the time, appropriate minimum-security prisoners might not be found either for the Mt Morgans camp, or for the new camp at Warburton.¹¹³
- 6.31 By June 2011, the Department decided to close Mt Morgans as the new Warburton work camp was commissioned. The Shires of Laverton and Leonora were notified, giving rise to strenuous objection. Reassurances that mobile Section 95 activities might continue in those Shires were given. The Mt Morgans camp closed in July 2011, and staff transferred to the new camp at Warburton.

108 OICS, *Report of an Announce Inspection of Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison*, Report No. 34 (June 2006).

109 Ibid.

110 Ibid., 33.

111 Cant R, *Social Systems and Evaluation: Outcome evaluation of the operation of work camps* (September 2008) 104.

112 OICS, *Report of an Announce Inspection of Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison*, Report No. 72 (June 2011) vi.

113 Ibid., vii.

- 6.32 Dispute arose between the Shire of Laverton and the Department concerning relocation of the elaborate solar electricity array at the camp, with the Shire assuming vacant possession. That dispute was still ongoing at the time of this inspection.

WHEATBELT (WYALKATCHEM)

November 2011 – January 2012

Capacity 12

Host: Wooroloo Prison Farm

- 6.33 The Wyalkatchem work camp operated briefly between November 2011 and January 2012. The Department had agreed to vacate the Kellerberrin work camp site at the old Iris Litis School in October 2011, and as the new Dowerin work camp was incomplete, interim accommodation was required.
- 6.34 Accommodation at Wyalkatchem was in the old railway workers' barracks. Rooms for the 12 prisoners were spacious, with separate kitchen, dining room and storage areas. Ablutions facilities comprised a laundry room, two showers and a small toilet block. The camp was surrounded by cyclone fencing. Recreation space at the camp was more restricted than at Kellerberrin, but prisoners were permitted to access the town bowls and tennis club facilities, and the town oval. A small outdoor visits area was provided. Prisoners reported a preference for Wyalkatchem work camp over Wooroloo Prison Farm. Work projects included refitting of kitchens at the Wyalkatchem Retirement Village, and skilled prisoners provided informal training to their fellows.
- 6.35 When the new Dowerin work camp opened in February 2012, the Wyalkatchem camp was closed.

Chapter 7

WORK CAMPS ACROSS THE CUSTODIAL ESTATE

WORK CAMPS AND THE WOMEN'S ESTATE

- 7.1 Service delivery to women in the Western Australian custodial estate has consistently been below standard.¹¹⁴ Despite Departmental policy documents identifying the particular needs of female prisoners,¹¹⁵ the progression of women through the system has been hindered by constraints to infrastructure,¹¹⁶ inappropriate security classification¹¹⁷ and restrictions on program delivery.¹¹⁸ Aboriginal women in particular have struggled, competing for access to regional prisons close to family and community.¹¹⁹
- 7.2 Equitable progression through the custodial system to minimum-security, Section 95, work release and work camp placement is not currently possible for women. The December 2012 review by this Office looking at the flow of prisoners to minimum-security, Section 95 and work camps raised two particular aspects of concern about women's position in the system:¹²⁰
- Firstly, the disadvantaged position of many women who manage to attain minimum-security status and their access to services and opportunities, and
 - Secondly, the low number of Aboriginal women rated minimum-security. Of particular concern was the disparity between the percentages of non-Aboriginal women attaining minimum rating (54%) compared to Aboriginal women (27%).¹²¹
- 7.3 The review report highlighted the impact of women being accommodated in over-secure facilities. In 2009 maximum-security Bandyup Women's Prison held the same number of maximum-security rated women as it did minimum rated. This had worsened by 2012, with the facility holding 3.5 times more minimum-security women than maximum-security.¹²² At the time of the March 2014 inspection, only seven per cent of women were rated maximum and 23 per cent were minimum.¹²³ Prisoners were also not able (and remain unable) to access any external section 95 activities regardless of their status. Another review by this Office also found that prisoners held in over-secure facilities were more likely to be involved in assaults on staff, and therefore further negatively impact on their opportunities within the system.¹²⁴
- 7.4 The benefits of access to work camps in terms of rehabilitation, restitution, work skilling and resocialisation opportunities prior to release are widely recognised and not in dispute. Despite this, women do not have the same opportunity as men to access this type of facility or service – the places available are limited in number and location, or, in regards to camps, simply do not exist.

114 Examples of findings in this regard can be found in: OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Bandyup Women's Prison*, Report No. 93 (October 2014); OICS, *Female Prisons in Western Australia and the Greenough Women's Precinct*, Report No. 91 (July 2014); OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Broome Regional Prison*, Report No. 6 (June 2001) 6; and OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Bandyup Women's Prison*, Report No. 13 (June 2002).

115 DCS, *Female Prisoners' Plan 2012-2022*, Executive Summary, 3.

116 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison*, Report No. 70 (February 2011) 27.

117 OICS, *The Flow of Prisoners to Minimum Security, Section 95 and Work Camps in Western Australia* (December 2012) 2.

118 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Bandyup Women's Prison*, Report No. 73 (August 2011) 35–36.

119 *Ibid.*, 1, 4.

120 OICS, *The Flow of Prisoners to Minimum Security, Section 95 and Work Camps in Western Australia* (December 2012) 3.

121 *Ibid.*, 7.

122 *Ibid.*, 9.

123 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Bandyup Women's Prison*, Report No. 93 (October 2014) 24.

124 OICS, *Assaults on Staff in Western Australian Prisons* (September 2014).

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- 7.5 The DCS *Female Prisoners' Plan 2012-2022* ('the Plan') stated that the male work camp model was not suitable for female prisoners.¹²⁵ Much was made of the highly-regarded Boronia Pre-release Centre as an example of appropriate pre-release process, but the Plan noted that its limited capacity of 80 could only cater for 23 per cent of the sentenced female population (and even less now with the recent rapid increase in the female prisoner population).
- 7.6 From this Office's perspective, Boronia is also fundamentally limiting in that it requires women to be located in the Perth metropolitan area. Our 2012 review also found that only 39.7 per cent of women approved for section 95 activities had actually participated in any activities from Boronia during the review period.¹²⁶ So while the facility may be available, it was not being used in the way a work camp environment would. Positively, however, while still not universally being fully utilised, women in regional prisons were accessing the section 95 activities more frequently.¹²⁷
- 7.7 Opportunities to progress through appropriately tailored programs and interventions in purpose built facilities were discussed in the Plan in the context of the recognition that a female prison management philosophy was required. The substandard infrastructure and limited options for progression for women were acknowledged.
- 7.8 In this Office's view, while women may not benefit from the exact same type of facility as that available to men, a facility driven by similar outcome and employment-focused goals as the existing work camps should be considered.
- 7.9 The Plan reached the same conclusion. It proposed the development of a Metropolitan Women's Community Transition Centre and called for a research process to:
- [A]ssist in the development of an operational and functional brief to support the planning of a future concept development project.
- The development of a best practice glossary of terms and issues will provide an overview of the key issues that must be considered in planning for a Women's Community Transition Centre.¹²⁸
- 7.10 It does not appear that the Department has further refined this work to date. Timely completion of that research process and movement towards implementation would benefit female prisoners from metropolitan Perth. Further research into non-metropolitan transition centre options would benefit Aboriginal and other female prisoners from the regions. Over-specification of the requirements for access to female minimum-security facilities had been cautioned¹²⁹ as it would likely embed systemic disadvantage for Aboriginal women. Those women often carried such offending histories of violence and substance abuse which could hinder their progression towards a minimum-security rating.

125 DCS, *Female Prisoners Plan 2012-2022*, 33.

126 OICS, *The Flow of Prisoners to Minimum Security, Section 95 and Work Camps in Western Australia* (December 2012) 20–21.

127 Ibid.

128 DCS, *Female Prisoners Plan 2012-2022*, 33.

129 Baldry E, 'Women exiting prison: critical essays on gender, post release support and survival', Carlton B & Segrave M eds (2013) 98–116.

- 7.11 The closure of the Toodyay Women’s Work Camp should not be seen as a precedent precluding future female work camp development. It was not a well-structured project and when male camps were seen to have ‘failed’, new ones opened. Lessons can also be learned from inter-state. The Warwick women’s work camp in southern Queensland,¹³⁰ the Tarrengower Minimum-security Prison in rural Victoria,¹³¹ and the Emu Plains Correctional Centre near Sydney¹³² provide examples of successful transitional, minimum-security prisons for female prisoners.
- 7.12 Women rated minimum-security are profoundly disadvantaged in Western Australia in terms of access to services to assist in rehabilitation, reintegration and reparation to the community. There is a fundamental need to provide additional options for minimum-security women, not just in Perth but in regional areas as well. These options should include low-security facilities akin to the male work camps, but with a female-specific focus. Women, not just men, are capable of undertaking reparative work and paid employment (with mining companies and others) upon release.

WORK CAMPS AND THE JUVENILE ESTATE

- 7.13 Western Australia has a long history of providing for the detention of juveniles. Currently all juvenile detainees from the whole of the state, and of every age, gender and legal status, are held in one place: the maximum-security Banksia Hill Juvenile Detention Centre in Perth.
- 7.14 This has not always been so. Going back some years, before youth justice was the responsibility of the Department of Corrective Services and its precursors, there was greater diversity. Prior to the passage of the *Young Offenders Act 1994*, juveniles had been detained by the Department for Community Welfare, later the Department of Community Development. Secure confinement of juveniles was at Longmore Remand and Assessment Centre, Riverbank Detention Centre and Nyandi Prison, all in Perth. A number of rural institutions had also been used.

HILLSTON REFORMATORY AT STONEVILLE

1955 – 1984

On-site capacity 80 boys

- 7.15 Hillston was a medium-security detention facility in semi-rural surroundings north of Perth. It provided general and remedial schooling, agricultural training, trade skills development and recreation activities. The Department for Community Welfare statistical report for 1979 identified Hillston as:

An “open” reformatory for adolescent boys on a working farm property. Most boys attended a school on the property as well as doing practical work on the farm. While the age group of boys admitted to Hillston was variously described as “adolescent” or

130 Noordink S & Ward F, *Womens’ work camp custody program. Warwick Work Camp: why it works*, AIC/DCSSA (2000).

131 Operational capacity 72, with 15 self-contained units providing single room accommodation and shared kitchen and living areas in each unit.

132 Operational capacity 40 women and 16 children in the eight Jacaranda Cottages.

from 11 years, in fact younger boys (from nine years of age) were recorded as resident within the Hillston system – those younger boys generally being placed at Darlington Cottage.¹³³

- 7.16 In addition to the 80-bed capacity on-site, Hillston provided supervision of up to a further 300 juveniles under its community based support system. The residential program at Hillston closed in 1984.

WARRAMIA GROUP HOME AT BADGINGARRA

Capacity 10 boys

- 7.17 Warramia was a group home for troubled youth on a 4,000 acre property near Badgingarra owned by the Department for Community Welfare. Until 1982, selected boys to be discharged from Hillston would transfer to Warramia for skilling in rural pursuits. Hillston closed in 1984, but Warramia continued as an alternative to custody for youth serving the second third of a sentence of detention.
- 7.18 In 1989 Warramia was for a period the venue for a series of five week employment and self-esteem building programs. Ownership of Warramia was transferred to the Ministry of Justice in 1993. Following a high-profile escape, Warramia closed as a youth custodial facility, and later re-opened in 1999 as Badgingarra work camp, the second of the adult male work camps.

KURLI MURRI WORK CAMP

42 males admitted

27 completed

- 7.19 The short-lived Kurli Murri work camp near Laverton in the Northern Goldfields was established at considerable cost in 1995. After only eight months, the Attorney General called for a review of Kurli Murri, to be conducted by retired Judge Kingsley Newman. In his Report, Judge Newman recommended closure of the camp, citing low referrals, unusual co-locating of juveniles and adults, high cost, lack of suitable work or vocational training opportunities, and inadequate staff training.
- 7.20 Despite the failure of the Kurli Murri work camp, the Department would do well to re-consider minimum-security and work camp-style detention for juveniles, particularly for Aboriginal youth from the regions. Lessons learned from circumstances preceding the disturbance at Banksia Hill¹³⁴ should give impetus to fresh analysis of a wider range of juvenile detention options than have hitherto been considered.

133 DCD website <<http://signposts.cpfs.wa.gov.au/facilities/view.aspx?id=182>> Accessed May 2013.

134 On the evening of Sunday 20 January 2013, a serious incident of mass disorder erupted at the Banksia Hill Juvenile Detention Centre. The then Minister for Corrective Services directed the Office to undertake a review of the incident. See OICS, *Directed Review into an Incident at Banksia Hill Detention Centre on 20 January 2013*, Report No. 85 (July 2013).

Chapter 8

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 From 1998 until 2011, work camps in Western Australia had provided cost effective rehabilitation, restitution and re-socialising opportunities to prisoners approaching release. Camps occupied existing facilities, so there were few capital costs. Operational costs also appear to have been low.
- 8.2 Between June 2009 and June 2010, work camp occupancy averaged 92 per cent. Aboriginal male prisoners, for whom both the Department and the Office had particularly recommended work camp placement, had been consistently and appropriately well-represented at most camps.
- 8.3 As early as 2001, this Office had recommended increased investment in work camps.¹³⁵ Prior to 2011, despite the good occupancy rates and the positive opportunities presented by the existing work camps, built infrastructure was often below acceptable standards. Access to training, particularly certificated courses, was limited, and varied, meaningful work projects were not always provided. Work camp placements for female prisoners had not been available since 2001 and juveniles have not had access to facilities other than maximum-security detention centres in Perth.
- 8.4 In 2011, the Department embarked on a substantial program of investment in work camp infrastructure. Architects were engaged to develop culturally appropriate and site-responsive designs. Building modules were constructed off-site and new work camps have been established at Wyndham, Warburton, Dowerin and Roebourne.
- 8.5 Build quality of the new camps is high, with accommodation, amenities and workshops all fit for purpose and anticipating a 20-year lifespan. The communities of Wyndham, Warburton, Dowerin and Roebourne have been welcoming, having competed with other towns for the privilege of hosting the camps.
- 8.6 While Royalties for Regions part-funded the new camp at Roebourne, the other three new work camps cost the Department in excess of \$25 million combined. Compounding the high build costs, the Department faced high operational costs, with larger capacity camps requiring Senior Officers in addition to work camp officers. The remote location of Warburton necessitated fly-in-fly-out rostered staffing, with associated costs.
- 8.7 The new camps differed in their fill rate and ability to sustain prisoner populations. After a year of operation, Wyndham had reached 50 per cent of capacity, limited by staffing constraints. Warburton, after initially achieving a capacity of above 70 per cent for four months, fell back below 50 per cent. Dowerin reached capacity after four months, and stayed near-full thereafter. Roebourne moved quickly to 50 per cent occupancy after opening, and maintained that level until the end of 2014.
- 8.8 The modified assessment and classification instrument implemented by the Department in mid-2009 has had a significant impact on the ability of the system to provide adequate prisoner numbers for camps, especially male Aboriginal prisoners. While boosting non-Aboriginal progression through the maximum- and medium-security classifications, the assessment reduced the proportion of Aboriginal prisoners reaching minimum status. Attaining minimum status is a fundamental precondition for accessing work camps.

135 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Broome Regional Prison*, Report No. 6 (June 2001) 7.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.9 With the roll-out of the new purpose-built work camps, the Department announced that it would provide a wider range of services than hitherto, with on-site training and vocational skilling delivered by qualified work camp officers. This is not yet happening at all sites, though Roebourne is showing significant innovation. It is also not yet clear if the new Executive Team intends to continue this new emphasis at all its camps. However, providing greater access to training and practical work experience, and allowing prisoners to ‘ease back’ into their home communities, are practices that would accord with the Department’s strategic objectives of reducing recidivism and enhancing community safety.
- 8.10 In summary, there are many positive lessons to be learned from experience in this state and elsewhere with respect to work camps. As the Minister for Corrective Services said when opening the new Roebourne Work camp, such camps can be a ‘great result’ for the community, for prisoner rehabilitation, and for the taxpayer.
- 8.11 For over a decade, however, the focus has been exclusively on men. Drawing on its experience, both of what has worked and what has not worked, the Department now needs to maximise the use of its existing assets, to develop and fund similar initiatives designed to meet the specific needs of women and juveniles; and to continue to expand work camps for men in appropriate locations. The following recommendations are made to the Department and the government:

Recommendation 1

Commence the development of work camps and other minimum-security facilities, with a focus on reparation, skill development and rehabilitation, for female prisoners and juvenile detainees.

Recommendation 2

Continue to invest in work camps for male prisoners in appropriate locations, including the option of a work camp in the south west that aims to better meet the needs of Noongar Aboriginal men.

Recommendation 3

Review the assessment and classification system with a view to better understanding why, since 2009, it has impacted negatively on Aboriginal prisoners, and to increasing the number of prisoners who reach minimum-security status and are considered suitable for work camp placement.

Recommendation 4

Develop the skills and qualifications of work camp officers to facilitate the delivery of accredited on-the-job training to work camp prisoner

Appendix 1

DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSE TO THE 2014 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Acceptance Level/Response
<p>1. Commence the development of work camps and other minimum-security facilities, with a focus on reparation, skill development and rehabilitation, for female prisoners and juvenile detainees.</p>	<p>Supported in Part</p> <p>The Department recognises the need to ensure that work camps and other facilities offer an appropriate range of training and vocational skills for different population groups to assist with successful community re-integration. The Department has therefore developed new programs of work to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• address the needs of specific offender cohorts and to inform future asset requirements;• ensure that models of service delivery meet the individual needs of young people, informed by new program evaluation tools; and• build an integrated and individualised approach to case management (IICM) to ensure that offender interventions are personalised and targeted to their rehabilitation needs. <p>These initiatives are outlined in the Department's Strategic Plan.</p> <p>The Department is also developing a new capital works program to maximise the use of its existing infrastructure and provide for projected growth requirements, including options to address pressures in the women's estate.</p>

DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSE TO THE 2014 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Acceptance Level/Response
<p>2. Continue to invest in work camps for male prisoners in appropriate locations, including the option of a work camp in the south west that aims to better meet the needs of Noongar Aboriginal men.</p>	<p>Supported in Part</p> <p>Albany Regional Prison, Bunbury Regional Prison, Pardelup Prison Farm and Walpole Work Camp are situated in the south west area. They are intended to meet the needs of male prisoners, including Noongar Aboriginal men.</p> <p>A number of issues affect decisions on investment in further work camps in the south west including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • declining occupancy rates; • access to placements based on security classification; • understanding and addressing the needs of specific offender cohorts; and • the build cost associated with new purpose built work camps. <p>Noting the above, the Department is committed to developing a strategic asset framework that encompasses different offender needs and to inform asset requirements.</p> <p>The Department is also looking for assurance that work camps will continue to offer an appropriate range of training and vocational skills to assist with successful community re-integration. Because of this, the Department is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engaging Aboriginal people to help develop targeted initiatives that produce better outcomes for Aboriginal offenders; and • reviewing rehabilitation and reintegration services to ensure they are targeted to criminogenic need and provide evidence based rehabilitation results.

DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSE TO THE 2014 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Acceptance Level/Response
<p>3. Review the assessment and classification system with a view to better understanding why, since 2009, it has impacted negatively on Aboriginal prisoners, and to increasing the number of prisoners who reach minimum-security status and are considered suitable for work camp placement.</p>	<p>Supported in Part</p> <p>The Department’s modified Security Assessment and Classification Instrument came into effect in 2009. Attaining minimum status is a fundamental precondition for accessing prison work camps.</p> <p>The Department is now reviewing the modified Assessment and Classification system as part of a broader offender management focus on safety, rehabilitation, reintegration, and reductions in offending. This review is expected to be completed by the end of June 2015.</p> <p>A Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group has also been established to develop an action plan that focuses on providing culturally relevant initiatives that will reduce aboriginal over-representation and high recidivism rates in the justice system. The Department is engaging with Aboriginal people to help develop these initiatives and expects a targeted plan to be prepared toward the middle of 2015.</p>
<p>4. Develop the skills and qualifications of work camp officers to facilitate the delivery of accredited on-the-job training to work camp prisoners.</p>	<p>Supported in Part</p> <p>Workplace Trainer and Assessor accreditation is a desirable criteria on the Work Camp Officer Job Description Form.</p> <p>The Department is introducing a new human resources system focused on recruitment and training to ensure that it has the Right Structure, Right People – Trained Right.</p> <p>Training for Corrections Officers is delivered by the Department’s Training Academy. The Department will be examining and revising the Training Academy’s model of training to ensure that it aligns with the Department’s vision, mission and key deliverables. A key focus will be the establishment of Workforce Plans for prison officers to ensure it has the right number of work ready staff now and into the future.</p>

Appendix 2

THE INSPECTION TEAM

Professor Neil Morgan	Inspector of Custodial Services
Charles Staples	Inspections & Research Officer
Amanda Coghlan	Inspections & Research Officer
Matt Merefield	Inspections & Research Officer
Cliff Holdom	Inspections & Research Officer

Appendix 3

KEY DATES

Formal notification of announced inspection	26 September 2012
Start of on-site phase	1 November 2012
Completion of on-site phase	21 February 2013
Draft Report sent to the Department of Corrective Services	15 December 2014
Draft report returned by the Department of Corrective Services	27 January 2015
Declaration of Prepared Report	24 February 2015



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*Inspection of prisons, court custody centres, prescribed lock-ups,
juvenile detention centres and review of custodial services in Western Australia.*



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