



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR
OF CUSTODIAL SERVICES

Media release

Report 125: 2018 Inspection of Post-Incident Management of Prisoners at Greenough Regional Prison

Embargoed until 10:00 AM on Friday 20 December 2019

The latest report from the Inspector of Custodial Services reveals that Greenough Regional Prison is still recovering from the riot of July 2018.

It also highlights the extremely difficult balance faced during the recovery from such events between safety, security and the needs and wellbeing of staff and the prisoners in their care.

Inspector Eamon Ryan said the report released today follows the days, weeks, and months after the riot, and the complex issues and circumstances faced by the Department, staff and prisoners.

'What became clear was that all involved were deeply affected by the events in July 2018,' Mr Ryan said.

'Today's report reflects what we saw and heard and what the evidence told us. Some may interpret this as criticism, or wisdom with the benefit of hindsight, but this is not our intention. Our focus was on how better planning and preparedness can make post-incident recovery more structured, efficient and effective for all involved.'

The Department has accepted 4 of the 5 recommendations in our report. Importantly, they acknowledged the need for structured post-incident planning and intend to develop a structured prison centric post-incident recovery plan for prisoners and staff.

Mr Ryan said that it was clear that while restrictions on prisoner conditions and treatment were understandable and mostly unavoidable in the immediate aftermath of the event, this went on for too long and basic prisoner rights were denied. Ironically, the impact was felt most by those prisoners who chose not to be involved in the riotous events that night.

'In the immediate aftermath of the incident there may have been little that reasonably could have been done differently in terms of prisoner treatment, given the state of the prison, the police investigation, and the geographical context,' Mr Ryan said.



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'However, as the days became weeks and the weeks became months, there were unnecessary delays in the return to a normal regime. Our report highlights many examples, particularly for prisoners who remained at Greenough, all of whom were identified as NOT involved in the riot.'

'Ironically, male prisoners identified as either escapees or persons of interest as rioters, who were transferred from Greenough to Hakea, were subjected to a much shorter period of restricted regimes or lockdowns than those who remained at Greenough. This puzzled us and was inherently unfair.'

The report acknowledges the trauma experienced by staff and prisoners during the riot. It found that several good, ongoing supports had been put in place for staff to try help with emotional recovery. Support for prisoners, however, was not consistent, and we continue to hear stories from prisoners, particularly women, who are still traumatised by their experience.

At the time of writing, although significant progress has been made at Greenough to get the prison fully operational again, Units 2 and 3 are still not open.

Our most recent visit also revealed a continued reticence by some staff to having women back on site. This is countered by a strong and welcomed commitment from the Department to make significant improvements to the women's precinct to facilitate their return. We will continue to monitor progress as part of our ongoing liaison work with the prison.

Eamon Ryan
Inspector of Custodial Services

For further media information:

The Inspector, Mr Eamon Ryan, will be available for comment from 10:00 AM on Friday 20 December 2019 and can be contacted on 0421 480 925.