

## Media release

### Report 128: 2019 Inspection of Roebourne Regional Prison

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Embargoed until 12 noon on Tuesday 12 May 2020

Roebourne Regional Prison has shown considerable improvement over the past three years, providing a more positive and productive environment.

In releasing the most recent inspection report of Roebourne Prison today, Inspector of Custodial Services Eamon Ryan, said the change was an example of how positive leadership and willing staff can make an impact.

‘We saw noticeable signs of improvement in many aspects of the prison’s operations since our last inspection. Much of the credit rests with having a new stable management team who engage well with staff and prisoners; and a staff who have, mostly, followed that lead,’ Mr Ryan said.

Prisoners were overwhelmingly more positive about their experience of being at Roebourne than in the past, and recognised many areas of service delivery that had improved. Mr Ryan said the evidence from the inspection supported the prisoners’ views.

‘Staff from across the prison should be pleased with the results from their efforts to improve services, and feedback to us showed prisoners recognised those gains. Prisoner experience of better services particularly came through in recreation, orientation, primary health care, laundry, meals, and programs,’ Mr Ryan said.

Some work had been done on the aged buildings at the prison. Refurbishment of the prisoner accommodation areas had neared completion, and the conversion of the dining hall to an indoor recreation space gave prisoners a much-needed space to be active in the stifling weather conditions.

Disappointingly, however, the Department of Justice continued to reject recommendations to meaningfully address the health risks created by heat in cells, despite ongoing attempts by the Inspectorate to engage on the issue.

‘This is an ongoing issue that will not go away. While we acknowledge the incremental mitigation measures that have been undertaken to date, the reality is that the level of heat which builds up in cells is unacceptable, and a real risk to prisoners’ health and welfare,’ Mr Ryan said.

And while the overall findings of this inspection were positive, Mr Ryan noted several areas for continued improvement at Roebourne. These included:

- Urgent need to expand meaningful work activities for prisoners
- Need to improve security equipment available for screening visitors
- Stronger welfare arrangements to be in place for new arrivals
- More appropriate eating areas for male prisoners
- Improve access to phones and Skype
- Improve access to education and training for more prisoners
- Upgrades required to the male maximum-security and women's yards

Mr Ryan noted that the prison and Department had generally engaged positively about addressing these issues, and had already begun to do so in some cases.

Eamon Ryan  
**Inspector of Custodial Services**

For further media information:

The Inspector, Mr Eamon Ryan, will be available for comment from 12 noon on Tuesday 12 May 2020 and can be contacted on 0421 480 925.