



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR  
OF CUSTODIAL SERVICES

# 2021 INSPECTION OF WOOROLOO PRISON FARM

# 137

OCTOBER 2021

*Independent oversight  
that contributes to a more  
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## 2021 Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm

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# Contents

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## INSPECTOR'S OVERVIEW

Wooroloo continues to impress, but the challenge is to do better .....	iii
Executive summary .....	v
List of recommendations .....	ix
Fact page .....	xi
<b>1 INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Our previous inspections.....	1
1.3 A haphazard accommodation upgrade.....	2
1.4 Other challenges .....	4
1.5 Inspection process.....	5
<b>2 GOVERNANCE .....</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1 Leadership.....	6
2.2 Human resources.....	8
2.3 Staff culture and training.....	9
2.4 Infrastructure .....	10
2.5 Farm management.....	13
<b>3 DUTY OF CARE .....</b>	<b>14</b>
3.1 Reception.....	14
3.2 Orientation.....	14
3.3 Quality of life.....	15
3.4 Aboriginal prisoners .....	16
3.5 Foreign national prisoners.....	16
3.6 At-risk prisoners.....	18
3.7 Complaints and requests.....	18
<b>4 DAILY LIFE.....</b>	<b>19</b>
4.1 The structured day .....	19
4.2 Recreation and library.....	19
4.3 Visits.....	23
4.4 Religious services .....	26
4.5 Gratuities and spends.....	27
4.6 Accommodation.....	29
4.7 Food .....	31
4.8 Clothing and laundry .....	33

<b>5</b>	<b>HEALTH AND SUPPORT .....</b>	<b>34</b>
5.1	Health .....	34
5.2	Mental health and addiction .....	36
5.3	Prisoner support .....	37
<b>6</b>	<b>SECURITY AND BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT.....</b>	<b>39</b>
6.1	Procedural security.....	39
6.2	Relational security.....	40
6.3	Emergency management .....	40
6.4	Managing behaviour .....	41
<b>7</b>	<b>REHABILITATION AND REPARATION .....</b>	<b>43</b>
7.1	Assessments and sentence planning .....	43
7.2	Offender treatment programs.....	44
7.3	Education.....	45
7.4	Employment.....	47
7.5	Preparation for release.....	51
<b>8</b>	<b>DOWERIN WORK CAMP .....</b>	<b>55</b>
8.1	Life at Dowerin .....	55
8.2	Community relations .....	57
<b>APPENDIX 1</b>		
	Bibliography.....	58
<b>APPENDIX 2</b>		
	Abbreviations .....	59
<b>APPENDIX 3</b>		
	Department of Justice response .....	60
<b>APPENDIX 4</b>		
	Inspection details.....	71

# Inspector's Overview

## WOOROLOO CONTINUES TO IMPRESS, BUT THE CHALLENGE IS TO DO BETTER

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Wooroloo Prison Farm (Wooroloo) has set itself a vision to be Australia's leading re-entry prison providing innovative and sustainable rehabilitation, improved community safety, and setting aspirational standards for all. Similarly, one of the Department's fundamental goals is the rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners to prevent re-offending and thereby improve community safety. Given the right settings, both are lofty but ultimately achievable goals.

Minimum-security, re-entry prisons like Wooroloo play a key role in the rehabilitation of prisoners by developing their skills and capacity for post-prison life in ways that maximises the potential for them to break the cycle of recidivism. For this reason, there should be keen interest and investment in their success.

Wooroloo is a unique prison. It consists of many heritage listed buildings spread over quite expansive grounds that are all very well maintained. The accommodation units are not secured and apart from the external perimeter fence there are no internal barrier fences. Prisoners are given many privileges that are not permitted in most prisons, including greater freedom of movement for most parts of the day. For custodial officers this can be a daunting prospect at first, but many we spoke to said that although it was not without risk it was conducive to the overall goals of rehabilitation and reintegration.

We saw many positives during this inspection with strong and stable leadership and many areas performing very well. Health services at Wooroloo deserve mention. We are often critical of the health services we see in prisons, with issues around staffing, access to services and supports, or other inefficiencies impacting services for prisoners. But these were not critical issues at Wooroloo and, despite not having a substantive Clinical Nurse Manager, we saw a functional and positive health team. The health service generally provided a complete suite of services covering mental health and allied health services, including a regular dental service. This is proof of what is possible in a prison setting.

But it is fair to say that it was not all positives. We heard examples from some female staff of inappropriate behaviour by some of their male colleagues that would not be acceptable in any modern workplace. Both the prison Superintendent and the Department responded positively to these concerns and set out the steps that they would take to address these concerns. As we noted in our de-brief to all staff at the end of the inspection, the responsibility of response is not just a systemic one and it is incumbent on all staff to ensure that respectful relationships exist, and inappropriate behaviour is called out and those impacted by it are supported.

We heard concerns from many prisoners about the impact of COVID-19 restrictions placed on in-person social visit sessions, particularly from men with younger children who come to visit them. This was probably the biggest concern that men raised with us during the inspection. Pleasingly, these restrictions started to ease shortly after our inspection and the Department's response to our draft report indicated that visit sessions had almost returned to pre-COVID processes.

## WOOROLOO CONTINUES TO IMPRESS, BUT THE CHALLENGE IS TO DO BETTER

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We also heard that delays in the approval processes for external activities at Wooroloo were causing an impact. The farm and many workshops at Wooroloo are outside of the secure perimeter and prisoners require approval to work there. Also, other activities, such as reintegration leave and prisoner employment programs, require similar approvals. Shortly after our inspection we were told that many of the outstanding approvals had been received and the Department's response to our recommendations noted that these processes were under review.

We have also identified in our report opportunities for improvement in the therapeutic and voluntary programs that are made available to prisoners at Wooroloo. Addressing the rehabilitation needs of prisoners requires a combination of education, training and employment opportunities, that are supported by a range of programs aimed at reducing the drivers of offending behaviour. If Wooroloo and the Department are to meet the goals they have set for themselves then they must offer a comprehensive range of all these activities.

Finally, the Dowerin Work Camp continues to be an impressive facility that is very much appreciated by the men who are sent there and the local communities who benefit from the excellent work the men undertake in those communities.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We have two experienced Independent Prison Visitors who are community volunteers appointed by the Minister for Corrective Services. They attend Wooroloo on a regular basis providing an opportunity for the men to raise issues and feedback that information to our office. I acknowledge the importance of their work and thank them for the contribution they have made to our ongoing monitoring of Wooroloo.

It is important to also acknowledge the support and cooperation we received throughout the inspection from the Superintendent and staff at Wooroloo and from key personnel in the Department. The men who took the time to speak with us and share their perspective also deserve our acknowledgment and thanks.

Finally, I would like to thank the members of the inspection team for their expertise and hard work throughout the inspection. I would particularly acknowledge and thank Aaron Hardwick for his hard work in planning this inspection and as principal drafter of this report.

**Eamon Ryan**  
**Inspector of Custodial Services**

27 October 2021

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### INTRODUCTION

This was our seventh announced inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm (Wooroloo). The inspection took place during March and April 2021.

Wooroloo is a minimum-security prison, it is often a prisoner's last place of residence prior to release back into the community. Wooroloo also plays host to the Dowerin Work Camp (Dowerin). In recent years Wooroloo's population capacity has remained at 410 however, plans were in place to increase to 458. To assist with the population increase, Wooroloo was provided new demountable accommodation in Unit 1 however, due to a raft of design issues this was not yet open. The prison was therefore forced to re-purpose other infrastructure to provide increased accommodation. At the start of our inspection 357 prisoners were residing at Wooroloo, another 20 were at Dowerin.

Wooroloo had successfully overcome many challenges since our last inspection. These included industrial action, a major disturbance, COVID-19 and a near miss from a large bushfire.

### GOVERNANCE

We found Wooroloo had a stable leadership team in place. The Superintendent and many other senior management positions were substantively occupied, by experienced staff, providing consistency in leadership and direction. Wooroloo had an excellent strategic plan in place, with a clearly articulated vision.

Human resources at Wooroloo were working well, but manual processes were inefficient. This reflected what we had previously found at other sites across the Department.

We identified concerns regarding some inappropriate staff behaviours. Examples provided by some staff were disturbing to hear, but the prison leadership and Department responded positively and were taking steps to address these concerns.

Only two per cent of staff at Wooroloo identified as Aboriginal, compared to 13.8 per cent of the prisoner population.

### DUTY OF CARE

There were good processes in place within the reception centre for new arrivals and men being released. However, the location of the Multi-Purpose Centre (MPC) within this building occasionally presented staff with some issues in juggling different cohorts of prisoners.

Prisoners arriving at Wooroloo received a thorough orientation, where they were well supported by peer support. Unfortunately, we found that orientation interviews conducted by staff were not always undertaken in private, placing prisoner privacy at risk.

In our pre-inspection survey, 84 per cent of prisoners reported feeling safe at Wooroloo however, during our inspection we heard prisoners no longer felt trusted. This was disappointing to hear given Wooroloo's minimum-security status.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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At the time of our inspection only 13.8 per cent of the Wooroloo population were Aboriginal, which was low considering Aboriginal men comprised 39.7 per cent of the total population. Only a small number of these Aboriginal prisoners were residing in Wooroloo's privileged accommodation units.

Wooroloo had a high proportion of foreign-born prisoners. Many of these men were at risk of failing the character test and having their visas cancelled under Section 501 of the *Migration Act 1958* (Cth.) These prisoners were desperate for information and support through this process. We also found that non-English speaking prisoners were not being offered adequate access to formal interpretation services. Most interpretation was being carried out using peer prisoners as translators.

### DAILY LIFE

Wooroloo operated on an appropriate structured daily schedule. This included opportunity for prisoners to attend work, education, religious services, recreation and library. During our evening visit, we were impressed with the way Wooroloo came to life after dark, with a focus on scheduled sporting competitions and informal recreation and social activities.

COVID-19 restrictions on visits processes were very unpopular amongst prisoners. The restrictions in place were impacting on the bonds between fathers and their children. This was unfortunate, as the Wooroloo visits infrastructure offered impressive amenities. Visitors could no longer deposit money into prisoners' private cash accounts, meaning money orders were required, at great cost to the sender.

Prisoner satisfaction with the canteen had increased over our last two inspections. In 2021 this was 48 per cent, up from 12 per cent in 2015. Despite this we saw room for improvement, believing the canteen should be run to reflect a community retail experience, building important life skills in shopping to a budget.

Wooroloo continued to offer a range of accommodation options. Men were given the opportunity to progress through various units, achieving different levels of privilege and independence along the journey. Unit 2d, the old Superintendent's house had recently been retro-fitted to provide an impressive self-care accommodation space that rewarded good behaviour and built life skills.

### HEALTH AND SUPPORT

Although Wooroloo was struggling to substantially fill the Clinical Nurse Manager (CNM) position, health was a highlight during our inspection. The team was cohesive, positive and provided a good prisoner service. Men were receiving adequate access to a range of allied health services. Positively, we found the provision of dental services at Wooroloo was one of the best in the state.

An efficient booking system was in place, empowering prisoners to take responsibility for their own appointments. Prisoners could also be risk assessed for suitability to receive their medication in weekly blister packs.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Mental health and psychological health services were adequately staffed and providing good prisoner service. The prison had a diverse and proactive peer support team in place however, we were concerned that only one member of that team had completed Gatekeeper suicide prevention training.

### SECURITY AND BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

Our 2021 staff survey demonstrated officer confidence in the security team had increased significantly since our last inspection.

In 2015, after finding the gatehouse control room was not always staffed, or locked, we recommended that Wooroloo 'should ensure the control room is secured and staffed at all times'. This was supported by the Department (OICS, 2015, Recommendation 13. p.39). In 2021 although we found the control room constantly staffed, the door was deliberately left unlocked.

During our inspection we witnessed little improvement in the area of relational security, despite making a recommendation regarding this in 2018 (OICS, 2018, Recommendation 8). Consequently, we made a similar recommendation again this time.

We learnt that Wooroloo will no longer evacuate if an emergency develops, such as a bush fire. Instead, the prison will stay and fight. The prison was in the process of finalising a 'shelter in place policy', including a proposal for the installation of ember protection sprinkler systems fitted to designated safe refuges.

Wooroloo managed critical incidents competently and undertook effective reviews to identify learnings and improvements from these incidents.

### REHABILITATION AND REPARATION

Unmet treatment needs remained a concern for prisoners. In December 2020, there were 27 instances where prisoners had been assessed as needing a program which was unavailable due to excess demand or the program not being offered at Wooroloo. In some cases, the Department's assessment of a prisoner's treatment needs did not align with that of the Prisoner Review Board, impacting their ability to achieve parole.

Education at Wooroloo provided a good range of short courses however, there was confusion around what traineeships were being provided. The provision of these did not appear to be a priority for the Prison. We also noted a lack of digital literacy training for prisoners.

We found employment opportunities to be a mixed bag at Wooroloo. Traditional industries inside the fence employed many men, many of whom earned high level gratuities. However, employment within external industries was hampered by approval processes.

Prisoners and staff both expressed significant frustration over head office delays in the processing of applications for the Prisoner Employment Program (PEP) and Re-Integration Leave (RIL). These delays were holding back prisoners who were preparing for release.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### DOWERIN WORK CAMP

Dowerin remained a shining light. Senior management had done a great job in ensuring beds were filled. We found local communities to be supportive and appreciative of the work prisoners were undertaking. Due to COVID-19 prisoners had been restricted from working in the community for periods of time however, work camp staff had been proactive in keeping the men busy.

## LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

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### RECOMMENDATION 1

Wooroloo should take adequate steps to address staff behaviour issues to ensure that all staff are protected from any form of discrimination or intimidation.

### RECOMMENDATION 2

Safeguard prisoner privacy during orientation by conducting interviews in a private space.

### RECOMMENDATION 3

Increase the access to information and support for prisoners facing deportation due to visa cancellation.

### RECOMMENDATION 4

Offer prisoners being interviewed or attending appointments the opportunity to use an accredited interpreting service.

### RECOMMENDATION 5

At the earliest opportunity, and in line with WA health guidelines, restore social visits to pre COVID-19 conditions, frequency and duration.

### RECOMMENDATION 6

Adopt an electronic bank transfer system for visitors to deposit money into prisoners' private cash accounts.

### RECOMMENDATION 7

Recommence AA and NA at Wooroloo.

### RECOMMENDATION 8

Provide peer support prisoners training in Gatekeeper suicide prevention or a preferred alternative.

### RECOMMENDATION 9

Improve relational security practices through more active engagement between officers and prisoners.

### RECOMMENDATION 10

Increase support mechanisms for fathers to re-establish or maintain connection with their children.

### RECOMMENDATION 11

Review traineeship processes with a view to increasing the range and number provided.

### RECOMMENDATION 12

Provide digital literacy training for all prisoners to support post-prison transition.

## LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

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### RECOMMENDATION 13

The Department should empower local prison management to assess prisoners as suitable to work outside the secure prison perimeter, but on gazetted prison property. That assessment should be visible on the Departmental database.

### RECOMMENDATION 14

Develop and implement a system wide plan to focus on expanding prison industries.

### RECOMMENDATION 15

Expediate the time taken to approve PEP and RIL applications, or amend policy to allow applications to be made earlier.

## FACT PAGE

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### NAME OF FACILITY

Wooroloo Prison Farm.

### ROLE

Minimum-security prison for adult males operated by the Department of Justice.

### LOCATION

Wooroloo, 55 kilometres north-east of Perth.

The traditional owners of the land are the Noongar Whadjuk people.

### BRIEF HISTORY

Wooroloo was built in 1914 as a sanatorium for tuberculosis patients. In 1960 it was transformed into a district hospital which closed in 1970. It was converted to a minimum-security facility for adult male prisoners in 1972.

### WORK CAMP

Wooroloo is also host for the Dowerin Work Camp. This was officially opened in its new location in February 2012, after relocating from Kellerberrin.

### PREVIOUS INSPECTION

21 – 27 March 2018.

### CAPACITY

Accommodation	Capacity 2018	Capacity 2021	Population 28.03.2021
Unit 1	83	107	83
Unit 2	101	103	99
Unit 3	112	130	75
Unit 4	111	115	100
Multi-purpose cell	3	3	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>357</b>
Work Camp	20	20	20

# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 BACKGROUND

Many of the buildings at Wooroloo are listed on the State Register of Heritage places, they date back to 1914. Originally, Wooroloo opened as a tuberculosis sanatorium. In 1960 it was transformed into a district hospital, which closed in 1970. The Department of Corrective Services took over the site and first opened it as a minimum-security prison in 1972. Initially the facility was not enclosed, however, in 2007 construction of an external perimeter fence was completed. It has another unique feature, the accommodation units and individual cells are not secured with prisoners permitted to access ablution blocks located on the verandas of each unit.

Wooroloo performs a vital role within the state's prison estate. As a minimum-security prison farm, it is often a prisoner's last place of residence prior to release back into community. Therefore, the prison offers a range of rehabilitation and reintegration services, education and employment opportunities.

Wooroloo is also host facility for the Dowerin Work Camp. This was officially opened in its new location in February 2012, after relocating from Kellerberrin. Dowerin plays an integral role in developing important life and work skills for prisoners. It also offers an important avenue to reintegrate prisoners back into community, by providing services that benefit Wheatbelt communities.

### 1.2 OUR PREVIOUS INSPECTIONS

This is the seventh inspection of Wooroloo by the then Inspector of Custodial Services (the Office). We first inspected the facility in 2002. In 2006 the then Inspector declared Wooroloo as the 'best male adult prison in the state' (OICS, 2007, p.iii). Unfortunately, in the years following we observed steady decline in staff and prisoner relationships. Morale was low and the minimum-security feel of Wooroloo was lost. During our 2015 inspection we noted that Wooroloo had commenced some positive progress, however, was bound by population pressures.

We last inspected Wooroloo in 2018. At that time, Wooroloo had successfully utilised its heritage architecture to provide accommodation units that incentivised prisoners to progress through a hierarchy of accommodation, autonomy and privilege. Educational and transitional management were under pressure, but prisoners could access short courses, and essential documentation was available prior to release.

Freedom of movement inside the Wooroloo compound and the relaxed, family-friendly visits centre reinforced the minimum-security atmosphere of the prison. Further, prisoners assessed at the lowest security and risk level could progress to the Dowerin Work Camp. While at the work camp, prisoners helped Wooroloo retain its reputation for reparation in the form of civic works in Wheatbelt towns. The prison had been proactive in managing the work camp and keeping it full.

The senior management team was more stable and had driven positive change. Relationships between management and staff were stronger, and morale across the site had improved. Overall, the prison was travelling well.

## INTRODUCTION

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### 1.3 A HAPHAZARD ACCOMMODATION UPGRADE

In early 2017, the rising prisoner population was placing pressure on the Department's existing capacity. There was significant pressure on bed space in the male estate. Due to this, the Department undertook a priority project to add additional beds in the male estate. The aim of this project was to rapidly add 212 beds, to create some capacity and allow the Department time to build new units at Casuarina.

One of the short-term options the Department identified was the installation of transportable accommodation in Wooroloo, at the northern end of Unit 1. This would provide residence for an additional 48 men, increasing the prison's population from 410 to 458. Work was to commence in early 2018, for completion mid-2018.

The new infrastructure included 24 cells. Each of these would be double-up accommodation to fit the additional 48 men. Once on site, staff highlighted that the cells were too small for double-up accommodation, so Wooroloo management decided to limit them to single accommodation. Each cell was approximately 7.53 sqm. They only just complied with the 'Standard Guidelines for Prison Facilities in Australia and New Zealand 1990', and the 'Standard Guidelines for Corrections in Australia 2012', both of which specify minimum single cell size at 7.5 sqm. Double-up cells without ablutions should be 11.5 sqm. It was also noted that bunk-bedding was impossible because, at 2.3 m high, the ceiling fans were too low. By comparison, the original Unit 1 cells were 11.44 sqm, with a ceiling height of 3.39 m and a fan height of 3.03 m.

The six new cell blocks were configured in two groups, facing uphill to the perimeter fence. A single dayroom closed the square for one group of cell blocks. The dayroom was small, just 13 sqm, reduced by a kitchenette at one end. Staff expected that prisoners would be served meals at the dayroom but would have to return to their cells to eat. We expect that the dayroom may be too small even for serving meals. Each of the two groups of cell blocks had an ablution facility, with just two toilets and two showers.



**Photo 1: New transportable accommodation unit**

## INTRODUCTION

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**Photo 2: Outdoor kitchenette installed in Unit 2 and Unit 3**

As the prison was required to take 48 extra prisoners by February 2019, 24 men had to be housed elsewhere in the prison. The management team identified areas in Unit 2 and Unit 3, where kitchens and dayrooms were converted back to cells and replaced with outdoor kitchens. Unfortunately, these outdoor kitchens have not been well received as they attract insects. Elsewhere, the old Superintendent's house was transformed into a self-care unit, accommodating eight men.

Meanwhile, work continued on the new Unit 1 accommodation. Verandas had been omitted and were being retrofitted at considerable cost. We were told these had been included in the original design, however later in a cost-cutting measure they had been deleted. Further work was also required to increase the prison's sewerage treatment capacity and allocate locks and cells on the Department's database system. Negotiations were ongoing to sign off a 458 Staffing Level Agreement (SLA) to enable the increase in numbers. This was completed in December 2020. Completion of the project was more than two years late.

At the time of our inspection in March 2021, the accommodation was still not in use, although it was acting as the prison's designated COVID-19 isolation unit. We are unsure exactly how and where the implementation of the new accommodation at Wooroloo had gone so wrong. It appeared that cost-cutting and design flaws may have been critical factors.



## INTRODUCTION

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### 1.4 OTHER CHALLENGES

Wooroloo has faced many other challenges in recent years. On 5 March 2020, officers at Wooroloo engaged in unannounced industrial action. Uniformed staff withdrew their labour for a period of 12 hours. This action was taken in response to the Department reinstating overtime controls, as well as a request for Wooroloo to increase their prisoner population by 10. Fortunately, the senior management team, with the assistance of public servant staff from other facilities were able to manage the day without major incident. Since this time, relations between the Western Australian Prison Officers Union (WAPOU) local branch and senior management have improved.

Shortly after the industrial action, the prison experienced a major disturbance. This occurred on the night of 11 March 2020. During the day, main network power was lost to the prison due to planned Western Power works. Unexpectedly the outage continued into the evening, with the prison initially settled and operating essential power only via an on-site generator. Shortly after dark, the generator ceased working and the prison was placed into total darkness. Prisoners at Wooroloo could not be locked in their cells and although many men remained compliant and, in their cells, some large groups of men had commenced roaming the prison grounds, lighting fires, barricading roads and throwing projectiles at staff who were conducting vehicle patrols. Additional staff, the Department's Special Operations Group (SOG), West Australian Police, St Johns Ambulance and Department of Fire and Emergency Services were deployed to assist at the prison. Western Power were able to restore power to the prison at midnight, at which point a team conducted a sweep of the prison and regained complete prisoner control. The incident was generally well managed by the Superintendent, supporting staff and services with no injuries or significant damage reported.

Like other prisons, Wooroloo had to remain flexible in its management of the challenges presented by COVID-19 throughout 2020 and 2021. Senior management placed strong focus on communication with staff and prisoners, providing continuous updates on changes to operations. Wooroloo is acting as the Department's state logistic hub for all personal protection equipment and sanitiser, distributing to all Department facilities state-wide. This equipment is stored in the prison's new stores shed.

On 1 February 2021 a rapidly moving bushfire started in Wooroloo. The fire coincided with a five-day lockdown of the Perth Metropolitan region due to a case of COVID-19 outside of hotel quarantine. In the early stages the fire was close to the prison's perimeter however, it moved quickly away from the prison into the Shires of Chittering and Northam. Utilising the prison's firefighting equipment, the prison's trained volunteer staff were part of the initial emergency response. Wooroloo management and staff handled the situation effectively and efficiently and have since utilised lessons learnt to implement new and improved processes.

## INTRODUCTION

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### 1.5 INSPECTION PROCESS

This inspection was only the second to be guided by the Office's Revised Code of Inspection Standards for Adult Custodial Services.

Our on-site inspection of Wooroloo commenced on 28 March 2021, it was conducted over five days. Members of our team also travelled out to the Dowerin Work Camp as part of the inspection. In the lead up to the inspection we distributed surveys to staff and prisoners and met with external organisations who deliver services inside the prison. This provided valuable insight and shaped our focus for the inspection. During the inspection our team met formally and informally with prisoners, staff and senior management in a range of individual and group settings. We also observed a variety of prison operations and procedures and inspected all areas of the prison.

Following the inspection, the Inspector presented preliminary findings to management and staff. A briefing was also provided to the Peer Support prisoner group by a member of the inspection team. A complete guide to our inspection team and timelines can be found in Appendix 3.

# Chapter 2

## GOVERNANCE

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### 2.1 LEADERSHIP

A stable senior management team was in place

Maintaining a stable senior management team is critical to the successful operations of a prison, and over recent years Wooroloo had benefited from this. The Superintendent has been at Wooroloo since 2014 and was appointed permanently to the role in 2017.

The Assistant Superintendent Operations had recently been appointed and the Assistant Superintendent Offender Services and Business Manager are experienced staff with many years in these roles. The Security Manager and Assistant Superintendent Risk and Safe Operations were filled by experienced staff on secondment.

The benefits of stability in the leadership group was evident during our inspection. Staff had a clear direction, knew where they stood and what was important, and what would and would not be tolerated.



**Photo 3: The administration building**

#### A clearly articulated strategic plan

Strategic plans are important in establishing direction, culture and operational philosophy for an organisation. We found Wooroloo had an excellent Strategic Business Plan 2020 – 2021. The plan had a clearly articulated vision statement:

To be Australia's leading re-entry prison excelling in the provision of innovative and sustainable rehabilitation for a safer community whilst setting standards for all to aspire to.

## GOVERNANCE

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Eight key areas were identified. Each of these contained numerous deliverables which were allocated to individuals or departments to implement. During our inspection it became apparent both staff and prisoners were aware of the prison's vision statement. This was a positive, although we did hear varying views as to whether Wooroloo was actually achieving its vision.

Wooroloo's business planning has been effective for some time. The focus and direction of what the prison is seeking to achieve had remained constant and appropriate for a minimum-security, re-entry prison farm. Some time ago we were advised the Department had established a 'Network Design Project', aimed at defining the operational philosophy, role and function for each of the prisons, along with the identification of supporting infrastructure and resourcing requirements. In 2020, that project was subsumed into a larger 'Prison Services Evaluation Project' to provide service reform options to operate WA's custodial estate. Although the outcomes are not yet finalised it would seem reasonable to assume that the role and function of Wooroloo would not change substantially in the future.

### **New terms of reference for the Aboriginal Services Committee**

Wooroloo has an Aboriginal Services Committee (ASC) which meets quarterly. The Department has recently revised the terms of reference for all ASC's to address perceived shortcomings and to implement one of the actions in the Department's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), which is to:

Maintain an Aboriginal Services Committee in each prison and detention centre to provide a focus on the appropriate management and delivery of services to Aboriginal prisoners and detainees.

Wooroloo was one of the trial sites for the new terms of reference. We were told that the adoption of these would require some cultural change and would take time. We will monitor progress of the ASC and look forward to the committee making a real difference to the outcomes for Aboriginal prisoners.

### **Good environmental sustainability initiatives, but opportunities for improvement exist**

A committee had been established within Wooroloo to consider recycling initiatives. Both cardboards and plastics were sent off site to recycling centres. The committee was also looking into arrangements for the prison to apply the container deposit scheme on site.

All garden waste was mulched and used in the prison gardens, providing benefits with respect to water use and contributing to the health and presentation of the gardens. Wooroloo did not purchase any plants for the garden as all were propagated on site. Bee hives have been introduced to supply honey and contribute to the pollination of plants.

Although these initiatives were good practice, there was little evidence of any other initiatives to save water or electricity. Accepting that initiatives in these areas may entail up-front costs, in the long term there is an opportunity to generate real savings and environmental sustainability.

## GOVERNANCE

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### 2.2 HUMAN RESOURCES

#### **Human resources were working well but processes were inefficient**

Human resources were working well at Wooroloo. The team was small, yet positive and generally appreciated by staff. However, the processes used in human resources were highly transactional and manual, meaning they were labour intensive and inefficient. This issue is not isolated to Wooroloo, we have reported it across the Department in many previous reports.

Sign on sheets were collected daily from the gatehouse, rosters had to be drawn up, shift swaps, leave applications and overtime had to be processed. Our office understands the Department is in the process of procuring a new electronic rostering system which will assist in automating some of these processes. But systems rarely deliver all the solutions and it is likely that changes to processes and practice will also be required.

#### **The new staffing level agreement had been finalised**

It was positive to find that the Staffing Level Agreement (SLA) for 458 prisoners at Wooroloo was finally signed in December 2020. At the time of our inspection Wooroloo was in a transitional phase, recruiting the additional staff required and rewriting its rosters to facilitate these additional staff. While this was occurring, Wooroloo continued to operate at a maximum capacity of 410 however, prisoner numbers remained well below this. Having the SLA approved in advance automatically facilitates the increased staffing numbers when prisoner numbers do increase. This will result in a reduced reliance on overtime to fill the additional roster lines created.

A major positive of the new SLA is the six full-time equivalent positions (FTE) identified for Vocational Support Officer (VSO) relief. VSO's hold a critical role in prison staffing models as they are largely responsible for the areas where prisoners work. However, when there are officer shortages in the units, these positions are prioritised, and VSO's are redeployed. This process impacts the amount of work and training prisoners partake in daily, and their ability to learn vital new skills. The allocation of a VSO relief component should assist with valuable relief to cover vacancies and leave, while also reducing the frequency of VSO redeployment.

#### **The prison would benefit from a greater diversity in its workforce**

The prison would benefit from the employment of more Aboriginal officers. This can be difficult to achieve as vacancies are often filled through the internal transfer process in the first instance. At the time of our inspection, 14 per cent of the prisoner population were Aboriginal, yet only two per cent of staff identified as Aboriginal.

The Department's RAP contains targets in relation to Aboriginal employment. One of the deliverables is to achieve a five per cent Aboriginal employment rate by June 2021. While we acknowledge this is a whole of Department goal, it would be positive if these rates were achieved in prisons who are delivering front line services to Aboriginal people.

## GOVERNANCE

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The Aboriginal staff at Wooroloo were highly valued, with prisoners telling us that they would often seek out these staff for cultural assistance and support. We believe the presence of more Aboriginal staff would be beneficial in building stronger relationships between the staff and prisoner groups.

### 2.3 STAFF CULTURE AND TRAINING

#### Some staff relations were concerning

Our staff survey results identified some concerning statistics which were supported by information we received from some staff about inappropriate staff behaviour. The survey included the following question: 'How often do you think the following occurs in this prison?' For staff to staff relationships, our staff survey results showed that:

- 4 per cent said sexual abuse sometimes occurred.
- 14 per cent said physical abuse sometimes occurred.
- 44 per cent said racial remarks sometimes occurred and two per cent said it often occurred.
- 51 per cent said other verbal abuse sometimes occurred and five per cent said it often occurred.
- 56 per cent said bullying sometimes occurred and 17 per cent said it often occurred.

Our survey was completed by 36 per cent of all staff at Wooroloo, which we felt was a large enough sample to warrant concern about what staff perceived had been occurring.

A group of female staff provided us with disturbing examples of inappropriate sexualised comments from some male staff. These were distressing to hear. Regardless of whether there is ill will or malice intended, there is no excuse for any form of inappropriate or abusive behaviour. It has negative impacts on the efficient operation of the prison and a profound impact on individuals who are the target of such behaviour. When we raised these concerns with the Superintendent, we received a very supportive response that such behaviour was not acceptable and would not be tolerated.

We were also pleased to see the Equal Opportunity Commission, in conjunction with the Department, had delivered sexual harassment training to all staff during the week we were on site. It is incumbent on the Prison to address these issues and create a safe environment for staff, free from any form of discrimination or intimidation.

#### **Recommendation 1**

**Wooroloo should take adequate steps to address staff behaviour issues to ensure that all staff are protected from any form of discrimination or intimidation.**

#### Staff training was well-provided

It is vital that prison officer competencies in critical skills are maintained, particularly those skills that involve a response to emergency situations.

## GOVERNANCE

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Wooroloo had one full time Senior Officer Training, who was supported by on shift trainers. The prison experienced a dip in training statistics in the middle of 2020 due to COVID-19. However, as at December 2020 the average completion rate for critical skills training was 85 per cent. Training in cell extraction, CPR refresher and first aid did, however, remain below 80 per cent.

Training was delivered to officers every Thursday morning, utilising the staff gymnasium, visits centre or Senior Officer Training's office. Positively, the prison had also delivered training at other times using their allocated overtime shifts, when they were unused. This was a good use of available time and enabled more focused training for officers who were less confident or competent. We were told that there was strong support from senior management for training at Wooroloo.

### Concerns over online training delivery of COPPs

Officers had recently been required to undertake online training on the new Commissioner's Operating Policy and Procedures (COPPs). Officers undertook this training at their own pace, while on shift. At the end of each module we were told they must acknowledge that they have read and understood the new COPPs.

Wooroloo had excellent completion rates for training in the new COPPs. As at the end of November 2020, the completion rate on most COPPs was above 85 per cent. Many of the COPPs reflect existing policy and practice however, some such as use of force and searching had introduced new concepts. It is essential that officers are familiar with relevant policy and practice to safely and competently undertake their work. Officers told us that, including the hyperlinks in the documents, some of the new COPPs ran into hundreds of pages. They said that they felt overwhelmed by the expectation to acknowledge having read and understood the new COPP and all the hyperlinked text. This brings into question the extent to which the Department may be able to rely on the acknowledgement at the end of each module, advising that officers have actually read and understood the document.

## 2.4 INFRASTRUCTURE

### Old buildings and manicured gardens

Many of the buildings at Wooroloo are over 100 years old and heritage listed. This often makes any maintenance or additional construction not only difficult but expensive.

At the time of the inspection the buildings and grounds were very well presented. While preserving their old heritage appearance the buildings were well maintained, as were the gardens around the administration and residential areas. Landscaped tiered gardens with good use of natural bush and areas of lawn provided a relaxed environment and ease of access around the heavily sloping site.

However, we were told that vehicles were unable to drive around the outside of the perimeter safely, due to undergrowth and washouts providing obstacles. Photos four to seven are lovely examples of Wooroloo's manicured gardens.



## GOVERNANCE

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**Photo 4**



**Photo 5**



## GOVERNANCE

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**Photo 6**



**Photo 7**

## GOVERNANCE

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### 2.5 FARM MANAGEMENT

#### Wooroloo had a clear Farm Action Plan

Wooroloo had a 'Farm Action Plan 2020 – 2021'. The plan articulated the role of the prison farm, which was to:

Support the public prisons through the offset of prison costs with the production of prime lambs, wool and hay. To also maximise the opportunities for prisoners to get a realistic work experience where they can gain employability skills and accredited training to enhance their employment opportunities on release.

The plan outlined production targets and projected income, which was factored into the budgeting process. There was a paddock plan outlining paddock management for the next 12 months. This appeared to be good practice and was consistent with environmental sustainability processes. We were told that it ensured no paddock was overutilised for any particular purpose, which may reduce its productivity.

In 2020, with the assistance of Prison Industries, the prison had contracted in a machine which was able to break up cap rock. This had enabled the prison to turn land that was previously not able to be cropped into land that was now productive. This was an excellent initiative and one the prison hoped to repeat in coming years.

# Chapter 3

## DUTY OF CARE

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### 3.1 RECEPTION

#### **The reception space and processes were well organised**

During previous inspections we found that Wooroloo's purpose-built reception building was open, spacious, and one of the best facilities of its kind in the state (OICS, 2009, p. 31) (OICS, 2018, p. 21). This was still the case at this inspection. The space was tidy, well organised, and provided a relaxed and non-threatening environment for new prisoners.

There were good processes in place for the arrival of new prisoners and men being released. Prisoner movements in and out of Wooroloo were mostly planned and controlled, so everything could be prepared up to a fortnight in advance – for example, paperwork, property and discharge money. Reception, movements, cashier and gate staff all worked well together to cover the various responsibilities associated with transferring and discharging prisoners.

Prisoner property was appropriately stored. Valuable property which was stored was well organised, secure and subject to regular audits. Systems were in place to allow discharged men to claim their confiscated property and for disposal of unclaimed property. There was also a large range of good quality civilian clothing available for the benefit of men attending court, funerals or being released.

#### **But reception was impacted by the operations of the multi-purpose centre**

Wooroloo's Multi-Purpose Centre (MPC) was in the same building as reception. The three multi-purpose cells were managed by the Senior Officer from Unit 1, although reception staff assisted with minor daily tasks, such as providing breakfast. Each morning up to 12 men are randomly selected to attend the MPC for urine testing. Their arrival coincides with prisoners arriving at reception for discharge and the area becomes busy with movements of both groups. Reception staff are used to managing this but there are still some risks when discharging prisoners' property which is taken out of storage. The problem was worse when drug prevalence testing occurred, which involved more prisoners moving through the reception area. Creating a separate entrance for the MPC would minimise these risks.

### 3.2 ORIENTATION

#### **Prisoner privacy was compromised during orientation**

In 2018 we found that orientation interviews in Unit 3 were not conducted in private. Unfortunately, this has not changed. Officers were not happy these were occurring in an open office space, often in front of other new prisoners.

Despite this, good orientation processes were in place and being followed. Nominated peer support prisoners met new prisoners at reception, escorted them to the designated orientation accommodation in Unit 3 and conducted orientation tours of the prison. The 32-page orientation booklet was comprehensive, although some men with poor literacy may find it overwhelming. An introductory video would assist prisoners to absorb more information.

## DUTY OF CARE

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### **Recommendation 2**

Safeguard prisoner privacy during orientation by conducting interviews in a private space.

### 3.3 QUALITY OF LIFE

#### **Prisoners rated their quality of life at Wooroloo as average, but felt safe**

In our pre-inspection survey, we included a question asking men to rate their quality of life at Wooroloo. A score of 1 is low and a score of 10 is high. The average score for prisoners at Wooroloo was 5.16. This is down from 5.33 in 2018, though slightly above the state average of 5.02. The slight decrease reflected sentiments expressed by the men during our inspection.

Eighty-four per cent of prisoners who completed our survey reported feeling 'mostly safe' at Wooroloo. Men stated that strong peer networks, a zero-tolerance approach to violence and appropriate prisoner placement contributed to this. We observed anti-bullying posters throughout the prison and good interpersonal dynamics amongst prisoners.

Prisoners understood the risks of transfer that arose as a consequence of anti-social behaviour and said this was an effective deterrent. Men residing in self-care units advised that when staff relocated prisoners, they tried to preserve group dynamics. The men welcomed and appreciated this approach.

Many prisoners with history of violence in prison, mental health issues and substance addiction were not approved to reside at Wooroloo. Staff and prisoners cautioned against changing the prisoner demographic and had a shared interest in preserving this model.

#### **Prisoners did not feel trusted**

Prisoners told us that despite having achieved a minimum classification status, they did not feel trusted. Several of the men stated Wooroloo was 'minimum in status, maximum in practice'. We were told that delayed approvals for Re-Integration Leave (RIL), section 95 and the Prisoner Employment Program (PEP) contributed to these feelings. This was further compounded by restrictions to visits, canteen purchases and some strained relations between staff and prisoners.

Prisoners in a minimum-security environment like Wooroloo should be encouraged to develop their personal responsibility and decision-making skills and this involves an element of risk by allowing more freedoms. This is consistent with the prison's philosophy of reintegration and ought to be encouraged by management and supported by head office.

## DUTY OF CARE

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### 3.4 ABORIGINAL PRISONERS

#### **The Aboriginal prisoner population at Wooroloo was low**

Despite a state-wide increase in the proportion of Aboriginal men in custody, the Aboriginal population at Wooroloo had decreased since our last inspection. At the time of our inspection only 13.8 per cent of the population at Wooroloo were Aboriginal, down from 15.6 per cent in 2018. Over that time, the state-wide proportion of Aboriginal men had risen from 38.8 per cent to 39.7 per cent.

Wooroloo, as a minimum-security, pre-release prison located in an attractive rural setting, should be equally available to Aboriginal prisoners. Further, Wooroloo's focus on rehabilitation and reintegration would also benefit Aboriginal men and help reduce recidivism rates.

Our inspection of Wooroloo found few examples of the infrastructure acknowledging Aboriginal culture or place. Apart from the Aboriginal flag proudly being flown at the front gate, we found few other Aboriginal signifiers. Sadly, throughout our inspection we observed minimal use of the Aboriginal meeting place by Aboriginal prisoners. We were advised this space had been taken over by prisoners from other cultures as a place to meet and play cards. Although Wooroloo is located on Noongar Boodja, spaces for Aboriginal men from the north and east of the state were also warranted.

Positively, we heard that Aboriginal kitchen workers were invited to prepare kangaroo and damper in the kitchen every three weeks. This was shared amongst their peers and was an important acknowledgement of culture and tradition.

#### **Aboriginal men were not reaching superior accommodation**

Aboriginal men told us they were finding it difficult to progress to preferred accommodation options of semi-self-care, self-care and the work camp. Aboriginal prisoners were over-represented at the 'standard' Unit 3 (33%) and there were no Aboriginal men residing in the majority of self-care units, including 2a, 2d, 4b, 4c and 4d. Furthermore, only five per cent of prisoners in the 'enhanced living' Unit 1 were Aboriginal.

Two Aboriginal prisoners were residing at Dowerin. This was an improvement from our last inspection, but still only represented 11 per cent of the work camp population.

### 3.5 FOREIGN NATIONAL PRISONERS

#### **Foreign national prisoners at risk of deportation were poorly supported and anxious**

Wooroloo had a high proportion of foreign-born prisoners, including many at risk of visa cancellation. At the time of our inspection 27.8 per cent of Wooroloo's population were foreign-born, the highest proportion of any prison in WA. Of those, 10.9 per cent were at risk of deportation.

Under, section 501 of the *Migration Act 1958* (Cth.), certain foreign-born prisoners are at risk of failing the character test and having their visas cancelled. The character test is very broad and includes a person having a substantial prison record (which includes a sentence of more than 12 months or a cumulative period of 12 months). Visa cancellation was a real and daunting prospect for many men at Wooroloo.



## DUTY OF CARE

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Several men at risk of a 501 visa cancellation told us that Wooroloo provided them with little useful information. These prisoners had limited understanding of the legislation or the revocation process. They advised us that there was little or no support available for men hoping to appeal against a ruling. However, during a meeting with peer support prisoners, we were informed that a poster with 501 cancellation information had recently been put up at the Re-entry House. We were also advised that a number of prisoners had successfully appealed against 501 deportation decisions.

It appeared there was a lot of confusion from prisoners facing 501 deportation. We have seen this issue across the prison estate. At a system level, although this is a Commonwealth Government issue, the Department must deal with the frustration and anxiety of these men and the impact this has on their mental health and wellbeing. More could be done through engagement between the Department and the relevant Commonwealth Department to provide better information and support to these prisoners.

### **Recommendation 3**

**Increase the access to information and support for prisoners facing deportation due to visa cancellation.**

#### **Prisoner privacy is compromised by informal interpreting**

In our 2018 inspection of Wooroloo we found that most interpretation was carried out by peer prisoners. While it may be understandable that interpreting by peer prisoners was convenient in many day-to-day interactions, it was not appropriate for formal interviews because it breached prisoner confidentiality and risked leaving prisoners beholden to, or reliant on, one another (OICS, 2018, p. 21).

Unfortunately, informal interpreting was still widely used in 2021. Staff seemed aware of the need to safeguard prisoners' confidentiality by conducting interviews in private spaces, but they were less conscious of the privacy issues created by relying on other prisoners for interpretation. Staff were also generally aware that a telephone interpreting service was available. Reception staff told us that the Department of Home Affairs arranged formal interpreting for foreign national men who were being released from Wooroloo into immigration detention.

Failing to offer prisoners the opportunity to communicate in their preferred language also contravenes the Western Australian Language Services Policy 2020, which requires State Government agencies to respond to clients' language needs (DLGSCI, 2020).

We would expect that, as a minimum, accredited telephone interpreting should be offered and arranged for reception, orientation, legal and health interviews and appointments.

### **Recommendation 4**

**Offer prisoners being interviewed or attending appointments the opportunity to use an accredited interpreting service.**

## DUTY OF CARE

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### 3.6 AT-RISK PRISONERS

#### **Wooroloo was not a preferred location to house at-risk prisoners**

Many at-risk prisoners did not make it to Wooroloo. The open, low supervision environment presented too many self-harm risks. There is no cell-call system, no crisis care unit, limited long-term support services and significant access to instruments of self-harm. Due to this, all vulnerable prisoners were screened prior to transfer to Wooroloo.

Staff at Wooroloo demonstrated a strong understanding of the Department's At-Risk Management System (ARMS) and Support and Monitoring System (SAMS), even though there were no prisoners being managed on these at the time of our inspection.

We were told that men placed on ARMS were initially transferred to a multi-purpose cell. This cell was utilised as an observation cell, monitored by closed circuit television (CCTV). Pending the level of ARMS monitoring required, men remained in standard clothing or could be placed in a rip-proof gown. Prisoners would be interviewed at the earliest opportunity by members of the Prisoner Risk Assessment Group (PRAG). PRAG was a multidisciplinary group chaired by the Assistant Superintendent Operations. PRAG had representation from mental health, psychological health, prisoner support and custodial officers. We reviewed previous meeting transcripts and found this group appeared to operate well and make appropriate decisions.

Prisoners deemed low risk could remain at Wooroloo and were provided with additional support. Men deemed moderate or high risk would regularly be transferred to Casuarina Prison Crisis Care Unit for increased monitoring and support. Wooroloo's MPC cell did not present a therapeutic environment to hold at-risk men for an extended length of time.

### 3.7 COMPLAINTS AND REQUESTS

#### **Prisoners were more confident resolving their complaints informally**

We were pleased to see that the prisoner orientation booklet had a full page of information about what prisoners could do if they had a complaint. Our pre-inspection survey showed that only 25 per cent of respondents said they would use mechanisms such as the Independent Visitor, ACCESS or external agencies to help them with an issue. But more than half of prisoners said that they preferred to seek help informally from Unit Officers, the Prison Support Officer (PSO), the chaplain or other prisoners, including peer support.

#### **Confidential mail boxes were not discretely located**

We tested the confidential mail system and confirmed that it delivered mail unopened and in a reasonable time frame. However, we were concerned that two of the three confidential mail boxes at Wooroloo were located at the administration building. This does not protect prisoner privacy, as there is a good chance that prisoners lodging a confidential yellow envelope would be seen by prison staff. It would be better if the confidential mail boxes were located in more discrete locations.

# Chapter 4

## DAILY LIFE

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### 4.1 THE STRUCTURED DAY

#### The structured day was appropriate for minimum-security prisoners

Wooroloo operated an appropriate structured daily schedule. As some prisoners were required to share ablutions on the unit verandas, the prison had no lock-down ability. Men carried their own cell keys and were allowed out of their cell for 16 hours each day.

Men were woken at 7.00 am for a morning count at 7.10 am. Following breakfast and cell inspection they reported for work, education or programs from 8.30 am to 11.30 am. Men working within the perimeter fence returned to their units for formal count at 11.40 am and lunch, before returning to work or activities from 12.30 pm to 3.30 pm. The evening meal was served early, at 4.30 pm, for those not residing in self-care units. Another formal count was conducted at 6.10 pm and men were required to return to their units in the evening by 10.30 pm for lock-up count at 11.00 pm. Following this, men were only allowed to exit their cells to smoke or attend the ablutions block.

Prisoners had access to recreation from 9.30 am through to 8.45 pm and the prisoner telephone system did not close until 10.30 pm daily.

### 4.2 RECREATION AND LIBRARY

#### Recreation provided a well-rounded service to prisoners

In 2018, we found a decline in satisfaction with recreation services. We attributed much of this to the cancellation of the V Swans and other external recreation programs (OICS, 2018, p. 30). Although external sporting opportunities had not been reinstated, in our 2021 prisoner survey, approval of organised sport had risen from 49 to 69 per cent.

Men at Wooroloo could access a wide range of recreation facilities, including an undercover sports court, oval, main gymnasium, recreation hall, squash and tennis courts. Men residing in Units 1 and 2 could also access smaller unit-based gymnasiums. The recreation program provided access to a range of activities, including basketball, cricket, Australian rules football, soccer, rugby, squash, tennis and boxing. Men could enjoy peer led exercise classes including cross fit and boot camp. Construction of a putt-putt course by prisoners had also commenced.

The Superintendent had recently ordered that the recreation hall would become a passive recreation facility. The hall had been set up with an extensive board game section, as well as a space for a small group of men to play Xbox together. Bingo and quiz nights were scheduled monthly. While this decision was unpopular amongst some men, it did provide a valuable alternative space for men who may not normally engage in recreation activities.

A music room was available for approved prisoners to use during evenings and on the weekend. Equipment included a drum kit, acoustic and bass guitars, keyboard, didgeridoo and sound equipment. This room provided an inviting, creative space for men to unwind.

Wooroloo has three substantive Recreation Officers, each working 12 hour shifts 9.00 am to 9.00 pm. During the inspection we observed the important role recreation played during the evening. Following the 6.10 pm formal count, recreation provided a central point for



## DAILY LIFE

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men to play sport, exercise, or simply sit, watch and socialise. This created a community atmosphere which we thought was evidence of good practice.



**Photo 8: The oval**



**Photo 9: The gym**

DAILY LIFE

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*Photo 10: The music room*



*Photo 11: New putt-putt course*

## DAILY LIFE

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### **Equipment maintenance and replacement practices were lacking**

Although Wooroloo had an extensive array of exercise equipment, many items were old, damaged or a risk to user safety. There was no routine maintenance schedule in place. Men refrained from reporting broken equipment for fear it would be removed permanently, and not replaced. Recreation Officers were frustrated they had to obtain three quotes for new items, as well as the time frame for approvals to occur.



**Photo 12: A rusted exercise bike supported by weights**

### **Recreation had responded positively to COVID-19 protocols**

The recreation department employed 20 prisoners, many of these were COVID-19 cleaner positions. These positions were responsible for the cleaning of all recreation facilities and equipment at routine intervals. Prisoners were required to register to access the gymnasium, with cleaning occurring between each timeslot. Maximum prisoner attendance numbers were in place for both the gymnasium and library.

### **The Wooroloo Library was functional and accessible**

In our 2021 prisoner survey, 79 per cent of prisoners rated access to the library as good. The library opened weekdays between 1.00 pm to 3.00 pm and 6.20 pm to 8.00 pm. On weekends it was also open 9.30 am to 11.00 am. Although the prison no longer received books from Casuarina Prison, an excellent exchange program was in place with the Mundaring Shire Library.



## DAILY LIFE

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The library stocked a wide range of literature, DVDs and X-box games, including a vast range of foreign national and Aboriginal cultural items. Men could submit a request for additional literature through the Mundaring Shire Library.

Prisoners had access to a small but adequate range of relatively current legal texts and legislation. Demand for legal resources was not high at Wooroloo however, in an otherwise tidy library, the legal materials section was quite disorganised.

### **Prisoners could access computers to prepare documents, but there was no privacy**

Four computers were available for prisoner use via a booking system however, two of these were not working. These computers provided men with access to further legal materials, or to prepare and print official documents and letters, such as parole and Reintegration Leave applications, resumes and employment applications. Unfortunately, we noted the positioning of these computers provided the user with little privacy. Library staff also had to store prisoners' discarded documents and take them to the administration building for shredding. Prisoners' sensitive information and privacy would be better protected by the installation of privacy partitions and availability of an on-site shredder.

## 4.3 VISITS

### **Wooroloo's visit infrastructure remained impressive**

We described the visits centre as 'among the best in the state' in 2018 (OICS, 2018, p. 32). The visits area comprised an indoor space and crèche, a large outdoor patio and a grassed garden area with a shaded, children's playground.

As prisoners at Wooroloo are expected to work during the week, social visits were only available on the weekend. Morning and afternoon sessions were available on Saturday and Sunday and visitors could make bookings for visits over the phone. Visitors could also access a free bus service to Midland Train Station on Sunday afternoons.

Wooroloo was in the process of fabricating a demountable external visitors' centre. At the time of our inspection, visitors remained in their cars until progressing through a secure visits gate in the perimeter fence. When complete, the installation of the visitors' centre will be welcomed and improve the ability for Reset staff to provide visitors with emotional and other support.

### **COVID-19 restrictions to visits were very unpopular**

In line with advice from the Chief Health Officer for Western Australia and to ensure the safety of staff, prisoners and visitors, the Department had applied restrictions to visits. Restrictions had been in place since the commencement of the COVID-19 pandemic. This resulted in reduced frequency, duration and quality of the visits experience. Men had to choose between a social visit or an e-visit each week.

## DAILY LIFE

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In our 2021 prisoner survey only 37 per cent of men reported it was easy to contact family via visits, a dramatic decrease from 78 per cent in 2018. The changes to visits had resulted in widespread disappointment amongst the men. Restrictions included:

- visits capacity reduced by 50 per cent;
- reduced visitor numbers allowed per visit per prisoner;
- no physical contact beyond an initial and final greeting, including children;
- the garden and children's playground were closed;
- no vending machines available;
- food or drinks bought from the prison canteen could not be brought into visits; and
- if people wanted a drink of water, they must remain at the water fountain whilst drinking, before returning to their table.



**Photo 13: The outdoor visits yard with children's playground**

Prisoners struggled to choose whether to see partners, children, parents or friends. Although time with loved ones should have provided a source of strong social and emotional support, many men avoided visits as it was distressing for them and their visitors. This was particularly hard for men with young children who did not understand the restrictions.

Staff and prisoners questioned the rationale of ongoing restrictions, as community observation of social distancing was less rigorous. At the time of our inspection, community playgrounds were open, large crowds gathered at sporting events and staff moved between the community and prison without incident. Men feared that

## DAILY LIFE

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ongoing restrictions were likely to continue as they supported security considerations, to the detriment of prisoner wellbeing. We do accept that the Department must be vigilant in preventing COVID-19 entering prisons, but there must be balance and consideration of different perspectives.

### **Recommendation 5**

**At the earliest opportunity, and in line with WA health guidelines, restore social visits to pre COVID-19 conditions, frequency and duration.**

#### **COVID-19 restrictions were impacting on the bond between fathers and their children**

Due to COVID-19 visits restrictions, we were told that children no longer looked forward to visits. With the lawn and play area closed, children must remain on a chair for the entire 90-minute visit. They could not sit on a prisoner's lap, nor receive cuddles during the visit. Although we saw a children's drink bottle on one table, there were no snacks.

We heard some children had become hyper vigilant to the presence of staff or had been reprimanded as they couldn't sit still for the duration. We observed one lady leave a visit early with crying children, stating 'it's too much for him.' Men were concerned visits were taking a toll on their child's mental health and many had ceased having them attend.

Reset had adapted to the restrictions and had two engaged staff on site. They provided children with drawing and craft material in the indoor crèche area however, this did not substitute for the gardens and outside play area where children and dads could be together informally.

#### **Gains to e-visits were at risk as the system changes again**

E-visits provided an important tool for men who were unable to receive visits due to distance or other circumstances. Over 27 per cent of the Wooroloo prisoner population were born overseas. Wooroloo was also home to many interstate and regional prisoners.

Men not scheduled to receive a social visit could book one e-visit per week. E-visits were available on weekday afternoons. E-visits were initially facilitated through Skype, then Skype for Business. A further change in platform to Microsoft Teams is also planned.

In our 2021 prisoner survey, 42 per cent of prisoners told us it was not easy to contact family through Skype. We heard many comments from men who felt 'ripped off' that e-visits only lasted 20 minutes. This was less than a quarter of the duration of a social visit. We also heard there were ongoing technological and linguistic challenges in facilitating e-visits, as staff were not familiar with platforms and international visitors were not proficient in English. In both cases, resources, training and support are required to support the transition to the new visit platform.

At the time of our inspection, Wooroloo had eight e-visit stations, but the bandwidth could not support more than four e-visits simultaneously. The prison should consider opportunities to expand this capacity.

## DAILY LIFE

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### 4.4 RELIGIOUS SERVICES

#### **Wooroloo had a dedicated chaplain however, chaplaincy attendance had decreased**

Wooroloo has a Catholic chaplain, who attended on Monday, Thursday and alternate Sundays. Every second Sunday, services were run by a priest from another prison. In the absence of an Anglican priest, the chaplain worked one day per week for this denomination. At the time of our 2018 inspection, Wooroloo had three permanent chaplains, each visiting one day per week, including a female Aboriginal chaplain (OICS, 2018, p. 34). We were informed that chaplaincy had played a pivotal role in supporting prisoners during COVID-19 and the recent Wooroloo bushfire. The chaplain's office was in Unit 2B. This was a restricted access self-care unit, meaning prisoners residing in other units could not simply drop in. They must be called by the chaplain and may be questioned by staff when entering the area. As a result of this, chaplaincy may be better placed in an area accessible by all prisoners.

Wooroloo was fortunate to have a beautiful chapel on site. Men were provided with religious literature through reception or chaplaincy. Religious items such as crosses and rosary beads could be purchased by prisoners.



**Photo 14: The chapel**

Our inspection occurred in the lead up to Ramadan. It was pleasing to observe the prison demonstrating flexibility around appropriate food options and timings. Unfortunately, medical staff did not believe this flexibility had been afforded to medication supply. One man's application for his medication to be provided after sunset had been declined by management, even though it was supported by medical. We understood the issue to be concerns about custodial staff dispensing restricted medications. Muslim men at Wooroloo could access a

## DAILY LIFE

dedicated building to conduct their prayers in a safe and appropriate environment. Prayer mats were provided through reception.

### Delays in religious visitor approvals were impacting prisoners

The Department was experiencing delays in the approval of religious visitor applications. We were told by chaplaincy and members of the senior management team that this had been an issue for several years and a cause of much frustration. Recently, a new application form had been implemented by the Department, compounding the wait time for previous submissions.

Sycamore Tree, a restorative justice program, was scheduled to commence in July for the first time in three years. The Prisoners Journey was due to start 29 April however, these were both subject to delays in visitor approvals. Subsequently, we have been advised that the Prisoners Journey was completed but the Sycamore Tree had not yet commenced.

## 4.5 GRATUITIES AND SPENDS

### More prisoners were earning high gratuity levels

Gratuities are paid to prisoners for the work they do while in prison. The *Prisons Regulations 1982 Reg 44 (1)* requires that prisoner work positions are paid at progressively higher rates in correlation to the skill, aptitude and diligence required. Level 1 is the highest gratuity rate within the prison, while men on level 6 earn nothing. An additional level 23 paying \$13.21 per day can only be achieved by prisoners on section 95 or residing at work camps.

**Table 1: Current Department gratuity rates**

Gratuity level	Daily rate paid
Level 1	\$10.35
Level 2	\$7.92
Level 3	\$6.21
Level 4	\$4.40
Level 5	\$3.25

Departmental policy (DCS, 2007) recommends what percentage of the prison's population should be paid at each level however, individual prison management can determine how they want to distribute gratuities. A snapshot of Departmental data conducted just prior to our 2021 inspection indicated Wooroloo was now paying a higher number of level one and level two gratuities, and a lower number of level three and level four gratuities than the recommended percentage.

**Table 2: Prisoner gratuity levels, actual and recommended as at 26 March 2021**

Gratuity level	Recommended %	Wooroloo actual %
Level 1	10%	17%
Level 2	15%	24%
Level 3	40%	34%
Level 4	25%	13%
Level 5	10%	11%



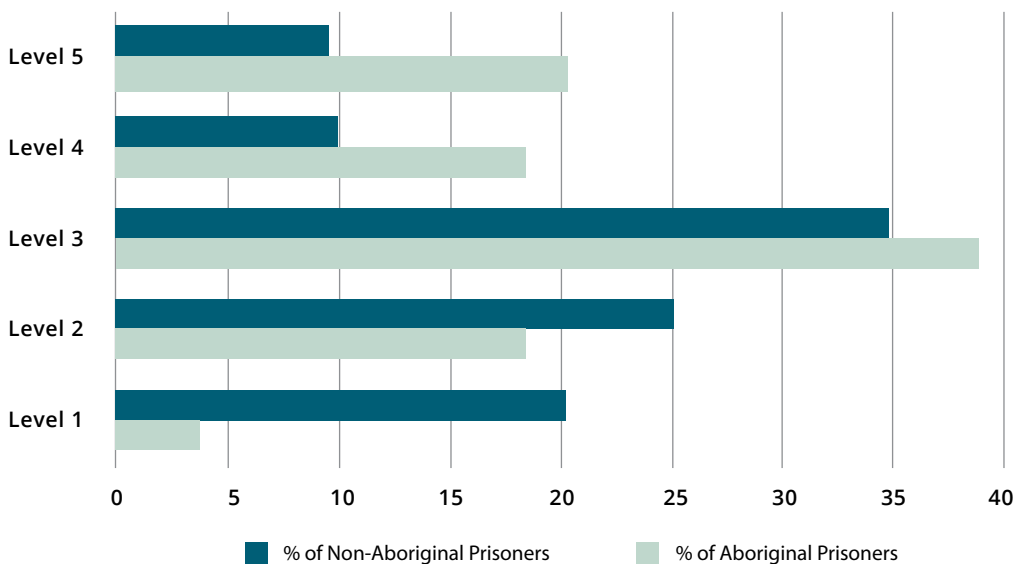
## DAILY LIFE

The higher number of level one and level two gratuities paid provided significant recognition of the work some prisoners undertook, and the trust and responsibility associated with those positions. Men were able to save a percentage of their gratuities in a savings account, which was available upon release to support reintegration efforts. We were told that this was a popular option.

### Aboriginal men were under-represented in higher paid positions

Our 2018 report recommended that 'Wooroloo must put strategies in place that increase the number of Aboriginal prisoners at desirable workplaces, and at higher gratuity levels' (OICS, 2018, p. 18). In 2021, we found that Aboriginal men continued to be under-represented in work that paid higher level gratuities.

**Graph 1: Aboriginal employment by gratuity level**



Wooroloo must continue to monitor Aboriginal earnings, prioritise Aboriginal employment in higher paying positions and consider a gratuity profile that better reflects the capabilities and potential of Aboriginal prisoners.

### Canteen service was good, but there was opportunity to be better

Prisoner satisfaction with the canteen had increased slightly from 44 per cent to 48 per cent since our 2018 inspection. We found the canteen to be a busy front-line service, operating out of a small heritage listed stores area. A range of food purchases were available, along with toiletries, recreation and art supplies. Men attended on a designated day to collect their order. Only trusted prisoner workers were selected to work there, to ensure they could withstand peer pressure. There was widespread praise for the VSO Canteen and their team.

Despite the positive feedback, many men saw room for improvement. This included increasing and diversifying products, because stocked items did not always reflect the tastes, interests and preference of prisoners. Prisoners drew comparisons to other facilities which

## DAILY LIFE

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offered an in-person shopping experience. Due to the recent construction of a large new external stores building, we were informed that the canteen would soon be expanding into the old stores site. In the 2012 inspection report, OICS recommended that the canteen be run to reflect a community retail experience (OICS, 2012), but this was not supported by the Department. The imminent move into the old stores site invites a reconsideration of this issue to assist men acquire skills and confidence relevant to reintegration. A regular consumer survey, accessible to all prisoners, would ensure the stock reflects the tastes and interests of the prison population.

### **Prisoner spends are hindered by the absence of an electronic bank transfer system.**

In line with COVID-19 restrictions visitors could no longer deposit money into prisoners' private cash accounts when they attend for visits. Instead, families were required to send funds via a money order which costs \$11. But with secure postage adding around \$7.60 this increased the cost of each deposit by almost \$20. This was a significant financial impact, particularly for families on low incomes or support benefits. Prisoners and staff expressed disappointment and frustration with this change.

The combination of infrequent postal deliveries, incomplete money orders and labour-intensive site level processing, caused delays in funds transferring into prisoners' accounts. Staff reported this happened on a daily basis and caused a lot of friction and frustration. We saw several men at the canteen negotiating when and how they could get their spends, as funds had not yet cleared.

We understand that the Canteen Officer is flexible, and prisoners can visit the canteen on non-allocated days as funds become available. However, the Wooroloo prison community would benefit from a more streamlined, automated process. We are aware that other prisons have commenced direct deposit transfer banking and we encourage Wooroloo to do the same.

### **Recommendation 6**

**Adopt an electronic bank transfer system for visitors to deposit money into prisoners' private cash accounts.**

## 4.6 ACCOMMODATION

### **Wooroloo offered a range of accommodation options**

In 2018 we noted that 'prisoners progressed through accommodation, earning autonomy and privilege' (OICS, 2018, p. 23). We found this to still be the case in 2021. Men were afforded the opportunity to progress through the various units, achieving different levels of privilege and independence along the journey. Self-care units offered the highest level of autonomy and men living here told us they were proud of their progression through the hierarchy. These units were personalised, clean and supported men to develop independent living skills such as meal planning, cooking, laundry and socialising. Bathrooms were located external to accommodation areas of each unit, meaning prisoners could not be locked down.

## DAILY LIFE

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Unit 1 sat at the top of the compound and offered views across the surrounding landscape. Unit 1 was semi-self-care, accommodating up to 83 men, spread across nine pods. Meals for prisoners residing in Unit 1 were cooked in the Wooroloo kitchen and delivered to a kitchenette attached to each pod. Unit 1 prisoners had access to their own small gymnasium. We found the men in Unit 1 to be generally happy with their accommodation however, they advised that the unit did not have a cold-water fountain and there wasn't enough storage space in fridges for food and water.

Unit 2 was a mix of standard and self-care accommodation, located across four blocks. Unit 2c provided standard accommodation for up to 44 men. There was a mix of single and double cells. Men attended the dining hall for meals. We did hear from some prisoners in this unit that their cells can be uncomfortably hot and ceiling fans offered little relief. Self-care units 2a and 2b offered single cells for 25 and 26 men respectively. Unit 2d provided a unique residential experience for prisoners. To generate increased bed space the prison had recently retrofitted the old Superintendent's house to create an impressive self-care accommodation space for eight prisoners. During our evening visit we spent time with men housed in Unit 2d. They were eating dinner together on the balcony, while playing guitar and enjoying the views over the valley. This was quite a unique experience in a prison environment and is a commendable incentive that promotes rehabilitation.



**Photo 15: Unit 2d**

## DAILY LIFE

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**Photo 16: Men playing guitar on the Unit 2d balcony**

Unit 3 provided standard accommodation for up to 130 men. Unit 3 infrastructure included one long building, flanked by a veranda. Meals for prisoners living in Unit 3 were served in the dining hall. The unit was utilised as the prison's designated orientation unit, meaning it was the first point of residence for new arrivals to the prison. Somewhat concerningly, Unit 3 is also the prison's drug management unit. We have previously raised unease regarding the co-location of these two functions.

Unit 4 is comprised of four blocks, located separately. Unit 4a provided standard accommodation for up to 85 men, who also ate meals in the dining hall. Units 4b, 4c and 4d offered self-care, house-style residences for a total of 26 men. Unit 4d in particular was reasonably isolated within the prison compound, providing a quiet environment for prisoners lucky enough to live there.

### 4.7 FOOD

#### **Although the kitchen was efficient, catering equipment required regular maintenance**

Last inspection, we said the kitchen was 'orderly and efficient' (OICS, 2018, pp. 25-26). We reached similar conclusions this time. The kitchen had four chef instructors and employed 61 prisoners who took pride in their work and the food produced. The kitchen operated a seasonal menu plan and fulfilled special diet requests, including for men requiring soft, vegetarian or Halal food.

## DAILY LIFE

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Unfortunately, faulty equipment created additional work for a busy kitchen and interrupted service delivery, menu planning and timings. We were told catering equipment broke down regularly and repairs were short lived. Faults were not always fully repaired and required multiple call outs for the same issue. At the time of our inspection there were issues with the baker's oven, braising pan and boiler. Positively, a new dough mixer had recently been approved and a business case was submitted for a new dough roller.

### Prisoner satisfaction with food had decreased

In our 2021 prisoner survey, we found prisoner satisfaction with food had decreased since the last inspection and was now below the state average.

**Table 3: Prisoner satisfaction with food. Note some prisoners did not respond to this section in the survey.**

	2021		2018		State average	
	Good	Poor	Good	Poor	Good	Poor
Food quality	34%	64%	41%	57%	45%	51%
Amount of food	39%	58%	47%	50%	49%	47%

Food distribution and accessibility were determined by accommodation hierarchy. Men in self-care were able to order ingredients and prepare their own meals. Often prisoners sharing the same accommodation would rotate cooking duties amongst the group. We saw men cooking fish and chicken. We also observed fridges and freezers stocked with a range of proteins and fresh vegetables.

Men in semi self-care were served prepared food in unit kitchenettes. This food was prepared by the kitchen and reflected meals served in the dining room. We heard many complaints about the portion sizes provided to prisoners here, and in self-care. Kitchen staff informed us they sent additional, measured portions to units and suggested unit dynamics and standover influenced an individual's allocation.

Prisoners residing in standard accommodation ate meals in one of two dining halls. There were two sittings and a brief time allocated for cleaning in between. Meal time at the dining hall was monitored by officers and was a no-frills experience. Men sat quietly and had limited meal choice.





***Photo 17: Food service at the dining hall***

#### 4.8 CLOTHING AND LAUNDRY

##### **Clothing was decent**

The prison laundry was run by one Laundry VSO and a group of prisoner employees. There were efficient systems in place to tag, sort, wash and return prisoners' laundry. Men received three personal sets of clothing on arrival, which were returned in individual bags after washing. Additional role specific clothing was provided to prisoners working in specialty areas. Men residing in self-care units had access to domestic washing machines and did their own laundry.

# Chapter 5

## HEALTH AND SUPPORT

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### 5.1 HEALTH

#### Health provided a good prisoner service

At the time of our inspection there was no substantive Clinical Nurse Manager at Wooroloo. In the last year, three members of the nursing team had filled this position on secondment, with another due to commence in the week after our inspection. We were told the position would be advertised again shortly. Despite this uncertainty, we were pleased to find a functional and positive primary health care team.

The health services' team was allocated 5.8 FTE clinical nursing positions. Generally, two or three nurses were rostered, working 10 hour shifts, with coverage between 7.00 am to 6.30 pm. Services provided by the general nursing team included:

- diabetic management and insulin provision;
- provision of medication;
- dressing and wound management;
- immunisations;
- specific patient care plans (asthma, cardiac etc.);
- blood borne virus management;
- hepatitis C treatment; and
- surgery preparation.

A General Practitioner (GP) was on site three days per week, between the hours of 8.00 am – 4.00 pm. In the absence of the GP nursing staff utilised the Department's on-call doctor service. At night, custodial staff were responsible for contacting the on-call doctor, but often this would, as a precaution, result in a prisoner attending hospital for assessment.

When on site, medical staff were responsible for emergency medical management. The team utilised a response kit and medical buggy for quick response. Due to Wooroloo's location, ambulances took up to 45 minutes to arrive on site and prisoners were typically transferred to St John of God Hospital in Midland.

Prisoners residing at the Dowerin Work Camp were temporarily transferred to Wooroloo to facilitate internal medical appointments. Prisoners could occasionally attend Goomalling Regional Hospital for radiological and other available services.

Prior to release, men were provided with details of their scheduled future external medication appointments, current medication and scripts. These were provided in their release folder. Medical transfer paperwork was also sent with men conveyed to immigration detention.

#### Allied health services were attending Wooroloo

Under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department of Health, the Department contracts allied health services for prisoners to access. We were told that men at Wooroloo were receiving adequate access to these services.



## HEALTH AND SUPPORT

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A dentist and dental nurse attended Wooroloo two days per week, utilising a dedicated, well equipped dental suite. Appointments were scheduled between 9.30 am to 11.30 am and 12.45 pm to 3.00 pm. Ideally, given the level of demand, this service would benefit from an extra day on site.

Prisoners must first be assessed by the general nursing team prior to referral to the dentist. The dentist then managed their waitlist. Urgent dental work was prioritised, there was a waitlist of two weeks to a month for non-urgent dental work. Men wanting general dental hygiene services sometimes waited four to five months.

A range of dental services were offered at Wooroloo, including:

- extractions;
- fillings;
- cleaning and management of gum disease;
- production of false teeth; and
- root canal therapy.

A physiotherapist was attending the prison monthly. Referrals for this service came through the GP. Podiatry and Optometry were on site as required. This would occur approximately every three months, or when waiting lists reached 15 to 20.

### **The health appointment booking system was efficient**

The health appointment booking system was efficient and empowered prisoners to take responsibility for booking their own appointments. Prisoners completed a 'request to see health professional form'. The form was basic, easy to interpret and readily available from unit staff.

Prisoners placed completed forms in a yellow box outside the medical centre. This box was emptied and sorted each weekday by one of two Senior Medical Receptionists (SMR). The forms were triaged by a Clinical Nurse and appointments booked on the ECHO electronic health system by an SMR. Appointments for the following day were printed and distributed to unit staff who called prisoners to collect. The appointment notification included a time and the medical service they were scheduled to see. Importantly, this system provided a prompt reply to prisoners regarding their medical request and placed the responsibility on them to attend. Prisoners would usually see a nurse prior to referral on to other services. The wait time to see a nurse was one to two days and a GP two to three days.

For external medical appointments, the GP submitted a referral to the Department's Health Services Division. This referral was sent to the relevant clinic, who would notify Wooroloo's SMR with an appointment time. Often, appointment times required rescheduling by the SMR as Wooroloo only allowed one morning and one afternoon external medical appointment per day. These appointments normally ran to schedule and were rarely affected by staffing issues.

## HEALTH AND SUPPORT

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### Eligible prisoners could keep some medication on their person

Medication parade occurred three times daily in the medical centre. Prisoners with non-Schedule four or eight medication were risk assessed to have personal blister packs allocated to them, which were exchanged each Saturday. The risk assessment was done by the Clinical Nurse Manager (CNM) and Security, and considered any previous incidents of standover, self-harm, medication secretion or hoarding. Once approved, men signed a contract for this to occur.

### The medical centre had no shower

We were surprised to learn that the medical centre had no shower facility. We were told that prisoners requiring a shower for medical purposes were escorted to the reception building and from there would have to return to the medical centre dressed in a towel. This process was not respectful or particularly hygienic.

We viewed a large prisoner bathroom located within the medical centre. Health staff expressed a desire for a shower to be placed in this area. We encourage the Department to support this infrastructure upgrade.

## 5.2 MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION

### Mental health services were small but sufficient

Wooroloo had one full time Clinical Nurse Specialist Co-Morbidity, however, at the time of our inspection they were seconded to Hakea for two days per week. A psychiatrist attended the prison for one day per month.

Only 13 prisoners listed on the Department's psychiatric priority ratings scale (i.e. P1 to P3) resided at Wooroloo, however, we heard that many more men had ongoing contact with the service. Prior to transfer of prisoners with a known mental illness to Wooroloo, a desktop review would be undertaken. This review would determine suitability for transfer, given Wooroloo does not have 24-hour medical care or a crisis care unit.

The prison in-reach transition team engaged with prisoners due for release, facilitating prisoner transition to community mental health and psychosocial support services.

In our 2021 staff survey, only 34 per cent of staff believed they had adequate training in dealing with prisoners with mental health issues. This skill gap could be tackled locally, through informal training and information, or systematically through the Department's training academy.

### Prisoners wanted increased support to address addictions

A small number of prisoners at Wooroloo were receiving Methadone. Methadone is a Schedule eight drug which was prescribed and dispensed daily in line with the Community Program for Opioid Dependence. Methadone was predominantly given to men with opioid addiction, or those who were already on the program when they came into custody. In the absence of a Prison Addiction Services Team Nurse, prisoners were supported through this program by the Clinical Nurse Specialist Co-Morbidity.

## HEALTH AND SUPPORT

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The Pathways addictions offending program was available for prisoners who had been assessed as suitable. Prisoners could also register for a six-session voluntary methamphetamine program. This program was part of the Allied Drug and Alcohol Programs and Treatment (ADAPT) program, a partnership between Cyrenian House and Holyoake.

Unfortunately, Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) had not been running at Wooroloo for an extended period. There was great demand across the prisoner group for these programs as they provided men important tools and pro-social supports to help overcome their addictions.

### **Recommendation 7**

**Recommence AA and NA at Wooroloo.**

### **Wooroloo now has a full-time Psychological Health Services Counsellor**

At the time of our 2018 inspection, Wooroloo had lost its Prisoner Counselling Service (OICS, 2018, p. 34). The service recently changed its name to Psychological Health Services (PHS) and in 2021 we found a stable service in place facilitated by a full-time PHS counsellor.

PHS at Wooroloo provided individual counselling in areas such as grief, trauma, coping and depression. PHS supported prisoners on ARMS and SAMS through the PRAG process. The waitlist for counselling was triaged appropriately, pending acuity.

PHS demonstrated some excellent initiatives. For example, a 'getting help' resource document had been created to provide prisoners with contact details for a broad range of support services available to them upon release. PHS were also supporting men to reconnect with their children, including a program to encourage them to read books with their children over the phone or during e-visits.

## **5.3 PRISONER SUPPORT**

### **Wooroloo had a diverse peer support team, but they need mental health training**

Wooroloo had, at the time of our inspection, one full time PSO. The PSO was dedicated, proactive and well respected by staff, management and prisoners. The PSO coordinated a diverse team of eight full time and 12 volunteer peer supporters. Prisoners applied directly to the PSO for placement on the team. If recommended, security conducted further screening prior to final approval being granted. Most units had a peer support representative, including the orientation unit where they played a pivotal role in the orientation of new prisoners.

Peer support meetings occurred monthly, chaired by the Assistant Superintendent Offender Services. These meetings provided a forum for prisoners to raise general prison issues.

Wooroloo policy states that the 'prisoner support program is a valued resource that provides support within the prison community in the reduction of self-harm, suicide and

## HEALTH AND SUPPORT

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prisoners adjusting to their placement and circumstances'. But only one member of the peer support team had received 'Gatekeeper' suicide prevention training. To ensure peer supporters are equipped to assist their peers, it is vitally important they receive further training in suicide prevention, mental health, effective listening and cultural awareness. Positively, all peer supporters were scheduled to undertake disability awareness training in May 2021.

### **Recommendation 8**

**Provide peer support prisoners training in Gatekeeper suicide prevention or a preferred alternative.**

#### **The prison would benefit from increased AVS attendance**

One Aboriginal Visitor Scheme (AVS) staff member attended Wooroloo every Tuesday. However, every second Tuesday the staff member left the prison at midday to attend their head office and complete timesheets. This effectively means that Wooroloo only has one and a half days of AVS every fortnight.

AVS provided Aboriginal prisoners culturally appropriate support, promoting a culture of resilience and healing. They also played a vital role in helping men connect with their culture and community. With an Aboriginal population of 56 men and Wooroloo being the point of release for many Aboriginal prisoners, the prison would benefit from increased AVS attendance.

# Chapter 6

## SECURITY AND BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

### 6.1 PROCEDURAL SECURITY

#### Confidence in the security team had increased

Our 2021 staff survey demonstrated that prison officers' confidence in the security team had increased significantly since our last inspection, and Wooroloo's results were now higher than state averages across all areas of security. The survey question was 'Overall, how effective is this prison in...' Prison officers' responses are set out in the table below.

**Table 4: 2021 staff survey results relating to security.**

	2021		2018		State average	
	Good	Poor	Good	Poor	Good	Poor
Preventing entry of contraband	42%	19%	9%	32%	10%	33%
Bring aware of what is happening in the prisoner group	45%	6%	27%	14%	19%	16%
Having good, clear security procedures	48%	6%	32%	13%	24%	17%
Maintaining perimeter security, gates and cameras	55%	10%	55%	9%	39%	13%
Intelligence gathering	52%	6%	29%	7%	25%	12%
Implementing charges and the prosecutions process	42%	6%	43%	7%	26%	18%

#### Our previous gatehouse recommendation was not being followed

The gatehouse at Wooroloo is a small but busy area. In 2015 we found that the gatehouse control room was not always staffed, or locked. We recommended then that Wooroloo should ensure the control room is always staffed and the door secured (OICS, 2015, p. 39). This was supported by the Department.

In 2021, although the control room was constantly staffed the door was deliberately left unlocked. We were advised by staff that this occurred to allow easy access and communication between the gate and control room, but this also compromised security.

The gatehouse did have good COVID-19 procedures in place. Signage was visible at the entry regarding requirements for entry. The gatehouse had restricted to five the number of people entering at any one time. This excluded staff working in the area. Two extra officers were regularly assigned to the gatehouse during the morning rush to assist. Their roles included COVID-19 questioning and temperature testing of all staff and visitors.

#### Broadspectrum and Wooroloo shared transport responsibilities

Broadspectrum (BRS)<sup>1</sup> were contracted to conduct court and prison transfers for Wooroloo. The prison had an excellent working relationship with BRS and were appreciative of their service. Wooroloo were responsible for all other prisoner transport

1. On 1 July 2021 Broadspectrum's operating name was changed to Ventia. The change did not alter the scope of services delivered under the Court Security and Custodial Services contract.

## SECURITY AND BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

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and would also often undertake last minute prison transfers if BRS was unavailable. To accommodate prisoner transport Wooroloo had transport officer positions on its roster.

### 6.2 RELATIONAL SECURITY

#### Relational security practices were still lacking

In 2018 we recommended that: 'to improve relational security, Wooroloo management should require custodial officers to engage positively with prisoners more frequently' (OICS, 2018, p. 45). This was supported by the Department.

Regrettably, during our 2021 inspection we witnessed little evidence of any significant improvement in this area. We observed many staff predominantly remaining in their office, only leaving when a task required them to do so. While we did witness some staff positively interacting with prisoners and roaming the units and work areas, our observations suggest that many staff rarely engaged with prisoners outside their office. Several prisoners stated officers were rarely seen walking around unless they were looking for someone or going somewhere.

We understand that officers had many duties to undertake and that some of these required the use of an office and computer. However, in a minimum-security prison with limited physical barriers and controls, relational security is key. Positive interaction between staff and prisoners is critical to relationship building, as well as intelligence gathering.

#### **Recommendation 9**

**Improve relational security practices through more active engagement between officers and prisoners.**

### 6.3 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

#### Emergency management is running well, but a full evacuation is not an option

Wooroloo prisoner numbers had risen to the point whereby the Department now felt that a full evacuation of the prison was no longer a viable consideration. If an emergency develops, such as a fire, the prison cannot evacuate but is required to stay and fight.

The prison trained all officers and VSO's in basic firefighting twice each year. They also had 30 registered members with the Wooroloo Prison Emergency Response Team (ERT) which could, at the request of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES), respond to external emergencies in the community.

The prison had several fire-fighting vehicles that could be used, including:

- 1 x Toyota Land Cruiser light tanker – DFES approved.
- 1 x heavy tanker 2000 litre x 4wd – DFES approved.
- 1 x heavy tanker 3000 litre x 4wd – for use on prison property only.
- 1 x response trailer 1000 litre with hoses for internal hydrants (24 hydrants).



## SECURITY AND BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

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The prison was in the process of finalising a 'shelter in place' policy. Once completed, the visits centre and dining halls will be used as a safe refuge for prisoners. Civilian staff will shelter in reception. The prison had submitted a business case for these areas to be fitted with ember protection sprinkler systems, which would be connected to the hydrant system.

Although measures were being implemented to make staying and fighting as safe as possible, the trees and undergrowth on site still presented a potential problem. There may be a need to remove some of these hazards to meet the 'Bush fire risk treatment standards' set by Parliament in 2020. If the instructions for Wooroloo are to stay and fight then everything possible to make this a safe decision should be implemented, to help prevent loss of life in an emergency.

Positively, Wooroloo had an up to date emergency management plan in place and was on schedule to complete all required exercises by the end of the year.

### Wooroloo continued to rely on the Department's Special Operations Group

Wooroloo is located approximately 55 kilometres north east of Perth. In the case of an emergency, it would take the Department's Special Operations Group (SOG) an hour to respond. Acacia Prison is privately run by Serco and located less than four kilometres from Wooroloo. Acacia has its own emergency response unit, the Correctional Emergency Response Team.

In our 2016 report of Acacia Prison (OICS, 2016) we recommended that: 'the Department and Serco should examine the feasibility of making Acacia's Correctional Emergency Response Team available to respond immediately to emergencies at Wooroloo Prison Farm'. We understand there used to be a MOU between Wooroloo and Acacia that allowed the sharing of resources between the prisons in emergencies, but this expired in 2019. Considering recent emergency events, there is an opportunity for a new MOU to be considered.

## 6.4 MANAGING BEHAVIOUR

### Incidents are well managed

Unlike many larger prisons Wooroloo did not have a dedicated internal recovery or response team to attend incidents. One officer per unit was nominated to carry handcuffs and if further assistance was required, staff in the nearest unit responded. Being a minimum-security prison, men at Wooroloo were not secured in their cells, therefore it was essential staff utilised verbal de-escalation techniques when attending incidents. In our 2021 prisoner survey 65 per cent believed staff did not use too much force during an incident. Positively, this is 10 per cent above the state average.

Prisoners involved in incidents were relocated to one of the prisons three multi-purpose cells located in the reception building. Security would attend and interview these prisoners and determine any future actions or alternative placements required. Multi-purpose cells were also utilised for men awaiting transfer, under threat, at-risk of self-harm or undertaking a period of punishment handed down by the Visiting Justice.

## SECURITY AND BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

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### Wooroloo has effective processes for review of incidents

Wooroloo reviews incidents at the earliest opportunity and uses findings to implement changes designed to prevent similar issues from occurring again. A good example of this process was demonstrated following a major disturbance at the prison in March 2020. An internal review of this incident determined a need for changes to response capability.

It was positive to see that work had commenced to action these findings.

# Chapter 7

## REHABILITATION AND REPARATION

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### 7.1 ASSESSMENTS AND SENTENCE PLANNING

#### **The assessments team was performing well despite a heavy workload**

In 2018, we found that the 'Wooroloo assessments team was functioning well under pressure. They were keeping up with assessments although a high prison population had them working at full capacity' (OICS, 2018, p. 4). The situation was the same at this inspection. Although the prison population had reduced, the assessments team was managing their heavy workload with less staff. The team comprised the Case Management Coordinator and two full time Assessment Writers, and a third writer was assisting temporarily on shorter shifts. Positively, Assessment Writers were only redeployed as a last resort. There was hardly any backlog of assessments, with only six overdue Individual Management Plans (IMPs) at the time of the inspection.

However, staff reported that this came at a cost, as they had to work overtime or spend less time on reports to keep on top of their workload. This was stressful, as assessments have significant consequences for prisoners and accuracy was important. It also didn't take much to throw things out of balance – for example, needing to do an unexpected assessment for a management transfer would result in other assessments falling behind schedule.

The team's heavy workload also meant that applications for optional reintegration programs, such as RIL and the PEP, were forced down the list of priorities. Assessments, such as IMPs, classification reviews and parole recommendations, had to be prioritised. This clash of priorities impacts on the philosophy of a re-entry prison.

In 2018, Wooroloo management had 'recognised that any further increase in prisoner population would require additional assessments resources' (OICS, 2018, p. 4). It was encouraging to hear that a third full time Assessment Writer position was included in the new staffing agreement. However, the assessments team will remain under pressure until this role is filled.

#### **Case management tasks were completed but offered few benefits**

Under the Department's case management policy, all prisoners with an IMP were allocated a case officer who was responsible for meeting with the prisoner regularly and completing contact reports. The focus of regular contact reports should be monitoring the prisoner's behaviour and progress against their IMP and assisting them to apply for activities associated with their reintegration and release. At the time of the inspection, case management tasks were mostly up-to-date. Only a small number of men were not assigned a case officer or had overdue contact reports, which is to be expected given staff shift patterns and leave arrangements.

However, case management seemed to be mostly superficial, although this is not unique to Wooroloo. We have consistently criticised the Department's case management model as offering limited value (OICS, 2018, p. 52) (OICS, 2018, pp. 4-5). Officers at Wooroloo told us they barely had contact with the prisoners they are assigned to case manage, as the unit roster system did not support them developing any meaningful relationship. As a result,

## REHABILITATION AND REPARATION

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case officers mostly relied on second-hand information to complete contact reports. We were told that regular contact reports were sometimes submitted unsigned by the prisoner, so it was unclear whether any contact had occurred at all. The concept of case management appears sound, but the practicality of its implementation is not effective.

### 7.2 OFFENDER TREATMENT PROGRAMS

#### **The range of offender treatment programs had reduced**

Offender treatment programs are vitally important in rehabilitating prisoners and reducing recidivism. In 2018, we found that Wooroloo offered a limited range of offender treatment programs. At that time, programs being delivered at Wooroloo included addictions-based offending, general offending, violence offending and cognitive skills development (OICS, 2018, p. 5). Since then, the range of available offender treatment programs had become more limited.

The cognitive skills development program was removed from the Wooroloo programs schedule from 2019 onwards. Numerous staff told us the loss of the cognitive skills development program was disappointing, as it was highly relevant for many of the men. An evaluation of this program in 2015 also found that it had numerous benefits including improving prisoners' behaviour in prison, reducing self-harm and threats and reducing the severity of subsequent offences (OICS, 2015, p. 15). The program was apparently cancelled due to removal of the prison officer facilitator, and in line with assessed demand. However, as at December 2020 there were still seven men at Wooroloo who required this program but were unable to complete it due to its unavailability or barriers to inclusion, such as serving a short sentence or English language difficulties.

In 2018, there were no culturally appropriate therapeutic programs offered for Aboriginal prisoners (OICS, 2018, p.5). That remained the case in 2021. In 2019-2020, the Pathways addictions offending program was the main program at Wooroloo with Aboriginal prisoner participation, but their participation in other programs was negligible. However, the completion rate for Aboriginal program participants was very high, with only one out of the 25 failing to finish. Both the lack of Aboriginal participation in other offender treatment programs and the high completion rate of Aboriginal participants suggests that culturally appropriate therapeutic programs for Aboriginal men would be very well received at Wooroloo.

#### **Unmet treatment needs remained a concern**

In December 2020, there were 27 instances where prisoners had been assessed as needing a program which was unavailable either due to excess demand or the program not being offered at Wooroloo. This was about 15 per cent of all assessed program requirements at Wooroloo.

However, we were told that a large proportion of prisoners were assessed as low risk by the Department's risk of reoffending and treatment needs tools and this was problematic, particularly because in some cases it did not align with the Prisoner Review Board's (PRB's)

## REHABILITATION AND REPARATION

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assessment of a prisoner's treatment needs. Men assessed as low risk were not prioritised for courses by the Department. There were many reasons why prisoners did not complete their required treatment programs. However, we were told it was a consistent problem that men had their parole deferred or denied because the PRB required them to complete treatment programs which the Department had not assessed them as needing. The Department is failing these prisoners whose parole eligibility is impacted by factors beyond their control.

As part of the Department's broader Justice Reform Program, a metropolitan Parole in-reach Program (PiP) pilot was being trialled at Wooroloo, Acacia and Roebourne. We were told the PiP aimed to provide improved access to rehabilitative programs, and to increase the number of prisoners who were considered suitable for release on parole by the PRB. At the same time, it would reduce the likelihood of men reoffending when returned to the community. We were unable to review delivery of this program during our inspection however, we will follow its progression with interest.

### **Intensive parenting support would improve prisoner wellbeing**

In 2018, we found that the scope of re-entry support services had been reduced under the contractual transition from Outcare to the ReSet consortium (OICS, 2018, p. 11). The most significant loss at Wooroloo was the Good Beginnings program, which helped men keep in contact with their children. The loss of this program was still sorely felt in 2021 and we were told there was a significant gap in parenting support services at Wooroloo.

While the two parenting courses offered by ReSet were well received, they had a completely different structure to the Good Beginnings program and could not provide a comparable level of support. We were told that parenting and dealing with the Department of Communities was a significant stressor for men at Wooroloo, and a potential risk factor for self-harm. A dedicated support officer, similar to the Family Links Officer in the women's estate, would be highly beneficial for prisoners' wellbeing, particularly at a re-entry prison like Wooroloo.

### **Recommendation 10**

**Increase support mechanisms for fathers to re-establish or maintain connection with their children.**

## 7.3 EDUCATION

### **The Education Manager had a challenging job, with a limited budget**

The Education Manager had a diverse and demanding role, coordinating education and training across the education centre and industries, as well as a range of external agencies such as Technical and Further Education (TAFE) and private training organisations. We were told that this was complicated by a budget reduction of 20 per cent from the previous financial year.

## REHABILITATION AND REPARATION

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There was instability in Education staffing. The Education Manager was not substantive in the position, a Prison Education Coordinator (PEC) was on long term leave, a recently appointed PEC had not commenced, and a casual tutor resigned during the inspection.

Despite the uncertainty, there was a significant focus on providing meaningful outcomes for prisoners. The Education Manager encouraged staff to adapt training materials to meet prisoners' education needs, within the constraints of the Vocational and Education Training units of competency. Staff and prisoners both commented that they felt supported by the Education Manager. Men engaged in education valued the opportunity and advised it had the potential to change their post-prison experience.

### **Wooroloo provided a good range of short courses**

The prison provided a wide range of short trade courses which were delivered through Central Regional TAFE and included:

- working at heights;
- first aid;
- forklift;
- bricklaying;
- skid steer / excavator; and
- white card.

Unfortunately, these courses were almost always oversubscribed. Men were prioritised for inclusion based on their release date and requirement to undertake the course for their work within the prison.

These short courses provided prisoners with 'tickets' that improved their employability on release. Prisoners were required to pay \$50 towards the cost of the courses, but the absence of a payment plan had the potential to limit access for some men.

### **Traineeship provision was haphazard and not prioritised**

Traineeships combine education with on the job training, which is important in providing meaningful work and employment pathways. Unfortunately, we did not find traineeships to be a priority at Wooroloo.

Education had identified seven possible traineeship pathways that could be offered and accessed at Wooroloo. But we found it difficult to ascertain the number and type of traineeships that were occurring. The Industries Coordinator had limited understanding of traineeships occurring within industries and information provided by VSOs, PECs and the Education Manager varied as to the number and range of traineeships currently active.

It was also disappointing to find a limited number of VSOs involved in formal training and assessment. Not all VSOs were supportive of training and many had not upgraded their Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, although they were provided opportunities to do so. It should be noted, however, that the shortage of VSOs did impact training delivery, as many VSOs often worked outside their area of expertise.



## REHABILITATION AND REPARATION

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There was a lot of potential for the successful provision of traineeships at Wooroloo however, a more coordinated approach is required. With the support of the Superintendent, it is incumbent on the Education Manager, Industries Coordinator and VSOs to work closely and ensure this occurs.

### **Recommendation 11**

**Review traineeship processes with a view to increasing the range and number provided.**

#### **Digital literacy was not being addressed**

Many prisoners residing at Wooroloo were close to release and should have access to, and training in, the use of technology to prepare them for navigating life after prison. This is particularly the case for prisoners at the end of longer sentences. The education centre had 18 ageing computers, although these did have Windows 10 operating system. These computers were primarily used for classes, but they could be accessed through a booking system when not in use. There were no laptops available for use in cells and no prisoner email facilities.

In an era where digital literacy is critical for employment and many aspects of modern life, some prisoners at Wooroloo will be ill-prepared for work and life beyond prison. Digital literacy is integral to all workplaces and essential for successful post-prison transition.

Many prisoners will also require familiarisation with the Australian Government myGov portal and the digital skills necessary to access and navigate support including JobSearch, Centrelink, Child Support, NDIS and the National Redress Scheme.

To support men at Wooroloo in developing digital literacy, more computers and increased prisoner access are required. If Wooroloo is truly striving to be 'Australia's leading re-entry prison excelling in the provision of innovative and sustainable rehabilitation', then consideration must also be given to allowing prisoners access to a limited suite of intranet sites and a monitored email address. These opportunities have been provided through technology solutions in other jurisdictions.

### **Recommendation 12**

**Provide digital literacy training for all prisoners to support post-prison transition.**

## 7.4 EMPLOYMENT

### **Access to meaningful employment opportunities at Wooroloo was mixed**

We found the traditional industries at Wooroloo were busy worksites, providing meaningful employment in a pleasant environment. Traditional industries included kitchen, laundry, grounds, maintenance and recreation. Forty-six per cent of the prisoner population at Wooroloo were employed in these areas. Prisoners informed us these work sites were attractive because they were allocated 43 per cent of available level 1 gratuities.

## REHABILITATION AND REPARATION

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Regrettably, at the time of our inspection fewer work opportunities were available at prison industry workshops located outside the perimeter fence. These included market gardens, cabinetry, metal and mechanical workshops. Many of the men told us that meaningful employment was generally difficult to obtain. Half of the prisoners responding to our prisoner survey felt that their time was not spent doing useful activities. Further to this, in our 2021 staff survey only 12 per cent of staff believed the prison was effective in providing meaningful employment. This was well below the state average of 26 per cent.

Twenty-four per cent of the population were either not working, or under-employed doing unit work for small periods each of time each day.

Some of these difficulties appeared to be related to delays in the approval processes for various work types and activities.



***Photo 18: The cabinetry workshop***

## REHABILITATION AND REPARATION

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**Photo 19: A grader that had been refurbished in external industries**

### Slow processing of 'suitability for external activities or work camps' forms limited access to production industries

Wooroloo has a number of workplaces that are outside the secure perimeter, but still on gazetted prison property. They have capacity to employ 100 prisoners but just 66 were assigned there. Before a prisoner can work in these workplaces a detailed application, suitability assessment and approval process are required (Section 95 of the *Prisons Act 1981*). Unit Officers were expected to complete the relevant checklist. Each application was then reviewed by the Designated Superintendent, and in some cases the final decision was made by the Director of Sentence Management (DSM) at Head Office. That could take months as the DSM's task list was extensive. Processing was made even more difficult because each prisoner's suitability required six-monthly review.

In the past, Wooroloo had used a local suitability assessment for external activities like employment in external industries. The local procedure had been limited to 14 days, during which time the full s95 risk assessment was conducted. This local policy placed full responsibility on the Superintendent, as it was not a formally endorsed policy nor was it recorded on the Department's Total Offender Management Solution (TOMS) database. Although some Superintendents were happy to carry this risk, Wooroloo's Superintendent was understandably hesitant. This resulted in delays filling external industries positions until formal approval was received.

## REHABILITATION AND REPARATION

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More recently, Wooroloo had phased out this local assessment, believing that compliance with new COPPs would eventually require timely suitability assessments. We were later told that the 'suitability for external activities or work camps' process was under review at head office.

### **Recommendation 13**

The Department should empower local prison management to assess prisoners as suitable to work outside the secure prison perimeter, but on gazetted prison property. That assessment should be visible on the Departmental database.

### **Full employment has been hampered by VSO absence or redeployment**

Most, but not all, VSOs are employed to run prison workplaces or workshops. They often supervise prisoners and provide vocational skills training and direction in prison workshops. At the time of the inspection five of the 32 VSO positions were vacant, and VSOs were also regularly redeployed to cover custodial staff vacancies. If there are not enough VSOs then some workplaces were closed, and others may run at reduced capacity.

Daily absences of VSOs for other reasons, such as personal leave or workers' compensation, could make the impact more acute.

We were pleased to note that the Wooroloo SLA signed in 2020 included eight new VSO positions to cover the 12 per cent rise in the prisoner population.

### **Wooroloo has benefitted from good external contracts**

Prison industries at Wooroloo had been proactive in taking on external contracts that increased skilled employment opportunities for prisoners, with profits going to consolidated revenue. Since 2018, the prison had been contracted to fabricate metal grow-tunnel frames for a local nursery, and to assemble trailers from imported components. Another contract to construct two transportable classrooms for the Department of Education had been successful and may be extended.

At the time of our inspection, Wooroloo industries was constructing a new visits centre building, to be located outside the secure perimeter. The basic structure was an ex-mining kitchen, transported in two halves. Fabrication in-house was cost-effective and there were plans to fit the building out with lockers, counters, and furniture for the visitor-processing area.

Wooroloo had also engaged with Main Roads for a role in a project to re-align the Great Eastern Highway between the Wooroloo and Acacia Prison access roads. Work will commence in mid-2021 and take up to 12 months. Wooroloo staff had met with Main Roads staff throughout 2020, and the indications are that the prison will benefit from being involved in a range of related activities.

## REHABILITATION AND REPARATION

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### System-wide planning for industries is holding back Wooroloo

A Working Prisons model proposed by the Department in 2020 included plans for expanding prison industries across the custodial estate. Partnerships with private enterprise to boost production and employment would be encouraged and prisons would benefit from targeted infrastructure funding (DPC, 2020).

Wooroloo was going to be a trial site for Working Prisons, and worksites outside the fence including, farm, market garden, and the carpentry, mechanical and metalwork shops had high expectations. In the past external contracts have allowed investment in plant and machinery outside the standard budget. Management had hoped that, under Working Prisons, Wooroloo would secure new contracts, and build capacity and production.

In anticipation of the Working Prisons model, Wooroloo management had developed an ambitious 'Proposed Initiatives for Expansion' document. It had identified \$4.3m targeted investment for internal production capacity to supply Wooroloo and the Western Australian custodial estate.

It also proposed \$21m in new investment for external commercial contract capacity. Without the Working Prisons model, these plans may not progress to fruition. That would be an opportunity lost.

### **Recommendation 14**

**Develop and implement a system wide plan to focus on expanding prison industries.**

## 7.5 PREPARATION FOR RELEASE

### Wooroloo as an end-of-sentence prison, should focus on re-entry services

The Department runs three minimum-security prison farms: Wooroloo (55 km north-east of Perth); Karnet (78 km south-east of Perth); and Pardelup (386 km south of Perth). Wooroloo is the largest of the three. At Wooroloo, support for prisoners soon due for release was provided by the Transitional Manager, the Employment Co-ordinator and Assessment Writers. They worked out of Re-entry House, a beautiful century old building.

Prisoners were free to queue each afternoon for appointments at Re-entry House. Staff helped them get personal documentation, including birth certificates, Medicare cards, and driver's licenses. The Transitional Manager and Employment Coordinator also distributed employment agency and training organisation details, provided banking information, and gave tips on resume preparation and the disclosure of criminal history. Since the onset of the pandemic, prisoners were given a COVID-19 pre-release awareness checklist.

Men within six months of their earliest eligibility date for release could be referred to government or non-government support agencies. Over 60 per cent of prisoners at Wooroloo were typically in that category. An average of 50 men each month were on the pre-release checklist. Re-entry House staff were very busy trying to keep up with demand.



## REHABILITATION AND REPARATION

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### **A recommendation to increase re-entry capacity had not been progressed**

In 2017 a Reintegration Project Officer position had been allocated to Wooroloo. The Reintegration Project Officer supported both the Transitional Manager and the Employment Coordinator. Despite that, in 2018 we found that Wooroloo re-entry services were still not meeting need (OICS, 2018, pp. 9-10). We were disappointed to learn that the funding for the Reintegration Project Officer position was discontinued in September 2020. This was surprising given the projected increase in the prisoner population and the increasing workload required in referring prisoner clients to the contracted re-entry service provider.

### **Head office delays were a major source of frustration**

We would expect that applications for reintegration programs would be prioritised for a re-entry prison such as Wooroloo. In 2018, we found that approvals for reintegration programs from the Sentence Management Directorate were being delayed by several months, reducing rehabilitation options and access to parole (OICS, 2018, p. 4). Head office delays remained an issue at this inspection and were a major source of frustration for both prisoners and staff.

The Department's Prisoner Employment Program (PEP) provides minimum-security prisoners the opportunity to engage in employment related activities in the community prior to release. PEP is intended to enhance a prisoner's prospects of gaining paid employment following release from prison (DCS 2015). Day release is provided to attend activities such as: work experience; vocational training; university attendance; activities relating to seeking employment; and paid employment. Prisoners are eligible for participation in PEP 12 months prior to the date they become eligible for discharge, and they may apply for the program up to three months prior to that date. We heard that some approvals took up to and often more than three months, which encroached on the prisoner's participation time on the program. These delays also impacted a prisoner's ability to earn valuable wages if undertaking paid employment while on PEP.

Eligible prisoners in their last 12 months of sentence can apply for Reintegration Leave (RIL). RIL provides minimum-security prisoners with the opportunity to re-establish relationships with their families and communities through programmed periods of leave, with the aim of offsetting the effects of institutionalisation and assisting with reintegration back into society (DCS 2010). As an incentive for work camp participation, a higher rate of leave is provided for prisoners located in a work camp. Logistically, RIL provided some challenges for prisoners based at the Dowerin Work Camp. They were transferred to Wooroloo the day prior, and returned the day after RIL was scheduled, meaning they must remain at the prison overnight.



## REHABILITATION AND REPARATION

**Table 5: Eligibility and maximum periods of RIL leave**

Months prior to earliest eligibility date for release, parole review date or earliest date of release	Prison – rate of leave	Work camp – rate of leave
Between 6 and 12 months	12 hours per month	24 hours per month
Between 1 and 6 months	24 hours per month	48 hours per month
1 month or less	72 hours per month	144 hours per month

Like PEP, prisoners can apply for RIL up to three months prior to the expected date of commencement. Many men advised us that their initial applications were still pending or had been considerably delayed beyond the three-month period. Not only did this impact the prisoner, but it also affected families who had been looking forward to the visits.

While staff tried to prepare prisoners for possible delays in PEP and RIL applications, they also had to manage their frustrations when delays were experienced. We understand the Department has a duty to ensure appropriate risk assessments and site visits occur prior to approval. However, if the delays at head office cannot be reduced, then the process should be amended to allow applications to be made earlier.

### **Recommendation 15**

**Expediate the time taken to approve PEP and RIL applications, or amend policy to allow applications to be made earlier.**

### **The re-entry contractor's capacity to provide support was limited**

For many years the Department has contracted external non-government organisations to provide additional re-entry support services. In 2018, the re-entry support contract for metropolitan prisons passed from Outcare to the ReSet consortium, comprised of Wungening Aboriginal Corporation, Centrelink, St Bartholomew's House, and the Wirrpanda Foundation.

ReSet relied on Wooroloo Re-Entry House staff to refer clients found to be at medium or high risk of re-offending. Early in the new contract that assessment had proved time consuming, and client referrals were few. In 2021, we were told that Transitional Managers could refer clients to ReSet based on local knowledge, which avoided long delays. ReSet was only contracted to manage 2,300 male clients across the metro estate. Clients were waitlisted according to the remaining time before their release.

Accommodation after release was a top priority for prisoners. ReSet had just 19 accommodation placements for the whole metropolitan area. That was less than half the available accommodation that had been available to Outcare before the contract change. Our experience has shown that the availability of stable accommodation on release was a crucial success factor for prisoners to reintegrate back into the community.

## REHABILITATION AND REPARATION

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The re-entry service contract included an expectation that ReSet continue to monitor and help ex-prisoners through their first 12 months of freedom. However, ReSet staff said that it was often difficult to continue engaging with some clients when telephone contact was lost.

### **ReSet staff reported improved engagement with DOJ contract management**

Early in the contract, ReSet found the lack of key performance indicators and a clear reporting structure challenging. Now, three years into the contract, ReSet's internal governance and quality assurance processes were in place. Engagement with the Department's contract management team had improved. The six-monthly Reintegration Services Program Reports were put to better use. ReSet and the contract management team had robust discussions about details in the reports. Respect and mutual understanding had grown.

# Chapter 8

## DOWERIN WORK CAMP

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### 8.1 LIFE AT DOWERIN

#### Dowerin continued to thrive

The Dowerin Work Camp is located 100km east of Wooroloo and was officially opened in February 2012, after relocating from Kellerberrin. The work camp has capacity for 20 low security rated prisoners and plays an integral role in developing important life and work skills for the prisoners. It also offered an important avenue to reintegrate men back into community, while also providing services that benefited local communities.

The senior management team at Wooroloo were doing an excellent job in identifying and approving prisoners for placement at Dowerin. Over the years it has maintained the second-highest occupancy rate of all work camps.

Dowerin was always staffed by one Work Camp Senior Officer and one Work Camp Officer. Staff rostered to these positions were scheduled on a rotating roster, on site one week at a time. During their week on site, officers resided in staff accommodation, with two bedrooms each with private amenities, a shared kitchen and lounge area.

Two vehicles were located at the work camp, a Landcruiser and a small bus. They were both new and adequate for the work required of them. Another vehicle was available at Wooroloo and used by staff commencing rotation or to collect new prisoners from Wooroloo and drive to the work camp. This was a small bus that had been retrofitted, with seven seats and a caged rear area for prisoners' property and other items.

The infrastructure at Dowerin was exceptional. Men resided in one of two units, in single cells with a small fridge, bed, shelving and a TV. Each unit had a small kitchenette, an ablution block and large veranda. Like Wooroloo, men were not locked in their cells at night. The work camp was in the process of laying pads for the installation of air-conditioning units in each cell.

Food was prepared by a nominated prisoner cook, who was supported by a peer helper and worked out of a large and well stocked kitchen. Food stocks for Dowerin were delivered to Wooroloo where they were collected and transported with the change of shift officer on a Friday. We heard some concerns regarding the transportation process of fresh and frozen food however, this should be improved through provision of a new compartmentalised trailer the work camp had been promised. The trailer will have a refrigerated section for food stocks.

Other infrastructure included a prisoner dining room, visits huts, e-visits facilities, recreational facilities, a large market garden and officer station.

## DOWERIN WORK CAMP

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*Photo 20: Dowerin recreation court*



*Photo 21: Prisoner accommodation at Dowerin*

## DOWERIN WORK CAMP

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### Prisoners were busy

Prisoners at the work camp had recently undertaken projects at Wongan Hills, Koorda, Kellerberrin, Meckering and Wyalkatchem. The week prior to our inspection, of the 18 men at Dowerin, seven were static workers at Dowerin or Goomalling Shires, driven to and from project work by shire staff. Five prisoners were completing maintenance work at the Kununoppin Hospital and the remaining five prisoners remained at the work camp as cooks or gardeners.

One prisoner had been able to gain PEP approval and was employed and earning wages at Goomalling Shire. Nine work camp prisoners had been approved for RIL, spending scheduled weekends at home with their family. Achieving PEP or RIL was a highly prized incentive but many men complained of the long wait times for the approval process.

Three two-hour social visits sessions were available over the weekend. Before COVID-19, visits sessions had been four hours. Dowerin prisoners disliked the change to two-hour visit sessions. Travel time from Perth was at least two hours each way. E-visits were also available after working hours. We were advised this had been popular. Outside work hours, men were also kept busy through recreational activities. Northam TAFE attended the work camp annually to facilitate education classes, including brick paving and construction.

At times in 2020 and 2021 prisoners were unable to leave the grounds of the work camp for work or recreation due to COVID-19 imposed restrictions. The men proactively utilised this time to conduct improvements on the camp itself. This included repainting of cells, kitchenettes and ablutions, replastering of the recreation room and the construction of a multi-purpose outdoor kitchen and BBQ area.

## 8.2 COMMUNITY RELATIONS

### The relationship between work camp and community was excellent

Dowerin deals with a different range of stakeholders to Wooroloo. Therefore, the prison had a separate consultative arrangement called the Community Liaison Group (CLG) in place. The CLG convened quarterly and consisted of representatives from the prison along with the Goomalling and Dowerin shires.

Completed and future works were discussed in this forum and it appeared relations were very positive. This was evidenced by the range of letters of appreciation the work camp had received from various community groups. Previously, many functions undertaken by work camp prisoners would have been completed by community volunteers or not at all.

# Appendix 1

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# Appendix 2

## ABBREVIATIONS

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AA	Alcoholics Anonymous
ASC	Aboriginal Services Committee
ARMS	At-Risk Management System
AVS	Aboriginal Visitor Scheme
BRS	Broadspectrum
CCTV	Closed-Circuit Television System
CNM	Clinical Nurse Manager
COPP	Commissioner's Operating Policies and Procedures
DSM	Director of Sentence Management
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent Position
GP	General Practitioner
IMP	Individual Management Plan
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPC	Multi-Purpose Centre
NA	Narcotics Anonymous
OICS	Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services
PEC	Prison Education Coordinator
PEP	Prisoner Employment Program
PHS	Psychological Health Services
PiP	Parole in-reach Program
PSO	Prison Support Officer
PRAG	Prisoner Risk Assessment Group
RAP	Reconciliation Action Plan
RIL	Reintegration Leave
SAMS	Support and Monitoring System
SLA	Staffing Level Agreement
SMR	Senior Medical Receptionist
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
VSO	Vocational Support Officer

# Appendix 3

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE RESPONSE

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## **Response to OICS Draft Report:** 2021 Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm

**September 2021**

Version 1.1

## DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE RESPONSE

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Response to OICS Draft Report:  
2021 Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm

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### **Contents**

Response Overview .....	3
Response to Recommendations .....	6
Appendix A: Inaccuracies and Comments.....	12

Response to OICS Draft Report:  
2021 Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm

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## Response Overview

### Introduction

On 23 November 2020, the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (OICS) announced its inspection of the Wooroloo Prison Farm (Wooroloo) scheduled to occur from 28 March to 1 April 2021. This was the seventh inspection of Wooroloo which includes Dowerin Work Camp, with inspections occurring every three years since 2002.

As per usual process, the Department of Justice (the Department) facilitated a wide range of documentation and access to systems, policies, processes, the facility including staff, prisoners and contractors were made available to OICS upon request for the purpose of the inspection.

On 17 August 2021, the Department received a draft report of the inspection from OICS for review and comment. The draft report has highlighted key findings and made 15 recommendations. The Department has reviewed the draft report and provides further context, comments, and responses to the recommendations as below.

Appendix A contains further comments linked to sections in the report for the Inspector's attention and consideration when finalising the report.

### Review Comments

The Department thanks the Inspector for the 2021 Inspection of Wooroloo and the opportunity to respond to key findings and initiate further improvements as required.

The Department is pleased to note Wooroloo continues to do well despite challenges at the prison and notes that Wooroloo has made positive progress in terms of maintaining a stable senior management team, improving relationships between the Western Australian Prison Officers Union (WAPOU) local branch and senior management, having a clear direction of what the prison is seeking to achieve which was widely communicated and understood by staff, and the finalisation of a staffing level agreement that facilitated increased staffing numbers to be able to safely and effectively operate at Wooroloo's maximum capacity.

It is also pleasing to note Wooroloo is committed to staff training with strong support from senior management and despite the challenges faced due to COVID-19, alternative strategies were adopted that enabled focused training, particularly for officers who were less confident or competent. The concerns highlighted by OICS in relation to the online training delivery of the COPPs have been noted and will be investigated.

With respect to the behaviour of staff, the Department has clear policies and procedures including the Code of Conduct dealing with what is expected of all staff in terms of their behaviour. The Code sets out the minimum behavioural standards. Behaviour such as bullying, unlawful discrimination or harassment in any form based on grounds such as national origin, race, culture, appearance, language, gender, sexual orientation, age, place of residence, belief, religion, political affiliation, social, economic or health status, family responsibilities or marital status is not tolerated. The Code of Conduct and the expectations of the Director General in terms of behaviour are made clear to staff in face-to-face training sessions conducted by Professional Standards Division (PSD) at Corrective Services worksites including custodial facilities.

## DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE RESPONSE

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Response to OICS Draft Report:  
2021 Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm

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All Department staff are required to undertake the online Accountable and Ethical Decision-Making (AEDM) training module. This training ensures that all employees are aware of their obligations under the Code of Conduct. Staff are required to refresh their AEDM training on an annual basis.

The results of the OICS 'perception' survey about staff behaviour at Wooroloo is not reflected in official complaints received by the PSD relating to allegations of verbal or physical abuse at that facility. The PSD currently receives reports of suspected breaches of discipline and/or criminal activity from across the Department and assess these matters to determine the most appropriate course of action. This includes an assessment of the nature of the complaint and in some cases, a referral for investigation. All matters are investigated in accordance with the Public Sector Commission (PSC) guidelines and the (PSC) Commissioner's Instructions.

The PSD have advised that the Code of Conduct requires all employees to report suspected misconduct and/or criminal activity. Employees can report through the Department's Online Misconduct Reporting Portal and a 24-hour Safeline Reporting number. Employees may also report directly to the PSC or the Corruption and Crime Commission.

The PSD currently have two Western Australian Police Force (WAPF) Detectives co-located within the PSD. Matters involving criminality are referred to the WAPF for their assessment.

The PSD have advised that as part of the Department's commitment to provide a safe workplace, additional Integrity and Ethics awareness sessions will be provided to employees at Wooroloo to educate employees on how to report suspected breaches of discipline. A session was undertaken on 30 September 2021, and a schedule will be arranged with the Prisons Superintendent thereafter.

In addition to the reporting mechanisms available, Integrity and Ethics Committee meetings have been established in all custodial estates, including Wooroloo Prison Farm. The last meeting was held in August 2021. Officers from PSD meet with the relevant Superintendents/Managers at the prisons to discuss any concerns requiring attention. This includes officers who may have come to attention based on their behaviour. This is a valuable mechanism in the detection, management, and prevention of conduct that could potentially escalate.

The Department has a Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure. Policies and Procedures aim to identify and eliminate inappropriate and unreasonable behaviours and practices within the workplace that constitute bullying and harassment. Grievance Officer located at corrective services sites are available to confidentially discuss matters that are concerning staff, including the behaviour of other staff.

The report discusses at length the transportable accommodation upgrade at Wooroloo which was originally intended to accommodate 48 prisoners, however resulted in accommodating only 24 prisoners. This was due to a shift from the original plan to double bunk the 24 cells to achieve closer comparability to the size of other cells at Wooroloo. Alternate solutions to achieve the increased capacity on the site were adopted. Due to the current low population numbers, these 24 cells have been sectioned for use as a COVID isolation area at Wooroloo.

It is important to understand that the building of the units at Wooroloo was planned for in 2016 when the Department was going through unprecedented prisoner growth and bed space across the estate was critically low. There was no Long-Term Custodial

## DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE RESPONSE

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Response to OICS Draft Report:  
2021 Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm

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Plan for expansion and no funded expansion in the Budget. There was a push to inject beds into the estate with limited time for design and consultation.

Since this time the Department has created a dedicated Senior Infrastructure Planning role, developed a Long-Term Custodial Infrastructure Plan and completed two major expansions of the estate at Bunbury and Casuarina Prisons. The Department is now in a better place to deliver robust well-designed infrastructure solutions that meet the needs of the estate.

The Department is proud of Wooroloo's sustainability initiatives, including the excellent work being done at Dowerin Workcamp as acknowledged in the OICS report. These initiatives provide opportunities for prisoners to get realistic work experience, and gain employability skills and accredited training to enhance their employment opportunities on release. Some of these initiatives include the recycling project, garden and plant propagation, and the farm action plan outlining the paddock management plan and the breakup of cap rock to be able to turn land previously not able to be cropped into land that is now productive, an initiative that has received excellence within the report.

Wooroloo's ability to respond to incidents is also evidenced through their immediate response and management of a disturbance in March 2020 due to a power outage as highlighted in the report. Additionally, they have an embedded firefighting capability to be able to respond efficiently and effectively to frequent bush fires in the greater Wooroloo area, the most notable being the widely publicised bushfire that spread throughout Wooroloo in February 2021. Wooroloo adopts a lessons-learned culture whereby incidents are reviewed for the purpose of implementing new and improved processes.

The report makes many other acknowledgements in relation to the services and operations at Wooroloo and has also highlighted a number of areas for improvement. The Department will examine each one of the areas to find ways to improve services and outcomes for the prisoners at Wooroloo.



Response to OICS Draft Report:  
2021 Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm

## Response to Recommendations

### 1 Wooroloo should take adequate steps to address staff behaviour issues to ensure that all staff are protected from any form of discrimination or intimidation.

**Level of Acceptance:** Supported in Principle  
**Responsible Division:** Corrective Services  
**Responsible Directorate:** Adult Male Prisons  
**Proposed Completion Date:** 30 June 2022

#### Response:

The Department has clear guidelines on how its staff are expected to behave. The Code of Conduct sets the minimum behavioural standards for Department staff and any inappropriate behaviours are not tolerated. These include bullying, unlawful discrimination or harassment in any form based on grounds such as national origin, race, culture, appearance, language, gender, sexual orientation, age, place of residence, belief, religion, political affiliation, social, economic or health status, family responsibilities or marital status.

Policies, procedures, and reporting mechanisms are in place to support staff who are the victims of such behaviours, and disciplinary action may be taken against those found to be engaging in inappropriate behaviours through the Department's Professional Standards Division.

Staff who experience any forms of abuse are encouraged to report these matters to the Professional Standards Division or an appropriate external agency such as the Equal Opportunity Commission, Public Sector Commission and the Corruption and Crime Commission.

As highlighted in the report, the Equal Opportunity Commission attended Wooroloo in April 2021 to deliver sexual harassment and workplace culture training to staff.

The Superintendent issued a broadcast to all staff reinforcing the requirements of the Department's Code of Conduct and Bullying and Harassment Policy. The situation will continue to be monitored and further appropriate action taken as required.

Additional Ethics and Integrity awareness sessions have commenced to educate employees on how to report misconduct and/or suspected breaches of discipline and to create an environment where staff feel safe to do so.

### 2 Safeguard prisoner privacy during orientation by conducting interviews in a private space.

**Level of Acceptance:** Supported in Principle  
**Responsible Division:** Corrective Services  
**Responsible Directorate:** Adult Male Prisons  
**Proposed Completion Date:** 30 June 2022

#### Response:

The availability of office space at Wooroloo is limited, specifically within the designated orientation accommodation in Unit 3. The privacy of prisoners is highly regarded and despite the limitations of interview space within Unit 3, Wooroloo will review its orientation process with a view to implementing allocated set times for the office to be used exclusively for private orientation sessions where appropriate.

## DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE RESPONSE

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Response to OICS Draft Report:  
2021 Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm

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### **3 Increase the access to information and support for prisoners facing deportation due to visa cancellation.**

**Level of Acceptance:** Noted  
**Responsible Division:** Corrective Services  
**Responsible Directorate:** Offender Services  
**Proposed Completion Date:** N/A

#### **Response:**

The Department will continue to support prisoners facing deportation and provide ongoing facilitation of prisoner communication with relevant immigration agencies and consular supports as required. The Department is not in a position to provide legal or immigration advice to prisoners and is not involved in the decisions of immigration matters pertaining to non-citizen prisoners.

### **4 Offer prisoners being interviewed or attending appointments the opportunities to use an accredited interpretation service.**

**Level of Acceptance:** Supported  
**Responsible Division:** Corrective Services  
**Responsible Directorate:** Adult Male Prisons  
**Proposed Completion Date:** Completed

#### **Response:**

The Superintendent Wooroloo has issued a notice to staff reinforcing the Translating and Interpreting Services (National) provided by the Australian Government Department of Home Affairs for people who do not speak English, and for agencies and businesses that need to communicate with their non-English speaking clients.

The service is available to all staff in areas that require an interpreter, including Health, Assessments, Reception and Prison Officers, when it has been determined that a person does not speak English, or otherwise requires an interpreter, staff can utilise this service without hesitation as necessary.

### **5 At the earliest opportunity, and in line with WA health guidelines, restore social visits to pre COVID-19 conditions, frequency and duration.**

**Level of Acceptance:** Noted  
**Responsible Division:** Corrective Services  
**Responsible Directorate:** Adult Male Prisons  
**Proposed Completion Date:** N/A

#### **Response:**

In accordance with WA's transition to Phase 5 of COVID-19 management, and in line with health advice, the Department has already lifted restrictions and Wooroloo has resumed full visit sessions, including access to all visit facilities such as canteen and children's playground.

The Department has a dedicated COVID-19 Taskforce established to coordinate the Corrective Services response to the pandemic in line with WA Health guidelines across all custodial facilities and community corrections and youth justice facilities.

Operational Instructions are issued and complied with based on advice from the Chief Health Officer for Western Australia to ensure the safety of staff, prisoners and visitors.

## DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE RESPONSE

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Response to OIGS Draft Report:  
2021 Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm

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At the time of the inspection, Wooroloo observed the advice and instructions from the Department's COVID-19 Taskforce and will continue to support restricted measures as directed to help prevent COVID-19 from entering into WA prisons.

### **6 Adopt an electronic bank transfer system for visitors to deposit money into prisoners' private cash accounts.**

**Level of Acceptance:** Noted  
**Responsible Division:** Corrective Services  
**Responsible Directorate:** Adult Male Prisons  
**Proposed Completion Date:** Completed

#### **Response:**

The Department has successfully implemented a new, no-cost, cash-free, COVID-19-safe system for depositing funds for prisoners. Wooroloo, along with other prisons across the custodial estate are taking advantage of the Cashless Prisons that provides prisoners with a Prisoner's Private Cash Account (PPCA) and Prisoner's Telephone Account (PTS). This allows registered family and friends to make deposits directly into prisoners' accounts at no cost to them or the prisoners.

### **7 Recommence AA and NA at Wooroloo.**

**Level of Acceptance:** Supported in Principle  
**Responsible Division:** Corrective Services  
**Responsible Directorate:** Adult Male Prisons  
**Proposed Completion Date:** 30 June 2022

#### **Response:**

Wooroloo supports Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA), though these services rely on the availability of volunteers.

A number of submissions (s.65 applications) are currently being assessed for security clearances. Once cleared, the successful applicants will be approved to visit and run AA and NA support sessions.

### **8 Provide peer support prisoners training in gatekeeper suicide prevention or a preferred alternative.**

**Level of Acceptance:** Supported in Principle  
**Responsible Division:** Corrective Services  
**Responsible Directorate:** Offender Services  
**Proposed Completion Date:** 30 June 2022

#### **Response:**

Gatekeeper training is very specialised and designed for professionals and paraprofessionals. The Mental Health Commission is in the process of realigning the Gatekeeper training and has confirmed training will be delivered to the Department. Initial focus will be on train the trainer to establish a cohort of facilitators. It is anticipated Gatekeeper training will be rolled out to the Peer Support Program in 2022.

Response to OICS Draft Report:  
2021 Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm

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**9 Improve relational security practices through more active engagement between officers and prisoners.**

**Level of Acceptance:** Supported  
**Responsible Division:** Corrective Services  
**Responsible Directorate:** Adult Male Prisons  
**Proposed Completion Date:** 31 August 2022

**Response:**

The Department supports the need to improve relational security which would see an increased interaction between custodial officers and prisoners.

Wooroloo will issue a direction to staff to improve relational security. Staff have been directed to move about the units and positively interact with prisoners. This will be monitored by senior officers and Wooroloo's senior management team.

**10 Increase support mechanisms for fathers to re-establish or maintain connection with their children.**

**Level of Acceptance:** Noted  
**Responsible Division:** Corrective Services  
**Responsible Directorate:** Offender Services  
**Proposed Completion Date:** N/A

**Response:**

Wungening (ReSet) currently hold the Department's Perth Metropolitan Area Parenting and Family Support Services contract for Men (DCS063-2016C) and Women (DCS063-2016E). Wungening deliver parenting programs as part of these contracts.

In addition, prisoners who are fathers are encouraged to maintain good relations with their children through visits, telephone calls and e-visits.

**11 Review traineeship processes with a view to increasing the range and number provided.**

**Level of Acceptance:** Supported  
**Responsible Division:** Corrective Services  
**Responsible Directorate:** Offender Services  
**Proposed Completion Date:** 31 December 2022

**Response:**

A professional development session has been scheduled for Q4 2021 to provide the Wooroloo senior management team and education and vocational support officer staff with strategies to increase traineeship and apprenticeship capability at Wooroloo.

Monthly trainee reports will be provided to the Superintendent commencing September 2021 to monitor the ongoing engagement of trainees at Wooroloo.

## DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE RESPONSE

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Response to OICS Draft Report:  
2021 Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm

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### **12 Provide digital literacy training for all prisoners to support post-prison transition.**

**Level of Acceptance:** Supported  
**Responsible Division:** Corrective Services  
**Responsible Directorate:** Offender Services  
**Proposed Completion Date:** 31 December 2022

#### **Response:**

From September to December 2021, Wooroloo will be trialing the National Centre for Vocational Education Research's (NCVER) Digital Literacy Assessment Tool.

The tool will assess prisoners' capability and familiarity with:

- Digital devices and technologies;
- Use of common software applications;
- Use of the internet to search and find relevant information, apply for services, or purchase goods etc.; and
- Knowledge and awareness of personal and private security, and privacy issues relating to living and working in the digital world.

Completion of the trial will assist the Department in determining the digital literacy training needs across the prison estate to develop appropriate training solutions.

### **13 The Department should empower local prison management to assess prisoners as suitable to work outside the secure prison perimeter, but on gazette prison property. That assessment should be visible on the Departmental database.**

**Level of Acceptance:** Supported in Principle  
**Responsible Division:** Corrective Services  
**Responsible Directorate:** Operational Support  
**Proposed Completion Date:** 31 December 2022

#### **Response:**

The 'suitability for external activities or work camps' process is under review. Consideration of local suitability assessment at the prison level in line with this recommendation will be taken into consideration as part of this review.

### **14 Develop and implement a system wide plan to focus on expanding prison industries.**

**Level of Acceptance:** Supported in Principle  
**Responsible Division:** Corporate Services  
**Responsible Directorate:** N/A  
**Proposed Completion Date:** 31 December 2024

#### **Response:**

The expansion of state-wide prison industries will be subject to the outcomes of the Department's current projects, including the Long-Term Prison Industries Plan (LTPIP) under the Prison Services Evaluation (PSE) Project.

## DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE RESPONSE

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Response to OICS Draft Report:  
2021 Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm

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The purpose of the LTPIP is to establish the long-term strategic planning direction for the expansion of Western Australia's (WA's) Prison Industries. Stage one of the LTPIP proposes a 10-year end state model for WA's Prison Industries.

The LTPIP is currently on hold, pending outcome of the PSE and related independent reviews.

**15 Expediate the time taken to approve PEP and RIL applications or amend policy to allow applications to be made earlier.**

<b>Level of Acceptance:</b>	Supported in Principle
<b>Responsible Division:</b>	Corrective Services
<b>Responsible Directorate:</b>	Offender Services
<b>Proposed Completion Date:</b>	31 December 2022

**Response:**

All applications for PEP and RIL are assessed in accordance with Policy Directive 68 – Prisoner Employment Program and COPP 14.2 – Home Leave respectively.

Each assessment carefully considers the suitability of the sponsor/employer; safety and interests of the public; risk to the safety of the prisoner; prisoner's behaviour while in custody; and likelihood of the prisoner successfully completing leave.

The Department will review the process to identify improvements that can be made to expedite approvals.



# Appendix 4

## INSPECTION DETAILS

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### PREVIOUS INSPECTION

21–27 March 2018

### ACTIVITY SINCE PREVIOUS INSPECTION

Liaison visits to Wooroloo Prison Farm	9
Independent Visitor visits to Wooroloo Prison Farm	25

### SURVEYS

Prisoner survey	28 January 2021	103 responses
Staff survey (online)	25–31 January 2021	59 responses
Service provider survey	23 February 2021	8 responses

### INSPECTION TEAM

Eamon Ryan	Inspector
Darian Ferguson	Deputy Inspector
Natalie Gibson	Director Operations
Charlie Staples	Inspections and Research Officer
Jim Bryden	Inspections and Research Officer
Aaron Hardwick	Inspections and Research Officer (Justice Secondee)
Catie Parsons	Inspections and Research Officer (Parliament Secondee)
Liz George	Inspections and Research Officer
Joseph Wallam	Community Liaison Officer
Janet Connor	Education and Training Consultant

### KEY DATES

Inspection announced	24 November 2020
Start of on-site inspection	28 March 2021
Completion of on-site inspection	1 April 2021
Presentation of preliminary findings	22 April 2021
Draft report sent to Department of Justice	17 August 2021
Declaration of prepared report	27 October 2021

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



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