



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Justice**  
**Corrective Services**

# **Response to OICS Draft Report:**

**2021 Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm**

**September 2021**

Version 1.1

## **Contents**

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

## 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.

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

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 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.

<b>Level of Acceptance:</b>	Supported in Principle
<b>Responsible Division:</b>	Corrective Services
<b>Responsible Directorate:</b>	Adult Male Prisons
<b>Proposed Completion Date:</b>	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.

<b>Level of Acceptance:</b>	Supported in Principle
<b>Responsible Division:</b>	Corrective Services
<b>Responsible Directorate:</b>	Adult Male Prisons
<b>Proposed Completion Date:</b>	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.

**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.

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.



**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.

**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.

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.