



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

# **Response to OICS Draft Report:**

## **2021 Inspection of Albany Regional Prison**

**October 2021**

Version 1.1

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## Response Overview

### Introduction

On 16 October 2020, the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (OICS) announced its inspection of Albany Regional Prison (Albany) scheduled to occur from 7 to 12 February 2021. This was the seventh inspection of Albany with inspections occurring every three years since 2002.

As per usual process, the Department of Justice (the Department) facilitated OICS' access to a wide range of documentation, systems, policies, processes, including access to Albany prison along with staff, prisoners and contractors as requested by OICS for the purposes of the inspection.

On 16 September 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 responses to the recommendations and further context and comments below for the Inspector's attention and consideration when finalising the report.

Appendix A draws the Inspector's attention to comments and/or inaccuracies linked to specific sections within the report.

### Review Comments

The Department appreciates the opportunity to respond to key findings highlighted in the 2021 Inspection Report of Albany and initiate further improvements as required. This is the seventh inspection of Albany since 2003.

The onset of COVID-19 and a reduction in prisoner population, presented an opportunity to make significant changes to Unit 1 at Albany, including shutting down Unit 1A and B wings to allow for refurbishments, and transferring the protection prisoners from this unit to Hakea.

The Department acknowledges only 58 staff (24%) elected to complete the staff survey, of which 25 staff (10%) provided their perception of the senior management team. From previous experiences with perception surveys, the Department is mindful that conclusions drawn may not be objectively accurate and can be influenced by a range of factors at an individual level.

Whilst the management team at Albany is not aware of any complaints of aggressive and unsupportive management or any discontent amongst staff, further discussions will be held to understand any concerns / issues staff may be experiencing.

Albany has been one of the Department's best performing prisons. Its capacity and capability to respond to an emergency is of a high standard. This is particularly valuable given Albany's geographical location and distance from the metropolitan areas where access to emergency services from Albany can be challenging.

Since the onsite inspection in February 2021, the Department has successfully recruited seven additional Senior Officers to Albany which is positive given its geographical location and associated recruiting challenges.

Albany, together with every other prison in the state, is part of the discussions regarding the future planning of WA prisons, via the Prison Services Evaluation and Prison Network Design initiatives. Each prison will be assigned a specific role within the network and prisoners will progress in a structured way through the network to

ensure equitable access to services across the State. Prisons will be resourced based on their role and services to be provided,

The Department has made significant inroads into modern Information and Communications Technology in the custodial estate by providing increased access to digital services for prisoners and capability for mobile technology access. The Department's Long-Term Custodial Technology Strategy will provide further opportunity to improve digital services and mobile technologies that will assist staff in their day to day duties and improve access to information and services for prisoners.

Albany has maintained a detailed Local Order for supporting its foreign national and CALD prisoners, in addition to implementing other measures beyond the requirements of the Local Order, such as the provision of reading material in foreign languages, and the ability to source authentic food products from local Asian grocers.

The Department is appreciative of the Inspector's positive acknowledgements of operational improvements made within the inspection report which will undoubtedly drive further improvements at Albany.

## Response to Recommendations

### **1 That the Department continue to prioritise replacement of legacy infrastructure at Albany Regional Prison, including: prisoner reception and that contained in the original prison building known as Unit 1.**

**Level of Acceptance:** Noted  
**Responsible Division:** Corporate Services  
**Proposed Completion Date:** N/A

#### **Response:**

Replacement of legacy infrastructure at Albany Regional Prison will be the subject of ongoing planning and funding under the Long-Term Custodial Infrastructure Plan. Previous attempts to secure funding for this purpose have been unsuccessful.

### **2 Evaluate the feasibility of increased use of mobile technology in prison units both to help staff better meet their work obligations and to improve access to information and services for prisoners.**

**Level of Acceptance:** Noted  
**Responsible Division:** Corporate Services  
**Responsible Directorate:** Knowledge, Information and Technology  
**Proposed Completion Date:** N/A

#### **Response:**

The Department has developed a Long-Term Custodial Technology Strategy (LTCTS) to assess the benefits and efficiencies of modern Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in the custodial estate, including mobile technologies and increased access to digital services for prisoners.

Submissions have been made to the State's established Digital Capability Fund to procure funding to deliver foundational ICT infrastructure upgrades at custodial facilities, particularly those in the regions. This will provide the base ICT infrastructure to unlock future benefits, such as increased mobility and services to prisoners.

Submissions for seed funding have also been made to enable the implementation of the next components of the LTCTS.

### **3 Establish an Industries Coordinator position.**

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

#### **Response:**

Industries staffing at Albany was reviewed at the end of 2020 and it was determined that no further resources would be allocated at this stage.

The Department is committed to the development of the state-wide Long-Term Prison Industries Plan (LTPIP). The LTPIP will work to establish the long-term strategic planning and direction for the expansion and commercialisation of WA Prison Industries. This will include an assessment of staffing needs to support the plan. The LTPIP is being tracked as part of the Prison Services Evaluation Project.

**4 The Department should develop guidelines for the use of interpretation and translation services for all prisons that meet the standards set by the WA Language Services Policy 2020.**

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

**Response:**

COPP 2.1 – Reception is scheduled for review in March 2022. As part of this review Corrective Services will consider making changes to the COPP to incorporate guidelines on how prisoners can access interpretation and translation services.

**5 Until such time as Unit 1 is fully decommissioned for prisoner accommodation, any future use should be on the basis of single cell occupation.**

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

**Response:**

Albany Unit 1, yards A and B are currently not in use. There are no plans to utilise Unit 1 any further than its current use, e.g. yard C is being used in a limited capacity, primarily for management purposes, and yard D is quarantined for COVID-19 isolation as required.

Planning and assessments of the future of all WA prisons is part of the Prison Services Evaluation and Prison Network Design initiatives. This will determine future infrastructure requirements across the custodial estate, including a decision in relation of the occupancy of Unit 1 at Albany.

**6 Commit to regular organised sporting competitions.**

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

**Response:**

The Department acknowledges the benefits that sporting activities have on the wellbeing of prisoners. Albany is currently developing its activities calendar which will be submitted for executive review and oversight.

**7 Reduce existing restrictions on art and music equipment and materials available to prisoners in their units.**

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

**Response:**

Prisoners at Albany are provided with art and music equipment for use in cells and in units as appropriate. Restrictions are on enamel and acrylic paint for use in cells or unit areas for safety and security reasons. These however are made available in the art classes. Controls around quantities and storage in cells are enforced to ensure issues such as defacement of prison property, trafficking and storage issues are managed.

Albany's current local policies on accessibility to practice music and arts will be submitted for executive review.

**8 Replace the medical centre with a facility meeting modern standards in health delivery, patient privacy and security, with adequate room for any growth in services, and including provision for allied health care, medical observation and an infirmary.**

**Level of Acceptance:** Noted  
**Responsible Division:** Corporate Services  
**Responsible Directorate:** Procurement, Infrastructure and Contracted Services  
**Proposed Completion Date:** N/A

**Response:**

Replacement of legacy infrastructure at Albany Regional Prison will be the subject of ongoing planning and funding under the Long-Term Custodial Infrastructure Plan. Previous attempts to secure funding for this purpose have been unsuccessful.

**9 Develop a Crisis Care facility that is appropriate for vulnerable prisoners in need of high-level support.**

**Level of Acceptance:** Noted  
**Responsible Division:** Corporate Services  
**Responsible Directorate:** Procurement, Infrastructure and Contracted Services  
**Proposed Completion Date:** N/A

**Response:**

Replacement of legacy infrastructure at Albany Regional Prison will be the subject of ongoing planning and funding under the Long-Term Custodial Infrastructure Plan. Previous attempts to secure funding for this purpose have been unsuccessful.

**10 Albany prison should obtain a secure escort vehicle fitted with a toilet and the ability to apply secure restraints through a hatch for longer journeys.**

**Level of Acceptance:** Not Supported  
**Responsible Division:** Corrective Services  
**Responsible Directorate:** Adult Male Prisons  
**Proposed Completion Date:** N/A

**Response:**

Long-distance prisoner escorts to and from Albany are conducted primarily by the Contractor, Ventia, who has a toilet fitted within the transport vehicle, i.e. coach/bus.

In the event the prison is required to undertake escorts, regular stops are made as needed, and escort / restraint procedures are determined in accordance with Departmental policies: COPP 12.1: Escort Vehicles, COPP 12.2: Coordination of Escorts, and COPP 12.3: Conducting Escorts.

**11 Amend COPP 2.3 to ensure that Albany Regional Prison completes a Remand MAP for all remandees received locally.**

**Level of Acceptance:** Not Supported  
**Responsible Division:** Corrective Services  
**Responsible Directorate:** Operational Support  
**Proposed Completion Date:** N/A

**Response:**

As defined in COPP2.3 - Assessment and Sentence Management, the Management and Placement - Remand (MAP-R) is the checklist completed to determine initial security rating and placement for a remand prisoner.

Albany Regional Prison is a maximum-security prison and remand prisoners are always held in standard supervision cells which are maximum security cells. There is no requirement to complete a MAP-R as the remand prisoners at Albany Regional Prison will always be classed a maximum-security.

Details that cover the prisoner's family and welfare situation, release plans, legal representation status, outstanding fines, support needs, and readiness to engage in voluntary programs are captured within the reception and orientation process, including the 'At Risk Management System – Reception Intake Assessment' checklist within TOMS.



**12 Amend procedures relating to Early Discharge to conform with the intent of the WA Parliament that Early Discharge act as an incentive for good behaviour, a means of release for compassionate reasons, and as a meaningful contribution to reducing the high rate of imprisonment.**

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

**Response:**

The Department's current provisions regarding Early Release have been developed and amended several times since the Prisons Amendments Act 2002 and are based on providing early release in line with security considerations.

As per Department's policy review processes and review schedule, this policy is subject to ongoing review. Further considerations and amendments will be made in consultation with key business areas within Corrective Services at the time of review.

**13 The Department should commit to development of a holistic case management system that supports prisoners to progress towards their rehabilitation and reintegration on release.**

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

**Response:**

The Department's case management processes provide the linkages to the various service provisions offered to prisoners during their journey commencing prior to an offender's sentencing through to sentencing/parole completion and re-entry into the community.

Each relevant business area provides prisoners with appropriate assessments relevant to their situation and status, e.g. remand/sentenced, which also includes health assessments. For prisoners with effective sentences greater than 6 months, Individual Management Plans involving a multidisciplinary approach are developed and incorporates treatment, education and security assessments whilst at the same time providing the wrap around services such as health, mental health, counselling and supports as required.

**14 Provide opportunities to improve prisoners access to, and use of, digital literacy technology, including in-cell resources.**

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

**Response:**

The Department is currently trialing the use of the National Centre for Vocational Education Research's (NCVER) Digital Literacy Assessment Tool at Wooroloo Prison Farm.

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.

**15 Albany should develop specific pathways to better engage Aboriginal prisoners in employment and training that will enhance their prospects on release. These initiatives should be tracked and monitored by the prison's Aboriginal Services Committee.**

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

**Response:**

Albany's participation rate in the Time to Work Employment Service program (TWES) is one of the highest in the state. This program provides Aboriginal prisoners with a range of tools to assist in job readiness.

The Department is committed to monitoring employment pathways for Aboriginal prisoners, and ensuring Aboriginal prisoners have equal and fair access to prison jobs via its Aboriginal Services Committee.

The process of tracking and monitoring prisoner employment vacancies and recruitment to ensure regard is given to engagement of Aboriginal prisoners within industry and service areas is being tracked via Albany's Aboriginal Services Committee (ASC). This will include strategies implemented at other prisons for consideration of inclusion within the ASC local service plan.