

MEDIA RELEASE

REPORT NO 139 – 2021 INSPECTION OF BORONIA PRE-RELEASE CENTRE FOR WOMEN

EMBARGOED UNTIL 2:00PM ON TUESDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2022

The recently published report detailing the 2021 inspection of Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women found that the facility continued to provide meaningful opportunities for rehabilitation and was an example of strong practice in the WA system.

Inspector of Custodial Services Eamon Ryan said Boronia benefited from the systemic clarity of its role and the commitment of staff and management to meet high expectations.

‘Every part of Boronia is geared towards maximising the potential for rehabilitation and preparation for release. The prison’s philosophy is based around the principles of respect, responsibility, empowerment and opportunity and the residents benefit from that,’ Mr Ryan said.

Throughout the inspection of Boronia, the support of those principles was observed in everyday operations and interactions between staff and residents.

Mr Ryan said the biggest disappointment was that only about 10-15 per cent of the total female prisoner population in WA could be accommodated at Boronia at one time, and most prisoners would never have the opportunity to reside there.

‘It is a supportive, therapeutic and trauma-informed environment that provides the best chance for residents to prepare for life outside prison. It is a chance all prisoners should have regardless of their location or status,’ Mr Ryan said.

While Boronia was providing a very good level of service, the inspection also identified several improvement opportunities, including:

- More programs focussed on recovery from trauma
- Better support and incentives for Aboriginal women to reside at Boronia
- More focus on structured life skills programs and training
- Improvements to the perimeter fence to ensure intruders cannot access the grounds

After almost 18 years in operation, the prison was also showing signs of wear and tear with increased maintenance needs. The facility has a capable on-site maintenance officer and a team of resident-workers, however many of the emerging issues are likely to require more substantial work and investment. This would ensure that Boronia does not go the way of many prisons in WA and become rundown. Improved maintenance would be consistent with the operating philosophy and ensure the safety and welfare of residents and staff. It is also important that the Department properly maintains a valuable State-owned asset.

A wider issue noted by the Inspector was the impact of the lack of suitable post-release housing on many of the women, and consequently their children. Lack of suitable accommodation potentially compromises the ability of many to secure early release, impacts their feeling of safety on release, and their likelihood of success in post-prison life.

“Not having a safe and stable home is also making it increasingly hard for released women to reunite with their children. We recognise it is an issue across the wider community, but it does have a significant impact on those leaving prison,” Mr Ryan said.

Eamon Ryan
Inspector

For further media information:

The Inspector, Mr Eamon Ryan, will be available for comment from 2:00pm on Tuesday 15 February 2022 and can be contacted on 0421 480 925.