



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR
OF CUSTODIAL SERVICES

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Report No. 79 - Announced Inspection of Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women

The Inspector of Custodial Services has released a report of an inspection of Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women. It is universally acknowledged that women prisoners have different requirements from male prisoners. In particular, they need structured and targeted support to help maintain their family links and to reduce the risk of returning to prison.

The report finds that Boronia continues to provide a safe, secure, calm and supportive environment for the women who are housed there. The Centre is well located and very well designed to meet its purpose. It benefits, too, from being well-resourced, having a clear vision about preparing residents for release, a coordinated and committed team of management and staff, and a positive public image.

Releasing the report, the Inspector of Custodial Services, Professor Neil Morgan said, however, that there are opportunities for further development if Boronia is to maximise its potential:

“For good reason, Boronia has attracted national and international interest as an example of how to deliver pre-release services for female prisoners. However, very few Aboriginal women access its services. Over the past 12 months, Aboriginal women have comprised around 47 per cent of the State's female prisoners but only around 12 per cent of Boronia's population. This means that Aboriginal women, even though they are acknowledged to have some of the highest pre-release needs, remain concentrated in the more disadvantaged parts of the system.

The reasons for the figures are quite complex and are explored in the report. But it cannot be said that Boronia is maximising its potential unless it reaches Aboriginal women in greater numbers. It is particularly disappointing that numbers have declined sharply from 2009, and that no strategies and targets had been established.”

The Inspector also drew attention to the problems facing the prison system as a whole in terms of meeting the rising number of female prisoners:

“The growth in the number of female prisoners shows no sign of abating and conditions at Bandyup, the state's main prison for women, stand in depressingly sharp contrast to those at Boronia. I will be monitoring, with interest, the decision to convert one of the male units at Greenough Regional Prison to a unit for female prisoners. This will relieve some pressure but additional action is required. Fortunately women's imprisonment is now receiving greater priority, but it is likely to remain a pressure point for a number of years.”

Neil Morgan

10th September 2012

For more detail, see the Inspector's Overview to the Report (copy attached).

Neil Morgan will be available for comment from 12 noon on Tuesday 11th September and can be contacted on 0427 426 471.

The full Report will be available on the Inspector's website (www.oics.wa.gov.au)