



Report No.

62

November 2009

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR OF CUSTODIAL SERVICES

REPORT OF AN ANNOUNCED INSPECTION OF  
BORONIA PRE-RELEASE CENTRE FOR WOMEN



**Report of an Announced Inspection of  
Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women**

Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services  
Level 27, 197 St George's Terrace, Perth WA 6000

[www.custodialinspector.wa.gov.au](http://www.custodialinspector.wa.gov.au)

November 2009

ISSN 1445-3134

**This report is available on the Office's website  
and will be made available, upon request,  
in alternate formats.**



This document uses environmentally friendly paper, comprising  
50% recycled & 50% totally chlorine free plantation pulp.

# Contents

---

---

## THE INSPECTOR'S OVERVIEW

BORONIA PRE-RELEASE CENTRE FOR WOMEN: ONE OF A KIND ..... iii

Boronia ..... v

Summary ..... v

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ..... vi

FACT PAGE ..... ix

## CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION ..... 1

Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women ..... 1

Inspection Planning ..... 1

Inspection Findings ..... 2

## CHAPTER 2

BORONIA IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WIDER WOMEN'S ESTATE: A NON-  
ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S APPROACH? ..... 3

## CHAPTER 3

PREPARING WOMEN FOR RE-ENTRY: PLACEMENT, MANAGEMENT,  
PROGRAMS AND EMPOWERMENT ..... 8

Background ..... 8

Preparing Women for Re-entry: Placement at Boronia ..... 9

Preparing Women for Re-entry: Case Management ..... 10

Preparing Women for Re-entry: Influencing Attitude, Thinking and Behaviour ..... 11

Preparing Women for Re-entry: Empowerment ..... 12

## CHAPTER 4

PREPARING WOMEN FOR RE-ENTRY: EDUCATION ..... 14

External education ..... 15

Vocational training and traineeships ..... 16

## CHAPTER 5

PREPARING WOMEN FOR RE-ENTRY: EMPLOYMENT AND COMMUNITY

RECONNECTION ..... 17

Employment ..... 17

Section 95 Work Program ..... 17

Prisoner Employment Program Coordinator ..... 21

The relationship between section 95 and the Prisoner Employment Program ..... 22

Recreation: In-reach and Outreach (via Section 95) ..... 23

---



---

Dedicated Re-Entry Services .....	25
<b>CHAPTER 6</b>	
PREPARING WOMEN FOR RE-ENTRY: CONNECTING WITH HEALTH SERVICES.....	27
An Ambivalent Health Services Directorate .....	27
The Health Service at Boronia.....	28
<b>CHAPTER 7</b>	
PREPARING WOMEN FOR RE-ENTRY: CONNECTING, RECONNECTING, AND MAINTAINING CONNECTIONS WITH FAMILY AND CHILDREN.....	30
Contact/Visits .....	30
Women and Children.....	31
Parenting Support.....	32
<b>CHAPTER 8</b>	
OUTCOMES DEMONSTRATING BORONIA'S EFFECTIVENESS IN PREPARING WOMEN FOR RE-ENTRY – FORGING FORWARD.....	34
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT .....	36
<b>APPENDIX 1</b>	
THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE 2009 RECOMMENDATIONS .....	37
<b>APPENDIX 2</b>	
SCORECARD ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRESS AGAINST THE 2003 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	39
<b>APPENDIX 3</b>	
THE INSPECTION TEAM.....	44
<b>APPENDIX 4</b>	
KEY DATES .....	45

# The Inspector's Overview

## BORONIA PRE-RELEASE CENTRE FOR WOMEN: ONE OF A KIND

---

Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women (Boronia) opened in 2004 and is a first rate facility. Its physical facilities and its service delivery models were explicitly designed around a women-centred approach to corrections. It has purpose-built buildings and has been well planned, well funded and well resourced. The prison has bedded in very well and some initial community concerns have been assuaged. There has been careful management, good community liaison and a very gradual fill of prisoners. Boronia has attracted not only national but also international interest. It has numerous visitors each year and, for good reason, has been acclaimed as an exemplar of women's imprisonment.

The Department of Corrective Services (the Department) is justifiably proud of Boronia and wrote as follows in response to our draft report:

It is important to provide context in terms of the prisoner accommodation and services at Boronia in comparison to other prisons in Western Australia. Boronia is without doubt 'one of a kind' ... and is a complete departure from standard prison design and associated services...

Whilst there is always room for improvement (a key reform principle for the Department is that of continual improvement), it is important to highlight that accommodation, services, innovation and commitment to services for women prisoners doesn't get any better than Boronia and we (the Department) are very proud of the staff and services.<sup>1</sup>

There is no doubt that Boronia is 'one of a kind' and that it is performing to a very high standard. But one of the aims of our inspection was, necessarily, to identify opportunities for building further on Boronia's achievements.

Boronia's place in the system is clear and unequivocal: it is a 'Pre-release Centre'. If the system is working as it should, women will therefore just spend the latter stage of their sentence at Boronia before progressing to release (the intended model being for most of the women then to be released on parole, under the supervision and monitoring of community corrections officers). It follows that Boronia cannot be viewed in isolation from the rest of the system and must be considered in light of its place in the system as a whole.

Unfortunately, as the rest of the prison system comes under increasing pressure from overcrowding, Boronia does look more and more like a 'complete departure from standard prison design and associated services' rather than a model that will be rolled out more widely.

### THE BIG PICTURE: ABORIGINAL WOMEN AND THE CONCENTRATION OF OVERCROWDING

Because of its unique role, Boronia has been immune from the pressures of 'double-bunking' that currently afflict most of the State's prisons. There are also no plans for future 'double bunking' and this is a good thing in terms of Boronia's role and standing. Unit 5 at Bandyup Women's Prison (Bandyup) is also currently immune from overcrowding.

---

i The Department provided two letters in response to the draft report. This quotation comes from the first response. The terms of the second response are reproduced in the recommendations section of this report.

Unit 5 is a new, purpose-built self care area with excellent physical facilities. Like Boronia, it is based around the model of 'shared houses'. However, even though the women's prison estate is not subject to the same level of overcrowding pressure as the male system, the decision not to double-bunk Boronia or Unit 5 at Bandyup inevitably leads to a concentration of overcrowding in other, more impoverished parts of the system – in particular in Unit 1 at Bandyup.<sup>ii</sup>

Aboriginal women have especially high 're-entry' needs. They constitute around 30 per cent of Boronia's prisoners. Even allowing for the fact that many Aboriginal women come from regional areas, this is below their representation in the system as a whole (50 per cent of female prisoners in the State). As the Chief Justice recently commented:

The percentage of Aboriginal women amongst those at Boronia is significantly less than the percentage of Aboriginal women within the prison population generally. While this may be a consequence of the characteristics of Aboriginal women offenders, including their offence types and criminal histories, the rates of return to custody... suggest that those offenders are in greater need of assistance when re-entering the community.<sup>iii</sup>

Chapter 2 of this report takes the analysis a stage further and examines the extent to which Aboriginal women are concentrated in the relatively disadvantaged parts of Bandyup. At the time of writing the report, Unit 1, the lowest level of accommodation, had a similar number of prisoners (74) to Boronia. Three quarters of these women were Aboriginal. Furthermore, 70 per cent of the Aboriginal women in Unit 1 were double-bunked compared with 44 per cent of the non-Aboriginal women. On the other hand, when we examined the figures for Unit 5, the best part of Bandyup, we found that only two out of 33 women (6 per cent) were Aboriginal.

Recommendation One reflected our concerns about the structural disadvantages that Aboriginal women currently experience, arguing that positive action be taken and measurable outcomes, targets and timeframes established. The Department has supported this recommendation in principle and subject to funding. It has also stated that the recommendation reflects its own existing policies. Clearly this is a matter to which we will return in future reports.

- 
- ii In terms of the male estate, the major minimum security facilities at Karnet and Wooroloo are being required to take additional prisoners at short notice through a combination of double bunking existing cells and new double-bunked demountables. The closest male equivalent to Boronia is the 72 bed Pre-release unit at Bunbury Regional Prison which was opened in October 2008 to the statement that it is 'similar to the Boronia model' (Ministerial media statement, 30 October 2008). However, within 12 months, it held around 100 male prisoners – in other words, it was already 40 per cent double bunked. Boronia, by comparison, was not full until 2009, more than four years after opening.
- iii The Hon Wayne Martin, Chief Justice of Western Australia, 'Corrective Services for Indigenous Offenders – Stopping the Revolving Door', paper to the Department of Corrective Services Joint Development Day, 17 September 2009.

## BORONIA

Although Boronia is performing very well, we did identify opportunities for improvement in terms of health, programs related to family violence, and community engagement.

It is universally recognised that women prisoners have very high physical and mental health needs. It is also well known that most women prisoners have been victims of violence and abuse as well as being offenders. These points are well-recognised in Departmental policies. However, we identified some areas for improvement. For example, although some not-for-profit agencies are delivering valuable pre-release programs, their funding is fragile and we believe the Department should focus more strongly on specific issues surrounding family violence.

The recommendations that we made in these important areas were our own conclusions but they also closely reflected the views expressed by Boronia staff and management during the on-site inspection period. The Department has supported both recommendations ‘in principle’ but that support appears rather ambivalent and there is no statement as to how they will be achieved.

Boronia’s philosophy is to ‘normalise’ the environment as far as possible so as to assist the women’s transition back to the community. There have been some positive initiatives in this regard, including the Boronia Choir and a number of prisoners undertaking employment and education programs. However, it should be noted that the original vision for Boronia sought to engage most of the women in community-based activities (including work, education, self-development, health, and recreation) on a daily basis. This was not the case at the time of the inspection and although the current level of community engagement is superior to most other facilities, it does fall short of the philosophical framework. For this reason, we concluded that there are ways in which ‘out of prison activities’ could be expanded as part of the Department’s process of continuous improvement. We also identified some issues relating to the inter-relationship between various schemes such as section 95 of the *Prisons Act 1981* and the new Prisoner Employment Program (PEP). The Department has indicated that these issues will be continually reviewed. We remain of the view that there is scope for expansion.

## SUMMARY

Boronia is a leader in its field and for good reason has impressed national and international observers. It is also immune from the overcrowding pressures that afflict the rest of the system. Consequently, the expectations for continuous improvement are high. A key part of that is to build on existing achievements and to lead through continuing innovation. We hope that in the short and medium term, Boronia will continue to push the boundaries of ‘accepted practice’. We also hope that the Department and the government will commit unequivocally to providing the same opportunities for all women prisoners, and especially Aboriginal women.

## Summary of Findings and Recommendations

---

---

The second announced inspection of Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women commenced on Sunday 21 June and concluded on Thursday 25 June 2009. In his overview of the report of the first inspection,<sup>iv</sup> the Inspector stated that ‘the achievements of Boronia in its first two years of operations are remarkable. The Centre is a model for good practice, women-centred approaches to managing female offenders in custody in almost all respects.’

It is encouraging to note that overall, the findings of the current inspection are generally as positive with positive staff/resident<sup>v</sup> relations, good management, and a clear vision and place. Significant achievements include:

- Boronia being fully utilised, with occupancy levels consistently at capacity.
- The continued development and provision of a quality education and training service for residents.
- The development of a service delivery model based on strong engagement with and support of not-for-profit community organisations to ensure that residents have access to a range of needs-led programs.
- A reduction in the cost per resident per day.
- A reduction in recidivism rates.

There are few negative or problem areas. However, in order to build on these foundations and move forward in terms of continuing to develop Boronia’s re-entry function, the Department needs to give attention to:

- The particular needs of Aboriginal women;
- The provision of family violence and related treatment programs;
- The development of an accessible, and effective complaints process;
- The provision of a health service that reflects stated intentions; and
- Management at Boronia needs to expand the opportunities open to the residents for community-based activity in relation to education, work, and recreation.

Boronia is held up as a shining example of good practice in relation to the management of female offenders, and justifiably so. Furthermore, that the proportion of Aboriginal women living at Boronia averages 30 per cent is a significant achievement when compared with the proportion of Aboriginal women residing in the more privileged accommodation areas of Bandyup.

Nonetheless, if we consider Boronia in the context of the wider women’s estate, in which Aboriginal women predominate, good women’s centred practices, have not extended

---

iv Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (OICS), *Report of an Announced Inspection of Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women*, Report No. 42 (April 2007) v.

v Prisoners at Boronia are referred to as residents consistent with the principle of normalisation and better preparing women for release. This inspection report adopts a similar convention except where reference is made to prisoners in general.



## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

---

---

in ways that are sensitive to the needs, customs, beliefs and values of Aboriginal women. Moreover, the quality and range of accommodation and services offered to Aboriginal women are sub-standard compared with those enjoyed by non-Aboriginal women. Arguably, therefore, the sense of alienation experienced as a function of imprisonment may be particularly exaggerated for Aboriginal women both at Boronia and elsewhere in the wider estate, and may explain in part their disproportionately high rates of return to custody.<sup>vi</sup>

### *Recommendation 1*

*Across the whole of the women's estate, the Department must provide accommodation, services, and programs to Aboriginal women that cater to their identified and specific needs, customs, values and beliefs, and which eliminate the structural disadvantages they currently experience. Measurable outcomes, targets and timeframes should be established and monitored.*

A key strategic goal of the Department<sup>vii</sup> is to reduce crime and offending by engaging prisoners in relevant change processes related to attitudes, thinking and behaviour. The provision of appropriate treatment programs is seen as an important strategy for achieving this goal. Such programs aim to raise the consciousness of offenders to the factors that place them at risk of re-offending, and to inculcate a sense of personal responsibility for, and control over, such actions and in turn, successful re-entry.

Women at Boronia approaching release face a very specific set of issues, which may have contributed to their offending behaviour, but which are not systematically addressed by the standard programs on offer. Areas that are of particular impact relate to relationships, violence within relationships, parenting, grieving/loss and self-esteem. Although management at Boronia has made strenuous efforts to resource and facilitate the delivery of programs that meet these different needs, the sustainability of such programs is continuously at risk because of the lack of recurrent funding. To date, the Department has not provided the resources to offer different programs that would meet these needs, even though this was identified as a recommendation at the last inspection.

### *Recommendation 2*

*The Department must resource and ensure the ongoing delivery of a discrete suite of quality endorsed group treatment programs that address family violence and related issues from a female – and especially an Aboriginal female - perspective.*

An accessible and effective complaints and grievance system can empower women, and assist in the development of a range of skills, including assertiveness, that can be useful and applicable to a variety of situations post-release.

---

vi Department of Corrective Services Government of Western Australia July 2009 *Background Paper for Women's Way Forward Women's Corrective Services Strategic Plan 2009-2012*, 14; Department of Corrective Services *Profile of Women in Prison 2008 Final Report* July 2009, 121. *Rehabilitation: Impact on Recidivism Rates*, Information provided by the Department of Corrective Services on request prior to the inspection: Of the 297 women released between 1/4/06-31/12/08, 48 (16.16 per cent) were returned to custody: 33 were Aboriginal and 15 were non-Aboriginal.

vii Department of Corrective Services *Strategic Plan 2008-2011*

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

---

---

Numerous formal and informal mechanisms for registering concerns, expressing dissatisfaction, or making complaints are established at Boronia. Nonetheless, similar to most other inspections, the residents at Boronia expressed a lack of confidence in the complaints and grievance system.

### *Recommendation 3*

*Across the whole custodial system, the Department must develop a complaints process that is integral to its overall customer feedback system, and which is open, transparent, well used and effective in eliciting constructive feedback and expressions of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and bringing about positive change and quality improvement. Given its stability and role, Boronia may be one of a number of sites at which to test new processes.*

Providing opportunity for residents to re-engage with the community through reparation, study, recreation and work is central to successful reintegration. Section 95 of the *Prisons Act 1981* provides the legal mechanism for the Superintendent of a prison to provide these opportunities. However, while most of the residents at Boronia are approved under section 95, its use to enable community-based participation in work, recreation, and study activities is currently limited.

### *Recommendation 4*

*Boronia must expand the use of (i) section 95 for more community-based education/study, recreation, reparation, and diverse work opportunities; and (ii) the Prisoner Employment Program (PEP). The Department must maintain its unequivocal commitment to the use of section 95 for education/training, employment and recreation opportunities.*

In 2008 the Department's health services directorate issued a progressive document *Strategic Directions Health Care for Women and Girls 2008-2012*. This document laid out the Department's plans for an integrated, culturally appropriate, holistic, social model of health care delivery for women and girls in custody and their children, and in so doing demonstrated a sound understanding of and sensitivity to their particular and complex needs. However, health services are not currently being delivered in line with the standards set out in the *Strategic Directions* paper and fall short in meeting all the needs of the patients.

### *Recommendation 5*

*The Department must ensure the provision of support, and the human, physical and financial resources necessary to fully operationalise the stated intentions of the 'Strategic Directions Health Care for Women and Girls 2008-2012' at Boronia and in other parts of the female custodial estate.*

# Fact Page

---

---

## NAME OF FACILITY

Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women

## ROLE OF FACILITY

Minimum security prison for women with re-entry focus. Provision for children to live with their mothers until the age of four, and for older children up to the age of 12 to have regular extended day and/or overnight stays.

## LOCATION

Noongyar land, suburban Perth, 8kms south east of Central Business District

## BRIEF HISTORY

Opened in May 2004 and replaced Nyandi Women's Prison

## DESIGN CAPACITY OF PRISON

70

## NUMBER OF WOMEN HELD

70

## NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN RESIDENCE

7

## NUMBER OF ABORIGINAL WOMEN

22

## OTHER SIGNIFICANT COHORTS

5 Vietnamese women

## LAST INSPECTION

11 June – 23 June 2006

## DESCRIPTION OF RESIDENTIAL UNITS

Community standard self-care, social housing each with shared kitchen, bathroom, dining/lounge, laundry, and garden facilities including:

- Three 'nursery' houses, each with four bedrooms designed for a mother and baby to share.
- Twelve houses, each with single bedrooms for four women.
- Two houses, each with single bedrooms for five women.



THIS PAGE HAS BEEN LEFT BLANK INTENTIONALLY

# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

---

---

### BORONIA PRE-RELEASE CENTRE FOR WOMEN

- 1.1 Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women (Boronia) opened in May 2004 replacing Nyandi Women's Prison as Western Australia's only dedicated, purpose-built, minimum-security facility for women and bringing with it a unique and contemporary prison management style and philosophy.
- 1.2 Boronia is located in Bentley, eight kilometres south-east of Perth's central business district. It is surrounded by a thriving community with a highly developed social infrastructure of further education, recreation, public housing and public transport facilities.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection (21–25 June 2009) Boronia was at full capacity accommodating 70 women. In addition, seven children aged under four years were residing with their mothers in Boronia.

### INSPECTION PLANNING

- 1.4 This Report details the findings from Boronia's second inspection. In his overview of the report of the first inspection, the Inspector stated that 'the achievements of Boronia in its first two years of operations are remarkable. The centre is a model for good practice, women-centred approaches to managing female offenders in custody in almost all respects.'<sup>1</sup>
- 1.5 Between inspections regular liaison visits were conducted to monitor Boronia's performance and progress in implementing the recommendations contained in this Office's report of its first inspection. These visits confirmed that substantial progress was being made and that Boronia was performing consistently well. However, concerns that the facility was being under-utilised remained.
- 1.6 From its inception to the time of the first inspection Boronia's average population was under 50 women, despite having a design capacity of 70. This pattern continued until planning for this second inspection commenced in March 2009, with the average occupancy increasing to just 53.7 women between 30 June 2006 and 28 February 2009.<sup>2</sup> Constantly operating under capacity constituted lost opportunities for women to obtain a positive experience in transitioning back into the community, but also for relieving the pressure on places for women elsewhere in the system. As such, themes for further inquiry and central to this inspection were:
  - The appropriateness of the number and type of women accessing Boronia;
  - The effectiveness of Boronia in preparing women for release; and
  - Boronia's role in achieving the Department's broader strategic objectives.

---

1 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women*, Report No. 42 (April 2007) v.

2 End of month census data, as obtained from the Total Offender Management System (TOMS) database.

## INTRODUCTION

---

---

### INSPECTION FINDINGS

- 1.7 In his exit debrief<sup>3</sup> following the completion of the on-site inspection, the Inspector commented that overall Boronia continues to perform well, has ‘bedded in well’ and is unequivocally a Pre-release centre. It is characterised by positive staff–resident relations, good management, and has a clear vision and place. There are few negative or problem areas and the challenge over the coming years will be to build on these foundations.
- 1.8 It is against the backdrop of these broadly positive findings that this report has been prepared. Consistent with the central themes of the inspection, the more detailed findings in this report will focus principally on the way in which services are geared towards re-entry, achievements in this regard and areas for further development.
- 1.9 However, it is important to note that Boronia does not function in isolation. It operates within the broad context of the custodial management of women at a number of other prisons in Western Australia – at the ‘hub’, that is maximum-security Bandyup, and at the regional prisons of Eastern Goldfields, Roebourne, Greenough and Broome. Before exploring Boronia’s re-entry services in detail, it is important to gain an understanding of its place in the wider women’s estate, with a particular focus on accommodation and services for Aboriginal women.

---

3 Professor Neil Morgan, Inspector of the Office of the Inspector for Custodial Services, Exit Debrief of Inspection of Boronia Pre-release Centre (25 June 2009).

## Chapter 2

### BORONIA IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WIDER WOMEN'S ESTATE: A NON-ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S APPROACH?

---

---

- 2.1 Boronia is a modern, relatively small, purpose-built re-entry centre with an explicit focus in its philosophy and operations upon a women-centred approach. Closer examination of these features at inspection served to highlight not only what was working well (see Chapter 3) but also significant inequities in the range and quality of services and accommodation provided to Aboriginal women, to some extent at Boronia, but more particularly elsewhere in the women's estate in Western Australia.
- 2.2 At the time of writing Aboriginal women represented 51 per cent of the total number of women prisoners in Western Australia and 90 per cent of the women held in the regional prisons. At the last inspection we expressed concern at the low number of women accessing Boronia,<sup>4</sup> including Aboriginal women. At this inspection, the number of Aboriginal women accessing Boronia had increased, not least because the overall population of Boronia had increased. Twenty-two Aboriginal women, predominantly from the metropolitan area, were resident at the time of the inspection and this was representative of recent occupancy patterns. Although the numbers of Aboriginal women accessing Boronia have increased, the proportion of Aboriginal women at Boronia has remained relatively unchanged – generally at around 30 per cent.<sup>5</sup>
- 2.3 Significantly, Aboriginal women remain concentrated in those areas of the prison estate, including Unit 1 at Bandyup Women's Prison (Bandyup) and the regional prisons, where the conditions generally endured are in stark contrast to those at Boronia. A very valid reason for the concentration of Aboriginal women in the regional prisons is their relative proximity to the women's home location. Moreover, it should be acknowledged that some effort to upgrade the women's accommodation in regional prisons (for example at Roebourne and Broome) has been, and continues to be, made.
- 2.4 However, this does not explain why Aboriginal women (from both regional and metropolitan areas) remain concentrated in the relatively disadvantaged areas of Bandyup. At the time of writing they were distributed as follows:
- In Unit 1, of a total of 74 women, 56 (75%) were Aboriginal. Forty of these Aboriginal women (71%) were double-bunked as compared to 44 per cent of the non-Aboriginal women.
  - In Unit 2, of a total of 74 women, 20 (32%) were Aboriginal. Twelve of the Aboriginal women (60%) were double-bunked as compared with 25 per cent of non-Aboriginal women.
  - In Unit 4 (self-care), of a total of 22 women, five (22%) were Aboriginal. These women were in J block (the transition unit) awaiting transfer to Boronia.
  - Only two of the 33 women residing in the new, purpose-built Unit 5 at Bandyup were Aboriginal.<sup>6</sup>

---

4 OICS *Report of an Announced Inspection of Boronia Pre-release centre for Women*, Report No. 42 (April 2007) [2.7].

5 Department of Corrective Services Strategic and Executive Services, email (10 July 2009).

6 TOMS data (26 June 2009).

BORONIA IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WIDER WOMEN'S ESTATE: A NON-  
ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S APPROACH?

---

---

- 2.5 Anecdotal explanations for the concentration of Aboriginal women in the most disadvantaged areas of Bandyup include personal choice; feeling intimidated by the non-Aboriginal women (not so much physical intimidation, but intimidation because of their 'standing', skills and education levels); fear of social isolation; under-developed self-care/housekeeping skills; and an unwillingness to take on the additional responsibility associated with living in incentive accommodation. While there may be some validity to these opinions, the Department has never conducted a formal evaluation of the factors that underpin this state of affairs. In the absence of such an evaluation, there is potential for theories to be perpetuated as truth rather than conjecture, and for the situation to be passively accepted as the status quo.
- 2.6 The Inspectorate understands that commitments have been given to the local community that Boronia will not be double-bunked or overcrowded.<sup>7</sup> The Inspectorate supports the principle that women at Boronia should not be double-bunked, but has also repeatedly stated that multiple-occupancy, which can impact upon decency, safety and management regimes, should not become the acceptable standard of accommodation in the rest of the prison estate. Nonetheless, the inescapable fact remains that Aboriginal women currently occupy the least desirable areas of accommodation in the women's estate and it is important that commitments to avoid double-bunking are not made at the expense of improving accommodation for this prisoner group.
- 2.7 Part of the strategic purpose of Boronia was not only to develop good women-centred practice<sup>8</sup> but also to transfer appropriate practices to the regional prisons. Such practices are well established and continue to develop at Boronia but their extension outside the metropolitan area has been limited.
- 2.8 Although there have been some improvements, such as the creation of Women's Support Officer positions in the regional prisons, the position of Women's Custodial Director remains as important today in driving and maintaining the momentum of change as at the time of the last inspection.<sup>9</sup> Prior to the creation of this position within the Department, women's interests were marginalised because of the dominating male custodial estate. While men's prisons continue to overshadow women's prisons in many regards, the importance of having a champion for the separate and different needs of women within that mix cannot be over-emphasised. The relatively positive result in the pre-inspection staff survey relating to perceptions of head office by staff, and local management's view that the Department has shifted its focus more towards re-entry, indicate the extent to which the position has elevated the profile and support for Boronia. This is further emphasised when these results are compared with the more negative results from the recent pre-inspection survey at Wooroloo,<sup>10</sup> a male minimum-security prison. The Inspectorate continues to support the role of the Director and encourages that position to develop and transfer

---

7 There are also no plans, should occupancy continue to rise, for doubling up in Unit 5 at Bandyup.

8 Department of Corrective Services, Adult Custodial Division, *Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women: Annual Business Plan, 2008–2009*.

9 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women*, Report No. 42 (April 2007) [5].

10 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm* (as yet unpublished) (July 2009) [2.33].



culturally appropriate women-centred practices from Boronia (and Bandyup) to regional prisons accommodating women prisoners.

- 2.9 The majority of women held in regional prisons are classified as minimum-security and are Aboriginal. At the time of writing, 90 per cent of women<sup>11</sup> held in the regional prisons (Roebourne, Greenough, and Eastern Goldfields) were Aboriginal and 61 per cent of these women were classified as minimum security.<sup>12</sup> However, they do not have access to the standard of pre-release service provided at Boronia. The Inspectorate advocates that prisoners should be accommodated at the prison closest to their home, but in the case of minimum-security women in regional prisons this means missing out on the women-focused programs available at Boronia. While it is recognised that it would not be possible to replicate the services of a dedicated women's pre-release centre in a regional or remote area, a commitment to the philosophies embedded at Boronia must be integrated into the culture of regional prisons in a way that is consistent with the needs, customs, values, and beliefs of the predominantly Aboriginal population. In this regard, the Department has some way to go, and needs to consider practical strategies to achieve this change in prison culture over the medium term. The recent endorsement of the Department's Women's Corrective Services Strategic Plan 2009–2012<sup>13</sup> should provide impetus for these essential changes to current practice.
- 2.10 Turning to the provision of services at Boronia, it has already been noted that increasing numbers of Aboriginal women are accessing Boronia and that they now represent a significant cohort of the population. However, it was clear to the inspection team that some of the services offered were not sufficiently accessible to this cohort; in particular, in terms of cultural appropriateness.
- 2.11 At a local level, efforts are being made to develop services that specifically cater to Aboriginal women's customs, values, beliefs, and needs.<sup>14</sup> But despite departmental commitments to 'integrate an Aboriginal perspective'<sup>15</sup> in relation to its work with offenders and to increase the numbers of Aboriginal staff,<sup>16</sup> there are no department-sponsored or endorsed Aboriginal-specific offender programs offered at Boronia,<sup>17</sup> and nor are there any Aboriginal staff.
- 2.12 Whatever the size of a facility, there are some services and needs that have to be met by various specialist staff. An unfortunate by-product of being a small facility is that in some

---

11 That is, 49 of a total of 54 women in regional prisons.

12 TOMS data (17 July 2009).

13 Department of Corrective Services, *Women's Corrective Services Strategic Plan 2009–2012*.

14 These are described in detail in Chapter 3.

15 Department of Corrective Services WA, *Strategic Plan 2008–2011*.

16 Department of Corrective Services WA, *Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2005–2010*.

17 Findings in the Department of Corrective Services' *Profile of Women in Prison 2008* Final Report indicate that the offending patterns of Aboriginal women are different to non-Aboriginal women: Aboriginal women are more often imprisoned for violent offences; are less involved in drug-based offences; and for many, drug and alcohol abuse within a closely knit group of community and family is endemic. Notwithstanding the contemporary diversity of Aboriginal women's language, culture and history, if treatment programs are to be effective in terms of contributing to reduced recidivism, they need to be specifically tailored to the common needs and interests of Aboriginal women.

areas, Boronia has been short on staff resources. The sharing of various staffing positions and services by Bandyup and Boronia fails to recognise the different priority and needs of each prison and the prisoners accommodated there. At Boronia, this particularly impacts upon the comprehensiveness and quality of service offered to Aboriginal residents through the Prisoner Support Officer position and the Aboriginal Visitors Scheme.

- 2.13 Prisoner Support Officers manage a team of peer support prisoners providing support to new arrivals and any other prisoners who are having difficulties. Prisoner Support Officers work closely with, and take direct referrals from, prison officers, nursing staff, and the Prison Counselling Service. They also refer prisoners to other service providers. A highly functioning and well-integrated peer support scheme can play a key role in the smooth operation of a custodial environment. Peer support representatives can often identify individual or systemic issues before they become more serious, and peer support group members provide an important communication link between prisoners and staff. Members of the peer support team are generally articulate and confident in putting forward issues, and therefore play a vital role in representing those prisoners not confident enough to represent themselves. The success of the peer support team is highly dependent on the coordination and guidance of the Prisoner Support Officer.
- 2.14 Until recently, Boronia had been operating without a Prisoner Support Officer and this inevitably weakened the peer support system. The new Prisoner Support Officer is shared with Bandyup, only attending Boronia for two hours a week. She is in the process of re-establishing the peer support system, although this will be challenging in the very limited time allocation of two hours a week. There are six residents in the peer support group representing a cross-section of Boronia's population. The Prisoner Support Officer only meets with peer support residents once a month.
- 2.15 It was positive to note that prison officers were referring residents who were experiencing difficulties to peer support. Although a prison officer is allocated at Boronia to assist the peer support team, it is important that residents have the ability to debrief with their Prisoner Support Officer. However, the Prisoner Support Officer's limited time at Boronia affected her capacity to debrief with residents and compromised her ability to effectively advocate on behalf of residents. This had particular implications for the Aboriginal residents – highlighted by the fact that the peer support group knew very little about the Aboriginal Visitors Scheme and the process for arranging video visits. It is the Prisoner Support Officer's responsibility to keep the peer support team informed about these services and facilities.
- 2.16 Another example that illustrates the way in which sharing positions between Bandyup and Boronia can be problematic and particularly impacts upon Aboriginal women is the Aboriginal Visitors Scheme. This scheme was established to provide support and counselling for Aboriginal prisoners. The most successful examples of the Aboriginal Visitors Scheme in other prisons have involved incorporating the visitors into aspects of the daily prison regime and having them involved in specific cultural activities.<sup>18</sup> At Boronia,

---

18 For example see OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Albany Regional Prison*, Report No. 60 (April 2009) 7–8.

## BORONIA IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WIDER WOMEN'S ESTATE: A NON-ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S APPROACH?

---

---

the scheme is not well engaged with residents. Visitors attend Boronia every fortnight for only two hours (as compared to Bandyup where they attend 20 hours a week). This means that very few Boronia residents are serviced by the Aboriginal Visitors Scheme and the process for seeing a visitor has become ad hoc. Although the population at Boronia is considerably lower than at Bandyup, two hours a fortnight does not allow the visitors to establish meaningful relationships with the residents, the peer support group or Boronia management and staff.

### *Recommendation 1*

*Across the whole of the women's estate, the Department must provide accommodation, services and programs to Aboriginal women that cater to their identified and specific needs, customs, values and beliefs and which eliminate the structural disadvantages they currently experience. Measurable outcomes, targets and timeframes should be established and monitored.*

# Chapter 3

## PREPARING WOMEN FOR RE-ENTRY: PLACEMENT, MANAGEMENT, PROGRAMS AND EMPOWERMENT

---

---

### BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Notwithstanding the diversity of female offenders, recent research conducted in Western Australia indicates that the lives of women who offend are often characterised by common themes: social and economic marginalisation; physical and sexual abuse; co-dependence; and a strong identity as a mother/carer.<sup>19</sup>
- 3.2 What we know about women in prison in Western Australia from research conducted in 2001, 2003, 2005, and 2008<sup>20</sup> has consistently revealed:
- A widespread incidence of past abuse;
  - An over-representation of Aboriginal women (often with extensive and severe histories of abuse, committing violent offences, sometimes based on cultural obligations);
  - Significant levels of physical and mental health problems;
  - That most women prisoners are under 35 years of age;
  - That prior to arrest, a large proportion of women prisoners were directly responsible for the care of a child or children;
  - That drug and alcohol were almost always related to their imprisonment;
  - That they had very low levels of education;
  - That most had not been employed prior to their arrest; and
  - That much of their offending was influenced or induced by their relationships with others.
- 3.3 A women-centred approach recognises that in order to maximise the chances of successful (law abiding and self-determining) reintegration of female offenders into the community, prison management systems, infrastructure, processes, services and interventions need to address the causes of their offending behaviour. This means that they must be informed by an awareness of the particular life factors or pathways that shape women's sense of self and ultimately their offending patterns.
- 3.4 As a dedicated pre-release prison, the driving focus of Boronia's operations should be upon preparing its residents for positive re-entry into the community. This focus is embodied in Boronia's philosophical framework, the guiding principles of which are: personal responsibility and empowerment; family responsibility; community responsibility; and respect and integrity.<sup>21</sup> This Chapter explores, through a detailed examination of various aspects of Boronia's operations, the extent to which such principles are translated into practice and are successfully assisting women on the path to community re-entry.

---

19 Tubex H, *Profile of Women in Prison 2008: Stage 2 of the Prisoner Characteristics and Needs Survey*, Department of Corrective Services (2008).

20 Department of Corrective Services, *Profile of Women in Prison 2008*, Final Report (2008); Department of Corrective Services, *Background Paper for Women's Way Forward Women's Corrective Services Strategic Plan 2009–2012* (July 2009).

21 Department of Corrective Services *Request for Information from the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services re: the Upcoming Inspection of Boronia Pre-release Centre* [1]

**PREPARING WOMEN FOR RE-ENTRY: PLACEMENT AT BORONIA**

- 3.5 All assessments for placement at Boronia are conducted at Bandyup. There is only one non-negotiable prerequisite for placement at Boronia: that the prisoner has attained minimum-security status. Other factors that are considered in relation to placement include: appropriateness of a placement in the metropolitan area; ability to self-care; health status (a chronic health condition necessitating frequent transfer to hospital for treatment may preclude placement at Boronia because of the intensive transport obligations); offence history (while not automatically exclusionary, offences against children must be taken into account given that children also reside at Boronia); mental health status (transfer does not proceed if a psychiatrist assesses that the placement would endanger the prisoner or others); and class of prisoner (remand prisoners are currently excluded).
- 3.6 Our 2006 inspection report expressed concern about the under-utilisation of Boronia (see Chapter 1). This had significantly contributed to it having a comparatively high operational cost despite its limited security needs. Most of the intervening three years still saw a population level well below capacity. However, since March 2009 occupancy levels have generally been at full capacity, demonstrating a much better use of the facility. The improved utilisation of Boronia has provided more women with access to essential re-entry services and a notable reduction in certain operational costs.<sup>22</sup>
- 3.7 As stated above, the only official criterion for eligibility for placement at Boronia is a minimum-security rating, and yet over the past five years when Boronia was under capacity, there was a significant number of women with the required security rating accommodated at Bandyup. At the time of this inspection, Boronia was operating at full capacity with an official waiting list of 20 women (this did not include any women classified as minimum-security who were on remand). Staff expressed the view<sup>23</sup> that full occupancy is likely to be sustained at Boronia because of improvements to 'preparatory' processes undertaken at Bandyup. These included:
- More efficient assessment processes;
  - A reduction in the number of prison charges, so that women's security ratings are not adversely affected;
  - An increase in the provision of courses and programs being conducted so that fewer women are being held back pending program completion; and
  - A focus on staff addressing any other issues that may be holding particular women back.
- 3.8 One noticeable difference since the time of the last inspection was the longer time it was taking women to be transferred to Boronia. In the past, women who were classified on admission to Bandyup as minimum-security could be transferred to Boronia within

---

22 A good example of this can be seen in the Department of Corrective Services' *Adult Custodial Cost Per Prisoner – Analysis of Expenditure* reports for December 2008, January 2009 and March 2009. These figures are based only on the costs of utilities, goods and supplies (and do not therefore include major costs such as salaries, security and head office services). In December 2008, Boronia stood around 14 per cent above the state average. In March 2009, it was just below the state average.

23 This view was supported by the Inspectorate's review of applicable documentation.

## PREPARING WOMEN FOR RE-ENTRY: PLACEMENT, MANAGEMENT, PROGRAMS AND EMPOWERMENT

---

days, but the waiting list has meant that they have to wait between six and eight weeks before transfer. Staff perceived a number of benefits with this situation: the women arrive more settled; are more likely to have sorted out any residual issues; and generally have substantially detoxified from any substance dependence. This decreased the likelihood that they would be sent back to Bandyup for behavioural reasons.

- 3.9 This did not mean that women were not being returned to Bandyup when appropriate. In the 12 months prior to the inspection, there had been 26 incidents of women being returned to Bandyup. The main reasons for these transfers were around drug use, security classifications changing due to being found guilty of prison charges and short-term 'punishment' transfers.
- 3.10 In the past, there was a strong perception that Boronia would not take women perceived to be difficult to manage or a possible threat to the image of the facility. The Inspectorate had found no evidence to support this perception. Indeed, at the time of this inspection, Boronia was found to have accommodated and managed a number of more challenging women.

### PREPARING WOMEN FOR RE-ENTRY: CASE MANAGEMENT

- 3.11 Case management, particularly in a re-entry setting, should be the driving force behind prison regimes and play a critical role in prisoners' preparation for release. While the Department supports the concept, more needs to be done in terms of setting general directions and investing in case management. There are currently no system-wide policy guidelines governing case management<sup>24</sup> and new prison officer recruits receive no training in the way case management should work at an operational level.
- 3.12 At Boronia, this lack of investment is evidenced by the fact that no discrete funding is allocated for the coordination of case management. It is to local management's credit, therefore, that there is an active case management system at Boronia, with the Manager Operations also performing the role of Case Management Coordinator. At the time of the inspection, case management processes were largely up to date with 50 women being case managed. Each prison officer is allocated responsibility for the case management of up to three women. In the pre-inspection survey, 84 per cent of respondents reported having an Individual Management Plan (IMP), 71 per cent recalled being involved in an IMP review, and 83 per cent had a case manager. Moreover, at inspection, residents demonstrated familiarity with, and knowledge of, case management; knew their case manager; and were cognisant of the importance of the process in driving their preparations for release.
- 3.13 At a local level, and in response to the recent tightening up on parole by the Prisoners Review Board, the Manager Operations has also initiated an informal case management process for those women who have less than six months of their sentence remaining. She personally meets with each of these women on admission in order to ascertain as far as possible whether all interventions or conditions that may assist in parole applications are being, or have been, completed.

---

24 This first became apparent at the Wooroloo Inspection in April 2009 (report as yet unpublished) when this Office was advised that Director General's Rule 18 was in suspension pending review and revision. This situation was confirmed and ongoing at the time of this Boronia inspection.

**PREPARING WOMEN FOR RE-ENTRY: INFLUENCING ATTITUDE, THINKING AND  
BEHAVIOUR**

- 3.14 A key strategic goal of the Department<sup>25</sup> is to reduce offending by engaging prisoners in relevant change processes relating to attitudes, thinking and behaviour. The provision of appropriate treatment programs is seen as an important strategy for achieving this goal. Such programs aim to raise the consciousness of offenders to the factors that place them at risk of reoffending, to inculcate a sense of personal responsibility for, and control over, such actions, and to promote successful re-entry.
- 3.15 The Department's Offender Management and Program Division (OMPD) offers a range of programs to address the most commonly identified criminogenic needs of prisoners. These programs are generally of a standard construction that do not (for validity reasons) allow for adjustment for different demographics, such as culture or gender. By the end of 2009, two Cognitive Skills courses and two Moving on From Dependency courses will have been provided at Boronia. However, the majority of its programs are not sourced through the Department. Women at Boronia approaching release face a very different set of issues that may have contributed to their offending behaviour that are not addressed by these standard programs. Areas that are of particular impact relate to relationships, violence within relationships, parenting, grieving/loss and self-esteem. Matters relating to the residents as part of a family, and in particular as mothers, are generally not addressed in these programs, nor are issues of inter-generational offending.
- 3.16 However, management of Boronia has successfully sourced appropriate programs from private (not-for-profit) providers that it believes may meet the wider range of needs for its residents. These programs have been funded through a variety of grants secured over the last five years. In general, these programs focus strongly on the role and responsibility of women within the family, and in particular, as mothers. They include Pine Tree Tots, Family Rhyme Time, and Family Linking Youth, and are described in more detail later.
- 3.17 The last inspection identified the lack of programs addressing family violence and related issues as an issue and this formed the basis of a recommendation. The Department accepted the recommendation but rated it as 'low risk'. To date the Department has failed to resource the delivery of discrete group programs/interventions to address family violence and related issues. However, to its credit, management at local level had secured funding for courses that may assist in addressing family violence issues (for example, Exploring Yourself Through Art). Boronia management had also recently sourced a self-directed learning package, which had been approved for use.
- 3.18 Management's efforts at local level have been progressive and proactive. Without these concentrated efforts, Boronia residents would have received very limited targeted programmatic intervention. The model supports the philosophy of Boronia to encourage in-reach and out-reach to assist in preparing the women for re-entry. However, there is some question about the sustainability of the programs – once the grants run out, the programs stop. The lack of long-term funding impacts on Boronia's capacity to run a

---

25 Department of Corrective Services, *Strategic Plan 2008–2011*.



constant suite of programs, and therefore risks the residents' chances of rehabilitative success.

- 3.19 The management of Boronia is concerned about this. Its strategy is to concentrate on gathering evidence that demonstrates outcome achievements from the programs it has funded, and to use this to present business cases to OMPD to secure ongoing funding. Management believe that the benefit of initially securing external funding for these 'different' programs is that they can be tested before an investment and commitment is made to purchasing a course that may not suit the client base. Moreover, working directly with providers has enabled a more responsive and adaptive approach to the needs of Boronia residents. Importantly, 79 per cent of respondents in the pre-inspection survey expressed satisfaction with their access to programs.
- 3.20 Boronia has therefore identified gaps in its provision of programs in terms of successful re-entry. At inspection, the Superintendent indicated some initial positive response from the Department in contracting programs currently being delivered by not-for-profit organisations via grants. If it is clear that the residents of Boronia have benefited from the delivery of certain programs, then as part of its support for a women-centred philosophy and its strategic goal to reduce recidivism, it is incumbent upon the Department to endorse and recognise such achievement by approving ongoing funding. This is particularly the case for programs related to family violence and to the role of women as mothers.

*Recommendation 2*

*The Department must resource and ensure the ongoing delivery of a discrete suite of quality endorsed group treatment programs that address family violence and related issues from a female – and especially an Aboriginal female – perspective.*

**PREPARING WOMEN FOR RE-ENTRY: EMPOWERMENT**

- 3.21 An accessible and effective complaints and grievances system can empower women and assist in the development of a range of skills (such as assertiveness) that can be useful and applicable to a variety of situations post-release.
- 3.22 Numerous formal and informal mechanisms for registering concerns, expressing dissatisfaction, or making complaints are established at Boronia. Informal chats with the unit officer, speaking to peer support residents or independent visitors, attending unit meetings, completing formal complaint documentation, or confidentially accessing external advocacy bodies are some of the ways in which residents can be heard.
- 3.23 Soon after arrival at Boronia, the resident is provided with an orientation, which includes provision of information about the complaints and grievances system. An evaluation of the resident's understanding of the complaints and grievances system is undertaken and any identified gaps in knowledge are followed up as necessary.
- 3.24 Nonetheless, similar to most other inspections, the residents at Boronia expressed a lack of confidence in the complaints and grievances system. This view was reflected in the pre-



inspection resident survey in which only eight per cent of respondents had ever used the grievance system. Indeed, documentation reviewed indicated that very few grievances have been recorded. This could be seen as an indicator that there are simply no problems at Boronia. But that would be extraordinary, and it is not the case. Staff expressed the view that problems should not be escalated unnecessarily, that they resolve most issues informally when they are raised, and that they do not routinely log them with details of actions and outcomes.

- 3.25 On the other hand, residents reported that unit meetings are infrequent. Moreover, they believed that if they raised concerns, they tended to ‘go nowhere’. Residents repeatedly cited the threat of a charge of making a frivolous or vexatious complaint, the threat of a transfer back to Bandyup, or the threat of an unfavourable parole report as deterrents to using the system. This presents an interesting paradox, given that one of the four guiding principles of Boronia’s philosophical framework is about empowerment of residents. These allegations are difficult to substantiate or refute; but it is clear that the prison (and the Department) needs to better promote use of the grievance system, so that residents can feel confident that feedback is actively encouraged and welcomed, and do not fear retribution.

*Recommendation 3*

*Across the whole custodial system, the Department must develop a complaints process that is integral to its overall customer feedback system, and which is open, transparent, well used and effective in eliciting constructive feedback and expressions of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and bringing about positive change and quality improvement. Given its stability and role, Boronia may be one of a number of sites at which to test new processes.*

# Chapter 4

## PREPARING WOMEN FOR RE-ENTRY: EDUCATION

---

---

- 4.1 Low levels of education are common among female offenders, impacting upon their self-esteem, their ability to build and maintain relationships, their employability, and their potential for economic and social independence. Giving women the opportunity to re-engage in education during imprisonment can contribute to increasing their chances of successful re-entry.
- 4.2 At the time of the last inspection, the education service at Boronia was described as ‘rapidly developing’, and ‘professionally delivered’ with a team of staff that was ‘proactive and flexible in the delivery of education to the residents’.<sup>26</sup> This progress continued and was further endorsed in September 2008 by the Training Accreditation Council, which audited Boronia against the Australian Quality Training Framework. The auditor praised Boronia for its response to the changes to the Framework’s Standards in 2007 and made particular comment about the ‘extremely good practice’ and ‘up to date learning options’.<sup>27</sup> At this inspection, 94 per cent of respondents to the pre-inspection resident survey expressed satisfaction with their access to education. Moreover, residents ranked education and training first in the top five positives about life at Boronia.
- 4.3 A very wide range of options, including adult education, vocational education and training, and external education is available at Boronia and most are relevant to realistic options for the residents in the labour market after release. Education is highly integrated into other activities within Boronia. As a result almost all residents both work and participate in education and training. For example, regular class attendances are negotiated around peak work times in the kitchen. Nonetheless, as there are no full-time face-to-face courses available, and because of the small population and the reliance on external studies and work-based learning, there is a risk that the needs of those women whose basic general education is lacking may be overlooked.<sup>28</sup>
- 4.4 It was difficult to elicit a clear picture of the rate of participation in education at Boronia from the Department’s figures. This failure to capture accurate participation rates does a disservice to Boronia’s education centre. Senior management at departmental level acknowledge that some attention needs to be given to the synthesis and configuration of official data regarding overall participation rates to ensure they are accurate and clear. However, class records kept by staff at local level indicate very high participation rates.
- 4.5 Good completion rates were achieved in comparison to the results achieved in TAFE colleges across the state. Sixty-nine per cent of units enrolled in the six months between October 2008 and March 2009 were completed successfully. Thirty-two per cent of students enrolled in this same period were Aboriginal. These students successfully completed 58 per cent of their enrolled units. Non-Aboriginal students successfully completed 76 per cent of their enrolled units. Twenty-five per cent of Aboriginal students were released before completion of their studies compared to 13 per cent of non-Aboriginal students. However, it is important to note that most courses offered at Boronia can be continued in the community post-release.

---

26 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women* Report No 42 (April 2007) 46.

27 *Office of the Training Accreditation Council Confidential Report* (September 2008) 4.

28 Though significant efforts have been made: see paras 4.6 – 4.7.

- 4.6 Since the last inspection, the provision of basic adult education has increased. There appear to be more residents with lower literacy and numeracy skills. This could indicate that Boronia is starting to cater for more disadvantaged offenders, but research<sup>29</sup> reveals a trend towards lower levels of education in the entire female custodial estate. Nonetheless, it is positive that Boronia is responding to the changing needs of its residents.
- 4.7 At the time of this inspection, eight women were undertaking a Hands On Learning Project creating 'Pickle Park', a sensory garden for the children at Boronia. This project incorporates maths and literacy into the construction process in a practical way and targets those residents who educators believe may not attend classes otherwise. There were also part-time classes for adult literacy and numeracy, including a new English as a Second Language class with mostly Vietnamese participants.
- 4.8 Federal funding for the Indigenous Tuition Assistance Scheme, which provided part-time Aboriginal students with the option of individual tuition and educational support, was transferred to the states in January 2009. Previously, 13 students out of a total of 59 Aboriginal enrolments were receiving individual tuition and support; these students now have to share a half-day class once a week and are set work to complete during the week without assistance; this is having a dramatic impact on Aboriginal participation at Boronia.

#### EXTERNAL EDUCATION

- 4.9 Formal Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) are now in place with TAFE, which offer a budget for delivery of external education services at Boronia. There are still no MOUs detailing expectations regarding student results, staffing and resources in place with smaller providers. Consideration should be given to formalising provider accountability to minimise the risk of compromised service quality.
- 4.10 Despite being a minimum-security pre-release centre (at which residents have been placed because they have earned the privilege of an increased level of trust, at which empowerment and personal responsibility are guiding philosophical principles, and from which all residents will most likely be discharged into the community), Boronia is required to apply similar security imperatives and directives to that of the higher security facilities. This particularly impacts upon tertiary students in terms of ownership and use of computers. They are not permitted to access the Internet and they are only allowed to use floppy disks for information storage and management of work files; these are anachronistic, unreliable and inefficient. The Campus Manager accesses the Internet at home on behalf of students. However, this is not only an inefficient use of the manager's time, but also can frequently result in less fruitful Internet searches because of the lack of specific and personal familiarity with the materials, academic requirements and content of certain courses. Fundamentally, such restrictions fly in the face of re-entry and continued study. The Department should customise its security policies to suit the different needs of Boronia as a re-entry facility and the respective risks posed by the residents therein.

---

29 Department of Corrective Services, *Profile of Women in Prison 2008: Stage 2 of the Prisoner and Characteristics and Needs Survey* (July 2009).

- 4.11 This departmental risk-aversion is further compounded at local level. For example, residents expressed concern about access to section 95 release<sup>30</sup> for study, including limited visits to tertiary education libraries. Section 95 release is an invaluable tool in the re-socialisation process and is discussed in greater detail below. Its use for study release is particularly important in facilitating continuation of studies post-release, and management at Boronia should ensure that this is maximised.

#### VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND TRAINEESHIPS

- 4.12 Boronia offers a wide range of vocational training opportunities, including blue card, first aid, small business management, forklift, community services, information technology, retail, construction (two units), picture framing, animal care, art and dress-making.
- 4.13 Traineeships in hospitality and horticulture are also offered, with 11 women enrolled at the time of the inspection. Most trainees commence their traineeships at Bandyup allowing them some opportunity to complete their traineeship despite short periods of residency at Boronia.
- 4.14 Training is provided for the 20 residents who work in the horticulture area daily but currently they receive no credit for their learning because the Vocational Support Officer (VSO) has yet to complete his own qualification.<sup>31</sup> No alternative arrangement has been put in place with an external registered training organisation to provide an assessor. This group predominantly comprises Aboriginal women who would particularly benefit from accredited learning. There seems to be no reasonable argument for allowing this situation to continue.

---

30 Part IX Section 95 of the *Prisons Act 1981* (WA) 'Prisoner Well-being and Rehabilitation' permits a wide range of activities inside or outside a prison. This includes activities to promote health and wellbeing; to acquire skills to assist prisoners to lead a law-abiding lifestyle; to assist family links and reintegration; education; and other constructive and beneficial activities.

31 The Department has since commented that this VSO holds a Diploma in Horticulture and is also a qualified assessor. This Office had no doubts about the VSO's skills, knowledge, and qualifications, but he made it clear that he was neither being permitted to conduct assessments because his prior learning had not been accredited nor being assisted to gain accreditation at least in the workplace assessment module of the Certificate IV.

# Chapter 5

## PREPARING WOMEN FOR RE-ENTRY: EMPLOYMENT AND COMMUNITY RECONNECTION

---

---

### EMPLOYMENT

- 5.1 Boronia has a very strong focus on resident employment and consistently maintains an employment rate of almost 100 per cent.<sup>32</sup> The pre-inspection resident survey indicated that 95 per cent of respondents were satisfied with their access to work and residents interviewed during the inspection generally expressed high levels of satisfaction with their opportunities to engage in meaningful work (though many also commented that the range of options is limited).
- 5.2 The small population requires a core number of residents to keep Boronia functioning as self-sufficiently and as cost effectively as possible on a daily basis. It must be acknowledged that this focus on core functioning and offsetting the cost of imprisonment (reparation) has been successful in terms of cost savings (see below). However, it necessarily limits the number and range of employment opportunities (both on site and in the community) and the extent to which residents can acquire skills that they can use upon release. Catering (including a well-developed commercial catering industry), horticulture/ gardening, cleaning, maintenance, and picture framing comprise the core services and industries on site. The catering industry has been the most successful in terms of providing the opportunity for the residents to acquire the skills, knowledge, qualifications, and experience that realistically they are most likely to use upon release.
- 5.3 At the last inspection, it was recommended that a comprehensive measure of reparation be developed. A formula for estimating the value of work completed by the industries, the value of the community entertainment provided by the Boronia Choir, and the value of annual Gala Day work has been developed. Reparative income or the saving to the community is now calculated on the basis of the difference between the cost of making an item or delivering a service and what it would cost if it was purchased at wholesale or if volunteer rates were paid. While management at Boronia acknowledges that this formula will continue to require some refinement inasmuch as the cost of residents' gratuities or, for example, the chefs' wages are not currently factored in, the development is highly innovative. The Department should look at how such work can be extended across the prison estate.
- 5.4 Impressively, in 2007–2008 the value of reparation was \$484,751 and in 2008–2009 it had almost doubled to \$867,158. Moreover, actual income from the catering industry had enabled the purchase of a new \$70,000 oven, and income from the garden industry had enabled the purchase of a computer and sundries that will facilitate more efficient stock management processes.

### SECTION 95 WORK PROGRAM

- 5.5 Providing opportunities for residents to re-engage with the community through reparation, study, recreation and work is central to successful reintegration. Section 95 of the *Prisons Act 1981* provides the legal mechanism for the Superintendent of a prison to provide these opportunities.

---

32 Department of Corrective Services, *Prisons Monthly Performance Report* (April 2009).

## PHOTOGRAPHS

---



*One of two enclosed playgrounds provided for supervised use by visiting, extended stay, and resident children.*



*Resident children share their bedrooms with their mothers.*

PHOTOGRAPHS

---



*A typical bathroom in one of the residences.*



*A typical kitchen in one of the residences.*



PHOTOGRAPHS

---



*The café and visits area. Residents prepare the food that is displayed for sale.*



*On-site fitness centre for residents' use.*



- 5.6 At the time of the last inspection in 2006, the section 95 work program had ‘not developed to a satisfactory level’<sup>33</sup> and the recommendation was that it should be reviewed, with a focus upon increasing the number of participating residents, increasing the range of community sites, and improving the quality of the services by engaging and applying the skills residents had acquired. In response, the Department agreed in part with the recommendation, but ascribed it a ‘low risk’ rating. At this inspection, the work party had only increased by two, from six to eight residents, and the range of sites serviced had not increased. As a re-entry prison, it is reasonable to expect that a much higher proportion (at least 20 per cent) of prisoners be involved in this sort of activity.<sup>34</sup>
- 5.7 Supported by a dedicated and now permanent full-time section 95 officer, the same group of eight women works Monday to Friday servicing the following sites: the Cat Haven; Good Sammy’s Industries; the Food Bank; and the Soup Kitchen. The women explained that the work does not provide them with opportunities to acquire specific skills and if any learning occurs, this is not accredited. They described the work as monotonous, although they also conceded that it was preparing them for life post-release in terms of instilling an understanding of personal responsibility, discipline and a good work ethic.
- 5.8 Discussion with management indicated that the section 95 work program at Boronia is primarily focused upon community reparation. Although this is consistent with one of its key guiding principles of community responsibility, the program does not appear to be seen as an opportunity for the women to acquire specific and useful skills that could be easily transferable upon release. This focus differs significantly from the section 95 work undertaken at Wooroloo and the regional work camps, where the community work frequently provides prisoners with specific trade skills that can be formally certified. Although the Department has not yet fully established a system to ensure that all section 95 and work camp officers have Certificate IV in Workplace Training and Assessment, certification can be requested and undertaken as appropriate by a representative of an external registered training organisation.

#### PRISONER EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM COORDINATOR

- 5.9 The Prisoner Employment Program (PEP) and the Employment Coordinator positions were introduced to prisons across Western Australia in the second half of 2008. PEP was developed to provide ‘for minimum-security prisoners to have the opportunity to engage in meaningful and sustainable paid employment, work experience, vocational training and education in the community prior to their release’.<sup>35</sup> It allows prisoners to leave prisons to undertake these activities in a normalised work, training or educational environment, plus the opportunity to be paid to undertake work in preparation for release.
- 5.10 The eligibility criteria for acceptance onto the Prisoner Employment Program are numerous and strict. The prisoner must have completed more than half of their minimum

---

33 Stacey R, *Exit Debrief: Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women Inspection 11 June to 23 June 2006* (June 2006) 4

34 OICS, *Report of An Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm*, Report No.39 (January 2007) 32.

35 Smith L, *Prisoner Employment Program...Building a Future: the First Six Months September 2008 – March 2009* (Government of Western Australia, Department of Corrective Services, 2009).

sentence and have less than 12 months remaining. They must also be medically fit, be approved as suitable by the Department, and have a good work and behaviour history. From the point of view of potential employers, the approval process has proved bureaucratically cumbersome and time consuming, resulting in some employers withdrawing from the scheme.

- 5.11 A full-time PEP coordinator is employed at Boronia, but progress has been disrupted by a change of post holder in recent months. At the time of the inspection, PEP achievements included two women who had gone on to sustain employment post-release and two current residents who were attending work experience with very real prospects of paid employment. Five applications were in process. The Coordinator also works with and on behalf of women who are ineligible for PEP by facilitating attendance at job preparation workshops, arranging employment expos, sourcing information, and networking with employment agencies.
- 5.12 A review conducted by the Department six months into the operation of PEP<sup>36</sup> found that lengthy delays in approvals for participation, and the need for transport were the biggest barriers. This has prevented wider participation in the program and the achievement of positive outcomes for more prisoners. Not surprisingly, therefore, at inspection, most of the women expressed frustration with and a lack of confidence in PEP, citing bureaucracy, the strict eligibility criteria and its time-consuming nature as major deterrents.
- 5.13 While conceptually sound, PEP's numbers and achievements to date are limited and do not represent good value for money. The Department should consider reviewing the criteria to maximise access to the program.

#### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SECTION 95 AND THE PRISONER EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

- 5.14 Despite the reluctance to expand section 95, Boronia has been using it to allow individual residents to access specific training and employment opportunities in the community on a case-by-case basis. This has been particularly beneficial for residents undertaking traineeships who have been able to access businesses in the community.
- 5.15 At the time of the inspection there was some apprehension about Boronia's ability to continue to do this, however. Some people involved in PEP management in head office had told the Superintendent that PEP should be the only mechanism for accessing ongoing external employment, study, and training. This is in spite of the fact that prisoner eligibility for PEP is tightly restricted (see above). The stand-off allegedly resulted in the managers of PEP stating they would seek changes to the policy directive related to section 95 release to ensure it could not be used for any ongoing employment, study or training arrangements and to limit its use to 'one-off type activities'.
- 5.16 Such changes to the Section 95 program would be in direct contradiction to the rehabilitation and re-entry ethos of the Department's strategic plan, and would have serious

---

36 Smith L, *Prisoner Employment Program...Building a Future: the First Six Months September 2008 – March 2009* (Government of Western Australia, Department of Corrective Services, 2009).

implications for all minimum-security facilities. Section 95 is the mechanism for access to so many positive activities for prisoners preparing for release. At his debrief at the end of the inspection,<sup>37</sup> the Inspector made four observations in relation to this issue:

- There is no reason in law for reading down section 95 so as to limit its use to ‘one-off’ type activities.
- The failure of Boronia management and PEP management to collaborate and cooperate in the best interests of the residents is profoundly unhelpful.
- To limit the use of section 95 in the way sought by those involved in PEP would be counterproductive and anathema to the philosophy of minimum-security facilities such as Boronia.
- Section 95 release provides those prisoners who are simply not ready for PEP or who do not meet PEP’s restrictive criteria to engage with services and activities that support rehabilitation and re-entry.

At the exit debrief the Commissioner of Corrective Services indicated that he would also be concerned if restrictive changes to section 95 were to occur.

#### RECREATION: IN-REACH AND OUTREACH (VIA SECTION 95)

- 5.17 The previous inspection report<sup>38</sup> recommended that the Recreation Officer position be fully funded as Boronia was overly reliant on volunteers to coordinate activities. This has been rectified with a full-time permanent Recreation Officer now in place. A Recreation Assistant (resident) is responsible for organising activities and making sporting equipment available outside of business hours.
- 5.18 Within Boronia residents can undertake self-directed recreation activities using the sports facilities (gym, basketball and volleyball courts), the library and community room. In addition, a range of structured recreational activities is offered on a regular basis including bingo, karaoke, circuit classes and volleyball.
- 5.19 In terms of external recreational activities, there is a daily (Monday to Friday) supervised walking group limited to eight approved residents, and a weekly visit to a community library available to four approved residents. Both activities require interested and approved residents to make formal application to participate through the ‘white form’ system on a weekly basis.
- 5.20 Boronia also has a full-time Volunteer Coordinator, whose role is to manage volunteer in-reach and outreach. Volunteer in-reach includes the Curtin University exchange student program (where Curtin University students attend Boronia for sports programs, craft and other recreation, and also provide personal items, bedding and clothing for care packs for women on release); attendance by Vietnamese Buddhist nuns; a flower essence therapist; and a laughter therapist. Community-based volunteer activity includes membership of the Boronia Choir, and members of the adjacent retirement village making goods for Boronia’s

---

37 Professor Neil Morgan, Inspector of the Office of the Inspector for Custodial Services, Exit Debrief of Inspection of Boronia Pre-release Centre (25 June 2009).

38 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women*, Report No. 42 (April 2007).

annual Gala Day. These initiatives are all positive and consistent with the guiding principle of community responsibility. However, most activities are centre-based (in-reach) rather than community-based (outreach).

- 5.21 During the inspection, we received somewhat ambivalent messages in relation to the value of external activities. On the one hand, the importance of outreach for the residents to assist re-entry was emphasised. But on the other hand, when we suggested that section 95 could perhaps be expanded for more community-based recreation and more diverse work opportunities, we were told that this was problematic because of security imperatives, lack of staff/transport, lack of interest on the part of the residents, and the careful planning required for sufficient women to be available on site to ensure maximum self-sufficiency and offset the costs of imprisonment.
- 5.22 We conducted an analysis of transfer and discharge sheets for Boronia for the three-week period between 11 May and 31 May 2009 to ascertain the level of section 95 approved outings. Despite the fact that approximately 70 per cent of the residents at Boronia are approved for section 95 activities, our analysis showed that 13 per cent of the approved women accounted for approximately 40 per cent of the outings;<sup>39</sup> in other words, a small proportion of women went on most occasions. And no section 95 outings occurred in the evenings or weekends.
- 5.23 Boronia's management indicated a level of reticence to expand external recreation, and to support this position cited the findings of the pre-inspection resident survey in which 90 per cent, 100 per cent, and 91 per cent of respondents respectively expressed satisfaction with access to recreation, the gym, and to the library. In contrast, during the on-site phase of the inspection residents repeatedly cited the lack of available recreation or activities of interest as an issue, particularly in the evenings, at weekends, and externally. While the Inspectorate agrees with management that community outreach activities should never be forced on residents, the issue would seem to be that an appropriate and suitable range of external recreation options should be available, and that the women should be actively encouraged and supported – in view of their imminent release – to reconnect with the community. Good use of external recreation via section 95 release has been successfully achieved in minimum-security facilities in rural and regional areas.<sup>40</sup> The Inspectorate can see no reason why external recreation should not be similarly successful at Boronia, especially given its central location and its close proximity to public transport.
- 5.24 One barrier to extending community outreach from Boronia seemed to be fear about public or media backlash, especially in the wake of recent criticism about Wooroloo Prison Farm's involvement in community football competitions.<sup>41</sup> However, this does not justify Boronia's failure to support external recreation. Boronia's stated commitment to extensive outreach needs to be backed up by substantive action.

---

39 Data provided by TOMS.

40 Such as Wooroloo and Walpole, see: OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Albany Regional Prison*, Report No. 60 (April 2009); OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Wooroloo Prison Farm* (as yet unpublished).

41 For example, see [www.inmycommunity/news...prison/7526349](http://www.inmycommunity/news...prison/7526349) (26 May 2009).

- 5.25 The Community Advisory Group, established with the primary purpose of educating the public and managing the public perceptions of a prison in a suburban area, could be appropriately engaged to assist Boronia by exploring opportunities for new outreach initiatives. The Superintendent acknowledged that the group's work had been outstanding during Boronia's establishment phase and that it was ready for a new challenge. Collaboratively, the Superintendent could work with the group to examine ways to better integrate Boronia and its residents into the wider community.

*Recommendation 4*

*Boronia must expand the use of (i) section 95 for more community-based education/study, recreation, reparation, and diverse work opportunities; and (ii) the Prisoner Employment Program (PEP). The Department must maintain its unequivocal commitment to the use of section 95 for education/training, employment and recreation opportunities.*

**DEDICATED RE-ENTRY SERVICES**

- 5.26 At the briefing at the commencement of the inspection, the Superintendent reported that office space behind the library at Boronia was in the process of being reconfigured to function as a dedicated re-entry hub. This area will house the Transitional Manager, the PEP Coordinator, and the Education Campus Managers, and there will also be space allocated for external re-entry services, such as Ruah and Outcare. To date, despite their closely related roles, these individuals and agencies have been dispersed across the site. This has negatively impacted on the potential for collaboration and has created inefficiencies in the re-entry process. The proposed re-entry hub is a positive initiative, consistent with the desired outcomes of recommendation 17 made at the last inspection.<sup>42</sup> It aims to encourage a team-based and cohesive approach, to enhance communication, to reduce duplication, and to improve coordination and efficiency.
- 5.27 All prisons in Western Australia have been provided with a Transitional Manager. This position was introduced to Boronia in December 2008, but only on a part-time basis, despite it being a prison from which virtually every resident will be transitioned into the community. The purpose of the role is to promote re-entry services among the resident group and to coordinate services to assist prisoners with issues related to their release, with the goal of making the transition from prison to the community as smooth as possible and giving prisoners a better chance of successfully pursuing a law-abiding lifestyle.
- 5.28 At Boronia there are two parts to the role. The first is to provide assistance with obtaining birth certificates, Medicare cards, proof of age cards and drivers licences; to connect women with agencies such as the Child Support Agency, Department for Child Protection, Centrelink, and Legal Aid; and to link women with transitional accommodation, employment, substance abuse counselling and life skills programs. A significant part of the Transitional Manager's role is to manage the relationship between the prison and the various external agencies and non-government organisations that deliver these services. The second part of this role at Boronia is to coordinate programs.

---

42 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women*, Report No. 42 (April 2007).

- 5.29 Unfortunately, to date, the Transitional Manager has found it difficult to fully realise the role due to the part-time nature of the position. This has impacted upon her ability to complete a full follow-up with women post-release, to delineate her duties in relation to other staff and agency representatives within Boronia, and to properly coordinate programs. However, at the time of the inspection another part-time position had been agreed and was soon to commence for at least a three-month period.
- 5.30 In spite of these restrictions, the Transitional Manager has been successful in seeing all women within two weeks of their arrival at Boronia to indentify their short- and long-term needs. From conversations with residents during the inspection, it was clear that there was widespread awareness of re-entry services. Moreover, the Transitional Manager has identified and is maintaining a log of gaps in service delivery, the most obvious of which continues to be the lack of dedicated family violence treatment programs. The integration and co-location of the re-entry team to include representatives of external agencies should further resolve any confusion about respective roles and responsibilities.

# Chapter 6

## PREPARING WOMEN FOR RE-ENTRY: CONNECTING WITH HEALTH SERVICES

---

---

### AN AMBIVALENT HEALTH SERVICES DIRECTORATE

- 6.1 In the initial planning for Boronia as a pre-release centre, the intention was that the residents' lives should be as 'normalised' as possible, with women accessing health services in the community rather than being serviced on site. However, for a number of reasons, this did not happen and a health service was established at Boronia.
- 6.2 At departmental level it would seem that the change of plan has never been satisfactorily resolved and, as a result, the inspection identified gaps between what the Department commits itself to providing and what is actually resourced and provided. Although staff on site are well qualified, diligent and professional, health services are not being delivered in line with the standards set out in official policy documents and fall short of meeting all the needs of the patients.
- 6.3 In 2008 the Department issued its 'Strategic Directions Health Care for Women and Girls 2008–2012', which promotes a progressive, integrated, culturally appropriate, holistic, and social model of health care delivery for women and girls in custody and their children. One of the document's philosophical principles commits the Department's Health Services Directorate 'to the delivery of a community best practice standard of patient care, irrespective of imprisonment'.<sup>43</sup> However, during the last year General Practitioner (GP) availability on site has been cut from six to three hours a week, and the on-site GP service does not extend to resident or visiting children.
- 6.4 One of the value statements in the strategic document states that 'Health services recognises women and girls have a pervasive history of past abuse, family violence, victimisation and vulnerability, and therefore ensures sensitive and appropriate service approaches that address identified needs'. However, head office managers criticised the health service at Boronia for having become, at times, 'an inefficient drop-in centre'. A strict appointment system has now been instituted. The on-site view seems to be that something of a 'drop-in' element is essential if women – the vast majority of whom have been victims of physical and sexual violence – are to develop trust in the service and feel comfortable in opening up and addressing their extensive physical and mental health needs.
- 6.5 The findings of the pre-inspection resident survey in relation to health services were not particularly favourable,<sup>44</sup> nor was the feedback provided by residents during the on-site phase of the inspection. The indicators of dissatisfaction predominantly related to protracted waiting times (sometimes weeks) to see a GP and lack of access to dental care. This was further supported by feedback to the Inspectorate by the Office of Health Review who stated that of the telephone complaints received to date in 2009 all concerned lengthy waits to secure an appointment with the GP. Nonetheless, those residents who have accessed a service spoke positively with the Inspectorate regarding their engagement with health centre staff.

---

43 Department of Corrective Services *Strategic Directions Health Care for Women and Girls 2008–2012*.

44 In the pre-inspection resident survey 58 per cent of respondents expressed satisfaction with access to a doctor or nurse and 83 per cent of respondents expressed satisfaction with access to a psychologist. Forty-one per cent of respondents complained about health; 36 per cent of respondents complained about health specialists; 46 per cent of respondents complained about dental services; and 23 per cent complained about psychiatric services. Medical services were ranked fourth in the top five negatives about life at Boronia.



- 6.6 The Inspectorate believes that ‘Strategic Directions Health Care for Women and Girls 2008–2012’ reflects a sound and progressive understanding of a women-centred approach to a continuum of health care, both in custody and in preparation for re-entry. Having endorsed the document, the Department has made a commitment to providing comprehensive health services to women and girls, not only at Boronia, but also at Bandyup, Rangeview Juvenile Detention Centre, and the regional prisons. The challenge now for the Department is to close the gaps between policy and practice, and between head office and Boronia (and other sites). The general statements in the Strategic Directions document should be bolstered by measurable outcomes and clearly defined targets against which progress can be measured. There should also be adequate resource allocation and a positive engagement by head office with health service staff at all sites.

*Recommendation 5*

*The Department must ensure the provision of support and the human, physical and financial resources necessary to fully operationalise the stated intentions of the ‘Strategic Directions Health Care for Women and Girls 2008–2012’ at Boronia and in other parts of the female custodial estate.*

#### THE HEALTH SERVICE AT BORONIA

- 6.7 Boronia’s health centre is open between 8.00 am and 4.30 pm weekdays and 8.00 am and 2.00 pm on weekends. During weekdays a nurse provides a comprehensive range of services with a specific health promotion focus, consistent with Boronia’s guiding philosophical principle of personal responsibility. The weekend cover is more for urgent matters that arise and for administration of medication. Residents telephone to make an appointment, just as they would in the community.
- 6.8 A General Practitioner (GP) visits Boronia every week for a three-hour session. Residents are referred by a nurse and are booked into one of the 15-minute appointment time slots. Previously there were two sessions a week but this had been reduced to one. There is considerable demand on the GP, particularly when follow-up appointments are required. While it is important to have a well-structured appointments system, overly rigid procedures (such as the 15-minute limit on consultations) can be counterproductive. This is particularly so given the complexities of the particular client group resident at Boronia. For specialist health needs, including mental health services, residents are referred to services in the community.
- 6.9 A matter of concern to the Inspectorate is that on several occasions in the weeks preceding the inspection the nurse had been prevented, on security grounds, from opening the health centre because health administration staff were on leave and no security officers were available. This constituted lost opportunities in health service provision. We believe that there is scope for more flexibility (reflecting the risk and needs of residents) at Boronia and urge the Department to review these rules. In the interim, Boronia management and head office should develop a contingency plan, such as provision of a domiciliary service or similar, to minimise the risk of such disruption.



- 6.10 In terms of pre-release services, it was positive to note that medical staff undertake a pre-discharge interview with residents, at which arrangements can be made in the community for post-release medical appointments. If contacts have been established whilst at Boronia, then efforts are made for these to be maintained for residents in the community.
- 6.11 A new program initiated at Boronia and in collaboration with Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service was in the planning stages at the time of the inspection. In recognition of the particular health needs of Aboriginal women, the program provides for Aboriginal women and their children to attend Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service on a weekly basis for a series of education/information sessions. The program operates with the intention that upon release these women will feel comfortable continuing to attend because a connection and familiarity with the services available has already been established. This program will reinforce the connection already made with the child health nurse from Derbarl Yerrigan, who provides services to Aboriginal children at Boronia on a regular basis.

# Chapter 7

## PREPARING WOMEN FOR RE-ENTRY: CONNECTING, RECONNECTING, AND MAINTAINING CONNECTIONS WITH FAMILY AND CHILDREN

---

---

- 7.1 Prior to imprisonment, a significant proportion of women have been directly responsible for the care of a child or significant other, have had close family connections, and have been in committed relationships.<sup>45</sup> The importance of family and relationships to women must therefore be a key focus of their custodial management and preparation for release. At Boronia, the importance of relationships to women is wholeheartedly recognised and embraced, and significant efforts are made to enable residents to connect, reconnect and maintain personal relationships.

### CONTACT/VISITS

- 7.2 The pre-inspection resident survey found that 97 per cent of respondents had regular contact with their family, and that 90 per cent received visits.
- 7.3 There are five phones for resident use within Boronia: two in each unit and one next to the programs room. As highlighted in the last inspection report, the four unit phones are out in the open with no shelter or protection from the elements.<sup>46</sup> This should be rectified.
- 7.4 The indoor/outdoor visits area with its spacious layout, relaxed atmosphere and well used, safe and enclosed children's playground is a highlight of Boronia. There are two visits sessions of two hours' duration that take place each Saturday and Sunday.
- 7.5 The family-friendly focus of visits is enhanced and emphasised by the presence of a childcare worker from Outcare. This worker actively engages with the children, undertaking various arts and craft activities. The Inspectorate was informed that the YMCA had provided a youth worker during visit sessions to organise structured activities for older children, and that this service was to be reinstated in the near future.
- 7.6 Up to 20 residents are allowed visits at each session. Three adults and unlimited children per resident are permitted at a visit session, helping to reinforce the importance of maintaining contact, particularly for those women who have larger families. A unique feature of visiting at Boronia is the photography service; residents and visitors can have their photographs taken, and the whole process, including photograph development, is managed by staff, at minimal cost to the resident. Local management is to be commended on implementing this simple yet important service to residents.
- 7.7 A café-style service, staffed by the residents, is provided in the visits area. This arrangement works well as it provides residents with the opportunity of acquiring a range of job-related skills, qualifications and experience. Visitors can purchase food and drink from a menu to consume during their visit. There is a commercial barista machine and residents are formally trained and certified in its use. One of the issues raised by some of the visitors was the cost of the food. Further to this feedback, local management is exploring options of low-cost meals and a children's menu.
- 7.8 Video visits at Boronia take place in the boardroom. Unfortunately, these visits are underutilised: over the five-month period from January until the end of May 2009 there

---

45 Department of Corrective Services, *Profile of Women in Prison 2008*, Final Report (2008).

46 OICS, *Report of an Announced Inspection of Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women*, Report No. 42 (April 2007) 22.

were only three video visits. Generally, there was a lack of awareness amongst residents, including the peer support representatives, regarding the use of video visits.

- 7.9 Inter-prison visits to adult metropolitan prisons are a real positive for Boronia, with a calendar of visits to the different prisons developed at the beginning of the year. It was noted, however, that no visits to the juvenile custodial facilities are organised. This was particularly disappointing as some of the residents had children in these facilities. If deemed to be in the best interests of the child, maintaining mother/child contact could aid the rehabilitative efforts of both parties. There seems to be no reasonable argument for this situation to continue: there are no documented rules that prohibit inter-facility visits between adult prisoners and their children. Rather, it appears to be a custom and practice that has evolved and been routinely applied by the superintendents of the juvenile facilities.
- 7.10 There is an interesting irony here also. Local management at Boronia has recognised the particular problems associated with the separation of mothers and adolescent children. It has also successfully secured continued funding for an innovative program, Family Linking Youth, which aims to maintain connections between mothers and their adolescent children and limit the risk of intergenerational offending. This program has been positively received by mothers and adolescent children alike, and Boronia management should be commended. However, a less contrived and simpler way of maintaining contact between mothers and adolescent children in custody could also be arranged.

#### WOMEN AND CHILDREN

- 7.11 Continuity in the relationship between the primary carer and child is vital to a child's emotional, social and intellectual development. The anxiety of mothers who are separated from their children makes their incarceration experience significantly different to that of their male counterparts. The fact that women prisoners are far more likely than men to be primary carers of young children highlights the importance of the provision of services for mothers and babies.
- 7.12 During the inspection week there were seven children residing full time at Boronia. The ages of these children ranged from two months to four years old. In addition, two children had been approved for extended day visits and 21 children for overnight stays. It was positive to note that although the maximum age for children to reside at Boronia is four years, there is some flexibility with this policy, particularly when the mother is close to release and the child has been resident at the centre.
- 7.13 Within Boronia, the Child Care Management Committee is responsible for reviewing all applications for child residency and extended day or overnight stays. The committee comprises the Assistant Superintendent, Manager Children and Community Services, Unit Management, Senior Family Links Officer, and other staff as appropriate. The committee also formally reviews all extended day and overnight stays monthly, as well as residential stays every three months. The regular meetings of this committee along with improvements in the electronic recording of and access to case notes and review dates have made the process of assessing and reviewing the placement of children at Boronia more rigorous.

Care plans are developed for all residential children or children on overnight stays (not for extended day stays). Further to a recommendation from the last inspection, members of the Child Care Management Committee now ensure that risk assessments are completed and that management plans are developed as appropriate.

- 7.14 There is a close working relationship between the Manager Family and Community Services and the Department for Child Protection (DCP) Senior Family Links worker. Although the DCP worker is based at Boronia, the position also works out of Bandyup. This ensures better communication between DCP, Bandyup and Boronia regarding care and wellbeing issues of children.
- 7.15 Further to a recommendation made at the last inspection, the Department sought advice from the State Solicitor's Office and based on that advice has chosen not to obtain Working with Children Checks<sup>47</sup> for its staff. However, at local level, training is provided to both staff and residents on 'protective behaviours'. Staff also receive training in 'duty of care' issues and in the application of procedures related to resident mothers and their children. Boronia has also utilised the Child Wise 'Choose with Care Kit' which is an information and training program to assist organisations to establish a safe environment for children and young people in their care.
- 7.16 The efforts made at implementing such important risk minimisation initiatives at local level are acknowledged and should be commended. However, the Inspectorate still believes that while Working With Children Checks may not be required in terms of the law's literal interpretation, they serve as an added safety precaution, are consistent with best practice and should be pursued.
- 7.17 Until recently, a staff member from the Department for Child Protection (DCP) had been on site at Boronia a number of days each week to support women and children with DCP-related issues and to facilitate and support child contact and other child issues women may face upon their release. Since she has left, the Department and DCP have reviewed and revised the role. The scope of the role will be to assist in the whole of the women's custodial estate, spending substantial time at both Boronia and Bandyup, but also intermittently visiting the regional sites and providing information support to the Women's Services Officers at these locations.
- 7.18 This is an important service. Child-related issues cause the highest level of anxiety for most women and having direct access to a DCP worker to assist residents with their contact, custody and issues relating to care of their children resolves a great deal of anxiety that may otherwise result in behaviour that could impact on the woman's prospects of successful re-entry. It also assists in women coming to an understanding about their roles and responsibilities as members of a family and, in particular, mothering.

#### PARENTING SUPPORT

- 7.19 The facilities at Boronia provide an excellent opportunity for children to live or stay on a regular basis with their mother or primary carers. Where such arrangements are in the

---

<sup>47</sup> *Working with Children (Criminal Recording Checking) Act 2004* (WA) s 6.

best interests of the child, they are critical to their social and emotional wellbeing and development. However, management and staff at Boronia have recognised that it is essential that mothers are provided with intensive support to undertake their parental responsibilities and to improve their parenting skills.

- 7.20 In the absence of substantive departmental investment, strong relationships have been developed with not-for-profit organisations, in particular Extra Edge Community Services. Significant efforts are being made to engage their support to continue providing parenting programs. They currently provide an impressive range of parenting services for residents, including Pine Tree Tots, Chit Chat, workshops and other parental support. Participants spoke highly of these programs and felt that they had learnt parenting skills they could apply when released. The service is federally funded through the Community Crime Prevention Program until December 2009; however, Boronia has applied for additional funding to continue the service beyond this date.
- 7.21 For older children, Extra Edge also facilitates the Family Linking Youth (FLY) project for 11 to 17 year olds. This project takes place three times a year with weekly sessions over a 10-week period. These children are collected and brought to Boronia, and encouraged to engage in activities aimed at strengthening the bond with their mothers and at reducing the risk of intergenerational offending.
- 7.22 Day care is also provided to residents by Communicare free of charge due to federal funding from the Department of Family, Housing, and Community Services, and the Department of Indigenous Affairs. This day-care facility enables the mothers to pursue treatment and education programs in order to address their offending behaviour and to meet the requirements of their Individual Management Plans (IMPs) while still maintaining primary parental responsibility for their child on site.
- 7.23 In terms of post-release planning, Extra Edge develops a three-month transitional plan with resident mothers, and a package of available services including playgroups, Aboriginal services, and other agencies that may be able to offer assistance or support. Extra Edge staff also undertake six post-release support visits to mothers over a three-month period, although funding for these is only available to those women living in the metropolitan area.
- 7.24 In the pre-inspection survey residents ranked being able to have their children with them third out of the top five positives about life at Boronia.
- 7.25 In summary, a comprehensive suite of support is provided for mothers and their children while they are in custody at Boronia and beyond. In light of recent research, this is absolutely critical to successful re-entry: while the responsibility of being primary caregivers puts an additional burden on women prisoners, 'at the same time it is often described as being the one positive thing in their lives. Being considered a good mother is of fundamental importance to these women and many rely upon their motherhood to keep crime free after release.'<sup>48</sup>

---

48 Department of Corrective Services, *Profile of Women in Prison 2008: Stage 2 of the Prisoner Characteristics and Needs Survey* (July 2009).

## Chapter 8

### OUTCOMES DEMONSTRATING BORONIA'S EFFECTIVENESS IN PREPARING WOMEN FOR RE-ENTRY – FORGING FORWARD

---

---

- 8.1 One of the top five positives identified by respondents in the pre-inspection resident survey was the 'chance to change life direction'. Respondents felt that they were helped to lead a law-abiding life on release into the community; were encouraged to work towards goals and plan for their release; and that the prison offered a chance for them to change the direction of their lives.
- 8.2 During the on-site phase of the inspection, women indicated that they saw the opportunity to live in a more 'normal' environment and therefore to prepare for re-entry, as the main purpose and benefit of being at Boronia. The fact that women understood the role and function of Boronia was a good indicator of their level of engagement and of its effectiveness as a re-entry centre.
- 8.3 Many factors can influence recidivism and reoffending cannot be wholly attributable to the quality of a person's incarceration experience. However, recidivism rates can provide an indicator of the extent to which prisoners have engaged in a change process. To this end, recidivism rates for Boronia show that since the last inspection, reoffending had dropped by almost 4 per cent (from 20% to 16.16%).<sup>49</sup>
- 8.4 Further breakdown of these figures supports the Inspectorate's view that non-Aboriginal women are the primary beneficiaries of Boronia's service and that, without a strategic focus and commitment at departmental level, piecemeal efforts at local level to engage Aboriginal women are insufficient to significantly influence their offending behaviour. Nonetheless, Boronia's success as indicated by the recidivism rates for non-Aboriginal women must be acknowledged.
- 8.5 Boronia's achievements must be understood in the context of the environment in which it was created. At the time, some concern was expressed about the facility being 'too good' for prisoners; about an open custodial environment operating within an established urban area; and about the progressive principles upon which it was to be run. Boronia has more than proved itself. Examples of its achievements have been highlighted in this report and previously, and have no doubt contributed to a shifting of this view.
- 8.6 A response the Inspectorate received to an invitation in the local newspaper for community feedback during the pre-inspection planning phase in May 2009 highlighted this. An elderly resident of the adjacent retirement village contacted the Inspectorate, telling us that in spite of initial anxieties about the centre being built next door, a mutually beneficial relationship has developed. Residents from the village make a significant contribution to Boronia's Gala Day each year, and in return they are invited for lunch at Boronia and the Boronia Choir also stages regular performances at the village. She concluded by expressing the view that the experience of having Boronia next door has been positive for all concerned.

---

<sup>49</sup> An analysis of TOMS data for the 21 months from 1 April 2006 to 31 December 2008, as presented in information provided to the Office prior to the inspection, indicates that 297 women were released. Of these, 48 were returned to custody (those women who were returned due to default of fines with old offences, who were remanded and then released with no further period of custody, or who had parole suspended, were excluded from these figures) – indicating a recidivism rate of 16.16 per cent. Of these 48 women, 33 were Aboriginal and the remaining 15 were non-Aboriginal.

OUTCOMES DEMONSTRATING BORONIA'S EFFECTIVENESS IN PREPARING  
WOMEN FOR RE-ENTRY – FORGING FORWARD

---

---

- 8.7 Through its slow fill and its careful engagement with the community, Boronia has built a good reputation within the community and within corrections. It is on the basis of this reputation that the Department is now perfectly positioned to enable Boronia to forge ahead with further innovations in corrections for women.
- 8.8 This report raises a number of areas in which this could occur: the development of services, accommodation and programs for Aboriginal women; the provision of family violence and related treatment programs; the delivery of client-focused health care; and the involvement of residents in a wider range of community-based education, work and leisure activities. These measures would all further enhance its re-entry role within the system.
- 8.9 However, the primary challenge for the Department relates not so much to Boronia itself but to the wider context of correctional services for women. With the development and endorsement of the new Women's Way Forward Strategic Plan, it is incumbent on the Department to set clear targets against which progress to address the inequity within the women's custodial estate can be measured, monitored and addressed. In particular, action must be taken to transfer good practice to the regions in a culturally appropriate way to eliminate some of the disadvantage faced by women who cannot access Boronia's quality services.

# Environmental Health Assessment

---

In November 2006, the Health Department carried out the Environmental Health Assessment of Boronia, in accordance with the *Health Act 1911* (WA) and other relevant legislation. The Health Department's overview<sup>50</sup> was that overall Boronia was well maintained and a very high standard of cleanliness was noted. It was suggested at that time that downpipes needed to be fitted to roof guttering in some areas to avoid water pooling and associated slip hazards.

As part of this announced inspection, our authorised officer carried out an inspection of Boronia against the *Code of Inspection Standards for Adult Custodial Services Version One April 2007* (Standards 61–64 Emergency Management, Standards 79–80 Hygiene and Environmental Health, Standards 96–99 Food and Nutrition, Standard 136 in relation to occupational health and safety standards, Standard 142 in relation to staff training, and Standards 154–161 Environmental Sustainability).

Again, Boronia was found to be generally well maintained, although the previously suggested remedial work to prevent water pooling had not been carried out and the hazard remained. There are two issues here: first, the implementation of strategies at local level for managing the hazard on a day-to-day basis; and secondly, the identification and implementation of preventive strategies at departmental level. It appears that no action has been taken on either front.

Other principal areas of concern include:

- Emergency Management – A pandemic management plan needs to be developed and implemented. In addition, Boronia needs to seek ongoing representation on the Local Emergency Management Committee to develop mutually assistive contingency arrangements with other community agencies should a critical event occur.
- Training – A systematic and regular process for training staff and residents needs to be established in the following areas: infection control; first aid and senior first aid; fire drills; manual handling; chemical handling and material safety data sheets; and stock rotation.
- Infection Control – A review of the laundering of health centre sheets needs to be undertaken to ensure consistency with hospital wash (sanitising) requirements. In addition, a review of health centre waste management, disposal, and collection needs to be conducted to minimise the risk of cross-contamination.
- Safety testing needs to be implemented.

More sustainability programs need to be initiated in accordance with the 2004 Sustainability Code of Practice for Government Agencies.

A detailed list outlining locally remediable issues in relation to emergency management, hygiene and environmental health, food and nutrition, occupational health and safety and environmental sustainability has been provided to Boronia for action. These items as well as those outlined above will be followed up by the Inspectorate at ongoing liaison visits.

---

50 HDWA, *Environmental Health Assessment – Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women* (2006).



# Appendix 1

## THE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE 2009 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Acceptance Level/Risk Rating/Response
<p>Across the whole of the women's estate, the Department must provide accommodation, services and programs to Aboriginal women that cater to their identified and specific needs, customs, values and beliefs and which eliminate the structural disadvantages they currently experience. Measurable outcomes, targets and timeframes should be established and monitored.</p>	<p><b>Supported in principle.</b> Ongoing implementation of previously initiated services and programs with the understanding that future prisoner accommodation is subject to government funding approval. <b>Timeframe:</b> This recommendation is already a key focus for the Department and therefore implementation is ongoing and part of our continuous improvement philosophy.</p>
<p>The Department must resource and ensure the ongoing delivery of a discrete suite of quality endorsed group treatment programs that address family violence and related issues from a female – and especially an Aboriginal female – perspective.</p>	<p><b>Supported in principle and in part.</b> Much of this is currently occurring and as such the recommendation states what the Department is already implementing or is currently delivering. However, the Department sees the introduction of family violence treatment programs as a greater priority for the men's estate, with a complementary range of initiatives targeting parenting, self-esteem and life skills more relevant to the women's estate. A core aspect of the program is the delivery of life skills information sessions, which can include subject matters such as domestic violence. <b>Timeframe:</b> Ongoing.</p>
<p>Across the whole custodial system, the Department must develop a complaints process that is integral to its overall customer feedback system, and which is open, transparent, well used and effective in eliciting constructive feedback and expressions of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and bringing about positive change and quality improvement. Given its stability and role, Boronia may be one of a number of sites at which to test new processes.</p>	<p><b>Supported in principle.</b> Has been in place for some time and it is the Department's position that the recommendation outlines what is already in place. The current process will be reviewed in accordance with our continuous improvement philosophy and any identified enhancements will be implemented accordingly. Therefore, there is no intention to trial a new process at this time. <b>Timeframe:</b> Ongoing.</p>

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Acceptance Level/Risk Rating/Response</b>
<p>Boronia must expand the use of (i) section 95 for more community-based education/study, recreation, reparation, and diverse work opportunities; and (ii) the Prisoner Employment Program (PEP). The Department must maintain its unequivocal commitment to the use of section 95 for education/training, employment and recreation opportunities.</p>	<p><b>Supported in principle.</b>                      In accordance with the Department's current focus and direction it will be continually reviewed in accordance with our continuous improvement philosophy.  <b>Timeframe:</b> Ongoing</p>
<p>The Department must ensure the provision of support and the human, physical and financial resources necessary to fully operationalise the stated intentions of the 'Strategic Directions Health Care for Women and Girls 2008–2012' at Boronia and in other parts of the female custodial estate.</p>	<p><b>Supported in principle and subject to funding.</b>                      In accordance with the Department's strategic direction for women's health care.  <b>Timeframe:</b> Three years.</p>

# Appendix 2

## SCORECARD ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRESS AGAINST THE 2006 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation Number	Report No. 42, Report of an Announced Inspection of Boronia Pre-Release Centre for Women By type of Recommendation / Duration	Assessment of the Department's Implementations				
		Poor	Less than Acceptable	Acceptable	More than Acceptable	Excellent
1.	<b>Administration and Accountability</b> There must be a supportive relationship between the Director of Women's Custodial Services and the centre management. This must also extend to support for an adequate allocation of funding for the centre to enable it to meet the high needs of its prisoner population and to develop new initiatives.				•	
2.	<b>Staffing Issues</b> (i) Key positions that remain unfunded at Boronia must be finalised at the earliest opportunity. This recommendation relates specifically to the positions of Manager, Family and Community Services and Recreation Officer. (ii) In addition, the position of Superintendent must be filled substantively.				• •	
3.	<b>Staffing Issues</b> The Centre should undertake a review of the night staffing arrangements and ensure that the Centre is sufficiently staffed at all times. This review should include an analysis of gender patterns of the staffing rosters at Boronia.			•		
4.	<b>Staffing Issues</b> Ongoing training and awareness raising about grooming and boundary setting should form part of Boronia's staff training schedule. This should be supported by robust policies that stipulate the appropriate levels of interactions between staff and residents at Boronia.			•		
5.	<b>Care and Wellbeing</b> The placement of the food items in the colour coding system in the supermarket should be reviewed as part of Boronia's commitment to continuous improvement.		• <sup>51</sup>			

51 See main body of report for qualification of this rating.

SCORECARD ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRESS AGAINST THE 2006  
RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation Number	Report No. 42, <i>Report of an Announced Inspection of Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women</i> By type of Recommendation / Duration	Assessment of the Department's Implementations				
		Poor	Less than Acceptable	Acceptable	More than Acceptable	Excellent
6.	<b>Care and Wellbeing</b> Mothers with children residing with them at Boronia should be allowed to accompany their child/children to their child's external medical appointment as a matter of course. This should occur in all instances and be a documented formal procedure.		•52			
7.	<b>Care and Wellbeing</b> That Boronia provide in-service training to all staff likely to come into contact with children during their normal duties regarding their duty of care, safety, development and protection of children.			•		
8.	<b>Care and Wellbeing</b> There is a need to develop satisfactory alternative care arrangements for the care of children should an emergency occur or a mother becomes unable to care for the child.				•	
9.	<b>Care and Wellbeing</b> That effective procedures are put in place to ensure better communication and information between DCD, Bandyup and Boronia in matters relating to the care and wellbeing of children. This must include internal information sharing at Boronia so that all staff are alerted to any matters relating to the custody of each child at Boronia				•	
10.	<b>Care and Wellbeing</b> That Boronia ensure that all staff who have regular contact with children obtain a Working with Children Check in accordance with Section 6 of the Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act	•				
11.	<b>Care and Wellbeing</b> The procedures for assessing and reviewing the placement of children at Boronia should be even more rigorous. Factors contributing to the rigour of this process could include application of the risk register at all stages of these processes, and more clarity with regard to the role of the Manager, Family and Community Services in these processes.			•		

52 If women have been classified as minimum security, accompanying children to medical appointments should be automatic unless there are child protection issues.

SCORECARD ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRESS AGAINST THE 2006  
RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation Number	Report No. 42, <i>Report of an Announced Inspection of Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women</i> By type of Recommendation / Duration	Assessment of the Department's Implementations				
		Poor	Less than Acceptable	Acceptable	More than Acceptable	Excellent
12.	<b>Care and Wellbeing</b> That Boronia develop detailed care plans that incorporate the risk assessment matrix provided in Appendix A of Policy Directive 10 for each child residing or staying at Boronia and review these care plans on a regular basis.			●53		
13i.	<b>Care and Wellbeing</b> In recognising services for families and children, Boronia must secure ongoing funding for its early years strategy which should include a position for an early years worker in order to reduce the dependency on volunteers for these essential services.		●			
13ii	<b>Care and Wellbeing</b> As part of parenting support Boronia should encourage both community inreach and outreach strategies whereby community organisations engage with the women while still at Boronia and provide continuous support to them on release.			●		
14.	<b>Rehabilitation</b> The policy for assessing the security classifications for female offenders in Western Australia should be reviewed as a matter of priority. This review should embrace a women-centred framework that considers the different risks posed by male and female prisoners. A women-centred assessment policy should interpret female offending within the historical context of abuse, neglect, substance use, mental illness etc, that have been identified as relevant to female offending in the Department's own 'profile of women in custody' survey.			●		
15.	<b>Rehabilitation</b> The department should resource the delivery of programs and/or interventions that specifically address domestic violence and related issues.	●54				

53 Although the risk assessment matrix provided in Appendix A of PD 10 has not become an integrated component of care plan reviews, assessments of risk are nonetheless rigorously and routinely completed.

54 It is acknowledged that at a local level efforts have been made to source the delivery of programs aimed at addressing issues of family violence; at Departmental level such programs or interventions have not been resourced.

SCORECARD ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRESS AGAINST THE 2006  
RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation Number	Report No. 42, <i>Report of an Announced Inspection of Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women</i> By type of Recommendation / Duration	Assessment of the Department's Implementations				
		Poor	Less than Acceptable	Acceptable	More than Acceptable	Excellent
16.	<b>Rehabilitation</b> Written agreements should be developed between the education centre at Boronia and each agency that provides education services at Boronia. These agreements should be specific about the range of the services to be provided and the expectations each party has in relation to the working relationship between the education centre at Boronia and the particular agency concerned.				•	
17.	<b>Rehabilitation</b> Boronia should work together with the visiting agencies to establish clear lines of communications about the discrete services they provide. An action plan should be developed to ensure the better integration and coordination of these agencies and their services, and the plan should include provision for evaluation of and feedback on these services.			•		
18.	<b>Reparation</b> The Department should review its perspective on the vast range of activities that fall into the category of reparation, and should work with Boronia to develop and trial a comprehensive measure of reparation taking into account the components of reparation detailed here. This is essential if the Department and Boronia are to work together to achieve meaningful and measurable reparative outcomes.			•		
19i.	<b>Reparation</b> The section 94 work program at Boronia should be reviewed with particular focus on: Increasing the number of residents participating in the program	•				

SCORECARD ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRESS AGAINST THE 2006  
RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation Number	Report No. 42, <i>Report of an Announced Inspection of Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women</i> By type of Recommendation / Duration	Assessment of the Department's Implementations				
		Poor	Less than Acceptable	Acceptable	More than Acceptable	Excellent
19ii	<p><b>Reparation</b></p> <p>The section 94 work program at Boronia should be reviewed with particular focus on:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Increasing the range of community agencies as section 94 sites as well as the diversity of the services residents are expected to provide.</p>	•				
19iii	<p><b>Reparation</b></p> <p>The section 94 work program at Boronia should be reviewed with particular focus on:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Improving the quality of the services provided by engaging the skills residents have been equipped with and incorporating these within the duties that are required to be performed.</p>	•				

## Appendix 3

### THE INSPECTION TEAM

---

---

Professor Neil Morgan	Inspector of Custodial Services
Ms Natalie Gibson	Director, Operations
Mr Jason Donaldson	A/Principal Inspections and Research Officer
Mr Jim Bryden	Inspections and Research Officer
Ms Janina Surma	Inspections and Research Officer
Ms Elizabeth Re	Inspections and Research Officer
Ms Cheryl Wiltshire	Expert Adviser, Department of Education & Training
Ms Diane Broadby	Manager Community Relations
Mr Joseph Wallam	Community Liaison Officer
Ms Emma Mitting	Research Officer



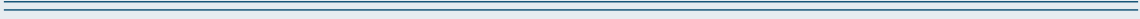
## Appendix 4

### KEY DATES

---

---

Formal notification of announced inspection	16 March 2009
Pre-inspection community consultation	6 May 2009
Start of on-site phase	21 June 2009
Completion of on-site phase	25 June 2009
Inspection exit debrief	25 June 2009
Draft report sent to the Department of Corrective Services	7 September 2009
Draft report initially returned by the Department of Corrective Services	5 October 2009
Further to a request for further information by this Office, draft report returned a second time by the Department of Corrective Services	20 October 2009
Declaration of Prepared Report	20 November 2009



THIS PAGE HAS BEEN LEFT BLANK INTENTIONALLY



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR  
OF CUSTODIAL SERVICES

[www.custodialinspector.wa.gov.au](http://www.custodialinspector.wa.gov.au)

Level 27, 197 St George's Terrace, Perth, Western Australia, Australia 6000  
Telephone: +61 8 9212 6200 Facsimile: +61 8 9226 4616