

**MEDIA RELEASE – EMBARGOED UNTIL 12NOON ON MONDAY 23<sup>RD</sup> JANUARY 2017**

**Report No. 107 - Greenough Regional Prison**

The 2016 inspection of Greenough Regional Prison found that while the prison had improved in some areas, services such as health, prisoner employment, education and rehabilitation programs had been badly affected by cost cuts. Despite the efforts of staff to deliver the best services they could, demand simply could not be met when faced with an increasing prisoner population and shrinking budgets. The Inspector Neil Morgan said:

“We fully recognise the difficult position the Department of Corrective Services has in trying to deliver more with less. We also recognise the hardworking staff, who generally provide the best services they can in those circumstances. But the fact remains many prisoners are missing out.

For example while there were only four prisoners in the prison classified as unemployed, 38 per cent of prisoners were working in roles that took only a small amount of time. This was exacerbated by the closure of industries because of the number of vacant staff positions, and the need to regularly redeploy those remaining to custodial roles.”

Another example was offender programs. Seven of 17 scheduled programs were cancelled in 2015. And by the inspection in May 2016, four of the 13 expected programs for 2016 had already been cancelled. Mr Morgan said:

“This has a direct impact on prisoner numbers and is unfair on prisoners. The Prisoners Review Board is not inclined to grant parole to prisoners who have not completed programs that the Department has assessed them as needing, even when the Department itself has failed to deliver the promised programs.”

While all prisons face these challenges, staff morale at Greenough had been affected more than most. Staff told us they felt unsupported and unappreciated and this had created a poor relationship with management. Positively, the prison and the Department had started to act on this finding at the end of the inspection.

A quarter of prisoners at Greenough are women. Steps had been made to improve conditions for women prisoners following the opening of their new unit in 2012. The full-time Women’s Support Officer was providing a high standard of service for the women, and education services had continued to improve. Compared with their male counterparts, however, services remained limited.

The Inspector noted that with the opening of the Perth Melaleuca women’s facility there would be pressure for the women’s section at Greenough to revert to male prisoners. Mr Morgan said:

“The Department is indicating that it intends to keep the Greenough women’s unit as it is, but this may not be possible given the pressures on the male prisons. If changes do occur, it is vital that the women preserve the better services and living environment it took so long for them to achieve.”

The report also calls for improved planning. Mr Morgan said:

“It is time for a strategic examination of the needs and demands on corrective services in the Mid-West, and for Greenough’s role to be clarified. This will allow it to focus on the future, move on from the morale issues and provide improved services. It must also include better engagement with the local community and its Aboriginal service providers.”

Neil Morgan  
**Inspector**

For more detail, please see the Inspector’s Overview to the Report and Key Findings (copies attached).

**For Further Media Information**

The Inspector, Mr Neil Morgan, will be available for comment from 12noon on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017 and can be contacted on 0427 426 471.

The full report will be available on the Inspector’s website ([www.oics.wa.go.au](http://www.oics.wa.go.au)).