

MEDIA RELEASE — EMBARGOED UNTIL 12 NOON ON TUESDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2017

Report No. 112 — Broome Regional Prison

Broome Regional Prison: A neglected prison in a state of disrepair

The Inspector of Custodial Services has welcomed the Government's announcement of \$2.7 million in funding for upgrades to Broome Regional Prison, but warned that Kimberley justice services need better long-term planning and investment.

In launching his report of an inspection of Broome prison in March 2017, Neil Morgan, said:

‘Living conditions in the men’s maximum-security unit were the worst in the state.

Prisoners were confined to the hot, dark, dirty, crowded, cramped unit for 24 hours a day. They had no personal space, very little mental or visual stimulation, and minimal access to physical activity. Staff and prisoners felt this was having a detrimental effect on the men’s mental and physical health.

The only alleviating factor was that almost all the prisoners were Kimberley men who were ‘in-country’ with fellow countrymen. They showed remarkable grace and tolerance of conditions that would not be acceptable in Perth. But even their goodwill was wearing thin’.

Conditions for women were also unsatisfactory. They were confined to a small unit, with no access to active recreation, education, programs, or meaningful work. Their visits area had no amenities, no play equipment, and no activities for children.

Mr Morgan said:

‘The degrading and inhumane conditions at Broome didn’t ‘just happen’. They were the inevitable result of years of inadequate investment, poor planning and uncertainty.

Previously, our previous warnings were not actioned, so I am pleased that the Department, and the Minister for Corrective Services, responded quickly to our findings. The Minister recently announced \$2.7 million in funding to address the most pressing infrastructure needs.

However, this is only a stop-gap measure. The Department still has no long-term plan for the custodial needs of the Kimberley region, despite multiple previous commitments.

The new Kimberley prison was built in Derby. But the main West Kimberley courts are in Broome, and there is no prison in the East Kimberley. A sustainable long-term solution is required.'

Mr Morgan said that he was also pleased to report that, following the inspection, the regime for minimum security prisoners at Broome had improved, and that more prisoners are now reaching the under-utilised Wyndham Work Camp.

Neil Morgan
Inspector

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

The Deputy Inspector, Mr Andrew Harvey, will be available for comment from 12 noon on Tuesday 7 November 2017, and can be contacted on 0477 307 559.

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