

Media release

Report 126: 2019 Inspection of Broome Regional Prison

Embargoed until 12 noon on Tuesday 10 March 2020

The most recent inspection of WA's oldest operating prison, Broome Regional Prison, has found that while some improvements had been achieved, a lot still needed to be done to provide the needed services.

Inspector of Custodial Services, Eamon Ryan, said that the renewed certainty about the future of a prison in Broome, and appointment of a permanent leadership team had enabled progress in rebuilding some prison services. But there was no avoiding the fact the infrastructure was unsuitable, well past its useful life, and in need of replacement.

'The accommodation blocks at Broome were opened in 1945, and the rest of the prison became rundown in the face of past indecision about its future,' Mr Ryan said.

'With the commitment to planning for a new prison in Broome has come the ability for management to plan, knowing services must continue for at least the next five or so years at this location. It also means that long term the relationships, investment and commitment to capacity building now, can move with them to the new location.'

Mr Ryan said waiting on the new facility should not be used as an excuse to limit Broome's service delivery and operating philosophy, and its minimum-security status. The prison could innovate in practice more by accessing community based services, and inviting services in.

'During our inspection, we met with several key external stakeholders, including representatives of local government, state government agencies, and community groups. We heard a high level of optimism for the potential that a prison in Broome offers. There was considerable support expressed for opportunities to partner with the prison,' Mr Ryan said.

Since our last inspection of Broome, infrastructure improvements had improved prisoner access to services. The main recreation area on the basketball courts were set to become accessible to all prisoners and the structural hazards in the kitchen, dining room and medical centre had been removed.



But there was still room for the prison to do better. The focus for Broome must be to ensure that prisoners receive humane and decent treatment now and over the coming years while the new prison is planned, designed, and ultimately constructed. In particular, there continued to be concern about the conditions in the maximum-security area, and mould problems in some buildings.

Encouragingly, Mr Ryan said the Department had responded positively to most of our recommendations and there are opportunities for the prison to offer meaningful and engaging services to prisoners at Broome which would enhance their chances of rehabilitation and reintegration.

Eamon Ryan
Inspector of Custodial Services

For further media information:

The Inspector, Mr Eamon Ryan, will be available for comment from 12 noon on Tuesday 10 March 2020 and can be contacted on 0421 480 925.