



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**
Clinical Excellence

Our ref: 21/1557
Author: Soniya Nanda

Mr Eamon Ryan
Inspector of Custodial Services
Level 5, Albert Facey House
469 Wellington Street
Perth Western Australia 6000

Via email: corporate@oics.wa.gov.au

Dear Mr Ryan

Thank you for the opportunity to review the *Draft Report – Snapshot series: Prisoner access to dental care in Western Australia*. The Director General has asked that I respond to you on his behalf.

Broadly, the Department of Health agrees with the findings and recommendations of the Draft Report. The following information is provided for consideration and context.

In recent years, efforts have been made to improve the health of the prison population. Notably, this included an attempt to shift responsibility of Justice Health from the Department of Justice to the Department of Health. This did not occur, and primary health care provision remains the responsibility of the Department of Justice.

I note the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Department of Justice and Dental Health Services signed in February 2020. The intent of this MOU was to formalise the historical arrangement between the two parties and not to meet the oral health needs of the prison population.

Given the higher burden of dental disease and level of unmet need, it is agreed comparing the level of service provided within the community to that of the prison population is overly simplistic. The required level and type of dental service should be established following a comprehensive oral health needs assessment. This would then guide any future procurement of dental services by the Department of Justice.

A copy of this letter will be emailed to Ms Christine Wyatt, Director Reviews as requested.

Yours sincerely

Dr Soniya Nanda
Chief Dental Officer

30 August 2021

Cc Christine Wyatt, Director Reviews