



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Justice**
Corrective Services

Response to OICS Draft Report:

**2022 Inspection of Wandoo Rehabilitation
Prison**

March 2023

Version 1.1

Response Overview

Introduction

On 4 July 2022, the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (OICS) announced the commencement of the 2022 Inspection of Wandoo Rehabilitation Prison (Wandoo).

To assist with the inspection, the Department of Justice (the Department) facilitated the provision of a wide range of documentation, including policies and procedures, as well as access to systems, facilities, staff, prisoners, and contractors upon OICS' request for the purpose of the inspection.

On 28 February 2023, the Department received the draft inspection report from OICS for review and comment. The draft report has highlighted key findings and made nine recommendations. The Department has reviewed the draft report and provides further context, comments, and responses to the recommendations as below.

Appendix A contains comments linked to sections in the report for the Inspector's attention and consideration when finalising the report.

Department Comments

The 2022 Inspection of Wandoo highlights the importance and value that Wandoo provides to the custodial estate as a dedicated alcohol and other drug rehabilitation prison for women in custody in Western Australia who are wanting to break the cycle of alcohol and or other drug addictions. The report also acknowledged Wandoo for the opportunity it provides women as a means of intervention in attempt to break the cycle of addiction, citing that many women have described Wandoo as a '*life changing intervention*'.

The life changing intervention at Wandoo offers a safe, healthy, supportive, and respectful place for women to recover from their alcohol and drug additions and make positive, lasting changes through treatment within a Modified Therapeutic Community (MTC). The OICS inspection report (the report) acknowledges the success of Wandoo citing that '*more prisons should run like Wandoo. It is safe, staff and residents appear dedicated to change and rehabilitation, and women leave with hope for the future.*'

Although the Department is pleased with how Wandoo has matured and improved over the years since its establishment in July 2018, Wandoo is not without its challenges and the Department will consider the findings highlighted in the report to address issues identified and improve the program.

The overall wellbeing of the MTC at Wandoo is dependent on sound working relationships between the residents, staff and the service provider. At times this has been challenging due to changes within the leadership teams at Wandoo and Cyrenian House. Since the inspection, a number of vacant positions within the administration teams have been filled with further appointments planned. An experienced Clinical Nurse Manager has also been transferred to Wandoo to provide leadership and support to nursing staff and opportunities have been provided to staff to act in critical roles prior to being advertised for permanent filling.

In addition, program governance has been strengthened through reinvigorated clinical governance meetings aimed at working in collaboration to resolve service delivery challenges, continuous improvement of the program and maintaining the expected Department standards.

In respect to the workplace cultural issues and unacceptable staff behaviour at Wandoo, the Department acknowledges that there are further opportunities to enhance workplace culture and continues to implement strategies and initiatives to promote positive workplaces.

The Department continues to promote and embed the Code of Conduct which sets out the minimum behavioural standards for all staff. The Code of Conduct is clear in that behaviour such as bullying, unlawful discrimination or harassment of any form is not tolerated and emphasises that employees who engage in such behaviour will be referred to the Departments People Culture and Standards (PCS) Division.

The expected standards of behaviour are furthermore reinforced through mandatory Integrity and Ethics Awareness sessions which are tailored to individual facilities and focuses on pertinent issues within a particular custodial facility. Currently 63% of staff at Wandoo have participated in the mandatory integrity and ethics awareness sessions.

In addition, staff are also required to undertake the online Accountable and Ethical Decision-Making (AEDM) training module. This training ensures that all employees are aware of their obligations under the code of conduct and are required to refresh their AEDM training on an annual basis.

In November 2022, the Department undertook a workplace culture review of Wandoo which gave staff the opportunity to provide anonymous and confidential feedback. The findings of the review are in the process of being implemented which includes face-to-face training delivered to the senior management team on the Department's code of conduct and the expectations of the Director General in terms of behaviour.

With regard to concerns raised in relation to the delivery of the Choice, Change and Consequences (CCC) Program at Wandoo, the decision was made to pilot the delivery of the program at Wandoo commencing quarter 1, 2022. The purpose being to:

- improve program outcomes for Aboriginal women by supplementing the CCC with further AOD intervention following completion of the program;
- to alleviate the pressure of limited program room availability at Bandyup Women's Prison; and
- to provide more women the opportunity to participate in the MTC.

Following concerns identified in the evaluation of the pilot, the CCC program that was due to commence in quarter 3, 2022 was postponed until quarter 4, 2022, allowing time to review the suitability of continued CCC delivery at Wandoo.

At the time of the inspection there were 10 residents enrolled to complete the CCC program. Of these 10 residents, four were already at Wandoo, one of whom had completed the MTC, and the remaining three were nearing completion. If the CCC program had not been available at Wandoo, these four residents would have had to return to Bandyup to complete the CCC. The return of the residents to a mainstream/maximum facility is not conducive to their recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration following completion of the MTC.

The remaining six residents of the second CCC program had all self-referred to Wandoo and all were advised they could complete the MTC following completion of the CCC program.

The Department values and encourages family relationships by providing the residents every opportunity to connect with family through social visits and quarterly family days. Wandoo's primary purpose is the delivery of the MTC which requires a

significant level of commitment and engagement from the residents to see the program through to completion. As such, there is caution in introducing day and overnight visits for children at Wandoo as it may result in the residents being distracted and to lose focus of their MTC commitments.

Further, family visit opportunities may be explored in future; however, these would need to be considered as part of the formal evaluation of the MTC to assess the feasibility and impact it may have on residents' success in completing the program. It should also be noted that Wandoo does not have the infrastructure to facilitate day and overnight visits, however on completion of the MTC, residents rated minimum security are often transferred to Boronia in preparation for release, where there are opportunities for facilitating day and overnight visits for children.

The Department makes a concerted effort to work in collaboration with the service provider, Cyrenian House, to provide residents with safe housing options as part of their transitional preparations back into the community. The shortage of safe housing available to graduates of the MTC upon release from custody is a broader issue outside the Department's control, affecting not only the people of Western Australia but also at a national level.

Despite the challenges, Wandoo strives to implement cultural initiatives, these include Culture Club, an initiative to connect women across the custodial estate utilising online connectivity to share their culture, community and history, Aboriginal resident representation and attendance at the Aboriginal Services Committees, Aboriginal dancing, singing and language classes, and comprehensive programs for Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week. These initiatives are undertaken in addition to the standard cultural activities undertaken as part of NAIDOC Week celebrations.

Overall, Wandoo is an exemplar in terms of the cultural initiatives and activities available to give Aboriginal residents a voice in sharing their culture. The Department understands there is always room for improvement, and an increase in Aboriginal staff would be key to achieving this. Recruitment of Aboriginal staff is an ongoing challenge for the Department and recruitment strategies continue to be explored by the Human Resources Directorate to identify solutions to employ and retain Aboriginal staff.

A formal evaluation of the Wandoo MTC has commenced. In consultation with the Western Australian Office of Crime Statistics and Research (WACSAR), the Department has engaged an independent consultant to evaluate the AOD programs currently run at both Wandoo and Mallee, including a process, outcome, and clinical evaluation. However, it should be noted that there are only a small number of MTCs nationwide, and that an evaluation of the Wandoo MTC against the outcomes of similar MTCs may be difficult.

The Department is proud of the unique role and service Wandoo provides to women in custody through its MTC and will continue to strive to provide the women the best opportunities to break the cycle of alcohol and other drug addictions whilst actively promoting personal change.

Response to Recommendations

1 All staff should complete training in therapeutic communities.

Level of Acceptance:	Supported
Responsible Division:	Corrective Services
Responsible Directorate:	Women and Young People

Response:

The Department recognises the importance and value of providing training in therapeutic communities to all staff at Wandoo. There are however practical impediments to achieving this, including the lack of a dedicated training program specifically for staff working within a MTC, and difficulty in achieving compliance with existing mandatory training modules.

Following feedback through a staff “town hall” meeting facilitated by the Wandoo Senior Management Team, in the absence of a formal training program, Cyrenian House has commenced delivering weekly information sessions to staff. These information sessions provide staff with information and knowledge about therapeutic communities to further assist them in their understanding of the Wandoo’s MTC. Information sessions include the following:

- TC Program Information Sessions (Cyrenian House)
- AOD Information Session (Mental Health Commission)
- Trauma Informed – Information session (Wandoo Clinical Manager)
- Family and Domestic Violence – Information session (Wandoo Clinical Manager)
- Difficult Presentations (Borderline Personalities) (Clinical Manager)
- Research and Evaluation (Clinical Evaluation Supervisor).
- Manipulation (SO Trainer)

In addition, following the establishment of the Mallee Rehabilitation Unit at Casuarina, the Department is considering how formal therapeutic community training can be delivered to custodial officers working within these therapeutic communities, including introductory training for new officers and refresher training for existing officers.

2 Women complete the CCC before transferring to Wandoo.

Level of Acceptance:	Supported in Principle
Responsible Division:	Corrective Services
Responsible Directorate:	Offender Services

Response:

Delivery of the CCC program at Wandoo was first piloted in quarter one of 2022. The concerns identified following the evaluation of this pilot have been addressed and a second pilot is currently underway.

As with the first pilot, the second pilot will also go through an evaluation process and upon completion, will provide further recommendations for action as appropriate.

3 Evaluate the alcohol and other drugs program at Wandoo.

Level of Acceptance: Supported – Current Practice / Project
Responsible Division: Corrective Services
Responsible Directorate: Offender Services

Response:

The process evaluation and short-term impact evaluation of the Moral Recognition Therapy (MRT) have been completed by the Department's Clinical Evaluation and Innovation Team with the long-term impact evaluation recently commenced.

The long-term evaluation is expected to be completed by the end of September 2023.

4 Improve communications and relations across management and with staff.

Level of Acceptance: Supported
Responsible Division: Corrective Services
Responsible Directorate: Women and Young People

Response:

The Wandoo SMT have commenced weekly “town hall” meetings for all staff. The meetings provide staff the opportunity to raise and discuss issues and concerns and provides a forum for the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendents to provide staff with updates on what is occurring within their respective portfolios.

In addition, Cyrenian House delivers information sessions to staff following the “town hall” meetings to further build upon their knowledge and understanding of the therapeutic community to better assist them in working with the residents.

5 Increase Aboriginal staffing at Wandoo.

Level of Acceptance: Supported in Principle
Responsible Division: Corrective Services
Responsible Directorate: Women and Young People

Response:

Recruitment of Aboriginal staff is an ongoing challenge for the Department and recruitment strategies continue to be explored by the Human Resources Directorate to identify solutions to employ and retain Aboriginal staff.

A recent recruitment process for Aboriginal Mental Health Worker positions failed to attract any suitable applicants and a request to advertise the positions a second time has been submitted.

It is noted that there has historically been challenges in filling Aboriginal Mental Health Worker positions at the Department of Justice given the difficulties in competing with the benefits that are offered by the Department of Health.

The Department continues to work with *Marr Mooditj Training* in attempt to encourage graduates to apply for upcoming positions within the Department.

6 Offer culturally specific training, including around intergenerational trauma to all staff.

Level of Acceptance:	Supported – Current Practice / Project
Responsible Division:	Corrective Services
Responsible Directorate:	Operational Support

Response:

The Department provides a range of online and face to face training for staff designed to build organisational capacity around cultural understanding. All frontline operational staff including newly appointed Prison Officers, complete a 16 hour Culturally Speaking training program whilst undertaking the Entry Level Training Program (ELTP) at the Corrective Services Academy. The program is culturally specific and delivered by Aboriginal facilitators and explores issues from a range of perspectives. The Working Effectively theme within the training program focusses on the damaged relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people due to intergenerational trauma caused by disposition and displacement.

Further, under the Commissioners instruction 29: *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Awareness*, cultural awareness training is mandatory for all public sector employees. As such, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural awareness training is provided and made available to all Departmental staff through the Departments learning platform. The training is owned by the Public Sector Commission and the Department requires that all employees are to complete the training.

The training provides employees with an understanding of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island culture, history and experiences, including intergenerational trauma, to enable employees to work in a culturally informed way. The resource has 4 sections, namely: family; education; country and work. Each section includes historical and contemporary information with audio and images to increase employee's knowledge and encourage reflection. Supplementary questions are also included to confirm employees understanding of the concepts and information provided.

In addition, multiple cultural awareness training is available to promote and reinforce the importance of recognising and embracing cultural diversity. These include:

- Sharing Culture – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People (Certificate on completion);
- Diverse WA Cultural Competency Training; and
- Share Our Pride – Reconciliation Australia.

7 Establish a regular forum for Aboriginal residents.

Level of Acceptance:	Supported
Responsible Division:	Corrective Services
Responsible Directorate:	Women and Young People

Response:

Wandoo has established a Cultural Leadership Group to provide residents of culturally diverse backgrounds a forum to raise and discuss issues affecting them. The group consists of six nominated members put forward by residents, all of whom are from culturally diverse backgrounds.

The group meets monthly with Cyrenian House staff to raise and discuss issues they may be experiencing, identify solutions to address these issues, and to provide suggestions and feedback to strengthen cultural practices within Wandoo.

In addition, the Department will explore other mechanisms to support greater communication and interaction through forums with Aboriginal residents.

8 Appoint a dedicated Aboriginal Visitor and Prison Support Officer to Wandoo.

Level of Acceptance: Supported – Current Practice / Project
Responsible Division: Corrective Services
Responsible Directorate: Offender Services

Response:

Wandoo currently has 1 FTE AVS and 0.5 FTE PSO positions allocated.

The AVS position has been substantively vacant since August 2021 due to challenges in attracting and retaining AVS staff. These challenges arise from the current classification of the role at level 1. These issues are being considered as part of an ongoing AVS review process.

Although the PSO position is substantively occupied, Wandoo is working with Bandyup Women's Prison and Prison Support Services Management to ensure that sufficient coverage of the PSD position is provided during periods of leave.

In addition, Wandoo has engaged Voice of Hope, an Aboriginal-led volunteer group who attend Wandoo twice a month to provide emotional support and mentoring to residents. While this is beneficial to residents, the support Voice of Hope can provide to residents is limited in their capacity as a volunteer group.

9 Ensure that the canteen provides the quality of stock, and access to town spends as listed in the Privileges Matrix.

Level of Acceptance: Supported
Responsible Division: Corrective Services
Responsible Directorate: Women and Young People

Response:

Wandoo does not have a dedicated canteen officer position and as such, the canteen and town spends ordering is being facilitated on a part time basis by the stores officer with assistance from administrative staff.

As of December 2022, Wandoo has had all administrative team positions filled, which has allowed town spends to occur on a consistent basis, in accordance with the privileges matrix.
