

## MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL 2PM, 13 JUNE 2023

### Wandoo is life changing

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In a report released today by Inspector of Custodial Services Eamon Ryan, Wandoo Rehabilitation Prison was found to offer life changing therapeutic interventions for women with drug and/or alcohol dependencies.

Mr Ryan explained that Wandoo is unique within the prison estate because it runs a therapeutic program from within a medium security prison. In this safe, controlled and drug free environment, women can practice new life skills and heal past trauma. This can interrupt the cycle of addiction and imprisonment.

Wandoo offers a busy and structured daily regime for women to work on themselves and their recovery. They participate in individual and group therapy and hold each other accountable for maintaining behaviours that support rehabilitation and relapse prevention.

Mr Ryan said while Wandoo provided well for residents, there were opportunities for improving collaborative work practices and staff wellbeing. He found the Department of Justice and the service provider, Cyrenian House, were not well integrated and had some different operational priorities. There had also been instability and changes in leadership over recent years, and there was evidence that unresolved workplace issues had strained relationships between staff, management and Head Office. But it was clear that custodial and Cyrenian House staff were committed to achieving positive outcomes for women. Mr Ryan said:

We don't often hear staff say that it is a pleasure to work in a prison, and yet so many staff told us this was the case. Staff reported they came to work because of the women held at Wandoo, and witnessing their change, growth and recovery. Similarly, the women reported their relationships with staff were unlike those at other prisons, and staff support was helping them heal from previous trauma and address the root causes of their substance misuse and offending.

Mr Ryan welcomed the Department's cultural review of Wandoo that got underway after the inspection.

Cooperative and collaborative working relationships are the key to Wandoo's success. We look forward to seeing the findings of the review being implemented. This would help ensure the best outcomes for those who live and work at Wandoo.

#### For further information:

The Inspector, Mr Ryan, is available for comment from 2pm Tuesday, 13 June 2023 on 0421 480 925.

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