



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR  
OF CUSTODIAL SERVICES

## 2024 INSPECTION OF BORONIA PRE-RELEASE CENTRE FOR WOMEN

# 161

MAY 2025

*Independent oversight  
that contributes to a more  
accountable public sector*

*The Inspector of Custodial Services and staff acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of this country, and their continuing connection to land, waters, and community throughout Australia. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to Elders, be they past or present.*

## 2024 Inspection of Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women

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## Inspector's Overview

*Boronia is good, but could be much better with a little extra support.*

Our 2024 inspection of the Boronia Pre-Release Centre for Women has once again found it to be a high-quality facility, with staff working hard to provide support and rehabilitation opportunities for the women who reside there.

Boronia's philosophy of providing residents with opportunities for self-improvement in preparation for release was evident in most of the areas we examined. This has been bolstered by stability in leadership and improved communication, which has reinforced this approach in day-to-day operations.

The self-care living environment encouraged and developed residents to take up available opportunities for personal improvement and responsibility. But barriers remain to maximising the potential a placement at Boronia offers women prior to release.

We heard that access to education and self-improvement courses, including vocational skills-based training, is often hampered by limited or no access to online educational resources and material. Increasingly, the delivery of education, regardless of whether it is adult basic education, vocational training, or tertiary education, is reliant on an online component for learning and assessment. With such technology not readily available in prisons, this significantly impacts full participation and student completion rates. The latter point is critical for improvement in self-esteem and employability on release.

As we have seen elsewhere and commented on in several reports, we were told of long delays in the process for assessing and approving applications for external activities such as employment (Prisoner Employment Program), work outside the perimeter (section 95), and reintegration leave. This has been an ongoing challenge for quite some time and has a significant impact on individual prisoners. The Department's additional comments in response to a draft of this report noted that the process took time, but refusal rates were relatively low. We took no issue with approval or rejection rates; it was the length of time taken to process applications that has been a consistent complaint from both staff and prisoners at every facility we inspect. Fixing this would not appear to require extensive resourcing or funding, but the reintegration benefits for residents would likely be significant.

The implementation of the smoking ban across the metropolitan women's prisons was well planned and managed at Boronia. Residents were involved early and had input into the program. Good communication, adequate support mechanisms, including withdrawal treatment and therapy were well managed. These factors and many others contributed to the overall success of the program, which should have long term health benefits for the residents who manage to remain smoke free on release.

Residents at Boronia also undertake commendable volunteer work either inside the facility or at external sites. This includes several residents volunteering at a nearby aged care facility. But the most impressive activity is the annual Boronia Gala Day. This is a community event where approved



community members can attend the facility, participate in activities, and purchase items such as plants, crafts, and artworks. These items, including artworks, are provided by prisoners from prisons across Western Australia and not just Boronia. Each year a significant sum is raised from the Gala Day and donated to a selected charity. There are many benefits gained from these Gala Days, not just for prisoners and participants but also for the charities who are recipients of the funds raised. This is a highly valued initiative and credit must be given to all involved, including prison leadership, community participants, contributors, and residents.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We had two Independent Prison Visitors for Boronia until early 2024. They were community volunteers appointed by the Minister for Corrective Services, who attended Boronia on a regular basis observing the operations of the facility and providing an opportunity for the women placed there to raise issues and complaints that informs the work of our office. I acknowledge the importance of the work undertaken and thank them for their contribution to our monitoring of Boronia. New opportunities exist for community minded individuals who are interested in being considered for such roles.

I also acknowledge the support and cooperation we received throughout the inspection from the Superintendent and staff at Boronia and from key personnel in the Department.

The women living in Boronia who took the time to speak with us and share their perspectives also deserve our acknowledgement and thanks.

Finally, I would like to thank the members of the inspection team for their expertise and hard work throughout the inspection. I would also particularly acknowledge and thank Charlie Staples, for his work in planning this inspection and as principal drafter of this report.

Eamon Ryan  
**Inspector of Custodial Services**

8 May 2025

# Executive Summary

## Background

This is the seventh report of an announced Inspection of the Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women (Boronia) by the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (the Office). Boronia opened in May 2004, replacing Nyandi Women's Prison as Western Australia's only dedicated minimum-security female facility. Based on international best practice, this Office has consistently found Boronia to be a women-centred facility, delivering empowerment, genuine choices and individual responsibility, focused on effective support for reintegration into the community (OICS, 2009, p. v; OICS, 2012, p. iii; OICS, 2015, p. iii; OICS, 2018, p. iii).

## A substantive senior management team provided stability

During this inspection, we were pleased to find that Boronia had a substantive management team in place, providing much-needed stability to the centre. In the past, the two most senior roles—Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent of Operations and Security—had been filled by acting staff, following a series of non-permanent appointments (OICS, 2022). This instability had disrupted services and impacted outcomes for residents, prompting our recommendation that the Department prioritise permanent appointments to these key positions. At the time of this inspection, the permanent senior management team brought significant experience, demonstrated forward-thinking leadership, and were implementing positive changes.

## A strong focus on personal development, but reintegration opportunities were limited

Boronia provided residents with a variety of programs, employment, and training opportunities designed to build skills and resilience ahead of their release. While the overall range of opportunities was broad, there is still room for improvement. Some residents voiced frustration over administrative barriers that limited access to employment and leave opportunities outside the facility's perimeter.

## Some wellbeing supports could be improved

We found wellbeing supports at Boronia were accessible to residents and played a valuable role in preparing them for reintegration into the community. As a smaller facility, Boronia faces resource limitations, which have affected the delivery of some services – particularly in the area of mental health care. Despite these challenges, the facility continued to provide strong support for pre- and post-natal women and offered meaningful opportunities for residents to maintain connections with their families.

## Residents require a safe and inclusive environment

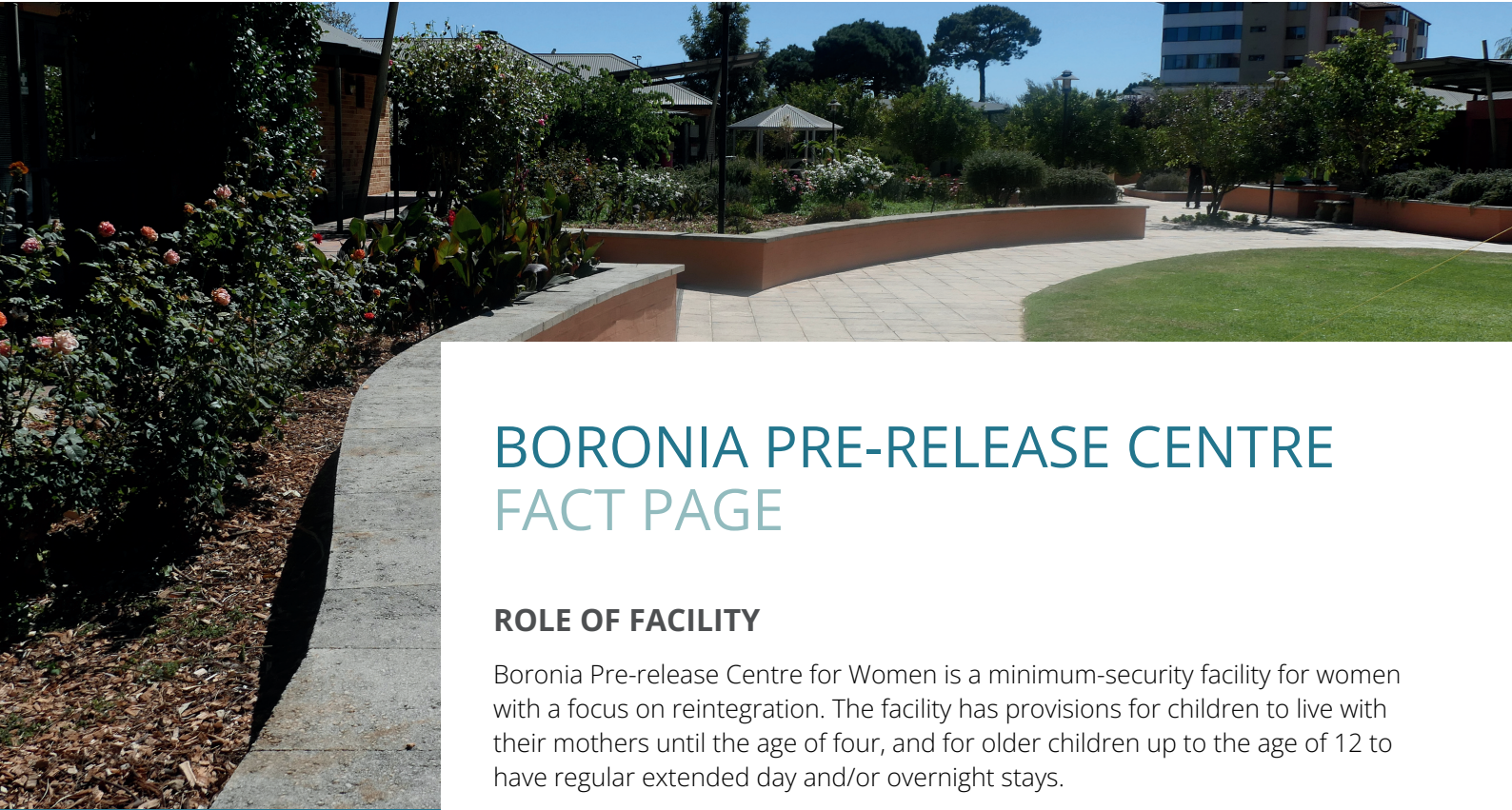
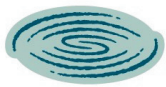
Ensuring residents feel safe is a core aspect of delivering a trauma-informed model of care at Boronia. Overall, our findings showed that Boronia fosters a safe and inclusive environment that

promotes self-determination and supports reintegration. This was evident in the resident survey, where 91% of respondents reported feeling safe at the centre. However, there remain opportunities for Boronia to further enhance support for residents' needs, better manage interpersonal conflicts, and address ongoing security challenges.

## List of Recommendations

Recommendation	Page	DOJ Response
<b>Recommendation 1</b> Provide permanent funding for education support positions.	6	Supported in Principle
<b>Recommendation 2</b> As part of the review of the Long-term Custodial Technology Strategy, the Department should re-assess opportunities to introduce controlled, secure internet access to tertiary students in custodial facilities.	7	Not Supported
<b>Recommendation 3</b> In consultation with residents, develop and provide more voluntary programs to meet their needs.	8	Supported in Principle
<b>Recommendation 4</b> Create a life skills instructor position at Boronia.	11	Supported in Principle
<b>Recommendation 5</b> Support Boronia's Employment Coordinator to increase residents' access to the Prisoner Employment Program.	12	Supported in Principle
<b>Recommendation 6</b> Review gratuity payments for Section 95 workers at Boronia to ensure it is fair and equitable in comparison to other facilities.	13	Supported
<b>Recommendation 7</b> Provide a transparent and streamlined approval process for home leave.	14	Supported in Principle
<b>Recommendation 8</b> The Government should create a cross-agency response to increase the supply of post-release accommodation across Western Australia.	14	Noted
<b>Recommendation 9</b> Increase mental health resources to meet the needs of women at Boronia.	17	Not Supported

<b>Recommendation 10</b> Provide additional staffing support for the Senior Officer Security role.	22	Supported in Principle
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## BORONIA PRE-RELEASE CENTRE FACT PAGE

### ROLE OF FACILITY

Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women is a minimum-security facility for women with a focus on reintegration. The facility has provisions for children to live with their mothers until the age of four, and for older children up to the age of 12 to have regular extended day and/or overnight stays.

### HISTORY

Boronia opened in 2004 and can accommodate up to 93 residents. There is capacity for children, up to the age of four, to reside there with their mothers. And children, up to the age of 12, can have overnight visits with their mothers. This is one of the most valued, reintegration opportunities the Boronia provides.

The facility is nestled amongst aged care residences and tertiary education institutions in a suburb just eight kilometres from the Perth CBD. It fits in visually with its neighbours, with little to indicate that it is a custodial facility. This is appropriate given its purpose as a reintegration centre.

#### OFFICIAL CAPACITY

93

#### PRISONERS AT TIME OF INSPECTION

79



Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women is located on Whadjuk Noongar Country, in the suburb of Bentley, Perth, Western Australia.



#### INSPECTION DATE

24 - 28 March 2024



# 1 A substantive senior management team provided stability

This inspection we were pleased to find Boronia had a substantive management team offering much-needed stability to the centre. Previously, we found the two most senior positions – Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent Operations and Security – were occupied by acting staff, following several rotations of other non-permanent placements (OICS, 2022). This had caused some disruption to services and outcomes for residents, leading us to recommend the Department prioritise filling Boronia’s senior management positions on a permanent basis.

The substantive senior management team at the time of the inspection offered significant experience and were found to be forward thinking and making positive changes.

## 1.1 The Superintendent actively promoted Boronia’s philosophy

The new Superintendent ensured Boronia’s philosophy was spoken about, actively referred to, linked to the work everyone did, and visible throughout the facility. Senior Officers (SOs) told us the Superintendent had changed the management style at Boronia and actively pushed the centre’s philosophy to the forefront of operational activities. This was supported by feedback from other staff, who felt there had been a positive shift in the strategic management of the centre under the new leadership.

In our pre-inspection briefing, the Superintendent reiterated to us that Boronia’s philosophy was integral to the success of the facility. He noted Boronia’s model was underpinned by a focus on providing every woman an opportunity to maximise her potential to re-enter the community positively, confidently, and safely. Further, Boronia’s self-care environment focussed on women’s health and wellbeing, empowering them to make decisions in their day-to-day life.

The Superintendent also acknowledged the importance of Boronia’s role in supporting women’s relationship with family, by allowing children to reside with their mothers, participate in day-stays, or through approved home leave. A commitment to delivering a trauma-informed approach by acting with decency and fairness was also reiterated.

This renewed focus on the purpose and intent of Boronia, as a specialist reintegration prison for women, was commendable.

## 1.2 Staff reported improved communication from leaders

Communication between staff and management had improved since our last inspection. Staff commented that the new leadership team had made a concerted effort to open-up lines of communication. Senior Officers (SOs) had formal weekly meetings with management, and other staff could raise issues informally, for example, over a morning coffee with the Superintendent.

*The relationship between operational and administration.*

*is improving with the substantive Superintendent.*

*It is a relief to have someone who will make a decision, actually listens to concerns and suggestions for improvement ...*

*There is new management at the top at Boronia and there has been a marked increase in communication, acknowledgement of everyone's input at work ...*

Comments from staff survey

This increase in communication was valued by staff. Survey results indicated staff felt better supported by their line manager and local management teams, when compared to results during our previous inspection. Previously, 25% of staff felt communication from their line managers was poor. This decreased to just six per cent this inspection, with nearly half (47%) rating communication now as 'good'. This sentiment was also reflected in survey comments.

**Table 1: Pre-inspection survey results indicate improvements in staff and management relations at Boronia.**

Support from your line manager	Poor	Mixed	Good
Current inspection (2024)	6%	29%	56%
Previous inspection (2021)	25%	28%	44%
Communication from your line manager	Poor	Mixed	Good
Current inspection (2024)	6%	38%	47%
Previous inspection (2021)	25%	33%	39%
Support from local management	Poor	Mixed	Good
Current inspection (2024)	3%	47%	41%
Previous inspection (2021)	22%	36%	39%

### 1.3 Conflict amongst staff was abating

During the inspection we heard of some ongoing conflict relating to changes in human resources. With an older workforce, many custodial staff at Boronia had excess leave entitlements that required managing. The management of leave, in addition to the introduction of an electronic sign-on system and a new rostering system, had caused some friction between staff and human resources. Officers



had complained about inconvenient leave schedules and restrictions on shift swapping. These tensions had lessened after the Superintendent used his discretion to take mitigating actions.

But there remained some concerns about poor behaviour between staff. In comparison to our previous inspection survey, perceptions of bullying, racist remarks, and other verbal abuse among staff had all increased slightly. In particular, the proportion of staff who felt bullying occurred 'often' between staff (18%) had increased to double the state-wide average (9%). While these figures are still relatively low, we encourage Boronia's management to maintain awareness of any unresolved conflicts that may undermine the good work of the facility.

*Staff spend a lot of time talking about each other and very rarely in a positive way. In my opinion there is a lot of passive bullying going on.*

Comment from staff survey

## 2 A strong focus on personal development, but reintegration opportunities were limited

Boronia offered residents a range of programs, employment, and training opportunities to develop their skills and resilience prior to their release. While the range of opportunities was generally quite extensive, there remained opportunities for Boronia to do more. Residents expressed frustration at some of the administrative barriers hindering the various employment and leave opportunities that existed beyond the bounds of Boronia's perimeter fence.

*Boronia has supported me every way possible and aided me to rebuild my life.*

Comment from a resident

### 2.1 Work provided women with important skills

The requirement for all Boronia residents to work aimed to equip women with important skills and improve job-readiness on release. At the time of our inspection, only six residents at Boronia were unemployed with others working across various industries such as the gardens, maintenance, and the kitchen. This level of engagement was valued by residents, with 91% of survey respondents feeling their day was spent doing useful, constructive activities.

*I'm lucky to have a job that I really enjoy, and I can do framing and furniture making and a logistics traineeship.*

Comment from a resident

Residents were also generally paid at higher rates than other facilities. Seventy per cent of women at Boronia were receiving Level 1 or Level 2 gratuity rates for their employment. In comparison, in March 2024, only 25% of women at Bandyup and 19% of women at Melaleuca were receiving Level 1

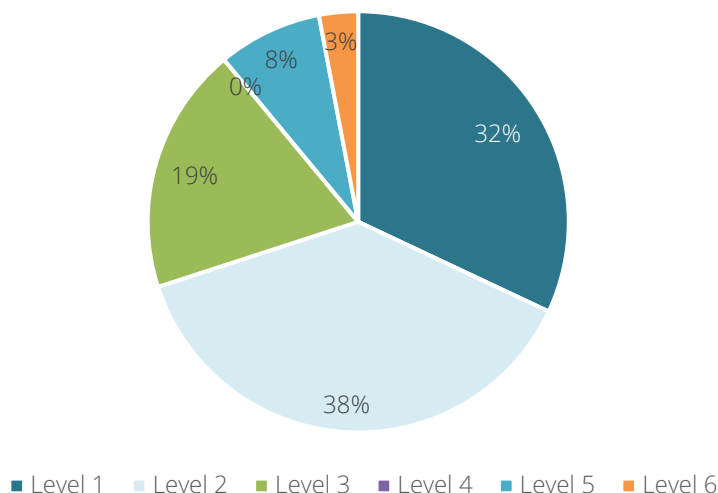


Figure 1: Women at Boronia were often paid at the higher Level 1 and Level 2 gratuities.

or Level 2 payments. Assisting with this was the Yirra Djinda training program for First Nations women, which paid participants at a Level 1 rate.

Higher rates of pay help incentivise women to participate in employment and training activities, while offering opportunities to develop their skills in budgeting and managing their finances. This aligns well with the ethos of Boronia as a pre-release facility.

## Volunteering opportunities gave residents a purpose

In addition to employment, various volunteering opportunities provided women with a sense of purpose, skills development, and community engagement. Opportunities were co-developed between residents and Boronia's volunteer coordinator, allowing women to bring their own experience and skills to the space. For instance, the women could decide what they were able to contribute, such as producing beanies and gloves for people experiencing homelessness, or toys that could be sold at the annual Gala Day.

Women also helped distribute grief support resources for the Department of Health's 'Good Grief Project'. Residents made memory catchers and fidget toys and wrote calligraphy messages for bereaved parents. Many residents felt a connection with the project. One resident told us contributing to the project was 'the only time I don't feel like a prisoner'.



**Photo 1: Some handicrafts prepared by women at Boronia.**

Boronia also helps connect women with volunteering opportunities upon their release. Three months prior to release, women can visit one of 12 agencies for a site visit and interview for volunteering roles. Boronia also runs a volunteering expo during National Volunteer Week, where external organisations can speak with the women about opportunities available on release.

This focus on volunteering provides the women at Boronia much-needed opportunities to build their skills and confidence, while also allowing them to give back to community. Women spoke highly of the many volunteering programs and mentioned the therapeutic outcomes they provided.

## 2.2 Education services thrived, despite limited resources

The full-time Campus Manager and Prisoner Education Coordinator (PEC) at Boronia had maintained high levels of engagement in education and vocational training, helping to boost residents' employment prospects on release. Numerous short-courses and traineeships were available to help women learn new skills and build their confidence. For example:

- The Campus Manager had recently arranged for 10 women to participate in a concreting course, where they helped complete the construction of concrete pads for a mulch and compost store at the centre.
- Several women were enrolled in a Certificate III in Animal Care Studies, which was a pre-requisite for veterinary nursing work.
- South Metro TAFE offered salon assistance, make-up skills, and health and beauty units that were equal to 10 units out of a 14-unit qualification that could be completed in the community.
- Two full-time education students also helped prepare pamphlets, posters, and advertising for events at Boronia, for instance NAIDOC week celebrations.
- Fourteen women, including four Aboriginal residents, were also participating in workplace traineeships in commercial cookery, cleaning, and supply chain logistics and warehousing.

In the year prior to the inspection, enrolments were also high in the following courses:

- Certificate I in construction: 57 residents
- Certificate III in cleaning operations: 44 residents
- Certificate II in retail services: 24 residents
- Certificate III in supply chain operations: 19 residents
- Certificate IV in leadership and management: 12 residents
- English as a Second Language (ESL) course: 2 residents

However, key support positions in the education centre remained unfunded on a permanent basis. The Campus Manager and PEC were supplemented by an administration assistant and an Aboriginal Education Worker (AEW) on casual contracts. These two non-permanent positions provided significant support but were funded out of the education centre's small budget. In particular, the AEW was a valued support for Aboriginal residents and had engaged them in a storytelling course to help them tell their own stories. Permanent funding for these positions would secure these support roles, making available additional budget capacity for the education centre.

#### **Recommendation 1**

Provide permanent funding for education support positions.

### **Lack of internet access continued to be a barrier for tertiary studies**

Internet access continued to be prohibited for residents at Boronia conducting tertiary studies. While laptops with pre-loaded content had been provided by the University of Southern Queensland for two students, residents were unable to access additional online educational materials, conduct research, and engage in interactive learning activities. As a result, students were not attaining the maximum benefit of their studies and were not developing skills that could assist them on release. Staffing resources were also being consumed assisting students to retrieve information.

In 2021, we recommended the Department pilot controlled online access for residents at Boronia (OICS, 2022, p. 49). At the time, the Department noted it had developed a technology strategy for the custodial estate but provided no commitment or support for internet access at Boronia. The Department is currently reviewing this strategy, providing an opportunity to re-evaluate the cost-benefit of providing controlled access to internet for residents at Boronia.

#### **Recommendation 2**

As part of the review of the Long-term Custodial Technology Strategy, the Department should re-assess opportunities to introduce controlled, secure internet access to tertiary students in custodial facilities.

We also noted the decline in residents undertaking tertiary studies observed during our previous inspection had continued. In 2018, there were 15 tertiary students at Boronia. In 2021, this had declined to two students. In 2024, only one resident was pursuing an undergraduate degree and a further two had been enrolled in a tertiary preparation program. The staffing resources required to support tertiary students, and approval processes from the Department and the respective university, were cited as barriers preventing more residents from enrolling in tertiary studies.

### **2.3 Personal development programs offered an opportunity to re-set patterns of behaviour**

Boronia offered a range of programs to support women in their rehabilitation and reintegration journey. ReSet, Ngala and the YMCA delivered parenting classes. Holyoake offered alcohol and other drug supports. The Department ran the Cognitive Brief Intervention program, and Outcare was planning delivery of a life skills program. Women told us they found these opportunities to be valuable for their personal development and helped them build resilience for when they returned to the community.

But residents wanted more. Most programs were short, ranging between four and eight sessions. Because they did not run back-to-back, there could be long delays between scheduling. They wanted programs that helped set healthy relationship boundaries and improved their interpersonal skills and coping strategies.

#### **There remained few programs to specifically address trauma**

In particular, we found there were still few programs available for women to address grief, abuse, and trauma. We had previously recommended the Department introduce programs to address those issues. Although supported in principle, the Department claimed that residents had access to individual counselling, that it was assessing the re-commencement of group programs after COVID, and that success of any interventions was dependent on the residents' willingness to participate in groupwork (OICS, 2022, p. 65).

However, residents expressed to us a clear interest in more programs.

*There are currently no specific programs for abuse and trauma.*

*Boronia has AOD Reset and CBI (cognitive brief intervention) programs, however, there are no FDV/grief/trauma programs.*

Comments by residents

### **Recommendation 3**

In consultation with residents, develop and provide more voluntary programs to meet their needs.

Despite the lack of specific programs, we were provided examples of residents being linked with relevant services. Several incidents of family domestic abuse during home leave were discovered and those residents were referred to the Kensington Police Family Violence Unit (FVU) for support. The Kensington Police FVU had previously attended Boronia to give information to residents about identifying family violence and had provided support after release.

### **Aboriginal residents grew confidence and learned new skills with Yirra Djinda**

The Yirra Djinda (Rising Stars) program was helping First Nations women build their confidence, self-esteem, and hope for the future. The employment and training program was developed by the Department in partnership with the National Indigenous Australians Agency to help Aboriginal women secure employment upon release. Groups of eight Boronia residents were participating in the program over a 16-week cycle.

Features of the program included:

- Participation in industry-recognised training up to a Certificate II in Kitchen Operations, Retail Services, Cleaning Operations, and Warehousing.
- Skills development in customer service, logistics, infection control, food handling and barista techniques.
- Trainees were given six months post-release support involving private companies and not-for-profits to help them stay in work while adjusting to life in the community.
- Trainees were also paid the highest gratuity rates (Level 1) and provided uniforms and work boots while participating in the program.

Participants worked in the Nyandi kitchen at the Department's training academy, learning new skills like preparing meals and serving lunch to staff. Mothers could learn about nutrition for their babies. They were also given lessons on Aboriginal language, and support and mentoring from Aboriginal leaders and industry qualified trainers. Aboriginal instructors with cultural knowledge became role models. Participants said they were patient and created a positive environment for learning.



Photo 2: A Yirra Djinda participant preparing food.

The Yirra Djinda co-ordinator was a key resource for residents. She provided pre- and post-release support for participants, helping them develop resumes and prepare for interviews. She organised transport to get them to job interviews. Yirra Djinda participants felt safe and empowered by the program.

At the time of the inspection funding for the program was due to cease in June 2024. The Department subsequently extended temporary funding until June 2025.

*The program fills our confidence, we do not feel incompetent, we are not judged, we can talk up, and they (Yirra Djinda participants) understand as they have the same traumas.*

Comment from Yirra Djinda participant



Photo 3: The Nyandi kitchen used for the Yirra Djinda program.



## Wandoo graduates were supported to maintain skills and abstinence

The Wandoo Intersection program was implemented to support women transitioning to Boronia from Wandoo Rehabilitation Prison's drug and alcohol program. As part of the program, Cyrenian House – who operate the therapeutic community at Wandoo – facilitate fortnightly group discussions with women who had recently transitioned to Boronia. Participants could also request to have telehealth counselling sessions with their former Wandoo counsellors.

As the environment and expectations at Boronia are different from Wandoo, the program supports Wandoo 'graduates' to use the tools they learnt to continue their recovery from addictions. The feedback from women was also positive, with participants commenting the program provides them with a much-needed safe space to discuss their thoughts with like-minded peers, and an opportunity to revisit key learnings from their time at Wandoo.

We commend the development of this program, which filled a gap in support for women who had successfully completed the Wandoo drug and alcohol program. We hope to see this program continue.

## Residents would benefit from a life skills instructor to assist with nutrition and budgeting advice

Boronia continued to operate without a life skills officer supporting women. Following our previous inspection, a recommendation was made to introduce a life skills VSO position to provide structured support and education in basic life skills such as budgeting, food preparation, and nutrition. At the time we found women valued the ability to self-cater, but some women lacked the skills required to manage a budget and prepare food. This led to some conflict within the households. The Department noted the recommendation, stating it would be considered as part of the next Service Level Agreement for Boronia. The need for a life skills officer was then reiterated in 2023 by an independent assessment of Boronia's nutrition (Fleay, 2023).

As part of Boronia's self-care operating philosophy residents are responsible for purchasing, preparing, and cooking their own meals as a household. Each house is allocated a set budget, which is used to purchase groceries from the small supermarket on site. A traffic light system allocates a certain percentage of the household budget to specific categories of groceries in order of health rating. During the inspection, several women expressed frustration that the household budget was inadequate, and that individual residents were using their own money to purchase extra meat, which had increased in price.

Upon arrival at Boronia, most residents complete a minimum of two weeks in the kitchen as part of the One Star food training. This training provides new residents with basic cooking, food safety, and hygiene skills to support them in the self-care environment. Randomised monthly food sampling from households is also conducted to test for food safety and hygiene. The kitchen VSO also aspires to visit resident households regularly to provide culinary advice, but we heard the demand on their role has made this difficult to achieve.



The inclusion of a life skills officer at Boronia could help support women maintain hygienic food preparation practices and manage their weekly household budgets. This position would also help alleviate the pressures experienced by the kitchen VSO in supporting women with recipes and advice.

#### **Recommendation 4**

Create a life skills instructor position at Boronia.

## **2.4 Residents were dissatisfied with reintegration opportunities**

Many women transition to Boronia hopeful of accessing the various reintegration opportunities available at the centre. As with previous inspections, we continued to find resident dissatisfaction with process delays impacting participation in the Prisoner Employment Program, Section 95 employment, and home leave. Other reintegration supports were being provided by ReSet, but limited post-release housing was an ongoing challenge.

### **Prisoner Employment Program needed reinvigorating**

The Prisoner Employment Program (PEP) continued to be impacted by lengthy approval processes, affecting the number of eligible residents. PEP allows approved residents to engage in paid employment, job-seeking activities, or education and training prior to their release, assisting them to transition back into the community. We have previously criticised the Department for slow approval processes impacting residents' eligibility (OICS, 2022). Again, we found the program was not being used to its maximum potential due to administrative barriers.

At the time of our inspection, there were four women approved to undertake education as part of PEP, and one woman was engaged in paid employment. An additional 14 applications were in the pipeline. Several women reported they had transferred to Boronia for the opportunity to work and earn money prior to their release and were disappointed at the low number of participants. They expressed frustration at the barriers preventing more women from participating, including:

- Being unable to search for jobs independent of the Employment Coordinator. They were required to book an appointment with the Employment Coordinator, which took time to arrange.
- The Employment Coordinator also felt the demands on their role prevented them from sourcing employers to participate in PEP or assist women to search for jobs.
- There was a limited range of potential employers already involved with the facility and several had fallen away since the last inspection. This meant there were less employment options for women to explore.
- The Department's lengthy approval process for women to participate in PEP activities meant potential employers would often fill their vacancy prior to approval being granted. Some employers stopped participating in the program altogether.

PEP has immense potential to provide Boronia residents (and other pre-release prisoners) with secure employment and a financial safety net prior to their release. It is noted that the Department is required to undertake thorough assessments of applications, to ensure the safety and security of applicants. Despite this, it is disappointing that we continue to observe and report on barriers impacting the number of people being able to take advantage of this important reintegration initiative (OICS, 2022; OICS, 2024; OICS, 2022a; OICS, 2022b; OICS, 2023).

#### **Recommendation 5**

Support Boronia's Employment Coordinator to increase residents' access to the Prisoner Employment Program.

### **Section 95 gave residents experience with mainstream employment, but there were frustrations with its administration**

Section 95 (s95) of the *Prisons Act 1981* (WA) allows suitably assessed prisoners to leave a prison and participate in a range of activities, many of which give back to the community. Overall, residents involved in s95 employment found the experience to be very beneficial. They appreciated the opportunity to work in public, be treated as normal people, interact with men, and refamiliarize themselves with community life, such as managing traffic conditions. During the inspection seven residents, including one Aboriginal woman, were working off-site at Food Bank and Good Samaritan warehouses.

However, some aspects of the s95 program at Boronia caused frustration amongst women. There was a dedicated s95 VSO at the facility to arrange external activities and supervise the women when they were off-site. But the position was shared between two officers, which at times led to a breakdown in communication with the women. We also heard women were often not given enough time to make lunches before going off-site, and as they were away from 8.30am to 1.30pm they often missed lunch at the centre.

Women also expressed frustration with a perceived inequality in gratuity payments for prisoners conducting s95 employment. The women were of the view that men in custody employed under s95 were generally paid the highest level of gratuities (Level 1). Whereas the women at Boronia were paid at Level 3 gratuity rates. This perceived inequity made the women feel disempowered and discriminated against.

We reviewed gratuity payment rates for prisoners engaged in s95 activities across various prisons in March 2024, and found there was a discrepancy in rates between Boronia and other facilities. Records confirmed most s95 participants at Boronia were paid at Level 3 rates, whereas most men engaged in s95 at other facilities were paid at Level 1 or Level 2.

Table 2: Gratuity rates for residents engaged in s95 activities were lower than other prisons (March 2024).

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Boronia	14%	0%	86%	0%	0%
Bunbury	91%	9%	0%	0%	0%
Broome	67%	33%	0%	0%	0%
EGRP	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Greenough	67%	33%	0%	0%	0%
Pardelup	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
West Kimberley	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Wooroloo	21%	33%	44%	2%	0%

The allocation of gratuity payment rates is a decision for local management. Boronia should re-assess the gratuity payments for s95 workers to ensure it is fair and equitable in comparison with other facilities.

#### Recommendation 6

Review gratuity payments for Section 95 workers at Boronia to ensure it is fair and equitable in comparison to other facilities.

## More resources were required to progress home leave applications

Residents were frustrated that the process for approving home leave applications were taking so long. Home leave is available to approved residents in the last 12 months of their sentence. Considered one of the main benefits of transferring to Boronia, women could spend time at home and in the community, helping to prepare them for life after release.

The delays appeared to stem from a convoluted approval process. Eligibility assessments were completed locally at Boronia, followed by separate reports prepared by departmental staff, before approval was sought by the Director Sentence Management. Although there were milestones for women's eligibility to apply for leave, it seemed the Department had few timelines around the many stages of its approval process. Communication around the status of an application also appeared to be poor. Without transparency women were left feeling anxious and uncertain. We were told the process could take up to eight weeks.

Women in a pre-release environment should not experience delays in accessing reintegration opportunities. While we appreciate the need for the Department to undertake a comprehensive assessment of home leave applications, to ensure the safety and security of the applicants and the community, the Department should apply timeframes to each stage of the home leave approval process to increase accountability.

#### **Recommendation 7**

Provide a transparent and streamlined approval process for home leave.

### **ReSet was active, but post-release accommodation was scarce**

ReSet assisted women reintegrate into the community but struggled to find residents post-release accommodation in a tight housing market. As the Department's contracted adult rehabilitation and reintegration service provider, ReSet was providing Boronia residents with reintegration support for the last six months of their sentence and for 12 months post-release. ReSet provided women with a release day plan, clothing, food vouchers, and transport from Boronia to their accommodation or any scheduled appointments.

The most significant challenge for ReSet was the availability of housing. Some accommodation provider waitlists were closed, others did not accept women with children, or those with a history of offending. We were informed that short-term placements might be available, but often without furniture. And, some options for single women were in high-risk areas, putting them at risk.

Residents saw stable, long-term housing for themselves and their children as essential for their successful return to society, their ability find and maintain employment, regain their confidence, and avoid reoffending. If a woman lost accommodation that had been specified in her parole plan, she would likely be returned to custody.

The availability of post-release accommodation is an issue impacting people in custody throughout the custodial estate that requires a cross-agency response.

#### **Recommendation 8**

The Government should create a cross-agency response to increase the supply of post-release accommodation across Western Australia.

### 3 Some wellbeing supports could be improved

Generally, we found wellbeing supports at Boronia were available to residents and helped prepare them for release back into the community. As a small facility, resources are limited and this was found to have an impact on some service delivery, such as mental health care. Boronia continued to support pre- and post-natal women successfully and offered good opportunities for women to maintain relationships with family.

#### 3.1 Physical health services offered personal control of health matters

The model of healthcare at Boronia was generally working well. The health centre followed a community health practice model, with residents responsible for booking their own health appointments through reception. We found the experienced team was providing good care with one clinical lead, one nurse, and one receptionist at the health centre each day. Weekly visits by the GP were enough to meet the existing demand. Care plans for chronic diseases, annual screenings, and the management of individual residents were all up to date, and ancillary health services including optometry and physiotherapy were available when required.

We were also pleased to find an improvement in health promotion. In 2021, we recommended the Department increase resources and supports for health services at Boronia to engage more health promotion activities (OICS, 2022). In 2024, we found Boronia was proactively organising various health promotion activities to meet residents' needs including pelvic health, cervical screenings, Cancer Council initiatives, and programs from Diabetes WA. These activities equipped residents with the knowledge and tools to actively participate in managing their own health, helping them to make informed decisions.

Pre-release health care was also proactive. Discharge planning commenced with a resident's first health appointment. The nurse or GP recorded details of the resident's community-based health service, how they planned to re-engage with it on release, and what supports they would need. One week before release, residents met with the health centre team and discussed post-release medical support. On the day of release, residents were given a week's medication supply. The clinical lead also communicated with the transitional manager or re-entry service provider if there were concerns about continuity of care in the community. The comprehensive pre-release discharge process supported reintegration.

The successful operation of the health centre was assisted by a full staffing complement. Boronia also benefited from resource sharing with Bandyup, enabling them to access a pool of nurses when short-staffed. However, a similar arrangement did not exist for the GP and medical receptionist. Appointments had to be rescheduled when these positions were not backfilled, which increased the strain on available resources. The Department was also yet to commit additional funding to employ an Aboriginal Health Worker to provide culturally sensitive healthcare.

## Smoke free campaign at Boronia achieved success

As we concluded our on-site inspection at the end of March, Boronia had been a smoke-free environment for one month. Residents and staff celebrated that milestone with a BBQ breakfast.

Planning for Boronia to become a smoke-free environment was comprehensive. Residents were included from the beginning and knew what to expect. A variety of supports were in place to assist the residents transition from smoking to non-smoking, including the provision of nicotine replacement therapies.

Other support strategies included:

- Health services supported residents in managing smoking withdrawal symptoms
- Zonta House conducted workshops on stress management related to smoking cessation
- Cancer Council held information sessions and conducted training for health staff
- Recreation team organised meditation groups for residents
- Residents in each house kept themselves occupied with arts and crafts

The Department's decision to transition the custodial estate to a smoke-free environment aligns with the findings of our review into smoking in Western Australian prisons (OICS, 2021).

## 3.2 Mental health services were limited

As a small, minimum-security facility the mental health services at Boronia were limited. While we would expect residents to have had their critical mental health needs addressed before coming to the centre, we found the services available were inadequate to manage continuity of care and other support needs as they arise. At the time of the inspection, there was:

- One counsellor (based at Bandyup) attending one day a week.
- A Wandoo-based counsellor attending one day a week to support Wandoo graduates (as per our previous recommendation).
- A psychiatrist conducting monthly telehealth appointments (though at times inconsistent). This had ceased as there was no longer a psychiatrist servicing the women's estate.

There was no mental health nurse allocated to the centre.

Unsurprisingly, women reported feeling unsupported. Some told us that their mental health had declined since arriving at Boronia, and that the centre was informally referred to as 'Bindi Bindi Boronia' – in reference to the Bindi Bindi mental health unit at Bandyup. Our pre-inspection survey also found 39% of respondents thought access to mental healthcare was poor – an increase from the 14% recorded in 2021 (OICS, 2022).

Staff also raised their concerns with us. Several commented that anxiety and depression was common, and that women had to be measured about their level of crisis in fear of being transferred out to Bandyup. Only 17% of respondents to our staff survey considered the mental health services at Boronia to be 'acceptable', compared to 53% last inspection.

#### **Recommendation 9**

Increase mental health resources to meet the needs of women at Boronia.

### **ADHD medication was abruptly ceased for some women**

Shortly before our inspection we heard approximately six residents had long-term prescriptions for attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) regulated medication abruptly ceased because the qualified psychiatrist had retired. This disruption appeared to compromise those residents' physical health and mental wellbeing and had caused some distress. Boronia's health services had assisted the affected residents, and the GP felt they could be managed with support and counselling. However, several staff and residents felt the situation had been handled poorly with limited communication.

The Department advised that the medication was due to be ceased following a clinical review. However, it appears the departure of the prescribing psychiatrist triggered a more sudden cessation. The clinical review had identified that the ADHD medication being used by the women was not in accordance with departmental pharmaceutical policy as it was deemed highly trafficable. The review also found that other medication plus additional supports can be as effective.

Regardless of why the medication was ceased, the sudden nature of its cessation, the inconsistent communication around the decision, and the resulting impact on the residents did not align with Boronia's trauma-informed model of care.

### **3.3 Peer supports required more guidance and oversight**

Peer support team (PST) members at Boronia were tasked with monitoring the population for signs of distress or self-harm ideation. Unlike most prisons, Boronia was not funded for an on-site Prison Support Officer (PSO). But Senior PSOs from the Department's Prison Support Services (PSS) came to Boronia on alternate Wednesday mornings to meet with the six peer support residents to offer support and guidance. They were also in frequent contact with the Assistant Superintendent Women's Services (ASWS), keeping track of trends and advocating for more PST members. For additional oversight, the ASWS met peer support residents on a weekly basis.

We found PST members were aware of their role and had processes in place to conduct welfare checks on residents and orientate new arrivals. If a resident needed frequent contacts, they reported this back to the PSS for follow-up. There had only been 11 referrals in the last three months. Most had been in-house interpersonal issues about canteen spends and house leadership.



We spoke with five peer supporter residents who told us there had been four different Senior PSOs in seven months, and the changes had been overwhelming. There was no peer support handbook and meeting minutes were not recorded.

They wanted clearer guidelines and better communication. They suggested that a full-time team leader should be appointed to liaise with the ASWS. They also wanted a space where the team could meet and talk, in addition to providing evidence of contact with residents to comply with key performance indicators.

Members of the PST spoke highly of the one-day Lifeline WA suicide awareness training session they had completed gaining skills in identifying residents in distress.

### 3.4 Family and community support was strong

Boronia provided a supportive living environment for pre- and post-natal residents, with accommodation for six mothers in three houses. Shared experiences promoted mutual support and fostered a sense of community.

Boronia's health centre gave expectant mothers comprehensive care until 22 weeks into their pregnancy. Thereafter, their care was transferred to the clinic at King Edward Memorial Hospital. This guaranteed continuity of care and access to specialised maternity services as the pregnancy progressed.

Post-natal follow-up care at Boronia's health centre ensured early detection of any health concerns. It also provided ongoing support to mothers during the critical postpartum period.

Educational programs also emphasised parenting skills. Mothers were able to join programs run by Zonta House to learn about the 'Circle of Security', focused on strengthening maternal-infant attachment and building parenting skills in a residential setting. Permission for young children to live



Photo 4: Young children were able to live with their mothers in dedicated houses at Boronia.



with mothers was also a feature at Boronia, providing valuable support for mothers to nurture their relationships with their children.

Further opportunities to support residents' ties to family were the availability of social visits. Residents booked guests for two-hour social visit sessions, either morning or afternoon, on Saturday and Sunday. The atmosphere was relaxed and friendly. Staff were present but remained unobtrusive. Residents enjoyed the opportunity to connect with older children and other family members children in a relaxed, friendly atmosphere.



Photo 5: Social visits were observed to be relaxed and friendly.

## 4 Residents require a safe and inclusive environment

A fundamental element of providing a trauma-informed model of care at Boronia is ensuring residents feel safe. Overall, we found Boronia was providing residents with a safe and inclusive environment that encouraged self-determination and supported reintegration efforts. This was reflected in the residents' survey results, which indicated 91% of respondents felt safe at the centre. However, we found there were opportunities for Boronia to do more to support the needs of its residents, address interpersonal conflicts, and to address some ongoing security challenges.

### 4.1 Some communication from staff was not trauma informed

Several residents commented that staff were often overheard using language that was not trauma informed. Trauma-informed communication should be consistent, transparent, and empowering. But some residents described communication with some staff as the opposite. In particular, residents told us that sometimes staff seemed too busy to answer their questions about off-site employment or home leave applications. That lack of communication was disempowering and created anxiety.

Residents also shared concerns about confidentiality and gossiping between staff and other residents. Some alleged staff had been using their personal information as the basis for ridicule, while others claimed staff had shared residents' confidential information in front of their peers. Those experiences, if substantiated, impacted on residents' psychological safety. There is an opportunity to embed trauma-informed practice and communication in daily operations with additional staff training.

### 4.2 There were some divisions amongst the residents

The residents who were part of Yirra Djinda and Wandoo Intersection enjoyed strong emotional support and felt empowered and safe in their groups. However, not all residents were eligible for those programs, and we were frequently told that there were three groups in Boronia – those who were from Wandoo, those who were in Yirra Djinda and those who were in neither.

Some in that third group reported feeling unsupported at times but feared voicing emotional vulnerability. They felt they would be seen as needy, a liability, and not a person ready for release and independence.

Adding to this perceived divide was the resentment experienced by some women who were not on the Yirra Djinda program. They reported feeling disadvantaged in the gratuities and equipment they received compared to those on the program. This led to feelings of resentment.

Contributing to tensions at Boronia was an increase in population while some houses were out of service. When we were on-site Boronia's resident population was above 80 – or around 85% capacity. At the same time, two houses were under renovation and out of service. This led to crowding and limited the ability of management to move residents to alternative houses to mitigate interpersonal conflicts.

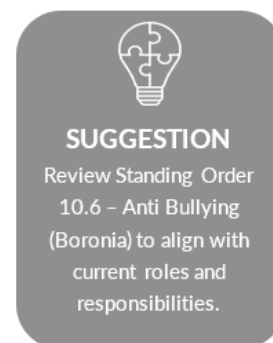
The staffing model at Boronia was such that officers were not always easily accessible to residents, which left some feeling unsure where to go for support or reassurance. We encourage Boronia to explore how welfare support can be formalised for those not eligible for Wandoo Intersection or Yirra Djinda. This could alleviate anxiety and normalise the act of seeking help, which is a relevant skill for successful reintegration.

### Bullying was being managed

Boronia continued to operate a no-tolerance approach to bullying. Residents were required to sign a memorandum of understanding during orientation regarding the behavioural expectations of the centre. The SO group directly managed incidents of bullying, gossiping, and rumours with perpetrators, and held meetings in relevant houses. We heard residents also regularly provided information to staff about such incidents.

At the time of the inspection there were no residents on the anti-bullying register. However, the behaviour of some residents was being monitored and recorded. We found there had been an increase in the use of the Department's offender database to record evidence of patterns of behaviour. This evidence provided support for 28-day management transfers to Bandyup for residents who had failed to meet the behavioural expectations of the centre.

However, Boronia's anti-bullying policy required updating to reflect changes in operational responsibilities (DOJ, 2021). The local policy specifies the centres approach to preventing bullying and delegates responsibility to the Assistant Superintendent Prison and Security Management and the Assistant Superintendent Women's Services. However, we found these positions had minimal involvement in the process and operational oversight was instead the responsibility of the Principal Officer. For clarity, this should be reflected in the policy.



## 4.3 Procedural security could be further improved

Various security issues have been raised in previous inspection reports. This inspection, we continued to find some challenges with the facility's procedural security including an under-staffed security team and limitations with CCTV coverage. However, we were pleased to find increased external signage had helped prevent intrusions to the facility that were becoming more frequent prior to the previous inspection.

### Senior Officer Security was spread thin

Boronia has continued to operate with only one security position. The SO Security was solely responsible for managing the centre's security including monitoring phone calls for intelligence, undertaking routine cell searches, conducting PEP and home leave checks, conducting urinalysis and breathalyser testing, and monitoring for contraband. The position-holder was doing a good job balancing the demands of the role with limited resourcing and assistance.

In 2021, we noted our concern that Boronia operated a one-person security team and suggested providing some administrative support (OICS, 2022). In 2024, the situation remained unchanged, and we again observed the high workload demands on this position. We acknowledge Boronia is a small minimum-security facility that would not have the same degree of security challenges experienced at other facilities. But resident safety is key to the centre's success and trauma-informed approach. Continuing to rely on a single security position, with high workloads and a build-up of responsibilities, increases the risk of the facility's security measures failing, posing both reputational and operational risks.

#### **Recommendation 10**

Provide additional staffing support for the Senior Officer Security role.

### **Improved signage helped prevent intrusions for over three years**

An increase in signage along the perimeter fence had helped prevent intruders from entering Boronia. The centre's outward appearance is that of an aged care facility, giving way to potential mistaken entry by members of the public. Multiple instances of intruders entering the facility prior to our 2021 inspection led us to recommending the Department improve its security and detections systems (OICS, 2022). While the Department did not support that recommendation, we were pleased to hear that the centre has not had any further intrusions since our previous inspection.



**Photo 6: An increase in external signage has helped prevent unauthorised access to Boronia.**

### **CCTV systems needed upgrading**

The CCTV system at Boronia was limited and outdated. Camera movements were slow, and some cameras were unable to be moved without blurring the vision. Several cameras were also offline pending repair. There were also known blind spots across the centre that left areas exposed and increased the risk of contraband entering the centre undetected. The centre was aware of the blind spots and had taken some corrective actions.

We were pleased to hear that a business case was being prepared to upgrade the system.

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## Appendix B Acronyms

Term	Expansion of Abbreviation
AEW	Aboriginal Education Worker
ASWS	Assistant Superintendent Women's Services
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
COVID	Coronavirus disease
FDVU	Family Domestic Violence Unit
GP	General Practitioner
PEC	Prisoner Education Coordinator
PEP	Prisoner Employment Program
PSO	Prison Support Officer
PSS	Prison Support Services
PST	Peer support team
SO	Senior Officer
VSO	Vocational Support Officer



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

# **Response to the Announced Inspection:**

**2024 Inspection of Boronia Pre-Release  
Centre for Women**

**May 2025**

## Response Overview

On 6 November 2023, the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (OICS) announced the 2024 Inspection of Boronia Pre-Release Centre for Women (Boronia), with the onsite inspection taking place from 24 – 28 March 2024.

To assist with the Inspection, the Department of Justice (the Department) provided a range of documentation as well as access to systems, custodial facilities, staff, and resident prisoners (residents).

On 24 February 2025, the Department received the draft report which raised 10 recommendations for review and comment.

Of the 10 recommendations made two were not supported, six were supported in principle, one was supported, and one was noted.

The Department acknowledges and respects OICS' role to independently and impartially report on the performance of custodial facilities to Parliament. While the Department does not seek to influence these findings, **appendix A** contains comments linked to sections in the draft report for the Inspector's consideration when finalising the report.



## Response to Recommendations

### 1 Provide permanent funding for education support positions.

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

#### Response:

As part of the broader Rehabilitation and Reintegration staffing level strategy, a recent budget submission for additional Full Time Equivalent (FTE) across the State was submitted. Should funding be approved, consideration of FTE allocations [inclusive of education support positions] will be made on a statewide need's basis. In the interim, Offender Services will continue to provide additional support to the Education Centre via casual contacts where possible.

An Aboriginal Employment Coordinator has been recruited to provide employment coordination services to all Aboriginal women within the prison estate. This position has recently been approved for permanency and has been permanently appointed to under Commissioner Instruction 39 which allows for the direct appointment of Aboriginal employees.

### 2 As part of the Long-term Custodial Technology Strategy, the Department should re-assess opportunities to introduce controlled, secure internet access to tertiary students in custodial facilities.

Level of Acceptance:	Not Supported
Responsible Division:	Corrective Services
Responsible Directorate:	Offender Services

#### Response:

Whilst the Department is working to improve prisoner digital literacy through access to digital services and platforms through the Departments Long Term Custodial Technology Strategy (LTCTS), there is currently no formal plan in place to provide internet access to people in custody due to associated risk and security concerns.

To ensure continued access to relevant academic resources, study materials are downloaded and made available to individuals in custody who are undertaking tertiary education, supporting them in completing their coursework effectively.

### 3 In consultation with residents, develop and provide more voluntary programs to meet their needs.

Level of Acceptance:	Supported in principle
Responsible Division:	Corrective Services
Responsible Directorate:	Adult Women's Prisons

#### Response:

The Department is pleased to note OICS finding that women at Boronia found programs such as ReSet, Ngala, programs delivered by YMCA and Holyoake,

Cognitive Brief Intervention program, aided their personal development and helped them build resilience for when they return to the community.

Whilst women residing within Boronia may have access to programs that encapsulates grief, abuse and trauma prior to transitioning to Boronia, trauma counselling and programs are not offered at Boronia given the imminent transition of residents to community and the inability to guarantee continuance of counselling post release. Noting the concerns raised by women at Boronia, residents can receive individual counselling via Psychological Health Services who since the inspection, now have a dedicated presence at Boronia twice a week.

In addition, Boronia also has a well-established internal volunteering program for residents named Spread Your Wings. All residents are encouraged to volunteer their free time to support other Boronia residents and various community groups assisting residents to develop more pro-social self-concepts and provides alternative considerations in how they establish new social networks to become active participants in their own social reintegration.

Boronia will continue to work with residents to better understand their needs and to inform future programs going forward.

#### **4 Create a life skills instructor position at Boronia.**

<b>Level of Acceptance:</b>	Supported in Principle
<b>Responsible Division:</b>	Corrective Services
<b>Responsible Directorate:</b>	Adult Women's Prisons

#### **Response:**

The creation of a life skills instructor at Boronia will be incorporated into the upcoming Prison Services Evaluation – *Staffing Review* which is due to be undertaken at Boronia mid-2025.

This review will provide Superintendents the opportunity to assess and develop a staffing profile and model that is operationally flexible, fit for purpose, suits the needs of each custodial facility, and delivers the right services required for the people in our care.

Noting OICS commentary regarding the inadequacy of household budgets, the Department reviewed the household budgets provided to female residents and maintain they are sufficient to provide residents essential items required.

Boronia Management Team meet with residents monthly and household budgets are a standing item for discussion through this forum.

**5 Support Boronia's Employment Coordinator to increase residents' access to the Prisoner Employment Program.**

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

**Response:**

All applications to engage in the Prisoner Employment Program (PEP) are assessed in accordance with *Commissioners Operating Policy and Procedure 8.2 – Prisoner Employment Program* with thorough reports conducted to assess eligibility of the applicant and prospective employer.

During Individual Management Plan discussions and case conference, residents are made aware of the eligibility and commencement dates associated with PEP.

While efforts have been made to streamline processes where possible, aspects of the process do take time as necessary processes require diligent checks and review.

Offender Services will continue to review staffing levels and business needs, managing resources accordingly.

**6 Review gratuity payments for Section 95 workers at Boronia to ensure it is fair and equitable in comparison to other facilities.**

Level of Acceptance:	Supported
Responsible Division:	Corrective Services
Responsible Directorate:	Adult Women's Prison

**Response:**

The Department supports this recommendation and acknowledge there was a discrepancy with gratuity payments to section 95 residents.

Since the inspection, a full review of all gratuity payments paid to residents working within Boronia has been undertaken and all section 95 residents now earning level 2 gratuities.

**7 Provide a transparent and streamlined approval process for home leave.**

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

**Response:**

Following the Inspection Offender Services reviewed the approval process for home leave and believe the approval process as it stands is appropriate.

The Department has a transparent process for home leave and all applications for home leave applications are assessed in accordance with *Commissioners Operating Policy and Procedure 14.2 – Home Leave*. Each assessment has a thorough report conducted to assess all risks associated with applications. Whilst the approval process takes time, careful assessment of an application and eligibility is necessary to ensure



public safety is maintained and to provide time for all relevant risk assessments to be completed.

Residents are made aware of the eligibility and commencement dates associated with home leave during Individual Management Plan discussions and case conference meetings. To improve communication to residents an update to the '*Application to participate in Home Leave*' form is being undertaken to include an overview of the broad timelines associated with the application and approval process.

**8 The Government should create a cross-agency response to increase the supply of post-release accommodation across Western Australia.**

Level of Acceptance:	Noted
Responsible Division:	Strategic Policy
Responsible Directorate:	Strategic Reform

**Response:**

The Department notes the availability of post-release accommodation is an issue impacting people in custody throughout the custodial estate. Rental accommodation statewide is at capacity in both the social and private rental markets, limiting access to housing.

Whilst housing availability is outside the Department's control, the Department will continue its efforts to work closely with the Department of Communities to secure further accommodation options.

**9 Increase mental health resources to meet the needs of women at Boronia.**

Level of Acceptance:	Not supported
Responsible Division:	Corrective Services
Responsible Directorate:	Offender Services

**Response:**

Following the inspection, Psychological Health Services bolstered counselling services at Boronia and allocated an additional 0.4 FTE to better meet the needs of women at Boronia. In addition, a telehealth nurse is now available at head office and provides in-reach services to all prisons statewide including Boronia.

Mental health resourcing at Boronia has been reviewed against the need and demand across the wider estate and the Department is of the view that Boronia is now adequately resourced. The Department is therefore not in a position to commit additional resources to Boronia at this point in time.

Where a resident's mental health declines - warranting increased mental health support, arrangements are made to transfer the resident to Bandyup Women's Prison to facilitate further treatment.

**10 Provide additional staffing support for the Senior Officer Security role.**

<b>Level of Acceptance:</b>	Supported in Principle
<b>Responsible Division:</b>	Corrective Services
<b>Responsible Directorate:</b>	Adult Women's Prison

**Response:**

Likewise, with the Life Skills instructor position, Security Officer roles will be incorporated into the upcoming Staffing Review and where supplementary resources are required supporting funding submissions will be initiated.

## Appendix D Inspection Details

Previous inspection		
23 – 27 May 2021		
Activity since previous inspection		
Liaison visits to Boronia Pre-release Centre	7 visits	
Independent Visitor visits	28 visits	
Surveys		
Prisoner survey	7 February 2024	54 responses (69%)
Staff survey (online)	29 January – 9 February	34 responses (67%)
Inspection team		
Acting Inspector	Jane Higgins	
Principal Inspections and Research Officer	Lauren Netto	
Principal Inspections and Research Officer	Liz George	
Inspections and Research Officer	Charlie Staples	
Inspections and Research Officer	Ben Shaw	
Community Liaison Officer	Joseph Wallam	
Student Intern	Taylar Davies	
Student Intern	Varunika Gupta	
Student Intern	Sheena Harpal	
Key dates		
Inspection announced	6 November 2023	
Start of on-site inspection	24 March 2024	
Completion of on-site inspection	28 March 2024	
Presentation of preliminary findings	16 April 2024	
Draft report sent to Department of Justice	24 February 2025	
Draft response received from Department of Justice	8 May 2025	
Declaration of prepared report	8 May 2025	

*Inspection of prisons, court custody centres, prescribed lock-ups,  
youth detention centres, and review of custodial services in Western Australia*



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