



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.

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

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