



Response to the Announced Inspection:

**2024 Inspection of Karnet, Pardelup &
Wooroloo Prison Farms**

June 2025

Response Overview

On 25 July 2024, the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (OICS) announced the combined 2024 Inspection of Karnet, Pardelup and Wooroloo Prison Farms, with onsite visits to all three facilities being undertaken from October 2024 to November 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 prisoners.

On 12 May 2025, the Department received the draft report which raised 13 recommendations for review and comment.

Of the 13 recommendations:

- One is supported.
- Five are supported in principle.
- Four are supported and considered current practice.
- Three are not supported.

Detailed responses to the recommendations can be found below.

Response to Recommendations

1 Create a policy or plan specific to the age-related needs of older prisoners.

Level of Acceptance:	Supported – Current Practice / Project
Responsible Division:	Corrective Services
Responsible Directorate:	Adult Male Prisons

Response:

All custodial facilities assess and review the suitability of working roles to ensure they are suitable for aged prisoners. This includes individually assessing all work opportunities to ensure they are not labor intensive, ensuring prisoners are regularly health assessed and housed in appropriate accommodation (e.g. ground level wings, bottom bunk placements etc.), and ensuring their identified transitional needs back into the community are addressed prior to release.

The long-term management of the aged male prisoner population is actively being considered with the construction of the High Care Needs Unit as part of the Casuarina Prison Expansion. Scheduled for completion in January 2027, the unit will accommodate aged and frail cohorts who may require assistance with daily activities, including meals, bathing and toileting. The unit will contain both single and double rooms, in addition to specialist rooms including bariatric and therapy rooms.

As the High Care Needs Unit nears completion, a Standing Order will be developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders including Operational Policy and Justice Health and Wellbeing Services to provide custodial guidance on the management of aged prisoners, operating alongside the existing health services procedure PM42 Procedure – *Management of Older Prisoner*.

2 Improve the opportunity for foreign national prisoners to engage in external activities.

Level of Acceptance:	Supported in Principle
Responsible Division:	Corrective Services
Responsible Directorate:	Adult Male Prisons

Response:

Corrective Services are exploring options for prisoners with immigration alerts to safely participate in external activities and to be housed in minimum-security facilities.

Once this matter has been explored and a list of recommended policy changes have been identified, these will be submitted to the Commissioner for consideration and approval.

3 Examine the reasons why recidivism rates for First Nations and non-First Nations people differ and implement mechanisms to reduce this disparity.

Level of Acceptance: Supported- Current Practice / Project
Responsible Division: Strategic Reform
Responsible Directorate: WACSAR

Response:

The Department of Justice is strongly committed to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap's four Priority Reforms and Justice socio-economic outcomes 10 and 11 and continues to progress a range of related deliverables. The Department, through the Aboriginal Justice Transformation directorate, is an active member of the Aboriginal Affairs Co-ordinating Committee and the Closing the Gap Deputies Group and works collaboratively with agencies across Government and key Aboriginal partners on addressing issues within the criminal justice system and the underlying factors that contribute to the disadvantage faced by many Aboriginal people.

The Department is an active member of the national Justice Policy Partnership (JPP). The JPP leads a national approach to transform law and justice systems through genuine partnerships between all levels of Government and Aboriginal organisations and communities. The JPP meets on a quarterly basis and continues to respond to evidence in developing specific measures to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal adults and youth in incarceration, identify opportunities to work more effectively across commonwealth and state governments to drive the implementation of the National Agreement and to engage with, support and develop Aboriginal community-led, place-based strategies.

The Department's Western Australia Office of Crime Statistics and Research (WACSAR) continually monitors and analyses data across the criminal justice system and regularly undertakes research into the overrepresentation of First Nations people across the custodial estate to identify trends and potential causes. The differing recidivism rates between First Nations and non-First Nations people are examined as part of this research and the Department will continue to explore solutions which can be implemented to reduce the disparity.

4 Examine causes of, and implement mechanisms to improve, First Nations representation at the prison farms.

Level of Acceptance: Supported in Principle
Responsible Division: Corrective Services
Responsible Directorate: Adult Male Prisons

Response:

The Department supports the intent of this recommendation and makes every effort to increase the number of First Nations prisoners at the prison farms.

Corrective Services is working with the Department's Aboriginal Justice Transformation directorate to identify opportunities and mechanisms to increase the level of First Nations representation at the prison farms.

In addition, the Assistant Commissioner Custodial Operations has the discretion to override sentence classification decisions to enable First Nation prisoners to be

eligible for prison farm placement, noting these decisions are made on a case-by-case basis and only where there is an acceptable level of risk.

5 Prioritise the development of life skills through structured and practical learning activities.

Level of Acceptance:	Supported in Principle
Responsible Division:	Corrective Services
Responsible Directorate:	Adult Male Prisons

Response:

A Life Skills Officer has been proposed in the next Staffing Level Agreement for Pardelup, pending negotiation and agreement with the Western Australian Prison Officers' Union.

In respect to Karnet and Wooroloo, both sites have considered the creation of a Life Skills Officer and have determined that this is not supported at this stage as the skills and training provided by Life Skills Officers are provided through the duties of other Vocational Support Officers such as Chef Instructors, Cleaning and Maintenance Officers and Gardens Officers.

6 Consider implementing a global assessment document to assess a prisoner's eligibility for various external activities, which can be updated as the prisoner progresses towards their eligibility dates.

Level of Acceptance:	Not Supported
Responsible Division:	Corrective Services
Responsible Directorate:	Adult Male Prison

Response:

The Department does not believe it is necessary for the development of a global assessment document for external activities as the external activities checklists serve this purpose.

While it is noted there are repetitive checks and significant screening questions which contribute to the lengthy approval times, these actions are necessary given the security of prisoners and the safety of the community remains paramount when assessing and/or approving a prisoner's participation in external activities. The Department must also ensure that when a prisoner's participation in external activities is approved, the decision is based on the most up-to-date information available, opposed to information collated several weeks or months prior.

The Department continues to focus on reducing the backlog of TARs and IMPs through the allocation of additional resources and amendments to policy requirements.

7 With regards to the Prisoner Employment Program:

- a) Allow prisoners to apply for the program earlier than three months prior to their eligibility to commence paid employment.**
- b) Review the application process to identify process barriers or resourcing constraints contributing to delays in approvals.**

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

Response:

Whilst the Department understands the intention of part (a) of this recommendation, assessing a prisoner for eligibility earlier than three months prior to employment is not practical nor will it have any material impact due to the need to assess a prisoner for Prisoner Employment Program (PEP) eligibility prior to commencement, regardless of whether they have been assessed earlier in their sentence as being suitable for engagement. Behavioral changes or involvement in adverse incidents may result in a prisoner no longer being suitable for PEP, hence the need for a current assessment to occur before commencing employment. In addition, a prospective Employer is unlikely to keep a job open for a prisoner for longer than three months due to business needs.

In relation to part (b), the Department has already identified delays in the preparation of intelligence reports as well as assessment of criminal history for PEP applications as the primary cause of approval delays.

As an interim measure, the Department has approved the use of overtime in an attempt to address the backlog of intelligence report requests. In parallel to this, a functional review of the Intelligence Services Branch has commenced which aims to improve the processes, procedures and resources surrounding intelligence functions, which is anticipated to improve the timeliness of intelligence report preparations in future.

8 Remove the requirement for prisoners participating in the Prisoner Employment Program to pay the Department of Justice a fee for their accommodation.

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

Response:

The purpose of requiring prisoners participating in PEP to pay board is twofold: to promote financial literacy by helping prisoners to understand budgeting, and to set realistic expectations for managing living expenses upon release. This practice is prescribed in regulation 54L(d) of the *Prison Regulations 1982* (Western Australia) and has been in effect since the inception of PEP in 2008.

The Department will conduct a jurisdictional scan to determine whether similar practices are implemented in other States and Territories and any necessary adjustments will be considered where appropriate.

9 Train willing participants at all prison farms, upskilling them in areas such as mental health, suicide prevention, and disability awareness.

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

Response:

Whilst the Department seeks to ensure training opportunities surrounding mental health, suicide prevention and disability awareness is provided to all prisoners statewide, certain training is limited to the metropolitan area and/or prioritised to peer support prisoners in the first instance.

Where there is capacity, training opportunities are offered to other prisoners willing to participate, noting only accredited training courses can be delivered to non-peer support prisoners.

As at May 2025, Prison Support Services (PSS) facilitated the following training and information sessions at the prison farms:

Karnet

- Breathing Space training, delivered in February 2025.
- Lifeline training, delivered in March 2025.

Pardelup

- Conversations Matter (suicide awareness) information sessions, delivered in January 2025.
- Lifeline training, delivered in February 2025.
- 'Helping someone at risk of suicide' information session, delivered in March 2025.

Wooroloo

- Reintegration information session, delivered in collaboration with the Employment Coordinator to all prisoners in February 2025.
- Aboriginal Visitors Scheme (AVS) information session, delivered in collaboration with the AVS in March 2025.
- Lifeline training, delivered in April 2025.
- Disability Awareness training, delivered in May 2025.

10 Adequately resource the custodial estate with Prison Support Officers, preventing the diversion of services.

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

Response:

In response to the unprecedented demand for PSO support, head-office based Prison Support Service staff are facilitating remote support sessions to facilities with no dedicated PSO resources to assist facilities in keeping up with demand.

Expansion of these services and the provision of additional resourcing is a matter for Government.

11 Wooroloo Prison Farm should establish a weekend yarning circle at the cultural area for out-of-Country First Nations men.

Level of Acceptance: Supported
Responsible Division: Corrective Services
Responsible Directorate: Adult Male Prisons

Response:

An existing weekend yarning circle for off-country prisoners, led by an off-country prisoner, is already established at Wooroloo.

Wooroloo will engage with its off-country men to ascertain the scheduling of the weekend yarning circle in an effort to ensure it occurs at the same time as social visits, thereby providing off-country men with additional supports.

12 Increase the access to information and support for prisoners facing deportation due to visa cancellations.

Level of Acceptance: Supported in Principle
Responsible Division: Corrective Services
Responsible Directorate: Adult Male Prisons

Response:

The Department will engage with the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) to determine what additional supports can be provided to assist foreign national prisoners facing deportation and will also explore the inclusion of the DHA contact number to the prisoner telephone system to enable prisoners to facilitate their own contact with the DHA.

The Department currently provides foreign national prisoners with support in referring them to services that can assist them with immigration matters, including interpreters, legal representation, consulates, and officer-initiated phone calls to the DHA.

Pending the outcome of the Department's engagement with DHA, the Department will consider what additional options are available to further increase supports for

prisoners facing deportation, acknowledging the emotional impacts on this cohort of prisoners.

13 The Department of Justice should request permission from Government to allow the prison farms to retain a portion of their generated revenues for farm reinvestment.

Level of Acceptance:	Supported – Current Practice / Project
Responsible Division:	Corrective Services
Responsible Directorate:	Adult Male Prisons

Response:

There are significant costs associated with Prison Industries providing produce and services internally across the Custodial Estate. Due to the increased prisoner population, opportunities to sell produce external to Corrective Services is limited. Revenue generated from external sales is retained by Corrective Services, however the revenue is recurrent funding which cannot be used for capital/asset investment. The Department will work with Treasury to consider opportunities to reinvest revenue back to Prison Farms to enable increased investment in aging equipment and infrastructure.