

MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL 2PM ON 11 NOVEMBER 2025

Report 165: Inspection of Work Camps

Today the Inspector of Custodial Services, Mr Eamon Ryan, released the report for the 2025 announced inspection of the state's minimum-security work camps for adult males, situated in Dowerin, Roebourne, Walpole, Warburton, and Wyndham.

The inspection found that work camps provide real benefits to adult male prisoners and local communities. They support rehabilitation and reintegration, offer meaningful work, and help maintain public spaces that might otherwise be neglected. Prisoners gain skills, contribute to their communities, and build self-worth.

However, many camps have been underused for years. While Dowerin and Walpole often operate at full capacity, Roebourne, Warburton, and Wyndham faced challenges—such as staffing shortages and remoteness. Aboriginal prisoners are also regularly under-represented, due to barriers in achieving minimum-security status and limited awareness of the benefits.

Following the inspection, it was positive to see the Department of Justice prioritise work camp placements, leading to a significant increase in use during a time of population growth across the custodial estate.

Lines attributable to the Deputy Inspector, Ms Jane Higgins:

"Work camps are a cornerstone of Western Australia's custodial system—and I've seen the difference they make. They offer men real work settings to build habits, confidence, and a sense of purpose. It's not just about skills—it's about connection and community."

"Section 95 opportunities—safe, supervised external work—are central. They help men practise responsibility, contribute locally, and rebuild trust. When consistent, these activities bridge the gap between camp life and life after release."

"It's also encouraging to see the Department reinstate a dedicated Work Camps Manager. With the right authority, this role can lead with consistency, improve access—especially for Aboriginal prisoners—and better align work camps with broader reintegration goals."

Eamon Ryan
Inspector

For further media information:

The Inspector, Mr Eamon Ryan, will be available for comment from 2pm on 11 November 2025 and can be contacted on 0421 480 925. The full report will be available on the Inspector's website (www.oics.wa.gov.au).