

2025 INSPECTION OF WANDOO REHABILITATION PRISON

WANDOO IS A SUCCESS STORY FOR WOMEN'S REHABILITATION

Wandoo Rehabilitation Prison continues to stand as one of Western Australia's best examples of therapeutic and trauma-informed rehabilitation in custody. As the State's only dedicated alcohol and other drug (AOD) rehabilitation prison for women, Wandoo plays a vital role in supporting recovery, reducing re-offending, and preparing women to reintegrate successfully into the community.

This inspection, conducted in July 2025, marks the third formal inspection of Wandoo as a women's rehabilitation prison and the second application of our revised inspection methodology, designed to enhance rigour, and transparency.

Since its establishment in 2018, Wandoo has operated as a Modified Therapeutic Community (MTC), underpinned by a partnership between Cyrenian House and the Department of Justice. This model remains the foundation of Wandoo's success, combining structured rehabilitation with a holistic focus on wellbeing, safety, education, and cultural identity. Our inspection found that residents overwhelmingly felt safe – 98% of those surveyed – and both staff and residents demonstrated strong commitment to the rehabilitative ethos.

The inspection also identified significant improvement in workplace culture, communication, and collaboration. Staff expressed greater alignment with Wandoo's purpose, reflecting a genuine shift since our previous visit in 2022. However, some challenges persist, including staffing instability, limited succession planning, and the need for consistent therapeutic community training for custodial staff.

Service delivery across education, recreation, and health has remained strong, with residents reporting high satisfaction and engagement. Notably, access to health and dental care has improved markedly, and cultural supports are more visible and valued. However, mental health services remain under strain due to workforce shortages, and some maintenance and infrastructure issues – such as ventilation, fire safety, and outdated security systems – require urgent attention.

The partnership between Cyrenian House and the Department continues to deliver clear benefits for residents. Pleasingly, contract governance issues seen early during Wandoo's operation have improved in recent years and the Department reports a review of the performance, effectiveness and value of the existing alcohol and other drug service agreements will be undertaken. Wandoo's future success depends on a continued focus on stable leadership, transparent governance, and pathways for recovery beyond the prison walls.

Overall, Wandoo remains a success story – a facility where women are offered genuine opportunities for recovery and transformation. Its evolution since the last inspection reflects commitment, compassion, and courage from all involved.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We have two Independent Prison Visitors for Wandoo. They are community volunteers appointed by the Minister for Corrective Services, who attend Wandoo on a regular basis and observe the operations of the prison. They also provide an opportunity for the women to raise issues and complaints which informs the work of our office. I acknowledge the importance of their work and thank them for their contribution to our ongoing monitoring of Wandoo.

I extend my appreciation to Superintendent Sue Rowley, Acting Superintendent Aaron Hardwick, the staff of Wandoo and Cyrenian House, and the Department of Justice for their cooperation and openness throughout this process. Most importantly, I thank the women who shared their experiences and insights with us so generously. Their voices lie at the heart of this report.

Finally, I acknowledge the professionalism and dedication of the inspection team, and particularly Charlie Staples for coordinating the inspection, and Kelly Jackson, for preparing this report.

Jane Higgins

Acting Inspector of Custodial Services

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