



# 2025 INSPECTION OF WANDOO REHABILITATION PRISON

# 167

DECEMBER 2025

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



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR  
OF CUSTODIAL SERVICES

*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.*

## Artwork Acknowledgement

*Marcia McGuire – Kolbang ‘Going Forward’ (2025)*

Format: Digital illustration (cover uses elements)

The artwork *Kolbang* – meaning ‘going forward’ – depicts the positive impacts the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services has on the custodial estate in Western Australia.

The artwork embodies traditional knowledge passed on from Marcia McGuire’s families of the Whadjuk, Ballardong, Yued Noongar and Badimia Yamatji Aboriginal People.



## 2025 Inspection of Wandoo Rehabilitation Prison

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## Inspector's Overview

### *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**

3 December 2025

## Summary of Findings

### Staff culture and communication had improved

Wandoo's workplace culture continues to improve, with enhanced staff wellbeing, communication, and teamwork. Custodial staff supported the therapeutic model, and ongoing training opportunities will further enrich resident engagement. Succession planning for key clinical positions is required to ensure continued positive outcomes. Community connections are being rebuilt, with renewed local engagement and strong relationships with service providers. The re-establishment of a formal reference group is underway, supporting collaborative progress. ([Recommendations 1–3](#))

### Wandoo's Modified Therapeutic Community effectively supported rehabilitation

Wandoo delivers a unique and accredited alcohol and other drugs (AOD) rehabilitation program through a strong partnership between Cyrenian House and custodial staff. Residents engaged in either a 28-week or 16-week therapeutic program, with collaborative assessments guiding participation. Safety remained central, with residents reporting high levels of safety and support. Behaviour management was integrated into the program, though some staff felt role clarity could be improved to enhance program delivery. Opportunities for through-care and contract review are being explored to further strengthen recovery outcomes. ([Recommendations 4-5](#))

### Residents were supported by a wide variety of services

Wandoo's assessment and case management processes were effective, with timely screenings and strong staff-resident relationships supported by a personal officer system. Despite system-wide delays in treatment assessments, Wandoo adapted by accepting residents pending eligibility. Orientation was well-integrated for program participants but had gaps for others, though recent improvements were noted. Education and recreation supported rehabilitation, with diverse learning options and activities, but funding and staffing pressures limited course availability. The library and recreation program were well-used and highly rated by residents, contributing positively to wellbeing and engagement.

### Health and wellbeing supports were performing well amid staffing gaps

Health services at Wandoo had improved, with residents reporting better access to general and dental care, though staffing shortages affected consistency. The medical centre was restructured as a neutral space after a death in custody, helping residents feel safer. Mental health support was under-resourced, with only one full-time counsellor managing a large caseload and no psychiatrist available, but collaborative care and staff attentiveness helped fill gaps. Cultural supports were strengthened through regular activities and yarning circles. Ongoing consideration of First Nations cultures will enhance Wandoo's commitment to residents' holistic wellbeing. ([Recommendation 6](#))

### Quality of life at Wandoo was generally high

Wandoo's living areas are bright and welcoming, and family visits were positive and respectful. Extending family visit times would further increase residents' satisfaction. Food quality and canteen

services were rated highly, and clothing and bedding are generally sufficient, supporting comfort and practicality for residents. [\(Recommendations 7-8\)](#)

### Safety and security risks could be detrimental to staff and residents

Wandoo's drug strategy was comprehensive and respectful searching practices helped maintain a drug-free environment. Addressing gaps in security staffing will increase the prison's ability to address drug related risks. Ongoing attention to safety and security practices will ensure a supportive and secure community for staff and residents. [\(Recommendation 9\)](#)

### Conclusion

Wandoo continues to provide a safe and supportive environment for recovery, underpinned by strong staff commitment and improved workplace culture. Health services have strengthened, and residents report feeling secure and well-supported throughout their rehabilitation journey. Ongoing collaboration between staff and service providers reflects Wandoo's dedication to continuous improvement and reintegration.

## Recommendations

Recommendation	Page	DOJ Response
<b>Recommendation 1</b> Implement recommendations from the cultural review into Wandoo Rehabilitation Prison and, where appropriate, share relevant key findings with staff.	2	Supported
<b>Recommendation 2</b> Deliver therapeutic community training for Wandoo custodial staff.	3	Supported – Current Practice/Project
<b>Recommendation 3</b> Re-establish a Community Reference Group.	4	Supported
<b>Recommendation 4</b> Develop a dedicated pathway for continuity of alcohol and other drug recovery maintenance in the community for Wandoo graduates.	8	Supported – Current Practice/Project
<b>Recommendation 5</b> Conduct a formal evaluation of the service agreement between Cyrenian House and the Department of Justice.	9	Supported
<b>Recommendation 6</b> Ensure there is full staffing of all positions within the health services team.	14	Supported – Current Practice/Project
<b>Recommendation 7</b> Implement a maintenance program targeting ventilation systems, ceiling fans, and shower areas across all units.	18	Supported
<b>Recommendation 8</b> Create a life skills officer position at Wandoo.	20	Supported in Principle
<b>Recommendation 9</b> Undertake an independent review of the alleged fire hazard in Eyre Unit and implement any resulting recommendations.	24	Supported – Current Practice/Project
<b>Recommendation 10</b> Review the Senior Officer Security roles and consider adjustments that increase their appeal and encourage staff to express interest in filling one or both positions.	25	Supported – Current Practice/Project

## Background

Wandoo Rehabilitation Prison opened in July 2018 as a drug and alcohol rehabilitation facility for female prisoners in medium- and minimum-security. It was established as part of the Western Australian Government's Methamphetamine Action Plan to reduce addiction-driven offending by addressing its root causes. Cyrenian House was contracted to deliver the Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) program through a Therapeutic Community (TC) model, making Wandoo the only accredited TC for women in custody across Australasia.

Because Wandoo operates within a custodial setting, its program is referred to as a Modified Therapeutic Community (MTC). Unlike community-based TCs, residents at Wandoo cannot begin reintegration activities in the same way, and decisions are made collaboratively between Cyrenian House and custodial management, balancing therapeutic goals with operational requirements.

Residents at Wandoo participate in a structured, peer-led program designed to address substance dependency and promote personal growth. Within a safe, drug-free environment, they are supported by staff and peers to build insight, take responsibility, and break cycles of addiction and criminal behaviour. The MTC model fosters behavioural change and mutual support, offering many participants their first opportunity to develop a healthier lifestyle in a secure and rehabilitative setting.

This is the third inspection of Wandoo – as a women's rehabilitation prison – by the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (the Office).



# WANDOO REHABILITATION PRISON

## FACT PAGE

### ROLE OF FACILITY

Wandoo is Western Australia's first alcohol and other drugs rehabilitation prison for adult females. Cyrenian House is the service provider and delivers alcohol and drug therapy in a modified therapeutic community to female residents.

### HISTORY

The Wandoo Reintegration Facility in Murdoch opened in late 2012. It was a small, minimum-security prison with 78 beds, providing rehabilitation and reintegration services for young men aged 18 to 28. Serco operated the facility under a five-year contract with the state government.

On 27 August 2017, the Western Australian Government announced that Wandoo would return to public management on 1 May 2018. It was converted into a women's prison focused on drug and alcohol rehabilitation, as part of the Government's Methamphetamine Action Plan.

#### OFFICIAL CAPACITY

77

#### PRISONERS AT TIME OF INSPECTION

73

as at 21 July 2025

#### PRISONERS SLEEPING ON THE FLOOR

0



Wandoo Rehabilitation Prison is located on Whadjuk Noongar land, in the suburb of Murdoch, Western Australia.



#### INSPECTION DATE

21 - 25 July 2025



# The Inspection Process

This inspection was guided by the Office's *Inspection Standards for Adult Custodial Services* (the Standards) (OICS, 2025), which draws on expectations and rights established in relevant international treaties and guidelines. The Standards provide a framework for assessing the performance of custodial facilities.

The scope of this inspection was refined to focus on 23 of the 33 adult standards, across all eight core themes. The scoping was based on the assessment of available evidence such as liaison visit reports, data on key indicators, a self-assessment completed by the Superintendent, and themes arising from Independent Visitor reports.

Before the on-site inspection, surveys were conducted with prisoners and staff, and interviews were held with departmental staff, key prison personnel, and service providers. Additional documents from the Department of Justice (the Department) and demographic data also informed the inspection's lines of inquiry.

The on-site inspection took place over five days in July 2025. It involved engagement with management, staff, and residents; observation of key processes; and review of relevant documentation. At the end of the inspection week, a debrief was held with senior management to present preliminary findings.

The findings and recommendations in this report are based on evidence gathered throughout the inspection process. Generative artificial intelligence (AI) has been used to summarise inspection notes to prepare an early draft. This draft was then subject to human oversight, cross referencing, contextualisation, proofing and editing to ensure accuracy, clarity, and readability. The Department and Cyrenian House were provided with an opportunity to respond to recommendations within this report.



# 1 Staff culture and communication had improved

At Wandoo, the journey toward a cohesive and communicative staff culture was clearly underway, marked by tangible improvements to persistent challenges that were present during the previous inspection (OICS, 2023). The facility's vision, to be Western Australia's premier AOD rehabilitation prison had taken root among staff, who evidently shared a sense of purpose.

This chapter assesses the performance of Wandoo against the following standards:

## **Standard 1 – Operational planning**

A strategic vision informs a comprehensive plan of the custodial facility's priorities, principles, values, and actions.

## **Standard 2 – Human resources**

All staff possess the necessary skills and authority to manage people in custody safely and effectively.

## **Standard 3 – Community relations**

The custodial facility engages appropriately with the local community.

## 1.1 Wandoo's workplace culture was improving

Wandoo's workplace culture was showing positive signs of improvement. At the time of our previous inspection, indicators of staff wellbeing – such as workplace stress levels – had diminished and there were signs of fractured relationships (OICS, 2023). Staff raised concerns that allegations of bullying, aggression and harassment had not been addressed, and communication from leaders was perceived to be poor.

This inspection we were pleased to find positive shifts in staff wellbeing indicators and perceptions, suggesting efforts to address concerns were taking effect. Staff reported a higher quality of working life in comparison to the previous inspection and were observed to be aligned with Wandoo's vision and philosophy.

The proportion of staff who felt collaboration with their peers was 'generally poor' dropped from 19% at the last inspection, to 9% this inspection. While this indicated an improvement in perceived teamwork across the prison, we found there was opportunity to further strengthen collaboration and strategic alignment. For example, while representatives of Cyrenian House were formally considered part of the senior management team (SMT), their inclusion in decision-making forums

such as SMT meetings, the Aboriginal Services Committee, and the Prison Council could enhance cohesion and ensure a shared understanding of site performance and strategic direction.

Staff communication also appeared to have improved significantly, supported by regular meetings and an open-door leadership approach. Survey results showed rising satisfaction with managerial support and communication, with 57% of staff respondents now rating line manager support as 'good', up from 37% in 2022. These gains reflected a positive shift in leadership tone and transparency since the last inspection (OICS, 2023).

While this progress was commendable, a minority of staff still reported inconsistencies in communication and unresolved concerns. Reports of bullying had declined, but over half of staff surveyed noted experiences or observations of staff bullying in the past three years. In response to previous bullying and harassment concerns, the Department conducted a cultural review at the prison – but at the time of inspection the findings had not been shared with staff. Implementation of the review's recommendations presents a valuable opportunity for the Department to demonstrate its ongoing commitment to improving Wandoo's workplace culture.

#### **Recommendation 1**

Implement recommendations from the cultural review into Wandoo Rehabilitation Prison and, where appropriate, share relevant key findings with staff.

Notwithstanding the above, the narrative emerging from Wandoo was one of progress and promise. Staff were increasingly engaged and motivated, inspired by the meaningful impact of their work with residents. The quality of working life had improved, and there was a growing sense of alignment with the prison's rehabilitative mission.

## **1.2 Staffing instability posed risks**

Ongoing changes in senior roles and the absence of succession planning in key clinical positions had made it more challenging to strengthen staff culture, maintain operational clarity, and support the continued success of the MTC program.

Key senior positions – including the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent roles, and Principal Officers – had seen frequent turnover or prolonged acting appointments, reportedly leading to inconsistent expectations, interrupted daily operations and a frustrated workforce. While recent appointments signalled a move towards stability, the legacy of inconsistency continued to affect staff morale and cohesion. This was reflected in staff feedback.

*It's impossible to comment on leadership as we've had so many changes in management. Some have been great, some not so, and that's at all levels.*

Survey comment from a staff member

We also found there was a risk of losing knowledge of critical clinical processes due to a lack of succession planning for several clinical roles. Staff in these positions were passionate and dedicated to their work, however, carry high workloads and reported feeling isolated without the support of a dedicated team. Idiosyncratic processes for screening, triaging, and reintegrating had been developed and, while these were effective, they were at risk of being lost should these staff leave. Wandoo should ensure key clinical positions are appropriately supported and all processes are documented and systematised.

### 1.3 Staff would benefit from dedicated therapeutic community training

Custodial staff at Wandoo were committed to the MTC model but felt they didn't receive the right training to support it. While departmental training was delivered regularly, it often focused on procedures like chemical agent use and cell extractions, which were not always relevant to Wandoo's therapeutic approach or cohort of residents. Over time, the more useful MTC-specific training declined from structured, on-site sessions led by Cyrenian House to occasional information sessions and optional community visits.

The lack of formalised MTC-focused training made it harder for staff to engage with residents in ways that supported Wandoo's rehabilitative goals. During the inspection, residents raised concerns this had affected how well the MTC was working and their relationships with staff. To restore alignment with MTC values, the Department should consider funding Cyrenian House to develop and deliver training focused on the systems and behaviours essential to MTC practice.

*Custodial staff in general could be offered more support and training around emotional intelligence, boundaries, and trauma informed practice especially within Wandoo since it is a rehabilitation program and the women are expected to become more vulnerable emotionally and psychologically than in any other prison setting.*

Survey comment from a staff member

#### **Recommendation 2**

Deliver therapeutic community training for Wandoo custodial staff.

### 1.4 Community relations were being renewed

Community engagement at Wandoo had seen a decline in recent years, particularly following the dissolution of the Community Reference Group (CRG). However, signs of renewal were emerging. The Superintendent advised they had recommenced attending the City of Melville's 'Safer Melville' Advisory Committee, engaged with local fire and police services in emergency management training exercises, and had developed a good working relationship with the neighbouring TAFE campus.

While plans to re-establish a CRG were under consideration, no formal steps had been taken yet, with efforts focused on resolving internal priorities. We strongly encourage the development of a representative and regularly convened CRG to support Wandoo's operational goals and strengthen its connection with the local community.

The prison also engaged numerous external service providers for delivery of education and vocation programs, legal assistance, reintegration supports, family contacts and health services. Service providers reported good communication, consistent on-site contact points, and reliable access to the site and residents.

### **Recommendation 3**

Re-establish a Community Reference Group.

## 2 Wandoo's Modified Therapeutic Community effectively supported rehabilitation

Wandoo stands as a compelling example of an MTC that has matured into a cohesive, well-functioning environment dedicated to rehabilitation. Since its inception in 2018 as part of Western Australia's Methamphetamine Action Plan, Wandoo has evolved into a structured, trauma-informed, and community-driven facility that supports residents through a holistic journey of recovery.

This chapter assesses the performance of Wandoo against the following standards:

### **Standard 8 – Feeling safe**

People in custody feel safe from bullying, abuse, violence and victimisation, and those seeking protection are appropriately located and safely managed to prevent harm, abuse, and neglect.

### **Standard 9 – Victims of abuse or trauma**

People in custody identified as victims of abuse or trauma experienced prior to coming into custody, receive appropriate interventions and support, and they can seek redress if they wish to do so.

### **Standard 19 – Substance misuse treatment**

The facility has a comprehensive drug and alcohol strategy and provides personalised and culturally appropriate supports.

### **Standard 25 – Encouraging positive behaviour**

The relationship between staff and people in custody is positive and respectful, fostering pro-social behaviours and personal responsibility.

### **Standard 22 – Programs and education**

All people in custody are assessed to identify their risks and needs, and receive evidence-based programs, education and life skills training tailored to their requirements.

## 2.1 Wandoo continued to offer a unique and innovative program

The inspection found Wandoo continued to deliver on its primary goal of delivering its unique and innovative AOD program. Wandoo's MTC remained accredited by the Australasian Therapeutic Communities Association, employing a community-as-method approach, which immersed residents in ongoing interaction with peers and counsellors to address the root causes of behavioural and psychological dysfunction. Residents engaged in the full 28-week program, or a recently introduced abridged 16-week version – both underpinned by therapeutic intervention and AOD psycho-education tailored to each stage of recovery.

Wandoo delivered the MTC program through a now well-established partnership between Cyrenian House and custodial staff. Cyrenian House continued to lead the AOD program, with oversight from its General Manager and on-site Service Manager. The Department supported clinical integrity through its Principal Manager (Clinical). The Triage Coordinator also continued to play a key role in promoting the program and identifying suitable candidates from other facilities.

Weekly Multi-disciplinary Team (MDT) meetings bring together Cyrenian House and Department staff to assess current residents' progress and review new applicants. Decisions are based on detailed input from both sides – clinical assessments from counsellors and behavioural reports from custodial staff. This collaborative approach ensured progression through the program was well-informed and balanced.

To identify new participants, the Triage Coordinator screens eligible prisoners and then prepared detailed intake reports for MDT review. Reports included sentencing details, treatment history, health needs, and readiness for the program. Once accepted, transfers into Wandoo happened quickly, ensuring timely access to the program.

Due to population pressure across the custodial estate, there were also an increasing number of residents at Wandoo who were not engaged in the program. Despite this, both program and non-program residents were required to abide by the expectations of the community.

Overall, the inspection found Wandoo was continuing to provide women in custody with a unique rehabilitation opportunity that supported their individual recovery and helped reduce the risk of re-offending. This is supported by findings of an outcomes evaluation procured by the Department, which found Wandoo was achieving eight of 11 short-term outcomes and all five medium and long-term outcomes, including reduced re-offending rates after release and increase rates of parole completion (Quantum Consulting, 2023). A clinical evaluation of the program had also commenced, but progress had stalled due to difficulties validating its findings.

The Department should prioritise finalisation of the clinical evaluation to support and inform future contract negotiations.

*I feel very privileged to be able to come to Wandoo. This prison is above standards. Thanks.*

Resident survey comment

## 2.2 Safety was central in philosophy and operations

Residents overwhelmingly reported feeling safe at Wandoo, with 98% of survey respondents indicating a sense of safety, well above the state average of 28%. Survey results also indicated rates of physical abuse were low, and while verbal abuse and intimidation were perceived by residents to be more common, they were actively addressed through a robust anti-bullying framework. This included a joint custodial and Cyrenian House approach to managing anti-social behaviour, an Anti-Bullying Committee, and a staged response system that reflected the therapeutic ethos of the MTC.

*The staff and the counsellors let us know that this place is our safe environment.*

Resident survey comment

Wandoo's focus on safety reflected its trauma-informed philosophy and operational model. We were pleased to see this extending to the identification and support of victims of abuse and trauma. Custodial and Cyrenian House collaborated to identify victims through structured assessments and offered support through the MTC program's counselling and psycho-social interventions.

## 2.3 Behaviour management was integrated into the program

Behavioural oversight at Wandoo is multi-pronged and integrated into the MTC program. Custodial and Cyrenian House staff worked collaboratively to manage and reduce negative behaviour among residents. While custodial staff enforced disciplinary measures in response to behavioural breaches in the form of a 'loss of privilege' or prison charge, Cyrenian House staff delivered educational interventions that focussed on understanding, taking responsibility, and reshaping negative behaviour patterns. When non-MTC residents displayed negative behaviour, they were managed solely by custodial staff, without the expectation of engaging in educational or therapeutic interventions like MTC participants.

This shared approach to behavioural management – unique to Wandoo – had resulted in some role ambiguity. In particular, some custodial staff felt a perceived lack of clarity was leading to hesitation or inconsistency in how non-compliant residents were being managed. These issues highlight the need for clearer role definition between custodial and Cyrenian House staff.

*Prison officers at Wandoo Prison play a vital role in maintaining safety and security while actively supporting the women's therapeutic program... However, when officers lack proper training and these essential skills, it becomes evident and can negatively impact residents and the effectiveness of the program.*

Staff survey comment

## 2.4 Recovery maintenance faced challenges

While Wandoo excelled with in-prison rehabilitation, continuity of care upon transfer or release remained a challenge. Once a resident graduates from the program, they can apply to become a Recovery Mentor and continue to reside at Wandoo providing support to other program residents. For those where mentorship is not possible, and they are required to transfer, there is the Wandoo Intersections Group – a peer mentorship and relapse support group. However, the availability of this program has become inconsistent across other women's prisons due to limited funding for staffing. As an example, the program used to offer ongoing individual counselling, but this had ceased due to staffing constraints.

For residents released from Wandoo, there were few community services that either accepted referrals from prisons or were familiar with the MTC method. Recognising this gap, Cyrenian House offered referrals to community services but lacked the infrastructure to track outcomes. Without a dedicated service or pathway for AOD recovery maintenance in the community, gains made at Wandoo could be compromised. A dedicated pathway for post-release AOD recovery maintenance, potentially linked to community services already offered by Cyrenian House, is recommended to preserve gains made during incarceration.

### **Recommendation 4**

Develop a dedicated pathway for continuity of alcohol and other drug recovery maintenance in the community for Wandoo graduates.

## 2.5 Contract governance issues were impacting program planning

The partnership between Cyrenian House and the Department for the delivery of the MTC at Wandoo Rehabilitation Prison was well-established in practice, but contract governance was showing signs of strain. Documents provided to us demonstrated Cyrenian House had consistently submitted detailed six-monthly qualitative and quantitative reports on time, outlining program outcomes, challenges, and proposed solutions. However, we were informed the Department's responses to these reports were often delayed, and minutes from contract meetings had not always been shared, despite meetings being held. This lack of timely feedback and transparency undermines the collaborative intent of the agreement and limits Cyrenian House's ability to refine service delivery.

The service agreement, in place since 2018, had also not yet undergone formal evaluation by the Department. Instead, it had been subject to repeated short-term extensions and contract variations. Continued extensions in this manner hinders a contractor's ability to recruit and retain staff and conduct long-term planning.

Given the maturity of the partnership and the apparent strong performance of the MTC program, a formal evaluation of the service agreement is overdue. A structured review would help clarify expectations, improve accountability, and support long-term planning for both Cyrenian House and the Department. It would also enable both parties to assess the efficacy of the current model and make informed decisions about future service delivery, staffing, and funding.

**Recommendation 5**

Conduct a formal evaluation of the service agreement between Cyrenian House and the Department of Justice.

### 3 Residents were supported by a wide variety of services

Wandoo continued to demonstrate a strong commitment to resident wellbeing through a diverse range of services, even as it navigated the dual pressures of a rising population and constrained staffing. The facility's MTC model was supported by a network of educational, recreational, and case management services that collectively fostered rehabilitation and personal growth.

This chapter assesses the performance of Wandoo against the following standards:

#### **Standard 5 – Orientation**

People entering custody receive a prompt, effective and supportive orientation to understand life in prison, including their rights and obligations.

#### **Standard 15 – Purposeful activities**

Individuals in custody have access to a range of purposeful activities during the day and at least two hours of recreation in the open air.

#### **Standard 21 – Classification, sentence administration, and case management**

People are lawfully held and released, provided with clear information about their custody, tailored risk assessments, and support to pursue their goals in custody.

#### **Standard 22 – Programs and education**

All people in custody are assessed to identify their risks and needs, and receive evidence-based programs, education and life skills training tailored to their requirements.

### 3.1 Assessment and case management processes were effective

Assessment and case management processes at Wandoo were working well, with timely assessments and a personal officer system that enhanced resident engagement. The assignment of a personal officer to each resident provided more effective case management than other prisons and allowed for more meaningful staff-resident relationships. Staff survey results also showed high levels of confidence in case management training, with 90% of prison officer respondents reporting adequate preparation, well above the state average of 30%. Staff at Wandoo also put significant effort into identifying women across the prison system who were suitable for the MTC program, which was managed separately from standard case management processes.

Despite these positives, some system-wide issues were affecting case management processes at Wandoo. In particular, delays in treatment assessments – which are required prior to any sentenced prisoner participating in rehabilitation programs – had limited the number of women eligible for transfer into the MTC program. These delays were mostly due to broader system backlogs, not local performance. Recognising this, processes for identifying women suitable for transfer had been amended to include women pending eligibility. Women would transfer to Wandoo initially as non-program residents, with an expectation they would join the MTC program once their treatment assessment was completed. This ensured there was a pipeline of program participants in place.

Overall, we found the work that went into the screening and assessment of potential program participants was impressive. However, as mentioned earlier in this report, with these idiosyncratic processes being driven by a small number of key people, there is a risk of processes failing should individuals move on. To mitigate this, Wandoo should ensure all processes are systematised.

### 3.2 Gaps in orientation were offset by the supports available at Wandoo

As Wandoo is very different to other prisons, orientation played a crucial role in letting residents know what to expect and what is expected of them. Residents entering the MTC program received detailed information through brochures, handbooks, and meetings with the Triage Coordinator before arrival. They were also assigned a buddy and supported by counsellors, making orientation a well-integrated part of the program. Peer support also played a strong role, with team members helping new residents settle in and guiding them through the orientation checklist within the first few days.

For residents not entering the AOD program, orientation materials were available but not always distributed properly. At the time of the inspection the orientation handbook was being updated and we found it was not available in the accommodation units as intended. Additionally, an internal compliance review from 2024 identified orientation checklists were not consistently being completed within the required three-day timeframe. Our analysis of records indicated this remained an intermittent issue until as recently as April 2025, before improving considerably.

Upon further interrogation we found a lack of senior management oversight may have contributed to these gaps in process. Despite raising our concerns with different senior management positions, it remained unclear who held responsibility for orientation processes. This needs to be rectified by Wandoo's management.

Despite this, survey results were positive with 84% of resident respondents saying they received enough information to understand how the prison worked, and 77% of staff rating orientation as effective.

### 3.3 Education and recreation supported holistic rehabilitation

The education centre at Wandoo continued to deliver positive outcomes. Education staff interviewed all new residents to determine needs and offered a range of learning options that supplemented the MTC program. For instance, an entry-level general education course supported those with literacy challenges to complete workbooks associated with the MTC program.

External providers also offered valuable educational pathways. This included a TAFE-led Certificate III in Community Services and Curtin University's Indigenous Tertiary Enabling Course (ITEC) to help residents transition into higher education. Aboriginal student participation in educational courses had recently increased following the introduction of the ITEC, and the offer of a Noongar language course. These programs reflected Wandoo's commitment to rehabilitation through education.

Notwithstanding these positive findings, we acknowledge concerns from some staff that funding and staffing for education had not kept pace with the rising population. The education budget had remained static since 2018, and the available student contact hours for TAFE courses was perceived to be low. Course costs and wages for casual tutors had also increased. This meant fewer courses could be offered to residents and decisions were being made about which courses to cut. These resourcing challenges were not unique to Wandoo and reflected broader budgetary pressures across the custodial estate.

### 3.4 Comprehensive recreation program supported resident wellbeing

Wandoo residents had access to a wide range of active, passive, and creative recreation opportunities that promoted engagement, wellbeing, and social connection. Recreation is scheduled each day and consisted of whole-of-community events, such as team sports and group walking sessions known as 'park-walks', and individual activities, such as yoga, dance, sound therapy, bingo, crochet and choir. During the inspection we observed residents participating in a pottery class and were told of an upcoming inter-facility volleyball match against women from Boronia. Survey results reflected the strength of recreation at Wandoo with 95% of resident respondents satisfied with gym facilities and 89% satisfied with organised sport, far exceeding state averages.

The Wandoo library had also undergone recent enhancements, creating a vibrant and accessible space for residents. Open daily and on weekends, it offered a diverse collection of books, DVDs, puzzles, and games, as well as a dedicated First Nations and legal section. Residents were encouraged to contribute to the collection through a donation system. A weekly 'Book Club – Not Book Club' session was also held, encouraging residents to read. Many residents were observed utilising the library during opening hours, to read, talk or crochet.



Photo 1: Wandoo's library had recently been refreshed.

## 4 Health and wellbeing supports were performing well amid staffing gaps

Wandoo was supporting residents' overall wellbeing by providing for their physical health, mental health, and cultural needs. While the system was not without its challenges, particularly in staffing and continuity, there was clear evidence of progress since our last inspection, and a strong platform from which to expand and refine services.

This chapter assesses the performance of Wandoo against the following standards:

### **Standard 3 – Community relations**

The custodial facility engages appropriately with the local community.

### **Standard 17 – Physical health**

People in custody are treated with respect and have equal access to all health services, including prompt care, clear information, and culturally sensitive practices, supported by a multi-disciplinary approach and strong partnerships.

### **Standard 18 – Mental health**

People in custody receive thorough mental health care and support.

### **Standard 20 – Support**

All people in custody can access a culturally sensitive support system, including a Prison Support Officer, peer support groups, and Aboriginal Prison Visitors.

### 4.1 Health services had improved, despite staffing shortages

Residents' perception of health services at Wandoo had improved since the last inspection, with 75% of pre-inspection survey respondents rating general health care as good – up from 43% in 2022. This improvement followed Wandoo's first death in custody, which deeply affected the community and led to changes in how the medical centre operated. Previously, the centre aligned closely with the principals of the MTC program with nursing staff issuing flags and bouquets on resident behaviour. It is now treated as a neutral and safe space, separate from the behavioural reward system used in the MTC program, allowing residents to engage with medical staff openly and without concern their interactions will result in rewards or consequences.

Despite these improvements, staffing shortages remained a challenge. At the time of the inspection, one of the two full-time nursing positions was vacant, and the other nurse was due to go on extended leave, leaving casual staff to fill the gaps which meant less consistent and stable care for residents. The Senior Medical Receptionist role was also not permanently filled. Positively, the long-serving doctor had increased their on-site days to support the growing population.

#### **Recommendation 6**

Ensure there is full staffing of all positions within the health services team.

### **Residents felt dental care had also improved**

Residents' perceptions of dental services had also improved, with 62% of survey respondents rating them as good – up from 34% in 2022 and 18% in 2019. Wandoo has an on-site dental suite, and the dentist is available weekly, providing residents with access to comprehensive treatments, including dentures. This is in stark comparison to most other custodial facilities, where there are long wait times for dental appointments and preventative or rehabilitative treatments are generally not available (OICS, 2021). As such, Wandoo's commitment to providing rehabilitative dental care was commendable and aligned well with its overall focus on recovery and support.

However, continuity of care upon release or transfer was not as reliable as previously advised. Last inspection, we were informed that as part of Wandoo's commitment to providing rehabilitative dental care residents could finish their treatment at another facility or at a community clinic after release or transfer (OICS, 2023). This inspection it was clarified that, while the dentist made efforts to complete treatment before a resident left Wandoo, there was no guarantee care would continue in the community unless the individual qualified for government-funded dental services. This is a clear departure from the Department's previous position. Accordingly, it is important residents are made aware of this policy prior to commencing treatment to ensure expectations can be managed.

## **4.2 Mental health staff are dedicated but under-resourced**

Mental health care at Wandoo was under pressure, with ongoing service gaps placing strain on the dedicated staff. The only full-time mental health worker on site was the Psychological Health Services (PHS) Counsellor. Other mental health staff only visited every 4–6 weeks or provided support via telehealth. There was also no psychiatrist available across the entire women's estate. This was a significant decline in resources from 2018, when Wandoo had a full-time Mental Health Nurse, an Aboriginal Mental Health Worker, a PHS Counsellor, and a part-time psychiatrist (OICS, 2020). Without adequate psychological supports, some residents were left vulnerable, especially when discussing traumatic or deeply personal experiences without the safety of clinical oversight.

Despite these staffing shortfalls, the PHS Counsellor continued to offer consistent support. She managed a caseload of 43 residents, which was more than half of Wandoo's population. She also supported women at Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women who had previously completed the MTC program. Due to the high caseload, residents could only expect one appointment per month,

compared to fortnightly sessions in 2022. Those on monitoring systems like the At-Risk Management System and Support and Monitoring System received more frequent support. Her work complemented the counselling provided by Cyrenian House for residents in the MTC program.

The vacancy of the Aboriginal Mental Health Worker role was especially concerning, given the rise in Aboriginal residents and the need for culturally appropriate care. As a minimum, the Department should consider reinstating this position to ensure the needs of all residents are being met.

## Collaborative care model supported residents at risk

Notwithstanding the pressures on mental health resources, it should be acknowledged that Wandoo's collaborative care model provided residents with a greater degree of support and care than other custodial facilities. Wandoo was designed to be a safe and supportive rehabilitation environment that promotes health, respect, and recovery. Because of its small resident numbers and therapeutic approach, residents can access help through a range of safe and supportive avenues.

This supportive and collaborative culture was evident in the pre-inspection survey results, which showed significantly higher levels of resident trust and confidence compared to the state average. Residents consistently expressed appreciation for the attentiveness and support of staff.

*The staff are more attentive to prisoners' needs and safety in Wandoo.*

Survey comment from a resident

**Table 1: Pre-inspection survey results show Wandoo residents feel more comfortable approaching staff for help, compared to the state average.**

Role	Wandoo Survey (2025)	State Average
Unit Officer	91%	49%
Prison Support Officer (PSO)	84%	44%
Industrial Officer (VSO)	89%	41%
Transitional Manager	89%	37%
Counsellor	87%	39%
Medical Staff	89%	46%
Peer Support Resident	87%	54%
Management	93%	31%

This collaborative approach and commitment to resident wellbeing was commendable and assisted by staff working closely with Cyrenian House to provide wraparound care. Staff who commenced when Wandoo opened as a women's prison also received extra training in trauma-informed care and

working with women, helping them to support residents better. The Department should consider offering this training to all prison officers at Wandoo.

### 4.3 Cultural supports were stronger

The inspection found cultural support at Wandoo had improved since the previous inspection. A Prison Support Officer and an Aboriginal Visitors Scheme visitor were available three days a week, and cultural activities such as dance, art, and language classes were held regularly. A monthly yarning circle led by a respected Aboriginal community member had also been introduced and helped resolve tensions among residents. Although Aboriginal staffing numbers had not increased, staff had received the Department's updated cultural awareness training.

Despite these improvements, some Aboriginal women still felt the MTC program did not respect their cultural grieving practices or support their need to connect with each other during those times. They viewed this as unconscious bias or even racism. That said, other Aboriginal women had reported finding the program valuable, and 92% of Aboriginal respondents in the pre-inspection survey felt staff respected their culture.



Photo 2: Wandoo's cultural space was used for various activities, including monthly yarning circles.

## 5 Quality of life at Wandoo was generally high

Wandoo's living areas and services were generally positive, but some maintenance issues affected comfort and safety. Food, canteen, clothing, and family visits were well received, with room for small improvements.

This chapter assesses the performance of Wandoo against the following standards:

### **Standard 11 – Living conditions**

The built environment is clean, functional, and culturally appropriate.

### **Standard 12 – Hygiene, clothing, and bedding**

People in custody are provided with adequate clothing, bedding, and basic hygiene items to maintain personal hygiene and dignity.

### **Standard 13 – Contact with families and visits**

People in custody can maintain contact with their friends and family and organise regular visits.

### **Standard 14 – Food and canteen**

There is access to a varied and balanced diet and additional items for purchase through a canteen system.

### 5.1 Living areas were bright and airy, but some maintenance issues persisted

Wandoo has four accommodation units: Jeelia, Hotham, Gascoyne, and Eyre. Jeelia is the intake unit with three wings and mostly double rooms, while Hotham and Gascoyne each have 12 single rooms and serve as progression units for residents recommended by staff. Eyre is reserved for residents not in the MTC program and has smaller, older rooms. Although Wandoo's rooms were originally designed for youth detention and are smaller than recommended standards, most residents did not complain. Jeelia has large day rooms and clean common areas, while Hotham and Gascoyne offer bright, residential-style spaces with kitchens and recreational items like a pool table and table tennis. Eyre feels more like a shared house, with lower ceilings, smaller windows, and only one small kitchen.

While Wandoo's living areas were generally very positive, Jeelia, Hotham, and Gascoyne units were found to have some ongoing maintenance issues. Accumulated dust on ceiling fans was visible and,

according to residents, frequently fell into food areas. Due to the height of the fixtures, residents were unable to clean them. Mould in showers also remained despite residents' cleaning efforts, seemingly due to air vents having been painted over or being blocked by dust or other materials. These problems not only potentially affect residents' health and comfort but increase the workload for maintenance teams.

Additionally, poor weatherproofing in Jeelia unit was affecting residents' comfort during winter. Fixed windows that don't seal properly made the units cold, and residents told us shortages of winter bedding worsened the situation. Cold and draughty conditions disrupted sleep and made it harder for residents to focus and participate in the MTC program.

Outside the units, residents benefited from open green spaces, including a well-maintained oval, gardens, and vegetable patches. These outdoor areas contributed to a positive and relaxed environment, supporting Wandoo's rehabilitative focus.

#### **Recommendation 7**

Implement a maintenance program targeting ventilation systems, ceiling fans, and shower areas across all units.



Photo 3: Wandoo had ample open green spaces that residents could access.



Photo 4: Day rooms in Jeelia Unit provided common recreation and dining opportunities.

## 5.2 Family visits were a positive and pro-social experience

Family contact and visits at Wandoo were functioning well, supported by a relaxed and welcoming environment that encouraged resident engagement. The visits room, though small, was bright and comfortable. Residents funded a coffee service run by the 'Barista Sistas', offering refreshments to visitors and adding a personal touch to the experience. Two custodial officers supervised visits respectfully and assisted residents as needed. A dedicated children's play area with rubber flooring was available, but its exposure to the elements limited use during hot or rainy weather and raised sun safety concerns. While residents cleaned up after visits, there was no formal process for sanitising shared toys and games, posing potential hygiene risks – especially for young children.

Residents also expressed a desire for more meaningful time with their children. Unlike other facilities such as Boronia and Bandyup, Wandoo does not currently offer all-day or overnight child visits. Although infrastructure limits overnight stays, the option for all-day visits appears feasible and worth exploring. Introducing this option, along with better cleaning practices and weather protection for the play area, would strengthen Wandoo's commitment to supporting family connections and improve the overall visit experience.

### 5.3 Food and canteen were above standard

Residents at Wandoo rated the food highly, with 96% of survey respondents saying the quality was good and 95% satisfied with the amount. The prison uses a self-care model where residents in each unit prepare meals using ingredients supplied by the kitchen. Positively, we found food was provided by portion per person rather than by weight, helping ensure fair distribution. However, we were concerned about food wastage and safety. Large amounts of unused food were being thrown out, and there was no system to monitor how food was handled once it left the kitchen. Issues like poor storage, limited cooking skills, and hygiene problems were observed in some units. While chefs were willing to help, they did not have time to oversee food handling or preparation in each of the units. The introduction of a life skills officer would help support women learn how to prepare food safely.

#### **Recommendation 8**

Create a life skills officer position at Wandoo.



Photo 5: A resident kitchen in Eyre Unit.

The canteen was also found to be working well, with 96% of resident survey respondents and 90% of staff respondents rating it positively – much higher than previous survey results and the state average. Although there was no dedicated canteen officer, administration and stores staff have

ensured the canteen continues to operate effectively and town spends are happening regularly. Stock variety has improved, and complaints were found to be minimal. Appointing a permanent canteen officer would help ensure there is consistent management.



Photo 6: Wandoo's canteen was well-stocked and valued by residents.

## 5.4 Clothing and bedding were generally sufficient

Residents at Wandoo generally reported high satisfaction with bedding, with 82% of respondents rating it as good in pre-inspection surveys. As noted earlier, feedback from residents on-site suggested winter bedding could be improved to better meet seasonal needs. Ensuring residents have access to warm bedding during colder months would further enhance comfort and wellbeing, support better sleep, and help residents stay engaged in daily routines and rehabilitation programs.

Clothing provision at Wandoo was also generally well received, with 84% of survey respondents reporting satisfaction. However, some small design issues – like pants without pockets – were raised, which can affect practicality for daily activities. These concerns appeared to be isolated and easily fixable. With a few adjustments to procurement and quality checks, Wandoo can continue to provide clothing that supports both comfort and functionality, reinforcing residents' dignity and independence.

The clothing store at Wandoo was also found to be organised and stocked well. Located above the canteen, it had clothing neatly sorted into labelled plastic tubs placed on shelving units. During the inspection, all types of clothing – including work items – appeared to be available, and no empty tubs were observed, indicating good stock levels across the board.



Photo 7: Wandoo's clothing store was well-organised and well-stocked.

## 6 Safety and security risks could be detrimental to staff and residents

Several infrastructure issues identified in the 2022 inspection – such as fire risks, lack of cell hatches, and trip hazards – remained unresolved. Ongoing security staffing shortages had disrupted compliance and weakened operational consistency. Despite these challenges, Wandoo continued to implement strong searching practices and a comprehensive drug strategy, though both were increasingly strained by limited staffing and outdated procedures.

This chapter assesses the performance of Wandoo against the following standards:

### **Standard 19 – Substance misuse treatment**

The facility has a comprehensive drug and alcohol strategy and provides personalised and culturally appropriate supports.

### **Standard 28 – Infrastructure**

The prison infrastructure provides a safe and secure environment.

### **Standard 29 – Procedural security**

The wellbeing of people in custody is safeguarded by effective security systems that are not unduly restrictive to daily life.

### **Standard 31 – Searches**

Searches are only conducted when necessary and with respect for the person's dignity and privacy.

## 6.1 Previously identified safety issues remained unaddressed

Several infrastructure issues at Wandoo raised in the 2022 inspection still have not been addressed (OICS, 2023). For example:

- Cell doors still lacked hatches, meaning staff must fully open doors to deliver items after hours, which was unsafe especially at night when staffing was low. A business case to retrofit hatches was submitted but staff told us it was declined without explanation<sup>1</sup>.
- Uneven concrete footpaths around the facility posed trip hazards, with no warning signs or barriers in place.
- Additionally, the front gate remained controlled by master control rather than gatehouse staff, even though gate staff had better visibility. A proposed fix was also rejected due to departmental security standards.

In addition to these issues, staff also raised concern there remains no CCTV coverage in the sallyport and in the Gascoyne, Hotham and Eyre common areas.

Of most concern, we found the kitchen in Eyre continued to present as a fire hazard. The unit's kitchen is positioned in a way that blocks the only exit route from resident accommodation, posing a serious risk in the event of a kitchen fire. Following our previous inspection, Wandoo conducted a local risk assessment and rated the hazard as moderate. However, a formal review from an external expert had not been conducted. This remains a significant safety concern.

### Recommendation 9

Undertake an independent review of the alleged fire hazard in Eyre Unit and implement any resulting recommendations.

## 6.2 Security staffing shortages had impacted compliance

Wandoo has faced ongoing staffing shortages in its security team, which has made it difficult to meet compliance requirements. The Assistant Superintendent Operations and Security (ASO&S) role had been filled through short-term secondments over the past three years, leading to perceived inconsistent leadership and decision-making. This lack of stability had caused confusion among staff and residents and, as a result, staff felt the overall effectiveness of the security function had been weakened.

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<sup>1</sup> In response to a draft of this report, the Department clarified that installing cell door hatches at Wandoo is no longer supported. They believe it goes against the therapeutic community model, which emphasises infrastructure that encourages social interaction. They explained that opening cell doors and speaking face-to-face is essential for building respect and trust between officers and residents. The lack of cell door hatches also reflects Wandoo's minimum-security approach to managing women.

Additionally, one of the two Senior Officer Security positions had remained mostly vacant, and the other was often reassigned to other duties. These roles were also reportedly less attractive to staff due to their 10-hour shifts, compared to the preferred 12-hour roster. As a result, the security team was stretched thin and reported being unable to carry out essential daily practices or maintain compliance. This was especially concerning given the risks associated with an increased population at the facility and, in particular, an increase in non-MTC residents.

#### **Recommendation 10**

Review the Senior Officer Security roles and consider adjustments that increase their appeal and encourage staff to express interest in filling one or both positions.

### **6.3 Searching strategies helped maintain a drug-free environment**

Wandoo undertakes comprehensive, but respectful, searching practices that support maintaining a drug-free environment. Records indicated regular searches were carried out on residents, their property, and areas within the prison. All persons entering the prison, including visitors, contractors, and staff, are also subject to searches, with staff selected randomly using a number system. The Drug Detection Unit (DDU) supports these efforts with drug detection dogs regularly used for social visits and routine searches. Both the DDU and custodial staff were observed to be polite and clear when explaining searching procedures to individuals entering Wandoo, contributing to a respectful and transparent process.

Strip searches are only used when necessary and require the Superintendent's approval, in accordance with trauma-informed practices. However, we identified some inconsistencies in how these searches were reported on the Department's offender database. While staff initially advised no strip searches had occurred in the 12-months prior to the inspection, records showed a small number had taken place. This highlights a need for improved accuracy in reporting to ensure there is transparency, accountability, and compliance with policy.

### **6.4 Wandoo's drug strategy was comprehensive but undermined by staffing vacancies**

Wandoo has a strong and well-structured drug strategy that has helped keep the use of illicit substances low since the last inspection in 2022. The strategy includes regular drug testing, intelligence gathering, and oversight by the DDU. However, the strategy is based on an older 2018 plan, and its effectiveness is now at risk due to staffing shortages – particularly the ongoing vacancy in the Senior Officer Security role. This vacancy has reduced the prison's ability to gather intelligence and respond proactively to drug-related risks, leaving staff to rely more on resident honesty and DDU presence.

Although only five positive drug tests were recorded between March 2024 and March 2025 (all linked to a single incident), this case was only identified because residents reported suspicious behaviour. The trafficking of the illicit substance into Wandoo had not been identified by security

staff, searching procedures, or through intelligence processes. While the incident was subsequently managed well, it highlighted the current gaps in monitoring and intelligence capabilities.

The drug strategy also includes providing training custodial officers in drug identification and classification, but there was no evidence this was being delivered. Without proper staffing and training, Wandoo's drug free-environment may experience further compromises.

## Appendix A Bibliography

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## Appendix B Acronyms

Term	Expansion of Abbreviation
AOD	Alcohol and Other Drugs
ASO&S	Assistant Superintendent Operations and Security
ATCA	Australasian Therapeutic Communities Association
CH	Cyrenian House
CRG	Community Reference Group
DDU	Drug Detection Unit
DOJ	Department of Justice
IMP	Individual Management Plan
ITEC	Indigenous Tertiary Enabling Course
MTC	Modified Therapeutic Community
MRT	Moral Reconation Therapy
MDT	Multi-disciplinary Team
OICS	Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services
PHS	Psychological Health Services
PSO	Prison Support Officer
SMT	Senior Management Team
TC	Therapeutic Community
VSO	Vocational Support Officer

## Appendix C Inspection Details

Previous inspection		
6 – 11 November 2022		
Activity since previous inspection		
Liaison visits to Wandoo Rehabilitation Prison	8 visits	
Independent Visitor visits	14 visits	
Surveys		
Prisoner survey	3 & 19 June 2025	55 responses (73%)
Staff survey (online)	3 June – 24 June 2025	47 responses (63%)
Inspection team		
Deputy Inspector	Jane Higgins	
Director Operations	Ryan Quinn	
Principal Inspections and Research Officer	Kelly Jackson	
Inspections and Research Officer	Charles Staples	
Inspections and Research Officer	Kieran Artelaris	
Inspections and Research Officer	Jim Bryden	
Inspections and Research Officer	Anna-Louise Morris	
Inspections and Research Officer	Oliver Santos	

Key dates	
Inspection announced	19 May 2025
Start of on-site inspection	20 July 2025
Completion of on-site inspection	25 July 2025
Presentation of preliminary findings	25 July 2025
Draft report sent to Department of Justice	3 October 2025
Draft response received from Department of Justice	24 November 2025
Declaration of prepared report	3 December 2025



# **Response to the Announced Inspection:**

## **2025 Inspection of Wandoo Rehabilitation Prison**

**October 2025**

## ▲ Response Overview

On 19 May 2025, the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (OICS) announced the Inspection Wandoo Rehabilitation Prison (Wandoo), which took place from 20 – 25 July 2025.

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 3 October 2025, the Department received the draft report which raised 10 recommendations for review and comment.

Of the 10 recommendations:

- Four are supported;
- One is supported in principle; and
- Five are supported and considered current practice / project.

Detailed responses to the recommendations can be found below.

## Response to Recommendations

### **1 Implement recommendations from the cultural review into Wandoo Rehabilitation Prison and, where appropriate, share relevant key findings with staff.**

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

#### **Response:**

Corrective Services has considered the findings of the 2022 Wandoo Cultural Review and where appropriate, has taken action to address the issues raised and implement relevant recommendations. This includes through:

- the delivery of Integrity and Ethics awareness training;
- training facilitated by the Equal Opportunity Commission pertaining to bullying and harassment;
- the return of the substantive Superintendent to provide stability and consistency in leadership;
- the delivery of training on how to report bullying and harassment delivered by Employee Welfare;
- ongoing messaging from the Director General – encouraging employees to report instances of suspected misconduct;
- development of a new Performance Planning and Development system to ensure Managers are providing staff feedback on their performance and to ensure Managers with supervisory responsibilities are provided performance management training; and
- reinforcement of public sector standards with regards to filling vacancies and oversight of higher duties allowances through the newly formed Executive Director position.

Given the sensitive nature of the review and in order to protect the confidentiality of those who contributed feedback, Corrective Services will provide staff a high-level overview of the recommendations, the action the Department has taken and any planned action to address issues identified through the report.

### **2 Deliver therapeutic community training for Wandoo custodial staff.**

<b>Level of Acceptance:</b>	Supported – Current Practice / Project
<b>Responsible Division:</b>	Corrective Services
<b>Responsible Directorate:</b>	Adult Women's Prisons

#### **Response:**

Numerous training opportunities are available which provide staff with information on modified therapeutic communities (MTC) values and trauma informed practices.

These include Working with Female Offenders, Cultural Capability, Mental Health Awareness and Suicide Prevention Strategies. In addition, MTC information is also regularly shared to staff through town hall meetings delivered by the Superintendent and staff training days.

Information sessions are facilitated by the Principal Clinical Manager in conjunction with Cyrenian House staff to staff members on the program. These sessions cover a variety of topics related to the clinical components of the program, serves as a Q&A session for staff, and provides details to staff on how the program is effectively maintained within a custodial setting.

The sessions provide custodial staff with a better understanding of the therapeutic community (TC) model and how custodial management practices, such as the imposition of sanctions and loss of privileges for adverse behaviours can be enforced in conjunction with therapeutic response mechanisms to form a complimentary and coordinated system to manage unhelpful behaviours.

A further initiative established in February 2025 to increase staff awareness and knowledge of therapeutic communities (TCs) is the commencement of staff visits to other community-based TCs. These visits provide participating Wandoo staff with valuable experience and insight into understanding how TCs operate, and how they may better manage the women at Wandoo as a modified TC within a custodial setting.

As at October 2025, a total of 28 Wandoo prison officers have participated in community TC visits including Munda Mia TC, Rick Hammersley Centre TC, and Serenity Lodge TC.

### **3 Re-establish a Community Reference Group.**

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

#### **Response:**

Corrective Services acknowledges there is no active Community Reference Group at Wandoo and the Superintendent is working towards re-establishing this.

### **4 Develop a dedicated pathway for continuity of alcohol and other drug recovery maintenance in the community for Wandoo graduates.**

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

#### **Response:**

In 2022, pre-release recovery maintenance services were introduced for Wandoo MTC graduates as a service agreement variation to offset low participant numbers. Wandoo graduates are eligible for post release maintenance services via the Allied Drug and Alcohol Programs and Treatment (ADAPT) program, also delivered by Cyrenian House, under the Women's Metropolitan Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) Rehabilitation (DCS063-2016H) Service Agreement.

Further, Corrective Services recently expanded the scope of the Corrective Services Commissioning Project to include AOD MTCs at Wandoo and the Mallee Rehabilitation Centre within Casuarina Prison. The provision of throughcare services

will be considered as part of this project to ensure ongoing pre-and post-release support for MTC graduates in their recovery journeys.

To allow sufficient time for the commissioning project to occur, Corrective Services is negotiating with Cyrenian House to extend the current service agreement to 30 June 2027.

**5 Conduct a formal evaluation of the service agreement between Cyrenian House and the Department of Justice.**

<b>Level of Acceptance:</b>	Supported
<b>Responsible Division:</b>	Corrective Services
<b>Responsible Directorate:</b>	Offender Services

**Response:**

The Service Agreement with Cyrenian house has been reviewed and varied on several occasions (in 2020, 2022 and 2024) in response to changing requirements, with a variation currently underway to adjust the criteria for the Abridged Relapse Prevention Program.

A further review of the performance, effectiveness and value of the existing AOD service agreements will be undertaken through commissioning in accordance with the State Commissioning Strategy.

**6 Ensure there is full staffing of all positions within the health services team.**

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

**Response:**

All health services positions at Wandoo are substantively filled. While staffing levels may be temporarily impacted by leave or other forms of absence, Corrective Services considers the current Full Time Equivalent (FTE) for health services to be adequate, noting the current population.

Medical services have been strengthened, with increased access to a doctor to support the health and wellbeing of women residing in Wandoo.

**7 Implement a maintenance program targeting ventilation systems, ceiling fans, and shower areas across all units.**

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

**Response:**

The Department is in the process of engaging an external contractor to undertake maintenance of the ceiling fans within the Jeelia, Hotham, and Gascoyne units.

The Department has engaged contractors to address the issues identified with the mechanical ventilation system. These works are ongoing.

In the meantime, Wandoo continues to undertake cleaning of shower areas to improve conditions.

**8 Create a life skills officer position at Wandoo.**

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

**Response:**

A Life Skills Officer has been included in Wandoo's Staffing Level Agreement established under the Safer Custody Staffing Review. Whilst the establishment of this role is supported, implementation of the position remains subject to the new SLA's.

**9 Undertake an independent review of the alleged fire hazard in Eyre Unit and implement any resulting recommendations.**

<b>Level of Acceptance:</b>	Supported – Current Practice / Project
<b>Responsible Division:</b>	Corrective Services
<b>Responsible Directorate:</b>	Adult Women's Prisons

**Response:**

A work health and safety investigation inclusive of a risk assessment pertaining to the Eyre Unit was conducted in 2022 by work health and safety representatives. The risk assessment assessed the layout of Eyre Unit to determine the level of risk due to a lack of fire exit doors.

This risk assessment noted the unit was compliant with fire safety standards in place at the time the unit was constructed and noted there are adequate controls in place to mitigate the risk to prisoners and responding staff as a result of the fire exit door.

In addition, advice was also sought from the Department's Infrastructure and Environment Services team who confirmed that the Eyre unit is compliant and fit for purpose in its current state. Within the Department, the Infrastructure and Environment Services are independent of Corrective Services and are relied upon for advice.

**10 Review the Senior Officer Security roles and consider adjustments that increase their appeal and encourage staff to express interest in filling one or both positions.**

<b>Level of Acceptance:</b>	Supported – Current Practice / Project
<b>Responsible Division:</b>	Corrective Services
<b>Responsible Directorate:</b>	Adult Women's Prisons

**Response:**

Corrective Services has reviewed the Senior Officer Security roles at Wandoo and has considered adjustments, particularly surrounding shift lengths for these positions, and

has determined that the current 10-hour shift patterns are considered adequate and appropriate for the operational needs of the facility at this time.



*Inspection of prisons, court  
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