GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR OF CUSTODIAL SERVICES

MEDIA RELEASE

11 November 2026

Annual Report 2025-26

Today the Acting Inspector of Custodial Services Jane Higgins released the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services' Annual Report 2025–26, outlining a year of sustained oversight activity and continuing pressure across Western Australia's custodial system.

The Office tabled 11 inspection and review reports, and made 89 recommendations, of which 83% were supported by the Department of Justice. Staff also completed 72 liaison visits, while Independent Visitors submitted 99 reports raising more than 1,100 matters.

The Annual Report records that the Office issued a Show Cause Notice in March 2026 concerning conditions at Hakea Prison, Casuarina Prison and Melaleuca Women's Prison. The review report highlighted worsening conditions across the system, most acutely seen in these three facilities. The Show Cause Notice provided one recommendation, a commitment to a funded, whole-of-system reform plan with clear actions, timeframes and accountability.

Ms Higgins said that staff shortages continue to impact daily operations and create unsafe environments.

> *"The daily average adult prison population reached 8,560 during 2025–26, an increase of 6% on the previous year. At 30 June 2026, nine prison facilities were operating above capacity and 111 people were sleeping on mattresses on cell floors."*
> *"Population growth, overcrowding and persistent staffing shortages continued to affect prison operations, including time out of cell and access to health care, rehabilitation, education, employment and family contact."*

Ms Higgins said the Office also identified positive practice, including rehabilitation and reintegration opportunities at prison farms and work camps, Acacia Prison's health care and program delivery, and the therapeutic model at Wandoo Rehabilitation Prison.

> *"The Annual Report also identified examples of positive practice across the custodial estate. These included improved access to health care and strong rehabilitation program delivery at Acacia Prison, effective peer support arrangements, practical reintegration opportunities at prison farms and work camps, and the therapeutic, trauma-informed environment at Wandoo Rehabilitation Prison, where 98% of surveyed residents reported feeling safe."*

The Office also introduced a revised inspection methodology during 2025–26. Average report drafting time reduced from 29 weeks to 14 weeks, and average publication time following onsite inspections reduced from 50 weeks to 30 weeks.

Jane Higgins
Acting Inspector of Custodial Services

For further media information: The Acting Inspector, Ms Jane Higgins, will be available for additional comment 11 November 2026 and can be contacted via media@oics.wa.gov.au

The full report will be available on the Inspector's website: www.oics.wa.gov.au

Level 5, Albert Facey House, 469 Wellington Street, Perth, Western Australia 6000
Tel +61 8 6551 4200 | www.oics.wa.gov.au
email: corporate@oics.wa.gov.au