

**MEDIA RELEASE – EMBARGOED UNTIL 12NOON ON TUESDAY 22<sup>ND</sup> AUGUST 2017**

**Report No. 110 – Casuarina Prison**

The latest report from the Inspector of Custodial Services finds that Casuarina Prison is meeting security and safety needs. It also congratulates staff for their positive, ‘can-do’ attitude, and their sense of commitment, pride and professionalism.

However, high prisoner numbers and a surge in remand prisoners mean that Casuarina is not meeting expectations in relation to rehabilitation, training, support, and resettlement services. The Inspector, Neil Morgan said:

‘Despite the best efforts of staff, Casuarina is stretched at almost every point. It was never built to hold so many prisoners, and is not resourced to properly meet the needs of both a remand and sentenced population.’

Casuarina opened in 1991 with a design capacity of 397. At the time of the inspection, it held close to 950 prisoners, most of whom were ‘doubled up’ in single cells. The population had increased by 20 per cent in the previous 12 months alone.

Adding stress to the rise in population, most of the increase has been in remand prisoners. Mr Morgan said:

‘Casuarina was designed for long term sentenced prisoners. It used to do an excellent job providing employment, education and programs for them. But over 40 per cent of its population is now on remand, and many of the sentenced prisoners are simply in short-term transit to another prison.

The result is high population churn, and a more volatile and stressed population. Resources become focused on trying to cope with immediate needs and risks, and settled long term prisoners are getting reduced services.’

Areas of concern included:

- the routine mixing of remand and sentenced prisoners, often in shared cells (in direct contravention of international standards and judicial expectations)
- a severe backlog in prisoners receiving an initial GP health screen
- a severe backlog in sentenced prisoners getting an Individual Management Plan
- insufficient investment in supporting infrastructure (such as the kitchen and health services)
- little increase in infrastructure or resources for high-risk specialist functions such as housing the state’s highest risk prisoners, those who need the greatest degree of protection from others, and those in need of specialised medical care
- high levels of unemployment
- insufficient education, training and rehabilitation programs

Mr Morgan noted that these deficiencies often had costly knock-on effects:

‘Backlogs create risks as well as delays. For example, the lack of timely access to programs makes it very difficult for prisoners to meet the expectations of the Prisoners Release Board. This leads to parole being denied or delayed through no fault of the prisoner. And this, in turn, increases prison crowding and costs.’

The Inspector called for better justice planning and for a clear plan for Casuarina itself:

‘We can’t just keep adding more people into existing facilities without doing more to meet their needs in relation to mental health, rehabilitation and post-release support. The budget is in a parlous state, but smart planning and well-targeted investment will lead to better outcomes and lower costs down the track.’

Neil Morgan  
**Inspector**

For more detail, please see the Inspector’s Overview to the Report and Key Findings (copies attached).

**For Further Media Information**

The Inspector, Mr Neil Morgan, will be available for comment from 12noon on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2017 and can be contacted on 0427 426 471.

The full report will be available on the Inspector’s website ([www.oics.wa.gov.au](http://www.oics.wa.gov.au)).