

**MEDIA RELEASE – EMBARGOED UNTIL 12 NOON ON  
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**Report No. 117 – Melaleuca Remand and Reintegration Facility**

Good intentions hampered by process, contract, and infrastructure

The first year of operation at the new Melaleuca Remand and Reintegration Facility for Women (Melaleuca) was both difficult and challenging, according to the latest report from the Inspector of Custodial Services.

Acting Inspector Andrew Harvey said that the inspection, conducted 11 months after the prison's opening under private contractor Sodexo, raised serious concerns about the services being delivered to the women, the adequacy of the contract, and the poor infrastructure which was unfit for managing its mix of prisoners.

'Since opening in December 2016, we had been concerned about the lack of services being delivered to women at Melaleuca, the absence of activities, the safety of prisoners and staff, the basic nature of the infrastructure, and the lack of its integration with the existing public prison system,' Mr Harvey said.

'While the inspection did find cause for concern, we also found a highly motivated and positive staff, and an organisation keen to engage, respond and improve,' he said.

Mr Harvey said that since the inspection both Sodexo and the Department had been responsive to the inspection's early findings and had made some significant changes.

Of fundamental concern to the Inspector was the contract itself. Its terms were overly aspirational, highly prescriptive, and lacked clear priorities. This was particularly disappointing given the Department's previous approach to contracting. Sodexo had also failed to properly understand the terms of the contract, and the WA context in which it had to operate.

Mr Harvey said it was also clear that the low price being paid for the service was always going to impact on the quantity and quality of services that could be provided. To that end, the prison has been operating at a significant loss since opening and is likely to continue to do so.

'While the staff are highly motivated and caring for the women, we found a high level of frustration about the lack of activity they could offer, and the inability to provide more for them,' Mr Harvey said.

One action taken by Sodexo since the inspection included funding new staffing positions in the areas of education, activities, and case management. While this provided some extra activity, women still did not have enough to do. However, no additional staff had been added to the accommodation units, where the inspection had found staff under considerable pressure, and where we were concerned that the number of staff was insufficient to adequately supervise prisoners.

Mr Harvey also noted the infrastructure was inappropriate for the prisoner mix at Melaleuca, and meant remand and reintegration women could not be separated.

'No other prison in Australia exclusively provides remand and reintegration services on one site, and for very good reason. The different cohorts require markedly different services and supports. Unfortunately, setting it up as it is means it cannot do enough for either group,' Mr Harvey said.

'In addition, as the facility was built out of the remnants of the male estate, it does not have appropriate activity or work spaces, education rooms, program rooms, crisis care facilities, or accommodation options. It remains wholly unsuited for the wide range of purposes it is contracted to provide,' he said.

Andrew Harvey  
Acting Inspector

### **For Further Media Information**

The Acting Inspector, Mr Andrew Harvey, will be available for comment from 12 noon on Friday 29 June 2018 and can be contacted on 0477 307 559.

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

### **About the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services**

Established in 2000, we are an independent statutory body with a strong focus on performance standards in custodial facilities and the rights of people in custody and staff. We report directly to Parliament, ensuring a high level of transparency and accountability.

Our responsibilities include:

- inspecting adult custodial facilities, juvenile detention centres, court custody centres and custodial transport services
- reviewing specific aspects of custodial services and the experience of individuals or groups
- carrying out thematic reviews
- managing the Independent Visitor Service.

### **About Melaleuca Remand and Reintegration Facility**

Melaleuca Remand and Reintegration Facility (Melaleuca) is situated 19 km south of Perth and has a total capacity for 256 women (including 4 beds in the Crisis Care Unit).

In 2014 The Department of Justice announced that Units 11 and 12 of Hakea Prison would be transformed into a maximum-security, remand and reintegration facility for women. The prison would take over the metropolitan remand function for women from Bandyup Women's Prison, and simultaneously provide specialist reintegration services.

Tenders were called for in July 2016 it was announced that Sodexo Australia Pty Ltd had won the right to manage the new facility.

Melaleuca commenced operations on 15 December 2016.