

MEDIA RELEASE – EMBARGOED UNTIL 12 NOON ON Tuesday 20 NOVEMBER 2018

Report No. 119 – Wooroloo Prison Farm

In releasing his latest report on Wooroloo Prison Farm, the Inspector of Custodial Services, Neil Morgan, congratulated the Superintendent and her staff on their hard work and improvements in recent years:

‘When we last reported on Wooroloo in 2015, the new management team had only recently started, and the prison was coming off six years of staff conflict, management turnover, and a lack of strategic direction. Reduced resources and growing prisoner numbers had also presented significant challenges. Over that time, it had been an unhappy place, and was not meeting its potential.

Three years on, the hard work of management and staff had led to some encouraging results. Staff relationships and morale had improved, and it was a far more positive place for them and the prisoners. Management had driven a number of improvements, and had a clear vision for the prison. It provides a positive lesson of ‘change management’ in a prison environment.

Overall, Wooroloo was certainly doing well, given its resources. However, as at other prisons, resources have not kept pace with rising prisoner numbers, and this poses some challenges.’

Wooroloo’s population has doubled in the past decade, and another 48 beds are to be added.

Mr Morgan said that the prison needs additional resources to cope with this expansion. An example is prisoner employment and skill development. The report found that around 15 per cent of prisoners were not working, and many were ‘under-employed’. There were also not enough external work activities given that Wooroloo is a minimum-security prison.

More generally, the report noted that minimum-security prisons are essential in a well-functioning system that contributes to public safety. They give positive opportunities for rehabilitation and for reparation through community work. They also help to prepare people for reintegration to the community, and offer a valuable incentive for prisoners confined in overcrowded higher security prisons. Mr Morgan said:

'Western Australia's minimum-security prisons, including Wooroloo, have a strong track record for risk management and rehabilitation. They are also generally cheaper to operate than higher security prisons. The majority of investment in recent years has been in higher security prisons. But I hope that that minimum-security facilities will be a central plank in future custodial planning.'

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 12 noon on Tuesday 20 November 2018 and can be contacted on 0427 426 471.

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