

## MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL 12 NOON ON 30 JANUARY 2025

### 2024 Inspection of Albany Regional Prison

---

“Despite many challenges, there was a renewed sense of enthusiasm seen at Albany,” said the Inspector of Custodial Services, Mr Ryan, in relation to the release of an inspection report for Albany Regional Prison.

Like many adult prisons across Western Australia, Albany was facing significant challenges with an increased prisoner population, daily staffing shortfalls, and ageing infrastructure, some of which was no longer fit for purpose.

At the time of the inspection, the provision of some basic needs and rights, such as clean clothing and contact with family, was found to be compromised. Access to meaningful rehabilitation activities such as education, recreation and treatment programs was inadequate for the size of the prison population. And, while the prison’s health centre was undergoing a much-needed refurbishment, there was no available doctor on-site, no mental health or alcohol and other drug (MHAOD) services, and limited psychological supports.

However, a shift in leadership just prior to this eighth inspection of the prison had brought about noticeable change. Mr Ryan found the acting Superintendent had generated renewed enthusiasm, and re-focussed efforts on getting prisoners out of their units to participate in activities like employment and recreation:

“The acting Superintendent brought with them a change in philosophy and management style that not only had a positive impact on the men held at Albany, but it also made staff feel more appreciated and that their concerns were being listened to and addressed,” Mr Ryan said.

Aboriginal men represented almost 50% of the population at Albany. Despite this over-representation, Mr Ryan noted Aboriginal men were disproportionately under-represented in higher-earning employment opportunities and many were unemployed:

“Reducing educational gaps is one of the key building blocks in addressing disadvantage for Aboriginal prisoners and creating opportunities for rehabilitation. For these reasons, we have made three recommendations to improve access to, and engagement in, employment and educational opportunities for men at Albany,” said Mr Ryan.

Pointing to the success of the Kaya Link centre at Bunbury Regional Prison and Kaartdijin Mia at Casuarina Prison, Mr Ryan felt there was both the opportunity and the need for a similar dedicated cultural centre at Albany:

“The Kaya Link and Kaartdijin Mia have both demonstrated the positive impact dedicated cultural centres can have on increasing engagement in education, rehabilitation activities, and cultural supports. There is an obvious need for this type of initiative in Albany – and

indeed in all prisons – and the current atmosphere of renewed enthusiasm for change has created an ideal opportunity”.

The inspection report made 15 recommendations to the Department on issues relating to access to rehabilitation programs, infrastructure, and maintenance, staffing resources, prisoner employment, and in-cell technology.

The Department’s response was not received prior to publication

Mr Ryan also noted that prior to his report being lodged with Parliament on 20 December 2024, the Department of Justice had not provided a response to his findings or recommendations.

The Department was provided a draft of the report for comment on 10 October 2024. The response from the Department was originally due on 3 December 2024, but this was extended to 17 December 2024. The Department then advised it would not be able to meet the revised deadline, hence the report was prepared for publication. The response was eventually received on 17 January 2025.

Mr Ryan notes there is a Memorandum of Understanding between the Department and my Office which sets out agreed operating parameters, including timeframes for various processes such as responses to draft reports. It is not a legally binding document but establishes what both parties agree are reasonable timeframes. The agreed timeframe for the Department to respond to draft reports is five weeks.

**Eamon Ryan**  
Inspector

### **For Further Media Information**

The Inspector, Mr Eamon, will be available for comment from 12 noon on 30 January 2025 and can be contacted on 0421 480 925.

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

The response to the report from the Department of Justice can be found on our website [here](#).