



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Justice**  
**Corrective Services**

# **Response to the Announced Inspection:**

**(2024 Inspection of Hakea Prison)**

**February 2025**

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## Response Overview

### Introduction

On 18 January 2024, the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (OICS) announced the 2024 Inspection of Hakea Prison (Hakea), with the onsite inspection taking place from 6 May 2024 to 15 May 2024.

To assist with the inspection, and to inform the Inspection Report, the Department of Justice, Corrective Services (the Department) provided a range of documentation as well as access to systems, custodial facilities, staff and prisoners.

On 13 December 2024, the Department received the draft report which contained 15 recommendations for review and comment.

### Department Comments

The Department acknowledges the challenges identified through the inspection and previous inspection reports (2018 and 2021) and is committed to taking action to strengthen the safety and welfare of prisoners within Hakea.

The Department accepts that progress to address the challenges raised in previous inspection reports has been incremental and reactive, with the Department's resources triaged to respond to urgent and high-risk matters. The persistence of these issues, coupled with the increasing demands on the custodial estate and staffing challenges highlights the need for further investment and whole-of-government effort to ensure sustained progress. The Department is committed to working with partner agencies to deliver the long-term structural reform required to achieve meaningful change and will utilise the recently re-established Justice Planning and Reform Committee for this purpose.

The fair and humane treatment of prisoners in the Department's care is paramount and significant effort has been directed towards improving conditions at Hakea, with a particular focus on ensuring greater time out of cell. Noting the importance of recreation and meaningful activity as a protective factor in prisoner wellbeing, changes to Hakea's adaptive routine have been implemented to ensure prisoners are provided recreation at least two days per week. To give effect to this, social visits have been temporarily suspended on these days.

In response to concerns raised by OICS, in August 2024 a multidisciplinary Hakea Safer Custody Taskforce (HSCTF) was established to shape and drive short, medium and long-term strategies to improve prisoner safety and address identified challenges. Key focus areas for the taskforce include but are not limited to; addressing staffing and recruitment challenges, enhancing security measures and suicide prevention strategies.

Since the inception of the HSCTF, a number of initiatives have progressed including:

- Negotiation of a new Staffing Level Agreement (SLA) to provide interim relief on staffing pressures;
  - Establishment of a pool of former prison officers to undertake hospital sits;
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- Establishment of a pool of medical staff to enable clinical resources to be deployed to Hakea as and when needed;
- Expansion of Hakea's pest control program in conjunction with increased cell inspections to increase hygiene levels throughout the facility;
- Establishment of an overtime budget for mental health and psychological health staff to assist in ensuring prisoners identified as high risk are provided with support; and
- Increased closed-circuit-television in high-risk areas throughout the site.

Noting the number of prisoners with mental health needs within Hakea, the HSCTF successfully advocated for additional Gatekeeper training resulting in additional courses being delivered in January 2025. This training ensures staff are aware of the signs and indicators that a prisoner may be experiencing suicidal ideation as well as appropriate intervention techniques.

With a view to address staffing challenges, a staffing review has commenced which will see the development of a new prison operating model that is operationally flexible and capable of meeting current and future demands. The operating model will include custodial operations and support areas including Health Services, Education, Treatment and Rehabilitative Services, Special Operations Group, Drug Detection Unit, Corrective Services Academy and Administration.

Stage one and two of the staffing review – comprising of the development and submission of a Prison Services Evaluation Project Initiation Document and business case is now complete and the focus is now on stage three which comprises of site visits to map out the staffing profiles across the custodial estate. The site visit for Hakea is anticipated to take place in March 2025. The findings from the site visit will inform the proposed operational staffing model and will be based on population projections.

The appointment of a new Commissioner of Corrective Services in October 2023 has seen a renewed focus on addressing critical issues through extensive planning, communication and stakeholder engagement. The Commissioner has prioritised initial investment in capability development, infrastructure and technology to enable the WA prison system to effectively manage the increasing demands whilst maintaining safety and security.

Key initiatives to address the long-term strategic and infrastructure planning for Corrective Services include the development of a Strategic Plan 2025-2030 and a Long-Term Custodial Infrastructure Plan (LTCIP) 2025 – 2035.

The LTCIP sets out proposed infrastructure works across the custodial estate over a 10-year period to meet current and future population demands and to replace ageing infrastructure. It identifies a number of infrastructure works for Hakea. These works will be part of a wide range of infrastructure works proposed for the entire custodial estate to meet current and future population demands and are subject to prioritisation and funding availability.

In tandem with the LTCIP, various infrastructure works across the custodial estate are also underway or have been completed in an effort to increase the capacity of the growing male custodial population. These works include the Casuarina 512 bed and Bunbury 160 bed expansions, and the Acacia Rectification Project to restore Kilo Block and bring 219 beds back online. It is intended the additional beds will ease population pressures at Hakea.

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The Department acknowledges and commends the dedicated efforts of staff working within Hakea who often work under challenging and demanding circumstances and is committed to taking the necessary action to ensure staff are supported and equipped to perform their roles effectively.

## Response to Recommendations

### 1 Create a cross-government taskforce to address the systemic problems across the justice system.

#### Response:

The Department agrees with OICS findings that a cross-government taskforce to address issues across the justice system is required and that a siloed approach by agencies within the justice system is not sufficient.

With Cabinet approval, the Director General of the Department of Justice initiated the reinstatement of the Justice Planning Reform Committee (JRPC) in late 2024 to steer and guide a strategic, coordinated, and cross-agency approach to reform in response to emerging demand pressures across the criminal justice sector. The Committee is comprised of agencies including but not limited to the Western Australian Police Force, Department of Treasury, Department of Communities, Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. The first meeting will occur in the first quarter of 2025.

This work will also be progressed through an existing Interagency Steering Committee for Custodial Infrastructure Projects which includes representatives from both Treasury and Finance.

<b>Level of Acceptance:</b>	Supported – Current Practice / Project
<b>Responsible Division:</b>	Strategic Reform
<b>Responsible Directorate:</b>	Strategic Reform

### 2 Finalise the system-wide staffing review and allocate sufficient staffing levels to Hakea that align with its purpose and prisoner population.

#### Response:

The Department is actively progressing the staffing review which is focused on establishing benchmarks for staffing across custodial facilities based on their purpose, individual needs and role within the custodial estate. The intention of the review is to develop a new prison operating model that is operationally flexible and capable of meeting current and future demands.

Whilst the initial review was solely focused on custodial staffing, since its commencement in May 2024, Corrective Services has broadened the review to include adult custodial facilities and operational support areas including Health Services, Education, Treatment and Rehabilitative Services, Special Operations Group, Drug Detection Unit, Corrective Services Academy and Administration.

Stage one and two comprising of the development and submission of a Prison Services Evaluation Project Initiation Document and business case is now complete and the focus is now on stage three.

To give effect to stage three, the review team are undertaking site visits and liaising with Senior Management Teams to map out the staffing profiles across the custodial estate. The staffing profile will consider the role Hakea plays within the custodial estate, the needs of the prisoners residing within the facility and the services the facility provides, and the resources required to adequately deliver those services. The site

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visit for Hakea is anticipated to take place in March 2025. The findings from the site visit will inform the proposed operational staffing model and will be based on forecasted projections.

In parallel to the review, Corrective Services have negotiated a new Staffing Level Agreement (SLA) based on operational requirements of a prisoner muster of 1,201. Agreement on the new proposed SLA has been reached at the local level and is now progressing through the final approval stages.

<b>Level of Acceptance:</b>	Supported – Current Practice / Project
<b>Responsible Division:</b>	Corrective Services
<b>Responsible Directorate:</b>	Operational Support

**3 Consider amending the Prison Officers’ Industrial Agreement 2022 to allow Vocational Support Officers (VSOs) to retain a similar substantive position during their probationary period as a prison officer.**

**Response:**

As identified by OICS, clause 136 of the *Prison Officers’ Industrial Agreement 2022* (the agreement) is restrictive in the sense that Corrective Services is required to hold Vocational Support Officer (VSO) positions for a substantive VSO for up to nine months [*the period the employee is progressing through the Corrective Services Academy as well as during the six-month probationary period*]. The Department then faces difficulty filling the temporary vacant positions for the nine-month period the position is being held.

In attempt to fill vacant critical VSO positions, on 3 December 2024, the Department presented the WA Prison Officers’ Union (WAPOU) with an offer for replacement of the Agreement. This offer included changes to clause 136 to remove the requirement to return a VSO who is unsuccessful in training to become a prison officer to their substantive position, and instead offer a right of return to a similar position.

This amendment was accepted in principle by WAPOU on 6 January 2025 with drafting of the replacement Agreement currently being undertaken to settle this change. This change will both preserve VSO’s ability to return to a substantive position whilst enabling the Department to fill these critical positions on a more permanent basis to ensure continuity of services.

<b>Level of Acceptance:</b>	Supported
<b>Responsible Division:</b>	Corporate Services
<b>Responsible Directorate:</b>	Workforce Services

**4 Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to improve staff morale and increase retention.**

**Response:**

The Commissioner for Corrective Services has placed an increased focus on staff wellbeing and has implemented initiatives aimed at boosting staff morale across Corrective Services.

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Initiatives include the implementation of the fitness passport and a staff chaplaincy model. Additional initiatives that are proposed for inclusion within the strategy include veteran support and critical incident leave.

At a local level, Hakea has initiated a staff recognition program to formally acknowledge the individual and team efforts of Hakea staff who have demonstrated a level of excellence above and beyond the normal call of duties. The first recognition day is scheduled to occur in May 2025 to coincide with National Corrections Day.

The above initiatives form part of the Department's greater efforts to promote staff wellbeing, recruitment and retention.

<b>Level of Acceptance:</b>	Supported – Current Practice / Project
<b>Responsible Division:</b>	Corrective Services
<b>Responsible Directorate:</b>	Adult Male Prisons

## **5 Establish a collaborative joint management-union committee to improve staff and management relations.**

### **Response:**

The Department acknowledges the important role WAPOU plays in supporting uniformed Corrective Services staff.

Hakea and WAPOU currently meet on a monthly basis as part of a Local Consultative Committee to discuss matters concerning Hakea, including industrial relations matters with the last meeting held on 19 December 2024.

In addition, ad-hoc meetings are facilitated on an as needs basis as requested from either party with the most recent meeting taking place on 7 January 2025. During this meeting attendees discussed and identified workable solutions and reached agreement on topics including e-visits and travelling home arrangements for staff who are injured or hurt in the workplace.

In addition, the Director General has initiated new processes for consulting with WAPOU to promote transparency and ensure unions are well-informed and engaged in discussions on new strategic initiatives and solutions to workplace issues.

<b>Level of Acceptance:</b>	Supported – Current Practice / Project
<b>Responsible Division:</b>	Corrective Services
<b>Responsible Directorate:</b>	Adult Male Prisons

**6 Ensure essential scheduled and unscheduled emergency management exercises are carried out, irrespective of staffing constraints.**

**Response:**

As identified by OICS, Hakea experienced significant staffing challenges between February 2024 and April 2024 which impacted the ability for the planned emergency management exercises to be conducted safely. As such, two of the scheduled exercises were postponed and completed in the latter part of the year.

The Department acknowledges the importance of regular emergency management exercises to ensure staff are prepared and equipped to respond to emergencies and will continue to make a concerted effort to ensure the training is conducted where staffing levels permit. However, the Department is unable to commit to the running of exercises in times where staffing levels deem the activity unsafe. Training must be balanced with the need to support day to day services and the safety of both prisoners and staff alike.

Where required, a determination will be made by the Superintendent as to whether the training can be conducted safely.

Resolving staffing challenges remains a key priority and the Department is actively working to bolster recruitment efforts and most recently increased the numbers of new recruits within each entry level training program.

<b>Level of Acceptance:</b>	Not Supported
<b>Responsible Division:</b>	Corrective Services
<b>Responsible Directorate:</b>	Adult Male Prisons

**7 The Department must commit adequate resources to ensure the effective and timely operation of the official visits centre in Hakea.**

**Response:**

With a view to ensure the official visits centre operates efficiently, Hakea has incorporated an additional VSO position to support and enhance the operations of the official visits area in the new proposed 1,201 SLA.

In the interim, temporary resources have been approved to support the administrative processes related to official visits.

<b>Level of Acceptance:</b>	Supported – Current Practice / Project
<b>Responsible Division:</b>	Corrective Services
<b>Responsible Directorate:</b>	Adult Male Prisons

**8 Ensure basic human rights and minimum standards for prisoners in custody are met.**

**Response:**

The Department agrees that the fair and humane treatment of prisoners is paramount. Significant efforts are in place at Hakea, including an adaptive routine where staff are redeployed to maximise opportunities to ensure prisoners' time out of cell is optimised.

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Noting the importance of recreation and meaningful constructive activity as a protective factor, changes to Hakea's adaptive routine have been implemented to ensure prisoners are provided recreation at least two days per week. To make this possible, social visits have been temporarily suspended on these days to enable staff to supervise recreational activities outside of the units.

**Level of Acceptance:** Supported  
**Responsible Division:** Corrective Services  
**Responsible Business Area:** Adult Male Prisons

## **9 Complete the planned roll out of body-worn cameras in Hakea and other maximum-security prisons.**

### **Response:**

The Department has advanced planning to roll out body worn cameras (BWC's) across the custodial estate. To date, end of life BWC's have been replaced at Banksia Hill Detention Centre and Unit 18. In addition, BWC's were rolled out to the Drug Detection Unit and the Perth Children's Court.

Implementing modernised technology to improve staff safety has been prioritised by the Department throughout 2024. Following completion of the Tranche 1 phased approach, the Department has progressed plans to expand the roll out to adult facilities across the custodial estate and the Sheriff's Office of Western Australia.

The risk-based approach used to determine the phased rollout of BWC's will continue throughout Tranche 2 of the project with facilities deemed 'high risk' prioritised for roll out in the first instance.

Hakea has been identified as the highest risk facility and is prioritised to receive BWC's as soon as funding is secured, and the infrastructure works required to accommodate implementation is undertaken. Other maximum-security facilities such as Melaleuca, Bandyup and Casuarina will follow.

**Level of Acceptance:** Supported – Current Practice / Project  
**Responsible Division:** Corrective Services  
**Responsible Directorate:** Operational Support

## **10 Commit to major infrastructure upgrades to improve the capacity and services for prisoners.**

### **Response:**

Whilst the Department supports the intent of this recommendation, a commitment to major upgrades is ultimately dependent on funding availability.

The Department's LTCIP, 2025 – 2035 identifies infrastructure works necessary to meet future accommodation and service provision needs of the custodial estate. The Department has identified priority infrastructure works and is preparing a funding submission for Government consideration.

A number of major infrastructure expansions to increase capacity within the male estate are complete with further works underway. This includes works at Acacia Prison, Casuarina Prison and Bunbury Regional Prison.

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**Level of Acceptance:** Supported – Current Practice / Project  
**Responsible Division:** Corrective Services  
**Responsible Directorate:** Adult Male Prisons

**11 Conduct a thorough analysis of primary and mental health care demand and allocate sufficient resources to meet identified needs.**

**Response:**

The Department is acutely aware of the demand for health and mental health services at Hakea (and across Corrective Services) and works hard to align available resources with the areas of highest need. Resourcing pressures in this area are further compounded by a national workforce shortage of many specialist medical roles.

The Department has undertaken multiple thorough reviews to analyse and quantify the gap between demand for services and its capacity, with this work informing recent funding requests. The Department received \$3.7 million over 2024/25 and 2025/26 as part of the Mid-Year Review process to fund a staged increase in health resources at Hakea. The Department will continue to request further resources to meet primary and mental health care needs in line with demand.

A further analysis of resourcing and demand will be conducted through Hakea's staffing review site visit which is expected to take place in March 2025.

**Level of Acceptance:** Supported – Current Practice / Project  
**Responsible Division:** Corrective Services  
**Responsible Directorate:** Offender Services

**12 Develop a purpose-built Management Unit within Hakea, to safely deliver a full range of services and regimes currently managed by Unit 1.**

**Response:**

As per the response to recommendation 10, all major infrastructure works across the custodial estate will be considered under the LTCIP 2025 – 2035 and will be subject to prioritisation and funding availability.

**Level of Acceptance:** Supported in Principle  
**Responsible Division:** Corrective Services  
**Responsible Directorate:** Adult Male Prisons

**13 Commit to and roll out a digital platform for prisoners to manage their own requests.**

**Response:**

As part of the Department's Long Term Custodial Strategy (LTCTS) a funding submission was submitted at the 2024 Mid-Year review to implement an '*Offender Digital Services Platform*' (ODSP) across the estate as part of the modernisation of the end-of-life Prisoner Telephony System (PTS).

The Department's funding submission was partially approved enabling the replacement of the end-of-life PTS across the estate. The extended business services

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Extended Business Services (EBS) pilot, which will enable access to services to improve digital literacy of prisoners and access to programs and education, will be considered as part of a future budget process.

**Level of Acceptance:** Supported in Principle  
**Responsible Division:** Corporate Services  
**Responsible Directorate:** Infrastructure Services

**14 Maintain equal focus on reducing Individual Management Plans (IMPs) and treatment assessments to ensure prisoners' needs are identified and addressed before they reach their earliest date of release.**

**Response:**

The Department continues to focus on reducing the backlog of Individual Management Plans (IMPs) and Treatment Assessment Reports (TARs).

Whilst the Department acknowledges further work is required to reduce the backload, the ability to do so relies heavily on the availability of clinical staff to undertake the assessments and meet the demand, accessibility to prisoners identified as requiring an IMP or TAR and the allocation of suitable rooms for interviews and assessments to be conducted.

In November 2022, an Individual Management Plan Taskforce (taskforce) was established, comprising subject matter experts across disciplines including sentence management, treatment assessments, clinical governance, and custodial representatives, to track performance, consider current barriers and develop solutions for immediate and sustained improvements to manage overdue IMPs and TARs.

Since inception of the taskforce, the following advancements have been made:

- Implementation of a triage process to screen out offenders who do not require more comprehensive assessments, enabling faster completion of the TAR process for those who are low risk.
- Conversion of prison officer positions to public servants as a dedicated resource for the completion of TARs.
- Suspension of:
  - (1) the requirement to complete a TAR for inclusion within an initial IMP;
  - (2) requirement to complete a TAR for prisoners who are within six months of their Earliest Date of Release (EDR); and
- Creation of additional treatment assessment positions including supervisors and regional based assessors.

The Department will continue to work through the overdue TARs and IMPs. The Department will include infrastructure and resourcing needs in future budget submissions to improve service delivery in this area.

**Level of Acceptance:** Supported – Current Practice / Project  
**Responsible Division:** Corrective Services  
**Responsible Directorate:** Offender Services

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**15 Source and establish voluntary programs, and ensure sentenced prisoners have access to mandatory programs, including via remote attendance.**

**Response:**

The Department acknowledges there are opportunities to improve access to programs for both sentenced and remand prisoners at Hakea. The ability to facilitate programs however is dependent on the timely completion of treatment assessments, access to appropriate infrastructure, program availability, and availability of staff (both clinical and custodial).

The frequency and location of program delivery is based on prisoner risk, need and demand. Where demand is apparent, efforts are made to transfer prisoners to a prison where participation can be facilitated.

Whilst remote attendance within programs on the face of it appears like a suitable solution, current clinical standards do not support this. The Department is however in the process of exploring this further to ascertain whether this is a suitable mode of delivery in certain circumstances.

<b>Level of Acceptance:</b>	Supported in Principle
<b>Responsible Division:</b>	Corrective Services
<b>Responsible Directorate:</b>	Offender Services