



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR  
OF CUSTODIAL SERVICES

2024 INSPECTION OF  
HAKEA PRISON

158

FEBRUARY 2025

*Independent oversight  
that contributes to a more  
accountable public sector*

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## 2024 Inspection of Hakea Prison

Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services  
Level 5, Albert Facey House  
469 Wellington Street  
Perth WA 6000  
Whadjuk Noongar Boodja

[www.oics.wa.gov.au](http://www.oics.wa.gov.au)

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# Inspector's Overview

## *Unacceptable conditions in Hakea Prison continue*

This report documents several very concerning findings about the conditions in Hakea Prison at the time of our inspection in May 2024.

The conditions we observed during the inspection were of such concern that on 27 May 2024 I took the unusual step of issuing the Director General of the Department of Justice with a Show Cause Notice under section 33A of the *Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2003*. This Notice set out the grounds upon which I formed a view that at that time prisoners in Hakea were being treated in a manner that was cruel, inhuman, or degrading. We observed increasing levels of anger and frustration in prisoners, which was leading to challenging or dangerous behaviour, including suicides, suicide attempts, serious self-harm, and assaults.

The Department's response to the Notice acknowledged our concerns and set out the plans and initiatives being put in place to address the issues raised. Following consideration of the Department's response, I referred the Notice to the Minister for Corrective Services advising that most prisoners at Hakea were regularly being denied their basic entitlements and that, despite the initiatives outlined by the Department, the situation was unlikely to improve in the immediate short-term.

In their responses, both the Department and Minister reiterated a commitment to addressing the issues identified in the Notice. Chapter seven of this report provides more detail about the Notice and the Department and Minister's response. I do not doubt the sincerity of these commitments and acknowledge that plans and initiatives are progressing, including the Department being allocated additional resources for Hakea.

Although all this work is progressing, prisoners at Hakea continue to experience sub-standard conditions that are not meeting all of the basic entitlements and standards outlined in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the *Nelson Mandela Rules* (UNODC, 2015), the *Standard Guidelines for Corrections in Australia* (Corrective Services Victoria, 1990), and the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services' *Revised Code of Inspection Standards* (OICS, 2020).

Since the inspection in May 2024, we have continued to monitor conditions in Hakea, including an increased number of liaison visits and contact with prison leadership, targeted data analysis and reporting, and regular updates on response initiatives. I have also had regular discussions about Hakea with the Minister, Director General and Commissioner.

Our ongoing monitoring suggests that, with a few exceptions, conditions have not improved significantly. Over the past eight months the reported average time out of cell for prisoners has fluctuated between 5.5 and 6 hours per day, which is only a marginal improvement since our inspection. Instances of threatened or attempted suicide or self-harm continue at high levels. There have also been two recorded deaths in custody in Hakea over the past eight months.

There has been limited, if any, access to programs, education, or outdoor recreation. Meaningful employment opportunities are limited to essential services, such as kitchen and laundry, with other

employment options regularly reduced or cancelled. Approximately 50% of scheduled visit sessions are cancelled or reduced.

Although custodial staffing levels may not be as critical as they were at the time of our inspection, daily shortages on the roster continue to have a significant impact on the prison regime. And there appears to be little, if any, improvement in the fractured local industrial relationship at the prison. The latter point is surprising, and frankly disappointing, as it would be reasonable to expect both sides have a shared interest in finding common ground to progress improvements in conditions for staff and prisoners.

All this shows that the situation at Hakea remains critical. Continued and renewed efforts towards improvement are essential to ensure meaningful and sustained progress. To date, the pace of improvement has been too slow and the conditions for the prisoners held in Hakea remain unsatisfactory. It is also worth bearing in mind that approximately 80% of the population in Hakea are unsentenced, which means they have not been convicted of the alleged offences for which they are held.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We had two Independent Prison Visitors for Hakea at the time of our inspection. They are community volunteers appointed by the Minister for Corrective Services, who attended Hakea on a regular basis observing the operations of the prison and providing an opportunity for the men placed there to raise issues and complaints that informs the work of our office. Throughout the year they have advocated strongly for improvements in conditions for the men held there. I acknowledge the importance of the work undertaken and thank them for their contribution to our ongoing monitoring of Hakea.

I also acknowledge the support and cooperation we received throughout the inspection from the Superintendent and staff at Hakea and from key personnel in the Department.

The men living in Hakea who took the time to speak with us and share their perspectives also deserve our acknowledgement and thanks. They also deserve community understanding and support, given the conditions they have to endure as set out in this report.

Finally, I would like to thank the members of the inspection team for their expertise and hard work throughout the inspection. I would also particularly acknowledge and thank Ben Shaw, for his work in planning this inspection and as principal drafter of this report, and Jim Bryden for his ongoing monitoring of conditions within the prison.

Eamon Ryan  
**Inspector of Custodial Services**

14 February 2025

# Executive Summary

## A lack of direction for a prison in crisis

Hakea Prison (Hakea) was in crisis, struggling to meet the needs of a growing adult male prison population. The Department of Justice's (the Department) failure to provide long-term estate wide planning significantly contributed to the challenges faced by Hakea.

Between January 2022 and May 2024, prisoner numbers increased by 39%, rising from 824 to 1,143. The growing prisoner population was complex, comprising approximately 240 sentenced prisoners, 200 in protection, and 100 with identified psychiatric conditions. Hakea's role within the broader correctional system had become problematic.

## Prison staffing was in crisis, with recruitment unable to match prisoner population growth

Hakea faced chronic staffing challenges, with daily unplanned absences accounting for 25% of the roster. This contributed to widespread staff frustration and exhaustion. Following discussions with some staff members we became concerned about their own mental health and the wellbeing of the prisoners under their care.

Recruitment efforts had failed to keep pace with the growth in prisoner numbers, contributing to the deteriorating conditions for prisoners. Relationships between staff and prisoners were poor. Increased tensions with senior management were largely driven by the Western Australian Prison Officers Union's (WAPOU) focus to improve staff safety. But, in our view, this emphasis had been prioritised over prisoner welfare and rehabilitation, undermining the prison's ability to provide a meaningful and constructive day.

## Living conditions were inhumane and failed to meet basic guidelines

Prisoner movements were severely restricted, with minimal time allowed out of cells and limited access to meaningful activities. Many prisoners were confined to small, unhygienic cells that attracted pests and failed to meet even the most basic requirements.

Frequent and prolonged lockdowns disrupted the management of the prison's telephone system, significantly impacting prisoners' ability to maintain contact with the outside world. When prisoners were briefly unlocked, they were forced to choose between essential activities such as showering, recreating, attending medical appointments, or maintaining contact with the outside world.

## Services to prisoners were poor

Services provided to prisoners were inadequate and inconsistent. Clothing and bedding supplies were insufficient, leaving many prisoners without clean clothing. Food had to be eaten in cells that were rarely cleaned, leading to pest infestations.

Recreation opportunities were minimal, further contributing to the poor living conditions. Routine cell inspections, essential for identifying hygiene and wellbeing issues, were not being conducted.

## High demand, but substandard access to health and wellbeing services

Physical and mental health services were overwhelmed, with a nurse-to-prisoner ratio of approximately one to 86. Services struggled to cope with the demand, resulting in long wait times and limited access to care. Mental health services were forced to prioritise at-risk prisoners, leaving others struggling without adequate support.

Unit 1 experienced disproportionately high rates of self-harm and suicide attempts. Prison Support Officers (PSOs) and Psychological Health Service (PHS) counsellors were also required to assess, support, and manage at-risk prisoners, leaving little time to address the needs of the wider prisoner population.

## Rehabilitative efforts were struggling

Custodial staffing shortages restricted access to education and treatment opportunities. The education centre had only opened a handful of times in the months prior to the inspection despite few staff vacancies. Similarly, several key assessments including treatment assessments remained a significant issue despite attempts to address the growing backlog. The absence of mandatory or voluntary programs further limited prisoner rehabilitation for the significant number of sentenced prisoners. Prisoner education opportunities were also restricted, however, over 40% of those employed received Level 1 gratuities.

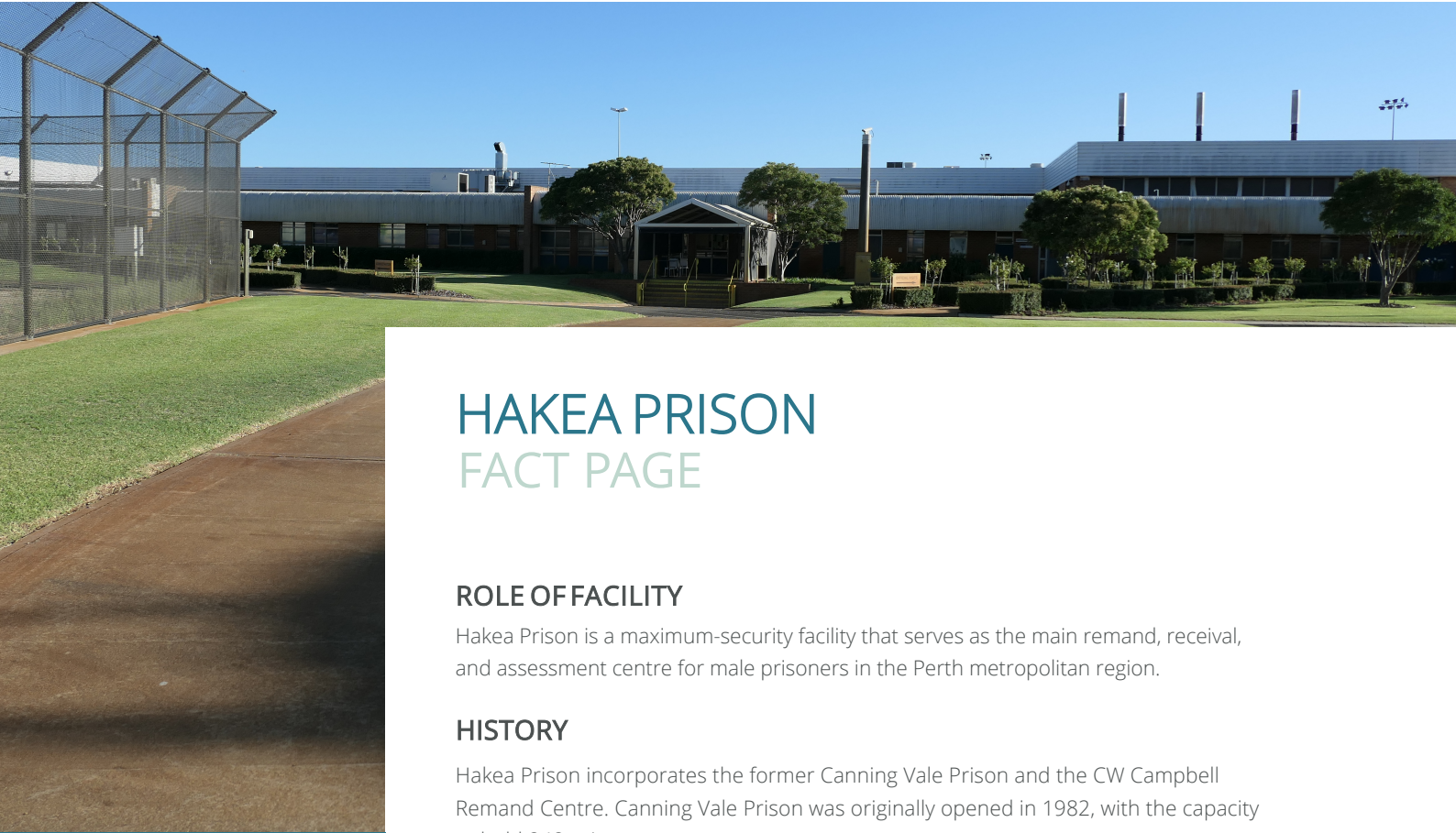
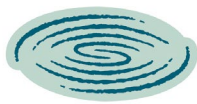
## The Inspector issued a Show Cause Notice due to concerns around treatment and conditions

The Inspector's concerns regarding the routine denial of basic entitlements to the men at Hakea led to a Show Cause Notice being issued under Section 33A of the *Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2003*. The Department responded to the Notice acknowledging the concerns raised, and outlined various initiatives it was implementing to address the issues. The Inspector referred the matter to the Minister for Corrective Services, noting that while the Department's initiatives reflected a commitment to addressing the situation at Hakea, they were unlikely to bring about an immediate resolution to the conditions being experienced. The Minister responded acknowledging the Notice and reiterated the Department's commitment to managing the issue.

## List of Recommendations

Recommendation	Page	DOJ Response
<b>Recommendation 1</b> Create a cross-government taskforce to address the systemic problems across the justice system.	2	Supported – Current Practice / Project
<b>Recommendation 2</b> Finalise the system-wide staffing review and allocate sufficient staffing levels to Hakea that align with its purpose and prisoner population.	5	Supported – Current Practice / Project
<b>Recommendation 3</b> 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.	6	Supported
<b>Recommendation 4</b> Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to improve staff morale and increase retention.	7	Supported – Current Practice / Project
<b>Recommendation 5</b> Establish a collaborative joint management-union committee to improve staff and management relations.	7	Supported – Current Practice / Project
<b>Recommendation 6</b> Ensure essential scheduled and unscheduled emergency management exercises are carried out, irrespective of staffing constraints.	9	Not Supported
<b>Recommendation 7</b> The Department must commit adequate resources to ensure the effective and timely operation of the official visits centre in Hakea.	11	Supported – Current Practice / Project
<b>Recommendation 8</b> Ensure basic human rights and minimum standards for prisoners in custody are met.	15	Supported
<b>Recommendation 9</b> Complete the planned roll out of body-worn cameras in Hakea and other maximum-security prisons.	21	Supported – Current Practice / Project
<b>Recommendation 10</b> Commit to major infrastructure upgrades to improve the capacity and services for prisoners.	22	Supported – Current Practice / Project
<b>Recommendation 11</b> Conduct a thorough analysis of primary and mental health care demand and allocate sufficient resources to meet identified needs.	24	Supported – Current Practice / Project
<b>Recommendation 12</b> Develop a purpose-built management unit within Hakea, to safely deliver a full range of services and regimes currently managed by Unit 1.	27	Supported in Principle

<p><b>Recommendation 13</b> Commit to and roll out a digital platform for prisoners to manage their own requests.</p>	34	Supported in Principle
<p><b>Recommendation 14</b> 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.</p>	37	Supported – Current Practice / Project
<p><b>Recommendation 15</b> Source and establish voluntary programs, and ensure sentenced prisoners have access to mandatory programs, including via remote attendance.</p>	39	Supported in Principle



# HAKEA PRISON

## FACT PAGE

### ROLE OF FACILITY

Hakea Prison is a maximum-security facility that serves as the main remand, receipt, and assessment centre for male prisoners in the Perth metropolitan region.

### HISTORY

Hakea Prison incorporates the former Canning Vale Prison and the CW Campbell Remand Centre. Canning Vale Prison was originally opened in 1982, with the capacity to hold 248 prisoners.

When the CW Campbell Remand Centre was built, it had capacity to hold 150 remand prisoners. Over the years both sites were upgraded and expanded and in November 2000, the two adjacent centres were merged to become Hakea Prison.

At the time of the inspection, Hakea had 1,131 general purpose beds and 68 special purpose beds.

### OFFICIAL CAPACITY

1,199

### PRISONERS AT TIME OF INSPECTION

1,148



Hakea is located on Noongar Whadjuk land in Canning Vale, 28 kilometres south of Perth.



### INSPECTION DATE

6-9 May 2024



# 1 A lack of long-term planning has left Hakea in crisis

Since our 2021 inspection, regular liaison visits and monitoring of Hakea and the wider custodial estate alerted us to several areas of increasing concern: a rising prisoner population, chronic overcrowding, increased deaths in custody, higher rates of self-harm and suicidal behaviour, insufficient staffing, escalating tensions between prison staff and management, and a restricted daily prisoner regime.

We found a prison struggling on multiple levels, with the lack of long-term planning by the Department of Justice (the Department) significantly contributing to the crisis. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the prisoner population had steadily increased, without any corresponding increase in infrastructure and services. Much of the prison's aging 1980s living units were unfit for purpose, something we have repeatedly raised throughout several reports. In the weeks following our inspection, the population increased, leading to three units accommodating men on mattresses on the floor of cells.

Hakea is, for most adult males remanded or sentenced into custody, the first facility where they will start their custodial journey. Prioritising investment in infrastructure and services to prisoners at the earliest opportunity would have a significant impact on the wider adult male custodial estate.

## 1.1 Hakea's strategic plan did not provide clear direction

Previously we found Hakea had a Strategic Business Plan (2021–2023), with a clear vision statement, but a lack of detailed supporting documents for how the plan would be operationalised or how to prioritise deliverables. The prison's current Strategic Plan (2023–2025) was largely unchanged from the previous three-year plan.

In 2021, there was a more settled and positive relationship between the prison's staff, management, and members of the Western Australian Prison Officers Union (WAPOU). During this inspection however, we found disillusioned and exhausted staff managing the prison on a day-to-day basis without a clear strategy or vision. Morale was low, with many staff seeking direction from the union, rather than senior leaders to manage the increasing prisoner population with a reduced workforce.

All organisations require focused plans, clarity, and clear communication to succeed. Without effective strategic and underpinning business plans, the consequences are far-reaching. The absence of a strategic framework not only impacts daily operations but also hinders long-term improvement. Addressing these issues promptly is essential for stabilising the current situation and ensuring the prison can return to an effective standard daily routine.

We acknowledge the Department is developing an organisational strategic framework. However, immediate short-term plans, clear communications, and directions are needed for individual prisons, while broader strategy and underpinning business plans are developed. A whole-of-government problem-solving consultation process, involving stakeholders such as the Departments of Finance,



Treasury, Communities, and the Western Australia Police Force is necessary to address the current crisis at Hakea.

### Recommendation 1

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

## 1.2 Hakea’s purpose in the system has become problematic

Newly remanded and sentenced male prisoners begin, and often finish, their custodial journey at Hakea. The prison’s strategic plan outlines Hakea as the primary remand, receipt and assessment prison for male metropolitan prisoners. But the extent of Hakea’s role is more complex, accommodating around 240 sentenced, 200 protection, and 100 prisoners rated with psychiatric conditions ranging from serious to stable.

On the first day of our inspection, Hakea held 1,148 prisoners, exceeding its general-purpose bed capacity by 1.5%. Additionally, 10 of the 11 adult male facilities in the state were operating at over 90% capacity, highlighting the limited availability of beds across the custodial system. Given the projected rise in the prison population, there is growing concern that current capacity levels will soon be inadequate to meet future demand.

The Department’s draft Justice Strategic Asset Plan (2020-2021) had projected sufficient beds for the adult male population only until July 2024, factoring in approved justice reforms and the approved expansion of Casuarina Prison (DOJ, 2019, p. 24). The pandemic saw prisoner numbers decline. But by May 2024, Hakea’s daily average population had risen 39%, from a low of 824 in January 2022, to 1,143 in May 2024.

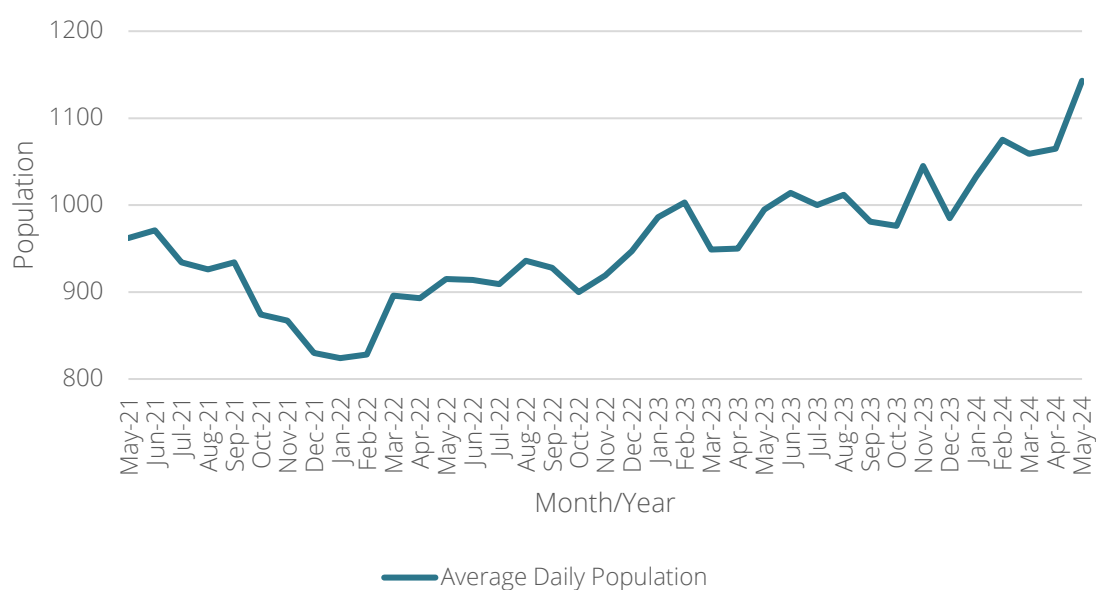


Figure 1: Increased Hakea average daily population between inspections.

The increase in Hakea's population was driven by remand prisoners, with a 4.8% rise in remand First Nations prisoners and a 15.8% rise in remand non-First Nations prisoners. This resulted in limited available bed capacity, not only at Hakea but also at other facilities where these prisoners were later transferred.

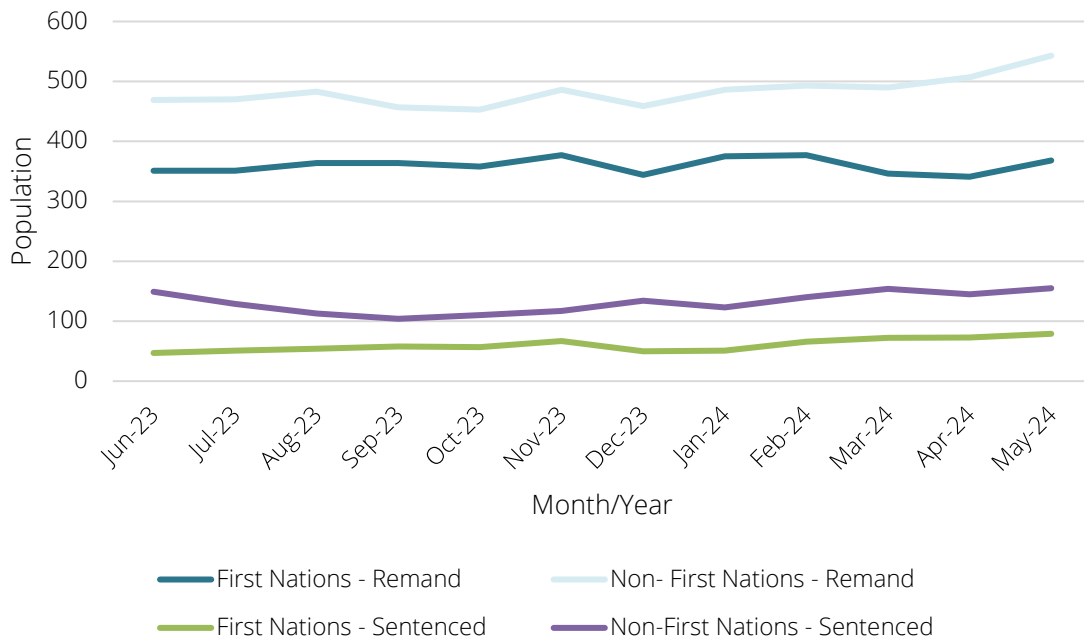


Figure 2: Hakea's population by legal status and Aboriginality from June 2023 to May 2024.

## 2 Addressing staffing issues requires urgent intervention

We have consistently raised concerns regarding appropriate staffing levels and the necessity to provide a positive working environment. In our 2002 report of Hakea, the then Inspector of Custodial Services, said: 'A prison that is bad for the staff, is inevitably bad for prisoners.' (OICS, 2002, p. 3).

### 2.1 Prison staffing was in crisis

Custodial staffing shortages had significantly impacted Hakea's daily operations. Departmental data highlighted the crisis in terms of vacancies, custodial staff availability, and turnover. Unplanned absences each day represented about 25% of the rostered daily workforce, impacting every aspect of prison life and leading to significant restrictions and adaptive routines. High numbers of staff on workers' compensation and personal leave resulted in serious concerns around staff welfare and workplace culture.

#### Recruitment failed to match the growth in prisoner numbers

Since the beginning of 2024, and up to the time of the inspection, 23 custodial officers left Hakea through transfers, resignations, or retirements. Meanwhile, only 26 new recruits graduated from the corrective services academy and were appointed to Hakea. This marginal increase in staff was insufficient to address the prison's needs, particularly given the attrition rate of experienced staff.

Significant issues within the staffing group remained. Chronic vacancies, secondments to other facilities, daily book-offs, and workers' compensation claims made the situation worse, leaving the facility critically understaffed. Increased prisoner numbers rendered the existing Service Level Agreement for 1,000 prisoners inadequate, creating a critical staffing gap that severely impacted Hakea's ability to operate effectively. Strategic recruitment and retention initiatives are needed to ensure staffing levels can support the increased prisoner population, maintain the good order, safety, and security of the prison, and provide a structured regime for prisoners.

#### A staffing review was underway, but progress was impeded by delays

Staff turnover rates were one of the biggest challenges in maintaining a stable workforce. Between July 2021 and January 2024, 104 staff members left their roles due to retirement, resignation, or other forms of permanent separation from the Department. In addition, 78 officers at Hakea transferred out and only 36 transferred in. This resulted in a net loss of 42 uniformed staff, leading to a total turnover of 182 staff, or 44% of the uniformed workforce, over two and a half years. This significant turnover negatively impacted the prison's staffing levels, stability, and operational ability.

Additionally, there were 207 uniformed staff on the waiting list to transfer out to other prisons, but only 24 on the transfer-in list. Our pre-inspection staff survey contained many negative comments

#### WORK RELATED STRESS

**7.27/10** ↑

(6.65 in the 2021 pre-inspection survey)

#### QUALITY OF WORKING LIFE

**4.49/10** ↓

(5.67 in the 2021 pre-inspection survey)

about inadequate staff numbers, redeployments, and perceived lack of support and bullying from management.

To address these challenges, the Department initiated a review of prison officer staffing numbers in April 2023, marking the first comprehensive staffing assessment since 2018. Although initially focused on custodial staffing, the scope of the review was expanded in 2024 to include all business areas such as health, education, assessments, and administration. Individual prisons, including Hakea, were preparing submissions for evaluation. However, the review faced several delays, pushing its estimated completion date to 2025.

Given the timing of the last review, the current staffing crisis at Hakea, and the significant changes within the prison system, it is crucial for the Department to prioritise and complete this review. A clear understanding of staffing needs across each prison is essential to addressing identified gaps, and ensuring that prisoners receive consistent and improved services, particularly in critical areas like health and welfare. A comprehensive review with updated and appropriate staffing levels for the current prisoner population could improve job satisfaction among prison staff, reduce turnover and workers' compensation rates, and build a more stable and experienced workforce.

#### **Recommendation 2**

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

### **Vocational Support Officers were constantly redeployed and frustrated**

In 2024, redeployment had become an expected norm for many custodial staff, including those in industrial or specialised positions like reception or security. This together with increased workloads, has led to staff reporting low morale, dissatisfaction with management, and a decline in productivity.

Hakea was authorised to fill a total of 61 Vocational Support Officer (VSO) positions across various roles within the prison. As of 30 April 2024, there were seven vacancies within the VSO group, and an additional four VSOs were on workers' compensation. Many of these positions require specific minimum qualifications. For example, a Construction and Maintenance Instructor must possess a Certificate III in a construction trade, while a Cabinet Shop Instructor needs a Certificate III in cabinet or furniture making. These qualifications and skills are in high demand in the community.

Both positions, while important, were deemed non-essential so were subject to regular redeployment. This led to frustration among VSOs, causing some to consider other employment options. Frequently redeployed VSOs who are approved to cover certain prison officer duties often become dissatisfied with not performing their roles and either leave altogether or transition to become prison officers.

### **An agreement impacted the ability to substantively fill VSO vacancies**

Clause 136 of the Prison Officers' Industrial Agreement 2022 outlines the pathway and conditions for VSOs who transition to be prison officers.

When substantive VSOs become prison officers, their VSO positions are held for them during their 12-month probationary period. This means that at any time during a probationary period, they can return to their substantive VSO position. Consequently, the prison cannot advertise for a full-time replacement until the probationary period is completed, which often leads to difficulties in attracting suitable candidates for skilled positions on short fixed-term contracts.

The rationale for this clause in the Agreement is understood, but there may be a solution if the right of return is for a substantive VSO position of a similar level, rather than a specific position.

### **Recommendation 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.

## **Staff were frustrated and exhausted**

We spoke with various staff through focus groups, individual meetings, and informal interactions. These sessions provided valuable insights into staff experiences and attitudes. It was clear that many were motivated to positively impact the lives of the prisoners in their care. Despite operating under difficult and challenging circumstances, staff consistently put in their best efforts to 'make things work.'

However, this dedication was overshadowed by widespread frustration and stress. We spoke with staff who were disengaged and reporting feelings of fatigue, burnout, and resentment. This negativity was often directed towards local management or the Department, indicating a significant disconnect and dissatisfaction with the current leadership.

*Staff making it work is not working anymore*

*I dread coming to work in the morning.*

*Quotes from pre-inspection staff survey.*

Frustration and exhaustion were negatively impacting staff attitudes toward prisoners, which raised serious concerns about the potential effects on prisoner welfare. During town-hall-style meetings, we heard viewpoints that were not only unhealthy, but highlighted the urgent need for a cultural shift in how prisoner care is approached. When asked what gave them hope for the future, staff responded by saying they looked forward to resignation, retirement, and long service leave.

These responses suggest that morale and job satisfaction were critically low and at crisis point. We were most concerned at the lack of a clear and effective strategy to address ongoing staffing issues. While the Department had increased recruitment for prison officers, these efforts were insufficient to counter high attrition rates. Without urgent and substantial intervention, the situation is unlikely to improve. Increased recruitment and retention strategies alongside a comprehensive approach to improve overall workforce morale and culture is required.

#### **Recommendation 4**

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

## **2.2 Conflict with senior management was an entrenched problem**

Having an effective and efficient staffing group is key to managing Hakea (OICS, 2002). The history of staff conflict with senior management at Hakea spans many years. Over the past decade, five different superintendents have faced many challenges, with varied success in maintaining a constructive working relationship with the Hakea prison officer group and their union. This suggests the problem lies beyond individual superintendents or individual union representatives.

The union has consistently led Hakea staff in criticising prison management for attempting to operate the prison with what they say is insufficient staffing levels. The union and prison staff are within their rights to argue that the Department has failed to implement effective recruitment and retention strategies to adequately staff Hakea. On the other hand, Hakea management and Department leadership may have a different view, seeing the arguments as unreasonable or the solutions as unrealistic. Such is the nature of industrial disputes.

But it is fair to say that the absence of effective strategic workforce planning has contributed to the current staffing crisis. Likewise, budget restrictions over time and infrastructure limitations have played significant parts in the dispute. By the time of our inspection, many of these problems had become entrenched in dispute between the custodial workforce and management.

We believe, however, that there has been a lack of appreciation of the impacts these disputes have had over many years in undermining prison management and their efforts to effectively run the prison. Attempts to introduce improvements are often resisted, constant workplace health and safety issues are raised and reported, and the daily regime appears to prioritise minimising risk to staff over all other obligations.

We resist taking sides and express no view one way or another on which party to these disputes is right, other than to say it remains an ongoing issue that needs resolution.

#### **Recommendation 5**

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

## 2.3 Restrictive adaptive routines had fractured prisoner-staff relations

During periods of short staffing, the prison implemented an adaptive routine, which involved closing non-essential industries and services and redeploying staff to run a restricted daily regime. Low staffing levels were a critical issue, with on average 25% fewer staff on shift than scheduled each day. This shortage, coupled with frequent lockdowns through adaptive routines, severely limited prisoners' time out of cells. Prisoners often had only up to an hour for essential activities like showering, cleaning, making inquiries, and telephone calls, often forcing them to choose between these activities.

Adaptive routines further restricted movement, with prisoners being locked behind grilles or having limited yard access. There was almost no access to recreation or the library, minimal education availability, and few opportunities to meaningfully interact with unit staff.

Social visits were reduced from seven to five days a week, and no family days had taken place. These reductions, combined with ongoing lockdowns, increased tensions between staff and prisoners and made the prison less safe. Comments from prisoners highlighted negative staff behaviours, and we witnessed several poor interactions.

New officers were not provided mentoring or the opportunity to participate in a structured daily routine. We were concerned many staff now seen as experienced, had worked at the prison for several years, but had rarely, if ever, worked a standard structured day. The risk-mitigating focus of the adaptive routines, resulted in staff adopting barrier management at the expense of rapport building, which was further hindered by interaction through wing grilles or hatches in cell doors.

*There is minimal experienced staff left at Hakea with new recruits who are not learning the correct procedures.*

*Quote from a staff member during pre-inspection surveys.*



**52%** ≈

of prisoners felt their relationship with unit staff was good. Down from **54%** in 2021



**33%** ↓

of prisoners felt their relationship with industrial officers was good. Down from **41%** in 2021

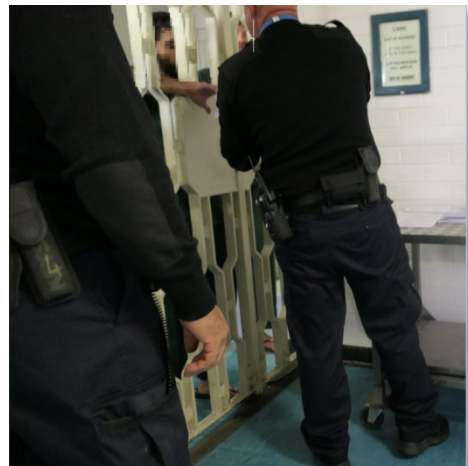


Photo 1: Prisoners making requests through a grille.

## 2.4 Insufficient staff to conduct emergency management exercises

Emergency management exercises are designed to prepare prison staff and test the facility's capability to respond effectively to emergencies. These exercises help evaluate the effectiveness of plans during actual emergencies, as outlined in the Department's policy (DOJ, 2023). One exercise is required to be conducted every two months, with a comprehensive set of exercises completed within a three-year period.

Up until January 2023, Hakea conducted monthly exercises, including 11 out of 12 live exercises in 2022, and 10 out of 12 live exercises in 2023. However, from February to April 2024, critical understaffing led to the cancellation of both emergency management exercises and drug prevalence testing. Although some exercises were carried out during our inspection, other critical training sessions that had been missed earlier in the year, including escape from custody-escort, pandemic response, and razor wire emergency training, had been postponed until 2025.

To compensate, the Superintendent had directed hard copies of emergency management plans be distributed to accommodation units, ensuring staff had access to critical information.

Pre-inspection survey results revealed a decline in the perceived adequacy of training among prison officers. Only 30% felt they had received sufficient training for a fire and/or natural disaster, down from 44% in 2021 and below the state average of 42%. Additionally, only 26% felt adequately trained for a loss of control incident, a decrease from 29% in 2021 and below the state average of 32%.

Given staff shortages, declining confidence, relevant Coroner's recommendations, and recent tragic events at Hakea, including four deaths in custody in six months prior to our inspection, it is essential that emergency management training continues regardless of staffing levels on the day, to improve the prison's response capability in emergencies.

### Recommendation 6

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

## 2.5 Some positive outcomes despite resourcing challenges

Despite a high number of vacancies, secondments, and daily personal leave among staff, many essential areas continued to provide committed and valuable services. While some areas initially stood out as highlights, many were simply achieving their basic responsibilities.

### The family visits centre was a valuable resource

The service at the family visits centre is provided by staff employed by ReSet, with a supervisor covering both Hakea and Melaleuca Women's Prison. We saw staff meeting visitors with compassion and enthusiasm and providing support to visitors who required assistance. The service also provides clothing to meet the strict dress code for visitors who attend unprepared. Delays in processing



through the gatehouse were frequent, and staff at the Family Visit Centre did their best to support and reassure visitors through the process. The centre was a good example of a high performing, much valued, and supportive service for families and visitors to Hakea provided by an external contractor.



Photo 2 and 3: The family visits centre was bright and inviting

### Efficient canteen processes provided a sense of normalcy

The canteen workforce had expanded from five to eight Level 1 prisoners from Unit 5, supervised by three VSOs. Although VSOs were not quarantined or immune to redeployment, staff efficiently provided timely services to the entire prison. The canteen supervisor also attended monthly Prison Council meetings to address any suggestions or queries and regularly updated the canteen spends list for distribution to the units each week.

Our pre-inspection survey revealed that 43% of prisoners were satisfied with the canteen, increasing from 32% in 2021. Around 30 prisoners mentioned the canteen as a positive aspect of their experience at Hakea.

## Video link and official visits operated well, but relying on single positions was a risk

Hakea manages over 800 remand prisoners and requires an efficient process to manage court appearances. The video-link area, designed for remote communications with court officials, was purpose-built and managed between 60 and 70 prisoners' hearings per day. A team of six managed court hearings and provided prisoners with access to fresh air and food.

In contrast, the official visits centre, with 14 rooms, was managed by a team of two permanently rostered officers. Both areas were busy and relied on well-trained staff, each with a supervisor overseeing operations. An official visits supervisor diligently managed the official visits process. But despite positive feedback from service providers regarding staff dedication, there were significant issues. Staff struggled to process booking requests, even those submitted a week in advance, due to a backlog driven by the growing remand population. The supervisor had been working extra hours to manage the demand but struggled to keep up. The delays in official visitors engaging with prisons for legal matters particularly impacted remand prisoners' court preparation.

Relying on a single individual for such a crucial area is a high-risk strategy, with a high likelihood of staff burnout. Any unplanned absence of an individual so heavily relied on has the potential for further delays in arranging official visits, which is likely to result in extended remand times, impacting the broader justice and courts system. Beyond the inspection we have heard many complaints and concerns from key stakeholders operating within the justice system about the difficulties and consequences of delays in facilitating official visits in Hakea.

Resourcing the official visits area appropriately is vital for maintaining the integrity and efficiency of Hakea's processes.

### Recommendation 7

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

## Orientation processes had fallen, but were improving

Most new prisoners received at Hakea are accommodated in Unit 7 for orientation. We have previously found Hakea to have effective orientation practices (OICS, 2019), which included dedicated orientation officers conducting prisoner interviews, tours of the facility, and assisting with paperwork. Regular activities were also organised in the unit, supported by a Prison Support Officer (PSO) who was based there.

But in early 2024, almost 900 prisoners had not been orientated using the official checklist staff are supposed to complete for new arrivals in the Department's offender database. The number of outstanding checklists had dropped to 250 during our inspection following concerted efforts to reduce the backlog. But many prisoners still reported feeling uninformed and unsupported. Our pre-inspection survey indicated rising levels of distress among new prisoners, with 79% reporting they

felt upset upon arrival. The percentage of prisoners who felt they received adequate information dropped from 32% in 2021 to just 14% in 2024.

Efforts to keep up with orientations were ongoing. Basic information and a copy of Hakea's First Night and Orientation handbook were provided to new arrivals. Two peer support prisoners in Unit 7 addressed immediate needs such as access to legal and welfare support, partially compensating for a formal orientation. A senior officer was driving the change in the unit, reflecting a commitment to address prisoners' needs.

Plans were also in place to assign two Unit 7 orientation officers to focus on completing TOMS orientation checklists. These officers would be replaced by visits officers who would work in Unit 7 on the days visit sessions were not held to cover for the officers catching up on the backlog of orientation checklists.

While improvements to ensure new arrivals received the necessary information and support had begun, immediate and continued efforts are needed to ensure adequate orientation for all new prisoners. This service is critical for maintaining a safe and secure environment in Unit 7.

### 3 Living conditions were substandard and inhumane

Regular visits to Hakea in the lead-up to our inspection revealed critical issues affecting the treatment of prisoners, mostly due to insufficient staffing numbers. We could not follow our usual in-person pre-inspection prisoner survey process due to the constant lockdowns restricting access to prisoners. Instead, we dropped the questionnaires off and left them overnight for prisoners to complete in their cells. We collected the surveys the following day. This was not our preferred methodology but was a necessary adaptation given the operational challenges the prison was experiencing. During the inspection, the use of adaptive routines limited our own interactions with prisoners too.

We frequently receive letters from prisoners detailing the living conditions within a facility. One letter, received just before this inspection, illustrates with insight the impact of the adaptive routines on prisoners. This account stresses the urgency of addressing staffing shortages and operational issues that significantly affect the daily lives and treatment of prisoners.

#### EXTRACTS FROM A PRISONER LETTER

To whom it may concern,

Every day for the past five months, I wake up to a Routine B or C, although majority of all routines recently have been C.

Routine C means **I will be locked in my two-man cell for 23 hours of the day**. I will be **fed through a hole** in my cell door.

**I may or may not get a shower** depending on how many guards are on duty.  
I will **have to defecate in front of my cell mate** as we are not allowed out of our cell.  
I will **not be able to call my partner, mother, or son**.  
I will **not get any recreation time** (I honestly cannot recall the last time we were out on the oval).

**I understand the prison is short staffed - I also know the prison is full** also. And the simplest solution may seem to lock us in our cell day after day, week after week, but we are going onto month after month now.

The **suffering that I go through everyday mentally from not being allowed into the sunshine... The stress and anxiety is overwhelming**.

I am no stranger to doing time in jail. This new routine of constant Routine C is new for me.

I know I am in a prison; **but I am also a human being**. Men are dying in here.

### 3.1 Failures to meet minimum expectations and basic standards

Several international rules and declarations, alongside the *Guiding Principles for Corrections in Australia* and our own *Revised Code of Inspection Standards*, establish the foundational and minimum expectations for the treatment of prisoners. The *United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners* (The Nelson Mandela Rules), recognised as the global standard for prisoner treatment, are central to these standards. Specifically, Rule 1 which clearly outlines that no circumstances whatsoever may be invoked as justification for not meeting the minimum standard of preventing cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment of prisoners (UNODC, 2015). These guidelines ensure that the fundamental rights and dignity of prisoners are maintained universally.

#### Time out of cell and meaningful activity was at unacceptable levels

We found the daily regime to be the worst it has ever been in terms of time out of cell and meaningful activity. Access to employment, education, programs, recreation, and any other activities outside of living units was extremely rare for most prisoners, with only essential workers regularly allowed to leave their units.

Time out of cell was at its lowest compared to any other facility in the prison system, except in the immediate aftermath of a major loss of control incident. Even when prisoners were out of their cells, they were often confined to their wing or unit, without access to outside areas, and fresh air. Recreation areas outside the units, such as ovals or the gymnasium, was inaccessible.

Departmental policy states prisoners are entitled to at least three hours of access to open air daily (DOJ, 2024). Rule 23 of the Nelson Mandela Rules requires at least one hour of suitable exercise in the open air each day (UNODC, 2015). Prior to the inspection, we viewed CCTV footage of accommodation units over several days. On at least two days in March 2024, we saw that prisoners (other than essential workers) in one unit were not unlocked from their cell at all throughout the day. This showed Hakea was regularly failing to meet both minimum standards and Department policies. Figure 4 shows the average out-of-cell hours (OOCH) per unit had been trending steeply downwards since the end of 2023.

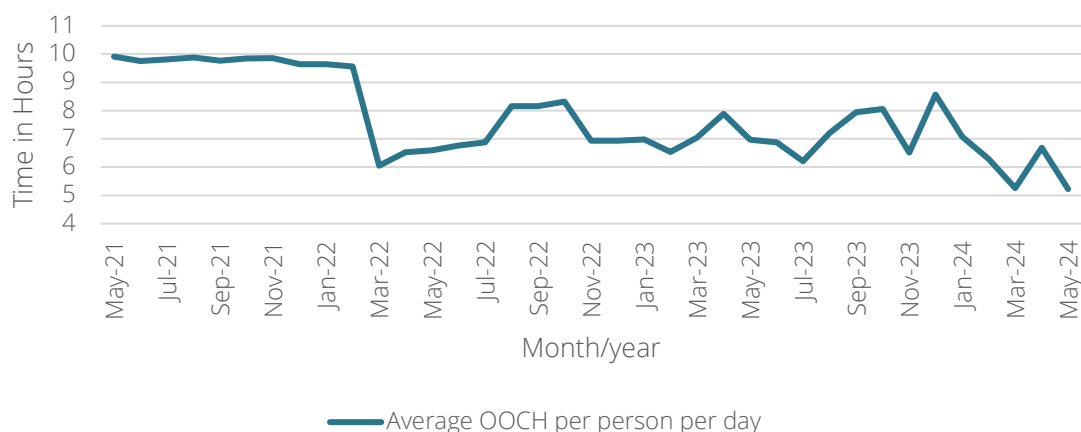


Figure 3: Hakea prisoners decline in out of cell hours (OOCH) over three years.

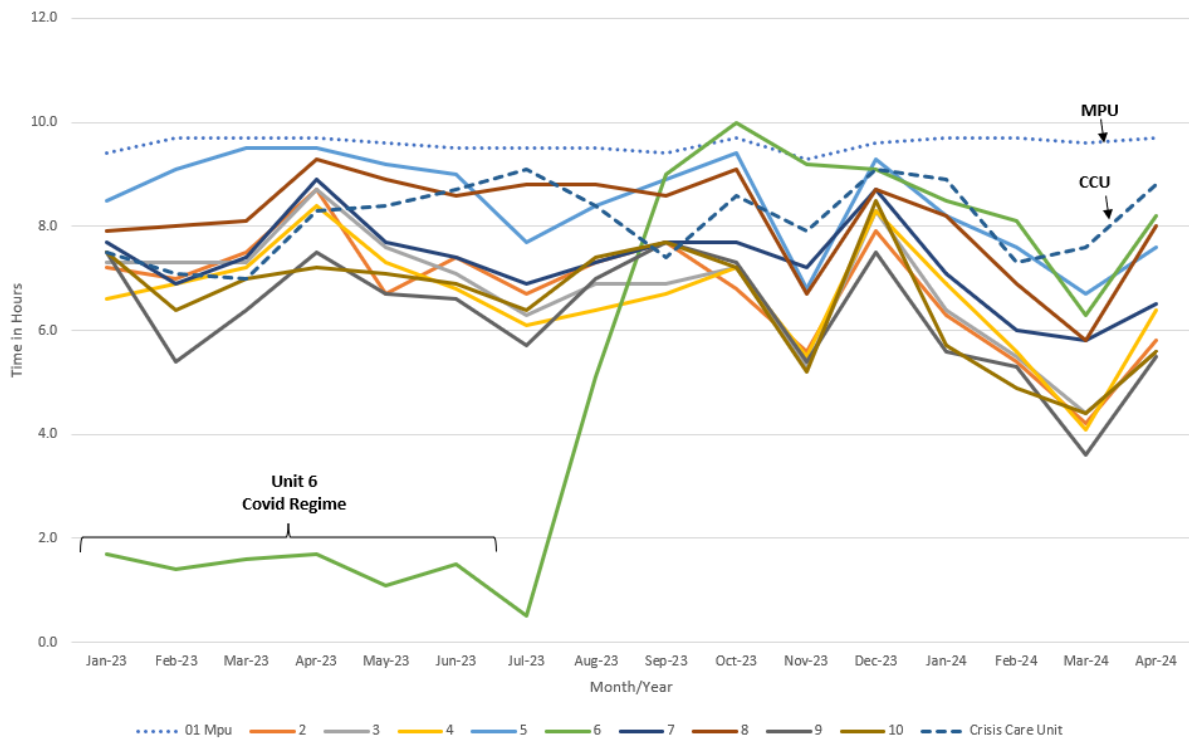


Figure 4: Average OOOH per unit at Hakea, January 2023 – April 2024.

This situation was driven by adaptive routines caused by severe custodial staffing shortages. The prison consistently operated under one of the adaptive routines A, B, or C – ranging from least restrictive to most restrictive – depending on staffing levels (see appendix E).

Figure 5 shows that since the start of 2024, routine C (the most restrictive regime) was the most common, especially throughout February and March 2024. In contrast, routine A (the least restrictive regime) was rare, and virtually no days featured a normal regime without adaptive routines.

This unsustainable situation severely impacted both prisoners and staff. For staff, it was mentally and physically exhausting. For prisoners, it created an environment which arguably constituted cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment.

### Recommendation 8

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

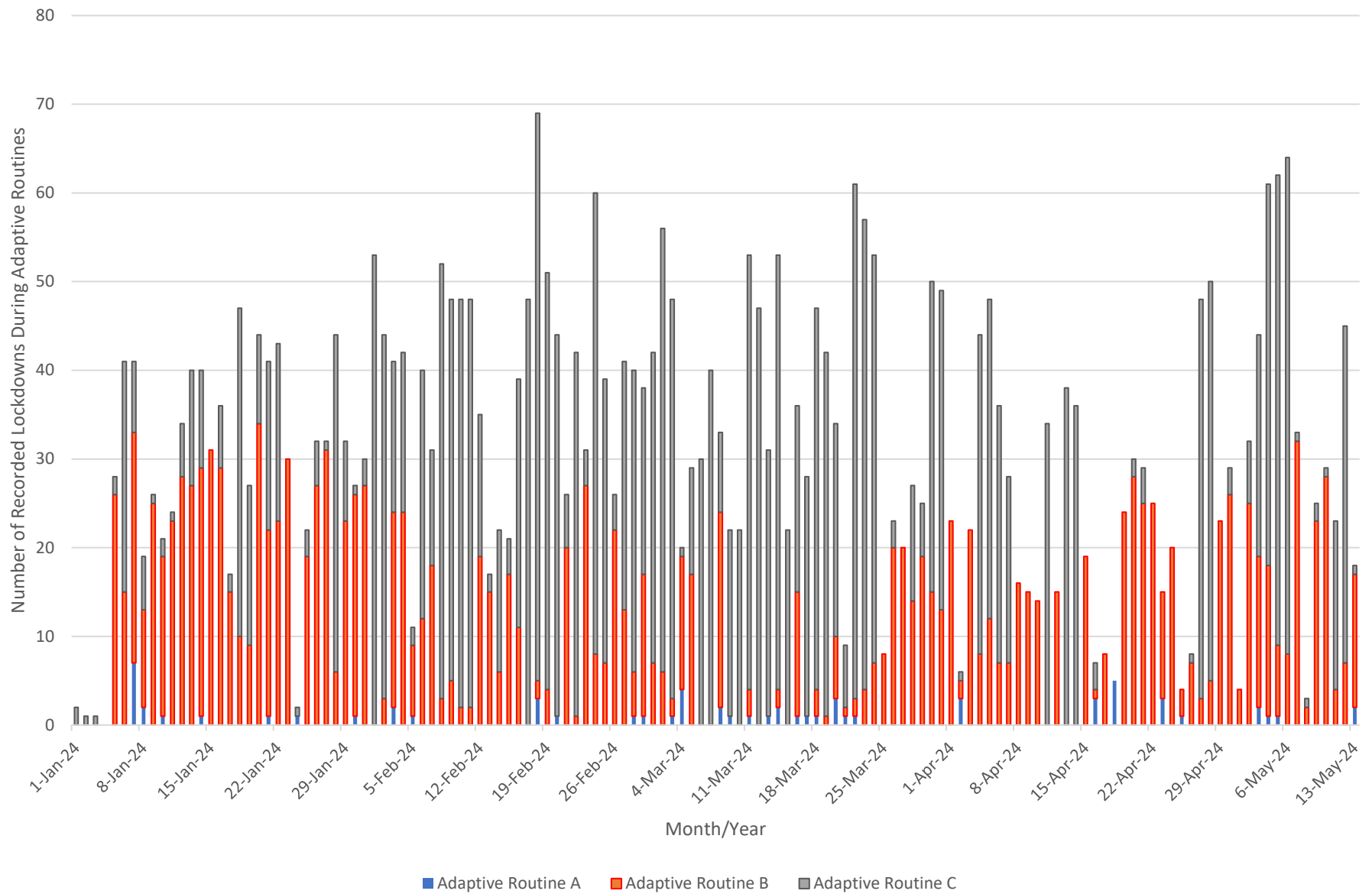


Figure 5: Adaptive routines recorded per day at Hakea, 1 January 2024 – 13 May 2024.

## 3.2 Quality of life was diminished

### Supply chain delays resulted in prisoners regularly lacking clean clothes

In 2021, laundry practices were satisfactory, with dirty clothes washed, dried, and returned the same day. However, the inability for prisoners to keep the same set of clothing, including underwear, was undignified.

In 2024, while laundry processes continued to operate efficiently, prisoners were not receiving clean clothing regularly. During the inspection, we found inconsistencies and inadequacies in the supply of clothing and bedding. Prisoners often went for long periods without clean clothes, particularly during lockdowns. Survey comments highlighted persistent issues:

- lack of clothing and towels
- waiting up to 13 days for clean clothes
- laundry services operating only once a week at best
- insufficient supply of clothes
- wearing the same clothes for several days
- no access to laundry for nearly three weeks
- using the same towel for three weeks and dealing with dirty linen for a month
- limited access to showers and clean clothes following lockdowns
- weeks without basic amenities, including laundry
- infrequent laundry services and delayed access to items like pillows.



Ideally, each unit should manage their clothing stock and request additional supplies as needed. But there were delays with supply, as thousands of sheets and doona covers were on order. The current stock of 80 new towels and 90 pillowcases was insufficient for the prison population.

Despite these challenges, there were some positive practices. Unit 8 had an effective clothing exchange process, and the laundry environment was improved with soundproofing in 2023. Prisoners' personal clothing was cleaned by reception workers, so they had access to their own clothes when attending court and upon release.

### Food delivery processes created unhygienic living conditions

We found prisoners were mostly receiving their meals through cell hatches. While this method ensured food was distributed under an adaptive regime, it was unhygienic, undignified, and posed health risks to prisoners, particularly as they ate in a cell which also contained the toilet. Food scraps regularly accumulated at hatch openings, interfering with medication delivery, and attracted pests including cockroaches and rodents.



*Unit 7 is infested with cockroaches*

*This place is riddled with cockroaches*

*Cockroaches are in plague proportions throughout this prison.*

*Quotes from pre-inspection prisoner survey.*

*The cockroaches in unit 7 it is an infestation for over a month.*

*Prisoners are being put in cells which are infested with cockroaches.*

*Prisoners are sleeping with cockroaches crawling all over them.*

*Quotes from pre-inspection staff survey.*

Previously, we recommended systemic management of environmental health, including cleaning, food storage and service, and pest control (OICS, 2022a). The Department supported the recommendation, issued a cleaning and hygiene direction in June 2022, and engaged external contractors for routine pest control. Although steps have been taken to manage pest infestations, the current food delivery processes during lockdowns contribute to a degrading and unhealthy environment.

### Cell sharing arrangements were based on availability rather than risk

With the significant increase to the population, cell sharing processes focused on ensuring those with certain alerts did not share to prevent conflicts, like separating individuals with active alerts against each other or those with a 'Not to Share Cell' alert. Despite these measures, the overall approach to cell allocation was disorganised.

Inappropriate placements, such as smokers with non-smokers, posed health risks, while young prisoners accommodated with elders, created opportunities for exploitation and bullying. Prisoners expressed concerns about being placed with others who had medical problems or violent offences. These important considerations were often overlooked, leading to unsafe and inappropriate cell placements that compromise prisoners' safety and wellbeing.

### A lack of recreational and rehabilitative areas for prisoners

Hakea has a recreation hall, two ovals, tennis courts, a library, a cultural space, and an education centre. But these areas were inaccessible to prisoners due to staffing shortages. Some unit exercise yards had been modified to allow access, but these had little use and were not well maintained.

Redeploying recreation officers left prisoners without structured recreation. A library VSO had not been appointed, despite multiple attempts to fill the position. As a temporary solution, mobile

libraries were placed in units with unit staff responsible for managing resources, rotating texts, and providing opportunities for prisoners to choose books. The effectiveness of this system was inconsistent, as the additional burden on unit staff often resulted in limited access for prisoners.

These services and activities contribute towards prisoner rehabilitation and wellbeing. The inability to use facilities due to staffing shortages not only reduces the quality of life for prisoners but undermines the overall values of the Department. Ensuring adequate staffing and prioritising the availability of recreational and educational opportunities are essential steps towards improving the conditions and outcomes for prisoners.



Photo 4 and 5: Unit recreation yards were unused and poorly maintained



Photo 6: Prisoners rarely used the cultural area which was harsh and exposed to the elements

### 3.3 Outdated infrastructure led to poor living conditions and safety

Hakea Prison was established through the amalgamation of two separate facilities: Canning Vale Maximum Security Prison, with a capacity of 350 beds for adult males, and the C.W. Campbell Remand Centre, which accommodated up to 150 adult remand prisoners.

#### Most cells were unfit for multiple occupancy

Hakea's living units were outdated, with most cells originally designed for single occupancy. Prisoners in Units 1 to 4 shared the smallest cells in the state, each measuring just 5.1m<sup>2</sup>. These cramped and overcrowded conditions fall well below the Australasian guidelines, which specify that a single wet cell should be 8.75m<sup>2</sup> and a double should be 12.75m<sup>2</sup> (Corrective Services Victoria, 1990).

The lack of in-cell showers resulted in hygiene issues. Many prisoners told us they did not always get access to a shower every day.

Cells in Unit 5, the earned privileges area, contained a toilet and shower, providing a more hygienic environment. However, at 7.5 m<sup>2</sup> they were also below the standard guidelines. Prisoners had access to recreation gear, and a small kitchen with rice cookers, and frying pans. However, prisoners were still doubled up in cramped cells, supplied with meals from the kitchen, and subject to the same lockdowns due to the adaptive routine, limiting their ability to benefit from many of these improved amenities.

#### Cells were not being inspected

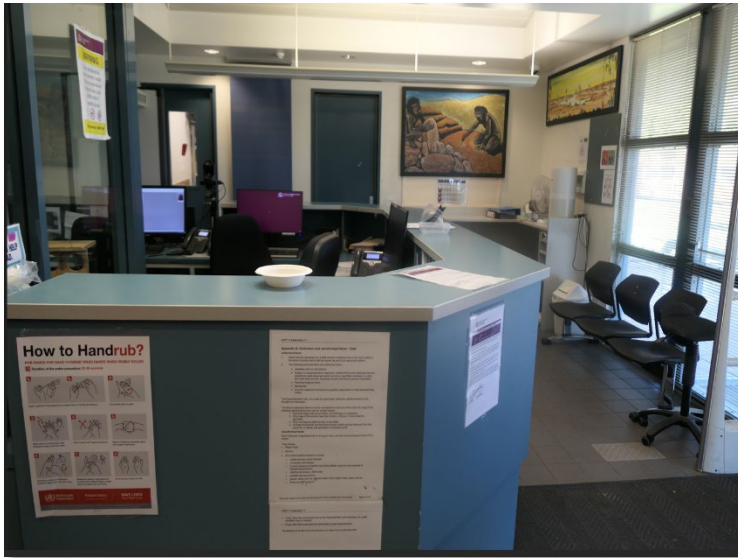
Cell inspections involve staff visually checking cells for hygiene and infrastructure issues, ensuring that living conditions meet the required standards. However, these inspections also serve a broader purpose. They can reveal conflicts between prisoners, such as signs of bullying or violence, and provide insights into prisoners' wellbeing. By observing changes in behaviour or the condition of the cell, staff can identify prisoners who may be struggling with mental health issues, stress, or other personal problems. This dual role of cell inspections is crucial for maintaining both the physical and psychological health of the prison population.

However, both prisoners and staff told us that cell inspections were not being conducted regularly. Many unit officers were either unwilling or unable to conduct regular cell inspections due to staffing shortages and the perception that it was unsafe to do so. This had several serious drawbacks. Failing to check the integrity of cells and their contents poses significant safety risks, as potential hazards and contraband may not be found. Many officers were unable to fully acknowledge and address the inhumane conditions that prisoners endured, and we found crowded units and cells created an environment conducive to bullying and violence. It is important for cell inspections to be routinely carried out, to allow for timely interventions and support for prisoners, while ensuring the safety of staff, in creating a more secure environment for all.

#### Gatehouse processes could be improved with updated infrastructure

Previous inspections have found the gatehouse to be equipped with old technology, outdated, small, and ineffective (OICS, 2022a, pp. 33-34). We saw no improvements during this inspection.

Designed to operate with a senior officer and six prison officers, the gatehouse often functioned with fewer staff, particularly on weekends. Staff struggled to manage entry and exit functions, leaving the x-ray scanner unstaffed and increasing the risk of prohibited items entering the prison. Staff lacked formal x-ray training, which often led to inadequate searches and missed opportunities to identify contraband. Due to its limited size, visitors had to wait at the family visits centre, until they were called to the gatehouse for processing.



Staff and external contractors frequently bypassed security protocols, such as metal detector checks, due to gatehouse staff being under pressure to expedite entry. The requirement to search 15% of staff daily was rarely met due to low staffing levels and there were ongoing issues with staff removing restraints and security equipment from the prison, despite multiple notices being issued to address the problem.

Photo 7: The gatehouse was small, understaffed, and outdated

### CCTV quality and coverage remained poor

CCTV was outdated and remained inadequate due to technical issues, frequent malfunctions, and the insufficient range of some cameras which failed to provide adequate coverage of their intended areas. Some coverage across multiple units was covered by a single camera. CCTV coverage was adequate in some areas but fell short in others. While CCTV upgrades were planned in reception by 2025, significant gaps remained elsewhere in Hakea.

### Body-worn cameras a priority

In 2019, we recommended the introduction of body-worn cameras to enhance CCTV coverage for use-of-force incidents (OICS, 2019). We reiterated this recommendation in 2022 (OICS, 2022a). The Department proposed a two-phase rollout, starting with Banksia Hill Detention Centre. Despite Banksia Hill having used body-worn cameras for many years, their use had not yet been extended to other facilities such as Hakea. Body-worn cameras offer a cost-effective way to increase surveillance and improve staff safety. At the time of writing, some camera units had arrived. The full roll-out of these cameras at Hakea to address the existing coverage gaps and improve overall security and safety of staff and prisoners is long overdue.

#### Recommendation 9

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



## Opportunities for significant investment

The adult male prisoner population is growing faster than Hakea and the system can accommodate, and available beds are quickly running out. Hakea will continue to experience chronic overcrowding and a higher demand for available beds. To reduce the pressures on its population, the Department must commit to and invest in new infrastructure or find viable alternatives to new prison capacity.



Figure 6: The number of available beds at Hakea had diminished in the months prior to the inspection.

Except for the purpose-built video-link facility, there had been no new infrastructure projects, or increases to the overall general bed capacity at Hakea. Renovations to cells in Unit 8 were finished during the inspection, and several cells in Unit 6 were due to be converted into safe cells. Yet Hakea was operating far beyond its intended design capacity. The prison was by no means the oldest prison in the state, but its infrastructure has aged poorly and become costly to maintain. A high turnover of prisoners and a restricted daily regime required regular attendance of external maintenance contractors which required a custodial escort as they moved around the site. This placed further strain on an already stretched workforce, reducing the ability for staff to provide services to prisoners or leading to the cancellation of the scheduled maintenance work.

### Recommendation 10

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

## 4 Access to health and wellbeing services were severely compromised

Prisoners, particularly those on remand, often have high and urgent medical needs. Overall, we found access to primary health care services was inadequate. Demand for health services was high, and the availability fell short of community expectations, with significant dissatisfaction reported among prisoners. Like many other areas of the prison, the service had been heavily impacted by the adaptive routine. A need for increased health care professional resourcing, better access to health and mental health services, and a more holistic approach to substance use treatment is required.

### 4.1 High demand, but substandard access to health services

#### Prisoner access to health services was poor

Many prisoners entering Hakea are in poor health, leading to high demand for health services. While our 2021 inspection found the system was struggling to meet demand, it had deteriorated further since then. The ongoing use of adaptive regimes reduced prisoners' access to health services, despite guidelines requiring essential services (including health and safer custody services) to be a priority.

Each adaptive routine affected different units in various ways, complicating prisoners' abilities to attend the health centre. Delays in unlocking, approving movements, releasing prisoners due to regime requirements, and competing staff priorities disrupted appointment schedules, often causing prisoners to miss health appointments. Prisoners from protection units faced further delays as they required custodial escorts, which were often unavailable due to staff shortages.



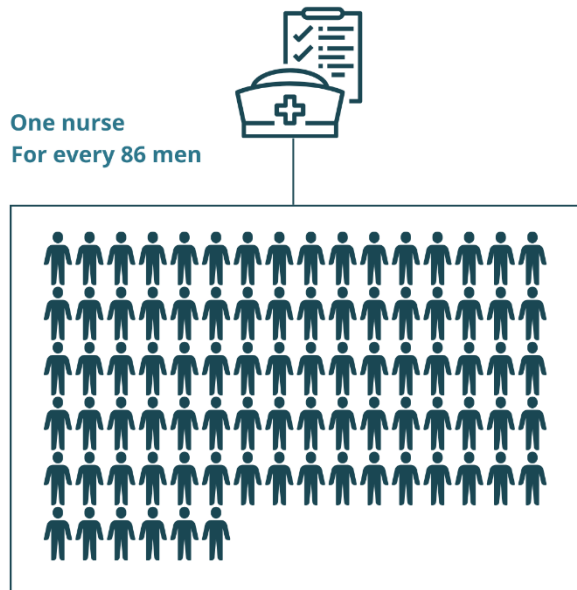
**8%** ↓  
of surveyed prisoners felt health services were good, down from **23%** in 2021

Prison staff told us that, at times, arranging for prisoners to attend the health centre was impossible, leading to frequent appointment reschedules. Staff told us that up to 14 prisoners per day were declining health appointments to prioritise access to other essential activities.

#### Allocated primary health resources were unable to meet the demand

Despite having few vacancies in primary and mental health positions, and in the Psychological Health Services (PHS) team, we heard that the allocated resources were insufficient to meet the demand for services by prisoners. Wait times of up to two weeks for a nursing triage appointment, and up to eight weeks to see a doctor, fell below community standards.

Lockdowns contributed to delays, but staffing allocation and maintaining a full complement of health staffing were also significant factors. The primary health team provided 24/7 services, including scheduled weekday appointments, after-hours and weekend emergency access, and new arrival



assessments. Despite most positions being filled, demand still outstripped supply, as evidenced by long triage wait times.

Health centre staff reported difficulties in attracting and retaining employees. This challenge, coupled with demanding work conditions, and delays in the recruitment process for health professionals, has reduced Hakea's ability to attract and retain staff. At the time of the inspection, there was one nurse for every 86 prisoners.

Hakea is allocated General Practitioner (GP) services five days per week with between three and five GPs on-site. However, GP attendance was based on availability which led to inconsistencies.

During our inspection, Hakea had only one full-time GP, and three part-time GPs, which sometimes resulted in just one doctor being on-site. We were told this was not enough coverage for the population.

### Mental Health resources were inadequate

Access to mental health services had further deteriorated due to the absence of a visiting psychiatrist in the months leading up to the inspection. At that time, there were only three full-time equivalent (FTE) psychiatrist positions for the entire prison system in Western Australia, but 2.2 FTE positions had been vacant for an extended period. This staffing level was also inadequate to meet the demand, creating significant risks to prisoners across the state, not just at Hakea. Although a new psychiatrist had recently started, this addition did not sufficiently address the lack of resources allocated for a high-needs population.

*I have entered the prison with existing mental issues these issues have got worse due to the treatment being limited.*

*Quote from pre-inspection prisoner survey.*

Hakea was fully staffed with the allocated 9.7 FTE mental health nurses and had only one vacant PHS counsellor position out of a total of 11. Despite this, the overwhelming demand for services was crippling both mental health and counselling services, highlighting an issue that requires urgent attention and an increase to allocated resources.

#### **Recommendation 11**

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

## 4.2 At-risk management demands were overwhelming wellbeing and mental health support services

The increasing use of adaptive routines and lockdowns, coupled with a rise in self-harm incidents, had placed pressure on support services. The PHS team, responsible for providing psychological support and care, was overwhelmed by the high number of at-risk individuals. The team's primary function is to support prisoners identified as at risk of self-harm through the Prisoners Risk Assessment Group (PRAG), which involves collaboration among health, uniformed, and other support staff.

During the inspection there were around 90 prisoners managed through the At-Risk Management System (ARMS). This required PHS, mental health, and PSOs to dedicate considerable time in providing support, undertaking assessments, and managing these at-risk individuals, leaving little capacity for addressing general psychological health or wellbeing needs. Most individuals required daily visits, detailed reporting, and discussions at PRAG meetings. This intensive demand absorbed the entire PHS staffing group.

### Facilities were inadequate to complete assessments

The operational environment further affected many services' abilities to deliver quality support. Staff faced challenges such as restricted movements, frequent lockdowns, and inadequate private spaces for conducting interviews. In many instances, interviews were conducted through cell hatches impacting the quality of interactions, confidentiality, and support provided. Additionally, due to workload demands the lack of a client-focused and collaborative approach between PHS and mental health teams continued to be a barrier to providing effective at-risk support services and quality care, a challenge noted in previous inspections (OICS, 2022a).

### Increased incidents of self-harm, attempted suicide, and suicides correlate with restrictive regimes and lockdowns

Over the 15 months leading up to our inspection, we observed a concerning rise in self-harm and suicidal behaviour at Hakea. Our inspection methodology, which included regular liaison visits, monitoring of departmental reports, and analysis of departmental data, revealed a clear escalation in at-risk behaviours.

Self-harm rates increased by 130% since March 2023 with 41 self-harm incidents recorded in March 2024 alone. Some incidents involved the same prisoners repeatedly engaging in self-harm behaviours. There were 13 attempted suicides in the first quarter of 2024, matching the total number recorded for the whole of 2023. Hakea accounted for a disproportionately high share of incidents across the prison system from January 2023 to March 2024. Self-harm incidents rose 72% at Hakea, far exceeding the 36.8% increase system-wide. Attempted suicides increased by 333%, compared to a system-wide increase of 130%.

While the entire system showed increasing risk behaviours, Hakea's rise coincided with the increased use of restrictive adaptive regimes, particularly between January and March 2024. Although a direct causal link between lockdowns and at-risk behaviours could not be definitively established, the



correlation was clear. More restrictive regimes saw higher incidents of self-harm, attempted suicide, and deaths in custody. Health professionals consistently linked these incidents to restrictive regimes, highlighting the damaging effects of prolonged confinement without access to fresh air, sunlight, or social interaction.

Hakea is at a crisis point. Immediate action is required to reduce the use and impact of restrictive regimes, or incidents of self-harm, suicide attempts, and deaths will continue to increase.

### Supports for prisoners following serious incidents was limited

When a prisoner dies in the Department's care, the Coroner must conduct an inquest under the *Coroners Act 1996* to determine the cause and manner of death, along with any contributing factors.

Since our last inspection in 2021, seven men had died in custody at Hakea, including four First Nations men. Four deaths occurred in the six months prior to April 2024. This points to a severe crisis in providing prisoner safety and the failure of the current system and resources to address poor mental health and wellbeing.

We found that while staff had access to a range of support services, both onsite and through other Department services, including follow-up welfare contact from the Superintendent or Senior Management Team (SMT) after serious incidents, similar support for prisoners was limited. Prisoners often relied on other prisoners and the peer support team for assistance rather than access to professional services, given the limitations outlined earlier in this report, adaptive routines and lockdowns further restricted access to prisoners.



Figure 7: Top five people prisoners would approach to discuss an issue, as per pre-inspection survey results.

In April 2024 alone, 514 serious incidents occurred at Hakea, including 16 critical incidents. These incidents included threatening behaviour, use of force involving physical control, sexual assault, and attempted suicides.

The lack of comprehensive support for prisoners following serious incidents is a significant concern. While staff have structured support, prisoners must often rely on informal support networks for assistance. Increasing access to support services is needed to address the broad range of welfare related issues for prisoners.

Recent changes to the *Work Health and Safety Act 2020* have included amendments to ensure psychosocial hazards are managed in the same way as physical hazards. There is a requirement to

ensure psychosocial risks are eliminated or minimised as far as reasonably practicable. Psychological trauma often requires lengthy recovery times compared to some physical injuries. With the legislative amendment, the Department may have a legal responsibility to provide ongoing mental health support to prisoners and ensure its policies to manage psychological wellbeing are followed. This is a question that the Department ought to resolve definitively.

### 4.3 Specialised units were under resourced and struggled to operate effectively

The absence of a dedicated mental health unit meant that many unwell and vulnerable prisoners were frequently accommodated for extended periods in the Crisis Care Unit (CCU) or Unit 1- the Multi-Purpose Unit (MPU). These units, while designed to provide some level of care and support, were not resourced appropriately to effectively manage the specific needs of prisoners with mental health issues or other vulnerabilities. Supports and interventions for these prisoners are critical, but during our inspection both the CCU and MPU had become overwhelmed, struggling to manage the complex and often high-needs population they accommodate.

#### Unit 1 managed a challenging mix of prisoners, incidents, and regimes

Unit 1 functioned as the management unit, accommodating a diverse and complex mix of prisoners, and coordinating prisoners' activities on various regimes. This included those on punishment or close supervision, individuals with mental health issues, and prisoners who could not be safely accommodated elsewhere in the prison. Staff in Unit 1 had to organise various regimes and alerts, determining who could be out of their cells at specific times, and often managing the most unsettled prisoners in the facility.

Although custodial staff in Unit 1 did not receive any specific training, we saw a stable, cohesive, and dedicated team, who tried their best to manage challenging prisoners. It was a high-pressure busy environment, which staff tried to manage effectively, but were simply unable to provide the level of supervision or therapeutic support some prisoners needed.

Their task was further impacted by poor infrastructure. In 2016, we recommended the Department construct a purpose-built management unit (OICS, 2016, p. 53). This was supported in principle, with the Department exploring best practice approaches to address the specific needs and requirements of prisoner cohorts. More recently, in our review of the use of confinement and management regimes, we reported on the two D-Wing recreation yards for prisoners who are required to exercise separately. These have concrete floors and are fully enclosed by walls with no view of the outside. The ceilings are covered by grilles and translucent roof sheeting that provides minimal light and fresh air. This arguably fails to provide access to fresh air and exercise as required under sections 43 and 82 of the *Prisons Act 1981* (WA) (OICS, 2022b, pp. 12–13).

#### **Recommendation 12**

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

## Increased attempted suicides and self-harm disproportionately occurred in Unit 1

In the first three months of 2024, Unit 1 accounted for nine of the 13 recorded attempted suicides (69%) at Hakea. This compared to only three of 13 attempts (23%) in the whole of 2023. This suggested that conditions in Unit 1 may have contributed to poor mental health, or that the unit was being increasingly used to accommodate prisoners with deteriorating mental health, despite not being a therapeutic support unit. Through observations, interviews with staff, prisoner surveys, and reviews of the PRAG and CCU processes, both factors likely contributed to the increase.

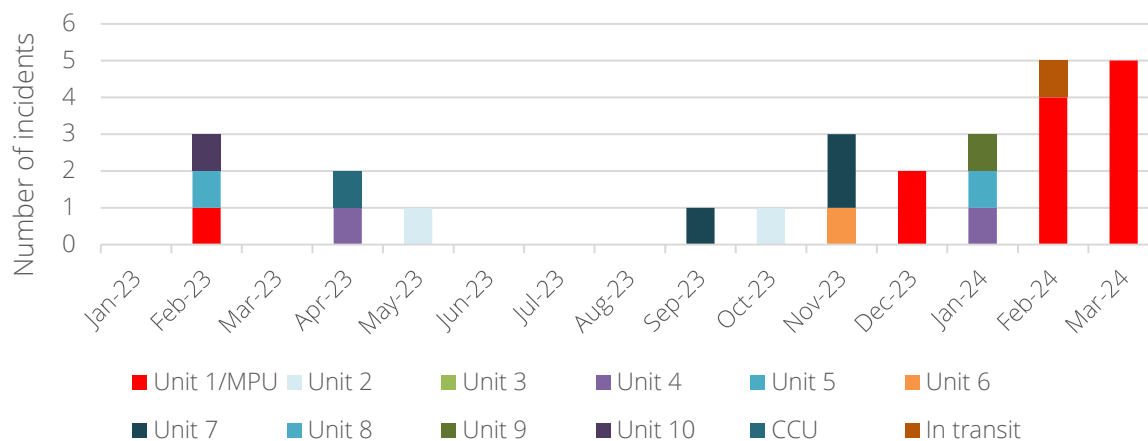


Figure 8: Attempted suicides per unit at Hakea, January 2023 – March 2024.

The unit was increasingly used for the long-term accommodation of prisoners who cannot be safely managed elsewhere due to their offences, risks to others, or high risk of suicidal ideation or self-harm behaviours. The CCU's inability to meet the demand for safe spaces led to more prisoners being transferred to Unit 1 as an alternative.

Health professionals highlighted Unit 1's unsuitable facilities for managing prisoners in distress. Many prisoners managed under ARMS, who were experiencing mental health challenges, were also transferred to Unit 1. PRAG decisions left the placement of prisoners to the discretion of unit officers, often resulting in their transfer to Unit 1 rather than them being allowed to remain in their current unit, which may have provided a more stable environment. Some health professionals noted that Unit 1 was sometimes used punitively to manage behaviour associated with poor mental health.

## The CCU was not a therapeutic environment

The CCU accommodated prisoners on high ARMS, those requiring extra care and support, and others under medical observation. All cells were designated as safe cells, but the unit was not therapeutic. There was a lack of appropriate recreational spaces, soft furnishings, and available consultation rooms, which impacted functionality.

Each morning PHS staff were tasked with completing assessments, often with a focus of clearing safe cells due to capacity limitations. Assessments took place in a small room opposite the control room, compromising privacy and comfort. Population pressures led to increased demand for safe cells and quicker turnover of prisoners. Prisoners with significant ongoing mental health needs were often

accommodated in the CCU due to inadequate facilities elsewhere and this contributed to the non-therapeutic setting. Some staff noted the CCU was actually more stressful for prisoners than mainstream units.



**Photo 8: The recreation yard of the CCU was sterile and uninviting**

Many prisoners were managed in the CCU long-term, with some having been there for close to 12 months. We were told prisoners in the CCU often experienced high noise levels, insufficient mental health support, and inadequate living conditions. Custodial and clinical staff were under increased workload pressure, which often led to burnout or compassion fatigue affecting their ability to support prisoners. We also saw a strained relationship between PHS and mental health staff, driven by workload management pressures, and staffing shortages.

## 5 Essential services were neglected

Essential services for prisoners are those necessary to ensure their basic human rights, safety, welfare, and ability to rehabilitate are maintained. Throughout a prisoner's journey from first entering prison, prisoners should receive basic minimum entitlements. However, at Hakea, these were often not available or unable to be delivered.

### 5.1 Increased demand and understaffing exposed risks in reception

#### Late arrivals of prisoners posed risks

Admissions of prisoner arrivals had increased from 5,186 in 2020, to 5,667 in 2023, a rise of 9%. Many prisoners arrive from court having spent long periods in police or court custody and are often vulnerable or volatile. They may not engage meaningfully with reception procedures such as questions surrounding mental health and substance use. We were told some prisoners were arriving as late as 9.00 pm, which can increase risks and compromise overall prisoner welfare.

Department policy acknowledges the stress new and vulnerable prisoners face, requiring prompt reception processes to minimise time in holding cells (DOJ, 2025). Despite this, staff shortages delayed the timely completion of the Reception Intake Assessment form, a critical assessment tool which identifies information such as self-harm and at-risk issues, crucial to safeguarding prisoner safety and wellbeing.

Previously, when these risk assessments were not conducted in reception, prisoners were placed in rip-proof clothing in the CCU under ARMS, which added to the PRAG's workload and further destabilised prisoners. A change around the time of our inspection allowed for prisoners to be accommodated in a safe cell equipped with a camera for hourly monitoring. This reduced the burden on the PRAG team but did not address the underlying issue of the reception assessments not being completed in a timely manner.

#### Initial health screening processes were good, but compromised by delayed arrivals and resource constraints

We found initial health screening processes were generally well-structured. Nurses conducted comprehensive initial health and psychological assessments using a checklist, ensuring thorough evaluations upon arrival. The Functional Impairment Screening Tool, developed following a recommendation from our 2021 inspection of Hakea, now formed part of the screening process.

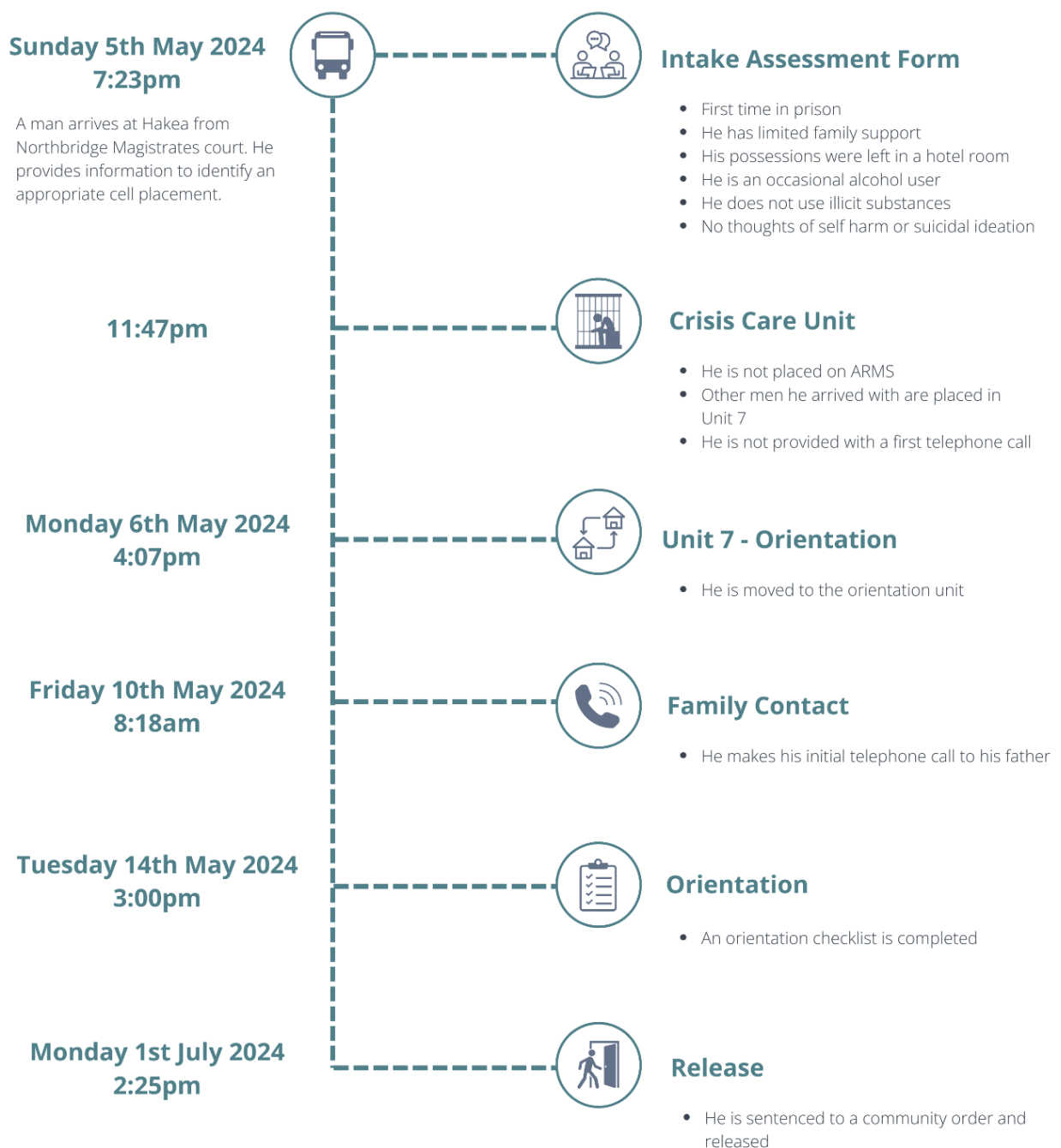
However, these processes were often compromised when large numbers of prisoners arrived late. Up to 20 men could face extended waits in holding cells prior to assessment. Urgent medical cases diverted resources, further delaying screenings for some prisoners.

One nurse was initially stationed in reception, but the growing number of arrivals led to an additional nurse, working staggered 12-hour shifts to provide coverage. Despite these efforts, delays in initial health screenings due to late arrivals and high prisoner numbers remained a risk. Extended waits in holding cells often cause emotional discomfort and stress, particularly for those with immediate health concerns.

## Many prisoners initial telephone calls were delayed

Facilitating prisoners' first telephone calls is crucial for keeping families informed of their whereabouts and addressing urgent matters. But due to delays and late arrivals, these calls were often missed, resulting in extended periods without community contact. Some prisoners told us they did not make their initial call for up to two weeks, which increased distress and anxiety.

## CASE STUDY



In our pre-inspection survey, 79% of prisoners reported feeling upset upon arrival, higher than the state average of 54%. This delay in facilitating initial telephone calls increases the emotional strain experienced by prisoners, highlighting a need for improvement in ensuring early communication with their families and support networks takes place.

## 5.2 Meeting remand prisoners' requirements was challenging

Remand prisoners should have fewer restrictions than sentenced prisoners (Corrective Services Administrators' Council, 2018). They are not required to work, complete educational courses, or participate in programs, and should be kept separate from sentenced prisoners as much as possible. Departmental policy states that remand prisoners should be allowed to wear their own clothing (DOJ, 2022). Many of these standards are in place in other jurisdictions nationally and internationally primarily because remand prisoners are yet to have their charges heard and, as such, are to be presumed innocent until proven otherwise. Also, history shows that remand prisoners are increasingly vulnerable due to high levels of poor mental health, uncertainty about their situation, and poor conditions in prisons.

However, in practice the reality differs significantly from these guidelines. No prison in Western Australia offers remand prisoners the option to wear their own clothing. With around 85% of Hakea's population on remand, we saw no difference in treatment between remand and sentenced prisoners. Cell placements were primarily determined by risk management considerations, including risk to self, the nature of the offence, gang affiliations, and other potential conflicts without any consideration of remand status.

Previously, remand prisoners had the right to receive social visits daily. However, an amendment to the *Prisons Regulations 1982 (WA)* in November 2022 reduced this entitlement to twice-weekly visits. The challenges of accommodating a high remand population were compounded by increased workloads, staffing shortages, and restrictive adaptive routines.

## 5.3 Prisoners struggled to keep in contact with the outside world

In 2021, a second telephone had been installed in each wing. But in 2024, we found that limited time out of cell restricted prisoners' ability to contact family and friends.

When a prisoner wants to contact a new person in the community, unit staff contact the requested recipient and forward a paper request to the security team, who enter the details. With up to 40 requests pending approval, delays in contacting recipients were common. Redeployments within the security team further slowed the process, causing prisoners to wait up to four weeks for new telephone numbers to be successfully added.

The limited number and availability of handsets in each wing meant many were unable to make a telephone call, and control of the system by other prisoners further restricted access. Maintaining family contact was difficult with restrictive adaptive routines. The reliance on outdated, time-consuming paper-based methods for approving communication via telephone was a significant factor contributing to the inability to maintain contact with family.





Photo 9: Prisoners had to wait to make telephone calls during brief unlock periods



**52%** ↓  
of prisoners felt it was easy to contact family by telephone, down from **79%** in 2021



**39%** ↓  
of prisoners felt it was easy to contact family by mail, down from **63%** in 2021



**28%** ↓  
of prisoners felt it was easy to contact family through visits, down from **47%** in 2021



**18%** ↓  
of prisoners felt it was easy to contact family through e-visits, down from **34%** in 2021

### Investment in digital technology and infrastructure is required

Ideally, prisons should operate with a structured daily routine where unit staff focus on prisoner welfare and develop relational security, while prisoners have some autonomy to manage their own affairs. Private prisons in Western Australia and elsewhere have invested in technology to allow prisoners to access information such as their gratuities balance or request various appointments. This investment in digital technology has proven to be beneficial in creating a more efficient and respectful environment.

Currently, prisoners request paper forms and writing materials through a window in the officers' station and submit completed requests to staff. This creates additional paperwork for staff, who must leave their core duties to process requests in the unit office. Many prisoners expressed frustration over delays or concerns about potential mishandling of their paperwork, leading to repeated submissions for the same request. This in turn is often perceived by staff as prisoners

being overly demanding. An electronic system would address these problems by allowing prisoners to track their requests and updates in real-time and reduce the paperwork burden on unit staff.

Given the current shortages of staff and the growing prisoner population, increasing technology to provide prisoners with the means to manage their own matters would be a meaningful approach to improve productivity and efficiency. This investment would not only streamline administrative processes but also reduce the mental health strain on prisoners awaiting the outcome of their requests.

**Recommendation 13**

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

## 6 Systemic challenges to rehabilitation

Hakea faces significant challenges in providing a meaningful daily routine that promotes rehabilitation. The rising number of applications for placement in protection units strained many resources, with the capacity of these units being stretched. There were substantial gaps in access to education and employment opportunities for protection prisoners and the wider population. Many prisoners require targeted assessments and individualised treatment interventions, yet resources to complete these remain insufficient. As a result, a significant number of prisoners leave custody unprepared for their return to the community, lacking the necessary skills and support for successful reintegration.

### 6.1 Protection units traded quality of life for other restrictions

#### The rising number of protection prisoners had impacted dynamics

Our review into the management of prisoners requiring protection revealed a 275% increase in protection prisoners in Western Australia between 1 July 2011 and 1 July 2021 (OICS, 2022c). Increased placement of prisoners with gang affiliations and those at-risk from other prisoners had altered the dynamics of protection units across the state.

Newly admitted prisoners who may require protection are initially accommodated in the CCU, Unit 1, or G-Wing in Unit 7 until their protection status is resolved. If an application for protection is approved, they are transferred to either Unit 6 or Unit 8, which together offer a total of 213 protection beds. In 2023, the prison reviewed over 1,000 applications for protection, with around 50% being approved. This review process ensures that only those genuinely in need of protection are accommodated in the designated units.

During the inspection, around 190 prisoners were held in protection, a significant decrease from the 275 recorded during the 2021 inspection. The reduction in protection prisoners reflected changes in statewide availability of protection beds at other facilities. And the recently completed renovation of Unit 8 at Hakea meant that these protection spaces became available again.

#### Protection prisoners had a better quality of life, despite some limitations

Prisoners in protection units felt safer than in mainstream units. Protection offered certain advantages, such as higher employment levels within the laundry and other trusted positions in administration, and the visits centre. However, employment opportunities in many other areas were restricted to prisoners in mainstream units.

Four escort officers were dedicated to supporting protection prisoners' access to essential services, including the medical centre, official visits, and video-link building. This support allowed for a more flexible daily routine, enabling protection prisoners to be unlocked more often than those in other units.

Although table tennis and pool tables remained in Unit 8, bats, balls, and cues had been removed. Additionally, access to the unit's small outdoor yards, which offered good lines of sight, had been restricted. In contrast, prisoners in Unit 6 were allowed more time out of their cells, but the pending

conversion of eight cells into safe cells in C-Wing would reduce the overall general bed capacity of the unit.

## 6.2 Reforms had yet to deliver improvements to treatment interventions

The assessment team had recently transitioned from a custodial workforce to a mostly civilian one. It included 10 Case Management Assessors (CMAs) including two assigned to an IMP taskforce until 31 December 2024, two supervisors, and a senior CMA all operating under the direction of an Assistant Superintendent. At the time of the inspection there were five vacancies in the team. The redeployment of assessment duty officers meant the assessments team struggled to interview prisoners. Shortly after the inspection, all positions were filled, but members of the SMT were covering duty officer responsibilities to enable the team to conduct assessments.

### Measures to address outstanding treatment assessments had not reduced the backlog

In mid-2023, the Rehabilitation and Reintegration Directorate was established, centralising services such as specialised intervention services, treatment, and forensic assessments into an Assessment and Interventions business area. This reorganisation aimed to streamline processes and improve clinical governance and oversight.

Historically, treatment assessment reports have been identified as a significant blockage to completing Individual Management Plans (IMPs), largely due to staffing factors including insufficient assessors caused by recruitment and retention issues, or physical restrictions such as a lack of private interview rooms to conduct assessments.

Treatment Course Planning Assessors (treatment assessors) are responsible for interviewing and assessing prisoners and making appropriate recommendations for inclusion into the Department's intervention programs or targeted individual interventions. Assessors must hold a four-year degree in psychology or social work. Six treatment assessors, based at Hakea, completed assessments for prisoners at the five adult male metropolitan prisons. Each assessor was required to complete two treatment assessments per week.

An internal taskforce had been reviewing other assessment processes and were considering the potential for a graduate program for treatment assessors. Efforts to introduce screening tools to reduce the time required for assessments were also ongoing.

Despite these efforts, progress to reduce the number of outstanding treatment assessments was slow. As of March 2024, there were 419 outstanding treatment assessments required for prisoners, across the estate. Prisoners who require an assessment of their treatment needs are often denied parole by the Prisoners Review Board, leading to higher prison populations as fewer prisoners are given the opportunity to serve the remainder of their sentence in the community.

## Backlogs in IMPs continued despite extended easing of requirements

The initial IMP is completed by assessments staff for prisoners with sentences longer than six months, within the first six weeks of sentencing. This plan contains details from treatment and education assessments and outlines recommendations for placement, intervention programs, and the specific needs of each prisoner.

In January 2023, the Commissioner for Corrective Services first approved a temporary suspension of the requirement to complete treatment assessments for prisoners who had an outstanding assessment but were within six months of their Earliest Date of Release (EDR). The requirement to include a treatment assessment in the initial IMP was also removed. These decisions aimed to prioritise resources for prisoners who had a realistic chance of completing criminogenic treatment programs. Three further extensions have since been approved, and at the time of writing the suspension was in effect until 31 December 2025.

Higher-than-average sentencing rates and unsuccessful efforts to secure additional treatment assessment staff have led to higher overdue IMP and treatment assessment backlogs. In 2021 there were 334 overdue initial IMPs across the five centres, with only 19 of those at Hakea. During the inspection, the number of overdue initial IMPs had grown to 364 with 36 overdue at Hakea.

Sustained and effective work is required to improve the assessment and sentence planning process for prisoners. In October 2024, the Department provided us with an update on the measures they are putting in place to improve the timeliness of treatment assessments, some of which involved seeking additional resourcing while others involved diverting existing resources.

It follows that once a prisoner has their treatment needs assessed and documented in their IMP, they must have timely access to suitable programs to address their rehabilitation needs.

Ultimately, prisoners who are assessed and have detailed sentence plans prepared in a timely and effective manner are likely to be easier to manage, thereby improving safety and security of prisons. Further, if their identified needs are met through effective rehabilitation programs and activities then community safety is enhanced through reduced recidivism, and the burden of incarceration costs are also reduced for the community.

The Department must maintain efforts to reduce the backlogs in both IMPs and treatment assessments as both are essential components in managing a prisoner's sentence plan and maximising their rehabilitation prospects. There is the added benefit of the positive impact on reducing prison populations if more prisoners are eligible for – and assessed as suitable for – parole.

### **Recommendation 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.

## 6.3 Prisoners had inadequate education, program, and employment opportunities

Access to education, programs, and employment is an important aspect of rehabilitation for prisoners. However, these opportunities were frequently disrupted due to the redeployment of custodial staff assigned there for security purposes. This regularly left education and employment services unable to operate effectively. Ensuring consistent access to these rehabilitative services is essential for maintaining a structured, constructive, and supportive environment.

### Prisoners struggled to access education

The education centre had several experienced educators including a campus manager, three Prison Education Coordinators (PEC), a tutor, a clerical officer, and a VSO who delivered WHS and Foodstar workshops. Recruitment for an Aboriginal Education Worker was ongoing and only one PEC position was vacant.

The regular unavailability of custodial staff to supervise prisoners in education has had a significant negative impact. Despite efforts, the centre had struggled to open over the past 18 months. In 2023, it was only open for around 80 out of 236 days, and fully staffed for just 22 days. Access declined further in 2024, with only six days of operation until our inspection in May. Education staff spent most of their time developing curriculum materials and grading self-paced learning from prisoners in other facilities. The lack of education was a common complaint in our pre-inspection survey.

*There has been no access to education or programs whatsoever for 2 years*

*Prison is meant to reform people ... education or programs doesn't exist here*

*Quotes from pre-inspection prisoner survey*

### No mandatory or voluntary programs were available

Hakea held around 240 sentenced prisoners during the inspection. Of these prisoners, 84 had identified program needs including 38 for addictions, 27 for violent offending, 10 for sexual offending, seven for cognitive skills, and two for general offending.

However, no mandatory programs took place or were planned at Hakea. Access to parole for these men was reduced by the lack of available programs in the prison.

Prisoners assessed as unsuitable for criminogenic group programs often require individual offence-specific counselling, but only a small number receive these interventions. Hakea previously offered a variety of voluntary programs aimed at supporting prisoner rehabilitation, many of which have since been discontinued. This has significantly reduced the availability of support services for prisoners, particularly those needing individualised interventions.

There were no programs or services available to remand prisoners to assist in their rehabilitation, aside from privately engaged counsellors. Additionally, support groups like Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous had not operated at Hakea for several years.

Engaging in quality short courses or voluntary programs can be valuable for all prisoners, regardless of their status. For those not assessed for treatment needs or with no unmet needs, these programs can improve their chances of parole by demonstrating a commitment to addressing offending behaviours. But it is equally as important that sentenced prisoners have access to the mandatory programs they have been assessed for. Opportunities exist to improve access for sentenced prisoners, including remote attendance with other prisoners and facilitators at different facilities where these programs regularly take place.

#### **Recommendation 15**

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

### **Limited employment opportunities, and disadvantage for First Nations men**

Employment in industry areas is highly valued by prisoners due to the potential for higher pay rates and opportunities for traineeships or other vocational training. This employment also comes with the benefit of reduced time spent in living units. However, the unemployment rate had reached 49.6%, a 10% increase since 2021 and well above the 20% target outlined in the prison's gratuities profile. An additional 30.7% of prisoners were employed as unit workers, leaving less than 20% with meaningful work, mostly outside of accommodation units.

Employment distribution showed that 42.4% of employed prisoners held Level 1 positions, conflicting with the 15% target in the gratuities profile. Essential workers, such as those in the kitchen, laundry, and domestic services, could consistently perform their duties, while others could only work during less restrictive adaptive regimes.

First Nations prisoners, who make up around 39% of the population, faced higher unemployment rates (57.5%) compared to non-First Nations prisoners (44.4%). Additionally, only 24.2% of Level 1 jobs were assigned to First Nations prisoners. Unlike some prisons, Hakea did not actively recruit and train prisoners lacking industrial skills, limiting their rehabilitation opportunities.

## **6.4 Reintegration and transitional management were critically under-resourced**

Limited access to education and employment opportunities, unstable accommodation, substance use, physical and mental health concerns, and family-related issues can all be barriers to successful reintegration on release from prison (Hunter et al, 2016). Responsibility for addressing these barriers in preparation for release often falls to transitional services. The Transitional Manager (TM) assisted all prisoners, regardless of their legal status. The role assisted with obtaining identification documents, converting fines, and referring prisoners to external stakeholders like ReSet and Outcare



for re-entry support, or to the Department of Communities and emergency accommodation providers for housing options.

Despite these efforts, transitional services were critically under-resourced, and demand far outweighed the TM's capacity. Unlike other prisons with similar populations, Hakea only had one TM to provide a service to almost 1,200 men. We were, however, pleased to find that clerical support had recently been introduced four days per week.

## 7 A Show Cause Notice was issued

### 7.1 A Show Cause Notice was issued after the inspection

Following our inspection in May 2024, we identified serious concerns about the routine denial of basic entitlements to prisoners at Hakea. As a result, the Inspector of Custodial Services (the Inspector) formed a reasonable suspicion that:

- a) There was a serious risk to the safety, care, or welfare of prisoners at Hakea; and
- b) That prisoners were being subjected to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment in Hakea.

It was noted that many of the same factors observed at Hakea were similar to those that existed prior to the 2018 riot at Greenough Regional Prison. These issues were well documented in the 2018 report by Ms Jan Shuard PSM (DOJ, 2018), and included ailing infrastructure, deteriorating staff/management relationships, a lack of prisoner activities, frequent lockdowns, and insufficient focus on the needs of prisoners (particularly Aboriginal and young prisoners).

On 27 May 2024, the Inspector provided a confidential summary report to the Department and issued a 'Show Cause Notice' (the Notice) to the Director General, pursuant to Section 33A of the *Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2003* (the ICS Act). The Notice detailed the Inspector's concerns and provided the Department with an opportunity to formally respond.

### 7.2 The Department's response to the Notice

The Department's response to the Notice, received on 7 June 2024, acknowledged many of the concerns and issues raised. The response also outlined initiatives and strategies being pursued by the Department, to try to address the issues and concerns identified at Hakea.

As a related issue, it is important to note here that many of the problems at Hakea are symptomatic of whole-of-system issues facing the Department that we have regularly identified through our inspection work. For example: a significantly rising prison population, bed capacity at all adult custodial facilities being at or near full capacity, and chronic staffing problems (including recruitment, retention, and high levels of workers' compensation and personal leave).

The Department acknowledged the importance of providing humane treatment to prisoners, highlighting the need for adequate time out of cells and access to essential services, such as the use of telephones, clean clothing, and social visits. The response also highlighted a Temporary Special Allowance (TSA) for prison officers at Hakea, with ongoing negotiations aimed at increasing staffing levels. Recruitment efforts were being increased, resulting in more prison officers being assigned to Hakea. Discussions were also underway to expedite the completion of infrastructure works at Acacia Prison and to implement a rotating workforce at Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison to expand bed capacity. Additionally, a working group was established to develop a comprehensive, long-term Custodial Infrastructure Plan.

### 7.3 The matter was referred to the Minister

Following consideration of the Department's response, the Inspector referred the matter to the Minister for Corrective Services (the Minister) in accordance with Section 33A(7) of the ICS Act.

The Inspector advised the Minister of concerns that most prisoners at Hakea were, on a regular basis, being denied their basic entitlements as outlined in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the *Nelson Mandela Rules* (UNODC, 2015), the *Standard Guidelines for Corrections in Australia* (Corrective Services Victoria, 1990), and the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services' *Revised Code of Inspection Standards* (OICS, 2020).

The Inspector informed the Minister that, while the initiatives outlined in the Department's response reflected a commitment to addressing the issues at Hakea, they were unlikely to bring immediate resolution. The Inspector raised concerns that prisoners at Hakea would continue to endure substandard conditions, with ongoing risks to their safety and wellbeing. Furthermore, the initiatives would, at best, only delay the need to address the underlying, fundamental problems at Hakea, which would still require attention in the medium term.

The Inspector advised the Minister that a broader system level response was required and recommended that the scale of the problem being experienced across corrections were such that a taskforce style intervention was required with cooperation and collaboration across relevant agencies with a role to play.

### 7.4 The Minister's response to the Notice

The Minister's response, received on 1 October 2024, acknowledged the Notice, and recognised the challenges presented by rising prisoner numbers, particularly at Hakea. The Minister noted discussions with the Director General and the Commissioner for Corrective Services and indicated some recent improvements at the facility.

Immediate actions included the establishment of a new Hakea Safer Custody Taskforce, which aimed to shape and drive short, medium, and long-term strategies to reduce self-harm and violence among prisoners. Additional beds across multiple prisons were also outlined to improve overall capacity in the wider estate, along with a consideration for an extension to the TSA.

The Minister highlighted ongoing medium and long-term initiatives, including the Justice Planning and Reform Committee, updates to the Custodial Infrastructure Plan, the development of a new Cost and Demand Model, and expanded recruitment efforts for prison officers. The Minister expressed confidence in the acting Commissioner's leadership to address the pressures at Hakea and drive significant improvements.

Hakea remains one of our high-risk monitoring targets. We undertake regular data analysis, conduct increased liaison visits, and receive departmental briefings, updates, and information.

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## Appendix B Acronyms

Term	Expansion of Abbreviation
ARMS	At-risk Management System
CMA	Case Management Assessor
CCU	Crisis Care Unit
DO	Duty Officer
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GP	General Practitioner
IMP	Individual Management Plan
MPU	Multi-Purpose Unit
OICS	Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services
OOCH	Out of Cell Hours
PEC	Prison Education Coordinator
PHS	Psychological Health Services
PRAG	Prisoner Risk Assessment Group
PSO	Prison Support Officer
SMT	Senior Management Team
TM	Transitional Manager
TSA	Temporary Special Allowance
VSO	Vocational Support Officer
WAPOU	Western Australia Prison Officers Union



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

# **Response to the Announced Inspection:** (2024 Inspection of Hakea Prison)

**February 2025**

## 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.

**Appendix A** contains comments linked to sections in the draft report for the Inspector's consideration when finalising the report.

### 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;



- 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.

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.

Level of Acceptance:	Supported – Current Practice / Project
Responsible Division:	Strategic Reform
Responsible Directorate:	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 recommencement 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



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.

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

Level of Acceptance:	Supported
Responsible Division:	Corporate Services
Responsible Directorate:	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.

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.



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.

<b>Level of Acceptance:</b>	Supported
<b>Responsible Division:</b>	Corrective Services
<b>Responsible Business Area:</b>	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.

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



**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

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.

<b>Level of Acceptance:</b>	Supported in Principle
<b>Responsible Division:</b>	Corporate Services
<b>Responsible Directorate:</b>	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 backlog, 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.

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

**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

## Appendix D Inspection Details

Previous inspection		
21 July - 30 July 2021		
Activity since previous inspection		
Liaison visits to Hakea Prison	12 visits	
Independent Visitor visits	25 visits	
Surveys		
Prisoner survey	7 – 8 March 2024	290 responses (27%)
Staff survey (online)	4 – 18 March 2024	109 responses (29%)
Inspection team		
Inspector	Eamon Ryan	
Deputy Inspector	Jane Higgins	
Director Operations	Natalie Gibson	
Principal Inspections and Research Officer	Lauren Netto	
Inspections and Research Officer	Kieran Artelaris	
Inspections and Research Officer	Cliff Holdom	
Inspections and Research Officer	Ben Shaw	
Community Liaison Officer	Joseph Wallam	
Student Intern	Taylar Davies	
Student Intern	Sheena Harpal	
Student Intern	Varunika Gupta	

Key dates	
Inspection announced	12 January 2024
Start of on-site inspection	6 May 2024
Completion of on-site inspection	9 May 2024
Presentation of preliminary findings	5 June 2024

Draft report sent to Department of Justice	13 December 2024
Draft response received from Department of Justice	6 February 2025
Declaration of prepared report	14 February 2025

## Appendix E Hakea Adaptive Routine

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### **Adaptive Routine A** – Unit is staffed by Senior Officer + 5 Officers

- All wings unlocked
- 2 x unit officers to supervise external recreation
- Unit workers may remain unlocked during external recreation periods
- Prisoners not wanting to participate in external recreation secured in cell
- Barrier management – wing grilles may be secured as required

### **Adaptive Routine B** – Unit is staffed by Senior Officer + 4 Officers

- Two wings unlocked at a time (serviced in both AM and PM), or reduction of prisoners across all wings in consultation with OIC.
- Access to recreation yards within the unit only
- The Principal Officer may deploy an additional fifth officer into the Unit to facilitate out of Unit recreation
- Barrier management – wing grilles closed may be secured as required (with exception of Unit 8, given the Unit is currently operating at approximately 50% of its original capacity – 54 beds),
- Where the unit musters return to SLA caps (e.g., west side 88), all wings will be unlocked

### **Adaptive Routine C** – Unit is staffed by Senior Officer + 3 Officers

- Reduced unlocks/movement only (e.g., workers, essential movements, etc.) as directed by OIC
- No access to unit recreation yards or external recreation locations
- If the temperature of the Unit is assessed as high, the Senior Officer in consultation with the Principal Officer, may consider lockdown of the entire unit

*Inspection of prisons, court custody centres, prescribed lock-ups,  
youth detention centres, and review of custodial services in Western Australia*



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR  
OF CUSTODIAL SERVICES

Level 5, Albert Facey House  
469 Wellington Street  
Perth, Western Australia 6000  
Whadjuk Noongar Boodja  
Telephone: +61 8 6551 4200

[www.oics.wa.gov.au](http://www.oics.wa.gov.au)