



Prisoner access to secure mental health facilities in WA

ANZSOC conference

December 2019



Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services

- Oversee the way people in custody are managed
- Independent (not part of Dept of Justice)
- Conduct regular inspections and reviews of
 - custodial facilities holding prisoners and young people
 - management of people in custody
 - services provided to people in custody
 - Eg Prisoner access to secure mental health treatment – Sept 2018



Why we did a review

- Most prisoners with mental health issues are managed in a prison setting
- But some prisoners are so unwell that they need to be in a clinical facility
- WA has one secure mental health facility (the Frankland Centre)
 - Opened in 1993 (26 years ago)
 - 30 beds since opening (extra eight subacute beds have since closed)
 - In this time the prison population has more than tripled



Why we did a review

- In mid 2017 we had two concerning cases of women transported from prison to Frankland
 - One women was moved into a transport vehicle as soon as it arrived. She was naked, having spent the previous hour in cell without clothes
 - Another women had her transfer to Frankland delayed for two hours while she completely a period of confinement as directed by a Visiting Justice. This was in response to an incident six months earlier.



Review intention

- Examine transport of prisoners to Frankland.
- Positively we found these two incidents to be anomalies
- Fuller picture – examine prisoner management before and after the transfer
 - Focus shift into issues with prisoner access to Frankland



Prisoners needing care in a clinical environment are frequently unable to access it



A large number of people in custody require mental health support

- In November 2017 almost 10% of the prison population was being supported by DOJ mental health teams
- 25 people were identified as requiring intensive and/or immediate care in a clinical environment
- A further 193 people were identified as having significant ongoing psychiatric conditions which were likely to need to access Frankland, but not necessarily immediately
- Between 1 July 2016 and 31 August 2017 there were 319 referrals to Frankland made for 147 different people in custody.



Frankland does not have enough capacity

- There are only 30 beds
 - only half are available for prisoners
- The Frankland Centre juggles the competing demands of:
 - hospital orders for assessment;
 - custody orders under the *Criminal Law (Mentally Impaired Accused) Act 1996*
 - prisoners needing care in a clinical environment



Prisoner access to Frankland is limited

- Often people are not referred to Frankland as it is believed they will not get there
- 61% of referrals do not result in a placement at the Frankland Centre, most lapse.
 - Even with multiple referrals, almost a third of the prisoners referred to Frankland did not make it there.



Staff are making this work

- Custodial and clinical staff are continually adapting and applying band aid solutions to provide as much support as possible
- Commendable, but vulnerable



There were significant problems in
record keeping



Information on which prisoners had accessed the Frankland Centre was fragmented

Department of Justice did not have clear information

- Total Offender Management System (TOMS),
 - Records where people are located
 - Also being used to ‘hold’ a bed in a unit
- Medical records recorded who was referred to Frankland, but not who went
 - Not searchable information
 - Manual exercise to find out who had been referred (we ended up with two lists)
- Gate movements were muddled by having multiple people moved in the one transport



Information on which prisoners had accessed the Frankland Centre was fragmented

- Frankland's records
 - Systems knew who was at the centre
 - Could not unpick who was on a custody order, hospital order or who was a transfer from prison
- Transport contractor records
 - Contract had recently changed, so records spanned two systems and archives



Information on which prisoners had accessed the Frankland Centre was poor

- We used a combination of TOMS data, medical records and Frankland records to develop the data set.



Recommendations

- Several recommendations, including:
 - diverting people away from Frankland
 - increasing beds at Frankland
 - improving record keeping



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Where are we now?



What has changed in the last year?

- Access to Frankland is even harder
- Record keeping has improved
- In prison step-up, step-down facilities are being planned
- Constructive cross agency discussions are being held



Our website

www.oics.wa.gov.au

Report: *Prisoner access to secure mental health treatment*