Report on an Inspection

of

Mulawa Correctional Centre for Women

New South Wales

INSPECTOR-GENERAL
OF CORRECTIVE SERVICES
Report on an Inspection of Mulawa Correctional Centre for Women

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INSPECTOR-GENERAL’S OVERVIEW

One of the most important roles of my Office involves the proactive assessment of the operations of the correctional system to identify and address potential problems. This role is no better exemplified than in relation to Mulawa Correctional Centre, which had been the subject of a lengthy investigation by the NSW Ombudsman in the mid 1990’s.

The importance of this proactive role was recognised by the then Minister for Corrective Services, the Hon Bob Debus, who, when announcing the preparation of legislation establishing the position of Inspector-General, advised Parliament in late 1996:

"...it will be well known to honourable members that in the early part of 1994 there was a terrible surge in self-harm and mutilation attempts by the women at the Mulawa Training and Correctional Centre for women. The Department of Corrective Services did not respond well. Unrest grew about conditions at the gaol. Ultimately, the matter resulted in major stories in the Sydney Morning Herald and a formal investigation by the Ombudsman... the Inspector-General, acting as a trouble-shooter, could have been used to identify the problems at Mulawa much earlier, to work with local managers to resolve problems and improve the lot of the women concerned”

Mulawa Correctional Centre is the main reception, remand and maximum-security centre for women in New South Wales. With a current operating capacity of 300, it is the centre-piece of female correctional management in this State. In terms of its remand function, within the female system it is the equivalent of the Metropolitan Remand & Reception Centre (MRRC) for men receiving 95% of all new female receptions\(^1\). At an average rate of forty (40) new receptions each week, Mulawa receives around 2100 new receptions each year. This makes it the second largest reception centre in the system.

Mulawa is also the only correctional centre for women that has the capacity to manage maximum security and high-risk inmates, many of whom present with challenging behaviours. Hence, Mulawa, within the female system, performs the equivalent function of the male maximum security centres of Goulburn or Lithgow. In addition, Mulawa is charged with the responsibility of managing women who are acutely mentally ill or who are acutely at risk of suicide or self-harm\(^2\).

The importance of Mulawa within the system cannot be overstated. Even after the opening of Dillynna correctional centre at South Windsor in 2003/2004, Mulawa will continue to be the focal point of the female correctional system. Consequently, the ‘health’ of the operations of Mulawa is of critical importance to the efficacy of the entire female system. This may be one of the reasons why Mulawa has received so much attention and scrutiny from external agencies, various interest groups and the media over the years.

Another reason for the high level of interest in the operations of Mulawa perhaps stems from the perception ‘that the history of female inmates is a history of neglect due to their relatively small numbers in the prison system, and the assumption that their needs roughly approximate those of male inmates’\(^3\). Whatever the reason, Mulawa has received more than its fair share of scrutiny.

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\(^2\) ibid., p.2.
Justice Nagle devoted an entire chapter of his 1978 'Report of Royal Commission into NSW Prisons' to the conditions of imprisonment at Mulawa, in which he commented extensively on the provision of medical services to female inmates. In 1985 the NSW Women In Prison Task Force (WIPTF) produced a report into the conditions at Mulawa and the Norma Parker Centre. The report contained 287 recommendations. Whilst not specifically focused on the operations of Mulawa, in 1994 the Department produced the first 'Women's Action Plan', which precipitated the establishment of the Women's Services Unit (WSU) in 1996. I will discuss each of these in more detail later in the report.

The most significant review of the operations of Mulawa to date, as previously indicated, was conducted by the NSW Ombudsman. The Ombudsman's investigation, which originally commenced as an investigation into serious allegations contained within a Sydney Morning Herald article in July 1994, was conducted with the significantly broader terms of reference, "the care and protection of women inmates at Mulawa Correctional Centre and the response to, and prevention of self mutilation by women inmates." Under the auspices of this wider purview, over the following two years the Ombudsman conducted a comprehensive investigation into the operations of the centre. The investigation culminated in the production of the 'Mulawa Report' in April 1997. The report contained forty (40) recommendations, thirty-six (36) specific to Mulawa. In addition, the report was invaluable in that it provided the first anthology on the development of services for women at the centre.

With the understanding that Mulawa had received much attention in the past, my decision to conduct this inspection of Mulawa was not taken lightly or driven by philosophical or emotional paradigms. I have no doubt that the Ombudsman's investigation and subsequent report 'assisted DCS and OCS to maintain, and in some cases sharpen, their focus on badly needed improvements to conditions of imprisonment for women'. However, my decision to conduct the inspection was based on a pragmatic rationale and predicated upon the appreciation that much had changed over 5 years since the Ombudsman's report.

Of most significance was the sizeable increase in the number of women who now find themselves in full-time custody in NSW. At the time of the Ombudsman's report the number of women in full-time custody was around 350. At the time of writing, the number of women in full-time custody stands at 517. In May 2002, the number of women in full-time custody reached a record high of 525%. This increase, together with an apparent concomitant increase in the number of women in custody who are mentally ill or present with substantial behavioural disorders, has had a dramatic effect on the female system and, most significantly, upon Mulawa.

Sadly, there is no expectation that the prevailing circumstances confronting Mulawa will ease in either the immediate future or longer term. It is generally accepted that the Bail Amendment (Repeat Offenders) Act 2002, which commenced on 1 July 2002, will serve to increase the number of women on remand.

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4 ibid, p.ii.
5 ibid, p.i
6 Weekly Stat, NSW Department of Corrective Services, Research & Statistics Branch.
7 Submission received from Kim Gull, President, The Law Society NSW.
INSPECTOR-GENERAL’S OVERVIEW

Internal estimates within the Department have predicted a possible increase of between 100 to 200 remand inmates within the first year of the amendments. Whilst I view this prediction as perhaps a worst-case scenario, the overall increasing trend in female incarceration rates since 1998 shows no sign of abating. Whilst it is true that the number of men being sentenced to full-time custody is also rising, as acknowledged within the Department’s ‘Women’s Action Plan 2’, ‘the rate is not as steep as that of the women’. In 2000, the number of women in full-time custody stood at 6.2% of the total inmate population of NSW. By the end of 2001 this figure had increased to 6.7%.

Information from within the system together with discussions held with Official Visitors, staff and interest groups indicated that Mulawa was already under considerable stress and, if the predicted increases did eventuate, that it may have considerable difficulties in meeting this challenge. Indeed, the stresses being placed upon Mulawa over the preceding 12 to 18 months had been identified by the Department and were the catalyst for its decision to transform Berrina into a women’s centre in December 2001.

In light of the above, I determined that it was imperative that my Office undertake this inspection at, what I considered, a crucial time in Mulawa’s history.

One of the main objectives of the inspection was to assess the centre’s current service delivery capacity and to determine whether the centre would be capable, taking into account the plans of the centre’s management and the Department, of meeting the anticipated increases in inmate numbers.

The multi-dimensional inspection methodology utilised by the inspection team was substantially based upon the methods used by the Chief Inspector of Prisons in the United Kingdom and the Inspector of Custodial Services in Western Australia to inspect correctional facilities in their respective jurisdictions. The inspection is structured so as to provide a holistic view of the operations and service delivery capabilities of the correctional centre. I am firmly of the view that the multi-dimensional approach taken during the inspection of Mulawa, together with the use of professional consultant inspectors, is the fairest method possible. I believe that this, and the objectives of the inspection, were successfully achieved by the inspection team.

Inspection Findings

In arriving at my findings I will necessarily be referring to the Ombudsman’s ‘Mulawa Report (1997)’ and its recommendations as it provides a point of reference upon which to comment upon the level of service provision and assess any improvements to the operation of the centre that have occurred since the time of that report.

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8 Mulawa Correction Centre, Proposal to manage increased remand inmate population and the impact of the new bail legislation, Lee Downes, Governor, March 2002, p.3.
10 See section ‘Inspection Methodology’ p.18, for more detailed description of the inspection process.
INSPECTOR-GENERAL'S OVERVIEW

As can be seen from the brief description of the centre given at the beginning of this report, Mulawa is a multi-purpose centre. In this context it is unique within the system as there is no other centre that is expected to fulfill such a diverse range of purposes and manage such a mixed population of inmates. Comparatively, within the male system there are ‘specific purpose’ correctional centres which service inmates with clearly identified collective needs.

From my inspection I quickly formed the view that this multiplicity of purpose was perhaps one of the most significant issues impacting on the centre’s capacity to deliver services to inmates. In fact, it was pervasive. It had necessarily affected management decisions concerning the allocation of the finite resources at the centre’s disposal. It had led to role confusion amongst staff and generated a general sense that given these circumstances there was ‘little or no chance for success’11 at Mulawa. This is not surprising. There has been much written in management texts about the necessity to ‘focus’ in order to achieve success. In a correctional context there is ample evidence in support of this notion within the Department. At the Metropolitan Special Programs Centre (MSPC), for example, the Department has achieved considerable success with the programs that are being delivered there, due to the ability of that centre to concentrate its efforts and resources on focused strategies.

During the inspection it was evident that the high level of use of the accommodation and facilities at Mulawa had caused significant ‘wear and tear’ to many of the buildings and units at the centre. Some of the major items that require the Department’s attention are detailed in the report. The ongoing maintenance required to address these issues at the centre was found to be suffering from a number of impediments, both internal and external to the centre. The inspection found that there were substantial delays in the external approval of the centre’s major maintenance expenditures, confusion regarding the work to be performed by the maintenance contractors and poor administrative systems for monitoring the maintenance work to ensure that it was being carried out within a reasonable timeframe. The appointment of a suitably qualified person to fill the position of ‘Manager of Employment and Centre Services’ at the centre would greatly assist in addressing these issues.

By and large the accommodation at Mulawa, when the maintenance issues are addressed, could be rated as fair depending upon the accommodation unit. However, conditions within the Multi-Purpose Unit (MPU) and Conlon are less than ideal. The noise levels generated within the MPU as a result of the poor ceiling design are deafening and militate against the good work being carried out by the staff in that Unit. The absence of suitable exercise areas for the inmates accommodated in the MPU is also a problem as is the lack of inmate access to telephones. We were pleased to hear from the centre’s management that funding had recently been approved for the installation of sound reduction materials and secure exercise areas at the MPU.

11 Staff surveys and focus groups held with staff.
INSPECTOR-GENERAL'S OVERVIEW

The Department has carried out recent renovations to the eastern section of Conlon 2, which are a welcome development. However, further renovation is required to improve the conditions within the remainder of the complex. Some of the renovations that are required are detailed in chapter 2 of the report. More generally, the Conlon complex, with its male oriented design, is not ideally suited for its current use as accommodation for inmates on protection. Equally, Conlon would not be a suitable environment in which to accommodate long-term inmates. It would be preferable that Conlon only be used to provide accommodation for short-term remand inmates or for short periods as part of a management program. Much to their credit, the centre’s management had identified the problems associated with the current accommodation arrangements within Conlon some time ago and had developed a proposal for the restructure of the centre’s accommodation. The inspection supported the need for the restructure and accordingly recommends that the centre be given the resources with which to carry out this proposal.

The inspection found that the most significant problems facing the centre in its efforts to provide effective services to inmates were the lack of staff, particularly custodial staff, and frequent management changes over a significant period of time. The staff and inmates were uncharacteristically united in their views on this issue. The staff spoke at length of the impact that staff shortages had had on the quality of services at the centre and ultimately on their personal lives. The inspection found that there were a number of factors that were responsible for the staffing problems at the centre. These included a high number of staff on long-term sick leave, actual staffing numbers being below the number that had been funded and high levels of short-term sick leave.

The Governor has been required to spend a significant amount of her time involved in the planning of new facilities or relieving at other centres. The absence of the Governor has had a deleterious effect upon the operation of the centre. My view on this issue is supported by the views of the UK Chief Inspector of Prisons who said, when commenting on the concept of a healthy prison:

"Engaging constructively with prisoners is the core job of prison officers. They will only do this well when there is leadership of the prison culture. This requires continuity in office for senior prison managers, particularly for Governors." 

In addition to these factors is the fact that Mulawa’s staffing levels are arrived at using the same staffing formula that is applied to determining the staffing levels of male correctional centres. Staffing female correctional centres, in particular Mulawa, in this way fails to take into account the ‘high-need’ characteristics of female inmates. The high workloads generated by the ‘high-need’ nature of female inmates is overwhelmingly supported by the Department’s internal statistics. Accordingly, the Department should look towards developing a separate, female centre specific staffing formula to determine the appropriate staffing levels for female facilities.

INSPECTOR-GENERAL'S OVERVIEW

In the interim, and at least until the opening of Dilwynia correctional centre at South Windsor, my report recommends that the Department look at the short-term redeployment of a number of experienced officers to Mulawa with a view to improving the often critical staffing levels at the centre. The anticipated increase in the number of women on remand after 1 July 2002 heightens the need to redeploy additional staff to the centre.

Notwithstanding the impediments caused by staffing levels, the inspection found that a number of the operational aspects of Mulawa were performing at very high levels. This was most evident within the centre's reception and induction processes. Whilst the conditions of the facilities do not assist, the staff in these areas were found to be highly motivated and skilled in their roles. This was particularly the case in the Induction Unit where staff performed admirably in this high volume and high turnover work environment. In sum, the reception and induction processes at the centre were a credit to the management and staff involved.

Whilst this was a pleasing result, under current staffing and accommodation arrangements, it was determined and agreed by staff that these processes, including medical services would have considerable difficulty coping with a 20% increase in the number of receptions to the centre, which is far less than the estimated increase referred to above.

The inspection found that there was considerable scope for improvement with regard to the orientation of new arrivals to the centre. The upgrading of orientation documentation issued to new arrivals and the use of inmate delegates to the centre's Inmate Development Committee in the orientation process have been suggested as possible improvements in this area.

By and large the inspection team found that there were many factors at Mulawa that militated against the centre achieving a better outcome in terms of inmate rehabilitation and return to the community. One of the major prevailing factors was again the multiplicity of the centre's purpose. Out of necessity the centres resources, human and financial, are directed towards what is seen as the centre's primary functions; reception, induction and management of inmates with mental illnesses and acute behavioural problems. The need for the centre to focus on these significantly reduces the resources left available for the rehabilitation of inmates and their successful return to the community. Both staff and inmates spoke strongly about this issue.

The inspection also found substantial problems in terms of the provision of Probation & Parole, Welfare, and Alkohol and other Drugs (AOD) services at the centre. In particular, the level of AOD service provision was found to be inadequate. The provision of these services was, for the most part, affected by staffing issues which need to be urgently examined by the Department. Additionally, there was a lack of co-ordination amongst these Inmate Services and Programs (ISP) disciplines evident at the centre. Chief among the reasons for this were the long-term absence of the centre's Programs Manager and the apparent absence of professional supervision of ISP staff.
INSPECTOR-GENERAL’S OVERVIEW

A more positive outcome of the inspection was our assessment of the overall relationship between the centre’s staff and its inmates. Both the staff and the inmates have made significant attempts to work together to establish and maintain an effective relationship and there was a degree of goodwill evident. However, the goodwill established is constantly under stress as a result of the operational difficulties at the centre and this does create friction from time to time.

In terms of Mulawa’s future, the Department has determined that it will become the equivalent of the MRRC within the women’s correctional system. If this vision is to be realised, then Mulawa must be given the opportunity to do so unencumbered. The continued placement of category 3 and 4 sentenced inmates at the centre after the opening of Dillwynia represents a substantial impediment to achieving this outcome. If Mulawa is to be successful as a remand & reception and an acute crisis management centre for women then the Department needs to look seriously at the creation of alternate placement options for the higher categories of sentenced inmates. With the construction of a 50 bed women’s facility at Kempsey (2003/2004) and a similar facility planned for the correctional centre to be constructed in the Central West, the Department has the opportunity to make the structural changes that are required to assist Mulawa to fulfil its new role and become a centre of excellence in the delivery of services to women inmates.

Many of the matters identified by the inspection team as requiring attention or resolution have been raised with and acknowledged by management at Mulawa and action is being taken to address them. Accordingly, I have not made recommendations in relation to all of the issues identified. However, I propose to monitor the implementation of improvements at the centre on a quarterly basis with follow-up reports to the Minister.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Governor of Mulawa, Superintendent Lee Downes, and the staff of Mulawa for the assistance and cooperation that they gave to the inspection team. The positive approach taken by the centre’s management and staff to the inspection process was greatly appreciated and I am hopeful that the resources and assistance that they need to address the issues before them will be forthcoming.

I would also like to thank Dr Simon Hasleton, Mr Don Davison and Mr Alan Kirkland for their specialist, and invaluable assistance. Thanks also to my staff, in particular Steve Griffin, for their dedication and commitment to ensuring that the inspection was a successful and worthwhile process.

My appreciation also goes to Professor Richard Harding, Inspector of Custodial Services in Western Australia, and his team for their guidance on the inspection methodology.

Lindsay Le Compte,
Inspector-General of Corrective Services
4 October 2002
Chapter 1

MULAWA IN CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

It simply would not be possible to arrive at an accurate, fair and worthwhile assessment of Mulawa and its operations unless it was viewed within a much wider context. This necessarily requires an appreciation of the centre’s history and an understanding of the linkages that exist between Mulawa and other centres in the system. Much of the Inspection Team’s pre-on-site inspection research was dedicated to providing this contextual framework.

In terms of the centre’s history, there is a need to know from where we came before we can move forward, and an understanding of the linkages to other centres provides greater insight into the importance of Mulawa within the women’s system. Hence, this chapter of the report is devoted to providing the reader with the wider context within which Mulawa should be viewed.

Location & general description

The Mulawa Correctional Centre site is located in the suburb of Silverwater on the southern shore of the Parramatta River and has main arterial road access from Silverwater Road in the Municipality of Auburn. Silverwater is approximately 20 kilometres west of the City of Sydney and 5.5 kilometres east of the City of Parramatta.

The Department of Corrective Services has developed and manages a complex of major correctional centres at Silverwater which adjoin each other and consist of the following:

- Metropolitan Remand and Reception Centre (MRRC) – a maximum security remand & reception facility for men;
- Mulawa Correctional Centre - a reception, remand and maximum security centre for women; and
- Silverwater Correctional Centre – a minimum security and work release centre for men.

The Silverwater correctional complex is bounded by the Parramatta River, Sydney Metropolitan Oil Pipeline Terminal, Wilson Park (currently dosed as adjacent land is being redeveloped from a former garbage tip and industrial uses and extended into a much larger parkland facility), Millennium Parklands (former Royal Australian Navy Newington Armament Depot that has been redeveloped into a large open space area as a component of the Sydney Olympic and Showground complex) and various industrial developments. No residential housing is located on the correctional centre side of Silverwater Road and the predominant land use in the district is industrial.

The former garbage tip and industrial sites have been amalgamated and are understood to have been classified as contaminated. For the last 7 to 8 years the land has been remediated by the State Government for use as a public park. A significant amount of landfill on the future park site has taken place with prominent fill mounds and steep banks located on the boundary of the Mulawa site.
MULAWA IN CONTEXT

A significant land use within the vicinity of Silverwater is a major oil refinery and oil pipeline terminal. The inspection did not canvas whether an emergency plan exists for the district that includes the Silverwater Correctional Complex. Whilst we did not sight it, the inspection team was advised that there was an evacuation plan in existence for the entire complex. From talking to staff it became clear that, whilst they knew that an evacuation plan existed, it was seldom, if ever, rehearsed. At various times within the Mulawa site, under certain prevailing weather conditions, a pungent smell can be noticed, presumably from the processing of oil products nearby.

The Mulawa Correctional Centre is divided by security fences and locked gates into distinct precincts according to security risk and function. The centre consists of a multitude of small to medium size buildings (28 buildings not including storage sheds) spread throughout landscaped grounds. The building layout creates numerous spaces within the grounds in which inmates of certain classifications can walk and exercise. Such a large number of spaces generate a high surveillance requirement from Mulawa staff, as surveillance camera coverage is limited. High-risk inmates are restricted to particular buildings and nominated periods for outdoor exercise.

A more detailed description of the accommodation and other facilities at Mulawa will appear later in the report.

HISTORY OF THE CENTRE

The Mulawa centre is built on the site of the old Newington hospital and was acquired by the Department of Corrective Services in 1968, opening as a corrective centre for women in 1970. Before being used as a hospital, the facility and land had been used as a farm, school, factory and asylum. Prior to the opening of Mulawa, female inmates had occupied a 200 bed prison built specifically for women at Long Bay in 1961. A surge in the number of male inmates during the period precipitated the relocation of female inmates to Mulawa.

A number of the very old historic buildings at Mulawa consisting of Chisholm, Catchpole and Blandshand Houses date from pre-1890 and 1911 construction periods. Notable architects John Verge and Walter Vernon designed the buildings. The facilities were used as a benevolent asylum and hospital and have been refurbished over the years. A number of alterations, especially to the interiors, have occurred over the last 32 years since becoming a correctional facility.

The historic buildings in the Silverwater correctional complex are protected by conservation area classification orders, which are listed in a Regional Environmental Plan, the Register of the National Estate and by a Department of Corrective Services Heritage and Conservation Register enforced under the Heritage Act of NSW. The requirement of a heritage classification is that the buildings must be well maintained and any alteration needs to be compliant with heritage principles.

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13 See Appendix B – site plan for Mulawa Correctional Centre
14 Report of the Comptroller-General of Prisons NSW, 1961, p.4
MULAWA IN CONTEXT

Mulawa was not purpose built and the practice over the ten years following its opening was one of moving in and out of various adapted old buildings, erecting new security fences and gates and using portable buildings. The original accommodation was divided into three sections; Caroline Chisholm House, primarily for first offenders and unsettled prisoners with a maximum capacity of 52 women; Margaret Catchpole House, which accommodated 31 recidivists and Mary Reiby House comprising 10 single cells for inmates who needed to be separated for security reasons. The first major addition to the site by way of construction was the erection of the Anne Conlon wing, now commonly referred to as Conlon, a 60 single cell building first occupied in September 1980.

The NSW Women in Prison Task Force (WIPTF), which was established in 1984, resulted in the development of a capital works plan for Mulawa under which the construction of the Multi-Purpose Unit (MPU) and new inmate residential accommodation took place with the Dawn Dea Loas complex coming online in 1989, closely followed by the Wyndana complex in 1990. The new residential accommodation was progressive and was based on inmates providing for their own living requirements with facilities for cooking, washing and cleaning within central communal areas. Cell units were designed for single occupancy. Inmates were moved from dilapidated historic buildings into new purpose built residential facilities. The old buildings could then be adapted for administrative and inmate industrial activities.

Since the opening of Wyndana or 'stage 2' in 1990 there has been no further major construction at Mulawa. However, a number of buildings have been the subject of major renovations, primarily in an attempt to improve the delivery of medical and therapeutic services at the centre. Principally, these developments were the transformation of a pre-existing dormitory into the current Hospital Annex (Clinic) in 1994 and the redevelopment of the old Chapel into the Mum Shirl Unit in 1996.

Previous Scrutiny

Mulawa has been the focus of much scrutiny and attention over the years. Justice Nagle devoted an entire chapter of his 1978 'Report of Royal Commission into NSW Prisons' to the conditions of imprisonment at Mulawa in which he commented extensively on the provision of medical services to female inmates. Nagle made 13 recommendations, which focused on the issues of medical treatment, classification and visiting conditions at Mulawa.

Following what was then a sharp increase in the number of female inmates to 182 in 1983, the WIPTF was formed at the direction of the Minister for Corrective Services the following year. In 1985 the WIPTF produced a report into the conditions at Mulawa and the Norma Parker Centre. The report contained 287 recommendations, many of which were 'well beyond the purview of the Department of Corrective Services' to implement.

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[16] Loc. cit
MULAWA IN CONTEXT

Within the plethora of recommendations the WIPTF sought to address many of the issues identified by Nagle some 7 years earlier. These included inadequate medical services, over-sedation, lack of exercise, lack of vocational and educational programs and the absence of a detoxification program for drug addicts. A spill within the WIPTF resulted in a minority report being submitted which advocated a fresh prison on a new site and a ceiling of 97 as the maximum number of women to be imprisoned in NSW. A majority report was also submitted. This report favoured the redevelopment of the Mulawa site and this became the preferred option of the government.

The WIPTF was disbanded in 1988 by the then Minister for Corrective Services. Many, including those within the WIPTF, were of the view that it had not been effective in securing the implementation of many of the reforms outlined in its report. Nevertheless, the WIPTF’s work was significant in that it ensured that a heightened degree of focus on female incarceration issues would continue well into the future.

Following a direction from then Commissioner Smeathurst, the first ‘Women’s Action Plan’ was produced by the Department in 1994. The stated objective of the plan was “to develop equitable, realistic, cost efficient strategies designed to ensure improved access to services and programs for women inmates.” One of the major thrusts of the plan, later appropriately referred to as ‘the capital works solution’, was the expansion of placement options for women. The plan provided the impetus for:

- the redevelopment and re-commissioning of the former Emu Plains prison farm as a minimum security (138 Bed) Correctional Centre for women (1995);
- the establishment of a 21 bed transitional centre at Parramatta to provide opportunities for inmates to be with their pre-school age children (1996);
- the provision of 19 beds within the June Baker Unit at Grafton and 8 beds at Broken Hill; and
- the establishment of the Women’s Services Unit (WSU) within the Department in 1996.

The Department’s ‘Women’s Action Plan 2 (2000-2003)’, which contains many of the Department’s contemporary plans for women’s facilities in NSW, represents a fundamental shift in focus away from the earlier objective of equity of access to services and programs for women inmates to placing emphasis on ‘needs-based programming for all women under its care’. There were no reasons given within the document for this shift in focus.

The most significant review of the operations of Mulawa to date was conducted by the NSW Ombudsman. The Ombudsman’s investigation was originally commenced as an investigation into serious allegations contained within a Sydney Morning Herald article in July 1994. The article raised a series of allegations which included; a ‘sex-for-favours’ network operating at

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20. ibid, *NSW Ombudsman*, p.41.
21. ibid, *Women’s Action Plan 2, foreword.*
the centre; theft of methadone from the centre's clinic; substandard medical, psychological and other care for inmates; and irregularities surrounding the death in custody of an inmate and the attempted suicide of another.\(^{22}\)

During the preliminary investigation conducted in 1994, the Ombudsman quickly discounted the more sensational allegations as unsubstantiated. However, the Ombudsman proceeded with an investigation under the significantly broader terms of reference, "the care and protection of women inmates at Mulawa Correctional Centre and the response to, and prevention of self mutilation by women inmates.\(^23\) Under the auspices of this wider purview, over the following two years the Ombudsman conducted a comprehensive investigation into the operations of the centre. The investigation culminated in the production of the 'Mulawa Report' in April 1997. The report contained forty (40) recommendations, thirty-six (36) specific to Mulawa. The report was invaluable in that it provided a comprehensive and instructional record of the conditions and services at the centre.

The Ombudsman's report was an extremely useful tool in my inspection of Mulawa. It provided many points of reference upon which the inspection team could assess the current levels of service provision and record any improvements to the operation of the centre that had occurred since the Ombudsman's report was published. Consequently, from time to time throughout this report, I will make reference to various comments and, in particular, recommendations made by the Ombudsman in her report.

THE CENTRE'S PURPOSE AND RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER CENTRE'S IN THE SYSTEM

Mulawa Correctional Centre is a multi-purpose centre. It is the main reception, remand and maximum security centre for women in New South Wales. With a current operating capacity of 300, it is at the epicentre of female correctional management in this State. In terms of its remand function, it is the equivalent for women of the Metropolitan Remand & Reception Centre (MRRC) for men receiving ninety-six percent (96%) of all new female receptions\(^24\). At an average rate of forty (40) new receptions each week, Mulawa receives around 2100 new receptions each year. This makes it the second largest reception centre in NSW.

It is the only correctional centre for women that has the capacity to manage maximum security and high risk inmates, many of whom present with challenging behaviours. Hence, Mulawa performs the equivalent function of the male maximum security correctional centres of Goulburn and Lithgow within the female system. In addition, Mulawa is charged with the responsibility of managing women who are acutely mentally ill or who are acutely at risk of suicide or self harm.\(^25\)

\(^{22}\) Ibid, NSW Ombudsman, p.n.
\(^{23}\) Ibid, p.n.
\(^{25}\) Ibid, p.2.
MULAWA IN CONTEXT

As a result of my inspection I quickly formed the view that this multiplicity of purpose was perhaps one of the most significant issues impacting on the centre’s capacity to deliver services to inmates. In fact, it was pervasive. It had necessarily affected management decisions concerning the allocation of the finite resources at the centre’s disposal. It had led to role confusion amongst staff and generated a general sense that given these circumstances there was ‘little or no chance for success’ at Mulawa. This is not surprising. There has been much written in management texts about the need to ‘focus’ in order to achieve success.

The impact that this ‘multi-purpose’ function had on the roles of staff came through very strongly in the focus group sessions. Some of the more notable comments were, ‘We spend all our time identifying the needs of reception inmates, which leaves no time for us to work constructively on inmates’; ‘Access to programs, it’s difficult to do them having to focus on assessment’; and, ‘Too much of our time is taken up identifying problems, however we have no time to focus on solutions to an inmate’s issues’.

Further attention will be given to this issue later in the report.

Notwithstanding the issues faced by Mulawa, it must be acknowledged that over the last 7 years the Department has made significant progress in regard to improving placement options for women in custody. And it intends to do more. As part of placing the operation of Mulawa into context it is not only necessary to understand its purpose, but also its relationship to other centres within the system.

In terms of women in full-time custody there are four other institutions involved, and others to a lesser degree, in the management of female inmates. These are Emu Plains, Berrima, Grafton (June Barker) and Broken Hill.

Emu Plains

In February 1995, the Department redeveloped the former prison farm for men at Emu Plains and established it as a minimum security centre for women. Originally intended as a 138 bed facility, the centre now has an operating capacity of 210. At the time of writing, the centre housed 166 inmates. All inmates had been sentenced and most were classified as either category 2 or 3. Unlike Mulawa, Emu Plains provides women inmates with access to work release programs, albeit in a limited capacity.

26. Comments made during staff focus groups and in staff surveys
28. See Chapter 5 re: The future plans for Mulawa.
29. Category 4: Continuous supervision — Those female inmates who, in the opinion of the Commissioner, should at all times be confined by a secure physical barrier;
Category 3: General supervision — female inmates who, in the opinion of the Commissioner, should be confined by a physical barrier unless in the company of a correctional officer or some other authorised person authorised;
Category 2: Minimum supervision — Those female inmates who, in the opinion of the Commissioner, need not be confined by a physical barrier at all times but who need some level of supervision by a correctional officer or some other authorised person;
Category 1: Monitored — Those female inmates who, in the opinion of the Commissioner, need not be confined by a physical barrier at all times and who need not be supervised.
30. According to the Department’s weekly states for the week ending June 9, 2002 only 4 inmates were recorded as being on work’s release.
MULAWA IN CONTEXT

Under the auspices of the Department's 'Mothers and Children's Program' (MCP), the Jacaranda Cottages, which provide women inmates with additional opportunities for full time or occasional residence with their pre-school children, were constructed at the centre. Up until this time there had been limited MCP opportunities at the Parramatta Transitional Centre since 1996.

More recently, Bolwara House was opened in April 2002. Akin to the Ngara Nura pre-release program for men at the AOD Therapeutic Unit at Long Bay, the new facility will provide women, 'with a history of drug and alcohol problems, Aboriginal women and recidivists', with pre-release program opportunities. At the time of writing, 2 inmates were accommodated within Bolwara House.

Berrima

To 'alleviate the severe overcrowding at Mulawa'22 the Department upgraded the 60 bed Berrima facility and commenced its operation as a medium security women's centre in December 2001. Many of the former male occupants of the Centre were relocated to the recommissioned Gooma correctional centre. The centre's primary purpose is to provide accommodation and programs for sentenced inmates with a category 3 classification rating. At the time of writing, 58 inmates were located at Berrima.

From discussions held with staff, inmates and official Visitors, it appears that Berrima has adapted well to its new role. Whilst there may be some minor problems in relation to access to some programs at the centre, by and large everyone I have spoken to has reported positively in relation to the operation of Berrima. In fact, I understand that many inmates whilst first reluctant to go to Berrima, now baulk, in some cases protest, at the prospect of returning to Mulawa. Whilst I am unsure of the Department's long term plans for Berrima, particularly after the opening of Dilwyna, the apparent smooth transition to a women's centre and the centre's good progress should be viewed as one of the Department's significant successes.

Grafton (June Baker Centre)

In 1996, the periodic detention centre attached to the Grafton correctional centre was refurbished to accommodate 19 women. The June Baker Centre, as it is now known, was opened as part of the Women's Action Plan (1994) expansionary objective. The objective sought to provide full time custody places for women in regional areas whereby they could be close to their families and maintain community ties. June Baker is administratively attached to the Grafton correctional centre and this has presented some problems regarding the resources the centre has to share with the 230 male inmates of Grafton. At the time of writing, June Baker is accommodating 13 inmates, 1 on remand and 12 sentenced.

Broken Hill

Broken Hill correctional centre is capable of accommodating 8 women inmates. This capability is affected, from time to time, by the centre's male inmate state. Like the June Baker Centre, the places available at Broken Hill are intended to allow

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women inmates to be placed near their families and communities. Whilst this is a meritorious objective, I am advised that placement of women at Broken Hill was undertaken in the knowledge that access to programs and services for these individuals will be affected. At the time of writing, there were 3 sentenced women inmates at Broken Hill.

Mulawa also has links to The Norma Parker Centre and the Transitional Centre at Parramatta.

The Norma Parker Centre
The Norma Parker Centre, formerly a minimum security (work release) centre, is now the main Periodic Detention Centre for women in the metropolitan area. Norma Parker has a significant impact upon Mulawa because Mulawa is administratively responsible for its operation. Any substantial increase in the number of women on periodic detention would necessarily result in a drain upon Mulawa’s financial and human resources. This is a factor that must be taken into account when allocating resources to the overall operation of Mulawa.

Parramatta Transitional Centre
As part of the MCP, since 1996 the Transitional Centre at Parramatta has provided 21 pre-release beds for women inmates where their pre-school children can live with them on a full-time or part-time basis. As is the case with inmates located at Bolwara House, the positions available at the transitional centre are given to those inmates who have been granted a ‘Local Leave Permit’ by the Commissioner pursuant to section 26(2)(j) of the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999. At the time of writing, there were 16 women accommodated at the Transitional Centre.

Other Centres
From time to time Junee holds a small number of women for short periods, usually to allow their appearance at nearby courts. Other centres such as Bathurst, Parklea and the Metropolitan Special Programs Centre (MSPC) have, more recently, been called upon to periodically assist Mulawa with the management of a number of acutely mentally ill or acutely ‘at risk’ inmates. This process will be discussed more fully later in the report. At the time of writing, 2 women inmates were being accommodated at the Acute Crisis Management Unit (MSPC), with 2 at Bathurst, 2 at Parklea and 4 at Junee.

INSPECTION METHODOLOGY

The inspection methodology employed in the inspection of Mulawa was substantially based upon the methods successfully utilised by the Inspector of Custodial Services in Western Australia and the Chief Inspector of Prisons in the United Kingdom to conduct prison inspections in their respective jurisdictions. The inspection methodology is not merely limited to an on-site inspection of an institution. Apart from being grossly unfair, I am of the opinion that such an inspection would be extremely limited in its capacity to provide an accurate and worthwhile assessment of a correctional centre’s operations and, more significantly, would not be capable of making any ‘value-adding’ recommendations.
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The inspection methodology utilised by the inspection team to inspect Mulawa involved a multi-dimensional approach designed to provide a thorough and comprehensive holistic assessment of the operations and service delivery capabilities of the correctional centre. Generally, the process involved the use of surveys, historical research, statistical research, submissions from major stakeholders, interviews with the Official Visitors to the centre, a presentation from senior departmental management and an on-site inspection of the centre over 5 days, from Sunday 26 May 2002 to Thursday 30 May 2002, utilising the services of psychological, architectural and welfare professionals as consultant inspectors.

I should add at this point that the inspection team also included a custodial officer chosen from persons involved in the Department's management development program. We also invited the Governor of the centre to nominate a staff member to act as liaison for us at the centre. This process proved to be very successful. To enable a greater appreciation of the processes involved, a brief outline of how the inspection proceeded is presented here.

Surveys

Formal structured surveys were conducted of both staff and inmates of Mulawa.

The survey of inmates at Mulawa Correctional Centre was carried out between 6 and 8 May 2002, with the involvement of two inspection team members. Official Visitor, Babette Smith, and two representatives from the Department's Indigenous Services Unit provided much appreciated assistance on 6 and 7 May 2002 respectively.

The surveys undertaken with inmates were face-to-face (market research) style interviews. The surveys were conducted in this way to ensure that inmates with poor literacy skills were not excluded from providing input into the process. Inmates to be surveyed were randomly selected from the Centre's nominal role. Ninety-four (94) surveys were completed. This sample represented 35.6% of Mulawa's population for the week ending 5 May 2002.

On 6 May 2002, 222 questionnaires were placed in the 'sign-on' area for staff to pick up on their arrival at, or departure from, the centre. The questionnaires were in sealed envelopes, which were addressed to each individual staff member, according to the current roster and MIMs records. A covering letter, outlining the basis of the questionnaire, and a return addressed envelope, were also in the envelope. Staff were advised to discard the outer envelope, so that there would be no indication of who had responded to the questionnaire. A locked strong box (AEC Ballot Box) was placed in the sign-on area to allow staff to submit completed questionnaires. Alternatively, staff were given the option of posting completed surveys back to us through the internal mail system. Surveys were to be returned by Friday 17 May 2002, however the strong box was not collected until the following Monday.

Sixty-nine (69) of the questionnaires were not collected from the 'sign-on' area, however 23 of these were addressed to staff members who were actually not rostered on to work for the entire two-week period. As such, they had probably not attended the centre during this time. Of the 153 questionnaires that were collected, fifty-seven (57) or a little over one third (35.95%) were completed and returned.
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Research & Statistical Information.
Statistical data relating to Mulawa was obtained from the Department’s Research and Statistics Branch. This data was added to by the statistical data held by my Office.

Numerous books, reports, articles documents and plans relating to Mulawa were sourced from the Department’s head office or the Corrective Services Academy. Much of the statistical and other information gathered during this process will appear later in the report.

Submissions from Major Stakeholders/Interest Groups
Six weeks prior to the on-site inspection I wrote to all the major stakeholder and interest groups to advise them of my intention to inspect Mulawa and invited them to make any submission they wished to regarding their knowledge and/or experience of the operations of the centre.

In response I received submissions from the following groups:- The NSW Ombudsman’s Office; Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW; NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs; Chair of the Board of Guthrie House; the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission; The Law Society of NSW; The NSW Bar Association; the Director of Public Prosecutions; Legal Aid NSW; Children of Prisoners Support Group Co-Op Ltd; Prisoner’s Aid and the Chaplains of Mulawa.

All the submissions received contained information and comments regarding the operation of Mulawa that were of great assistance to the inspection team. I will make reference to some of the comments contained within a number of these submissions throughout the report. This aspect of the inspection was a most invaluable exercise and I wish to take the opportunity of thanking those who took the time to provide me with submissions.

Interviews with Official Visitors
Members of the inspection team met with the two Official Visitors to Mulawa, Ms Kay Valder and Ms Babette Smith and obtained submissions from them in relation to the operation of the Centre.

Presentations from Head Office
In the week lead up to the on-site inspection, members of the inspection team received a briefing from the Acting Senior Assistant Commissioner, Mr John Kock and the Assistant Commissioner for Inmate Management, Mr Luke Grant. During the briefing the current operation of the centre and the Department’s future plans for Mulawa were outlined.

All of the information and data gathered during the process outlined above allowed the inspection team to identify many of the key issues well in advance of the actual inspection. This allowed the inspection team to focus its efforts on examining these key issues during the on-site phase of the inspection.
The On-Site Inspection

The on-site inspection commenced on Sunday 26 May 2002, at which time the inspection team (see Appendix A) attended the centre for a four hour period to examine the visits process. The inspection team carried out observations and a number of exit interviews with visitors to the centre.

On Monday 27 May 2002, the inspection team was provided with a presentation by the Governor and taken on a tour of the Centre. From the Monday afternoon to Thursday evening the inspection team involved itself in individual interviews with staff members and inmates. Focus groups were held separately with the Non-Commissioned Officers, Commissioned Officers and Inmate Services & Program Staff (IS6P). Inspection team members arrived at the Centre at 5am and others stayed until 10pm in order to observe as much of the centre's routine as possible.

On Friday 31 May 2002, the inspection team members provided a de-briefing to the Governor and her Deputy outlining some of our preliminary findings.
Chapter 2
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INFRASTRUCTURE & AMENITIES

The inspection of the buildings at Mulawa over a period of 4 days identified a number of issues. It is accepted that the ages of buildings vary quite dramatically from very old historic readapted constructions to purpose built constructions completed some 14 years ago and renovated about 7 years ago.

The majority of the buildings have maintenance and repair problems associated with a high intensity of use. Also, the buildings have been designed with materials requiring high maintenance such as painted surfaces and the need for periodic replacement of fittings and fixtures. Some confusion was also found on what is ‘normal cleaning’ and what is ‘maintenance’ such as cleaning off dust blocking ceiling air ventilation grilles.

The items listed in this report were not checked against current maintenance schedules except for the few items on the current 2001/2002 maintenance program. It is recognized that many of the listed items may be fixed before the completion of my report.

Mulawa’s management have planned significant changes to several buildings in order to improve living conditions imposed on specific inmate classifications. These plans will be fully discussed in the final chapter of the report.

Accommodation Units
Conlon

The two-storey Conlon complex for specialised inmate accommodation was constructed in 1980. Originally comprising 60 single bed cells, with the installation of double bunks in a number of the cells during the mid 1990s, it now has a capacity to hold 100 inmates. Conlon is currently used to accommodate ‘non-association’ and ‘special management area protection’ inmates and is divided by its levels into two sections with the upstairs accommodation regarded as Conlon 1 and the downstairs accommodation designated as Conlon 2. At the time of our inspection only 45 inmates resided within the Conlon complex. The purpose to which the complex has been put necessarily restricts the number of inmates that can be accommodated within Conlon.

With respect to the conditions faced by inmates accommodated within Conlon, save for the recent renovative improvements in Conlon 2 (East), the inspection team was left with the impression that little had changed since the time of the Ombudsman’s report in 1997. Her description of Conlon as ‘dark and unattractive’32, unfortunately, still holds true today. In terms of its current condition, Conlon is one of the most problematic buildings at Mulawa. The cell design and construction provide its occupants with very little natural light and sparse communal rooms. The cells have heavy metal screens over the windows, which significantly restrict natural light. Outdoor exercise spaces are totally inadequate. Old paintwork and floor finishes have resulted in a depressing internal character.

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There have been some recent renovations by the Department to the accommodation within Conlon 2 (East). In this area the walls between a number of cells have been partly demolished and the former single cells merged to create larger cells, each containing a living area separate to the sleeping area. Whilst still poor in terms of natural light, the accommodation in this portion of Conlon is a vast improvement on that in the remainder of the building. Unfortunately, due to the constraints faced in managing the type of inmates within the building, at the time of the inspection it was not possible to have these new units fully occupied.

There were numerous maintenance and safety issues evident within the building such as:

- Water leaks through cracks in the concrete roof.
- Particleboard cupboards in the kitchen areas are disintegrating and require replacement.
- Poor air ventilation exists throughout the building.
- Significant insect problems exist with ants, cockroaches and wasps.
- Broken glass windows in the communal area create adverse temperatures in winter.
- Broken kitchen sink tap is a safety issue.
- Leaking washing machine results in water over the kitchen floor.
- No smoke alarms are connected to the monitor room (Only domestic smoke alarms are installed with battery operation).
- Emergency cell duress alarm system is light only type and does not identify which room has called. The alarm is only connected to a walkway outside of the monitor room and is not connected inside it, making it possible for staff to miss the duress call.
- Broken and loose metal external doorframe in cell.

Mulawa management is attempting to have urgent fire and duress alarm issues resolved but to date work has not commenced.

The fact that Conlon accommodates inmates under protection and lifestyle classifications who spend extensive periods in their cells heightens the concerns I have regarding the conditions within this building. Whilst, Conlon was once considered state of the art accommodation at the time of its construction some 22 years ago, the current condition of the building with its traditional male oriented design is patently not appropriate accommodation for inmates who, often through no fault of their own, have to spend considerable periods confined to their cells whilst on protection.

As a result of my inspection, and the reasons outlined, I formed that view that Conlon was not appropriate accommodation for ‘long-term’ inmates. If it is to be used at all, its use should be limited to the accommodation of women for very short periods, such as during induction screening. I believe that the centre’s management, the Department and I agree on this point.

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34 Submission by the Department to the NSW Ombudsman in April 1996.
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In March 2002, the centre's management presented the Department with a business plan, which outlined how it could manage the anticipated increases in the remand population. Amongst the many proposals contained within that document that will be referred to later in the report, was the plan to relocate the inmates currently accommodated within Conlon to areas within the Dawn de Loas section of the centre and the use of Conlon to accommodate short term remand inmates. Not only would this aspect of the business plan free up 55 additional beds within the centre, it would ensure that only 'short stay' inmates would continue to be accommodated in Conlon.

From speaking with staff and inmates I understand that implementation of this proposal may lead to a 'flood' of applicants for protection. Nevertheless, I consider the advantages of the proposal far outweigh the disadvantages that it also presents.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

That the Department grant approval to the proposal by management at Mulawa to relocate inmates within the centre and that it assist in ensuring that the proposal is implemented as soon as possible.

Wyndana

One of the most recent group of buildings are the inmate accommodation units within the Wyndana area of the centre.

Contained within Wyndana are the Willet, Theresa, Kipling and Brady units, which collectively provide accommodation for 105 remand and sentenced inmates who are on a normal discipline. Also located within this precinct is the nursery, which is one of the major industries and employers at the centre. Those inmates working in the nursery are normally accommodated in one of the units in Wyndana.

In comparison to the accommodation within Conlon the cells within the units are a considerable 'step-up' in terms of their presentation, condition and outlook. The accommodation within each of the units is split into two areas with an Officers' station located in the middle so that both areas can be monitored simultaneously. Inmates within these units have a later lock-in time and have the facilities to cook their own meals.

Dawn de Loas

Located within the Dawn De Loas centre, completed in 1989, are A&B units, C&D units, E&F units and G Unit. During the inspection G unit (a former storeroom converted into 4 single cell accommodation) was not in use and the C&D unit communal space was being painted.

The Dawn de Loas centre has the capacity to accommodate 88 inmates and the units, save for G unit, are similar in design to those within Wyndana. The units in Dawn de Loas have a more expansive outlook with

E/F Units - Dawn de Loas Centre

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36 Mulawa Correctional Centre, Proposal to manage increased remand inmate population and the impact of the new bail legislation, Lee Dowies, Governor, March 2002.
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playing fields and easier access to the gym and activities facilities. This area also accommodates both remand and sentenced inmates on a normal discipline. Inmates in these units also have later lock-in times and the facilities to cook their own meals.

To augment the capacity of the centre, many of the cells within both Dawn de Loos and Wyndana had been converted to ‘2 out’ cells by the installation of bunk bedding. These cell units now accommodate two inmates and former study rooms in each block had been converted into cell accommodation. The size of the cells are 8.17 sq.m, which includes a shower. The Australian/New Zealand standard for cell spatial requirement is 8.75 sq.m for a single cell and 12.75 sq.m for a double cell (These standards include 1.25 sq.m for the inclusion of a shower). Large kitchen and communal areas, which have access to outside areas, assist the size of the cells. However, during lockdowns two inmates in each cell would be well below the standard.

The MPU
The Multi-Purpose Unit (MPU) constructed in 1989 is another relatively recent building within the centre. The MPU is located on the eastern side of the complex and is separated by fences and a gate from the rest of the centre. The MPU is appropriately named as it (1) accommodates around 40 newly received inmates and holds them for the period of their induction; (2) has 5 cells for segregation; (3) has 2 safe cells and 1 dry cell to accommodate acutely at risk inmates; and (4) provides 4 cells for Drug Court participants.

The building suffers many serious fit-out and design deficiencies. One of the most notable of these is the noise amplification that stems primarily from the poor ceiling design depicted here. Those with any experience with the correctional system will appreciate, as I do, that correctional centres are inherently noisy environments. However, the noise levels resonating within the MPU are at times deafening and would, no doubt, be counter-productive to the work being undertaken by the units’ staff. There are also significant problems with the phone system which I will address later in the report.

When first constructed the original MPU building had secure walking yards that provided inmates with opportunity to exercise. For reasons unknown to the current management, these yards were removed some years ago and, if it were not for the benevolence of staff, inmate access to exercise would normally be limited to the confines of the day room and adjacent courtyard. Staff, when they can, permit inmates to walk around the area immediately outside the unit.

Mulawa management are intending to modify the building significantly with items such as air conditioning, sound reduction, improved surveillance of inmates, window modifications, improved staff facilities, removal of hanging points, outdoor exercise yards, painting to remove graffiti and altered door entry. The suicide proofing of cells emanated from a recent inmate suicide and involved numerous changes to the cells to provide adequate surveillance, alarm systems and eliminate hanging points and self-harm items.

The roof of the dayroom in the MPU

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The Department has indicated that it has made funding available (2002/2003) for the installation of sound reduction materials, window and door modifications and the re-establishment of the secure exercise yards. These much needed modifications and improvements will greatly assist the staff of the MPU in the management of inmates, particularly those with specific psychological needs, as well as establish a more humane and safe environment.

RECOMMENDATION 2:
That the modifications planned for the MPU at Mulawa be given the utmost priority, with completion, at very least, being before the end of the 2002 calendar year.

The Mum Shirl Unit (MSU)
The Mum Shirl Unit (MSU) is the therapeutic building accommodating mentally ill and at risk inmates. The MSU has nine cells within which it can accommodate 12 inmates at any one time. The building itself is quite spacious, airy and well lit with ample natural light. However, within the cell accommodation area there are ventilation problems with the safe cells. An attempt to resolve security issues resulted in the installation of lexcen plastic covers over the cell bars. Small holes within the plastic covers have resulted in poor air circulation. The air exhaust vents in each of the cells were also blocked with dust. With proper cleaning the air circulation may assist the ventilation problem but would not remove the need for air conditioning. The cells face west, creating high heat loads during summer. This makes air conditioning essential and we were advised by the centre’s management that they intend to provide this.

The Hospital Annex (Clinic)
The Hospital Annex (Clinic) building for dental, nurse and doctor care for inmates was the result of a redevelopment of a former dormitory in 1994. As illustrated below, the building is dimly lit and cramped. It also has a number of significant design and facility limitations. These include small single rooms that open to the narrow central corridor pictured here. This raises the issues of effective safety and security control, restricted movement of trolleys, medical equipment and stretchers. Escape and safety provisions for staff, nurses and doctors are issues currently before Workcover. We were advised that the clinic building was “condemned” by Corrections Health Service (CHS) two years ago.

Cell provisions in the Clinic are inadequate for the number of sick or violent inmates at the centre. The bed rest area adjacent to the Officers station is in urgent need of renovation and painting with many of the walls found to be dirty and covered in graffiti. The domestic smoke alarms in the Clinic are inadequate and are not connected to the central monitor room. All but one of the detectors did not appear to be working (i.e. no green lights in the alarms were observed) nor were
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there are any fire sprinklers in the building (a fire in the building apparently occurred last year). The lack of air conditioning in most rooms would make conditions difficult for staff and inmates.

Whilst not ideal, the medication parade and dispensary area has improved somewhat since the Ombudsman’s report with the addition of an awning covering much of this area.

It is understood that Mulawa’s management intend to seek building modifications and air conditioning to the Clinic and, in the longer-term, there are plans for a new clinic in a new building.

RECOMMENDATION 3:
That the minor renovations required to improve the bed rest area within the Clinic be undertaken immediately and that air conditioning be installed in the clinic as soon as possible.

The Reception Area (Chisholm House)
The inmate reception centre (located in Chisholm House) accommodates arrivals and departures of inmates from Mulawa. Activities that take place in the reception room include the processing of inmate documentation, body searches, showers, inmate property storage and holding cells. The facility is dilapidated and requires refurbishment. Mulawa management has indicated that the construction of a new facility is proposed.

Programs & Recreational Areas

Education & Library (Blaxland House)
Blaxland House together with several portable buildings provide education, art and craft activities, computer training and library facilities for inmates. The building is a heritage item requiring specialised and costly maintenance if carried out correctly. The building in its current condition needs attention as the verandah flooring is deteriorating. Stained glass needs repair, timberwork requires further investigation and upgrading is required to the teatoom and toilet facilities. A previous shower room is in a state of disrepair. Smoke and duress alarms need to be assessed for connection to all of the education facilities.

Workshops

Gencor Industries (Catchpole House)
The Gencor Industries building within Catchpole House has roof extensions on the ground level that leaked during rainstorms and damage to stored items was evident. Fire escape stairs from the first floor level had furniture and garbage bins obstructing the fire escape. In addition, two locked doors for each escape had been installed for security reasons (refer to later comments on fire certification). The ceiling fans needed cleaning and extensive external areas of the building have peeling paint. This needs to be tested for lead content.
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Visit facilities

The visitor centre was originally designed to cater for a much smaller component of 63 inmates. With an average state of around 280-290 the visiting facilities are stretched. The inspection found that there were insufficient interview rooms for private legal visits. Being a remand centre, ample interview rooms should be made available to facilitate these types of visits. This issue was raised within many of the submissions received by my Office.

In addition, our inspection of the visitor centre raised the following design and maintenance issues:

- A leaking roof had damaged the metal detector resulting in the need for hand held detectors for visitors.
- The drab facilities in the children’s room did not maintain their interest and attention.
- A small inquiry window results in a communication and image problem between visitors and staff. An issue raised quite strongly by the staff.
- The entrance to the building has only a very small outside covered area for visitors (the area is used by visitors who smoke).
- The visitor waiting area has damaged and unsecured lockers.

![Visitor inquiry window](image)

- Service access holes have been cut into the staff administration area ceiling and have not been fixed.
- The outdoor area for inmate visits is generally not used because of previous accidents involving children (Mulawa management intend to lay a rubber paving finish to avoid accidents).
- No camera surveillance of inmate visits area made security difficult for staff.
- Inmate holding facility has broken glass.

The centre’s management were made aware of these issues immediately following the inspection and indicated their intention to rectify most of them as soon as possible. The visits process will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter of the report.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

That the Department consider the allocation of funds for the minor capital works required to increase the number of interview rooms and replace the small window at the inquiry counter of the visits section.

Facility Maintenance

It is recognised that the current condition, age and high intensity of use of the centre generates a significant number of repairs, most of which are delayed while the most urgent ones are attended to. A concern is held regarding items that involve Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) matters and those related to fire and emergency requirements.

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[31] Ibid, Mulawa correctional centre proposal, p 18.

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The principal concern in regard to OH&S matters was that the OH&S committee had been in abeyance for some months and was just starting anew. In addition to this, previous items in meeting minutes were difficult to find or had been lost (latest minutes located were dated 11 December 2001). An effective OH&S committee is vital to avoid injury of staff, inmates and visitors. Every effort must be taken to provide the resources and time to carry out the work.

File information indicates that Mulawa's management has directed all staff to report OH&S items and is encouraging staff on the new OH&S committee to develop skills by attending specialist courses to identify risks. It is understood from staff that some time ago the inmates had their own formal OH&S group that functioned quite effectively. I see merit in involving the Inmate Development Committee (IDC) and Aboriginal Inmate Committee (AIC) in the identification of OH&S issues as this will support and enhance the relationship between staff and inmates and assist the OH&S Committee and Official Visitors in their respective roles.

The OH&S items when identified must be quickly attended to within the work program. Currently, this does not appear to occur except for those issues picked up by supervising staff and maintenance contractors. Any dangerous item must be protected or quarantined if any delay occurs in organising the work and materials required to rectify the problem.

From initial observations the following items are some examples of safety issues evident at the centre:

- Current damaged fibreglass electrical turnouts to underground power cables. It is possible to lift the covers with an apparent risk of electric shock to staff and inmates. The repair work has been listed on the maintenance schedule for the fitting of cast iron covers for some time but no attempt has been made to provide a warning or place temporary barriers around them.

- A large number of buildings have inadequate or no smoke alarms. All smoke alarms need to be wired into the central security and surveillance unit. Mulawa management is well aware of the problem stating that cost is prohibiting the immediate installation of such devices. Smoke alarms are intended for inmate residential accommodation at the Conlon centre and should be installed as soon as possible. Mulawa risks the loss of life as well as the loss of assets and records unless an adequate alarm system is installed.

- General items of safety concern can be found in many locations throughout the centre such as broken taps that allow hot water to burn people, leaking water from washing machines creating slippery surfaces, loose vinyl to trip over, overloading of power outlets, leaking air conditioners, defective chairs, defective gym equipment, defective power points and defects in electrical equipment such as vacuum cleaners, and raised edges of external cement paving.

- Cell and office duress alarm systems are vital for safety and many at Mulawa require upgrading and connection to the security and surveillance monitor centre. Mulawa currently uses portable duress alarms for office use, which may help in the short term, but if people do not have them, serious problems could occur. Many of the old duress alarm systems currently operating in several Mulawa buildings and in the grounds are light only indicators and need upgrading to fully
Taking Stock

Audible types connected to the central control monitor unit. Mulawa management are currently attempting to obtain more mobile duress alarms for teachers, nurses, doctors and official visitors who work in the centre.

RECOMMENDATION 5:
That management at the centre ensure that:
5.1 The OH&SS Committee conducts an audit of outstanding OH&S issues.
5.2 The OH&S Committee consult with inmates on OH&S issues through the monthly IDC and AIC meetings.
5.3 An implementation plan be developed to prioritise the resolution of OH&S issues.

Administration of Maintenance and Repair Work

All building maintenance and repairs require Mulawa staff and management to deal with an exclusive private contractor, Asset Services. Under a five-year contract, Asset Services undertakes the maintenance work for the entire Silverwater Correctional Complex. Mulawa management has expressed concern that in some instances improved response to some urgent items is needed. Also, it is understood that a dispute had existed with Asset Services over what is normal wear requiring maintenance under contract and what items are the result of vandalism requiring additional cost. Matters where delay is involved should be documented within the computer records for future reference.

Currently, problems appear to exist with the maintenance computer system, known as MIMS38, as a way of keeping up to date maintenance records. Mulawa staff are not able to extract information they need on a daily basis for management to assess. It is understood that the Department's Facilities Management Branch is addressing this problem with additional software. It is understood that a comprehensive list of proposed maintenance work by Asset Services under contract exists but a copy was not available at Mulawa.

The current backlog maintenance program for 2001 and 2002 has items for electrical turrets, water main, cell call system, storm water/servery system, MPU safe cell ventilation, PA system and painting of recreation rooms in four residential units, which total $95,300.00. The staff indicated that the program was submitted in July 2001 and was not approved until March 2002 for a completion by 30 June 2002. The inspection team was unable to determine reasons for this inordinate delay. Clearly, the yearly maintenance program needs to be processed, approved, monitored and completed in a more timely and effective manner.

RECOMMENDATION 6:
That the Department conduct a review of the maintenance program approval process with a view to streamlining it.

38 MIMS: Management Information Management system.
Supervising staff within the residential units advised the inspection team that staff reporting defects (usually identified by inmates) did so on the proforma “Request to Carry Out Work”. Many of the notifications received little or no feedback as to when or if the work was to be carried out. This process results in many staff not knowing what has happened to the request and a reluctance to persevere with work requests. The high workload of Mulawa maintenance staff appears to generate a communication problem whereby negative attitudes spread throughout the centre regarding repair and maintenance work. Staff told the inspection team that this leads to friction between staff and inmates as the inmates perceive that the staff are ignoring their requests for repairs.

Generally, during building inspections it was evident that the majority of Mulawa staff do care about the condition of the centre and want to avoid unnecessary conflict and confrontation with inmates over maintenance and repair issues.

The repair and maintenance work requests are carried out under four classifications with immediate, within 24 hours, within a week and when it can be fitted in. The staff indicated that there are usually 2 immediate items, 5 items within 24 hours and 40 to 60 items within any one week.

Mulawa management has advanced a proposal recommending the appointment of a suitably qualified person to the position of ‘Manager Centre Services and Employment’ with building experience who will directly manage maintenance and repair work for the centre. Such an appointment is essential, as it is apparent that the high workload of the current Manager of Industries (MOI) justifies the additional staff member to allow for, amongst other things, more effective and focused management of the maintenance and repair work. The position would also ensure that staff and inmates would be kept informed of the progress of any request for repairs or maintenance.

Such a position existed at Mulawa some years ago. However, at a time when it was anticipated that inmate numbers would decline a decision was made to vacate the position. I understand the position is still on the centre’s EFT99 establishment30.

The issue of yearly fire certification under the requirements of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, and Part 9 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulations 2000 and the Building Code of Australia was raised with the Department of Corrective Services. Correctional centres are a special problem in regard to fire escape provisions and compliance requirements would need dispensations against security and evacuation provisions. It is understood that earlier this year a pilot study was undertaken at Parramatta Correctional Centre using Wormald Fire and Safety specialists. We were advised that the outcome of this study will form the basis of what can be done at other centres such as Mulawa. However, appropriate emergency procedures need to be currently in place for the safety of staff and inmates.

Many items and issues have been raised in this report and are in response to only a general overview of the facilities that existed at Mulawa on the particular inspection days. Many of the issues raised during the inspection of the centre require

30 Effective full-time employee.
31 ibid, Mulawa correctional centre proposal, p.20.
special expertise to evaluate and provide advice, such as fire emergency and certification requirements, emergency evacuation plans for the centre, building services (electrical, hydraulic, communications and structural), duress alarms, and surveillance and security installations. An audit of the facilities by independent specialists could identify what is required to reduce risks associated with the centre and avoid, if possible, adverse events occurring.

Facilities Summary
The general living conditions for the majority of inmates at Mulawa could be considered as fair when a number of maintenance issues are resolved in a timely manner. However, with the growing number of women inmates with special needs (such as mental health care, protective custody and self harm) the living conditions within the buildings for these inmates requires urgent attention (i.e. Induction Unit, Conlon, Clinic and MSU). There are many repairs that could be completed relatively easily with consequential improvements for both the staff and inmates.

As mentioned earlier, many improvements should result from the appointment of an additional staff member with construction experience (builder or project manager) together with the provision of the appropriate resources to enable that person to work on site and manage specific maintenance and repair work directly with the contractors and other organisations involved. The problems with the computer monitoring systems involved in the maintenance and repair work process should be resolved, to provide a more effective management tool for Mulawa’s management and all the parties involved. Effective communication throughout the system regarding the backlog of proposed work would enable all staff and inmates to be better informed of when items will be attended to. It could also reduce unnecessary conflict between staff and inmates.

The effective operation of an Occupational, Health and Safety Committee is necessary so appropriate items can be attended to quickly and monitored under a work program.

**RECOMMENDATION 7:**
That Corrective Services Industries immediately take steps to fill the position of ‘Manager Centre Services & Employment’ at Mulawa and that person coordinate an assessment of outstanding major risk issues such as fire certification, emergency evacuation plans and building services.

**THE INMATES**

By the end of 2001, women in custody represented 6.7% of the total inmate population of New South Wales. This was an increase of half a percent on the previous year and in real terms was an increase in the women’s population from 454 to 515. At the time of our inspection there were 505 women in full-time custody in NSW with a record number (525) having been reached 2 weeks prior. Of this total just over half (268) were being accommodated at Mulawa.
TAKING STOCK

Their Sentences

Table 1 Legal Status of Female Inmates – May 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal Status</th>
<th>317</th>
<th>62.7%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sentenced</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>27.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remand</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As illustrated in table 1 above, of the total female inmate population (as at 26 May 2002), 62.7% were sentenced and 27.7% were on remand. Because it is the main reception and remand centre for women, the remand rate is a particularly important statistic for Mulawa. At the time of the inspection, Mulawa had a population mix of almost half sentenced (129) and half remand inmates (139). When the trend regarding the remand rate is examined, in both total and proportional terms, it shows no signs of declining. As the data in table 2 shows, over the eight-year period, 1994 to 2001, the remand rate has doubled from 13.8% to 27.6%.

Table 2 – Remand rates 1994 to 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>134</th>
<th>26.5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 – Known prior imprisonment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>55.1%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>55.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>50.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>59.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>64.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>65.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>62.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>68.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The recidivism rate and aggregate sentence duration are also of importance to Mulawa in terms of the number of inmates that it receives. The inmate census figures for 2001 show that 68.5% of women in full-time custody had been in custody prior to their current period of incarceration. Table 3 illustrates that the recidivism rate, save for a small decline in 1996, has continued to climb from its much lower rate of 55.1% in 1995. Of the inmates surveyed by the inspection team, 52% admitted to having been in prison before. Of this group one-third admitted to serving more than 5 custodial sentences.

In 2001, just over one-quarter (26.1%) of women in full-time custody were serving a custodial sentence of less than 12 months and 39.7% had been sentenced to less than 2 years. Only a very small proportion (4.9%) of the female population were serving sentences in excess of 10 years. Apart from the increase in proportion of inmates on remand referred to earlier, the data in table 4 (below) shows that there has been an increase in the proportion of women serving sentences of 1 to 5 years in duration.
TAKING STOCK

Table 4: Aggregate Sentences for women in full-time custody

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence Duration</th>
<th>1999%</th>
<th>2001%</th>
<th>2002%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unsentenced</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 3 months</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 months to &lt; 1yr</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1yr to &lt; 5yrs</td>
<td>40.3%</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5yrs to &lt; 10yrs</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10yrs to Life</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An examination of the nature of the offences committed by women in full-time custody reveals that a higher percentage are serving a sentence for violent crimes. In aggregate terms, in 1995 28% of sentences being served by women in full-time custody were for those offences categorised as ‘violent crimes’. By 2001, this figure had increased to almost 33%. The most sizeable increases have been in the assault categories and Robbery with Major Assault.

Table 5: Most serious offences for female inmates in F/T custody

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offence</th>
<th>1999%</th>
<th>2001%</th>
<th>2002%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempt Murder</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conspiracy to Murder</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manslaughter</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Assault</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Assault</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious Sexual Assault</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Sexual Assault</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery Major Assault</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Robbery</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inmate demographics

In 2001, 29.3% of women in full-time custody were under the age of 25 and 53.6% were younger than 30 years of age. Only 2.6% of women inmates are over the age of 50. Unlike the male system with its aging population, the proportion of women aged between 18 and 25 in full-time custody is rising. In 1999, this group only represented 26.6% of the population41. Of the inmates surveyed at Mulawa, 85% were aged between 18 and 35.

Almost 60% of the inmates surveyed advised that they had children under 18 years, with 75% stating that these children would normally reside with them. In terms of their cultural backgrounds, 60% of those surveyed identified themselves as being Australian, 18% as aboriginal, 2% as Asian, 11.7% as European and the remaining 8.3% identifying themselves as coming from ‘other’ backgrounds including South American, New Zealanders and Pacific Islanders. An examination of the

41 ibid, Women’s Action Plan 2, p.5.
statistics relating to the cultural backgrounds of women inmates reveals that the proportion of women from other countries is continuing to grow and now represents almost one-third of the total female inmate population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>1993 %</th>
<th>1995 %</th>
<th>1997 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>78.1%</td>
<td>74.2%</td>
<td>71.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The proportional representation of Aboriginal women in custody continues to rise, in 1997 it was 17.2%. It now stands at 25.2%.

The health of women arriving at Mulawa is a major factor impacting upon the use of its resources. The health of women inmates is often affected by significant alcohol and other drug use and the inmate’s lack of awareness or preparedness to access health services whilst not in custody. It has been suggested that 90% of women coming into custody have a history of some form of substance abuse and 70%-80% will be using some form of substance, mainly heroin, at the time they arrive at Mulawa. At the time of the inspection approximately one-third (34.3%) of the inmates were on a methadone regimen.

A 1997 Inmate Health Survey found women in custody twice as likely as male inmates to have been diagnosed with psychiatric problems and nearly three times as likely to be on psychiatric medication at the time of their reception into custody. It is understood that a more recent survey conducted by the Corrections Health Service (CHS) revealed that 46% of all women inmates had suffered major depression in the preceding 12 months and as many as 50% had had contact with the community mental health system in the 12 month period leading up to their reception into custody.45

THE STAFF

In her report the former Ombudsman spoke about what she described as ‘staffing problems’ at Mulawa during the period of her investigation. Her investigation included an analysis of the ‘lockdowns’ that had occurred at Mulawa during the period February 1993 to April 1995. She concluded that the ‘sheer lack of staffing’ was one of the main reasons for the many disruptions to the centre’s routine. She rightly identified this issue as one ‘which inevitably affected the quality of the inmates’ lives’.46 Unfortunately, as a result of the inspection and an analysis of the Department’s records relating to the incidence of locked-in cells, the inspection team quickly formed the view that the issue of staffing at Mulawa continues to be a significant problem for the centre. In fact, the issue of staffing at the centre was found to be the major factor impacting on the delivery of services at the centre.

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42 Dr Anne Selton, Focus, Issue 2, p.23-24.
43 ibid, Women’s Action Plan 2, p.28.
44 ibid, Mulawa Correctional Centre Proposal, p.1.
45 ibid, NSW Ombudsman, Mulawa Report 1997, p.87.
46 ibid, p.91.
47 In October 2001, the Department changed the descriptive term for these occurrences from ‘lockdowns’ to ‘locked-in-cells’. No reason was given, however, it is assumed that the latter has a softer tone.
TAKING STOCK

The shortage of staff, particularly custodial staff, was a recurring theme in both the staff and inmate surveys and the focus groups conducted with staff. In the staff survey, 'short staffing' was a highly frequent response to the question, "Please list the 3 worst things about working at Mulawa". All of the staff focus groups unanimously concluded that the shortage of staff was the most significant problem faced by the centre. "We need more staff" was the resounding message from each of the groups.

'Lockdowns as a result of staff shortages' was the most frequent response given by inmates to a question regarding the 3 worst things about life at Mulawa. Some of the more notable responses from inmates included, "In the last 4 months there have been too many lockdowns during the day in all wings due to lack of staff. The inmates are locked in their rooms with no access to the kitchen, laundry, television or telephone" and "If staff shortages are this regular obviously more staff are required. Some of us had a total of 2 hours unlocked today."

It is accepted that 'locked in cell' occurrences are necessary and incidental to the proper management of a correctional centre. They allow the managers of centres to provide staff training, conduct routine searches, carry out hospital and other escorts, hold union meetings and from time to time cover periods of staff shortage. The need to do so for these purposes is not questioned. There is however, a level at which the number of 'locked in cell' incidents becomes counter-productive and negatively impacts upon the conditions and services being delivered by a centre.

The inspection team was left with no doubt that Mulawa was exceeding this level, due mostly to the shortage of staff, primarily custodial staff. This conclusion is supported by an analysis of the Department's 'Running Sheet' records for the 11-month period 1 July 2001 to 31 May 2002.

Figure 1 – ‘Locked in cell’ occurrences by Centre 2001/2002

[Diagram showing locked in cell occurrences by centre over a 11-month period]
TAKING STOCK

In real terms, Mulawa has the second highest rate of 'locked in cells' occurrences in the system (117). Eighteen percent of the total 'locked in cells' occurrences in the correctional system can be attributed to Mulawa. As illustrated in the graph above, 60 or approximately 51% of Mulawa's 'locked in cells' incidents were recorded as being due to 'staff shortages'. Only one other centre, the MSPC, had a higher rate of 'locked in cells' caused by staff shortages.

Further analysis reveals, however, that only 15% of Mulawa's 117 recorded 'locked in cell' incidents were complete or total lock downs of the centre. The Department's records indicate that, on 100 occasions over the period, Mulawa utilised a process known within the system as 'rolling' or staged lock downs where a wing or a number of wings are locked down on a rotational basis. Whilst such a process is preferable to a total lock down on each occasion, rolling lock downs nevertheless impact upon the delivery of services to inmates and serve to add to inmate frustration and anxiety as they are, more often than not, unscheduled and unannounced. Many of the inmates surveyed related to the inspection team that they could handle being locked in their cells on a reasonable number of occasions as long as they were given some advance warning so that they could make their telephone calls, do washing and cooking prior to being locked in.

A breakdown of the reasons given for the 'locked in cell' occurrences at Mulawa during the period examined appears in table 8 below. When the category entitled 'sick leave/overtime restriction', which necessarily results in staff shortages, is added to the 'staff shortages' category the staffing problems at Mulawa become more apparent. Almost three quarters (68%) of the locked in cells at Mulawa are, in one way or another, attributable to staffing related issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Sick Leave</th>
<th>Staff Shortages</th>
<th>Sick Leave/Overtime Restriction</th>
<th>Furloughs</th>
<th>Staff Training</th>
<th>Searches</th>
<th>Union Meetings</th>
<th>No Reason Given</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mulawa</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A comparison with the reasons for 'locked in cells' occurrences at the Metropolitan Remand & Reception Centre (MRRC) assists in determining the degree of Mulawa's staffing level problems. Table 9 shows that the MRRC had a total of 81 'locked in cell' occurrences during the corresponding period, 36 less than Mulawa. This result is made more significant by the fact that the MRRC has an inmate state of 863, three times larger than that of Mulawa. In addition, only 6% of its 'locked in cell' occurrences were caused by 'staff shortages'.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Sick Leave</th>
<th>Staff Shortages</th>
<th>Sick Leave/Overtime Restriction</th>
<th>Searches</th>
<th>Staff Training</th>
<th>Searches</th>
<th>Union Meetings</th>
<th>No Reason Given</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MRRC</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The MRRC statistics are perhaps indicative of an appropriate level and use of 'locked in cell' occurrences by its management, particularly with regard to staff training (52%) and searches (15%). The importance of staff training and
searches to the good operation of a correctional centre can not be over stated and as mentioned earlier are extremely
valid reasons for a full or partial 'locked in cells' occurrence. When  the statistics for Mulawa are compared to those for the
MRRC, however, it is clear that the number of 'locked in cells' caused by staff shortages has had the effect of severely
restricting the opportunities that Mulawa's management has to be able to engage in these essential activities. Only 3%
of Mulawa's locked in cells occurrences for the period were recorded as being for the purpose of staff training and only 2%
were to facilitate searches of the centre.

Staff shortages occur for various reasons including, long-term and short-term sick leave; detached duties where staff are
attending training courses or temporarily performing duties elsewhere; and transfers and resignations which leave
positions vacant until replacements can be found. The inspection revealed that all of these factors were impacting upon
Mulawa's staffing levels. An examination of the centre's roster, the MIM's staffing schedule and the centre's cost centre
budget provided a clearer picture of the nature of the staffing problems at Mulawa.

The MIM's staffing schedule for Mulawa indicates that it has an authorised EFT strength of 245 with 219 of these positions
funded within the centre's budget. The schedule also shows that 211 'actual' positions are currently occupied, which
represents a shortfall of 8 EFT staff. Because CHS staff are employed by the Department of Health they do not appear on
either the MIM's or the Centre's roster. The ISGP staff roster is separate from the centre's custodial staff roster.

The custodial staff roster at Mulawa indicates that there are 188 officers deployed at the centre. On paper, 188 officers
covering three shifts, appears to be ample staff to operate the centre and manage a normal inmate state of around 270 to
290. However, of the 188 custodial personnel, there were ten (10) officers whose names continued to appear on the
centre's roster and the MIM's staffing schedule although they had either transferred to another centre or left the service
some time ago. During the period of the inspection eleven (11) staff were on recreation leave; six (6) were on detached
duty elsewhere; 3 staff were on long-term sick leave; 1 was on maternity leave; 1 was on long-term leave without pay. In
line with the applicable industrial awards on any given day 49 officers may be rostered on a rest day or rostered day off.
Table 10 below illustrates the effect that these contingencies have on the staffing levels of the centre.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Category</th>
<th>Total EFT</th>
<th>Actual EFT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Custodial staff</td>
<td>188</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff resigned/transferred</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation leave</td>
<td>-11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detached duties</td>
<td>-6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term sick</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternity leave/Leave without pay</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rostered days off</td>
<td>-49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff available for duty</td>
<td>107</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Corrections Health Service*
TAKING STOCK

When the current contingencies are factored in, on any given day Mulawa has an available compliment of 107 custodial officers. This level may be sufficient to effectively operate the centre, however, the number of staff that may be on short-term sick leave on any given day also has to be taken into account.

During the period of the inspection, on average, 9 officers called in sick each day. On the Friday before the inspection commenced (24/5/02) there had been 20 officers off on short-term sick leave. So when the number of staff on short-term sick leave is also subtracted from the number of staff available for duty, this leaves the centre’s management with around 98 custodial staff to operate the centre across three shifts. On a day, such as occurred on 24/5/02, the number of staff available for duty could be as low as 87.

On days when the short-term sick leave numbers are high, the centre’s management, more often than not, is able to supplement staff numbers by calling staff in on overtime who are on rostered days off, or by working officers on double shifts (also on overtime). This process, which often negates the need for the centre’s management to lock-in the inmates either completely or partially, cannot be sustained long-term. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, the centre’s budgetary allocation for ‘overtime’ is finite and non-discretionary and more recently became the focus of the Department’s plans to derive savings with which to fund the non-treasury funded 6% increase in staff salaries.

Secondly, and more significantly, there is a point at which staff begin to reject the offer of overtime. Many of the staff told the inspection team that they would often ‘knock back’ the offer of overtime because they had become fatigued or the substantial periods being spent at work had began to impact negatively upon their families and personal relationships. Some even stated that they went off on sick leave to avoid working double shifts and/or being called in to work on rostered days off. There was also an admission by staff that the long periods of work on overtime did occasionally affect their dealings with inmates and many felt that the long hours of work left them at a higher risk of making mistakes or errors of judgement.

From this, it is apparent that there is a point beyond which the operation of a correctional centre by the prolific use of overtime becomes counter-productive and perhaps dysfunctional. From the inspection, and in particular the focus groups with staff, it was clear that management’s use of overtime to staff the centre had reached a point were it was beginning to negatively impact upon its staff and their effectiveness.

The centre’s budget report reveals that Mulawa is heavily reliant upon overtime to keep the centre operational. As at the end of April 2002, the centre had already exceeded its yearly overtime allocation by 41% ($308K). The computer projections for overtime expenditure indicate that, during the 2001/2002 financial year, Mulawa will have exceeded its overtime funding allocation by a staggering 63% ($465K). It was of interest to note that the computer projections in relation to staff ‘base salaries’ showed that Mulawa would under spend on salaries by almost half a million dollars ($488K). This was evidence that Mulawa was considerably below its budgeted EFT staffing levels.
TAKING STOCK

On the 8th of August 2001, staffing levels reached a point were they became the subject of industrial action by officers. The Prison Officers Vocational Branch (POVB) withdrew the labour of its members on the 8th of August and the following day the matter went before Justice Marks in the Industrial Relations Commission of NSW. Upon the direction of Justice Marks, the officers returned to work on the 10th of August 2001, pending the issuing of a decision on arbitration of the issue by the Commission. After receiving submissions from all parties, Justice Marks, inter-alia, ruled that at Mulawa the inmate to officer ratio should not exceed 10 inmates to 1 officer. The ruling effectively meant that when there were more than 10 inmates in any one area of the centre that the centre’s management were required to either re-deploy another officer to that area or, alternatively if another officer was not available, confine the inmates to their wing or cells.

In adhering to the requirements of the 'Marks' ruling, as it is known amongst the centre’s staff, and coping with the low staff levels the centre’s management has often been left with no alternative but to lock down various areas within the centre. It has also led to the development of other coping strategies such as the use of a 'non-workers' holding yard which will be discussed later in the report.

The Governor, in a recent business case submission to the Department, 'Proposal to manage increased remand inmate population and the impact of the new bail legislation', indicated that 44 additional staff (28 custodial, 13 IS&P, and 2 admin staff), would be required to facilitate a restructure of the centre that would enable it to meet the anticipated increase in the inmate population whilst simultaneously improving the delivery of services and programs to inmates. The detail and merit of the proposal will be discussed later in the report. The inspection team’s view of Mulawa’s additional staffing needs were more immediate than this. Notwithstanding the staffing needs that may be required to cope with a possible increase in inmate numbers arising from changes to the bail legislation, it was clear from the inspection that more staff, particularly custodial staff, are currently needed at Mulawa in order to both reduce the incidence of 'locked in cells' and improve the overall delivery of programs and services to inmates.

The inspection team was told that 6 Probationary Officers were due to start at the centre on the 5th of June 2002. From discussions held with senior staff at the centre it was indicated that this would not be enough to address Mulawa’s staffing problems. Inquiries made with the Department indicate that of the 120 recruits to be trained between now and the end of 2002, none were due to be posted to Mulawa. Many of the staff in the focus groups related that sending them more recruits was not the solution, as Mulawa required more officers with experience, including executive officers. Within the focus group conducted with the senior custodial officers it was suggested that in order to operate Mulawa effectively an additional 14 correctional officers and 6 executive officers would be required.

Whatever the number, until the opening of Dillwynia at South Windsor, Mulawa’s staffing resources will continue to be stretched and constantly under stress. Accordingly, it is recommended that the Department seek the short-term redeployment of a number of experienced staff to Mulawa, at least until the opening of Dillwynia. The redeployment of staff to Mulawa under this proposal has the added advantage of developing a larger pool of officers skilled in the management of women inmates ready for deployment to Dillwynia when it comes on line. Any short-term redeployment of staff to Mulawa
should be voluntary and viewed as a career development opportunity for those staff who wish to be considered for future
deployment to Dilkynia.

**RECOMMENDATION 8:**
That the Department take immediate steps to re-deploy a suitable number of experienced Officers to Mulawa, at least until
the anticipated opening of Dilkynia in late 2003.

As far back as Nagle in 1978, possibly longer, it has been recognised that women react differently to imprisonment than
men. Nagle also acknowledged that women inmates have different needs. These differences are recognised within the
female specific classification scheme, which is based on the concept of 'high need -- low risk'. The Department, in its
Women’s Action Plan 2 says, 'The Department acknowledges that the criminogenic needs of women are different from those
of men'. Yet, despite the identification and acceptance of these differences, female correctional centres continue to be
staffed according to the same staffing formula utilised to determine the appropriate staffing levels in male centres. The
staffing of female correctional centres in this way fails to take into account these differences. Simply put, the different
characteristics and 'high-need' nature of women in full-time custody requires a significantly higher degree of staff input per
capita than their male counterparts. Evidence in support of this proposition is provided by a comparative analysis of the
incidents reported in the Department's daily 'running sheets'.

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**Figure 2** Daily Running Sheet incidents by Centre 2001/2002

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60. The Department utilises the "280" formula to determine appropriate staffing levels at correctional centres.
TAKING STOCK

The graph appearing in figure 2 above shows that Mulawa had a substantial number of reportable incidents during the 2001/2002 financial year. The number of incidents attributable to Mulawa was the second highest in the system. Only the MRRC, with an inmate population three times that of Mulawa, had a higher number of incidents.

Accordingly, a separate formula, that takes into account the higher degree of staff input required in the management of ‘high-need’ women inmates, is required for determining the appropriate staffing levels of female correctional centres such as Mulawa.

RECOMMENDATION 9:
That the Department work towards the development of a ‘female centre specific’ staffing formula which is based upon the recognition that the needs of women inmates are significantly different and more resource intensive than those of men.

Assistant Commissioner Order (ACO) 2002/034 issued by the Department on 24 May 2002, seeking a ‘stock-take’ of the number of staff on long-term detached duties and secondments is evidence of the difficulties that the Department faces in regard to staffing levels across the system. This stock-take and associated measures to reduce the number of staff on long-term detached duties has considerable merit and is a necessary step in ensuring that appropriate staffing levels are maintained at the correctional centre level of the organisation.

Another important staffing related matter requiring the Department’s attention is that of long-term sick leave arrangements and their effect on the operations of correctional centres. The number of individuals on long-term sick leave was found to be one of the factors impacting on the staffing levels of Mulawa. Long-term sick leave presents as a major problem for managers because the vacant position created by the officer on long-term sick leave cannot be filled in that officer’s absence. These periods of absence are often lengthy. Absences on long-term sick leave of 18 months to 2 years in duration are not uncommon. Not surprisingly, this issue has significant impact upon the operation of a correctional centre. Apart from creating difficulties for the management of centres, the carrying of these vacancies for such long periods is simply an unfair burden for staff. It was suggested by a number of staff that officers on long-term sick leave should be transferred on to the Region’s establishment thereby ‘freeing up’ the vacant position at the correctional centre so that it could be filled. This suggestion has considerable merit, particularly given the fact that each of the Regions have Human Resource staff dedicated to the management of those staff off on long-term sick leave. It is understood that such a process already operates in other agencies in NSW.

RECOMMENDATION 10:
That the Department examine and assess the benefits that may accrue to the operation of correctional centres by the transfer of staff on long-term sick leave on to Regional establishments.
TAKING STOCK

Staff Training

Many of the staff at Mulawa spoke positively about the nature of their work at the Centre. Many also expressed the view that serving a tenure at Mulawa was an invaluable learning experience as different skills had to be learned to be able to deal competently with women inmates. It was generally felt that this experience gained at Mulawa was a benefit to their careers. Unfortunately, this positive sentiment did not extend to staff feelings and perceptions regarding their training.

Within the staff survey, 25, or almost half of the respondents, stated that they had not received any training other than their initial 10 weeks at the Academy. It is understood, however, that this was the experience of fairly junior officers with less than two year’s service. Nevertheless, the surveys and focus groups revealed that many of the staff perceived that they were not receiving enough training. When asked whether they felt that they had been offered enough training and information to do their jobs well, less than 40% of staff who responded advised that they felt this way. Only 23% of the respondents felt they had been offered enough training and information about the management of female offenders, and 36% felt this way about case management. Similarly, a low 33% advised that they had been offered enough training in security matters to do their job well, while only 11% felt this way about emergency procedures.

Some of the more notable comments from staff in relation to training were, “I have asked for training but I am overlooked”; “Training – what training? Once you have left the academy, that’s it”; “Staff training does not appear to be high on the list of priorities”; “Precious little training is available and only offered to a special few in the know” “This centre allows no time for ongoing training”; “Staffing issues do not permit us to attend many courses”. The latter two comments accord with the earlier assessment in this report of the limitations flowing from the staffing levels at the centre.

When asked to nominate the training courses provided by the Department attended by them, 22.22% advised that they had completed a CPR/First Aid Course, 11.11% had completed a security course, 5.56% had done an OH&S course, and 3.70% advised that they had completed a course in emergency procedures. In relation to courses covering specific inmate needs; 22.22% advised that they had completed a course in suicide awareness/prevention, 12.96% had done a course in inmate assessment, 11.11% in case management, 3.7% stated that they had completed a course in conflict resolution and 1.85% had completed a course in interpersonal/communication skills. None of the respondents had completed a course in stress management or disability awareness, and only 3.7% advised that they had completed a course in the management of female offenders. Only 3 staff members advised that they had been offered a refresher course in any of these disciplines.

The number of staff that had advised that they had completed a CPR/First Aid course was disappointingly low. It is imperative that all staff possess the knowledge and skills, particularly in relation to CPR techniques, to assist in the emergency life-saving situations which often confront them in the performance of their duties. In addition, in order to maintain these skills the techniques need to be routinely practiced.

**RECOMMENDATION 11:**

That the Department conduct an urgent review of the training and, in particular, first aid/CPR training, of staff at Mulawa to assess the need to provide additional refresher courses.
TAKING STOCK

The perceptions of staff in relation to staff training were found to be somewhat focused on access to training delivered by the Corrective Services Academy. In that sense, the views expressed by the staff are perhaps not surprising. Whilst structured training programs delivered at or by the Academy are extremely important, of equal importance is the amount of skills-based training that can be provided at the correctional centre level. In this regard, the inspection revealed that there was skills-based training being delivered at the centre.

During the focus groups, staff related that there was 'some' training taking place at the centre. However, this was too little and was limited to those officers working in specialised areas of the centre, such as the MPU and Mum Shirl Unit. The inspection revealed that there were a number of factors militating against the best intentions of the centre's management to provide further training. The first of these, low staffing levels, has already been discussed at length. Another factor impacting on the delivery of training at the centre was the long-term absence on sick leave of the centre's Staff Officer. The inspection team learnt that, rather than 'acting someone up' into the role, the centre's Intelligence Officer had the Staff Officer's functions made additional to his duties. This is in no way a criticism of management's decision in this regard for it was appreciated by the inspection team that the staffing levels at the centre made it impossible to do otherwise.

Where staffing permits, a better option would be to have a suitably trained and qualified person relieve in the position during the Staff Officer's absences from the centre. This would include absences due to attendances at courses, sick leave and recreation leave. The Staff Officer's position, as is the Intelligence Officer's position, is simply too important in human resource management terms to leave vacant for any period of time or made adjunct to another officer's duties. The creation of a position of a 'Staff Training Officer', working to the Staff Officer at a correctional centre, would provide a centre's management with this better option. In addition, the creation of such a position would create a clear career path for those staff who aspire to the Staff Officer role.

With the provision of these positions there would be a capability to deliver a much more diverse range of services to both staff and management than is currently the case. Without being exhaustive, these would include career guidance counselling, including providing staff with advice and guidance in relation to aspects of the promotion process; delivery of a Probationary Officer induction program; assisting staff to access training courses, both internal and external to the Department; the identification of staff training needs and either delivering the training in house or the co-ordination of its delivery by the Training Service Unit (TSU); assisting the centre's management with the new 'Professional Conduct Management System'; monitor sick leave absences, and provide staff welfare services.

RECOMMENDATION 12:
That the Department give consideration to the creation of a 'Staff Training Officer' position at Mulawa on a trial basis to assess the benefits of such a position to the management of the centre.
Taking Stock

Many of the senior officers at the centre told the inspection team that they would be in a much better position to provide junior staff with improved 'on-the-job' training, particularly in regard to the use of the Offender Management System (OMS), if there were computer terminals in the officer stations located in Wyndana and the Dawn de Loas centres.

They advised that the provision of computers in these areas would also serve to improve the relationship between staff and inmates in regard to the provision of information as inmates constantly approach staff requesting information regarding visits etc that can only be obtained by accessing a computer.

This proposal by staff has considerable merit. To implement it a total of six (6) terminals would need to be installed. Three in Wyndana (one each in the Theresa, Willet and Brady Units) and three in the Dawn de Loas centre (one each in A/B Unit, C/D Unit and E/F Unit).

**RECOMMENDATION 13:**

That the Department give consideration to the installation of six additional computer terminals within Wyndana and the Dawn de Loas centre at Mulawa.

The Centre's Management

In December 2000, the current Governor, Ms Lee Downes, was appointed to manage the centre. Prior to her appointment there had been a long period during which the centre had been managed by the former Deputy Governor with the Deputy's position being filled by a number of Senior Officers on a fortnightly rotational basis. A short time after Ms Downes' appointment the former Deputy Governor, Ms Judy Leyshon, was appointed as Governor of Emu Plains correctional centre. The top management structure of the centre was not settled until the appointment of Mr Pat Aboud to the Deputy Governors' position in mid 2001.

In December 2001, the Department directed Ms Downes to temporarily occupy the position of Governor at Parklea. This required her absence from the centre for some 10 weeks, during which time Mr Aboud stood in as Governor. Much to her credit, it is understood that whilst located at Parklea, Ms Downes maintained continual contact with Mr Aboud to provide him with every assistance possible in his management of the operations of the centre. Whilst the Department's reason for the temporary relocation of the centre's Governor may have been well intentioned, it nevertheless did not assist with the consolidation of the centre's upper management, particularly at a time when many changes within the female system were taking place.

Whilst not making a specific recommendation in relation to this issue, the Department should seek to economise on its use of temporary redeployment of existing Governors for the purpose of filling vacancies. The disadvantages, in terms of its

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52. The bringing on-line of Berinnie as a placement for sentenced inmates was occurring at this time.
impact on the consolidation and continuity of a centre's management, outweigh any possible advantages that may accrue from this strategy. The better or preferable strategy would be the use of regional superintendents or the 'acting up' of deputies during periods of short-term governor absences.

The inspection revealed that the centre's middle management were a relatively cohesive and committed team. This was also reflected in the minutes of the senior management meetings, which are held on a regular basis (usually every week). However, during the focus groups it became apparent that staffing levels were placing the centre's middle management under considerable stress. Many of the senior staff related that they were too busy performing the tasks, 'which were normally undertaken by more junior staff', to attend to other staff related matters, such as training and meeting with their staff.

From the surveys and focus group discussions conducted with the non-executive staff it was clear that the lack of regular meetings between them and middle management was having a negative impact on the working relationship between the two groups. Many staff stated that a rift between the groups had led to the development of an 'us and them' relationship. During our inspection the relationship between the middle managers and their junior staff, whilst not exactly cohesive, did not appear to be as dysfunctional as had been earlier made out. Nevertheless, within the minds of the centre's non-management staff these perceptions regarding the relationship between them and their managers are very real and, accordingly, cannot be ignored. They are mostly due to poor communication brought about by the current inflexibility of the centre's operations to allow time for middle managers to meet with their staff.

The inspection process revealed similar stresses in the relationship between custodial officers and IS&P staff. The staff surveys and focus groups left the impression that the two groups were open to, and looking for, more effective ways of working together to deliver services at the centre.

The centre has staff meetings each month of 1 to 2 hours duration. However, there have not been enough meetings to permit staff to improve the level of communication and thereby the relationship between the groups. It was recognised by senior staff at the centre that time for regular meetings or other interaction between middle managers and their staff needed to be set aside to further develop cohesive teams. It was pleasing to hear that this is what the staff desired. Unfortunately, it was clear from the inspection that this was a desire being left unfulfilled by the prevailing operational circumstances at the centre.

THE CENTRE'S FINANCES

It is clear that any forward planning with regard to Mulawa’s budget would be difficult, particularly given the uncertainty of the demands that are placed on it by virtue of its remand and reception function. Any consideration of Mulawa’s budget would also have to take into account its administration of the FDC at Norma Parker. For these reasons one would expect that Mulawa’s global expenditure each year would be measured within an acceptable range, rather than be tightly and strictly adhered to.
TAKING STOCK

Many of the centre’s staff spoke about the problems the centre experienced in regard to purchasing and supply. In particular, the recent redeployment of administrative staff from Mulawa to the centralised Silverwater Complex Administration centre was identified as causing considerable delays in the financial and other administrative functions within Mulawa. In terms of the administration of purchasing supplies, the changes had left the officer responsible for administration without assistance. The inspection team found that the processing of many of the purchasing orders was being unnecessarily delayed due to the officer’s limited financial delegation ($1000).

The inspection team was advised that the Administration Manager at the Silverwater Correctional Centre had a financial delegation of $10,000. Mulawa’s Administration Manager was spoken to in relation to this matter and advised that an increase in her delegation to $5,000 would be sufficient to ensure that delays in the purchasing of supplies for the centre would be reduced.

RECOMMENDATION 14:
That the Department give consideration to increasing the centre’s Administration Manager’s financial delegation to $5000.

SECURITY

By the centre’s own admission, the security systems at Mulawa are ‘primitive’. The Central Control Security and Surveillance Centre (monitor room) is installed with very old equipment. The centre apparently suffers from continuous false alarms from the perimeter security fence and has only a few surveillance cameras throughout the complex. A duress alarm main switch is located at floor level in the monitor room and has in the past been accidentally kicked off by a monitor operator. The centre’s management have been attempting to arrange for the maintenance contractor to place a cover over the switch.

An emergency power connection to the stand-by generator and the need for a battery back up supply needs to be investigated, otherwise the monitor room may not function during a power failure. The monitor room and surveillance and security installation should be audited by a specialist in the field for advice on its adequacy. Due to the fact that the centre’s management are in the process of addressing many of the issues outlined here, there appears to be no reason to make any recommendations.

In terms of improving staff safety, management recently expended $30,000 to increase the number of portable radios from 17 to 25. Every section within the centre, including GENCOR, now has a radio. Management advised that a new radio base was about to be installed.

The aspect of the centre’s security that was of most concern to the inspection team was the opportunity that existed for the introduction of contraband into the centre. The success of the Department’s visitor screening process is well known and its effectiveness at Mulawa is not questioned. However, this is only one of many avenues through which contraband can make its way into a correctional centre.
TAKING STOCK

At Mulawa the manner in which GENCOR, one of the centre's main industries, receives its inputs represents a considerable risk for the centre's management. GENCOR has a contract with Qantas for the cleaning and reassembly of airline passenger headsets. At the end of each flight, Qantas staff fill airline bags with the used headsets, which are then forwarded to GENCOR at Mulawa. Crates containing hundreds of airline bags arrive at Mulawa each day and enter GENCOR receiving only a cursory external inspection. Whilst the inmates are supervised within the industries workshop it is impossible for staff to monitor every movement of each inmate. The inspection team was told that in the past many of the airline bags were found to contain small bottles of alcohol. The team was also shown a stockpile of empty bottles, food accessories and other items that had been removed from the airline bags during our visit.

Given these circumstances it is recommended that the Department and the centre's management explore ways in which it can reduce the risk of contraband entering the centre within the airline bags forwarded to GENCOR. One possible solution could be the use of a Drug Detector Dog on a random, but frequent, basis to screen the airline bags upon their arrival at the centre.

RECOMMENDATION 15:

That the Department and the centre's management consider the use of Drug Detector Dogs to randomly screen the large number of airline bags that enter Mulawa each day.
Chapter 3

LIFE FOR INMATES AT MULAWA

ORIENTATION & INDUCTION

Reception

Due to the fact that the reception of inmates was such an important aspect of Mulawa's role within the system the inspection team gave considerable attention to assessing the processes involved. The process of receiving inmates was observed, together with the processes of forwarding inmates to court and their transfer to other centres. The inspection team conducted their observations early in the morning with a view to assessing the preparation of inmates for their appearances at court and again in the evening as inmates either returned from court or were first received into the centre.

Despite the poor layout of the old building in which the reception room is located, the inspection team found that the reception process was of a very high standard. It was obvious to the team that the centre's management had spent some considerable time refining the reception processes. The processing of the inmates received, particularly those received back from court, was smooth and efficient with little or no delay occurring. Under the conditions observed by the inspection team, all of the inmates were processed expeditiously, with an average stay in the reception room of only 20 minutes. In the Reception Room all inmates coming and going to court were strip searched in accordance with departmental requirements. Officers other than Reception Room officers perform this task. At all times the Officers performed these duties in a courteous and professional manner. The strip searches took place in a bathroom next to the Reception Room counter. The main entry to the reception room adjacent to the bathroom is left open at all times. As a result in winter the temperatures in this room are very low. There is no heater in the bathroom, nor mats on the tiled floor, for the female inmates to stand on, making the process more uncomfortable for inmates than it needs to be. Currently inmates stand on their clothes to decrease coldness from the tiles. The centre's management advised that they will look to install a bar heater in this room.

The inspection team examined the documentation given to new arrivals at the centre. The documentation contained information regarding prison discipline (obviously in response to recommendation 12.2.3 of the Ombudsman's 1997 Report), inmate entitlements and privileges, the victim's compensation levy, courses available at the centre and a copy of the buy-up list. The documentation consisted of poor quality photocopies of various original documents. Apart from this, much of the information, particularly in regard to prison discipline (which referred to the Prisons Act 1952 & Prison Regulation 1989), was out of date. The inspection team were advised that these issues would be rectified in the near future with the introduction of a new inmate handbook.

The inmates spoken to by the Inspection team had no complaints concerning the reception process. However, many were not happy with the early let-go (4:30am) and preparation for court in the morning. One of their concerns was the need for them to have to go to holding cells at the MRRC until they were put on to the trucks taking them to court. They also complained about the lack of food, tea and coffee during the court escort process. I understand that the Department is examining options to address this.

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55 See commentary re: Chisholm House on page 26.
LIFE FOR INMATES AT MULAWA

From the reception room the inmates are taken to the Hospital Annex where they are seen by the medical staff prior to either being sent back to their unit (for those returning from court) or to the Induction Unit (new arrivals).

Induction

The Induction Unit is the main assessment area for new admissions after they have passed through their initial health screen in the Clinic and is located within the MPU. The Induction Unit has a maximum capacity of 45, but generally accommodates around 40 inmates. The Unit has ‘throughput’ targets for the induction and screening of new receptions with a minimum expected stay of 3 days and a maximum of 6.

The inspection team was impressed with the efficiency of the staff, particularly the custodial officers, and the systems that they had implemented to assemble the assessment information garnered from welfare workers and psychologists, and the establishing of Case Management files. The staff reiterated the general comment that, while the induction and case management processes that they do there competently identifies difficulties, shortages of staff and other resource constraints inhibit attempts to treat the problems identified.

Within the Induction Unit a lot of information regarding each inmate received is collated. Amongst other things this includes a welfare summary, psychological assessment, and a ‘Risk Intervention Team’ (RIT) status. Ticks are placed on a whiteboard that records the stages in the process (shown below). The development of the processes utilised, and the high quality of the work done within the Induction Unit, was a credit to the centre.

![Whiteboard used in Induction Unit](image)

Militating against this good work is the environment within which the induction process takes place. As mentioned earlier, the MPU is also the location of the Drug Court, segregation cells and safe cells. Together with the noise problems generated by the poor design of the MPU building these factors serve to inhibit the induction process.

Another of the less positive features of having the Induction Unit located within the MPU is the poor availability of telephones. There are only two telephones in the MPU to be shared amongst 50 inmates. As the telephones are not Arunta telephones5 (which usually limit calls to 10 minutes duration) they have to be regulated by the staff. The inmates have to place their names on a list to use the telephone. The Officers place the calls on behalf of the inmates and limit the duration of the calls so equality of access is maintained.

Whilst the Officers try to do their best to allow equal access, the inspection team were advised of ‘standover’ tactics used by some inmates to increase their use of the limited telephone time available. Both the staff and inmates told the inspection team that inmates in the MPU could miss out for days in getting access to the telephone, particularly if there were staff shortages. Given the vulnerable nature and anxiety of new arrivals at the centre, this poor access to telephones is

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5 Arunta is the name of the subcontracted telephone service supplied to all NSW Correctional Centres.
LIFE FOR INMATES AT MULAWA

appalling. The centre’s management advised that arrangements were being made for the installation of additional Arunta telephones within the MPU.

RECOMMENDATION 16:
That the Department expedite the installation of additional telephones within the MPU of Mulawa Correctional Centre.

The consultant Psychologist on the inspection team examined many of the documents used in the assessment process. He was impressed with the high quality and content of the screening instrument entitled ‘Welfare Assessment (1): Crisis Assessment’.

The Welfare staff who support the induction process do so on overtime. Apart from being a drain on the limited welfare staff available at the centre, this practice seemed to detract from the feeling that this was a core duty.

In summary, the inspection supported the view that the process of induction and throughput to the main part of the centre, as it is currently structured, would find it extremely difficult to cope with an increase of 20% in the number of admissions.

Orientation

When the inmates were asked if there was any formal orientation program at Mulawa, 85% of them said no. Some of the notable comments given by inmates were, “I feel scared, isolated and didn’t know who to approach or ask. It was the worst week of my life - nobody wanted to help me”; “After a week you know exactly how things work, especially when you’ve screamed at”; and “Never had any orientation whatsoever. You fend for yourself and keep your mouth shut and your eyes open or learn the hard way unfortunately”.

In the Induction Unit a video is shown to inmates soon after their arrival at the centre. It is more often than not shown the day following their arrival. The inspection team found that much of the information contained in the video was about what has already happened to the inmates up to that point. The video used for this purpose needs to be re-worked. This, together with the handout given to them at reception, is clearly not sufficient orientation from the inmate’s perspective.

Many of the inmates admitted to not being in a good state of mind when they first arrived at the centre and this made it difficult, if not impossible, for them to take much information in. More can and needs to be done in this regard.

One significant area of support and assistance to new inmates relates to the involvement of inmate delegates to the IDC and/or AC. These delegates are able to assist new arrivals with orientation prior to them leaving the Induction Unit and proceeding to the main part of the centre. The orientation would be wide-ranging including information about meal and lock-in times, medication parades and the centre’s routine. Importantly, the delegates would provide new arrivals with someone who they could turn to thereby negating the feelings of isolation that many of them understandably have when they arrive at the centre for the first time. The role envisaged for inmate delegates is already referred to in the Department’s Operations

This issue is addressed on pp. 13 – 14 of the Governor’s ‘Proposal to Manage’.
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Procedures Manual (OPM) and is consistent with recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

RECOMMENDATION 17:
That the Department take steps to ensure that correctional centres comply with the standing instruction regarding the use of IDC and AIC delegates to assist in the orientation of new arrivals.

LIFE IN THE UNITS

Currently, both sentenced and remand inmates are housed in the same living units, with distinctions being based on either the needs of or the behaviour of the inmate.

Daily Routine

Those inmates due to appear in court are woken between 4.30 and 5.30am. The remainder of the inmates are woken at 7.00am and attend a morning muster within their unit at 7.30am each morning. At 8.00am the inmates are asked to leave their units, and after they are locked, they will not be able to return until the units are re-opened just prior to the afternoon muster at 2.30pm.

After being removed from the units the inmates are taken to their work locations and commence work at 8.30am. Those inmates who are unable to work, or who are unwilling to undertake employment, are placed in the non-workers yard, which is located between Gencor industries in Catchpole House and the Chapel (pictured below). This area, which is commonly referred to as the 'chook-pen' by both staff and inmates, is often overcrowded. The inmates complained that the yard restricts their access to activities and was cold and open to the elements. More importantly, the IS&IP staff advised that the use of the yard restricted inmate access to their services.

The centre’s management acknowledged that the use of the yard was not ideal and given the resources they would prefer not to have it. There are many reasons why the non-worker’s yard forms part of the centre’s routine, such as, the security of protection inmates attending work and pill parades. However, the main reason is insufficient staff with which to allow inmates to remain in their respective areas of the centre. The IRC ruling referred to earlier in the report has also had an impact.

Non-workers yard

Note: Inmates on remand, by regulation, are not required to work, however they are encouraged to do so.
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Whilst all concerned were not happy with the use of the non-workers yard, it is accepted that the only way of eliminating its use would be a significant increase in the number of available custodial staff with which to supervise the accommodation units.

At 2.00pm the inmates are released from work or the non-workers yard and return to their respective units to enable them to attend the afternoon muster that takes place at 2.30pm. From 2.30pm until evening muster at 5.30pm the inmates are free to occupy the common area of their units; watch TV; make telephone calls; cook; do their washing; and walk around the grounds within their area of the centre. Inmates attend education and other programs during this time. They also have, albeit limited, access to the Library (Closes at 3.00pm) and the Activities area (closes at 4.00pm).

At 5.30pm the inmates attend evening muster, after which they are locked within their units. Between this time and being locked into their cells at 7.30pm the inmates attend to cooking meals, watching TV and making telephone calls.

RECREATION

Activities

The centre has an activities area located in the main administration building, which contains a gym and games area. The activities area is staffed by an Activities Officer between 8am and 4.00pm each day. The inmates advised the inspection team that the shift worked by the Activities Officer limited their access to the activities area to between one and one and a half hours each day. Inmates on protection located within Conion were the most disadvantaged group with respect to access to the activities area.

Staffing levels have a substantial impact on inmate access to activities, as the activities officer position is one of the first posts stripped to fill vacancies within the centre. The staff advised that this was frequently the case and that this had led to a build up of stress and frustration amongst many of the inmates. The centre’s management has attempted to rectify this problem with the creation of an assistant Activities Officer position. However, the centre’s log revealed that this position was rarely if ever filled.

With a view to improving inmate access to the activities area the centre’s management has arranged for the Activities Officer to be available from 11am to 7.00pm. This step should vastly improve the situation, that is, provided the position does not continue to be stripped to fill vacancies elsewhere.
LIFE FOR INMATES AT MULAWA

Library

The centre’s library is located within heritage listed Blaxland House. The access to the library is not ideal with inmates having to pass through a gate controlled by officers. The Library is open between 9.00am and 3.00pm and is managed by an inmate employed by the centre for this purpose. As mentioned earlier, the restricted opening times of the library are a problem for those inmates working and in the non-workers yard. They are not released until 2.00pm and muster in their wings is at 2.30pm, therefore leaving only 15-25 minutes to access the library. As those inmates located within Conlon, the MSU and Kipling do not have access to the library, the librarian regularly attends these wings with a “mobile library” which consists of an assortment of the various types of books. For the reasons outlined below, inmates have little opportunity to identify and order books of interest.

The library is arranged into sections by topic. There were books on gardening, cooking, and biographies, however the librarian advised that most of the inmates ask for ‘true crime’ or ‘self help’ books, of which there were few. The librarian advised that there was no limit on the number of books that an inmate could borrow at any one time. Whilst there is one table and four chairs in the library, there were no tape recorders for inmates to listen to audiotapes related to legal matters.

The library catalogue index is contained on a Microsoft excel spreadsheet. This spreadsheet lists over 5000 books, although there did not appear to be anything like that number on the shelves. The spreadsheet is only available on the librarian’s computer and she did not know how long ago this list was created, or whether it has ever been updated. A search can only be undertaken by sorting the list by ‘title’, ‘topic’, or ‘author’, and scrolling through it. This means that an inmate would really need to know which book they were looking for, or who wrote it. Once the book is found on the spreadsheet, the inmate will still have to locate the book on the shelf as the texts’ specific location within the library is not recorded on the spreadsheet.

No complete hardcopy of the Department’s Operation’s and Procedures Manual (OPM) was available in the library as required by the OPM. An electronic version of the OPM on CD Rom was located in Education area in accordance with recent action by the Department in response to my March 2001 report on Library Resources within the correctional system. However, the inspection team was advised that, for security reasons, access to the Education area is only available to inmates who are students. These circumstances hardly facilitate easy inmate access to the Department’s OPM.

The librarian advised, and our inspection confirmed, that there were no copies of the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999 or Regulation available. The availability of the legislation is also an OPM requirement and this situation was somewhat disappointing given that, after raising this issue with the Department in my report in March last year, we were advised that steps had been taken to restock all correctional centre libraries with up-to-date copies of the relevant legislation. In addition to this, in 1997 the Ombudsman made a recommendation (12.2.1) regarding this very issue.

It is understood that the gate and officer presence are a security measure to ensure the safety of education staff.
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There was a reference list of legal materials entitled “Law reports and other legal publication in the Ron Woodham Library”. This list did not advise the reader that this library was in fact located at the MRNC, nor did it explain how inmates at Mulawa could access these books and/or CD-ROMs if they required them. The fact that Mulawa is a remand centre makes the poor access to such materials at the centre unacceptable. The inspection revealed that this was an area where the women at Mulawa were clearly not on an equal footing with male inmates.

RECOMMENDATION 18:
That the Department review the operation of the library at Mulawa with particular reference to the proper cataloguing of the materials and access being provided to legal reference materials including legislation governing the Department’s operations.

Food

The provision of food to inmates at Mulawa is a mixture of pro-serve (pre-cooked and quick chilled) and self-preparation. Inmates on protection within Conlon and inmates located within the MPU and MSU are provided with pro-serve meals prepared at Silverwater by Corrective Services Industries (CSI). The inmates in the other accommodation units prepare their own meals from weekly rations provided to them by the centre together with foods purchased by them through the ‘buy-up’ system.

During the day all inmates are provided sandwiches for lunch that are also prepared by CSI. The inmates told the inspection team that they threw out most of the sandwiches. The waste of resources through this process is significant. A large industrial garbage bin full of discarded food that was located in Wyndana provided evidence of this.

All of the inmates spoken to by the inspection team had a distinct preference for preparing their own meals. Those in receipt of the pro-serve meals said that they supplement this with a shared ‘buy-up’ of foodstuffs. The inmates indicated that the pro-serve meal menu was heavily oriented towards male inmates. A number of the pro-serve meals were examined during the inspection and they appeared to be sufficient in both quality and quantity.

The Department and the centre’s management have expressed the desire to place the entire inmate population at Mulawa on a pro-serve regimen. The main reason for doing so related to a review that showed poor standards of hygiene being employed by inmates in preparing their meals. If the centre is to expand the provision of pro-serve meals, any reduction in the inmates’ ability to supplement this with foods from their buy-up lists will create discontent amongst the inmates.

The Department should explore other options with the inmates prior to the full introduction of pro-serve meals and should re-assess the food provided to inmates at lunchtime at Mulawa.
RECOMMENDATION 19:

That the Department, in consultation with inmates, explore alternative lunch provisions to the existing sandwiches and assess options for maintaining hygiene and related controls over evening meal preparation prior to any final decision on the introduction of pro-serve meals throughout the centre.

Buy-Ups

Each week inmates are able to submit a buy-up list, which allows them to purchase a range of toiletries, goods and foodstuffs. Every Thursday the buy-up contractor delivers goods to the inmates via a buy-up shop within the centre. The bulk of an inmate's 'buy-up' is individually wrapped in a sealed bag. The buy-up system appeared to be working reasonably well at Mulawa with little or no complaint being received from the inmates.

The inspection team noted that the buy-up system does, however, present further security risks. Whilst the buy-up truck is searched according to departmental procedures, such a search would be insufficient to detect contraband entering the centre through this process. Not wishing to risk being the subject of spurious allegations, the officers are understandably reluctant to inspect the contents of an inmate's buy-up.

This assessment is in no way intended to suggest that the buy-up contractors to the centre are not of good character. It is, however, another security risk that needs to be addressed by correctional centres.

RECOMMENDATION 20:

That the Department consider implementing a system of random screening of buy-up goods entering correctional centres and incorporating random screening by drug detector dogs as part of the security process.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Visits

The general atmosphere within the visits area at Mulawa was relaxed. The staff were competent and helpful and visitors who were interviewed were generally complimentary in their comments regarding staff. This view was also generally shared by the inmates who spoke highly of the attitude of officers conducting the visits. Their appreciation of the understanding attitude of the officers conducting the visits was typified by a comment from one of the inmates who related, "It was my kid's birthday recently. He couldn't bring a cake in so I baked one so that we could celebrate his birthday"
LIFE FOR INMATES AT MULAWA

From the inspection it was evident, however, that there were problems with visit booking arrangements. This was confirmed through exit interviews conducted by the inspection team with visitors at the completion of their visit. Visitors advised that the phone booking system was inadequate as they often had difficulties getting through to an officer to book their visit. Many related that they had to wait on the phone for hours (one visitor said that there were apparently four lines but only one phone, so the other three lines just rang out if the officer was on the phone). Added to this was the fact that bookings could only be made after 5pm.

The centre’s management advised that they had put forward a business plan to the Department requesting the creation of a ‘Visits Clerk’ position at the centre. Given the response received from visitors it was clear that such a position was urgently needed at the centre. From an examination of the IDC meeting minutes for April 2001, it was evident that this had been an unresolved issue at the centre for some time.

RECOMMENDATION 21:

That the Department:
21.1 approve the establishment of a Visitor Clerk position at Mulawa.
21.2 Review arrangements for the booking of visits to Mulawa.
21.3 Provide more helpful information about the visits process through electronic and other means.

Many visitors also complained of the lack of access to the centre via public transport. Inquiries revealed that there were only 3 buses scheduled to travel to the complex from Auburn Station on any given day. We were advised that the taxi fare is $12.50 on average. In response to this issue staff made the suggestion that a mini bus shared by all centres within the Silverwater Complex could be used to transport visitors to and from the Mulawa and the other centres within the complex. It was also suggested that provision of the service would be an appropriate role for an officer returning to work on rehabilitation. Whilst it is acknowledged that there may be public liability issues involved, the suggestion is worthy of consideration.

RECOMMENDATION 22:

That the Department assess the feasibility of providing a visitor shuttle bus service from Auburn Station to the Silverwater complex to supplement the lack of public transport access.

During the inspection of the visits area it was noted that some of the inmates were required to wear white overalls whilst others were not. The team was later advised that there was an insufficient range in the sizes of overalls. This resulted in some inmates being allowed to wear their normal clothes while others suffered the ignominy of wearing the overalls and explaining the clothing to their visitors, who were often their children. In the opinion of the inspection team and visitors the

56 White overalls were introduced a number of years ago as an added measure to prevent the introduction of contraband into correctional centres through contact visits.
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Indiscriminate use of the white overalls was unnecessarily demeaning for female inmates, particularly as the inmates are searched before and after visits. The Governor said that she would re-examine the need to continue the use of the overalls. Whilst there may be many well intentioned reasons to persist with the use of the overalls, if they are to continue their use should be consistently and equitably applied to all inmates.

There are many improvements that could be made to the visits area, particularly in terms of making the area more interesting for children. These were discussed with the Governor and need no further comment here.

From discussions held with staff it would seem that little information regarding the visits process was available for distribution to visitors. There were several notices up near the gate (pictured here) advising visitors of contraband items

and the consequences of bringing them into the centre. However, these were not easy to read and most were just quotes from sections of the legislation. Although there were pictures of the contraband items, these were not all easily identifiable. In addition, we were advised that, although these were the most recent signs provided by the Department, the information on them was not entirely up-to-date.

A suggestion was made by staff, with which I agree, that an alternative method of advising visitors of the rules and regulations of visiting inmates may be through a leaflet/brochure, available in community languages. This could be a double-sided pamphlet - one side with general information (eg. rules and regulations throughout the system) and the other side with centre specific details (eg. visiting times, the booking process, transport options, etc.). The centre should look at producing such a pamphlet as well as arranging for information to be communicated whilst a visitor is waiting on the telephone to make a booking for a visit.

There was also a sign noted in the waiting area that indicated that persons who left the visits area would not be allowed back. It was our understanding that the Department had over-ruled this situation in 1998. Inmates were not aware of this change and believed incorrectly that the restriction applied. When apprised of the situation the Governor agreed to have the signs removed.

Telephones & Mail

Complaints were also made by the inmates regarding the apparently frequent failure of the Arunta telephone system at Mulawa. This was confirmed by the inspection. The team found phones in many of the areas visited had a "not in service" error message regularly displayed.
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In addition, the inmates said that quite often the phones were unavailable for use for up to 40 minutes when a muster had to take place, even though a muster usually took only 10 minutes to conduct. Our inquiries revealed that the phones at the centre were, indeed, timed to go off at 4.50pm and back on at 5.30pm. In light of this it is recommended that the centre’s management review the arunta telephone access time limitations.

Many of the inmates complained about substantial delays in receiving mail. The management of incoming mail is the responsibility of the centre’s Mail Officer, who also happens to be responsible for the telephone system. For security reasons mail items have to be checked prior to delivery to inmates. The inspection team was advised by staff that the mail ‘backs-up’ whenever the Mail Officer post is stripped in order to staff the centre or that Officer is on rostered days off.

The centre’s management advised that they had recently begun to train other officers to undertake this function during any absences of the Mail Officer.

SAFETY & WELLBEING

Over half of the inmates surveyed stated that they felt unsafe at Mulawa. Whilst just over 55% of staff surveyed stated that they felt safe at work, the remainder expressed feeling unsafe to varying degrees. Some have sought to ‘down-play’ the level of violence occurring at Mulawa. A recent departmental report regarding a corporate approach to violence reduction in the NSW correctional system, ‘Talking Up Communication – Talking Down Violence’, suggested that Mulawa was not as violent as many had reported. The report’s focus on incidents of ‘serious assaults’ in reaching this conclusion was rather narrow as it failed to take into account the many other manifestations of violence, such as fights and incidents of self harm. In this regard, the statistics appearing as appendices to that report showed that with a total of 44 during the year 2000, Mulawa had the second highest rate of assault upon Officer, second only to the MRRC. With a rate of 20.6 per hundred inmates, Mulawa had the second highest rate for ‘fights’ amongst inmates. In terms of incidents of self-harm, Mulawa again had the second highest level in the system with 65.

An analysis of the incidents reported in the Department’s daily ‘Running Sheets’ for the 2001/2002 financial year reaffirmed the high levels of violent conduct at Mulawa. During this financial year Mulawa’s total rate for assaults by inmates upon inmates was 41.7 per hundred inmates. The highest rate in the system, Mulawa’s statistics in relation to assaults upon officer and acts of self-harm were also the highest in the system during this period. Whilst it is acknowledged that the assault incidents at Mulawa are not as severe in terms of their impact upon the victims as they are in male centres and a high number of self-harm incidents are attributable to a small number of inmates, nonetheless, the statistics are indicative of a very violent environment. The figure appearing on the next page graphically illustrates, by way of comparative analysis, the high level of violent incidents at Mulawa during the last twelve months.

In terms of the Department’s response to violence at Mulawa and other female centres, the Department’s report rightly identifies the need for a violence prevent program (VPP) for women inmates as the VPP delivered at Long Bay is only available to male inmates. The report talks of a satellite module for women and supports the establishment of a pilot scheme at Berrima. It is recommended that the Department establish a VPP for female inmates as soon as practicable. Given the nature of the inmates that would be involved in a VPP one would have thought that Mulawa was the only location that could accommodate such a program.

**RECOMMENDATION 23:**

That the Department establish a Violence Prevention Program for female inmates as soon as practicable.

Welfare Services

There are three (3) Welfare Officers attached to Mulawa. These officers work from Reilly House, which is centrally positioned within the centre. The inspection team found that the Welfare Officers were under considerable stress in their attempts to cater to the needs of inmates. As mentioned earlier, they are involved in the screening of reception inmates, a function that they carry out in the evening or overtime.
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The inspection team identified that the welfare staff had been seeing clients individually on a self-referral basis, and it was clear that this was not the most effective means of managing their caseloads. An alternative suggestion, that welfare workers should be accessed only on referral from an inmate’s Wing Officer, seemed equally problematic. This is an issue that needs to be addressed as the welfare staff are close to becoming overwhelmed. The welfare staff also advised that their workload would be considerably reduced if the wing officers were able to facilitate bail calls.

There also appeared to be a lack of clear purpose as to the role of welfare at the centre and a lack of clarity in the relationships between welfare staff, line management and other service providers at the centre. The welfare staff advised the inspection team that they had only recently been provided with a ‘statement of duties’. In addition, the inspection team was left with the impression that the welfare staff did not have available to them any clearly focussed professional supervision.

I note that the Department has completed a review of the Inmate Services & Programs function within the Department. The eventual implementation of structural change in this area will no doubt resolve a number of issues within the system as a whole. Meanwhile, there is a need for the Department to review the delivery of welfare services at Mulawa, including the relationships of the welfare area with other functional areas of the centre.

RECOMMENDATION 24:
That the Department review, as soon as practicable, the delivery of welfare services at Mulawa including the interaction of welfare officers with other areas at the centre and professional supervision of welfare staff.

COMPLAINT RESOLUTION

Within the correctional system there are a number of ways in which an inmate can seek to resolve his or her complaint. Apart from their wing officer or Area Manager, inmates have access to inmate applications (a formal written process); Inmate Development Committees (IDC’s) and Aboriginal Inmate Committees (AIC’s); Officials Visitors; the NSW Ombudsman; and the Inspector-General for the resolution of their complaints. The inspection of Mulawa focused on two of these mechanisms, the inmate application process and the operation of IDC’s and AIC’s at the centre.

Inmate Applications

The inspection found that inmate application forms were readily accessible at Mulawa. The inspection team’s review of the inmate application registers for each area of the centre revealed that the applications, apart from being used to resolve complaints, were heavily relied upon to resolve requests within the centre.
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Many of the inmates spoken to told of frequently not being advised of the result of an application lodged by them. This was supported somewhat by the substantial number of applications that appeared to be missing from the system. Whilst many of the missing applications are, no doubt, attributable to inmates failing to return them to their wing officers after being issued, the inspection found that the application process was not being regularly reviewed by managers as per departmental policy.

As a result of a previous review by this Office the Department is in the process of implementing a new system and associated guidelines that should improve this area of the centre’s operations.

Inmate Development Committees (IDC’s) & Aboriginal Inmate Committees (AIC’s)

In the lead up to, and during the inspection, the team met with the centre’s inmate development committee. In addition to this, the team asked to be supplied with the minutes of previous meetings of the IDC and AIC Committees. In response to this request the team was provided with copies of the minutes of two meetings only - April 2001 and November 2001. We were advised that there had been other meetings where minutes were not produced, but it was apparent that the meetings were spasmodic.

In meetings with the IDC it was apparent that, while the inmates present clearly had a good understanding of the operations of the centre, they had not been formally appointed to the Committee. Accordingly, it is necessary for a formal election to take place. The inspection team found that there was no AIC in place even though Mulawa has the highest representation of aboriginal inmates in the system. We did note, however, that an Aboriginal delegate attends Inmate Development Committee meetings when they are held.

It was evident that IDC meetings generally take place at times when it is decided by the centre’s management that some form of communication with inmates is necessary to achieve certain outcomes. In other respects, the centre has not demonstrated adequate support or commitment to the Committee process. This has contributed to the lack of communication evident at the centre and also has contributed to the perception amongst inmates and staff that management decisions are made inconsistently.

It was clear from the inspection that the Committees were not functioning in accordance with the Department’s policy directives. Apart from being a recommendation arising out of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, the effective operation of IDC’s and AIC’s is critically important to the operation of a correctional centre. It allows inmates to collectively present their issues to management and allows management to communicate effectively with inmates thereby reducing inmate frustration and discontent. Accordingly, the Department must take further steps to ensure that these committees are functioning, as intended, in each correctional centre in the system. The issuing of directives by the Department is clearly not enough. Systematic reviews by regional commands of the IDC’s and AIC meeting minutes is also required.
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Regional commands should also conduct systematic reviews of the inmate application and misconduct process in each correctional centre to ensure compliance with the Department's directives and improve the quality of these important systems.

RECOMMENDATION 25:
That the Department require regional commands to conduct systematic reviews of the operation of the inmate application, misconduct and Inmate Committee processes in each correctional centre with a view to ensuring compliance with its policy directives and improvement in the quality of these systems.

MEDICAL & ALLIED HEALTH SERVICES

As referred to earlier in the report, the inmates have a diversity of health-related and custody related problems, which are so contradictory that bringing them into coherent focus must present extreme difficulty for medical staff. The health, behavioural, and social problems of the inmates are significant, and need not be detailed here. However, among the salient issues are the following: 60% have a recent psychiatric history, and half of these have been in inpatient treatment in the preceding 12 months. 60% are parents of 2-3 children, and a substantial proportion of them are sole parents. Some 70% are actively 'detoxing' from illegal drugs. At the time of the inspection, 89 (34%) of the inmates were on Methadone treatment, and up to 50% of inmates tested have returned positive random urinalysis or refused to be tested, and may thus be currently using illegal drugs during their incarceration.60

For jurisdictional reasons my inspection of medical services did not involve an assessment of the qualitative aspect of medical service provision. The inspection team, in particular one of the consultants, Dr Simon Hasleton, spent some considerable time examining the facilities and talking with staff to determine if there were any local factors that may be impacting upon the effective provision of Medical Services by CHS staff.

The hospital annex (Clinic) building was assessed as being the most significant local factor impacting upon the delivery of services by CHS. The Clinic building appeared overcrowded and poorly suited to its purpose. It is noted that the clinic premises are provided to CHS by the Department of Corrective Services. The examination rooms seemed small, and there appeared to be insufficient storage space. The small bed rest area at the side of the clinic was cramped and intimidating to an unnecessary degree. Against this, the inspection team was impressed by the air of cheerful competence and efficiency in the nursing and custodial staff that were encountered in the clinic area.

60 There must be a strong possibility that the figure for current use is confounded, in this rapidly moving population, by possible hang-over from the period prior to recent admission, and perhaps other factors.
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Whether the existing staff and the physical plant could cope with a possible 20% increase in the number of inmates as a result of changes to the Bail Act and other factors seems unlikely. Staff to whom the inspection team spoke were adamant that the situation was at maximum capacity now. The team were advised that funding for a new clinic building was being sought. In regard to the current facilities, recommendations regarding minor renovations have already been made in this report.

In regard to access to medical services, the inspection team were told that some custodial staff were acting as 'filters' in determining if and when an inmate could access the clinic or CHS staff. The degree to which this was taking place could not be accurately determined. However, it should be noted that such a process places the custodial staff at considerable legal risk.

Therapeutic Programs

There are four psychologists employed at the centre. One is located in the Mum Shirl Unit, one is located in the Induction Unit and is heavily involved in case screening, and two are located in Reilly House to service the remainder of the centre. Overall, there appear to be two major areas of need, both currently catered for in the Mum Shirl Unit (MSU). These are:

(a) a small number of inmates suffering from major psychiatric disorders who, given bed availability would be in a hospital ward.

(b) a larger group of inmates with grossly challenging behaviours. These comprise two major groups which may overlap;

(i) aggression and violence toward others; and
(ii) self harm (or 'slashing up')

Although there will be a neurological factor in some of the group characterised under (b), they will over-represent personality disorders and developmental disability. Their main need is for a regimen in which their behaviour can be brought under control by providing it with reliable and consistent positive and negative consequences. Generally, these are insufficiently available in a custodial environment, and indeed, given that self-harm and the threat of self-harm invariably 'work' in such an environment, this behaviour tends to becomes more probable and more entrenched. It is also highly susceptible to imitative learning, and tends to become epidemic.

The centre’s management and psychologists have developed an alternate accommodation strategy for managing this second category of inmate. This strategy, which is contained within the document ‘Mulawa Correctional Centre Proposal to manage increased remand inmate population and the impact of the new bail legislation’, would vastly improve the treatment opportunities and lifestyles of the women within this group.
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The management of women within group (a) have presented Mulawa with substantial problems. These women are highly resource-intensive to manage and are a drain on staff. Given the limitation on appropriate accommodation and staffing, to accommodate all of the women with psychiatric disorders at Mulawa places tremendous pressure on staff. In an attempt to provide staff with some relief several of the women are temporarily placed at Acute Crisis Management Units at other correctional centres. Apart from providing much needed relief for staff, this process appears also to be advantageous to the women. Many of the women relocated have demonstrated improved behaviours, particularly in terms of reductions in acts of self-harm, as a result of the change in environment. With the construction of a new Mental Health Assessment Unit planned for Mulawa this process of continual relocation will no longer be required and will substantially improve the treatment and quality of life of these women.

It is understood that the new Mental Health Assessment Unit at Mulawa has been planned as a ten-bed facility with a similar forty-bed facility to be built at the MRRC. Given the current number of women with psychiatric disorders in full-time custody and the high incidence of self-harm behaviour at Mulawa, a ten-bed facility at the centre would most likely be insufficient to meet even the current demand for beds. Whilst it is acknowledged that Health NSW controls the funding for construction of these new facilities, it is recommended that the Department and CHS review the plans for the Mulawa facility with a view to determining if the number of beds needs to be increased.

**RECOMMENDATION 26:**
That the Department, in consultation with CHS, review the plans for the Mental Health Assessment Unit to be constructed at Mulawa to determine if the number of beds in that facility needs to be increased.

In terms of staff to meet the needs of these inmates, the Clinical Psychologist working in the MSU, in particular, appeared to be highly skilled and exceptionally well qualified for her role. It was the observation of the consultant on the team that her service would benefit from having another Psychologist and a Program Officer working under her direction. The Program Officer position could be filled by a Custodial Officer with training in behavioural program management and implementation. As to the psychologists, it is suggested that the Clinical Psychologist working in Belvedere House be relocated to the Induction Unit, with the psychologist from there being redeployed to work with the psychologist in the MSU. The service to the remainder of the centre could be supplied without any diminution of services to other inmates by a weekly clinic offering evidence-based treatments, staffed and supervised from the MSU. Given these changes, Mulawa could have a well-focused behaviour management resource in the MSU, which could provide a rotational training role for the rest of the centre. One test for the efficacy of this proposal would be a reduction in the high incidence of self-harm and threatened self-harm behaviour.

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51 Media Release, DCS, 4 June 2002.
52 Ms Anne Langford, Clinical Co-ordinator, Intellectual Disabilities Services could perhaps offer some assistance here.
LIFE FOR INMATES AT MULAWA

In addition to these measures, it was clear from the inspection that Mulawa also required the establishment of a 24 hour Risk Assessment & Intervention Team (RAIT). Unlike the PRRC, Mulawa only has a Risk Intervention Team (RIT) comprising two staff working morning and afternoon shifts. Given the high rates of self-harm at Mulawa and the death in custody of an inmate in the Induction Unit in April of this year, the establishment of a RAIT at the centre is imperative.

RECOMMENDATION 27:
That the Department, as a matter of urgency, provide the resources for the establishment of a RAIT at Mulawa.

DISCIPLINE

The Ombudsman’s investigation gave considerable attention to the operation of the internal disciplinary system at Mulawa and made 11 recommendations in relation to this issue. Our inspection on this occasion was not as comprehensive and did not explore the use of the segregation area as it was understood that this formed part of an ongoing review by the Ombudsman’s Office. Our inspection considered the manner and timeliness with which misconduct charges were resolved.

The inmates had very few complaints to make in regard to the disciplinary process. However, some staff expressed concern about the apparent delays in the adjudication of matters and apparent inadequacies of some of the penalties being imposed upon inmates, particularly for assault officer and disobedience breaches.

In order to assess these matters the inspection team reviewed the 440 misconduct charges that had been dealt with at Mulawa during the 11-month period from July 2001 to May 2002. Of the 440 matters there were only 4 pleas of ‘Not Guilty’ entered by responding inmates. In terms of time it took to adjudicate matters, it was found that just over half had been dealt with within 3 days of the charges being laid and 83% had been finalised within 7 days. There were, however, a number of matters that had taken two to three weeks to complete. When staff were spoken to in relation to these matters they advised that delays in adjudications often occurred when senior staff went on leave as the Senior Correctional Officers who ‘acted up’ in their positions were not authorised to deal with misconduct charges. This was a sore point for some senior staff who faced a ‘backlog’ of misconduct charges whenever they returned from leave or days off.

RECOMMENDATION 28:
That the Department examine whether the delegation to conduct inquiries into misconduct charges could be extended to include SCO’s relieving in the position of Area Manager.

63 The Commissioner’s delegation to deal with misconduct charges in terms of inquiry are restricted to the Governor, Deputy Governor, or other Commissioned Officer acting as an Area Manager (Section 16:1:1 of Department’s Procedures Manual)
LIFE FOR INMATES AT MULAWA

In terms of penalties applied to offences involving violence, such as assault upon another inmate, the most frequently used penalty was 3 days confined to cells (45%). There were only three ‘assault officer’ misconduct charges dealt with during the period in question with 2 days in cells, 24 hours in cells and 28 days off telephone calls being the penalties applied. It is understood that the majority of ‘assault officer’ offences are dealt with by the Police. The most frequent penalty applied to ‘dirty urine’ or ‘failure to supply urine sample’ breaches was ‘42 days off contact visits’ (60%). More will be said on the treatment of ‘dirty urine’ breaches in the next section of the report.

By and large the review of misconduct matters by the inspection team did not necessarily support the claim that breaches were being dealt with inadequately nor too harshly for that matter. However, as mentioned earlier in the report there is a need for regional commands to frequently review the handling of misconduct charges by correctional centres to ensure that the processes are being operated in accordance with legislative requirements and departmental directives.

Urinalysis

Each correctional centre is required to conduct systematic urinalysis testing of its inmates. A random sample of approximately 5% of the total inmate population at each centre, together with those inmates targeted for testing via the use of intelligence, are subjected to urinalysis testing for drugs each month.

The inspection team reviewed the centre’s urinalysis register for the period January to May 2002. The register showed that there had been a total of 134 tests (or attempted tests) conducted during this period. Of the 134 tests, there had been 31 (almost one quarter) refusals by inmates to provide a urine sample for testing. It is accepted that inmates avoid providing a sample out of fear that doing so will produce a positive result. In this sense, they are rightly viewed as being equivalent, in misconduct terms, to returning a positive result.

Thirty-two (25%) of the samples taken returned a positive result. Without examining the applicable lab reports the inspection team was unable to assess the types of drugs prevalent in the samples. Nonetheless, the high level of refusal to supply a sample together with the positive test results were indicative of significant illicit drug use by inmates at the centre.

The most disturbing aspect of our review of the urinalysis process at Mulawa was the apparent non-existence of a system that directed inmates detected with positive samples onto diversionary programs. Positive tests and refusals to supply samples for testing were certainly dealt with expeditiously in a punitive sense. However, the inspection team found that there was no system in place for automatic referral or notification of positive test results to the Alcohol & Other Drug workers at the centre so that diversionary programs or treatment could be considered. These circumstances beg the question – What is the use of performing urinalysis if it is not also directed at getting inmates identified by the process onto diversionary programs and off illicit drug use?

The Department’s OPM manual at section 19.3.3 makes it incumbent on Area Managers to inform ‘D&A’ staff of inmates who produce positive results. It would appear that this task could be more easily and adequately carried out by the centre’s Urinalysis Officer who could be held accountable for ensuring that the notifications took place.
LIFE FOR INMATES AT MULAWA

Providing the AOD workers with a list of inmates producing positive results on a regular basis would assist in the follow-up of those inmates for participation in counselling and other diversionary programs. In addition to this, the Department should consider implementing, within the disciplinary process, a system where the inmate's involvement in diversionary programs forms part of the 'penalty' applied for producing a positive urinalysis test. For example, the inmate's attendance at counselling sessions or other diversionary programs would be made antecedent to the "loss of privileges" penalty, which is usually applied to positive tests results. Should the inmate later fail to attend the diversionary programs then the loss of privileges could then be evoked. Under such an arrangement there would be an incentive on the part of inmates to seek diversionary assistance, whereas at present there is very little.

RECOMMENDATION 29:

That the Department:

29.1 Conduct a review of its urinalysis procedures and conduct audits at correctional centres to ensure that both the notification of positive tests are taking place and diversionary programs are being made available.

29.2 Consider the successful involvement of inmates in drug diversionary programs as an alternative to loss of privileges as a penalty for a positive urine test.
Chapter 4

PURPOSEFUL SENTENCES

REHABILITATION OR REPARATION

The concepts of rehabilitation and reparation are at the forefront of our thinking when it comes to the rationale for excluding individuals from our communities for breaches of the law. With regard to the former, both the staff and inmates at Mulawa were uncharacteristically united in their views. The high recidivism rate for women was cited by staff as evidence of this. Some of the notable comments from staff were: “Throughcare is nice on paper, but it doesn’t happen in practice here for women.”; “The recidivism rate is much higher for women, you don’t have to tell us the stats. we see the same old faces time after time.”; “Inmates are given very little pre-release information or programs and are sent out and left to their own devices”; and “Resources are too limited to adequately prepare inmates for community life.”

Some of the inmate comments regarding rehabilitation and preparation for release back into the community included, “when its time for release, they kick you out the gate”; “Too many privileges have been removed due to lack of funding. This place is just run like a human warehouse, there is no rehabilitation”; “Not at Mulawa, but I’ve heard about some good programs at Emu eg. Works release, parenting programs, weekend leave, day leave”, and sadly, “If anything, we just learn to hate and fight and do more crime”.

The inspection team viewed this assessment of Mulawa’s performance in this regard as somewhat unfair given the nature and characteristics of the inmates that it is required to manage. In this sense, one would expect that Emu Plains correctional centre would perhaps be more positive in this respect. Nevertheless, the comments of the staff and inmates cannot be ignored and it was obvious that an assessment of the rehabilitative programs at Mulawa was required.

Probation & Parole

There are two Probation and Parole Officers located at Mulawa. They occupy an office within the day room of the centre. Whilst ideal in terms of being in the centre of the facility, the accommodation is not spacious. The Probation & Parole Officers are a shared resource within the Silverwater complex and whilst they are attached to the centre they report to a District Manager at the MRRC and are co-ordinated from outside the centre. The officers advised that they very rarely had the opportunity to speak with the Governor.

Each officer is required to complete 8-10 reports per month. The officers advised that there are no relieving arrangements whilst they are away on leave or attending courses. As a consequence, work piles up in their absence and often reports are being submitted with psychology & work reports not being seen.

More distantly, these staff advised the inspection team that the Early Date of Release (EDR) of some inmates had to be put back because reports could not be compiled in time. They also advised that significant delays in other program areas, such as AOD, adversely affected their ability to write their reports. They further advised that many of the recommendations that they make in their reports were not being carried out, for example drug and alcohol referrals not done before release.
PURPOSEFUL SENTENCES

The officers stated that, usually, they would write 4 to 5 Pre Release Reports and 4 to 5 Balance of Parole Reports a month with the added pressure of trying to obtain copies of psychology reports, work reports and organising housing, employment and other relevant documents to summarise their conclusion. The officers stated that gaining access to medical reports even with a consent form from an inmate was difficult and the Medical staff seemed reluctant to give any feedback. From their viewpoint communication with Corrections Health required improvement. The Department should address this issue with CHS management.

The Probation & Parole Officers also spoke about their lack of access to inmates in the Induction Unit who had had their parole revoked. They related that many inmates were simply unaware of the procedures following the revocation of parole, in particular the opportunity for review of the Parole Board’s decision64. These Officers indicated that they would like to be able to speak to inmates in the Induction Unit who have had their parole revoked in order to give them adequate information about the procedures following revocation of parole. Ideally, this would occur as soon as possible after the inmate had arrived at the centre. The inspection team was surprised that this was not an established procedure.

RECOMMENDATION 30:
That the centre’s management establish a procedure that ensures the earliest possible contact between P&P Officers and inmates received into custody on revocation of parole.

The Department’s ‘Women’s Action Plan 2’ rightly stresses the importance of Probation & Parole in the ‘throughcare’ process. One of the major strategies contained within that document in support of this position is, “Probation & Parole will revise its staffing profile in correctional centres for women with the view to increased participation of Probation & Parole Officers in case management and throughcare.”65 In light of our discussions with the staff at Mulawa it is imperative that this strategy now be followed.

RECOMMENDATION 31:
That Probation & Parole revise its staffing profile in accordance with the strategy contained with the Women’s Action Plan 2 (2000-2003) with particular attention being paid to the resources available at Mulawa.

64 Section 174 of Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999, makes provision for an offender to ask the Parole Board to review its decision and allow the offender to appear before it and make submissions regarding the revocation of their parole.

65 DCS, Women’s Action Plan 2, p.11.
PURPOSEFUL SENTENCES

Alcohol & Other Drugs (AOD)

There are 3 Alcohol and Other Drug staff attached to Mulwa. The inspection team was advised that one of these staff had been on long-term sick leave since late 2001. At the time of our inspection one staff member was attending a course and the other was not available until the last day of our inspection. We were advised that one of the AOD workers is involved in the induction screening process on almost a full-time basis, which, under current staff arrangements, left one AOD worker to service the majority of the centre’s population.

The AOD workers advised that at Mulwa a lot of their time was spent on case management, in particular being a member on the centre’s Case Management Team (CMT). Due to this focus on case management and low staff numbers we were advised that they only see 7-8 inmates per week. We were also advised that, at present, if an inmate wants to see an Alcohol or Other Drug worker (self referral) the waiting time is around 4-5 weeks. Additionally, due to the lack of staff, the AOD workers are unable to prioritise this list of inmates in terms of the urgency of their need for services.

The staff confirmed for the inspection team that there was no referral to AOD staff of positive tests arising from the Urinalysis testing undertaken at the centre. The case files of 15 inmates who had recently produced positive urinalysis tests were selected for examination. The inspection team found that whilst these 15 inmates had received penalties ranging from 42 to 126 days of contact visits, there was no record of any of them being referred to the Alcohol and Other Drug Workers. The AOD workers agreed that they should be following up on these inmates, specifically the repeat offenders. However, under current staffing arrangements, this would simply create longer waiting lists for those inmates who voluntarily wished to avail themselves of the AOD services.

It was clear from the inspection that the vacancy created by the staff member on long-term sick leave was placing considerable strain upon the AOD resources at Mulwa. Two AOD staff is simply insufficient to deliver the alcohol and other drug services that one would expect to be delivered at a centre like Mulwa. The consequent lack of, and access to, diversionary programs is unsatisfactory given the accepted characteristics of women in full-time custody and the high level of positive urinalysis tests at Mulwa. Steps should be taken to temporarily fill the vacancy as soon as possible.

RECOMMENDATION 32:

That the Department’s Alcohol & other Drug Services Unit conduct an urgent review of the AOD service delivery capacity at Mulwa.

CONSTRUCTIVE & STRUCTURED DAY

Fundamental to the philosophy of rehabilitation and reparation are the concepts of ‘constructive’ and ‘structured’ day.
PURPOSEFUL SENTENCES

Purposeful employment or work is at the core of the notion of a constructive day and education and other rehabilitative programs are essential aspects of what is known as a structured day. The concept of a structured day in this context is somewhat broader than the commonly held understanding of it being the normal routine of a centre. The two are not mutually exclusive with both being important in terms of an inmate’s rehabilitation and preparation for release back into the community. Given this importance, no inspection would have been complete without an assessment of what Mulawa offered inmates in regard to a constructive and/or structured day.

Employment

With regard to offering a constructive day, Mulawa has two major industries that provide employment for inmates - Gencor and the Panama Nursery.

Gencor is an industry run by Corrective Services Industries (CSI), which operates two business activities at the centre. The first, and more substantive, is the re-assembly, cleaning and repackaging of airline headsets. The second business activity is the preparation for distribution of a magazine. The inspection team was advised that the magazine business could possibly be relocated to another centre in the near future. Nevertheless, both business activities create 85 employment opportunities for inmates.

The Panama Nursery is a private business activity undertaken within the centre producing a wide variety of flowering plants, trees and shrubs. Apart from aesthetically enhancing the environment within the centre (as pictured here), the nursery employs 30 inmates. Combined, the two industries create employment for 115 inmates. In addition to these industries, inmates can also secure employment in administration, in ground maintenance or as a ‘sweeper’ within their units. At the time of inspection 62 inmates were engaged in this type of employment.

A breakdown of the total employment within the centre is contained in the table below. Whilst all inmates are encouraged to work, there are a number who choose not to work (39) and number of sentenced inmates (22) who have either been dismissed from their jobs, refuse to work or prefer to undertake vocational courses. Due for the most part to ill health there are also a number of inmates categorised as unemployable (34).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Inmates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GENCOR</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PANAMA NURSERY</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER EMPLOYMENT</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNEMPLOYED</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NON-WORK &amp; DISMISSED</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNEMPLOYABLE</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>272</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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PURPOSEFUL SENTENCES

Generally speaking, there are currently sufficient employment opportunities for inmates at Mulawa. Whilst some of the employment is not particularly skill enhancing, it is nevertheless important to both the centre and the inmates. As a result of the inspection, the inspection team grew to appreciate the importance of industries to the routine and operation of the centre. When industries are not working (due to staff shortages) it creates difficulties in terms of managing the inmates in their wings, often, as discussed previously, culminating in them being locked-in their units or cells. Unfortunately, due to problems filling staff vacancies within CSI, the number of occasions the industries have not operated has been on the increase.

Apart from the appointment of a suitable person to the position of Manager Centre Services & Employment as mentioned earlier in the report, CSI need to establish arrangements for relief of Overseer positions during short and long-term sick leave with a view to ensuring that stoppages due to staffing issues are minimised.

Education

There are a good variety of courses offered at Mulawa including art and craft, adult education and vocational courses. All of the courses undertaken by the inmates are accredited through VETAB, and are regularly evaluated by AEVTI. The centre's Senior Education Officer (SEO), Programs Manager and Governor decide upon the courses that will be offered at the centre. Generally, the courses offered are chosen on a needs basis and after consultation with AEVTI.

Inmates register for the courses that they wish to do, however, they are sometimes encouraged by teachers to enrol in other courses. For example, if they are undertaking all art and craft courses, they may be encouraged to enrol in a combination of courses including some adult education courses. Courses with a vocational focus are generally encouraged.

The majority of the courses are delivered in Blaxland House and nearby demountable buildings. The education area has a computer room with eight 'off-line' computers. The inspection team was advised that access to the computers is limited to students within class times.

To facilitate security two custodial officers occupy a post at Blaxland House that also controls gate entry to the education and library area. The Education staff advised that in times of staff shortages the two officers are stripped from this post resulting in classes being cancelled.

In terms of improved access to courses for inmates, the Centre’s SEO advised that three teachers currently run courses in literacy, numeracy and music for protection inmates in Conlon. Two teachers go to the Mum Shi Unit and Kipling (when available) and offer a ceramics course with a therapeutic focus. We were advised that a cooking course was offered in the MSU and Kipling in the past, but the teacher who was running this course is currently on sick leave. This course will resume upon that teachers return.
PURPOSEFUL SENTENCES

Many of the inmates advised that it was difficult, if not impossible, to do a combination of work and education apparently due to the inflexibility of the overseers in regard to release from work to attend classes. The inspection team was unable to confirm this assertion. The inspection team later learnt that the inmates’ preference for work over education was based purely on economic rationale. An inmate undertaking full-time studies receives twenty dollars per week, whereas an inmate working in GENCOR can earn between twenty and sixty dollars per week depending on the work they perform. Hence, there is a significant financial incentive to work rather than focus on full-time study.

Generally speaking, the delivery of education programs and courses at Mulawa was found to be more than adequate both in terms of the quality and types of courses offered and the level of access inmates have to them.

CASE MANAGEMENT & THROUGHCARE

The inspection revealed that case management at Mulawa was working extremely well in some areas of the centre, such as Induction and the Mum Shirl Unit. However, it had a tendency to fall away in its application in regard to the longer-term remand and sentenced inmates.

In the Induction Unit, case management principles and practices were guiding the professional work done in that Unit. Similarly, case management was of high quality within the Mum Shirl Unit. It was apparent that case management worked best in areas where the needs of the inmates were high, as is the case when they are first received into custody and during times when they exhibit ‘at-risk’ behaviours.

For all other inmates who did not fall into either of these categories the level of service in terms of the quality of case management declined. In responding to the survey only half (54%) of the inmates stated that they had a case officer assigned to them and just under half of this group (20) stated that they had never met with their case officer. Overall, 71% of the inmates surveyed rated case management at Mulawa as poor.

Of case files reviewed, there was evidence of officers not carrying out monthly reviews in time. It was difficult to understand why this was the case particularly given the very low officer caseload of 2 inmates per officer. There was also an absence of checking by case supervisors and case managers of the notes made by case officers. Memos were issued to officers where case notes were overdue.

The staff advised that local factors militated against them performing case management to a higher standard at the centre. One of the main factors was that their inmate caseloads were located in other areas of the centre. For example, one officer in the Induction Unit had one inmate who was on protection in Conlon and another in the Dawn de Loas centre on her caseload. Her duties in the Induction Unit meant that it was impossible for her to access those inmates in the other parts of the centre and also attend to her duties. Many other officers complained of the same problem and said that they ran the risk of being charged for abandoning their posts in their attempts to meet with their allocated inmates.

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PURPOSEFUL SENTENCES

Many of the officers suggested that the structured day of the centre also militated against them meeting with their inmates and making notes on the relevant case files. We were advised that a period of locked-in-cells during lunch-time each day in other centres provided the officers with the opportunity to catch up on their case notes. Whilst the officers were not advocating such a move at Mulawa they did suggest a short period of locked-in-cells on alternate Saturdays would assist case officers with their meetings with inmates and case notes. In any event, it was clear from our discussion with staff that their caseloads needed to be reviewed to ensure, as much as possible, that inmates on an officer’s caseload were located in areas of the centre where the case officer would normally be performing duties.

RECOMMENDATION 33:
That the centre’s management review the caseload allocation to ensure that, where possible, inmates on an officer’s caseload are located in areas of the centre where the case officer normally performs his/her duties.

Program Co-Ordination

One of the other factors affecting case management and program co-ordination at Mulawa has been the long-term absence of the centre’s Programs Manager. One of the centre’s psychologists has been relieving in the position for the last six months. She advised the inspection team that she has received no training and had not previously performed in the Programs Managers role. In terms of case management she advised that many of the meetings that she should be having with case managers and supervisors are not taking place because workloads do not allow time for such meetings. Given her lack of experience and training in the role, together with the fact that she is not permanently appointed to the position it is understandable that she is finding her task a difficult assignment. The centre’s management advised the inspection team the Acting Programs Manager was now to undertake training relevant to the Program’s Manager’s position.

The inspection team were also advised that in the near future Mulawa would be trialling an electronic case management system which will improve the centre’s capacity to monitor the case management process and allow officers to enter case notes electronically. It is hoped that the introduction of e-case management will lead to improvements in this aspect of the operations of the centre.

RECOMMENDATION 34:
That the Department take immediate action to fill the position of Program Manager at Mulawa.
Chapter 5

THE FUTURE

The Department's vision for the future of Mulawa is that it will become the equivalent to the MRRC in the women's system. This vision has considerable merit in terms of providing equitable service delivery for women inmates received into custody and on remand. However, the changes occurring within Mulawa, and external to it, indicate that the Department's vision for Mulawa will not materialise unless additional changes are planned that will allow the centre to focus on the delivery of reception, induction and remand services as is the case at the MRRC.

Internal and External changes ahead

Internally, Mulawa is preparing itself to continue to deliver services to inmates who are acutely mentally ill and present with acute behavioural problems. Its capacity to provide these services will be boosted by the addition of the Mental Health Assessment Unit planned for the centre. As mentioned earlier in the report, the number of beds planned for this facility (10) seems insufficient for the high number of mentally ill women who find themselves in custody at Mulawa.

Until this facility is constructed, the centre's management and senior staff have developed proposals for the restructuring of accommodation at Mulawa with the view to improving the delivery of services to this category of inmate. In summary, the proposal involves the relocation of protected custody inmates from the Conlon complex, together with a large proportion of the inmates currently accommodated in the Mum Shirt and Kipling Units, to residential units in the Dawn De Loas area. The inspection team concluded that implementation of this proposal would lead to significant improvements in the treatment options available and lifestyles of the inmates concerned.

These changes to the centre will also represent a profound shift in emphasis for the institution as a whole, from a custodial toward a treatment emphasis. There will be a need for custodial staff to understand, participate in and facilitate the treatment process, and not to become either bystanders, or be perceived as the begrudging 'bad guys' while the Inmate Services staff play out their valued new roles. Therefore, it is vitally important that the training implications for custodial staff not be overlooked.

Additional staff and the erection of a fence and gate in the Dawn de Loas centre would be required to enable this proposal to be implemented. Whilst there may be some difficulty in rapidly redeploying additional staff to the centre, it would appear that the capital works required would not be significant in cost. Given the substantial improvements that will be derived from implementing this proposal it should receive the Department's full support.

In addition to future construction of the Mental Health Assessment Unit, the inspection team were apprised of future renovations and additional construction planned for the centre. These include:

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75. This is only one of the changes to the structure of the centre proposed in the document, Mulawa Correctional: Proposal to manage increased remand inmate population and the impact of the new bail legislation.
THE FUTURE

- Renovation of the MPU to re-install the secure exercise yards and install a door to improve airflow (2002/2003);
- Provision of new reception and clinic facilities to be attached to the current administration and gatehouse building (2003/2004); and
- Construction of a new chapel (2003/2004);

The construction and renovations planned will, no doubt, improve the conditions at the centre. However, on their own they will do little to assist the centre's management to improve the delivery of services to inmates at Mulawa. There is a need to look at the changes planned external to Mulawa to see if they will assist.

The Dillwynia correctional centre for women is currently being constructed at South Windsor and is due for completion mid to end 2003. This facility initially intended for 200 beds will be expanded to 300. The Department has advised that Dillwynia will ostensibly be used to accommodate category 2 remand and sentenced inmates and Mulawa will continue to house the bulk of category 3 and 4 inmates and be the main remand centre for women inmates.

The opening of Dillwynia will improve the Department's ability to deliver services to women inmates and will provide much needed relief to Mulawa in terms of the number of inmates that it currently has to manage. However, its opening and operation with this limited purpose will not alleviate many of Mulawa's service delivery problems that are associated with it being a multi-purpose centre.

In its Annual Report for 2000/2001, the Department announced its intention to create a new position of Commander of Women's Facilities and Services with the view to 'providing State-wide direction and management of women'.\textsuperscript{54} It is understood that the Department intends to implement this in the near future. The creation of such a position has considerable merit and is necessary given the planned expansion of the women's system. This position will serve to increase the focus and attention given by the Department to women's facilities and service provision. However, to be effective the position will need to be sufficiently supported administratively and be given the management flexibility and autonomy to move resources around the women's system to where they are most needed.

With this in mind, it is recommended that the Women's Services Unit be located within the Women's Facilities and Services command structure. Such a move would improve the effective implementation of the policies and strategies developed by the WSU.

RECOMMENDATION 35:
That the Department give consideration to the placement of the Women's Services Unit within the new Women's Facilities and Services Command.

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., DCS, Annual Report 2000/2001, p. 22.
THE FUTURE

If Mulawa is to be the future MRRC within the women's correctional system, then it must be given the opportunity to do so unencumbered. The continued placement of category 3 and 4 sentenced inmates at the centre in the future will represent a substantial impediment to achieving this outcome. If Mulawa is to be successful as a remand & reception and an acute crisis management centre for women then the Department needs to look fervently at the creation of alternate placement options for the higher categories of sentenced inmates.

With the construction of a 50 bed women's facility on the mid North Coast (2003/2004) and a similar facility planned for the correctional centre to be constructed in the Central West, the Department has the opportunity to make the structural changes that are required to assist Mulawa to fulfill its new role and become a centre of excellence in the delivery of services to women inmates.
Summary of Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM THE INSPECTION

RECOMMENDATION 1:
That the Department grant approval to the proposal by management at Mulawa to relocate inmates within the centre and that it assist in ensuring that the proposal is implemented as soon as possible.

RECOMMENDATION 2:
That the modifications planned for the MPU at Mulawa be given the utmost priority, with completion, at very least, being before the end of this calendar year.

RECOMMENDATION 3:
That the minor renovations required to improve the bed rest area within the clinic be undertaken immediately and that air conditioning be installed as soon as possible.

RECOMMENDATION 4:
That the Department consider the allocation of funds for the minor capital works required to increase the number of interview rooms and replace the small window at the inquiry counter of the visits section.

RECOMMENDATION 5:
That management at the centre ensure that:
5.1 The OH&S Committee conducts an audit of outstanding OH&S issues.
5.2 The OH&S Committee consult with inmates on OH&S issues through the monthly IDC and AIC meetings.
5.3 An implementation plan be developed to prioritise the resolution of OH&S issues.

RECOMMENDATION 6:
That the Department conduct a review of the maintenance program approval process with a view to streamlining it.

RECOMMENDATION 7:
That Corrective Services Industries immediately take steps to fill the position of ‘Manager Centre Services & Employment’ at Mulawa and that person coordinate an assessment of outstanding major risk issues such as fire certification, emergency evacuation plans and building services.

RECOMMENDATION 8:
That the Department take immediate steps to re-deploy a suitable number of experienced Officers to Mulawa, at least until the anticipated opening of Dilkwynia in late 2003.

RECOMMENDATION 9:
That the Department work towards the development of a ‘female centre specific’ staffing formula which is based upon the recognition that the needs of women inmates are significantly different and more resource intensive then those of men.

RECOMMENDATION 10:
That the Department examine and assess the benefits that may accrue to the operation of correctional centres by the transfer of staff on long-term sick leave on to Regional establishments.
RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM THE INSPECTION

RECOMMENDATION 11:
That the Department conduct an urgent review of the training and, in particular, first aid/CPR training, of staff at Mulawa to assess the need to provide additional refresher courses.

RECOMMENDATION 12:
That the Department give consideration to the creation of an "Education Officer" position at Mulawa on a trial basis to assess the benefits of such a position to the management of the centre.

RECOMMENDATION 13:
That the Department give consideration to the installation of six additional computer terminals within Wyndana and the Dawn de Zoys centre at Mulawa.

RECOMMENDATION 14:
That the Department give consideration to increasing the centre's Administration Manager's financial delegation to $5000.

RECOMMENDATION 15:
That the Department and the centre's management consider the use of Drug Detector Dogs to randomly screen the large number of airline bags that enter Mulawa each day.

RECOMMENDATION 16:
That the Department expedite the installation of additional telephones within the MPU of Mulawa Correctional Centre.

RECOMMENDATION 17:
That the Department take steps to ensure that correctional centres comply with the standing instruction regarding the use of IDC and AIC delegates to assist in the orientation of new arrivals.

RECOMMENDATION 18:
That the Department review the operation of the library at Mulawa with particular reference to the proper cataloguing of the materials and access being provided to legal reference materials including legislation governing the Department's operations.

RECOMMENDATION 19:
That the Department, in consultation with inmates, explore alternative lunch provisions to the existing sandwiches and assess options for maintaining hygiene and related controls over evening meal preparation prior to the introduction of preserved meals throughout the centre.

RECOMMENDATION 20:
That the Department consider implementing a system of random screening of buy-up goods entering correctional centres and incorporating random screening by Drug Detector Dogs as part of the security process.

RECOMMENDATION 21:
That the Department:
21.4 Approve the establishment of a Visitor Clerk position at Mulawa.
21.5 Review arrangements for the booking of visits to Mulawa.
21.6 Provide more helpful information about the visits process through electronic and other means.
RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM THE INSPECTION

RECOMMENDATION 22:
That the Department assess the feasibility of providing a visitor shuttle bus service from Auburn Station to the Silverwater complex to supplement the lack of public transport access.

RECOMMENDATION 23:
That the Department establish a Violence Prevention Program for female inmates as soon as practicable.

RECOMMENDATION 24:
That the Department review, as soon as practicable, the delivery of welfare services at Mulawa including the interaction of welfare officers with other areas at the centre and professional supervision of welfare staff.

RECOMMENDATION 25:
That the Department require regional commands to conduct systematic reviews of the operation of the inmate application, misconduct and Committee processes in each correctional centre with a view to ensuring compliance with its policy directives and improvement in the quality of these systems.

RECOMMENDATION 26:
That the Department, in consultation with CHS review the plans for the Mental Health Assessment Unit to be constructed at Mulawa to determine if the number of beds in that facility needs to be increased.

RECOMMENDATION 27:
That the Department, as a matter of urgency, provide the resources for the establishment of a RAIT at Mulawa.

RECOMMENDATION 28:
That the Department examine whether the delegation to conduct inquiries into misconduct charges could be extended to include SCO’s relieving in the position of Area Manager.

RECOMMENDATION 29:
That the Department:
29.1 Conduct a review of its urinalysis procedures and conduct audits at correctional centres to ensure that both the notification of positive tests are taking place and diversionary programs are being made available.
29.2 Consider the successful involvement of inmates in drug diversionary programs as an alternative to loss of privileges as a penalty for positive urine test.

RECOMMENDATION 30:
That the centre’s management establish a procedure that ensures the earliest possible contact between P&P Officers and inmates received into custody on revocation of parole.

RECOMMENDATION 31:
That Probation & Parole revise its staffing profile in accordance with the strategy contained with the Women's Action Plan 2 (2000-2003) with particular attention being paid to the resources available at Mulawa.
RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM THE INSPECTION

RECOMMENDATION 32:
That the Department’s Alcohol & other Drug Services Unit conduct an urgent review of the AOD service delivery capacity at Mulawa.

RECOMMENDATION 33:
That the centre’s management review the caseload allocation to ensure that, where possible, inmates on an officer’s caseload are located in areas of the centre where the case officer normally performs his/her duties.

RECOMMENDATION 34:
That the Department take immediate action to fill the position of Program Manager at Mulawa.

RECOMMENDATION 35:
That the Department give consideration to the placement of the Women’s Services Unit within the new Women’s Facilities and Services Command.
Appendix A

THE MULAWA INSPECTION TEAM

Mr Lindsay Le Compte  Inspector-General of Corrective Services
Stephen Griffin  Director, Operations & Review
Lyn Chant  Operational Analyst
Nerida Hogan  Inspector
Victoria Barkell  Inspector
Vanessa Swan  Inspector
Assistant Superintendent Michael Hovey  Inspector (Seconded)
Dr Simon Hasleton, MA PhD  Health & Allied Services Consultant
Don Davison, B Arch (Hons), MTCP (Syd)  Architectural Design and Planning Consultant
Alan Kirkland, Director NC OSS  Welfare & Support Services Consultant
## Appendix C

### DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIVE SERVICES' RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS & ACTION PLAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Comment/Action Required</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Person/s Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>That the Department grant approval to the proposal by Management at Mulawa to relocate inmates within the centre and that it assist in ensuring that the proposal is implemented as soon as possible</td>
<td>The Department in conjunction with the Department of Public Works and Services is developing a 10-year Master plan for the redevelopment of the Mulawa site. The proposal is under consideration and review and requires some action. Concurrent with the review, an analysis is being undertaken of the staffing requirement for Mulawa's existing and proposed operations.</td>
<td>Feb 2003</td>
<td>Senior Assistant Commissioner Inmate &amp; Custodial Services Commander Women's Facilities and Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>That the modifications planned for the MPU at Mulawa be given the utmost priority, with completion, at the very least, being before the end of this calendar year.</td>
<td>Funding has been approved for this project. The Department of Public Works and Services has been engaged to manage the project, assisted by the Regional Building Coordinator. Design specification and tender documents are currently being prepared. The provision of air conditioning to both the Induction Unit and the Clinic is a priority.</td>
<td>19 May 2003</td>
<td>Peter Hardman, Project Manager, DPWS Commander Women's Facilities and Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>That the minor renovations required to improve the bed rest area within the clinic be undertaken immediately and that air conditioning be installed as soon as possible</td>
<td>See Recommendation 2</td>
<td></td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>That the Department consider the allocation of funds for the minor capital works required to increase the number of interview rooms and replace the small window at the inquiry counter of the visits section</td>
<td>There are insufficient funds in this year's (2002/2003) minor capital works program to give this recommendation a priority. This recommendation will be looked at within the Department’s master plan for the redevelopment of the Mulawa site.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Commander Women's Facilities and Services Director, Facilities Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The management of the centre ensure that:- 5.1: The OH&amp;S Committee conducts an audit of outstanding OH&amp;S issues; 5.2: The OH&amp;S Committee consult with inmates on OH&amp;S issues through the monthly IDC &amp; AIC meetings; 5.3: An implementation plan be developed to prioritise the resolution of OH&amp;S issues.</td>
<td>A Risk Assessment audit has been conducted. Management are working with inmates IDC and AIC meetings. Training has been completed and a Hazard Risk Assessment Tool is being developed.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Governor Mulawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>That the Department conduct a review of the maintenance program approval process with a view to streamlining it</td>
<td>See Recommendation 7.</td>
<td>Feb 2003</td>
<td>Director Facilities Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>That Corrective Service Industries immediately take steps to fill the position of Manager Centre Services &amp; Employment at Mulawa and that person coordinate an assessment of outstanding major risk issues such as fire certification, emergency evacuation plans and building services</td>
<td>The submission for the establishment of the position of Manager, Centre Services and Employment has been considered by ODEPC and rejected. The maintenance contract for Mulawa is outsourced, if this company is not delivering a service under the agreement a review of the performance contract will be undertaken.</td>
<td>Feb 2003</td>
<td>Director Facilities Management</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>That the department take immediate steps to re-deploy a suitable number of experienced Officers to Mulawa, at least until the anticipated opening of Dillwynia late 2003.</td>
<td>Additional staff have been deployed to Mulawa, with an additional eight custodial officers commencing on 7 November 2002. Recruitment action has commenced for administrative positions. Mulawa has around 30% of its staff with less than 2 years' experience.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>The Commander Women's Facilities and Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>That the Department examine and assess the benefits that may accrue to the operation of correctional centres by the transfer of staff on long-term sick leave on to Regional establishments</td>
<td>The Department does not support a female centre specific staffing formula. All centres are staffed on the needs of the centre, demographics and the programs conducted in the centre.</td>
<td>Feb 2003</td>
<td>Senior Assistant Commissioner Inmate &amp; Custodial Services Commander Women's Facilities and Services As per recommendation 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>That the Department examine and assess the benefits that may accrue to the operation of correctional centres by the transfer of staff on long-term sick leave on to Regional establishments.</td>
<td>The Department believes that staff on long-term sick leave must be actively managed. An assessment needs to be made as to whether their illness is likely to prevent their return to work. Should this be the case then they need to be referred to Health Quest for an assessment as to whether they should be medically retired. If the officer's illness is not that serious they need to be actively managed at the local level by the staff officer. The current system is considered to become more effective as local and regional responsibilities are clearly defined. In addition, the department has in the past and will continue to fill vacancies at Mulawa over the approved staff establishment.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Executive Director Human Resources Management Commander Women's Facilities and Services</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Recommendation</td>
<td>Action Taken</td>
<td>Status</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>That the Department conduct an urgent review of the training and, in particular, first aid/CPR training, of staff at Mulawa to assess the need to provide additional refresher courses.</td>
<td>The Regional Training Officer together with Corrective Services Academy provide training to correctional centre staff. It is reported that Mulawa staff attend training on a regular basis.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Governor Mulawa Correctional Centre Executive Director Human Resources Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>That the Department give consideration to the creation of a 'Staff Training Officer' position at Mulawa on a trial basis to assess the benefits of such a position to the management of the centre.</td>
<td>The creation of a position of Staff Training Officer will be considered as part of the overall review of staffing and services at Mulawa. Refer Recommendation 1.</td>
<td>Feb 2003</td>
<td>Senior Assistant Commissioner Inmate &amp; Custodial Services Executive Director Human Resources Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>That the Department give consideration to the installation of six additional computer terminals within Wyndana and the Dawn de Loas centre at Mulawa.</td>
<td>A review of Wyndana and Dawn De Loas has identified that there is no suitable cabling to facilitate the installation of computers. In accordance with normal protocols the management at Mulawa will be asked to develop specifications and a business case and to forward this submission to the Executive Director, Finance and Assets Management for funding consideration.</td>
<td>March 2003</td>
<td>Governor Mulawa Correctional Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>That the Department give consideration to increasing the centre’s Administration Manager’s financial delegation to $5,000.</td>
<td>There is no position of Administration Manager at Mulawa. Under the shared corporate services approach administrative matters are dealt with at the MRRC.</td>
<td>No action required</td>
<td>No action required</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>That the Department and the centre’s management consider the use of Drug Detector Dogs to randomly screen the large number of airline bags that enter Mulawa each day.</td>
<td>Mulawa has an ongoing search program, which incorporates periodic searching by drug detector dogs. The limited number of drug detector dogs teams necessitates the deployment be strictly arranged in accordance with intelligence priorities.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Governor Mulawa</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>That the Department expedite the installation of additional telephones within the MPU of Mulawa Correctional Centre</td>
<td>Mulawa is in the same position as all other centres across the State, which are attempting to increase the number of phones in inmates’ accommodation areas. The department is negotiating with Telstra regarding this matter.</td>
<td>Feb 2003</td>
<td>Manager, Security &amp; Communications Director, Facilities Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>That the department take steps to ensure that the correctional centres comply with the standing instruction regarding the use of IDC and NAC delegates to assist in the orientation of new arrivals</td>
<td>Implemented.</td>
<td>No action required</td>
<td>No action required</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>That the Department review the operation of the library at Mulawa with particular reference to the proper cataloguing of the materials and access being provided to legal reference materials including legislation governing the Department's operations.</td>
<td>The Department has made a commitment to review the processes, to include cataloguing, in relation to Correctional Centre Libraries with the view of establishing a Principal Librarian position. It has been resolved to establish the MRRC Library as a reference collection for legal texts and on-line information. It is anticipated that staffing will be enhanced at the MRRC Library by an additional position of Library Technician who will provide a service to other correctional centres requesting legal reference material.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Executive Director, Human Resources Management Assistant Commissioner Offender Management</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>That the Department, in consultation with inmates, explore alternatives lunch provisions to the existing sandwiches and assess options for maintaining hygiene and related controls over evening meal preparation prior to the introduction of pro serve meals throughout the centre.</td>
<td>The provision of two (2) wraps and a piece of fruit instead of sandwiches was trialed for one month at Mulawa. At the conclusion of the months’ trial, the inmates rejected the wraps, and asked to be provided with sandwiches. It is the Department’s position that a move to introduce pro-served meals at the units at Mulawa is the only way to effectively monitor and control content, portions, hygiene and safety issues associated with providing female inmates with nutritious and balanced meals. Further, inmates at Mulawa have been seeking the introduction of Pro-Serve meals.</td>
<td>Feb 2003</td>
<td>Governor Mulawa Food Services Manager, Corrective Services Industries</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>That the Department consider implementing a system of random screening of buy-up goods entering correctional centres and incorporating random screening by Drug Detector dogs as part of the security process.</td>
<td>The Governor at Mulawa will ensure that the searching program takes into consideration periodic searching of buy ups. (As per Recommendation 15).</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Governor Mulawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>That the Department:- 21.1: Approve the establishment of a Visitor Clerk position at Mulawa; 21.2: Review arrangements for the booking of visits to Mulawa 21.3: Provide more helpful information about the visits through electronic and other means</td>
<td>The Governor of Mulawa is in the process of making arrangements for Mulawa visits to be booked through the MRRC Visits Booking Clerks.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Governor Mulawa Management MRRC</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>That the Department access the feasibility of providing a visitor shuttle bus service from Auburn Station to the Silverwater complex to supplement the lack of transport access</td>
<td>The Department will complete a feasibility study and if necessary seek an enhancement in next year’s allocation.</td>
<td>May 2003</td>
<td>Director, Facilities Management Governor Mulawa</td>
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<td>S. No.</td>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>Details</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Responsible Officer</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>That the Department establish a Violence Prevention Program for female inmates as soon as practicable</td>
<td>The Clinical Coordinator for Violence Prevention Programs has been asked to provide advice on the best modes of intervention for the prevention of violence in the population of female inmates. The model currently under development for men may not be suitable because of responsibility factors, and as women have typically shorter sentences than men the time required to complete intensive Cognitive Behavioural Therapy programs (like men’s VPP) may not be available.</td>
<td>March 2003</td>
<td>Clinical Coordinator for Violence Prevention Programs</td>
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<td>Assistant Commissioner, Offender Management</td>
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<td>Commander Women’s Facilities and Services</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>That the Department review, as soon as practicable, the delivery of welfare services at Mulawa including the interaction of welfare officers with other areas at the centre and professional supervision of welfare staff</td>
<td>The delivery of welfare services is currently under review by management at Mulawa and the Commander Women’s Facilities and Services</td>
<td>April 2003</td>
<td>Management Mulawa</td>
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<td>Commander Women’s Facilities and Services</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>That the Department require regional commands to conduct systematic reviews of the operation of the inmate application, misconduct and Inmate Committee processes in each correctional centre with a view</td>
<td>Mr J Dunthorne, Regional Superintendent, Long Bay is chairing a group of regional superintendents who are currently developing a new regional superintendent’s checklist. A copy of Inspector-General’s recommendation has been referred to Mr Dunthorne for appropriate action. Consultant Mr Vern Dalton has been contracted to conduct a review of Inmate Discipline. A copy of Inspector-General’s recommendation has been referred to Mr Dalton for appropriate action.</td>
<td>Feb 2003</td>
<td>Senior Assistant Commissioner, Inmate and Custodial Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>That the Department, in consultation with OHS review the plans for the Mental Health Assessment Unit to be constructed at Mulawa to determine if the number of beds in that facility needs to be increased</td>
<td>Corrections Health Service recently conducted a workshop to explore the services and programs needed for mentally ill women offenders. An action plan is being developed from this meeting. The number of beds were considered in the planning process.</td>
<td>March 2003</td>
<td>Corrections Health Service</td>
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<td>Commander Women’s Facilities and Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>That the Department, as a matter of urgency, provide the resources for the establishment of an RAIT at Mulawa</td>
<td>The RAIT model was developed specifically to meet the needs of the MHRC where the number of receptions are significantly higher than all other centres including Mulawa. At other centres the Department’s preferred model is the Risk Intervention Team which does not require permanently rostered staffing. In line with the response to Recommendation 1, the department is committed to reviewing a proposal from Lee Downes, Commander Women’s Facilities and Services to restructure staffing for service provision in the centre.</td>
<td>As per Rec.1</td>
<td>As per Recommendation 1</td>
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<td>Page</td>
<td>Task</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Responsible Officer/Unit</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>That the Department examine whether the delegation to conduct inquiries into misconduct charges could be extended to include SCO’s relieving in the position of Area Manager</td>
<td>Not supported, however this recommendation has been forwarded on to Mr. Vernon Dalton, Consultant who is conducting a Review of Inmate Discipline for consideration.</td>
<td>Senior Assistant Commissioner Inmate &amp; Custodial Services</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 29   | That the Department:-                                                 | The Department has developed a process of developing a specification to fully automate the entire urinalysis program and to integrate this new system into the OMS. The benefits will include quicker processing and response times, better statistical and intelligence reporting, better monitoring of the process and automatic information updates into the Visit, Classification, Parole Board and Inmate Discipline modules of the OMS. Once signed off the processes will be trialed at Long Bay and after evaluation, if successful will be implemented throughout the state, including Mulawa.  
29.2: Consider the successful involvement of inmates in drug diversionary programs as an alternative to loss of privileges as a penalty for positive urine tests. | Trial to commence February 2003  
May 2003  
Dave Cahill, A/Deputy, Superintendent Corrections Intelligence | Ray O’Connor, Project Manager, Urinalysis Program, Security and Investigations |
| 30   | That the Centre’s management establish a procedure that ensures the earliest possible contact between P&P Officers and inmates received into custody on revocation of parole. | The Probation and Parole service has revised the staffing profile of the Parole Units within the female correctional facilities, creating a manager who oversees Mulawa, Ems Plains and Berrima Correctional Centres with additional full time staff at all three centres.  
Additionally, a Project Coordinator position has been established to assist the Manager to implement the women’s integrated Case management Team.  
Plans have been developed to trial the Women’s Integrated Case Management program (WICMP).  
The Inspector-General’s recommendation has been forwarded to the Project Coordinator WICMP for consideration. | Feb 2003  
Assistant Commissioner, Offender Management  
Project Coordinator WICMP | |
<p>| 31   | That Probation and Parole revise its staffing profile in accordance with the strategy contained with the Women’s Action Plan 2 (2000-2003) with particular attention being paid to the resources available at Mulawa. | See above Recommendation 30 | |</p>
<table>
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<th>Alcohol and Other Drug Services will be assessed in the light of the broader review of staffing and service needs at Mulawa. Refer Recommendation 1. There has been, since the Inspector-General's review, filling of vacant positions in the AOD area.</th>
<th>As with Rec. 1</th>
<th>As with Recommendation 1</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>That the Department's Alcohol and Other Drug Services Unit conduct an urgent review of the AOD service delivery capacity at Mulawa.</td>
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<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>That the centre's management review the caseload allocation to ensure that, where possible, inmates on an officer's caseload are located in areas of the centre where the case officer normally performs his/her duties.</td>
<td>The Management of Mulawa has reviewed daily operations to ensure officers are able to undertake case management duties.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Governor Mulawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>That the Department take immediate action to fill the position of Program Manager at Mulawa.</td>
<td>Recruitment for the position of Program manager at Mulawa has been completed. Appointee should take up position January 2003</td>
<td>Jan 2003</td>
<td>Executive Director, Human Resources Management, Commander Women's Facilities and Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>That the Department give consideration to the placement of the Women's Services Unit within the new Women's Facilities and Service Command.</td>
<td>Structurally this has occurred.</td>
<td>No action</td>
<td>No action</td>
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Appendix D

LIST OF SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED FROM STAKEHOLDERS

- New South Wales Department of Aboriginal Affairs
- NSW Ombudsman
- The Law Society of New South Wales
- The New South Wales Bar Association
- The New South Wales Director of Public Prosecutions
- Legal Aid, New South Wales
- Corrections Health Service
- Chaplains at Mulawa
- Children of Prisoners' Support Group Co-op Ltd
- The Department of Corrective Services
- The Chair of Guthrie House
- The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
- Prisoners' Aid of NSW