



Hon Bill Johnston MLA
Minister for Mines and Petroleum; Energy; Corrective Services

Our Ref: 71-18882

Ms Ros Fogliani

Dear Ms Fogliani

Thank you for your office's letter of 30 December 2020 to the former Minister for Corrective Services, Hon Fran Logan, regarding the Inquest into the death of Mr Jordan Robert Anderson. I apologise for the delay in responding.

I advise the Department of Justice (the Department) has responded to Coroner Urquhart's recommendations as follows:

Recommendation One: *As a matter of urgency, the Department should consider increasing the number of ligature minimised cells at Hakea Prison with a view to having all cells at Hakea Prison either fully ligature minimised or three-point ligature minimised as soon as possible.*

The Department supports this recommendation in principle and has implemented a number of initiatives to reduce ligature points across the custodial estate.

Currently, 47% of all secure prisoner beds are located in cells that have been constructed or modified to, at a minimum, remove the three most commonly used ligature points (that is, 3250 beds are within ligature minimised cells out of a total 6839 beds in secure cells). Since 2012, all new secure cells have been built to a three-point ligature-minimised standard, at a minimum.

At Hakea Prison, 731 of 1170 beds are in cells that are either three-point or fully ligature minimised. This includes 33 beds that are in fully ligature minimised cells and six dedicated safe cells that include CCTV coverage.

Immediately moving to convert all cells at Hakea Prison to either fully ligature minimised or three-point ligature minimised is cost prohibitive. The cost of fully ligature minimising a cell ranges from \$35,000 to \$50,000 per cell. Since 2005, the Department has operated a targeted program of ligature-minimisation of existing cells. Currently the program is funded to \$500,000 a year. The Department considers prisoner population, suicide risk profiles and existing ligature-minimised capacity when targeting work of the program.

The Department has allocated funding for further ligature minimisation at Hakea Prison in 2021-22. This work will increase the number of ligature minimised cells by around 12.

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Recommendation Two: *In order to better manage prisoners and thereby enhance security at Hakea Prison, the Department should increase the number of safe cells from six to 12.*

The Department supports this recommendation in principle, but implementation is not achievable within the Department's existing budget.

The Department is currently planning a purpose-built 30 bed mental health unit as part of the Casuarina 344 Bed expansion. This new facility will provide an alternative placement option, reducing demand for safe cell beds at Hakea Prison. The Department is also completing a new 32-bed Mental Health Unit at Bandyup Women's Prison.

Recommendation Three: *A suitably qualified prison mental health staff member should conduct a mental health assessment as soon as practicable upon any prisoner who has been involved in a critical incident regarding violent behaviour or who has been the subject of punishment requiring placement in a specialised unit for disciplinary purposes.*

The Department supports the recommendation in principle, but advise full implementation is not practical. Review and assessment of every critical incident and disciplinary cell placement would place unreasonable demands on the Department's Mental Health and Other Drug branch. The Department will prioritise mental health assessments of prisoners with a known mental health condition who are involved in a critical incident or subject to disciplinary cell placement.

The Department provides custodial staff with mental health training. This training supports staff understanding of mental illness and includes instruction on identifying mental illness and its warning signs. Custodial staff who identify mental health concerns in the course of a critical incident or disciplinary cell placement (or at any other time) are supported to refer prisoners for specialist mental health assessment.

Recommendation Four: *In order to ensure that prison officers are better equipped to deal with situations where prisoners attempt to take their lives by way of hanging, officers should participate in drills involving simulated hanging scenarios during their initial employment training and during refresher training for CPR.*

The Department supports this recommendation. The Department has directed all prisons to undertake a simulated attempted hanging scenario at least annually.

Presently, new custodial staff participate in a simulated hanging scenario as part of the Entry Level Training Program. To build on this, the Department is developing a new Suicide and Self Harm module. This training will include the theory and practice of responding to an attempted suicide or suicide in varied circumstances, including seated and prone hangings.

I trust this information is of assistance. I concur with your proposal to add this letter to the Coroner's Court website.

Yours sincerely

Hon Bill Johnston MLA
Minister for Mines and Petroleum; Energy; Corrective Services

4 AUG 2021