

MEDIA RELEASE

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Joint investigation triggers big reforms in WA prisons

The Corruption and Crime Commission has today tabled in State Parliament a report detailing significant changes to address risks of serious misconduct within the State's prisons.

Western Australia's prison population is housed in 16 public prisons, one private prison and five work camps spread across a vast geographical area. Serious misconduct risks exist in all of them.

The reforms over the past 18 months were in response to 51 recommendations made in six separate reports delivered by the Commission in 2018.

The reports identified the Department of Justice had a lack of a corruption prevention framework or coordinated approach to the management of serious misconduct risks, and therefore inadequate support for basic misconduct prevention strategies.

The former Corruption and Crime Commissioner, John McKechnie QC, commenced in April 2019 a 12-month review of the Department's response to each of the 51 recommendations. The review was assisted by the Department's willingness to work with the Commission and opportunities to engage with a broad range of operational staff.

The Commission's review revealed 37 of the recommendations made in 2018 have been finalised and 14 require further work.

Key reforms commenced by the Department following the Commission's recommendations include:

- restructuring the Department to accommodate an agency-wide approach to the prevention, education and management of misconduct risks;
- establishing a new Corruption, Prevention and Education directorate;
- confidential mechanisms for reporting misconduct;
- replacing voluminous and often confusing or contradictory policies and procedures – an ongoing project involving the review and consolidation of more than 2,000 operational instruments;
- measures to improve the accuracy of use of force reporting;
- improved entry, search and screening procedures and an expanded testing regime to limit or stop drugs entering prisons; and
- improved supervision, training and safety measures for Vocational Support Officers managing prisoners outside of prison.

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The Commission believes the measured and extensive response from the Department of Justice and Corrective Services demonstrates commitment to the broad and sweeping changes needed to address the serious misconduct risks identified by the Commission's investigations.

A full list of the 51 recommendations is included as an appendix to the report, including which the Commission considers the Department has, and has not, adequately addressed.

The Commission recognises that some changes will take more time, and will conduct another review of the outstanding 14 recommendations in a year's time.

ENDS

Read the report

[Review of recommendations made to the Department of Justice arising from six reports](#)

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