



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Custodial Inspector Annual Report 2021-22

The Tasmanian Custodial Inspector's Annual Report was tabled in the Tasmanian Parliament House of Assembly today highlighting that in its sixth year of operation the workload of the Inspectorate continues to be demanding, despite recent additional funding.

Mr Connock said that whilst welcome additional funds have been allocated to the Custodial Inspectorate to employ a third staff member, personnel changes, vacancies and recruiting difficulties have resulted in a backlog of inspections, including those still holding over as a result of past COVID-19 restrictions.

"Recent appointments filling the roles of the Principal Inspection Officer and Senior Inspection Officer will assist in making substantial inroads into the backlog and I expect the Inspectorate to move forward with purpose," said Mr Connock.

Inspections completed

Mr Connock said that despite challenging circumstances the Inspectorate completed a number of important inspections during the 2021-22 period.

"The Mary Hutchinson's Women Prison (MHWP) Inspection was undertaken in November 2021 and was assessed against a framework from the Tasmanian Inspection Standards for Adult Prisons with results released in August 2022," said Mr Connock.

"In June 2022, an inspection against all Mental Health Care standards was undertaken to consider whether Tasmanian custodial centres made appropriate and adequate provision to meet the mental health care needs of prisoners and detainees, and have in place effective processes to detect and manage prisoners in crisis with the full report to be published soon," he said.

The Custodial Inspectorate also undertook the Capacity Utilisation Review, tabled in Parliament in November 2021, that assessed all prison cells including segregation, holding, buddy and disability cells at the five Tasmanian adult custodial centres, the extent of 'overcrowding' in those facilities, design capacity of cells and assessment as to whether the prescribed dimensional requirements of the Standard Guidelines for Prison Facilities in Australia and New Zealand (SGPFANZ) for habitable rooms was being met.

Increasing workload

Mr Connock reflected that his office's workload is only set to grow.

"Looking ahead, the workload of the Custodial Inspectorate is expected to increase further with the opening of the Southern Remand Centre in July 2022 along with another adult custodial centre to be established in the north of Tasmania," said Mr Connock.

"Add to this the announced closure of Ashley Youth Detention Centre with the proposed replacement of up to two new facilities, and the workload for my Office just about doubles over the next few years," he said.

"It is therefore evident that with the existing staff complement and current inspection backlog, the Inspectorate is unlikely to meet its three-year legislative timeframe for inspection of all custodial centres against all standards," said Mr Connock.

New and ongoing issues of concern

Mr Connock noted a number of emerging as well as ongoing issues that are of concern.

These issues include:

- Access to dental care;
- According to the Report on Government Services 2022, whilst there has been a decrease in serious assaults by prisoners on prisoners in Tasmania, assaults by prisoners on prisoners have increased and the rate of assaults from prisoners on correctional officers are the highest in Australia;
- Dealing with increasing prisoner numbers impacting on prisoner services & health care;
- Ageing infrastructure at Ron Barwick Prison and Launceston Reception Prison in particular;
- Lack of drug and alcohol programs for all prisoners;
- Insufficient and inadequate assistance provided to prisoners for pre and post release;
- Very few applications for Section 42 leave in the community for rehabilitation and reintegration purposes are approved; and
- Generally, prisoner requests to attend funerals for significant family members or relationships continue to be refused with an over-reliance on external service providers to facilitate funeral attendance by means of video facilities rather than escorting prisoners to funerals.

"The Custodial Inspectorate will continue to work with the Department of Justice and Tasmanian Prison Service management to address these issues," he said.

Mr Connock highlighted that the lockdowns young people are experiencing at Ashley Youth Detention Centre commenced in the current reporting year so are not reported on in his 2021-22 annual report but will be considered in the Wellbeing inspection in the first half of the 2022-23 reporting year.

[Custodial Inspector of Tasmania Annual Report 2021-22.](#)

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