

Inspector of
Custodial Services

Inspector of Custodial Services

Inspection of Geoffrey Pearce
Correctional Centre

2022

Acknowledgement of Country

The Inspector of Custodial Services acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and live. We celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of NSW.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that contributed to the development of this report.

We advise this resource may contain images, or names of deceased persons in photographs or historical content.

Inspector of Custodial Services

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Inspector's overview

Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre (CC) is a minimum and medium security facility for males located in Windsor, on the outskirts of Sydney. The centre was last inspected in 2018 as part of the programs, employment, and education inspection.¹ This inspection considered all aspects of the centre with a focus on the treatment and conditions of people in custody and preparation of inmates for release.

We found Geoffrey Pearce CC to be a facility with reasonably good accommodation and inmate employment opportunities but poor custodial practice, and a daily routine not suited to the cohort.

In 2020, the sector 1 and sector 2 accommodation units at Geoffrey Pearce CC were demolished and rebuilt. This was the majority of the accommodation infrastructure. The new accommodation is bright, modern, and clean. The sector 3 accommodation block was not rebuilt and although adequate, it is not appropriate to house minimum security inmates. The accommodation and facilities in the honour house were in good condition, clean, but dated, and we welcome plans to refurbish it soon.

Geoffrey Pearce CC has a diverse range of work opportunities and traineeships available to inmates. Employment provides inmates with the opportunity to earn money and learn new skills. Geoffrey Pearce CC also has an impressive work release program, with eligible inmates working in agricultural, manufacturing, logistics and administration positions in the community. This is an invaluable opportunity for inmates to reintegrate into society and lead pro-social lives.

There were several areas of concern. One of these is that the daily routine hours are not reflective of a correctional centre that houses minimum security inmates. Early lock in times do not enable people in custody to engage in exercise or rehabilitative activities that foster pro-social behaviour.

We were disappointed to observe poor custodial practice in a number of critical areas including reception, discharge, screening and searching. Segregation and separation were not compliant with legislation and policy, potentially jeopardising the safety and dignity of people in custody. I was also concerned that a centre with such poor custodial practice was being used as a training site for new recruits as part of their entry level training.

Geoffrey Pearce CC is the site for the Intensive Drug and Alcohol Treatment Program (IDATP), a high intensity group treatment program for offenders whose drug and alcohol use is linked to their offending behaviour. Unfortunately, some custodial staff at Geoffrey Pearce CC were not supportive of IDATP and we were informed of several instances where they actively undermined the program. We also learnt that this unprofessional behaviour extended to hindering access to other therapeutic programs and services at the centre. In fact, some staff made conducting our inspection challenging, particularly in relation to engaging with inmates.

I was so concerned about how the centre was operating, the conduct of some staff, and the treatment of my staff during the inspection, I contacted the Commissioner of CSNSW immediately following the inspection to inform him of my concerns. This resulted in some immediate action being taken and I acknowledge the work that has taken place since the inspection to improve the operation of the centre.

Fiona Rafter
Inspector of Custodial Services
November 2024

¹ Inspector of Custodial Services, *Programs, Employment and Education Inspection* (Report, February 2020).

Glossary of terms and acronyms

Aboriginal	'Aboriginal' when used in this report is inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
CC	Correctional Centre
CCTV	Closed-circuit television
COPP	Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019, caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus
CSI	Corrective Services Industries
CSNSW	Corrective Services NSW
EQUIPS	Explore, Question, Understand, Investigate, Practice and Succeed programs
GP	General practitioner
IAT	Immediate Action Team
ICAC	Independent Commission Against Corruption
ICS	Inspector of Custodial Services
ICS Act	<i>Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2012</i>
IDATP	Intensive Drug and Alcohol Treatment Program
IDC	Inmate Development Committee
JH&FMHN	Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network
LECC	Law Enforcement Conduct Commission
MPU	Multipurpose unit
NUM	Nursing unit manager
OAT	Opioid Agonist Treatment
OIMS	Offender Information Management System
OMMPCC	Outer Metropolitan Multi-Purpose Centre
OS&P	Offender services and programs
POVB	Prison Officers Vocational Branch
RIT	Risk Intervention Team
ROAMS	Remote On-Call After Hours Medical Service
SORC	Serious Offenders Review Council
WDO	Work Development Orders

Executive summary

Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre (CC) is a minimum and medium security facility for men located on the Francis Greenway Correctional Complex in Windsor, 60km from Sydney. The centre was last inspected in April 2018 as part of a thematic review into programs, employment, and education.² The inspection detailed in this report focused on the custodial conditions, care and wellbeing of inmates, rehabilitation services and preparation of inmates for release at Geoffrey Pearce CC.

Infrastructure

In 2020, the sector 1 and sector 2 accommodation units were demolished and rebuilt. This represented the majority of the accommodation infrastructure at Geoffrey Pearce CC. The new accommodation is bright, modern, and clean.

The sector 3 accommodation block was not rebuilt. While this accommodation is adequate, it is not appropriate for minimum security inmates as the cells cannot be locked from the inside. This means that inmates are locked into their cells each afternoon, rather than the units, as occurs in sectors 1 and 2 and most minimum security settings.

The honour house accommodates approved minimum security inmates approaching the end of their sentences. The accommodation and facilities were in good condition and clean, however we welcome plans to refurbish the honour house for the first time since it opened in 2000.³

Custody

The daily routine hours were not reflective of a correctional centre that houses minimum security inmates. Inmates were released from their cells at 8am and locked in at 3.30pm. Custodial staff were rostered on eight hour shifts from 8am to 4pm, reflecting this limited daily routine. Early lock in times do not enable people in custody to engage in exercise or other pro-social activities after a day of attending programs and/or work. To increase time out of cells, we recommend implementing 12 hour shifts for custodial staff.

We observed that a range of procedures including reception, discharge, screening and searching were being performed poorly and in ways which put the safety of inmates at risk. Trainee correctional officers were onsite during the inspection to observe and learn these procedures. Geoffrey Pearce CC should not be used as a training site until Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) has ensured that these critical procedures are performed correctly. We also found that Geoffrey Pearce CC was not following correct procedures when segregating and separating inmates.

Following the 2020 redevelopment, an Immediate Action Team (IAT) was established at Geoffrey Pearce CC to assist in managing the small number of medium security inmates participating in the Intensive Drug and Alcohol Treatment Program (IDATP). The IAT is trained to respond to security and emergency situations. Their role requires them to negotiate with inmates and if necessary, use reasonable force. At the time of inspection, we found no evidence to suggest that the IAT was performing any tasks that could not be managed by regular custodial staff and therefore concluded that its presence at Geoffrey Pearce CC was not required.

Dynamic security practices play an important role in maintaining safety and security at correctional centres. It was found to be lacking at Geoffrey Pearce CC. Custodial staff who are alert to what is happening within the centre through engagement and rapport with people in custody are vital. The purported need for an IAT at Geoffrey Pearce CC to make custodial staff feel safe speaks to the near absence of dynamic security. Custodial staff should be trained in the benefits and methods of dynamic security. Opportunities for temporary assignment or transfer to other correctional centres may assist.

2 Inspector of Custodial Services, *Programs, Employment and Education Inspection* (Report, February 2020).

3 Information provided by CSNSW, April 2024.

Staffing

We heard of numerous reports of harassment and bullying between staff (particularly toward non-custodial staff by custodial staff) and by custodial staff towards inmates. We learnt that bullying had resulted in several staff being on long-term leave.

Health services

The Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network (JH&FMHN) provided health services in a clean and modern health centre, however access to general practitioner services needs to be increased to ensure that the health needs of people in custody are addressed promptly.

Services and amenities

At the time of the inspection, in-person visits had resumed (with COVID-19 prevention strategies in place) and were operating well. However, we were disappointed to see that people in custody were being strip searched after receiving a visit despite an x-ray body scanner being available.⁴

Geoffrey Pearce CC had insufficient exercise facilities despite having a large amount of open space. There was no oval. We welcomed news during a visit in April 2024 that returfing of the grass in sector 3 was planned to facilitate sports being played.

Rehabilitation and release preparation

As of 30 June 2022, 19.6% of the population was Aboriginal.⁵ Despite this, there were no culturally specific programs or services for Aboriginal people in custody, and no regular connection with Aboriginal Elders and the Aboriginal community.

Geoffrey Pearce CC is the site for IDATP, a high intensity group treatment program for offenders whose drug and alcohol use is linked to their offending behaviour. IDATP operates as a therapeutic community which involves the community members challenging the antisocial behaviour of other members. Unfortunately, establishing a therapeutic community at Geoffrey Pearce CC was difficult as some custodial staff were unsupportive of IDATP. We heard of several instances where custodial staff actively undermined attempts to create a therapeutic environment. We also learnt that the delivery of IDATP was interrupted by recurrent lockdowns and early head counts.

One of the strengths of Geoffrey Pearce CC is the diverse range of work opportunities and traineeships available to inmates, including the RSPCA Dog Rehabilitation Centre, the print shop and the upholstery unit. In 2021-22 an average of 20 inmates participated in work release, working in administration, manufacturing, logistics and agricultural positions in the community.

⁴ The Inspection took place before POVB industrial action.

⁵ Information provided by CSNSW, September 2022.

Recommendations

The Inspector recommends:

1. Corrective Services NSW ensures that Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre provides sufficient furniture and shade in the common areas of each accommodation sector.
2. Corrective Services NSW ensures that Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre produces and follows a local operating procedure for the management of COVID-19 outbreaks.
3. Corrective Services NSW ensures that adequately sized beds are installed as part of the refurbishment of the honour house at Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre.
4. Corrective Services NSW ensures that the body scanner located in the visits area is utilised to scan inmates during their reception to Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre.
5. Corrective Services NSW ensures that reception procedures at Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre do not create security risks by conducting inmate interviews in the presence of others, providing confidential documents to other inmates or failing to conduct an appropriate risk assessment before allocating inmates to cells.
6. Corrective Services NSW ensures Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre establishes an induction procedure which provides new inmates with information about the correctional centre.
7. Corrective Services NSW implements 12 hour custodial shifts at Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre and extends the daily routine for inmates in all sectors in line with other minimum security correctional centres.
8. Corrective Services NSW removes the Immediate Action Team (IAT) from Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre unless the medium security population increases substantially. In this event, Corrective Services NSW should ensure that the IAT focuses on performing its core duties within a medium security sector.
9. Corrective Services NSW ensures Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre custodial staff undertake training in dynamic security and that this is actively encouraged by senior custodial staff.
10. Corrective Services NSW arranges temporary assignments of custodial staff to other correctional centres so that they can learn different ways of working.
11. Corrective Services NSW ensures that Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre complies with obligations under *Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures* with respect to segregated custody.
12. Corrective Services NSW ensures that Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre follows correct procedures when issuing a direction for separation of an inmate under section 78A of the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999*.
13. Corrective Services NSW only places inmates under camera supervision when required to ensure their safety.
14. Corrective Services NSW takes steps to ensure that the cells in the old reception unit are decommissioned.
15. Corrective Services NSW reviews scanning procedures at Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre.
16. Corrective Services NSW ensures custodial staff at Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre always video targeted strip searches.
17. Corrective Services NSW ensures that custodial staff facilitate inmates' access to services and programs in a timely and professional manner.
18. Corrective Services NSW actively monitors staff compliance with the code of conduct and ensures that senior staff are role modelling professional behaviour.

19. Corrective Services NSW does not use Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre as a training site for Brush Farm Corrective Services Academy students until Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre demonstrates improved levels of professionalism.
20. Justice Health & Forensic Mental Health Network seeks funding to increase GP services statewide.
21. Corrective Services NSW ensures that all inmates are issued the minimum allocation of clothing prescribed by the COPP at reception at Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre.
22. Corrective Services NSW ensures Geoffrey Pearce CC provides an adequate supply of cooking equipment in each wing.
23. Corrective Services NSW reintroduces the Lifestyles Program in the honour house at Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre.
24. Corrective Services NSW ensures a monthly reconciliation of inmate amenities funds should be provided at each Inmate Development Committee meeting at Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre.
25. Corrective Services NSW ensures that Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre registers an x-ray body scan profile for every inmate and discontinues the practice of strip searching inmates after visits except in the circumstances outlined in the COPP.
26. Corrective Services NSW delivers further training for staff in the interpretation of x-ray images including how to differentiate between contraband and non-contraband items.
27. Corrective Services NSW ceases the destruction of mail and instead stores it in inmate property after inspecting it for contraband.
28. Corrective Services NSW introduces a secure and monitored email function to inmate tablet devices.
29. Corrective Services NSW ensures that Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre continues to promote and encourage people in custody to utilise complaint mechanisms.
30. Corrective Services NSW ensures that Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre appoints Aboriginal delegates from each accommodation sector.
31. Corrective Services NSW provides people in custody at Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre with access to religious services and resources that reflect the diversity of religion at the centre.
32. Corrective Services NSW installs gym equipment in each accommodation sector at Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre and relocates the existing gym to a more suitable location.
33. Corrective Services NSW considers how sports fields could be introduced at Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre by returfing existing grassed areas.
34. Corrective Services NSW ensures that Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre maximises the provision of therapeutic recreational activities.
35. Corrective Services NSW increases engagement with the Aboriginal community and establishes a local Elders visiting program to provide cultural support, guidance, and advice for Aboriginal men at Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre.
36. Corrective Services NSW provides Aboriginal inmates with opportunities for cultural knowledge and connection activities at Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre.
37. Corrective Services NSW ensures Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre develops a therapeutic community to support the goals of the Intensive Drug and Alcohol Treatment Program.
38. Corrective Services NSW ensures all inmates at Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre eligible for Work Development Orders are registered.

39. Corrective Services NSW increase the number of inmates undertaking traineeships at Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre.
40. Corrective Services NSW ensures that Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre staff receive refresher training in discharge procedures and use interpreters as required.
41. The Inspector recommends that this report is made public immediately upon being tabled in NSW Parliament, in accordance with section 16(2) of the *Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2012*.

Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre profile

Location

Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre (Geoffrey Pearce CC) is a minimum and medium security facility for male inmates located in Windsor, 60km from Sydney on the land of the Darug people. Geoffrey Pearce CC is on the Francis Greenway Correctional Complex, which also hosts two other correctional facilities, John Morony Correctional Centre and Dillwynia Correctional Centre.

History

Geoffrey Pearce CC was opened in 2000. At that time, it was known as “John Morony 2”. It was later renamed as the Outer Metropolitan Multi-Purpose Centre (OMMPCC) in 2009. In 2020, most of the accommodation infrastructure was demolished and replaced. The OMMPCC was renamed Geoffrey Pearce CC after an officer who died in 1997 after he contracted HIV through being attacked by an inmate with a syringe in 1990.⁶ The redevelopment work was performed to upgrade the quality of accommodation and improve access to work, programs and education.⁷

Function

Geoffrey Pearce CC has numerous functions, including being the site for:

- a cook-freeze kitchen that prepares and freezes meals to be distributed to numerous correctional centres across NSW;
- the Intensive Drug and Alcohol Treatment Program (IDATP), a high intensity group treatment program for offenders whose drug and alcohol use is linked to their offending behaviour;
- an honour house, which is a less restrictive placement for approved minimum security inmates approaching the end of their sentences; and
- a work release program.

Capacity

Geoffrey Pearce CC can hold a maximum of 354 inmates across four accommodation sectors.⁸

Previous inspection by the Inspector of Custodial Services

Geoffrey Pearce CC was last inspected by the Inspector of Custodial Services (ICS) in April 2018 as part of the programs, employment and education inspection.⁹

Inspection dates

4 to 7 December 2022

Post-inspection visit

18 April 2024

6 NSW Government Communities and Justice, ‘Correctional Centre renamed to honour fallen officer’ (Press release, 6 May 2020) <<https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/news-and-media/media-releases-archive/correctional-centre-renamed-to-honour-fallen-officer.html#:~:text=A%20Sydney%20correctional%20centre%20has,OAM%2C%20who%20died%20in%201997>>.

7 NSW Government Communities and Justice, ‘Correctional Centre renamed to honour fallen officer’ (Press release, 6 May 2020) <<https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/news-and-media/media-releases-archive/correctional-centre-renamed-to-honour-fallen-officer.html#:~:text=A%20Sydney%20correctional%20centre%20has,OAM%2C%20who%20died%20in%201997>>.

8 Information provided by CSNSW, October 2022.

9 Inspector of Custodial Services, *Programs, Employment and Education Inspection* (Report, February 2020).

Inspection process

The office of the ICS was established by the *Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2012* (the ICS Act) in October 2013. The mandate of the office is to provide independent scrutiny of the conditions, treatment and outcomes for people in custody, and to promote excellence in staff professional practice. The Inspector is required to inspect each adult custodial centre at least once every five years and report on each such inspection to the NSW Parliament with relevant advice and recommendations.¹⁰

Inspection provides independent information gathering and analysis concerning what is working well and which areas require improvement. The inspection of Geoffrey Pearce CC focused on:

- custodial conditions
- treatment, care and wellbeing of inmates
- rehabilitation services and preparation of inmates for release.

The inspection of Geoffrey Pearce CC took place in December 2022. The inspection team consisted of the Inspector, one senior inspection and research officer, one inspection and research officer, one Aboriginal inspection and liaison officer, one research officer and one official visitor coordinator.

During the inspection, we observed a range of processes and areas of the centre and held discussions with custodial and non-custodial staff, including union representatives, as well as a significant number of inmates, including delegates on the Inmate Development Committee (IDC).

Prior to, and after the onsite inspection, a range of additional information was obtained through liaison visits and documents and data provided by the correctional centre, the Corrections Research Evaluation and Statistics (CRES) branch of CSNSW, and the Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network (JH&FMHN).

Inspections capture a snapshot in time, with understanding and observations limited by the amount of time spent on site. It should be noted that inspections of custodial facilities which occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic were sometimes impacted by ICS staff and correctional centre staff being unavailable at short notice due to illness, lockdowns due to COVID-19 outbreaks, and changes to routines and practices to prevent or mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Consequently, some interviews that would usually occur in-person took place virtually either before or after the onsite inspection. The length of time onsite and ability to observe all functions of a centre was also impacted, often at short notice.

The inspection considered sensitive information and methodologies. In accordance with section 15 of the ICS Act, information that could prejudice the security, discipline or good order of any custodial centre, or identify or allow the identification of a custodial centre staff member, has been removed in the public interest.

A draft report or relevant parts thereof were provided to CSNSW and JH&FMHN in accordance with section 14(2) of the ICS Act, and submissions were received from both. In accordance with section 14(1) of the ICS Act, the Inspector provided the Hon Anoulack Chanthivong, Minister for Corrections with the opportunity to make a submission in relation to the draft report. In accordance with section 14(3)(b) of the ICS Act, each submission and the Minister's response was considered before the finalisation of the report for tabling.

¹⁰ *Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2012* s 6.

1 Inmate profile

1.1 Population, legal status and charges

280 men were in custody at Geoffrey Pearce CC on 30 June 2022. All but one was sentenced. Nine were appealing their sentence. One inmate was on remand.¹¹

Approximately one third (95 inmates) were convicted of illicit drug related offences as their most serious offence.¹²

Table 1: Profile of ten most serious offences for inmates at Geoffrey Pearce CC on 30 June 2022¹³

Offence	Number of inmates
Illicit drug offences	95
Acts intended to cause injury	46
Homicide and related offences	32
Robbery, extortion and related offences	29
Unlawful entry with intent/burglary, break and enter	22
Offences against justice procedures, government security and government operations	11
Abduction, harassment and other offences against the person	10
Dangerous or negligent acts endangering persons	9
Sexual assault and related offences	6
Traffic and vehicle regulatory offences	4

Most of the population, 268 of 280 (or 95.7%) inmates, were classified as minimum security. 166 (or 59.2%) held a C2 classification, 77 (27.5%) people had a C1 classification and 25 people (8.9%) had a C3 classification. 11 inmates (3.9%) had a B (medium security) classification. One inmate (0.4%) had an E2 (escape risk) classification.¹⁴

11 Information provided by CSNSW, September 2022.

12 Information provided by CSNSW, September 2022.

13 Information provided by CSNSW, September 2022.

14 Information provided by CSNSW, September 2022.

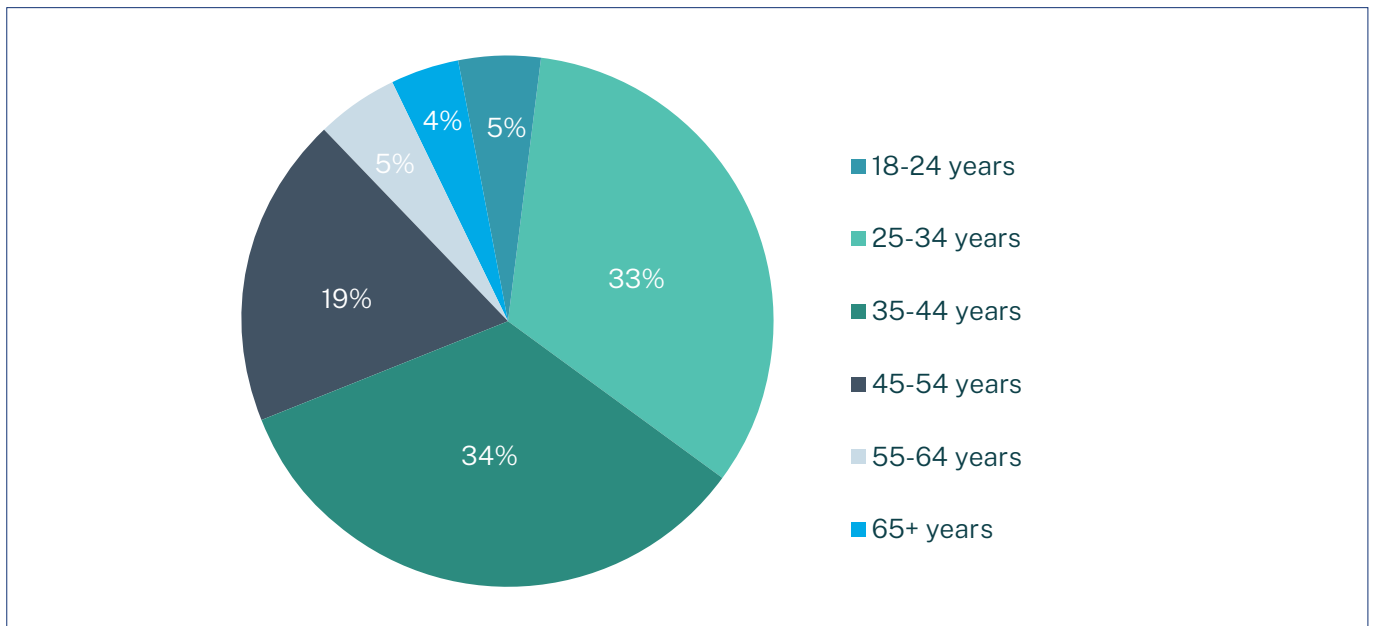
1.2 Age and cultural background

On 30 June 2022, 55 people in custody (19.6%) at Geoffrey Pearce CC identified as Aboriginal.¹⁵ Most people in custody were born in Australia (182 people or 65%) and 79.6% spoke English at home.¹⁶ Just over half of the people in custody at Geoffrey Pearce CC were Australian (150 people or 53.5%). The next largest cultural backgrounds were South East Asian (22 people or 7.9%), Chinese Australian (20 people or 7.1%), followed by Arab (20 people or 7.1%).¹⁷

The five largest religious groups were Catholic (33 inmates or 11.8%), followed by Christian (27 inmates or 9.6%), Buddhist (26 inmates or 9.3%), Muslim (21 inmates or 7.5%) and Roman Catholic (10 inmates or 3.6%).¹⁸

The ages of people in custody are outlined in figure 1.

Figure 1: Geoffrey Pearce CC age profile on 30 June 2022¹⁹



¹⁵ Information provided by CSNSW, September 2022.

¹⁶ Information provided by CSNSW, September 2022.

¹⁷ Information provided by CSNSW, September 2022.

¹⁸ Information provided by CSNSW, September 2022.

¹⁹ Information provided by CSNSW, September 2022.

2 Physical environment

2.1 Layout

Geoffrey Pearce CC has four main accommodation sectors:

- **Sector 1** comprises two accommodation blocks (A and B) which housed participants in the Intensive Drug and Alcohol Treatment Program²⁰ (IDATP). This sector was constructed in 2020.
- **Sector 2** comprises three accommodation blocks (E, F and G) which housed inmates who were working or completing a program. This sector was also constructed in 2020.
- **Sector 3** comprises two accommodation blocks (M and N) which housed people who had recently arrived at Geoffrey Pearce CC and were awaiting placement in sector 1 or 2, people temporarily at Geoffrey Pearce CC in transit to another correctional centre²¹, and people dismissed from work. This sector is part of the original accommodation infrastructure which existed when the Outer Metropolitan Multi-Purpose Centre (OMMPCC) opened in 2000. The units were closed in the first quarter of 2020 for a period of eight weeks to replace fire-resistant cladding.²²
- **Sector 4** is the honour house which is situated on the complex, outside the correctional centre's secure perimeter. It was built in 2000. An honour house is a less restrictive placement for approved minimum security inmates approaching the end of their sentences. Placement in the honour house supports inmates to transition to the community by facilitating increased levels of self-sufficiency and personal responsibility, with inmates responsible for their own cooking and laundry.

Located within the secure correctional centre is a health centre, an education building including a library, a programs building, a chapel, a gym, a visits area, and a range of industries employing inmates.

2.2 Accommodation

Sector 1

The A and B units were modern, bright, clean and each housed up to 48 inmates. There was a mix of single and shared rooms in each unit. Each cell contained a bed, desk, shelves, shower and toilet.

Each unit has a kitchenette and a communal living area. These were furnished with basic cooking appliances, a large television, a lounge and maximum-security style fixed, steel furniture. This provided seating for only 15 people.

The outdoor area had a Yarning Circle, basketball court and fixed gym equipment. Sector 1 had no outdoor seating or shade. During a visit to the centre in April 2024 we noted that clotheslines had been installed since the inspection and that a barbecue had been provided.

20 IDATP is a high intensity group treatment program for offenders whose drug and alcohol use is linked to their offending behaviour. This program will be discussed later in this report.

21 We were informed that inmates in transit to their gaol of classification were being placed in the M and N unit to assist Geoffrey Pearce CC to keep its cost per inmate per day down. We have since been informed that as of late 2023 the M and N unit no longer acts as a transit accommodation unit and instead houses minimum security offenders. Information provided by CSNSW, February 2024.

22 Information provided by CSNSW, April 2023.

Single occupancy cell in sector 1



Kitchenette in sector 1



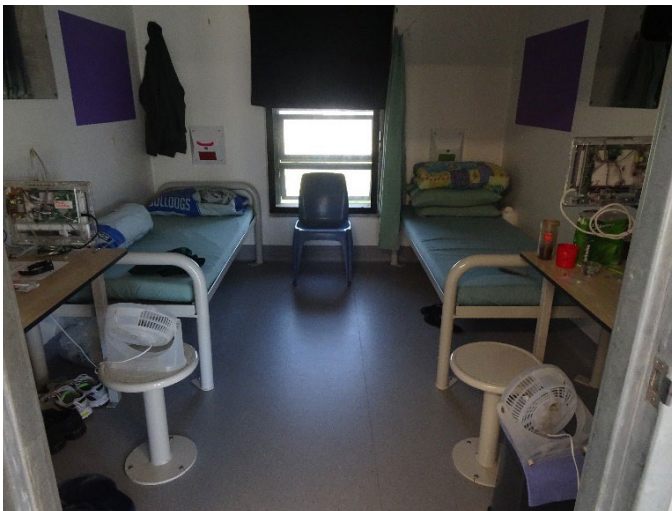
Sector 2

Sector 2 also provides dignified and modern living conditions. The E, F and G units each accommodate up to 48 inmates in a mix of single and shared rooms. Single and dual occupancy cells provide each inmate with a bed, desk, shelves, toilet and shower.

Each unit has a communal living area with seating, a kitchenette and telephones.

There is a substantial amount of outdoor space that contained a basketball court, fixed gym equipment and soccer nets. There was no seating or shade.

A shared cell in sector 2



Sector 2 outdoor area



Sector 3

M and N units each accommodate up to 40 people. The M and N units have a shared kitchen, dining and living room space. Shower curtains had not been provided and we observed that it was impossible to keep cell floors dry when the shower was on. This posed health (mould and damp) and safety (slipping) risks. However, during a visit in April 2024 we noted that shower curtains had been installed and had made a difference in keeping the cell floors dry. In addition, we were advised that window curtains were also being produced by Corrective Services Industries (CSI). However these had not yet been provided to inmates, and we saw towels and linen hanging over windows. Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) advised that it is reviewing the window curtains as this matter had not previously been raised by the IDC.²³

23 Information provided by CSNSW, August 2024.

A cell in sector 3



Mould growing on a foam mattress



In the sector 3 outdoor space, there was some undercover seating and barbecues where inmates could cook.

We were informed that inmates infected with COVID-19 were relocated and isolated in cells in sector 3. However, no specific cells were designated for this purpose. Inmates were simply locked into an available cell or, if no vacant cell was available, another inmate may be moved into a shared cell to make their cell available. A local operating procedure guiding how Geoffrey Pearce CC would manage COVID-19 outbreaks did not exist. Concerningly, we heard numerous reports that cells were not routinely cleaned before and after accommodating a person with COVID-19.

We were advised during our April 2024 visit that this procedure had changed. Instead, affected inmates would be isolated in a designated section of the M and N unit.²⁴ A local operating procedure had not been written.

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW ensures that Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre provides sufficient furniture and shade in the common areas of each accommodation sector.

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW ensures that Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre produces and follows a local operating procedure for the management of COVID-19 outbreaks.

Honour house

We observed the honour house to be an appropriate environment for approved inmates preparing to reintegrate into the community. The honour house accommodates up to 32 inmates with a C3 security classification, many of whom were working in the community and/or accessing day or weekend leave.

The accommodation and facilities, which included a full kitchen, were in good condition. The cells were clean and contained a desk, shelving and a bed that was very small and narrow. At least two inmates had placed their mattresses on the floor because they were too large for the beds. There were shared toilets and showers.

²⁴ If the number of affected inmates is small, they would be isolated in cells in the health centre or multipurpose unit.

Bedroom in the honour house



Kitchen in the honour house



During our April 2024 visit, we were informed that there were plans to relocate some C3-classified inmates to Emu Plains Correctional Centre in the near future, and refurbish the honour house.

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW ensures that adequately sized beds are installed as part of the refurbishment of the honour house at Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre.

3 Custody

3.1 Reception and induction

At the time of inspection, new inmates were being received to Geoffrey Pearce CC from other correctional centres daily. We observed the reception process of four inmates and found it to be conducted very poorly with numerous aspects jeopardising the safety and dignity of people in custody.

The four inmates were not scanned using a body scanner on arrival, despite there being a body scanner located in the adjacent visits area. Instead, strip searches were conducted. The strip searches were conducted by three trainee officers from the Brush Farm Corrective Services Academy²⁵, under the supervision of a senior correctional officer. This supervision was inadequate. After the first strip search was completed, the senior correctional officer left the search room as the trainee staff commenced the next strip search. We brought this to the attention of a higher ranking officer who instructed the senior correctional officer to return to the search room and continue supervising the trainees. It was very concerning that the senior correctional officer did not seem to understand his responsibility to ensure that the trainees were conducting and learning this procedure correctly. At the conclusion of each strip search, the next inmate was immediately brought into the search room to start undressing while the previous inmate was still getting dressed. This was an unnecessary impingement on the privacy and dignity of people in custody.

We also observed the intake screening questionnaire being conducted out in the open, within earshot of other inmates waiting in a holding cell with an open door. This posed a serious security risk to the arriving men as other inmates could potentially overhear sensitive information that may place the person at risk or may deter the person from disclosing important sensitive information.

We then watched the reception sweepers (inmates) preparing linen and toiletries packs and identity cards for the arriving inmates. Reception staff had provided them with inmate profile documents for each of the arriving inmates to assist them. This immediately created a serious privacy breach and security risk as those documents contained sensitive and confidential information. We brought this to the attention of the Governor immediately.

We followed the inmates to the health centre where a nurse greeted them in a welcoming manner and completed the health screening of each person efficiently.

Finally, we followed the inmates to sector 3 to observe their allocation to cells and their induction to the unit. No induction was provided. One inmate was placed in a cell that had not been cleaned since the previous occupant departed.

We were unable to see any evidence of a risk assessment being conducted prior to the allocation of these inmates to cells. We enquired with the senior custodial officer in sector 3 about this procedure. He advised us that the risk assessment involves ensuring that people of different cultural backgrounds or ages are not placed together. This is a wholly inappropriate and inadequate approach which does not actually assess the risks or needs of individual inmates. This approach does not conform with the Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures (COPP)²⁶ which requires staff to use the cell placements decision guide²⁷ before determining a cell placement. This guide asks custodial staff to consider whether an inmate falls into one or several risk categories²⁸ and then provides guidance on suitable accommodation options, including one-out accommodation, shared accommodation, segregation or a dry cell.

25 On one of the days of our inspection there were 21 new trainees from Brush Farm Corrective Services Academy on site learning at Geoffrey Pearce CC.

26 Corrective Services NSW, *Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures: 5.2 Inmate accommodation* (version 1.5, 18 August 2023) 4.

27 Corrective Services NSW, *Cell placement decision guide* (version 1.1, 14 March 2023).

28 These categories include risk of harm to self, risk of harm from others, risk of harm to others, health/special needs, employment, and alcohol/drug abuse.

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW ensures that the body scanner located in the visits area is utilised to scan inmates during their reception to Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre.

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW ensures that reception procedures at Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre do not create security risks by conducting inmate interviews in the presence of others, providing confidential documents to other inmates or failing to conduct an appropriate risk assessment before allocating inmates to cells.

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW ensures Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre establishes an induction procedure which provides new inmates with information about the correctional centre.

3.2 Daily routine

The daily routine within the secure part of Geoffrey Pearce CC was very brief. Minimum security inmates (C classification) who work for CSI were released from their units or cells by CSI overseers at 6am. Inmates who do not work were released from their units or cells at 8am by custodial staff. Both groups of inmates were locked in at 3.30pm. Medium security (B classification) and escape-risk (E classification) inmates were locked in first at 3pm. These times are insufficient to allow meaningful access to services and exercise. Workers employed in the kitchen complained that they do not have time to exercise or engage with non-custodial services after finishing work at 3pm. These times do not correspond with those at other minimum security centres. For example, Mannus CC and Glen Innes CC release inmates at 7am and lock them in at 5pm, for a total of 10 hours out of cells each day.²⁹ The COPP states that from 1 November to 31 March the latest time that inmates are to be locked in their accommodation area is 7pm and from 1 April to 31 October 5pm.³⁰

Inmates in the honour house were released at 6am and locked in from 5pm, depending on the time they returned from working in the community.

In practice, the day at Geoffrey Pearce CC was even shorter than this.

On multiple days during the inspection, we observed that staff had completed locking inmates in by 3.15pm and then exited the correctional centre by 3.40pm, 20 minutes before the end of their shifts. We heard from some non-custodial staff that this was a regular occurrence.

This limited daily routine was the result of custodial staff working eight hour shifts. Officers started at 8am and finished at 4pm. NSW is the jurisdiction with the lowest average time out-of-cell hours in Australia, some 2.5 hours per day behind Victoria and ACT and 1.1 hours behind the national average.³¹ In our view, this can only be improved through the implementation of standard 12 hour shifts.

Locking adults into accommodation units, and particularly into cells, in the mid-afternoon is not an appropriate way to manage minimum and medium security inmates. It does not support good health through access to exercise, nor does it provide the opportunity to practice the pro-social communication skills inmates learn in programs through interactions with staff and their peers.

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW implements 12 hour custodial shifts at Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre and extends the daily routine for inmates in all sectors in line with other minimum security correctional centres.

29 Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection of Mannus Correctional Centre and Glen Innes Correctional Centre 2022* (Report, February 2024) 11, 28.

30 Corrective Services NSW, *Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures: 5.3 Musters, let-go and lock-in* (version 1.3 18 August 2023) 7. Note: certain correctional centres have exceptions to allow later lock-ins.

31 Productivity Commission, *Report on Government Services 2024*, part C, section 8: Corrective Services (29 January 2024).

3.3 Immediate Action Team

Since our last inspection, an Immediate Action Team (IAT) had been established at Geoffrey Pearce CC. IAT members are trained to respond to serious incidents including assaults, fights and riots, and extract inmates from cells. IATs are not usually present at minimum security facilities. However, the IAT had been introduced at Geoffrey Pearce CC because of the small number of inmates with a B (medium) security classification located there to participate in IDATP. On 30 June 2022 there were 11 B classified inmates.³²

The use of an IAT to assist with the management of such a small number of medium security inmates was not an efficient use of resources. We found no evidence that it was necessary to maintain an IAT at Geoffrey Pearce CC. In the 12 months from July 2021 to June 2022, there were only seven uses of force at Geoffrey Pearce CC.³³ We were also informed that the IAT was largely performing tasks which can, and should, be performed by regular custodial staff. A member of the IAT advised us that the team's primary functions are to conduct cell searches, respond to relatively minor incidents, and generally make the workforce feel safer at work. An IAT should not be necessary to make staff feel safe in a minimum security correctional centre. Throughout the inspection we repeatedly observed the IAT patrolling areas where medium security inmates were not present. This contributed to a tense atmosphere and a reluctance of people in custody to be seen speaking with us.

In the event of a significant disturbance or incident, there are IATs based at the two other correctional centres on the complex which could be deployed if required.

IAT equipment



Security at Geoffrey Pearce CC would be much better supported through a greater emphasis on dynamic security. Dynamic security arises from staff-inmate relationships and interactions such that staff understand the dynamics between inmates and can identify warning signs before an incident occurs.³⁴ Some custodial officers at Geoffrey Pearce CC appeared reluctant to engage with inmates. We observed custodial officers sitting around talking to each other for extended periods each day rather than speaking to inmates. Custodial staff at Geoffrey Pearce CC may benefit from having dynamic security role modelled by participating in temporary assignments to other correctional centres where this is a focus.

We observed inappropriate posters on the lockers used by the IAT. The display of these posters indicated an unprofessional culture and lack of respect towards people in custody. This, in turn, undermines the efforts of other staff at Geoffrey Pearce CC to create a therapeutic environment and promote pro-social attitudes and behaviours among people in custody.

32 Information provided by CSNSW, September 2022.

33 Information provided by CSNSW, September 2022.

34 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Handbook on Dynamic Security and Prison Intelligence* (December 2015) 6, 29-30.

In April 2024, we were advised by management at Geoffrey Pearce CC that plans were being considered to increase the number of medium security inmates by approximately 80. If these plans are to eventuate, the medium security inmates should be placed together within one sector, allowing minimum security inmates to live separately under minimum security conditions. The members of the IAT should be replaced with new staff members to comply with the following provision in the COPP:

As a general principle, officers should not be appointed to an IAT post for longer than two years. This may be extended by a further one year by the Governor of the correctional centre in consultation with the GM SOG [General Manager Special Operations Group].³⁵

The refreshed IAT should focus on managing emerging security issues within the medium security sector. It may be appropriate for the IAT officers to train and mentor custodial officers but they should avoid entering the minimum security sectors except in the event of a serious security incident.

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW removes the Immediate Action Team (IAT) from Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre unless the medium security population increases substantially. In this event, Corrective Services NSW should ensure that the IAT focuses on performing its core duties within a medium security sector.

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW ensures Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre custodial staff undertake training in dynamic security and that this is actively encouraged by senior custodial staff.

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW arranges temporary assignments of custodial staff to other correctional centres so that they can learn different ways of working.

3.4 Segregation and separation

3.4.1 Segregation

At any time, there may be a need to remove a person in custody from the general population. An inmate can be segregated under section 10 of the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999* to ensure the safety of others, the security of the correctional centre, or the good order and discipline within the correctional centre.

The segregation procedure includes safeguards. An inmate can request to have their placement in segregated custody reviewed by the Serious Offenders Review Council (SORC) if it extends beyond 14 days. An inmate should be informed of this right and is required to sign an acknowledgement form at the commencement of the segregation period. It also requires staff to visit the inmate daily to check on their wellbeing and confirm whether the segregation is required to continue and then to enter a case note about this check on the Offender Information Management System (OIMS).³⁶

Following our inspection of Geoffrey Pearce CC, we reviewed the segregation orders for the three months prior to our inspection. A total of 16 segregation orders were reviewed. The acknowledgement form was not completed in nine out of the 16 cases. This suggests that inmates were routinely not being informed of the right to appeal their segregation order.

The COPP also states:³⁷

Segregated custody may cause greater distress for an Aboriginal inmate than for other inmates. When considering such placements recognition must be given to the unique social and cultural relationships that exist between Aboriginal people.

35 Corrective Services NSW, *Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures: 16.13 Immediate action teams* (version 1.3 2 January 2024) 5.

36 Corrective Services NSW, *Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures: 3.4 Segregation* (version 1.5 10 July 2023) 9.

37 Corrective Services NSW, *Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures: 3.4 Segregation* (version 1.5 10 July 2023) 13.

Recommendation 181 of the *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody* states that placing an Aboriginal inmate in segregated custody is undesirable in the highest degree.

However, where segregated custody is necessary, the Governor is to:

- ensure that the relevant Regional Aboriginal Programs Officer (RAPO) (who will provide support for the inmate) is informed.
- provide the segregated inmate with access to a member of the Aboriginal Inmate Committee or appropriate Aboriginal delegate. Such access may assist inmates who are experiencing problems that could lead to physical or mental harm.

These procedures are in accordance with the recommendations of the *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody* and must be followed.

We identified four out of six instances where an Aboriginal person was placed in segregated custody and neither a RAPO nor an Aboriginal delegate was contacted. The Inspector is very concerned that this duty of care was not being met because it is an important safeguard against the risk of the inmate experiencing mental health decline and harm.

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW ensures that Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre complies with obligations under *Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures* with respect to segregated custody.

3.4.2 Separation

Inmates can also be held separately from others for the purposes of their care, control or management under section 78A of the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999*. There are five specific grounds for a person to be separated from others under section 78A:

- Gender – where, in special circumstances, an inmate is held in a centre which does not ordinarily hold [or] house inmates of their gender
- Health – where there is a risk to the general population from infectious or contagious disease
- Risk – from others but only pending re-classification or relocation
- Affiliation with an outlaw motorcycle gang or organised crime network; or
- Any other reason, but only with the approval of the Assistant Commissioner, Custodial Corrections.³⁸

An inmate may be separated under section 78A by the Governor for up to 14 days. If a longer period is required, Governors must receive the approval of the General Manager, State-wide Operations to continue the separation. This approval will be for a further 28 days, and additional approval must be sought for each subsequent 28 day period of separation.³⁹

Following our inspection of Geoffrey Pearce CC, we reviewed the paperwork for 11 inmates who had been separated under section 78A in the three months prior to our inspection. We identified some concerning practices, including two instances where incorrect forms were completed, as well as two cases where separation orders under section 78A were used in instances where the criteria listed in the separation policy were not met and segregation orders would have been the appropriate option. This practice removes access to the safeguards within the segregation procedure. We also found two instances where separation forms were not signed by the Governor.

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW ensures that Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre follows correct procedures when issuing a direction for separation of an inmate under section 78A of the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999*.

38 Corrective Services NSW, *Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures: 3.1 Separation of inmates* (version 1.3 30 October 2020) 4.

39 Corrective Services NSW, *Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures: Separation of inmates* (version 1.3 30 October 2020) 4.

3.4.3 Multipurpose unit

The multipurpose unit (MPU) at Geoffrey Pearce CC was built in 2020 and has five modern and clean cells with closed-circuit television (CCTV) that accommodate inmates on protective custody orders, separation orders or segregation orders.⁴⁰ On visiting these cells, we became aware that the CCTV camera in each cell has an unobstructed view of the toilet. It is not appropriate for all the MPU cells to have CCTV cameras as these are generally only required to monitor a risk of suicide, self-harm or erratic or volatile behaviour.

CSNSW advised that the Multipurpose Unit cells are used to manage high needs and high risk inmates that are at a risk of suicide, self-harm or erratic or volatile behaviour and therefore, the existing camera surveillance is appropriate.⁴¹ However, this is only true in some cases. Those inmates who are placed in the MPU for the purpose of segregation or separation, and not to manage a risk of suicide or self-harm, do not require camera supervision. In these cases, it is an unnecessary breach of an inmates' dignity. During our visit to Geoffrey Pearce CC in April 2024, one of the men held in the MPU told us that the constant camera supervision made him feel vulnerable.

The Metropolitan Special Programs Centre is currently piloting the use of cloth covers on the cameras in the Secure Housing Unit cells when inmates do not need monitoring by camera. This should be rolled out to all MPUs in NSW which do not provide cells without cameras.

During our April 2024 visit, we observed graffiti on an MPU cell wall which included highly inappropriate comments about a particular person in custody which could put that person's safety at risk. We reported this immediately to the acting Governor.

CSNSW also advised that Geoffrey Pearce CC is in the process of a review and efforts are being made to identify and remove graffiti, particularly if it is offensive, may impact the good order and security of the correctional centre or may place an individual at risk.⁴² We welcome this initiative and will monitor cell graffiti during future visits.

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW only places inmates under camera supervision when required to ensure their safety.

3.4.4 Old reception unit

The old reception unit hosts the IAT's office, armoury, a staff meal room and two cells. This unit is no longer used to process inmates being received or discharged from Geoffrey Pearce CC as a new reception building was established during the 2020 redevelopment. We were advised that these cells had not been used for "at least two years". However, we queried this further as an inmate's identity card was still displayed at the entrance to one of the cells. The staff member then admitted that inmates may occasionally be temporarily "held" in one of these cells during a controlled move, for no more than a few hours. It seems unlikely that an identity card would be displayed at the cell entrance if the inmate was not being housed there at least overnight. We later discovered that this inmate had arrived at Geoffrey Pearce CC 11 months earlier, which meant that the cell had been used in the last year. Our analysis of segregation paperwork also found that at least one other person had been placed in one of these cells a month prior to our inspection, however we could not determine from this paperwork or from OIMS how long he was detained there. This information should have been recorded in OIMS. We requested footage from the various CCTV cameras within the building but were informed it had already been deleted prior to our request. We were therefore unable to identify how or why inmates were apparently taken to these cells.

The interior of the building is highly isolated from the view of any staff except for the IAT which is based there. We heard that the meal room was seldom used by staff as the building does not have any bathrooms so was considered an inconvenient location for meals. This only increases the risk of actual, or allegations of, mistreatment of inmates.

40 Inmates who are on a Risk Intervention Team (RIT) management plan are usually managed in cells located in the health centre.

41 Information provided by CSNSW, August 2024.

42 Information provided by CSNSW, August 2024.

One of the cells was filthy with unidentifiable brown matter on the floor and bench. The camera in this cell was covered with a piece of paper attached by tape. When we asked about this, we were told that the camera had been covered by contractors who had been using the toilet in the cell. Even if this account is accurate, the obstruction of the camera in this isolated location is concerning.

CSNSW advised that the cells in the old reception unit are now non-operational and do not appear on the operational bed capacity report.⁴³ While we welcome this, CSNSW must ensure staff stop using these cells to “hold” inmates for a few hours.

Unclean cell in the old reception building



CCTV camera covered by paper in the same cell



Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW takes steps to ensure that the cells in the old reception unit are decommissioned.

43 Information provided by CSNSW, August 2024.

3.5 Contraband

After our inspection, it was reported in the media that a correctional officer found A4 paper boxes on the cook-freeze kitchen loading dock containing 3.2kg of tobacco, 304 buprenorphine strips, four vapes, ten lighters, 44 grams of crystal methamphetamine, 200ml of anabolic steroids, and 1,111 tablets of steroids and other unknown substances. Four mobile telephones, three SIM cards, and charging cables were also found.⁴⁴

In April 2024, we viewed a relatively new body scanner at the workers' entry/exit to the cook-freeze industry, located alongside the existing metal detector. We were informed that at the end of each shift, 50% of workers in these industries would be scanned before they returned to their accommodation. However, this had not actually been occurring for several months due to a Prison Officers Vocational Branch (POVB)⁴⁵ direction against doing so. It is important that all available measures to detect and prevent contraband reaching the accommodation areas are used. This is particularly important at a centre delivering the IDATP to people attempting to overcome their drug and alcohol issues.

Frozen meals to be transported to other correctional centres



X-ray body scanner and metal detector near the cook-freeze industry (taken April 2024)



If contraband is detected or suspected following a body scan, the inmate will be strip searched in a nearby bathroom. This bathroom is located in a blind spot with no CCTV. We were advised that these searches are not filmed. Video recording of targeted strip searches is permitted by the COPP.⁴⁶ This provides a protection against mistreatment of inmates at a time when they are highly vulnerable, especially when conducted in isolated locations.

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW reviews scanning procedures at Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre.

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW ensures custodial staff at Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre always video targeted strip searches.

44 Mageros, A. 'Officers foil 'sophisticated' plot at NSW correctional centre kitchen to distribute drugs and contraband to other prisons' (media article, 21 July 2023) < <https://www.skynews.com.au/australia-news/crime/officers-foil-sophisticated-plot-at-nsw-correctional-centre-kitchen-to-distribute-drugs-and-contraband-to-other-prisons/news-story/b619b78c037e581fee7be4a299c751f8>>.

45 The POVB is a branch of the Public Service Association of NSW, representing non-commissioned custodial officers employed by Corrective Services NSW.

46 According to the COPP, the video recording of a strip search is permitted when conducting a targeted search for contraband, an inmate is non-compliant, or there are reasonable grounds for believing that an inmate may be aggressive towards staff. Corrective Services NSW, *Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures: 17.1 Searching inmates* (version 1.12, 27 March 2024) 5.

3.6 Inmate discipline

We reviewed documentation of inmate discipline procedures for the three months prior to our inspection.

We noted that in five out of 25 cases, inmates had incorrectly been charged with “fail to comply with correctional centre routine”, under clause 39 of the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Regulation 2014*:

An inmate must comply with the hours of work and general routine for the correctional centre or part of the correctional centre in which the inmate is detained.

This charge was being applied for no reason that was documented in the paperwork, in addition to other charges which were also applied. These included one where an inmate refused to follow directions from custodial staff and resisted a search and three related to intimidating and/or assaulting staff. In another instance, an inmate had damaged a television, auxiliary cable and headphones. None of these cases related to a failure to comply with the correctional centre routine.

These charges are unfairly included in inmates’ custodial records which may have significant consequences. An inmate’s history of correctional centre offences is taken into consideration at key moments during their time in custody including at classification reviews and parole applications. We have previously reported our concerns with this practice at other correctional centres.

CSNSW advised that it is undertaking a review of the current inmate disciplinary process and its application which includes ensuring staff are trained and adhere to all parts of the disciplinary process, the delegation of decision makers, and consideration of including an appropriate review mechanism into the process.⁴⁷ We also note that the NSW Ombudsman recently published a report on its investigation on this topic which ‘found a systemic failure across all correctional centres to follow the requirements of the legislation and the relevant policies in relation to inmate discipline.’⁴⁸

47 Information provided by CSNSW, August 2024.

48 NSW Ombudsman, *Investigation into Inmate Discipline in NSW Correctional Centres* (Report, August 2024) 15.

4 Staffing

In June 2022, Geoffrey Pearce CC had a staffing profile of 183, outlined in table 2.

Table 2: Staffing profile of Geoffrey Pearce CC⁴⁹

Area	Position	Approved FTE
Custodial	Governor	1
	Senior Assistant Superintendent	6
	Senior Correctional Officer	29
	Correctional Officer	69
Corrective Services Industries (CSI)	Manager of Industries	1
	Manager of Business Units	2
	Senior Overseer	7
	Overseer	15
Offender services and programs (OS&P)	Manager of Offender Services and Programs	1
	Senior Services and Programs Officer	1
	Services and Programs Officer	6
	Psychologist	2
	Therapeutic Manager	1
	Psychologist	4
	Senior OS&P Systems Officer	1
	Senior Services and Program Officer	3
	Services and Program Officer	13
	Administration Clerk	2
Case Management	Senior Case Management Officer	1
	Case Management Officer	6
Classification	Classification and Placement Officer	1
Education	Education Services Coordinator	1
	Assessment and Planning Officer	1
Administration	Finance and Administration Manager	1
	Clerk 3/4	2
	Clerk 1/2	4
	General scales	2
Total		183

We are grateful to those staff at Geoffrey Pearce CC who were professional and facilitated our access around the correctional centre and explained its operations to us.

However, we found that some of Geoffrey Pearce CC's staff made conducting the inspection challenging. For example, certain staff followed us around while we were engaging with inmates and appeared to be actively deterring them from speaking to us or taking note of those who did. Several inmates told us that they were unwilling to speak to us in the presence of those staff members as they believed it would result in them being transferred to sector 3 or to another correctional centre.

⁴⁹ Information provided by Geoffrey Pearce CC at the time of inspection and April 2024.

We also heard from numerous inmates and staff that inmates were threatened they would be moved to sector 3 accommodation units (M and N) if they complained or questioned decisions. Although inmates were reluctant to provide the names of the officers for fear of retribution, we raised these allegations during the inspection, and they were corroborated by a senior member of custodial staff.

It is therefore disappointing that CSNSW advised that its records do not reflect a complaint to the CSNSW Professional Standards and Investigations Unit around the time of the inspection which related to inmates being threatened with relocation to sector 3.⁵⁰

CSNSW encourage ICS to report unprofessional behaviour when it occurs so that it can be addressed contemporaneously.⁵¹ The Inspector contacted the Commissioner immediately following the inspection to raise, amongst other matters, the conduct of a number of senior staff and officers at the centre.

It is an offence under section 19 of the *Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2012* to:

a) without reasonable excuse, wilfully obstruct, hinder, resist or threaten the Inspector or a member of staff of the Inspector in the exercise of functions under this Act, or (b) without reasonable excuse, refuse or wilfully fail to comply with any lawful requirement of the Inspector or a member of staff of the Inspector.

CSNSW has commenced training correctional centre managers prior to inspections to ensure that staff are aware of the Inspector's powers.⁵² We welcome this training initiative, and the Inspector has delivered several training sessions to senior CSNSW staff.

We repeatedly heard about a culture of bullying and harassment between staff (particularly toward non-custodial staff by custodial staff) and from staff toward inmates. Although we did not directly observe bullying or harassment between staff, we heard that this had resulted in a high number of staff being on long-term workers compensation. There is a clear need for the Governor to actively monitor staff compliance with the code of conduct and ensure that senior staff are role modelling professional behaviour. It is also imperative that staff are provided with regular and ongoing training to educate them on professional conduct.

Staff in various teams also told us that several custodial staff were uncooperative and unprofessional in facilitating inmate access to services and programs. This is clearly unacceptable in any correctional centre but particularly in one mandated to provide the IDATP. CSNSW have advised that the executive team is working to change workplace culture and does not tolerate poor staff behaviour.⁵³

On one of the days of our inspection there were 21 custodial officer trainees from Brush Farm Corrective Services Academy at Geoffrey Pearce CC to observe custodial practices. Given the poor custodial practice we repeatedly observed at the centre, the Inspector immediately raised with the Commissioner our concern that Geoffrey Pearce CC was being used as a training site by the Brush Farm Academy.

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW ensures that custodial staff facilitate inmates' access to services and programs in a timely and professional manner.

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW actively monitors staff compliance with the code of conduct and ensures that senior staff are role modelling professional behaviour.

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW does not use Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre as a training site for Brush Farm Corrective Services Academy students until Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre demonstrates improved levels of professionalism.

50 Information provided by CSNSW, August 2024.

51 Information provided by CSNSW, August 2024.

52 Information provided by CSNSW, August 2024.

53 Information provided by CSNSW, August 2024.

5 Health services

The health centre was staffed by a full-time nursing unit manager (NUM) and 5.6 FTE other nursing staff.⁵⁴ Inmates at Geoffrey Pearce CC had good access to nurses at the health centre, which was staffed from 7am to 10pm seven days a week. The health centre is modern and purpose-built and has one patient waiting area, one dental suite and five consultation and treatment rooms. “Virtual care” facilities were available at the health centre.⁵⁵ We observed two clinical observation cells that were clean and in good condition at the time of inspection.

Health centre observation cell



JH&FMHN reported that health services were generally being delivered within recommended timeframes. Of the 702 total waitlist entries at the time of the inspection, 29 were outside the recommended wait time for their designated clinical priority. This equated to 4% of the total waitlist entries. The overdue entries related to routine Opioid Agonist Treatment (OAT) reviews, dosage reviews and management of back and limb pain.⁵⁶

Inmates made few complaints to us regarding access to health care other than access to general practitioner (GP) services. While the health centre had arrangements with a GP who visited once a week, there were 59 people on the GP waitlist at the time of inspection. Access to GP services needs to be increased to ensure that the health needs of people in custody are addressed in a timely manner.

JH&FMHN advised that GP hours at Geoffrey Pearce CC are allocated according to clinical demand, and consistently with centres of similar size and patient profile. JH&FMHN further advised that GP waiting lists are reviewed weekly by the NUM and any concerns are escalated to the Primary Care Operations Manager. If urgent patient health needs arise between scheduled clinics, on-site staff can request an ad hoc virtual care appointment or call the 24 hour Remote On-call After Hours Medical Service (ROAMS) for medical advice. Any acute presentations would be referred to the local hospital emergency department. JH&FMHN also noted that it is exploring funding opportunities to increase GP services statewide.⁵⁷ ICS supports the increase of GP services statewide.

Recommendation: Justice Health & Forensic Mental Health Network seeks funding to increase GP services statewide.

54 Information provided by JH&FMHN, July 2022.

55 Virtual care is the JH&FMHN preferred term for telehealth.

56 Information provided by JH&FMHN, July 2022.

57 Information provided by JH&FMHN, July 2024.

6 Services and amenities

6.1 Clothing

We observed four inmates arriving at Geoffrey Pearce CC from other correctional centres. All four men reported to us that the only clothes they had were those they were wearing at the time as staff at their previous locations had confiscated their additional clothing. An officer at reception handed each man a clothing request form and advised them to complete it and submit it to staff in sector 3. Inmates in sector 3 reported that it took anywhere from three to 10 days for their requested clothing to be issued after they arrived at Geoffrey Pearce CC.

The COPP stipulates the amount of clothing to be issued to inmates and this is outlined in table 3 below.⁵⁸

Table 3: Initial clothing at reception for male inmates

Item	Number
T-shirt (short or long sleeve)	4
Fleecy tracksuit top/sloppy joe	2
Fleecy tracksuit pants	2
Shorts	2
Singlets	4
Underpants	7
Socks	7 pairs
Shoes	1 pair

These amounts should be maintained throughout a person's time in custody. At the time of the inspection, the COPP stated that 'correctional centre issued clothing and hygiene items must travel with the inmate on transfer to another correctional centre'.⁵⁹ We acknowledge, therefore, that the shortage of clothing held by inmates arriving at Geoffrey Pearce CC was a problem created by other correctional centres. However, it is unacceptable that Geoffrey Pearce CC did not comply with the COPP and provide people in custody with clothing in a sufficient quantity or timeframe. This is not a new or unique problem to Geoffrey Pearce CC. It has been reported in previous inspection reports.⁶⁰

On 22 June 2023, the policy was updated to reflect the practice that actually occurs at many correctional centres. The COPP now states that 'No gaol-issue clothing is to be transported with the inmate other than the clothing worn by the inmate'⁶¹ and 'all gaol issue clothing and linen remains at the sending centre for re-issue or disposal'.⁶² This approach may work but will require all correctional centres to issue the balance of prescribed clothing allocations to all arriving inmates.

We were, therefore, concerned that practices had not changed at Geoffrey Pearce CC following our inspection or the change to policy, when we visited Geoffrey Pearce CC in April 2024.

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW ensures that all inmates are issued the minimum allocation of clothing prescribed by the COPP at reception at Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre.

58 Corrective Services NSW, *Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures: 1.5 Issuing correctional centre clothing and linen* (version 1.4, 22 June 2023) 5.

59 Corrective Services NSW, *Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures: 1.5 Issuing correctional centre clothing and linen* (version 1.3, 16 March 2021) 7.

60 For example, Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection of Goulburn Correctional Centre and the High Risk Management Correctional Centre 2021* (Report, June 2022) 36.

61 Corrective Services NSW, *Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures: 4.5 Property on transfer* (version 1.0, 22 June 2023) 4.

62 Corrective Services NSW, *Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures: 1.5 Issuing correctional centre clothing and linen* (version 1.4, 22 June 2023) 4.

6.2 Food and nutrition

People in custody at Geoffrey Pearce CC are provided with meals prepared and distributed by inmates working in CSI industries. Breakfast typically includes cereal, milk, and bread. Lunch generally consists of sandwiches or salad and fruit. Dinner is generally a hot meal which was prepared, frozen and rethermed at Geoffrey Pearce CC.

An example of a dinner meal



A cheese sandwich provided for lunch



People in custody would often supplement meals with food purchased through the weekly grocery buy-up and/or the fortnightly egg and meat buy-ups.

Minimum security inmates should be supported to prepare their own food as much as possible as they approach their release from custody. The opportunity to prepare meals using facilities in the wing was strongly valued by inmates. The sector 1 accommodation areas had fridges, a microwave oven, flat sandwich press and a boiling water dispenser. The sector 2 accommodation units each had fridges, a microwave oven, hot water dispenser and toasters. These appliances are appropriate for a minimum and medium security facility, but it is important to make sure there are sufficient appliances for units that each accommodate up to 48 people, to reduce tension between inmates.

The honour house has fully equipped kitchens, as well as a substantial vegetable garden maintained by the residents. The produce, which included spinach, leeks and various herbs was used to supplement meals. Gardening is also a useful practical skill and a therapeutic activity, so we welcomed Geoffrey Pearce CC's support of this garden.

Vegetable gardens at the honour house



A variety of vegetables growing



The Lifestyles Program was an initiative for honour house residents that aimed to support them to budget for and produce healthy meals. The program allowed honour house residents to purchase groceries from a supermarket using an equivalent budget to the cost of supplying CSI meals. Regrettably, this program was cancelled approximately six months prior to our inspection due to inflation.⁶³ The inmates and several staff expressed concern that this meant that honour house residents had lost an opportunity to develop skills in budgeting, meal planning, and cooking. These skills are important in supporting a successful return to living in the community.

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW ensures Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre provides an adequate supply of cooking equipment in each wing.

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW reintroduce the Lifestyles Program in the honour house at Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre.

6.3 Fundraising for amenities

Inmates engaged in fundraising activities (for example, recycling cans and egg buy-ups) so that the profits could be spent on amenities such as exercise equipment, barbeque utensils, toasters, and microwaves. Whilst the notion of encouraging self-responsibility is supported, it raises some concerns as to why inmates were required to self-fund basic items such as toasters and microwaves that should be provided by CSNSW.

Frustrations were raised by inmates regarding the lack of transparency around the use of funds raised through recycling and egg buy-ups. We received allegations that these funds were being misused, which the Inspector immediately raised with the Commissioner.

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW ensures a monthly reconciliation of inmate amenities funds should be provided at each Inmate Development Committee meeting at Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre.

6.4 External contacts and communication

6.4.1 In-person visits

At the time of inspection, visits were scheduled on Saturdays and Sundays over five sessions per day. The first session commenced at 8.30am and the last commenced at 2.30pm. Each session lasted 45 minutes. This reduced duration was to allow time to clean the visits area after each session (a COVID-19 prevention requirement issued by a Commissioner's Instruction),⁶⁴ although we did not observe any cleaning occurring between sessions.

We attended two in-person visit sessions on Sunday, 4 December 2022 and observed professional interactions between staff and visitors. Families and friends we spoke to provided positive feedback about their experiences dealing with staff but were frustrated that their visit sessions were not longer.

The Geoffrey Pearce CC visits area consists of a large, airconditioned room and an undercover outdoor space. There is also a shaded playground for children. At the time of our inspection, the men were able to play with their children in the playground. This was positive to see as CSNSW COVID-19 restrictions had prohibited this activity for much of the pandemic.⁶⁵

63 Information provided by CSNSW, February 2023.

64 Commissioner's Instruction 2022/28.

65 Deputy Commissioner's Memorandum No: 2022/40, 12 December 2022.

Playground in visits area



Visitors were told where to sit according to a seating plan. There was a kitchenette where visitors could have a cup of water. Tea and coffee were not available and there were no vending machines in the visits area despite restrictions on food and drink having been lifted.⁶⁶

On completion of their visit, every inmate was scanned for contraband using an x-ray body scanner. The scanning machine replaces the need for strip searches and provides a much more dignified and efficient method of searching for contraband. The COPP states: 'Wherever practicable, a body scan must be undertaken in preference to a strip search. A strip search is only necessary where body scanning is unavailable or impractical, or when the body scan indicates the presence of contraband'.⁶⁷ A Deputy Commissioner's Memorandum on 12 December 2022 also advised staff that 'When an inmate has been body scanned, a strip search is not to be undertaken unless the body scan indicates the presence of contraband or unauthorised items'.⁶⁸

After one of the visits sessions, we noticed that several inmates were being strip searched. A staff member advised us this was because the men were not registered on the x-ray scanner, and that it was quicker to conduct a strip search than to register them. Some staff also reported that they did not feel confident interpreting the x-ray images because their training focused on radiation safety rather than analysing images. Although one custodial officer said that he felt he would be more likely to find contraband via a strip search than using a body scanner, this reflects a lack of confidence and /or competence. We support the use of technology as a more effective and dignified method to identify contraband secreted externally and internally.

Tablet visits were held on Saturdays over two sessions between 9am to 11.30am and 12.30pm to 3pm, with each session lasting 50 minutes to allow for tablets to be cleaned between visits.⁶⁹ We continue to support the use of tablet visits as they provide an opportunity for people in custody to see their families and friends, without families and friends having to travel.

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW ensures that Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre registers an x-ray body scan profile for every inmate and discontinues the practice of strip searching inmates after visits except in the circumstances outlined in the COPP.

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW delivers further training for staff in the interpretation of x-ray images including how to differentiate between contraband and non-contraband items.

66 Commissioner's instruction 2022/40, 3 October 2022.

67 Corrective Services NSW, *Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures: 17.1 Searching inmates* (version 1.11, 16 December 2022) 4.

68 Deputy Commissioner's Memorandum No: 2022/05, 12 December 2022.

69 Information provided by CSNSW, April 2024.

6.4.2 Tablets and telephones

It is now standard practice in most NSW correctional centres to provide people in custody with the use of an electronic tablet device. These are provided shortly prior to afternoon lock-in and then returned by inmates the following morning to be charged. One of the functions of these tablets is to make telephone calls. Staff and inmates informed us that the tablets were valuable for facilitating regular contact with families and friends and were particularly appreciated by people with family overseas in different time zones as they allowed people to make telephone calls from their cells during the evening.

6.4.3 Mail

In 2020, legislation was introduced that enabled CSNSW to photocopy and distribute photocopies of inmate mail.⁷⁰ This was followed by a CSNSW Commissioner's Instruction requiring the photocopying of all personal mail received by inmates⁷¹, as well as the COPP being amended.⁷² This was implemented in an attempt to reduce contraband entering correctional centres concealed within mail.

During the inspection inmates expressed frustration that copies of the mail they had received were incomplete and/or poor quality. Personal mail provides an important connection to family and friends. We were informed that original mail is only kept for seven days after it has been photocopied, after which it is destroyed.

While we understand that it is important to prevent drugs from entering correctional centres, our *Review of the response to COVID-19 in NSW custody*⁷³ report expressed concerns that, while photocopying mail was authorised by legislation, the destruction of the original mail was not. We recommended that CSNSW obtains legal advice regarding the destruction of original mail to inmates.⁷⁴ The Inspector remains of the opinion that destroying original mail should be ceased and original mail that contains no evidence of contraband should be placed in an inmate's property.⁷⁵

Expanding the use of tablets so that security checked emails can be received by inmates, instead of letters, would reduce the risk of contraband entry and reduce the administrative burden of photocopying and searching letters.

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW ceases the destruction of mail and instead stores it in inmate property after inspecting it for contraband.

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW introduces a secure and monitored email function to inmate tablet devices.

6.5 Inmate advocacy and complaint mechanisms

When we inspected Geoffrey Pearce CC, we observed an anti-complaint culture. As noted in section 4, some staff repeatedly followed us around the accommodation areas more closely than necessary, making it difficult for people to speak to us confidentially. Inmates frequently told us that they were not comfortable speaking to us in the presence of staff for fear of reprisal. This included being transferred to sector 3 (deemed to be an undesirable accommodation sector) or to another correctional centre outside of the Sydney metropolitan area which would make it difficult for their families to visit. It is an offence under section 20 of the *Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2012* to take, or threaten to take, detrimental action against any person wishing to provide information to the Inspector.

70 *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Regulation 2014* cl 112(4).

71 Commissioner's Instructions 2020/80 and 2020/86.

72 Corrective Services NSW, *Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures: 8.1 Inmate Mail* (version 1.10, 25 November 2021) 5.

73 Inspector of Custodial Services, *Review of the response to COVID-19 in NSW* (Report, November 2023).

74 Inspector of Custodial Services, *Review of the response to COVID-19 in NSW* (Report, November 2023) 88.

75 Inspector of Custodial Services, *Review of the response to COVID-19 in NSW* (Report, November 2023) 88.

CSNSW advise that they are working on an approach to Upstander training. This includes the approach for any negative workplace behaviours that staff witness and empowering staff to understand their responsibility and support model for being an upstander.⁷⁶

When we visited Geoffrey Pearce CC in April 2024, we were pleased to find that people in custody were more willing to speak to us, even when custodial staff were nearby. We will continue to monitor this issue.

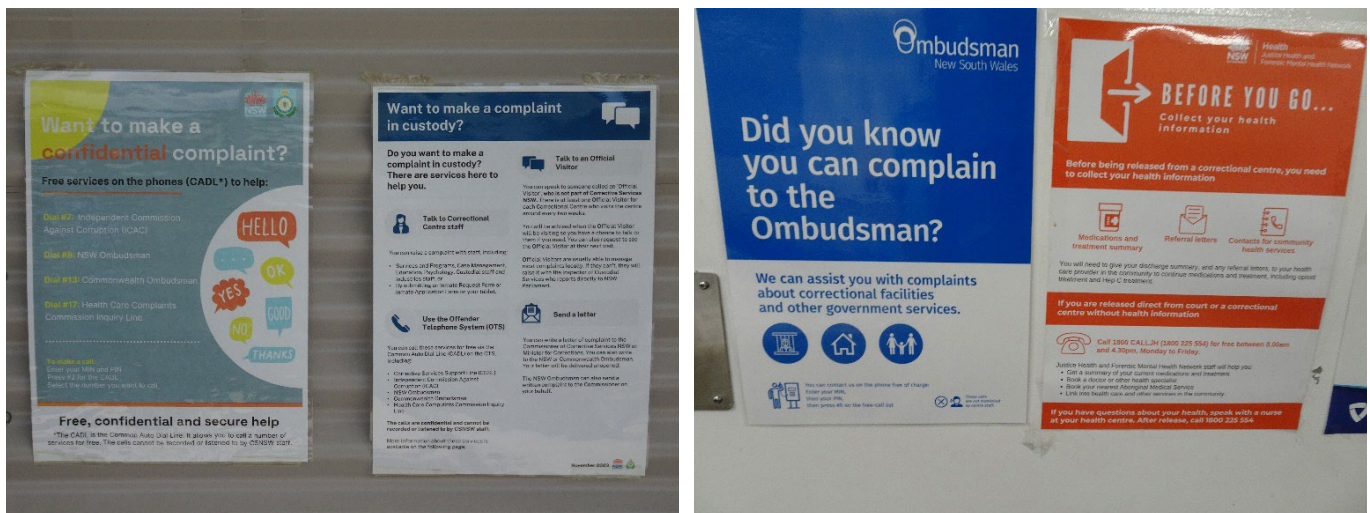
Complaint mechanisms

There are various complaint avenues available to people in custody. An official visitor visits the centre on a monthly basis to assist with the resolution of complaints at a local level. Inmates can also access several external agencies via free telephone calls, including the NSW Ombudsman, the Health Care Complaints Commission, the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission (LECC), Legal Aid NSW, and Aboriginal Legal Service. However, these avenues were not being promoted to people in custody. During the inspection, we observed very few posters for any of these services. Moreover, some staff confided in us that they have seen reprisal action taken against people who made complaints to CSNSW or external complaint bodies.

During our April 2024 visit, we were pleased to see that a range of these services were being promoted through posters displayed throughout the centre. We also saw posters advertising the CSNSW Sexual Misconduct Reporting Line, a free and confidential service where inmates can report any sexual misconduct they may have experienced or witnessed in NSW correctional centres, including by CSNSW staff. This is a positive step towards changing the anti-complaint culture which will require ongoing support from local management and staff.

CSNSW advised that it is working to deliver training to its staff on how to respond to negative workplace behaviours they may witness. CSNSW also advised it will roll out ‘practices that build and enhance rehabilitative culture, such as staff engaging with people in custody in ways that are culturally safe, trauma informed, procedurally fair, and strengths focused’.⁷⁷

Complaint posters (April 2024)



Inmate Development Committee (IDC)

An IDC is an inmate representative body established at each correctional centre. It provides an opportunity for inmates to meet with senior management and discuss suggestions and concerns about inmate services, programs and activities.⁷⁸ The IDC at Geoffrey Pearce CC met approximately once a month and consisted of one inmate representative from each accommodation block (including the IDATP accommodation block). There was also an Aboriginal delegate from sector 1, but no Aboriginal delegate from the other accommodation sectors.

76 Information provided by CSNSW, August 2024.
 77 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, August 2024.
 78 Corrective Services NSW, *Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures: 9.8 Inmate development committee* (version 1.2, 12 March 2020) 4.

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW ensures that Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre continues to promote and encourage people in custody to utilise complaint mechanisms.

Corrective Services NSW ensures that Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre appoints Aboriginal delegates from each accommodation sector.

6.6 Religious services

A full-time chaplain was running two services a week and providing pastoral and wellbeing care. Support provided by the chaplain included:

- facilitating the online viewing of funeral services for inmates
- conducting the Salvation Army “Positive Lifestyle Program for individuals” individually over eight sessions and having reflective conversations with inmates
- providing clothing for inmates upon release
- post release follow-up via telephone calls, text messages and one-on-one meetings.

The chapel bookshelves predominantly contained Christian books and resources. The range was not reflective of the religious makeup of the population, with very few resources available for Buddhist (9.3% of the population or 26 men) and Muslim (7.5% of the population or 21 men) inmates.⁷⁹ While the chaplain advised that they can provide other religious texts to inmates if they request them,⁸⁰ inmates and chaplains from non-Christian faiths should be consulted regarding what texts need to be purchased for the chapel bookshelves.

A Muslim and Coptic Orthodox chaplain were also visiting Geoffrey Pearce CC fortnightly and monthly respectively to meet with inmates. A Catholic chaplain was available on request. Geoffrey Pearce CC did not have a Buddhist chaplain. At Dillwynia CC, which neighbours Geoffrey Pearce CC, a Buddhist chaplain was available one to two days per week.⁸¹

Chapel



Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW provides people in custody at Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre with access to religious services and resources that reflect the diversity of religion at the centre.

79 Information provided by CSNSW, September 2022.

80 Prayer mats and other religious items were available for purchase through the activities buy-up.

81 Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection of Silverwater Women's and Dillwynia Correctional Centres 2022* (Report, November 2023) 98.

6.7 Access to exercise

Despite having a relatively large amount of space, Geoffrey Pearce CC provided inadequate space and facilities for exercise. Each accommodation sector had very limited fixed outdoor gym equipment. There were basketball courts in sectors 1 and 2.

Exercise facilities in sector 1



Exercise facilities in sector 3



A central gym was located inside a cage near the health centre. Each accommodation sector was scheduled for one session every day except Thursdays, with a maximum of 15 people per session. This provided a total of only 45 people, or approximately 12.7% of the population, an opportunity for gym time each day. The gym would be more appropriately located inside a building or suitable fenced area rather than a caged area.

The honour house had a basic but reasonable gym located under a shelter outdoors.

The central gym inside a cage



Gym at the honour house



At the time of inspection there was no organised sport at Geoffrey Pearce CC. We were informed that the community group SLAM Australia used to facilitate sporting activities at the centre on a Saturday. This ceased due to the redevelopment of the centre and did not resume due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In April 2024, we were advised of plans to turf the grassed area in sector 3 to make it suitable for sports such as touch football. We were also advised of plans to facilitate rugby league referee training for inmates who may be interested in pursuing this line of work post-release. We welcomed these plans as much-needed steps towards Geoffrey Pearce CC providing access to a suitable range of recreation and exercise activities.

A large, unused grassed area behind sector 1



Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW installs gym equipment in each accommodation sector at Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre and relocates the existing gym to a more suitable location.

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW considers how sports fields could be introduced at Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre.

6.8 Access to therapeutic activities

There were very few opportunities for people in custody to participate in informal therapeutic activities. While arts and crafts items were available on the activities buy up, there was no dedicated space for these activities.

Vegetable pods had been delivered to Geoffrey Pearce CC for IDATP participants located in sector 1 to grow vegetable gardens. This would have provided access to an appropriate therapeutic activity. However, according to staff, the Governor retracted his approval for them to be placed in sector 1 following concerns raised by the IAT that the pods could be dismantled into pieces which could be used as weapons. The vegetable pods were instead relocated to a locked area that was accessible to one designated inmate.

We were pleased to observe during an April 2024 visit that the vegetable pods had been moved inside sector 1 where they were accessible to people in custody.

Vegetable pods



Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW ensures that Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre maximises the provision of therapeutic recreational activities.

7 Rehabilitation and release preparation

7.1 Support for Aboriginal people

On 30 June 2022, 55 Aboriginal people made up 19.6% of the population at Geoffrey Pearce CC.⁸²

At the time of inspection there was a Yarning Circle in sector 1. Sectors 2 and 3 did not have a Yarning Circle.⁸³ Yarning Circles hold cultural significance for Aboriginal people to come together and communicate cultural knowledge. Sharing and interweaving understandings in a Yarning Circle creates a cultural healing space.⁸⁴

Yarning Circle (unfinished) in sector 1



We found that cultural programs and support, activities and events were lacking at Geoffrey Pearce CC, and had not been sufficiently prioritised. At the time of inspection, there were no Aboriginal cultural knowledge programs running. We did, however, accept an invitation to attend the 2023 NAIDOC celebrations at Geoffrey Pearce CC. The celebrations were a positive expression of Aboriginal culture and included local Elders, smoking ceremonies, music, and barbecues.

There were no Elders visiting Geoffrey Pearce CC to provide cultural and spiritual support to people in custody. Recognised Elders and significant Aboriginal community members can have an impact on the rehabilitation and dignity of Aboriginal men in custody. A reciprocal relationship with the local Aboriginal community would benefit the people in custody and the staff at Geoffrey Pearce CC. Their regular presence at Geoffrey Pearce CC would significantly support Aboriginal people in custody through their rehabilitation journeys and efforts to avoid recidivism.

The Time to Work Employment Service was helping prepare Aboriginal people in custody to find employment and reintegrate into the community following their release.⁸⁵ Geoffrey Pearce CC was unable to provide numbers of how many men this service assisted in 2021-22. CSNSW advised that this service was discontinued in non-remote areas on 30 June 2024.⁸⁶

During the inspection, we were informed that Geoffrey Pearce CC had recently established relationships with a recycling and waste management company and an Aboriginal registered training organisation to provide pre- and post-release employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal people. We have since been informed that neither initiative commenced.

82 Information provided by CSNSW, September 2022.

83 Construction of a Yarning Circle in sector 2 commenced in 2023.

84 Norman Sheehan, *Stolen Generations Education: Aboriginal Cultural Strengths and Social and Emotional Well Being* (Link-up (Qld) Aboriginal Corporation, 2012).

85 Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, 'Time to Work Employment Service' (Web Page, 13 March 2024) <<https://www.dewr.gov.au/time-work-employment-service>>.

86 Information provided by CSNSW, August 2024.

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW increases engagement with the Aboriginal community and establishes a local Elders visiting program to provide cultural support, guidance, and advice for Aboriginal men at Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre.

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW provides Aboriginal inmates with opportunities for cultural knowledge and connection activities at Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre.

7.2 Programs

7.2.1 Intensive Drug and Alcohol Treatment Program (IDATP)

The Intensive Drug and Alcohol Treatment Program (IDATP) commenced operation at the then OMMPPC in July 2014.⁸⁷ IDATP is a high intensity group treatment program for offenders whose drug and alcohol use is linked to their offending behaviour.⁸⁸ IDATP consists of over 250 hours of treatment. The program is delivered in four group sessions per week (12 to 15 hours per week) and in additional one-on-one sessions for a period of six to eight months. It is facilitated in a rolling group format with no more than 14 participants in each group.⁸⁹ 50 men completed IDATP in 2021-22, this number was small due to COVID-19 restrictions limiting the transfer of inmates to 'essential movements' only.⁹⁰

To be eligible for IDATP, a male inmate must have a minimum or medium security classification⁹¹, be assessed as having a medium/medium-high/high risk of reoffending and have a drug and alcohol domain score of at least six. All participants must also be sentenced with no further court matters and with at least six months remaining before the end of their sentence.⁹²

IDATP was designed to operate as a therapeutic community. A therapeutic community is described as a 'living-learning situation' where the events and relationships within that community are used as a learning opportunity.⁹³ The components of a therapeutic community in a custodial setting are:

- the separate placement of the community of program participants from the general prison population
- involvement of program participants in the operation of the therapeutic community
- the challenging of anti-social behaviours and attitudes by community members (both staff and program participants)
- programs that are delivered in an intensive format and have a duration of at least six to 12 months.⁹⁴

Establishing a therapeutic community within the environment of a correctional centre is challenging. During our inspection, it was apparent that there were many custodial staff who were sceptical of IDATP and any initiatives that aimed to promote rehabilitation and address recidivism. We are also aware of an instance where the psychological safety of an IDATP session was not respected by an IAT officer who interrupted to handcuff and remove a participant for an earlier minor discipline breach. It would have been appropriate for the IAT to disrupt an IDATP session in the event of an emergency or to prevent a risk of harm to a person. This was not the case.

87 Imogen Halstead and Suzanne Poynton, 'The NSW Intensive Drug and Alcohol Treatment Program (IDATP) and Recidivism: An Early Look at Outcomes for Referrals' (2016) 192 *Crime and Justice Bulletin* 1, 3.

88 Corrective Services NSW, *Compendium of Offender Behaviour Change Programs in New South Wales* (June 2016) 20.

89 Corrective Services NSW, *Compendium of Offender Behaviour Change Programs in New South Wales* (June 2016) 21, 23.

90 COVID restrictions applied through Commissioner's Instruction 20/2021 (rescinded), 45/2021 (rescinded), 56/2021 (rescinded) and 06/2022 (rescinded).

91 Inmates with a B medium security classification who had drug related offences (but no violence related offences) were also able to participate in IDATP.

92 Corrective Services NSW, *Compendium of Offender Behaviour Change Programs in New South Wales* (June 2016) 20, 22.

93 David Kennard, 'The Therapeutic Community as an Adaptable Treatment Modality across Different Settings' (2004) 75(3) *Psychiatric Quarterly* 295, 296; Jayson Ware, Andrew Frost and Anna Hoy, 'A Review of the Use of Therapeutic Communities with Sexual Offenders' (2010) 54(5) *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* 721, 722.

94 Imogen Halstead and Suzanne Poynton, 'The NSW Intensive Drug and Alcohol Treatment Program (IDATP) and Recidivism: An Early Look at Outcomes for Referrals' (2016) 192 *Crime and Justice Bulletin* 2.

We also heard IDATP delivery had been impacted by frequent lockdowns and custodial staff calling musters early in order to depart the correctional centre before the end of their shift, as outlined in section 3.2. These practices compromise the ability of IDATP facilitators to deliver sessions properly, ensure the wellbeing of participants by debriefing at the end of sessions, and deliver the required total program hours to participants. Custodial officers posted to IDATP should be provided with relevant training about the importance of the program.

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW ensures Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre develops a therapeutic community to support the goals of the Intensive Drug and Alcohol Treatment Program.

7.2.2 Explore, Question, Understand, Investigate, Practice and Succeed (EQUIPS)

Geoffrey Pearce CC offers four of the EQUIPS (Explore, Question, Understand, Investigate, Practice and Succeed) programs (Addiction, Aggression, Domestic Violence and Foundation). The number of inmates who had completed EQUIPS in 2021-22 was very small due to COVID-19 restrictions. Geoffrey Pearce CC resumed EQUIPS Pathway programs from April 2022, as outlined in the table below:

Table 4: Geoffrey Pearce CC EQUIPS Program 2022⁹⁵

EQUIPS Program	Dates	Number of participants
EQUIPS Foundation	5 April 2022 – 10 May 2022	10
EQUIPS Addiction	17 May 2022 – 16 June 2022	9
EQUIPS Aggression	21 June 2022 – 21 July 2022	7

Since July 2022, Geoffrey Pearce CC has been using the ‘Getting Equipped in Cell’ activity books to prepare eligible EQUIPS candidates for their upcoming participation in EQUIPS programs. At the time of inspection, Geoffrey Pearce CC was also piloting an accelerated format of the EQUIPS Pathway Programs that was designed to provide inmates access to the EQUIPS programs over a 15-20 week period instead of the usual 30-40 weeks.⁹⁶

Programs room



⁹⁵ Information provided by CSNSW, November 2022.

⁹⁶ Information provided by CSNSW, November 2022.

7.2.3 Work Development Orders

Geoffrey Pearce CC advised that 10 to 15 inmates were on Work Development Orders (WDO), working to pay off state debts, at the time of the inspection. This is a low proportion of the population. Geoffrey Pearce CC should ensure inmates have the opportunity to complete WDOs while in custody. We acknowledge that some inmates may have already completed WDOs at previous correctional centres.

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW ensures all inmates at Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre eligible for Work Development Orders are registered.

7.3 Education

Geoffrey Pearce CC was offering education, with one trainer contracted from BSI Learning responsible for delivering the Foundation Skills Program (Literacy and Digital Literacy Courses).⁹⁷ Between July 2021 to June 2022, 21 and 16 people participated in the Level 1 Literacy and Level 1 Digital Literacy courses respectively.⁹⁸

Geoffrey Pearce CC was also facilitating a range of vocational training, usually coordinated with CSI work. Courses provided in the 2021-22 year and participation figures are included in the table below:

Table 5: Education and vocational training offered at Geoffrey Pearce CC July 2021 to June 2022⁹⁹

Name of course	Number of participants
First Aid	7
Food Safety 1	34
Forklift	19
General Induction Training (White Card)	8
Cultural Arts (Drawing)	6
Cultural Arts (Painting)	9
Cleaning Operations 1	5
Warehousing Operations	18

As of 30 June 2022, a total of 29 inmates were undertaking traineeships at Geoffrey Pearce CC in kitchen operations, cleaning operations, furnishing, printing and graphic arts, warehousing, business, and construction. This is positive and Geoffrey Pearce CC should strive to increase the number of traineeships, given that 243 inmates were employed in industries at Geoffrey Pearce CC in 2021-22.¹⁰⁰ In April 2024, we heard there were plans to deliver training in commercial cooking in the cooking classroom.

We learnt that two inmates were studying a Bachelor of Business, one was studying a Bachelor of International Studies, and another was undertaking an Advanced Diploma of Theology. We commend the role of education staff in facilitating access to university education for inmates with higher levels of education and note that many NSW correctional centres do not have a sufficiently resourced education team to do so.

97 Information provided by CSNSW, January 2024.

98 Information provided by CSNSW, April 2024.

99 Information provided by CSNSW, September 2022.

100 Information provided by CSNSW, January 2024.

Cooking classroom



Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW increases the number of inmates undertaking traineeships at Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre.

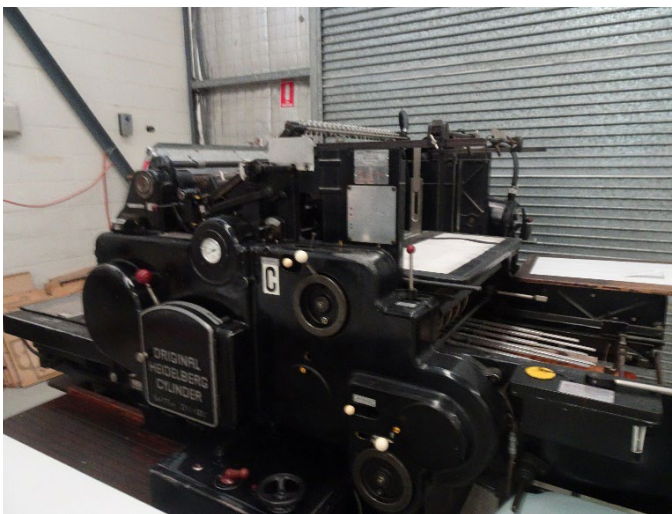
7.4 Employment

One of Geoffrey Pearce CC's strengths is that it offers people in custody access to a diverse range of productive employment opportunities and skills training. Employment opportunities included:

Print shop: The print shop employs up to 30 inmates, however, during 2021-22 an average of 20 inmates were employed in this unit. Inmates working in the print shop could undertake traineeships in printing and performed tasks including printing, cutting and packaging materials such as writing pads, booklets and gift cards. Customers included both the private and public sectors.

Laundry: The laundry services the three correctional centres on the Francis Greenway Correctional Complex. The laundry has the capacity to employ 15 inmates (12 inmates were employed in 2021-22) and gives them the opportunity to undertake traineeships in commercial laundry operations.

Machine in the print shop



Laundry



Cook-freeze kitchen: This unit prepares up to 15,000 snap frozen meals per day that are distributed to most NSW correctional centres. The unit has the capacity to store up to 180,000 frozen meals. Work in this unit is highly automated and meals are served into trays to deliver consistent meal sizes. An average of 80 inmates were employed in 2021-22, however up to 105 inmates can be employed in this unit.

Upholstery: This business unit provides 45 inmates with the opportunity to produce industry standard furnishings (mainly lounges and chairs) for private and government customers. During 2021-22 an average of 40 inmates were employed in this unit.

Upholstery workshop



Meals prepared in the kitchen



Internal Ground Maintenance: 15 inmates were employed inside the correctional centre to carry out ground maintenance tasks such as garbage clearance, edging, lawn mowing and horticultural duties. In 2021-22 an average of ten inmates were employed in this unit.

External Ground Maintenance: 15 inmates (eight inmates were employed in 2021-22) were employed in this area and are responsible for all external ground maintenance on the Francis Greenway Correctional Complex.

Hygiene: 30 inmates are responsible for the cleaning and upkeep of accommodation units, the administration building, clinic, toilets, reception, and visits areas. Hygiene maintenance is provided to a commercial standard and all inmates are trained in work health and safety (WHS) and hygiene requirements. In 2021-22 an average of 35 inmates were employed in this unit.

RSPCA Dog Rehabilitation Centre: This provides the opportunity for four inmates to contribute to the rehabilitation and relocation of RSPCA dogs found in the Sydney region. At the time of inspection, however, the number of inmates working in this section had been reduced to two, with the other two positions being redeployed to other industries. Inmates assist with the care of lost or abandoned dogs, performing tasks including maintaining dog kennels and preparing meals.

Wildlife Centre: The Wildlife Centre employs up to eight inmates, although at the time of inspection only six inmates worked there. One of these inmates is employed as a caretaker who lives onsite. This facility rehabilitates injured wildlife and offers opportunities for inmates to undertake training in this area. The centre has strategic partnerships with Taronga Park Zoo, Sydney Wildlife Service, WIRES, RSPCA and National Parks.

Barber shop: The barber shop did not exist at the time of the inspection but was established subsequently. It provides inmates the opportunity to train and work as a barber, acquiring skills and experience which are highly relevant to finding work after being released from custody. At the same time, the barber shop provides a useful service to inmates. We commend Geoffrey Pearce CC on this initiative and encourage CSNSW to adopt similar practical solutions at other correctional centres.

Barber shop (taken April 2024)



Table 6: Geoffrey Pearce CC employment profile as of 30 June 2022¹⁰¹

Employment	Profile	Actual
Upholstery Unit	45	40
Print Shop	30	20
Food Services and Cook Freeze	105	80
Laundry	15	12
Hygiene	30	35
Internal Ground Maintenance	15	10
External Ground Maintenance	15	8
RSPCA Dog Rehabilitation Centre	4	4
Wildlife Centre	8	8
Work release	32	20
Community projects	6	6
Total	305	243

7.4.1 Work release

Geoffrey Pearce CC is located close to Windsor and can take advantage of a variety of local administration, manufacturing, logistics, and agricultural employment opportunities. In 2021-22 an average of 20 inmates were actively engaged in works release.¹⁰² This is good practice and Geoffrey Pearce CC is to be commended for its commitment to its work release program.

7.4.2 Community projects

Community projects allows inmates the opportunity to work in and contribute to the local community, while also developing employable skills.¹⁰³ It is also an opportunity for inmates to demonstrate that they can be trusted in the community under limited supervision, which may then support a subsequent application to participate in work release. During 2021-22, six inmates were working in community projects.¹⁰⁴ Geoffrey Pearce CC had a small array of community projects running, which included:

¹⁰¹ Information provided by CSNSW, January 2024.

¹⁰² Information provided by CSNSW, January 2024.

¹⁰³ Inspector of Custodial Services, *Programs, Employment and Education Inspection* (Report, February 2020) 62.

¹⁰⁴ Information provided by CSNSW, January 2024.

- grounds maintenance at a local church
- lawn and garden maintenance at a nearby historical tourist attraction
- maintenance of the gum trees in the Taronga Zoo Koala plantation located outside of Geoffrey Pearce CC.

Community projects participants said that they derived satisfaction from being able to contribute to the community. The Inspector encourages Geoffrey Pearce CC to continue these community projects and seek out new partnerships and opportunities because the number of community projects positions is very low compared to the number of inmates who hold a C2 classification.

7.5 Release from custody

We observed two men being discharged from custody simultaneously. The discharge process was conducted carelessly with paperwork and property belonging to both men on the discharge desk. The attempt to discharge the men simultaneously led to one of the men receiving the wrong valuables.

One inmate being discharged did not speak English and a telephone interpreter was not engaged to assist in the discharge process. Using a telephone interpreter would have ensured the man understood his post-release instructions. The two men were escorted out of the correctional centre by foot through the vehicle dock, not the exit used by visitors.

As a predominately minimum-security centre, staff at Geoffrey Pearce CC should be experienced in discharging people from custody into the community. Refresher training in release processes is required for custodial staff at Geoffrey Pearce CC.

Recommendation: Corrective Services NSW ensures that Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre staff receive refresher training in discharge procedures and use interpreters as required.

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