

Inspector of
Custodial Services

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Inspection of Junee Correctional Centre 2023

December 2024

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We advise this resource may contain images, or names of deceased persons in photographs or historical content.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

Published by the Inspector of Custodial Services

<https://www.inspectorcustodial.nsw.gov.au/>

First published: December 2024

ISBN/ISSN: 2207 0389

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Glossary of terms and acronyms

Aboriginal	'Aboriginal' when used in this report is inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
AOD	Alcohol and other drug/s
AVL	Audio visual link
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
FTU	Female Transit Unit
GEO	The GEO Group Australia Pty Ltd
HRAT	High Risk Assessment Team
ICS	Inspector of Custodial Services
ICS Act	<i>Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2012</i>
IDC	Inmate development committee
JH&FMHN	Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network
KPI	Key performance indicator
MPU	Multipurpose unit
Normal discipline	'Mainstream' accommodation areas for inmates not requiring placement in a special management area or protective custody
OAT	Opioid agonist treatment
OIMS	Offender information management system
PI	Performance indicator
R&R	Rehabilitation and reintegration
RRT	Rapid response team
SMAP	Special management area placement
Unsentenced	Includes unconvicted persons, as well as people who have been convicted but are awaiting sentence

Executive summary

In November 2023 the NSW Government announced that Junee Correctional Centre (Junee CC) will be handed over to the State and operated by Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) following the expiry of the current management agreement in March 2025. This will conclude a 30 year association with The GEO Group Australia Pty Ltd (GEO), who have managed the centre since it opened in 1993.

As far as we are aware, the decision not to go to tender and to take the centre into public hands was not related to the performance of GEO. The decision to transition the operations of Junee CC to public management is consistent with the NSW Labor Party's election policy commitment to 'ensuring public-owned assets remain in public hands'. Public management of Junee CC is expected to provide savings to the NSW Government while providing better pay, conditions and career opportunities to frontline workers.¹

This report sets out the findings of our August 2023 inspection during GEO operation, prior to the announcement. Many of our recommendations must now be addressed to CSNSW, as they prepare for the transition to State management.

While Junee CC has a range of challenges and concerns, we did find many areas of good practice. We have noted in this report where relatively good treatment and conditions for inmates were observed, with a view to CSNSW maintaining those standards. It would be disappointing for any services or conditions for inmates to deteriorate after GEO's departure. Likewise, we have highlighted areas that in our view carry risk and need improvement.

This report therefore includes quite a high number of recommendations: those directed towards improvement (relevant to both GEO and CSNSW), and those directed to CSNSW for retention of good practice.

CSNSW advised that a 'transition working party of subject matter experts has been established to develop the operating philosophy and plans' for Junee CC and that formalised plans will not be available until closer to the transition date of 1 April 2025.²

For most of its life, since opening in 1993, Junee CC accommodated predominantly sentenced medium and minimum security male inmates, with a smaller population of inmates on remand, and a very small transitional unit for women. Since a major expansion in recent years, adding a maximum security sector, Junee CC is now a large multi-classification centre.

Ideally, an inmate from the local region and surrounds should now be able to spend their entire incarceration at Junee CC, from their time on remand to their eventual release. At the outset, we think the centre's role and function as the correctional centre for accommodating inmates from the regional area needs more emphasis going forward.

The addition of the large maximum security sector has resulted in increasing numbers of inmates on remand (who are unconvicted) at Junee CC, from 16-24% between 2018-2021, to 44% in February 2024.³ For remand inmates specifically, we would prefer to see more strategic placement for people from the region, as opposed to the centre simply being a place that inmates from Sydney or further afield can be sent to while awaiting legal proceedings. The random placement of remand inmates across NSW occurs due to a policy called Remand Bed Placement.⁴

Junee CC also acts as the regional reception facility, and new reception inmates arrive on a daily basis from surrounding areas (for example Wagga Wagga, Albury, Griffith). With Junee CC holding increasing numbers of remand prisoners, GEO (and CSNSW) need to be constantly vigilant regarding staff training and staff resources dedicated to reception screening. This is for security and safety reasons. Reception and early remand is an extremely high risk period for vulnerable inmates.

1 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 17 October 2024.

2 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 17 October 2024.

3 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 25 March 2024.

4 On 11 July 2024 the Acting Commissioner of Corrective Services NSW wrote to the ICS and advised that the Remand Bed Placement policy was being revoked.

Like several centres across NSW, Junee CC was the site of major multi-year construction works between 2018-2020. This was our first inspection since the expansion with the new infrastructure in use. We noted several positives and good planning, including a significant increase in audio visual suite capacity and good placement around the centre; new reception area including holding cells; a new multi-purpose unit (MPU)/segregation area; a fit for purpose small transit unit for holding women for short stays in maximum security conditions; new maximum security accommodation for men; new gatehouse and entry. In many ways the expansion has extended the life of Junee CC considerably.

We observed, however, some major limitations in the 30 year old accommodation still used for medium and minimum security accommodation. While they are not yet obsolete, they require improvement and refurbishment for long-term suitability. We have made a number of recommendations around custodial infrastructure here, related to safety, security and hygiene.

Regarding overall safety and security, Junee CC was, in our view, still adjusting to the change in cohort, and to managing large numbers of maximum security and remand inmates. Overall, the volume of incidents at Junee CC in 2023 exceeded the targets in the contract performance regime, and assaults were trending upwards compared to previous years.⁵ We felt the new maximum security units were hectic and crowded, communication and relationships between inmates and staff was strained and lacked effectiveness, and we believe there is room for improvement regarding cell placement risk assessment. We have made recommendations around operational capacity, single cell capacity and risk assessment.

Some good custodial practice was observed in several areas, for example, how staff managed unlock and lock-in times for inmates (on time), staff management of court appearances via audio visual link (AVL), and how they managed accountability for inmate tablets. It would be good to see these practices retained by CSNSW at Junee CC and adopted more broadly by CSNSW.

Good custodial practice was also observed in reception during the inspection, however with the increasing numbers of remand prisoners, GEO (and CSNSW) need to be constantly vigilant regarding staff training and staff resources dedicated to reception screening. We have recommended some enhancements to the induction regime.

Health services is an area that was under significant pressure at Junee CC. Stability had seemingly improved in 2023 after a very difficult few years coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic, and we did see some good practices and care towards inmates during the inspection. However, like many regional correctional centres, Junee CC has struggled to maintain staffing resources in recent years. Staffing retention will have to be considered by the Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network (JH&FMHN) as they ready to take over health services at Junee CC in April 2025. Furthermore, given the transition to JH&FMHN, it will no doubt be a particular challenge to retain adequate staffing and resourcing as GEO's time as operator nears an end, with attrition and additional risk a real potential.

JH&FMHN will also need to ensure that numbers of remand and reception inmates, including the proportion of Aboriginal and female remand and reception inmates are factored into their planning to take over delivery of health services at Junee CC. In 2022 Junee CC received on average around 20 new receptions per week. This is in addition to an average of around 27 inmates transferred from other correctional centres per week. All require health examination by a qualified health professional within 24 hours of arrival.⁶

Regarding health services delivered by GEO, we have made recommendations around a number of issues of concern, including insufficient nursing clinics, resources for drug and alcohol, mental health and Aboriginal health, and waitlist management for less-urgent matters. While GEO had dedicated good resources to dental services, we were disappointed to see a lack of progress on implementation of some of the standardised JH&FMHN Oral Health Service technology, which was

5 Assaults trended upwards at the initial stage of the transitional phase where GEO's staffing was impacted and inmates spent more time in their cells. Staffing and the inmate population has since stabilized which has resulted in a downward trend in assaults and incidents, Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 17 October 2024.

6 Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection Standards for Adult Custodial Services in New South Wales* (May 2020) standard 78.

an issue raised with GEO and JH&FMHN during the previous inspection. We also note the Coroner has made a number of recommendations regarding delivery of health services at Junee CC in recent years, and this advice will also need to be factored into strategic planning.

In terms of conditions and treatment of inmates, there were several areas where GEO have developed good practice over the years of operation. This included preparation of fresh meals onsite, which is valued by inmates, good library access and services and vocational training opportunities for medium and minimum security inmates, dedicated activities officers in the staffing structure, embedding of mental health nurses and psychologists into the management of high risk inmates and (at least historically) good out of cell hours. We have made a number of recommendations to CSNSW to retain good practice so as standards do not deteriorate.

In other areas, we think the centre was not meeting expectations. This included aspects of the visits regime, internal complaints and avenues for inmate requests, provision of work release opportunities, some training and some aspects of the minimum security regime.

Our review also indicated that Aboriginal inmates were overrepresented in segregation orders (issued in 2022) and in use of force incidents in 2023. This should be of concern to Junee CC management.

Around one third of the population at Junee CC was Aboriginal. We found that staff cultural awareness was lacking and have recommended that GEO take immediate steps to improve Aboriginal cultural awareness for non-Aboriginal staff at Junee CC. While we observed some good practice and leadership, and some good but incomplete initiatives, we believe Junee CC did not have adequate provision of cultural strengthening programs, or adequate access to cultural spaces such as Yarning Circles. All GEO and CSNSW staff must treat Aboriginal people with decency and respect for Aboriginal culture, preventing and calling out any prejudice and racism observed.

We also think it would be timely for a review of program offerings overall at Junee CC, particularly to increase those relevant to the increased cohort of remand inmates. In addition, as GEO's role as operator of Junee CC draws to an end, CSNSW should ensure it has captured any best practice from the GEO specific suite of programs, particularly around substance abuse, so that important knowledge is not lost.

As the centre moves to public hands, it is important to reflect that key performance indicators (KPIs) can drive better performance if they are appropriate, targeted, and enforced. We would like to see CSNSW retain some of the KPIs for Junee CC that can drive good practice, for example, setting targets for out of cell hours, purposeful activity, and random illicit drug testing. CSNSW now faces the challenge and opportunity to focus on the role and function of Junee CC as a regional centre. It should consider adopting KPIs under state operation, similarly to John Morony Correctional Centre, that allows it to facilitate safe custody and optimal daily regimes and structured day for work and rehabilitative programs and education.⁷

There are significant risks associated with the transfer of operators of correctional centres. Looking towards the handover, if CSNSW (and JH&FMHN) are to be ready to commence the operations of Junee CC on 1 April 2025, retention of many existing GEO staff will be very important. The NSW Government are planning to enable a specific process for existing GEO employees to move into CSNSW employment. This includes a multi layered recruitment strategy including but not limited to matching existing GEO employees to CSNSW roles.⁸ If CSNSW is unable to retain and recruit sufficient staff to safely operate the centre, they propose to substantially reduce the operational capacity. CSNSW advise that a contingency plan has been developed to ensure the inmate population matches the staffing profile to maintain safety and security within the centre as they approach the handover in April 2025.⁹

7 Junee Correctional Centre will operate in accordance with Corrective Services NSW Key Performance Indicators, Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures and Local Operating Procedures. Information provided by CSNSW, 17 October 2024.

8 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 17 October 2024.

9 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 17 October 2024.

Recommendations

The Inspector recommends:

1. Corrective Services NSW reconsiders the removal of dedicated onsite monitors from privately operated centres.
2. GEO and Corrective Services NSW continue to use a specific area in Sector A accommodation blocks to manage new receptions and remand inmates for first night(s) accommodation.
3. Corrective Services NSW reviews and adjusts the operational capacity of Sector A accommodation blocks to be closer in line with cell design, and increase the single cell placement capacity in Sectors A and B.
4. GEO and Corrective Services NSW ensure that the purpose built interview rooms in the Sector A 'R&R' infrastructure are used by staff for relevant functions and interventions, and that access is incorporated into planning daily regimes and custodial staffing.
5. GEO and Corrective Services NSW carry out thorough refurbishment of Sector B accommodation, paying attention to:
 - a. remediation of hanging points
 - b. constructing showers in cells
 - c. improve privacy and hygiene for existing showers in common area unless and until showers are available in-cell
 - d. ensuring adequate connectivity so in-cell tablets can be used
 - e. painting over graffiti.
6. Corrective Services NSW reviews refurbishment and maintenance needs in Sector C to ensure viable long-term use.
7. GEO and Corrective Services NSW conduct custodial screening of new reception inmates with increased privacy, and in a private room where possible.
8. Corrective Services NSW continues GEO practice of issuing each new reception inmate to Junee Correctional Centre with a doona on arrival following contract transition.
9. Corrective Services NSW maintains staff training levels for X-ray body scanners at Junee Correctional Centre.
10. Corrective Services NSW maintains the standard required under the Junee Correctional Centre management agreement that Aboriginal inmates should be provided access to an Aboriginal wellbeing/liaison officer within 24 hours of reception into custody.
11. GEO and Corrective Services NSW enhance induction practice at Junee Correctional Centre through an induction video to assist inmates with low literacy; as well as plain English or Easy English improvements to the inmate handbook and an easier to read font size for physical copies.
12. GEO and Corrective Services NSW improve risk assessment regarding cell placement for those entering a shared cell at Junee Correctional Centre.
13. GEO and Corrective Services NSW provide staff at Junee Correctional Centre with training in the management of LGBTIQ+ people.
14. GEO managers speak to relevant inmates before the weekly segregation meeting.
15. GEO rapid response team members at Junee Correctional Centre should be required to complete specialist training, as is required by Corrective Services NSW Immediate Action Team members.

16. Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network ensures that numbers of remand and reception inmates, including the proportion of Aboriginal and female remand and reception inmates are factored into their planning to take over delivery of health services at Junee Correctional Centre.
17. GEO reinstates primary care nurse, metabolic monitoring and chronic care clinics to complement the role of the GP.
18. GEO ensures ongoing monitoring, clinic scheduling and action taken to allow appropriate waitlist management for all clinics, including Priority 3 patients.
19. Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network works to maintain the current levels of dental services/hours post transition as a good practice service level model.
20. GEO implements standardised JH&FMHN Oral Health Service technology prior to transition to JH&FMHN, including Titanium clinical record system, the JH&FMHN oral health access line and digital X-ray services.
21. GEO prioritises recruitment of the full drug and alcohol team at Junee Correctional Centre, including drug and alcohol registered nurse or nurse practitioner and drug and alcohol medical specialist to reduce waiting times for drug and alcohol clinical interventions.
22. GEO and Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network consider increasing mental health nursing resources to include an additional position, preferably a higher level mental health nurse position such as a mental health clinical nurse consultant or mental health nurse practitioner to provide a broader range of supports and clinical supervision.
23. GEO and Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network prioritise an Aboriginal health primary care program, through direct recruitment of Aboriginal health staff or partnership with an Aboriginal community-controlled health organisation.
24. Corrective Services retains time out of cell as a key performance indicator for management of Junee Correctional Centre (at least to the level required by the current contract) and incorporate 12 hour shifts into the custodial staffing profile to facilitate this.
25. Corrective Services NSW undertakes a security review for Sector C (minimum security) at Junee Correctional Centre.
26. GEO and Corrective Services NSW review lock-in regimes in Sector C (minimum security), with a view to designating at least one unit where inmates can be locked into their units (and not cells) overnight.
27. Corrective Services NSW retains GEO practice for provision of fresh meals prepared onsite at Junee Correctional Centre, including use of produce from the farm where possible.
28. Corrective Services NSW take action to amend relevant policies and procedures, to make specific reference to audio visual link (AVL) visits. This should include entitlements, frequency and duration of AVL visits.
29. GEO and Corrective Services NSW ensure in-person visit information available to the public and inmates is regularly updated and that remand inmates are provided with the entitlement to receive two visits per week.
30. GEO and Corrective Services NSW re-introduce a separate extended visits regime for inmates in Sector C of Junee Correctional Centre, reflecting minimum security standards across NSW.
31. GEO and Corrective Services NSW review the visits regime at Junee CC to ensure meeting demand and entitlements regarding in-person and video visits.
32. Corrective Services NSW implements the tablet management system adopted at Junee Correctional Centre by GEO staff at Junee and at other correctional centres.

33. Corrective Services NSW improves telephone access in Sector B (medium security).
34. GEO and Corrective Services NSW ensure that Junee Correctional Centre has an auditable system that records internal requests and complaints, which can be inspected by Corrective Services NSW, Official Visitors, the Ombudsman and the Inspector of Custodial Services. The auditable system should record the time taken to resolve a complaint.
35. Corrective Services NSW retains a dedicated AVL team at Junee Correctional Centre and related good management and practice.
36. GEO and Corrective Services NSW refurbish holding cells in the central AVL hub in Sector B and reduce unnecessary crowding in holding cells through timed movement.
37. Corrective Services NSW maintains the level of library access and range of library services provided to inmates at Junee Correctional Centre.
38. Corrective Service NSW retains KPIs for purposeful activity and maintains dedicated activities officers in the staffing profile for Junee Correctional Centre that cannot be absorbed into the regular custodial staff pool.
39. GEO and Corrective Services NSW provide programs with a focus on strengthening cultural connectedness with traditions and contact with Elders and Mentors at Junee Correctional Centre.
40. GEO takes immediate steps to improve Aboriginal cultural awareness for non-Aboriginal staff at Junee CC. This should also be included in custodial officer recruit training.
41. Corrective Services NSW prioritises retention of Aboriginal staff at Junee Correctional Centre, retains the Aboriginal liaison officer function in the staffing profile and increases resources directed to that function: aim for a staffing complement of at least four, with gender balance, on transition to CSNSW operation.
42. GEO and Corrective Services NSW ensure Yarning Circles at Junee Correctional Centre are accessible to inmates within the daily regime.
43. Corrective Services NSW ensures GEO-specific programs for substance abuse and life skills delivered at Junee Correctional Centre are reviewed and any best practice incorporated where possible into program and service delivery in NSW correctional centres.
44. GEO and Corrective Services NSW review and increase program offerings for remand cohorts at Junee Correctional Centre, including short term programs relevant to substance abuse.
45. GEO and Corrective Services NSW review staffing to ensure sufficient capacity for regular welfare support to reception and remand inmates, as well as program delivery for a large multi-sector correctional centre.
46. Corrective Services NSW retains the variety of employment offerings at Junee CC for medium and minimum security inmates and increases options for maximum security inmates where possible.
47. Corrective Services NSW maintains the farm at Junee Correctional Centre, and the variety of opportunities within the farm, including as a source of employment, local food production for the inmates, vocational training and wellbeing.
48. Corrective Services NSW maintains the variety of vocational training opportunities offered at Junee Correctional Centre.
49. GEO and Corrective Services NSW identify and establish work release opportunities at Junee Correctional centre and ensure local practice for progression to C3 classification is consistent with policy.
50. 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*.

Junee Correctional Centre profile

Location

Junee Correctional Centre (CC) is located on the land of the Wiradjuri people, in the town of Junee in the Riverina region of NSW. Junee is approximately 435km southwest of Sydney.

History

Junee CC opened in 1993 as the first privately operated correctional centre in NSW. The GEO Group Australia Pty Ltd (GEO) has managed Junee CC since it opened.¹⁰ For most of its life, Junee CC accommodated inmates in medium and minimum security accommodation. A major expansion added a large maximum security sector to the centre in 2020.

The NSW Government announced in November 2023 that Junee CC will be operated by Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) following the expiry of the current contract in March 2025.

Capacity

Across all security areas, Junee CC can accommodate up to 1,279 persons.¹¹ The contract also includes a reference to a minimum population of 790 men.¹² Within this range, the maximum inmate population and cohort mix can vary at the discretion of CSNSW, and GEO is required to maintain operational flexibility in this regard.¹³ The actual population on the first day of our inspection (21 August 2023) was 895.

Function

Following the recent expansion, Junee CC is now a large facility with separate maximum, medium and minimum security areas for men. It also includes a small transition unit for women. The largest group being managed are inmates with a medium security classification, around 35% in January 2023 and 40% in February 2024. One third of the population has a minimum security classification.¹⁴ The centre's function also now includes managing a substantial cohort of inmates with a maximum security classification, around 29% of the population on 1 January 2023 and 26% on 1 February 2024. Around half of this cohort were on remand (unconvicted).

Junee CC is the remand and reception centre for the Riverina region and also receives transfers from other correctional centres, (some of whom will transit through Junee CC before going to another centre). In theory, people from the local region should be able to spend their entire time in custody at Junee CC. While the majority of inmates at Junee CC are sentenced, there is now a substantial remand population. This proportion of unconvicted inmates has increased from 16-24% between 2018-2021, to 37% in January 2023 and 44% in February 2024.¹⁵

Previous inspection by the Inspector of Custodial Services

Junee CC was previously inspected by the Inspector of Custodial Services in June 2018 as part of a thematic inspection on access to health services in NSW correctional centres.¹⁶

Inspection dates

Pre-inspection visit: 29-30 May 2023
Onsite inspection: 20-25 August 2023

10 Formerly operating as Australasian Correctional Management, see section 1.1.

11 The 'maximum inmate state' is described in the contract as 1,279. See Contract, Schedule 23 (Output Specification) Part A Introduction and Overview, 8.

12 Minimum Population is defined as meaning '790 male ordinary inmates' in Schedule 21, Payment Schedule, 1.

13 For example, we were advised by the General Manager Junee CC on 29 May 2023 that the agreed operational capacity at that time was 910.

14 Approximately 33% on 1 January 2023 and 32% on 1 February 2024. Information provided by Corrective Services NSW 14 March 2023 and 25 March 2024.

15 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 25 March 2024.

16 Inspector of Custodial Services, *Health Services in NSW Correctional Facilities* (Report, March 2021) (Health Services Report).

Inspection process

The office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (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.¹⁷

Inspection provides independent information gathering and analysis concerning what is working well and which areas require improvement.

The Inspector and a Principal Inspection and Research Officer (the lead coordinator) carried out a preliminary inspection visit to Junee CC on 29 and 30 May 2023. The main onsite inspection of the centre took place between 20 and 25 August 2023. The inspection team consisted of the Inspector, two Principal Inspection and Research Officers, two Senior Inspection and Research Officers, an Inspection and Research Officer and an Aboriginal Inspection and Liaison Officer. An independent consultant with a clinical background in custodial health settings was also engaged to join the inspection team.

We gathered a range of information during the onsite component. Observations were made, documentation was obtained and discussions were held with individual men and women in custody, groups of inmates (including the inmate development committee) and a range of GEO staff.

It is acknowledged that inspections capture a snapshot in time. Prior to and after the onsite inspection, a range of information was obtained (via meetings and in documentary form) from GEO, CSNSW, Official Visitors and the Ombudsman.

Following the on-site inspection, a debrief is held with the Governor of the centre. This provides an opportunity for local management to address any immediate concerns and to be aware of the initial findings of the inspection and likely medium to longer term recommendations. A debrief with the General Manager of Junee CC took place in October 2023.

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, identify or allow the identification of a person who is or was detained at a youth justice centre or in custody in a juvenile correctional 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 the GEO Group Australia Pty Ltd, Corrective Services NSW, and the Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network in accordance with section 14(2) of the ICS Act. Responses were received from GEO Group Australia Pty Ltd, Corrective Services NSW and Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network. 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.

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

1 Junee Correctional Centre background and operating framework

1.1 Background

Junee CC opened in 1993 and was the first privately operated correctional centre in NSW. The GEO Group Australia Pty Ltd (GEO) has managed Junee CC since it opened 30 years ago. GEO is a wholly owned subsidiary of the GEO Group Inc, a publicly listed company with headquarters in the United States.¹⁸ At the time of writing GEO is operating two correctional facilities and a transitional centre in Victoria.

1.2 Contract history and current term

Since 1993 and the original management agreement for Junee CC, there have been two competitive tender processes, in 2000 and 2008. GEO was the successful tenderer on both occasions. A new ten-year operational contract was awarded in April 2009. Around this time the inmate population was approaching 800, with over 85% sentenced inmates.¹⁹

In 2018 the state exercised its option to extend the contract for a further five years from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2024. This five year extension included contract amendments and a new performance regime designed to align with the performance regimes for the two other privately operated facilities in NSW, Parklea Correctional Centre (Parklea CC) and Clarence Correctional Centre (Clarence CC). This new performance regime actually came into effect at Junee CC on 1 December 2020, following the completion of major construction work at the centre.²⁰

In this report, use of the term ‘the contract’ refers to this five year extension.²¹

Following our last inspection of Parklea CC, we recommended that the effectiveness (including cost effectiveness) of the new contracts to operate Parklea, Junee and Clarence Correctional Centres be independently assessed.²² This recommendation was supported by CSNSW. In October 2022, the previous NSW government approved an extension of the Junee CC management agreement with GEO for a further period of 12 months from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, to allow an appropriate time for the re-tender process. In November 2023 the NSW Government announced that Junee CC will be handed to the State and operated by CSNSW following the expiry of the current contract in March 2025.²³

Given the mandate of our office, this report focuses on treatment and conditions of inmates. We are aware that Junee CC has played a major role supporting the local community over many years and note that this report does not analyse or list in detail the work GEO performs as a corporate citizen in the town of Junee, for example corporate sponsorship of local events, funding scholarships, charitable donations, or supporting local businesses through purchases. Nevertheless we did see evidence of GEO’s support of the local community during our inspection and acknowledge the transition from GEO to NSW government will have an impact on the town of Junee as well as the operation of the correctional centre.

18 The original management agreement for Junee CC in 1993 was between CSNSW and an entity called Australasian Correctional Management (ACM). ACM was a wholly owned subsidiary of the US based Wackenhut Corrections Corporation. In 2003 Wackenhut Corrections Corporation changed its name to the GEO Group Inc, and ACM then became the GEO Group Australia Pty Ltd. The GEO Group Inc operates a range of correctional and immigration facilities in North America, South Africa and the United Kingdom.

19 Corrective Services NSW, *Annual Report 2008-09* (Annual Report, 2009) 51, 98, 141. The total population on 28 June 2009 was 787, 685 sentenced and 102 on remand.

20 Letter from CSNSW to GEO 3 November 2020, advising that the ‘revised Amendment start date is 1 December 2020.’

21 Long form: Junee Correctional Centre Deed of Amendment and Extension, between the Commissioner of Corrective Services for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of NSW and the GEO Group Australia Pty Ltd, 30 November 2018.

22 Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection of Parklea Correctional Centre* (Report, June 2022) (‘Parklea Report’) 25-26.

23 <https://www.nsw.gov.au/media-releases/bringing-junee-correctional-centre-into-public-hands>.

CSNSW advise that they must follow whole of government procurement guidelines when working with local businesses and organisations, and are working to identify local vendors and suppliers that fit within these guidelines.²⁴

1.3 Expansion

For nearly 30 years, Junee CC operated as the remand and reception centre for the Riverina region and surrounding areas and as a medium and minimum security facility for men, predominantly sentenced inmates with protection status. It also had a very small capacity to accommodate women for short periods of time. This changed significantly in recent years. Major construction took place at Junee CC between 2017-2020. The main feature was a new 480-bed maximum security compound for men, incorporating four identical double storey accommodation blocks.

The expansion also included a number of new facilities for the maximum security sector (Sector A), including an audio visual link (AVL) building, satellite health clinic, employment, programs and education areas, and a new multipurpose unit (MPU).

The new Sector A is effectively the size of a new prison, and this development was a major shift in Junee CC operations due to:

- a much larger physical footprint to oversee
- managing a maximum security population
- larger proportion of remand inmates, and
- larger numbers overall.

Other construction and refurbishment work that took place during this period included refurbishments and improvements to the main health centre, inmate reception area and gatehouse, as well as the construction of a new 10-bed unit for women.

1.4 Operating framework

1.4.1 Private operation of correctional facilities – key principles

The role of our office is to report publicly on custodial services and conditions, and to recommend improvements, irrespective of what sector (private or public) provides the services.

When considering or commenting on privately operated correctional centres in NSW, it is important to keep some key principles and legal requirements in mind, for example:

- Provisions in management agreements (contracts) must not be inconsistent with the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences Act) 1999* (CAS Act) or the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Regulation 2014* (CAS Regulation).²⁵
- However, management agreements may establish a standard in relation to inmate welfare that exceeds the standards of the CAS Act or the CAS Regulation.²⁶
- Staff employed at privately operated centres in NSW are subject by law to the provisions of the CAS Regulation, and to any directions given by the Commissioner of CSNSW, either generally or in a particular case.²⁷
- While Junee CC has its own operating manuals for example, as required under the management agreement, these procedures must be consistent with the CSNSW *Custodial*

24 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 17 October 2024.

25 *Crimes (Administration of Sentences Act) 1999* s 238.

26 *Crimes (Administration of Sentences Act) 1999* s 238(4).

27 *Crimes (Administration of Sentences Act) 1999* s 241(2).

Operations Policy and Procedures (COPP) and reviewed and approved by CSNSW.²⁸

Therefore, while GEO has been contracted by the NSW Government to provide certain services at Junee CC, it does not operate outside of or independently of the NSW correctional system. Inmates are transferred between public and privately operated prisons daily, and CSNSW retains responsibility for inmates housed in all locations.

Some of the current legislative and reporting framework around private operators in NSW are discussed in more detail in our report that was published in 2022 following the inspection of Parklea CC (Parklea Report).²⁹

1.4.2 Performance regime

A performance regime applies to the contract. It includes four 'charge events', 25 key performance indicators (KPIs) with financial consequences if non-compliance is identified, and 'a suite of output specifications which reflect the service delivery requirements of the operator against key operational outcomes'.³⁰

The four charge events (unnatural deaths, escapes, major disruptions to the operation of the correctional centre and compliance with release dates) are considered major defaults to the contract, and also allow the Commissioner of CSNSW to issue a significant financial penalty, or 'charge'.³¹

The output specification incorporates a summary of key outcomes the State is hoping to achieve across five key services areas: rehabilitation and reintegration; safety and security; decency and respect; professionalism and accountability; and health services. For each outcome, there is then a comprehensive list of minimum service requirements with which GEO must comply.

Also included in the output specification are 23 performance indicators (PIs), on which GEO also has to report performance. They are the same as those described in the Parklea Report and include a range of factors related primarily to safety and security and rehabilitation.³² PIs do not have financial consequences per se, however they are a tool to evaluate performance, and can be used by CSNSW to formulate a Performance Improvement Notice (PIN), should performance be unsatisfactory.

The State may issue a PIN if there is a failure to comply.³³ If CSNSW issues a PIN, GEO must develop a 'cure plan' to remedy the failures identified, which is provided to CSNSW to review.³⁴ There is a separate process for major defaults.

1.4.3 Key performance indicators

Table 1 below shows the KPIs to the contract to operate Junee CC. Although the numbering is different, they are substantively the same as the KPIs discussed in our Parklea Report.³⁵ GEO is required to report monthly (as well as quarterly and annually) on these. Financial abatements (referred to as Quality Failure Abatements in the contract schedules) apply to the monthly fees under the contract subject to performance.³⁶

28 Management agreement for Junee Correctional Centre (Deed of Extension) part 20 'Management of the Correctional Centre' 43.

29 Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection of Parklea Correctional Centre* (Report, June 2022) 24-35.

30 See Department of Communities and Justice, *2021-22 Annual Report Volume 1*, 115.

31 There are a number of other types of major default, outlined in the definitions section of the Deed of Extension. See also Schedule 19, Performance Regime, 7-12.

32 See Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection of Parklea Correctional Centre* (Report, June 2022) 31-32.

33 Contract, Schedule 19, Performance Regime.

34 Adherence to cure plans is KPI 14.

35 Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection of Parklea Correctional Centre* (Report, June 2022) 27-30.

36 Section 10.2 of Schedule 21, Payment Schedule together with section 3 of the Performance Regime describe a methodology for calculating Quality Failure Point (QFPs) and Quality Failure Abatements where target performance is not met.

Table 1: Key performance indicators³⁷

KPI	Description	Target or performance range/comment
KPI 1	Current case plans	Number of eligible inmates with a current case plan. Target is 98-100% of eligible inmates with a current case plan. Quality Failure Points (QFPs) begin to accrue at 98% or less
KPI 2	Outstanding case plan interventions	Target is zero outstanding. QFPs begin to accrue at 3% or more. The rate of QFPs is higher for medium/high risk inmates, than applies for low risk inmates
KPI 3	Specified serious incidents	Target is zero. QFPs accrue per incident.
KPI 4	Assaults on non-inmates	Target is zero.
KPI 5	Assaults on inmates by other inmates	One or more serious or significant incidents results in QFPs.
KPI 6	Illicit drug use	Calculated by reference to the rate of random drug tests returning a positive result. ³⁸ Anything more than 6% accrues QFPs, with a higher deduction above 12%.
KPI 7	Serious self-harm	Target is zero.
KPI 8	Temporary leave programs and compliance with temporary leave orders	Calculates rate of participation of eligible inmates, as well as number of breaches.
KPI 9	Time out of cells	Requirement to ensure a minimum of i) 7.5 hours per day out of cells in secure accommodation; ii) 11 hours per day out of cell in open accommodation areas.
KPI 10	Purposeful activity	Target of 4.8-6 hours for sentenced inmates and 3-4 hours for remand inmates.
KPI 11	Staff misconduct	Number of incidents, as well as number of incidents not known to operator and/or not reported.
KPI 12	Escapes from temporary leave	Zero threshold-any escape from temporary leave (so defined) results in QFPs.
KPI 13	Accuracy of reporting	Target is zero non-compliant reports and zero critical reporting failures
KPI 14	Adherence to performance improvement notice cure plans	Target is 100% adherence (or zero failures to comply).
KPI 15	Carrying out scheduled FM service tasks	Target is zero failures to undertake critical or non-critical maintenance tasks. Higher rate of QFPs in relation to critical planned maintenance.
KPI 16	Rectifying facilities management failure events	Four levels of service failures: emergency, urgent/high, medium and low, each with specific time frames.
KPI 17	Chronic healthcare plans	Proportion of eligible patients with up to date plans. Target is 100%, QFPs accrue at 85% or less.
KPI 18	Timely primary health services	Target is 100% compliance with timeframes for priority 1 and 2 patients. QFPs apply for any failure periods.
KPI 19	Health discharge plans	Health discharge plans provided to eligible sentenced and remand patients.

³⁷ Contract, Schedule 19 Performance Regime, 13-56.

³⁸ Random drug testing as defined under the contract is a monthly exercise whereby the State selects a random 5% sample of the population of eligible inmates and notifies GEO who then conduct the tests. Inmates who have been in custody for less than 30 days are excluded.

KPI 20	Early detection programs and immunisation services	Target is 100% eligible patients provided with immunisations, with QFPs accruing below this rate. For Early Detection Programs, the target is also 100%, but QPPs accrue from 75% or below.
KPI 21	Health related incident reporting	Related to timeframes for required reporting on health incidents
KPI 22	Drug and alcohol referrals for pregnancies	Referrals of eligible patients to addictions specialist or drug and alcohol medical officer
KPI 23	Health screening	For persons newly received into custody, the target is 100% health assessment within 24 hours
KPI 24	Inmate place unavailability	QFPs accrue for each day a cell is unavailable for inmate placement (for a variety of reasons that may require rectification)
KPI 25	Meal failures	QFPs accrue for any failure to provide an inmate food in accordance with the contract.

In our recent report on the John Morony Correctional Centre, we found that KPIs had driven change at that centre, even though it was publicly operated.³⁹ At that centre, as well as at Junee CC, having key targets for time out of cell can drive good practice around daily regimes, longer out of cell hours, and efficient unlock and lock-in procedures.

While most of the KPIs are important, they are fairly generic. There is an opportunity now for CSNSW to ensure they are tailored to Junee CC and to the different cohorts it accommodates, provided they have a sound thesis behind the role and function of Junee CC. As an expanded multi-classification centre, CSNSW should clarify the role of Junee CC as a regional correctional centre, and review KPIs to ensure they cover the specific needs of different cohorts, such as specific indicators relevant to remand inmates such as access to lawyers and legal materials, additional visits and welfare resources.

1.4.4 Performance reported under the CAS Act

Regardless of the particular performance regime, Section 242 (6) of the CAS Act requires a report on performance of privately operated centres to be included in the annual report of the NSW Department of Communities and Justice. For the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 (the Junee CC contract year) the report stated that GEO's performance was sound and that there were no significant non-compliance issues.⁴⁰ The situation was similar the following year, 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021, where it was reported that GEO met its contractual obligations, and no issues of significance were found.⁴¹

For the year 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, it was noted that (as elsewhere) the COVID-19 pandemic had heavily impacted on the operations of Junee CC. A total of five PINs were issued by CSNSW to GEO in this period: failure to secure inmate; case management file removed from intake area; missing 911 equipment (ligature cut down tool); medical assessment beyond 24 hours; and non-compliance with quarantine requirement. GEO was required to submit cure plans to remedy the performance issues outlined, with remedial actions subject to monitoring by the State.⁴² To provide some context, in the same or similar period ten PINs and two default charge event notices were issued to MTC regarding Parklea CC and ten PINs were issued to Serco/Northern Pathways regarding Clarence CC.⁴³

For the year 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 CSNSW issued a total of seven PINs to GEO (four relating to health services): provision of religious services to inmates; inmate access to medications; deficiency in onsite health solution, unsecure inmate/ door; failure to ensure continuity of care

³⁹ Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection of John Morony Correctional Centre 2023*, (Report, March 2024) 12.

⁴⁰ Department of Communities and Justice, *2019-20 Annual Report*, Volume 1, Part 3 – Appendices, 67.

⁴¹ Department of Communities and Justice, *2020-21 Annual Report*, Volume 1, Part 3 – Appendices, 99.

⁴² Department of Communities and Justice, *2021-22 Annual Report*, Volume 1, 115.

⁴³ The Parklea contract year is also April to March; however the Clarence year is July to June.

through lack of clinical documents; failure to commence opioid agonist treatment (OAT) and Hepatitis C treatment; personal protective equipment (PPE) non-compliance.⁴⁴ The report also noted that Junee CC had experienced recruitment challenges ‘especially within their Health Sector due to high demand for health professionals in the region’ and that they had ‘offered incentives as part of their recruitment strategies to address this issue.’ There were also two charge events in that year, relating to two deaths in custody from unnatural causes. In the same year, CSNSW issued a total of eight PINs and four major default notices to Parklea CC and five PINS and one major default notice to Clarence CC.

As far as we are aware, the decision not to go to tender and to take the centre back into public hands was not related to the performance of GEO. The decision to transition the operations of Junee CC to public management is consistent with the NSW Labor Party’s election policy commitment to ‘ensuring public-owned assets remain in public hands’. Public management of Junee CC is expected to provide savings to the NSW Government while providing better pay, conditions and career opportunities to frontline workers.⁴⁵

1.4.5 Monitoring

Section 242 of the CAS Act provides that at least one person is to be employed in the public service as a monitor for each managed (privately operated) correctional centre.⁴⁶ The monitor is to have free and unfettered access at all times to all parts of the correctional centre, to all records, all offenders and all staff.

In the Parklea Report, we noted that CSNSW contract monitors were onsite daily at Parklea CC, with real time access to Parklea CC documentation and CCTV footage as well as to locations within the centre.⁴⁷ Since then the monitoring regime has changed. There are fewer monitors, now at a more senior rank, appointed to two centres and no longer based at each centre on a full-time basis. We did not see monitors at Junee CC during the week of our inspection. Although we have not analysed performance in detail, we are not confident the decision to remove dedicated onsite monitors from privately operated centres was prudent in the circumstances. While there may be benefits in higher ranking staff being appointed to more than one centre, we think CSNSW should reconsider the removal of dedicated onsite monitors from privately operated centres.

Recommendation: CSNSW reconsiders the removal of dedicated onsite monitors from privately operated centres.

1.5 Staffing overview

GEO provides detailed staffing information to CSNSW in its monthly and quarterly reports, including structure, commencements, terminations, transfers, and promotions. The following staffing structure was provided in March 2023, prior to the inspection.

Table 2: Junee CC staffing structure March 2023

Department	No. FTE	Actual	Casuals
Custodial services - management	18.68	16	0
Custodial services - coordinators	2.22	2	0
Custodial services - supervisors	31.83	25	0
Custodial services - officers	172.8	128	52
Custodial services - trainees	0	18	0

44 Department of Communities and Justice, *2022-23 Annual Report* Volume 1, 127.

45 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 17 October 2024.

46 *Crimes (Administration of Sentences Act) 1999* s 242.

47 Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection of Parklea Correctional Centre* (Report, June 2022) 34-35.

Administration	24.01	19.9	12
Food services	10.98	6	2
Canteen	1.61	1.5	0
Industries/Maintenance	5.11	5	0
Health services	37.99	29.2	31
Rehabilitation and reintegration	25.33	23.6	0
Custodial services (non-custodial)	8.98	8	0
Vocational services	17.1	13	4
Total	356.64	297.24	101

There had been several industrial issues and strikes involving custodial staff at Junee CC in the 12 months prior to our inspection.

During the week of our inspection, Junee CC appeared to have an appropriate number of staff to ensure the normal operation of the centre.

1.5.1 Transitional staffing

With the announcement that Junee CC will return to CSNSW (and JH&FMHN) operation in March 2025, many staff will naturally be concerned about their future employment. Some will seek opportunities elsewhere if the continuation of their roles is uncertain. We expect GEO will face a very challenging period as they try to retain sufficient staff to maintain operations until the handover. Traditionally, GEO has employed a number of staff who live in the local area who may not be available for employment as a full-time public servant. A reduction in staff naturally also has the potential to adversely impact the living conditions of inmates and available opportunities.

Since the announcement, CSNSW has established a regular presence at Junee CC, with a transitional Governor appointed, and a 'shopfront' office where GEO staff can seek information about employment and conditions with CSNSW. If CSNSW is to be ready to commence the operations of Junee CC on 1 April 2025, retention of many existing GEO staff will be very important. There are significant risks associated with the transfer of operators of correctional centres and we encourage CSNSW to review any significant learnings from (for example) the transfer of Parklea CC from GEO to MTC, or the transfer in Queensland of the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre from GEO back to public hands in 2019-20.

If CSNSW is unable to retain and recruit sufficient staff to safely operate the centre, they propose to substantially reduce the operational capacity.⁴⁸ This type of decision will need to be made soon as it is too high risk from a security and safety perspective to make the decision too close to April 2025. CSNSW has developed a contingency plan to ensure the inmate population matches the staffing profile to maintain safety and security within the centre.⁴⁹

There is currently a multi layered recruitment strategy including but not limited to matching existing GEO employees to CSNSW roles. To assist with the recruitment (and retention) of GEO staff, the NSW Government is amending the relevant government employment regulation to enable a specific process for existing GEO employees to move into CSNSW employment.⁵⁰

48 Information provided by staff, August 2024.

49 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 17 October 2024.

50 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 17 October 2024.

2 Inmate profile

2.1 Population

At the beginning of our inspection on 21 August 2023, Junee CC held 895 inmates, which included one woman in the women's unit.

Data provided by CSNSW prior to the inspection and presented below, gives a breakdown of the inmate population as of 1 January 2023, by legal status, age, security classification and cultural background. On this date the population of the centre was 935: 929 men and 6 women. This was consistent with the average range for the 12 months prior. During 2022, the daily average population for men ranged from a low of 882 in September 2022 to a high of 961 in February 2022. For women the range was between five and 10.⁵¹

2.2 Legal status and charges

On 1 January 2023, 63% of male inmates (582) were sentenced or appealing their sentences. 37% (347) were on remand. This breakdown was consistent throughout the 2022 year. Of the six women in custody on that day, four were on remand, one was sentenced, and one was appealing their sentence.⁵² Therefore, while the majority of inmates at Junee are sentenced, there are substantial numbers on remand.

The number of people on remand has increased significantly since the expansion of Junee CC and the establishment of new maximum security infrastructure. We requested some historical population data, which showed that on the first day of February in the years 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021, the number of inmates on remand ranged between 132 to 206, representing less than 25% of the total population. Throughout 2022 however, the daily average remand population increased, and was consistently in the range of 35-43% of the total population.⁵³ On 1 February 2024, out of a total population of 834 people in custody, 370 or 44% were unsentenced. This is a notable change in the Junee CC inmate profile.⁵⁴

Junee CC was managing significant numbers of persons charged with or convicted of violent or sexual offences. Acts intended to cause injury was the most serious offence or charge for the largest number of inmates (279), followed by sexual assault and related offences, offences against justice procedures, illicit drug offences and unlawful entry with intent/burglary. Figure 1 below displays the profile of most serious offences (ten most common categories).⁵⁵

51 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW 14 March 2023.

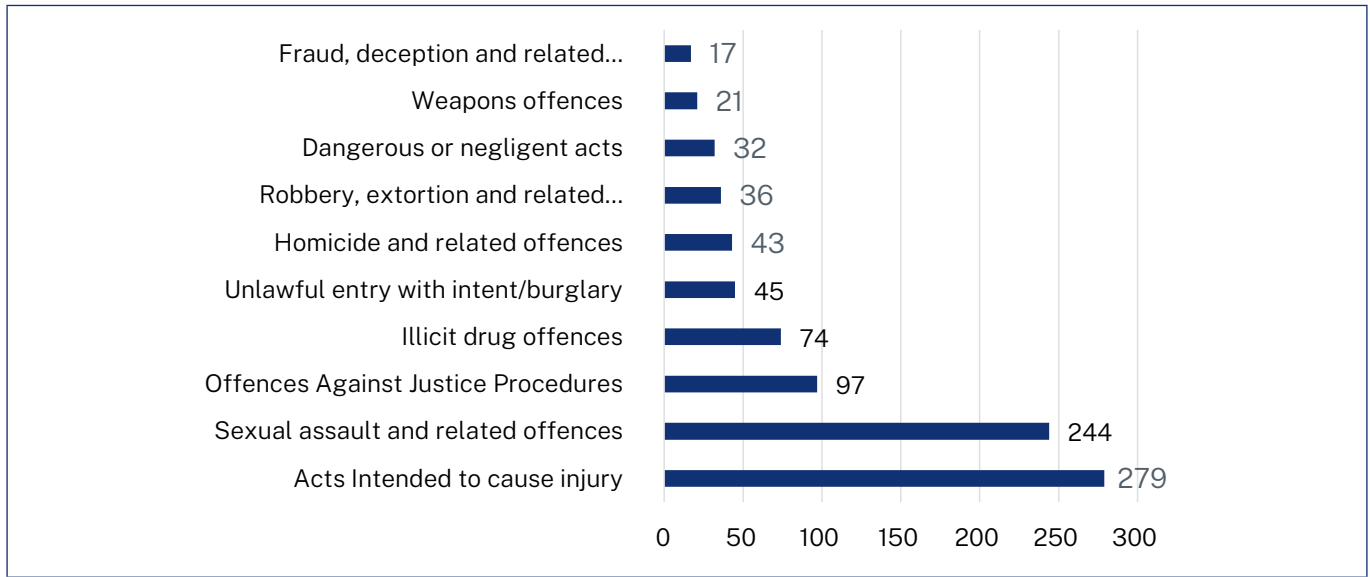
52 The daily average remand population was in the range of 35-43% between January and December 2022. Information provided by Corrective Services NSW 14 March 2023.

53 Information provided by CSNSW 14 March 2023.

54 Information provided by CSNSW 25 March 2024.

55 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW 14 March 2023. Ten most common charges or convictions are listed.

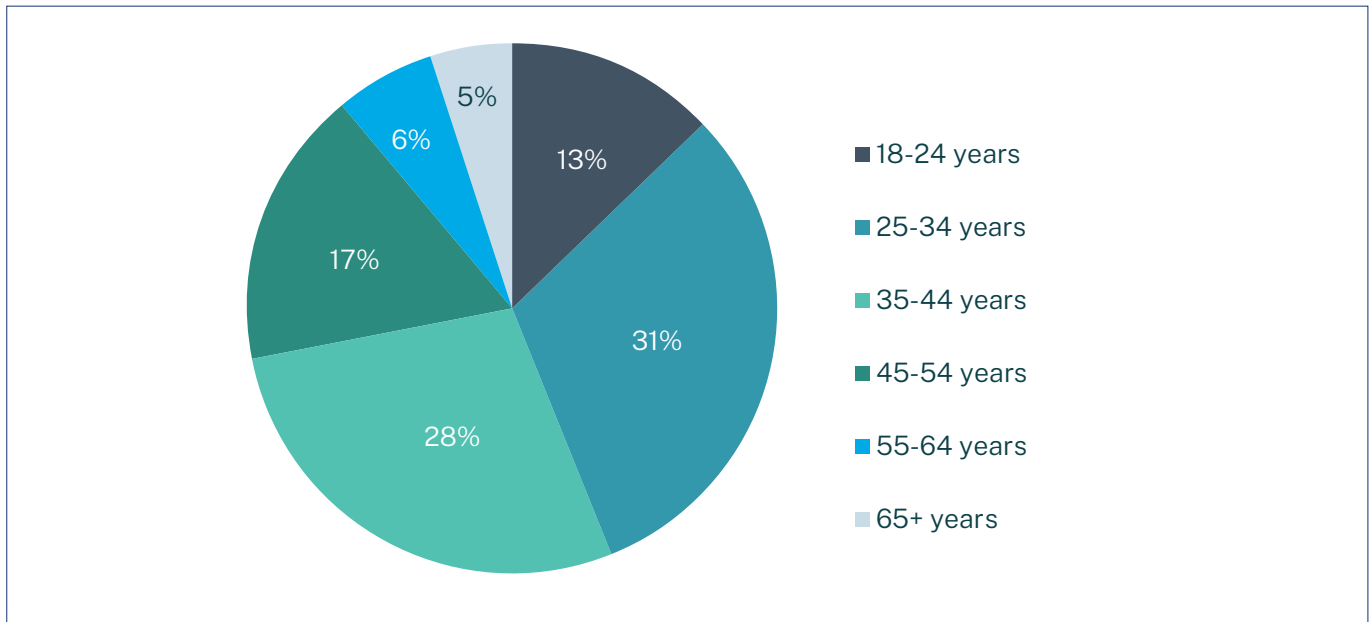
Figure 1: Most common serious offence (charge or conviction) at Junee CC – January 2023



2.3 Age and cultural background

The Junee CC population had a fairly wide distribution of ages, as indicated in Figure 2 below. On 1 January 2023, 31% of the population were aged between 25-34, 28% between 35-44 and 17% between 45-54. It also held a number of men aged 65 or older (48 or 5%).

Figure 2: Age distribution (percentage) of inmates at Junee CC – January 2023



Thirty three percent of the male cohort was Aboriginal, which was slightly higher than the state-wide average for the previous month (29%).⁵⁶ Four of the six women in custody at the time were Aboriginal.

Most inmates (81%) were born in Australia, and 92% spoke English at home. A very small number (8 or less than 1%) were identified as requiring an interpreter.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ In December 2022 29.4% of men in NSW custody (remand or sentenced) were Aboriginal. See NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR), *Aboriginal over-representation in the NSW Criminal Justice System*, quarterly update December 2022. 12 months later, in December 2023, the percentage across NSW remained effectively the same, at 29.7%. See BOCSAR, *NSW Custody Statistics Quarterly Update December 2023*, 25.

⁵⁷ After English, the most common languages spoken at home were Arabic, Tongan, Vietnamese and Samoan.

Most inmates identified their cultural background as Australian (79%). The next largest cultural background identified was North African and Middle Eastern (6%), followed by Oceanian (4%), and British (1%).

The majority of inmates (61%) had no preferred religion. For those that identified with a religion, the largest religious group was Catholic (11%), followed by Muslim (7%), Christian (7%) and Anglican/Church of England/Presbyterian (6%). Small numbers also identified as Buddhist or atheist.⁵⁸

2.4 Security classifications

Junee CC holds inmates with a wide variety of security classifications.⁵⁹ The breakdown of those classifications as at 1 January 2023 is presented in Figure 3 below. This figure does not include 22 inmates who were yet to be classified on this date.

On 1 January 2023, medium security men (sentenced and on remand) were the largest inmate group, making 35% of the centre population. Minimum security inmates comprised 33% of the centre population, with only a very small number of people in this group being unsentenced. Maximum security men, (sentenced and on remand) together with those with an 'escape risk' classification, comprised 29% of the population.

Junee CC was managing very high numbers of specific population inmates. On 1 January 2023 there were 425 Special Management Area Placement (SMAP) inmates, 157 Protection Limited Association (PRLA) inmates, and two inmates designated as Protection Non Association (PRNA).⁶⁰ Together this represented more than 60% of the prison population at the time.

The Serious Offenders Review Council (SORC)⁶¹ managed 54 inmates (5.8% of the population) and Junee CC also held 24 people with immigration release notifications, one high security inmate⁶² and one extreme high security inmate.⁶³

58 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 14 March 2023.

59 Inmate security classifications and risk designations are defined in the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Regulation 2014* cls 12, 14-15.

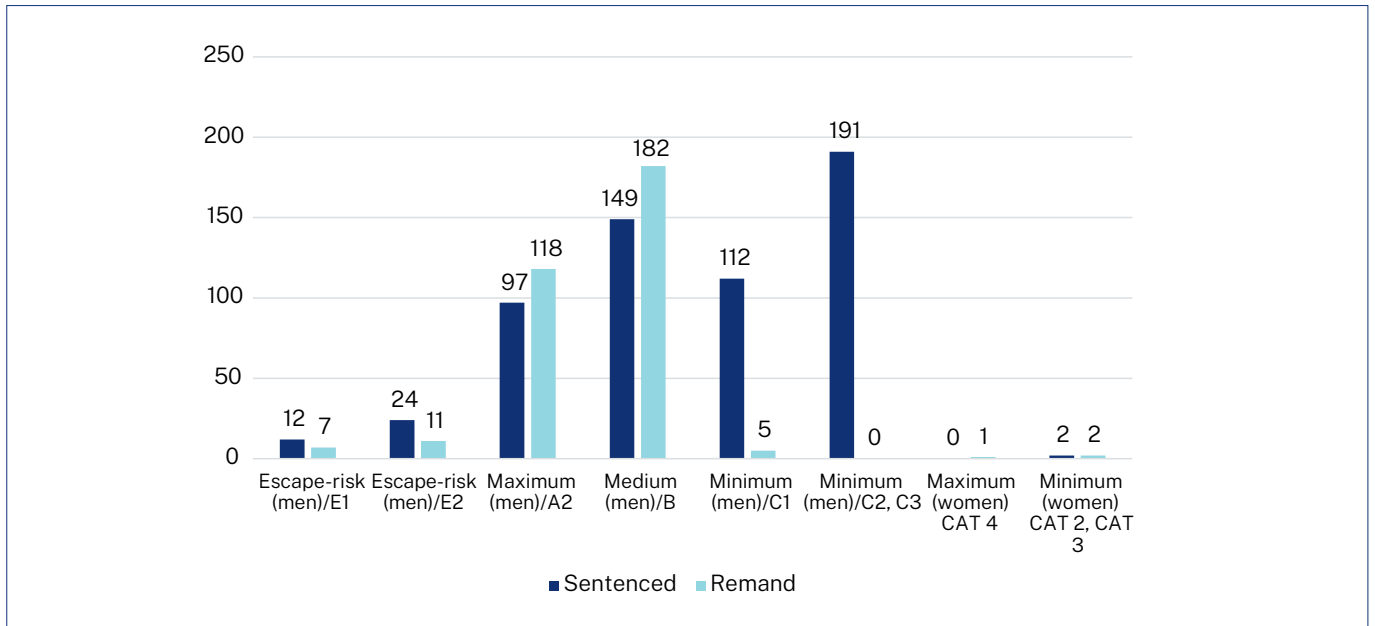
60 As discussed in section 3.4.4, although the PRLA designation had been formally removed by CSNSW in October 2020, it appeared to be still used as an onsite designation by Junee CC.

61 SORC provides advice and makes recommendations to the Commissioner of Corrective Services NSW regarding the security classification, placement and program participation of 'serious offenders'. See *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999 s 197*. A 'serious offender' is defined in *the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999 s 3* and includes an offender serving a life sentence, who must serve at least 12 years in custody or who is required to be managed as a serious offender due to a decision of the sentencing court, the State Parole Authority or the Commissioner of Corrective Services NSW.

62 The Commissioner may designate an inmate as high security, extreme high security, extreme high risk restricted or national security interest. This applies to inmates who are considered to constitute a danger (or extreme danger) to other people, or a threat (or extreme threat) to good order or security, and there is a risk that the inmate may engage in, or incite others to engage in, activities that are considered a serious threat to the peace or good order of a prison; see: Corrective Services NSW, *Factsheet 9: Classification and Placement* (May 2023).

63 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 14 March 2023.

Figure 3: Security classifications of inmates at Junee CC – January 2023



3 Custody

3.1 Custodial infrastructure

Following its expansion, Junee CC operates with three distinct sectors:

- Sector A maximum security (new infrastructure)
- Sector B medium security
- Sector C minimum security

3.1.1 Sector A maximum security

Sector A incorporates a 480-bed maximum security compound for men, with four identical double storey accommodation blocks (A1-A4). Each block has two distinct sides, for example 'A1 A' and 'A1 B' with the officer's station at the centre. During the inspection, Junee CC operated each A block with one side for inmates requiring protection (designated SMAP) and one side for mainstream inmates (designated 'normal discipline').

The modern infrastructure is similar to maximum security accommodation now in place at other correctional centres, for example at Shortland CC. Generally, it is fit for purpose and facilitates the safe and dignified management of people in maximum security custody, including new reception inmates. The main problematic aspect of the design is that while the cell showers are placed in a position to afford some privacy from a cellmate, there is no privacy at all regarding the toilet. We observed the same issue in our inspection of Shortland and Cessnock Correctional Centres and made a recommendation in our report following that inspection (Shortland and Cessnock Report), where we recommended that CSNSW install privacy screens or curtains (which do not create hanging points) in shared cells.⁶⁴

There is an AVL suite and multi-purpose meeting room connected to the accommodation wings to allow more practical and efficient access to new and/or remand inmates. The officer's stations also have better visibility across the units than in some of the older maximum security infrastructure across NSW. The accommodation units are temperature controlled.

At the time of the inspection, Junee CC was maximising the use of the new infrastructure as three of the medium security B units were closed. However the cell use was not ideal. Each accommodation side has 45 cells: 16 purpose-built for double occupancy (with side by side single beds), 28 single cells that have bunk style beds to provide surge capacity and one single use wheelchair accessible cell. During our inspection, we observed that many of the single cells were routinely occupied by two inmates. Table 3 below gives an overview of the capacity of the units compared to their population during our August 2023 inspection.

This was leading to crowding and a somewhat hectic atmosphere, discussed further in section 3.3.2 (dynamic security). We understand this was in large part due to the fact that three of the medium security B units had been emptied in May 2023 to carry out maintenance work, with most of those inmates moved to Sector A.⁶⁵ Single (bunk bed) cells are narrower and only include one built in hard seat/stool (no back support), meaning a second inmate can only sit on their bunk bed and/or stand during hours locked in cell.

⁶⁴ Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection of Shortland Correctional Centre and Cessnock Correctional Centre* (Report, June 2024) 24-25.

⁶⁵ As discussed in section 3.1.2, we were advised that this was to allow some security upgrades to the B units, and also due to the fact that the recently rolled out in-cell tablets were not functioning properly in Area B due to connectivity issues.

Table 3: Sector A unit capacity and use

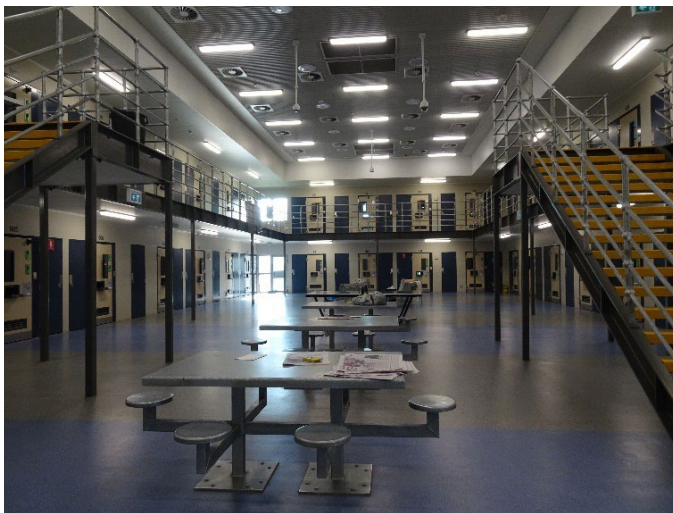
A1-A4 cell design capacity	Population observed during onsite inspection ⁶⁶	Operational capacity ⁶⁷	Max (surge) capacity
122 (61 each side)	143 (A1), 144 (A3), 144 (A4)	170 (85 each side)	178 (89 each side)

The challenge for Junee CC is that the newer maximum security accommodation is a higher standard (and the cell design is safer) than the older medium security sector discussed below. We agree Junee CC should maximise the efficient use of Sector A, however it should not be at the cost of crowding beyond design capacity, which can increase the tension for both staff and inmates and lead to safety and security issues. We believe the agreed operational capacity in the sector should be reviewed and brought closer in line with the intended design. This should increase the centre’s capacity for single cell placement, which we think is needed in all sectors.

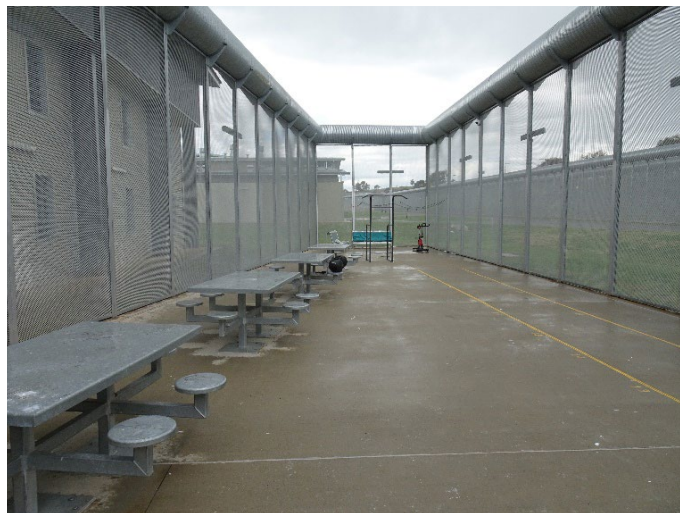
Sector A also incorporates a range of dedicated new infrastructure: AVL suites, multi-purpose unit, dedicated programs and education area (referred to as R&R area), satellite health clinic as well as a bakery and a laundry. This should serve Junee CC well going forward, provided staffing is adequate.

We observed that a variety of non-custodial staff were ‘competing’ for the use of the same meeting room inside the Sector A accommodation blocks. These meeting rooms were not available when used by health services staff to distribute medications in the mornings, for example, which understandably takes priority. The officers also use these rooms to enter the wings if necessary (although it is not the sole entry point). There are good, purpose built interview rooms included in the R&R area of Sector A. However they did not appear to be used (or considered by staff) during our inspection. All non-custodial staff (particularly R&R staff) should be encouraged to make use of these facilities where appropriate. This will sometimes require inmates to be escorted by custodial staff and so requires cooperation. Use of these rooms in the R&R sector needs to be factored into daily regimes and custodial staffing.

Common area, A2



Yard, A3



66 Numbers as displayed in units on 22 August 2023.

67 Unit capacity information provided by GEO March 2023.

Cell, A3



Interview room and AVL suites, A1



3.1.2 Sector B medium security

The medium security Sector B accommodation blocks are part of the original Junee CC build. There are four double storey blocks (B1, B2, B3 and B4), and each block is divided into four discrete inmate areas or 'pods', for example B1 (A-D), B2 (A-D). Each block has a capacity of 162 or 163, meaning approximately 40 inmates per 'pod'. The majority of cells are single or 'one out' cells, with each pod having between seven and 12 double occupancy or 'two out' cells.

The major benefit of the design is that having four discrete inmate areas (pods) allow greater flexibility to manage different cohorts separately. The capacity of each pod is also a more manageable (lower) number for staff to supervise, compared with Sector A which held over 70 inmates in each discrete area during our inspection. B units also contain basic laundry facilities and attached yard with basic gym equipment, which is practical for daily living.

However there are significant problems with this infrastructure. The cells contain hanging points, and hanging point remediation work has been piecemeal.⁶⁸ Second, unlike the newer infrastructure, B units have no showers in cells. Rather, there is a separate row of showers in the common area near the kitchen, which is an unusual design. This is outdated and lacks privacy. The placement of the showers is also questionable as a matter of hygiene and constrains the use of the accommodation for those with mild illnesses who should otherwise remain in cell. For long term planning, B unit cells should include showers. In the short term, the shower blocks should be reviewed and refurbished to ensure privacy for example through installing doors/curtains or similar structure, (without creating hanging points) and to ensure hygiene and public health considerations; this should preferably be done with input from environmental health experts. Third, the shared 'two out' cells in our view are too small and cramped to be used as dual occupancy and they should not be used for sharing unless strictly necessary or otherwise desirable for health or security reasons. Finally, the units also required thorough cleaning as well as painting, (we observed some inappropriate including racist graffiti). Some painting work in the accommodation blocks has taken place since the inspection.⁶⁹

The units date from the 1990s and are not necessarily obsolete, unlike some Victorian era cells elsewhere in NSW. They could offer useful, adequate accommodation if the above issues can be addressed. However, we believe they require serious refurbishment if CSNSW wish to use them in the longer term at Junee CC. CSNSW is currently undertaking a Cell Refurbishment & Anti-ligature Program and is committed to improving cell safety which includes building new cells designed to anti-ligature design principles, removing obsolete cells from use, and refurbishing existing cells

⁶⁸ Prior to the inspection, CSNSW advised that between 2019 and 2021 remediation works occurred in the B units to replace 101 beds with new designs to reduce anchor points, and that in addition, unit brackets and shower fittings were removed or replaced to also reduce hanging points.

⁶⁹ Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 17 October 2024.

to remove ligature points. Cell refurbishments are completed in accordance with the risk based prioritization identified in this program.⁷⁰ It is unfortunate that such an upgrade was not incorporated in the expansion several years ago.

Some work was taking place in the empty B units during the inspection, primarily security related. Junee CC was also working on Wi-Fi connectivity, to allow inmate tablets to be used. This is a good first step.

Common area, B2



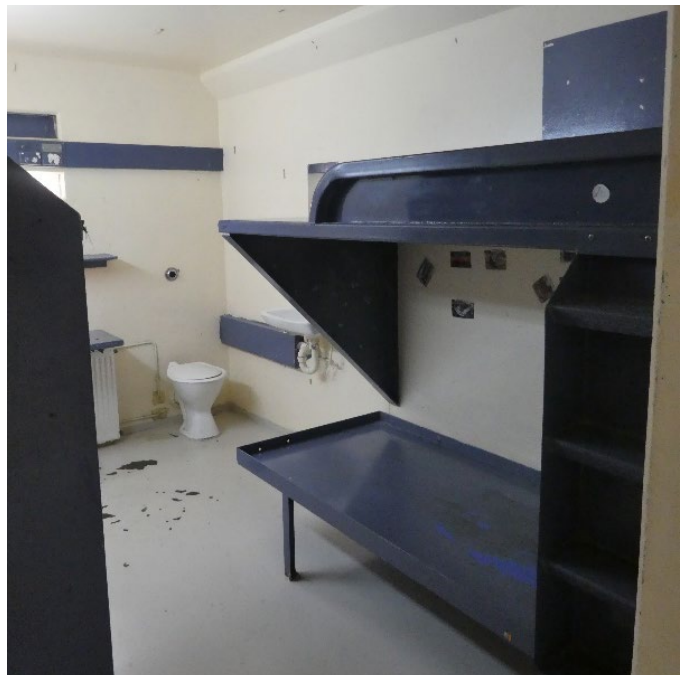
External view, B3 and B4



Showers, B1



Unoccupied shared cell, B3



3.1.3 Sector C minimum security

Sector C is single storey accommodation for sentenced minimum security male inmates. The sector can accommodate up to 140 inmates in three separate blocks (C1, C2 and C3). Each unit has four separate shared living quarters (pods) (e.g., C1 (A-D) and each individual pod (e.g. C2 A) has either 8 or 9 cells.

Cells include a shower and toilet, and each pod has a common area with shared cooking facilities.

70 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 17 October 2024.

Sector C also has some basic gym equipment and outdoor BBQ area. There are 60 single cells in total, with other inmates accommodated in shared cells.

The infrastructure is basic, dated, and very cramped for those who share a cell. We saw two cells which experienced leaking and deterioration at the bottom of a shared wall, with maintenance pending. Although we do not hold the same concerns here as for Sector B, it is also unfortunate that this area was not considered for refurbishment during the expansion. This was a missed opportunity. We also discuss in more detail in section 5.1.2 that the daily regimes and some aspects of increased security were harsher than we would expect in a minimum security setting.

The sector does not compare well to newer minimum security infrastructure around the State that opened around 2019-2020, for example at Parklea CC (Area 4) and Cessnock CC (Area 2). However, as with Sector B, it is not obsolete.

It is preferable for people from the Riverina region and surrounds to be accommodated at Junee CC to enhance rehabilitation and reintegration prospects. Retaining a minimum security sector is essential. We recommend a review of maintenance and a refurbishment plan for the sector. CSNSW advise that GEO has commenced maintenance work within the centre and that remedial works will be completed prior to transition to CSNSW in April 2025.⁷¹

Entrance to minimum security Sector C



3.1.4 Women's unit (FTU)

A small new women's unit was constructed as part of the recent expansion at Junee CC. This area (known locally as the female transit unit or FTU) has 10 cells and generally accommodates women for short periods of time: entering into custody; in transit to another centre; or attending court proceedings in the local area while on remand. The median length of stay in 2023 was seven days.⁷²

We were pleased to note the area is much more appropriate than where women were being held in 2018. It is not suitable for any long term stays, noting it lacks any green space, and the style is more reflective of restrictive conditions. However it is decent, appropriate infrastructure for women who need to be held in maximum security conditions for short periods. It is also located sensibly, close to the main health centre. We acknowledge good planning and the improvement in physical environment for women at Junee CC since our last inspection.

Recommendation: GEO and CSNSW continue to use a specific area in Sector A accommodation blocks to manage new receptions and remand inmates for first night(s) accommodation.

Recommendation: CSNSW reviews and adjusts the operational capacity of Sector A accommodation blocks to be closer in line with cell design, and increase the single cell placement capacity in Sectors A and B.

⁷¹ Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 17 October 2024.

⁷² Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, March 2024.

Recommendation: GEO and CSNSW ensure that the purpose built interview rooms in the Sector A 'R&R' infrastructure are used by staff for relevant functions and interventions, and that access is incorporated into planning daily regimes and custodial staffing.

Recommendation: GEO and CSNSW carry out thorough refurbishment of Sector B accommodation, paying attention to: a) remediation of hanging points; b) constructing showers in cells; c) improve privacy and hygiene for existing showers in the common area unless and until showers are available in cell; d) ensuring adequate connectivity so in-cell tablets can be used; e) painting over graffiti.

Recommendation: CSNSW reviews refurbishment and maintenance needs in Sector C to ensure viable long-term use.

Cell doors and corridor, women's unit (FTU)



Outdoor area, women's unit (FTU)



3.2 Reception into custody

Junee receives new reception inmates into custody directly from court cells in the local area, for example Wagga Wagga, Albury and Griffith, as well as inmates transferring from other correctional centres.

3.2.1 Overview of arrival numbers

During 2022, 1,044 new receptions were received into custody at Junee CC, averaging around 20 per week. Of this number 112 (or 10.7%) were women. The situation was very similar in 2023, with 1005 new reception inmates received into custody, averaging around 19 per week for the year.⁷³ Of this number, 117 (or 11.6%) were women.

In both years, approximately 46.5% of all new receptions were Aboriginal people.⁷⁴ This figure is higher than the proportion in the overall Junee CC population at a point in time - around one third or 33-34%.⁷⁵ It likely reflects a greater number of short stays for Aboriginal people. We believe these reception numbers should be specifically factored into resource planning for CSNSW and JH&FMHN going forward (if not being done already). Reception into custody is a stressful and volatile period, and a high risk time for inmates. It is also resource intensive for correctional centres.

Regarding transfers, inmates are generally transferred to Junee CC from Sydney metro (after stopping at Goulburn on the way) and from Bathurst CC. A total of 1,414 persons were transferred to Junee CC from another correctional centre in 2022. This number was 1,423 in 2023, which is an

⁷³ The highest monthly figure was 101 in January 2023, and the lowest was 66 in April 2023.

⁷⁴ Information provided by CSNSW, 14 March 2023 and 25 March 2024.

⁷⁵ For example, demographic information provided by CSNSW for 1 January 2023 and 1 February 2024.

average of around 27 per week.⁷⁶ Many of these transfers were Sydney-based men on remand sent to regional centres as part of the remand bed placement (RBP) practice.⁷⁷ On 1 January 2023, the median time spent on remand was 109 days (or 3.6 months).

We requested information on how many persons were being transferred into Junee CC for very short periods of time, that is, staying for less than seven days before being transferred on to another correctional centre. These short stays can increase the burden on screening and reception resources. Ultimately the data revealed steady but not remarkably high numbers in this category-134 persons during 2023, or 9% of all transfers into Junee CC. Some of these short stays will be men transiting through Junee on their way to Mannus CC or returning back from Mannus CC.⁷⁸

3.2.2 Intake process

The reception and intake area was refurbished as part of the Junee CC building project/expansion. We were pleased to see clean, decent holding cells, and a well-maintained reception area. Likewise, the adjacent property storage area was clean and well-organised.

During the inspection we observed the intake process at different times. Broadly, we observed some good custodial practices, with the process managed efficiently and professionally. This included an unusual situation where an inmate had been incorrectly identified as a protection inmate prior to arriving at Junee CC, and it was managed well under time pressure. Relevant documentation sighted by us onsite was correctly completed.

Although overall the process observed was of a good standard, we believe custodial screening could achieve better results if it was conducted in a private room rather than in an open area with other inmates and staff present. Particularly considering the high numbers of inmates at Junee CC with protection status. Health screening was conducted in a private room and is discussed in Chapter 4.

There was a full X-ray body scanner in the reception area, which was used during the inspection. This technology reduces the need for strip searching inmates, and there are related training and auditing requirements.⁷⁹ We were advised that as of 1 February 2024, 72 staff had received training to use the scanner, and 69 were licenced to do so.⁸⁰ Based on the staffing profile provided to us in March 2023, this represents approximately 45% of the actual FTE custodial officers and supervisors in position at that time (not including casual staff). While continuous improvement is always required, GEO and Junee CC staff should be acknowledged for this good level of training completion.

Inmate workers in reception areas are trusted employment roles at most correctional centres. At other centres we have raised concerns at times during inspections seeing inmate workers with inadequate supervision, particularly as regards to proximity to confidential information, paperwork or inmate property. At Junee CC we were pleased to see an appropriate demarcation of roles, and we did not see custodial staff inappropriately delegating any sensitive tasks. CSNSW should take care to maintain this standard after transition.

Each new reception inmate was provided with a doona. This is good practice to be acknowledged, particularly in an area such as Junee which has a cold winter climate. It is also a higher standard than usually seen elsewhere in the NSW system. The COPP provides for the issue of 2 x cotton blankets as a minimum standard, although Governors and Functional Managers have discretion to issue items in excess of the entitlements subject to factors such as climate or inmate health.⁸¹ At other centres we have noted that inmates have to wait until they can afford to buy their own doona through the local buy up system, which can take an extended period of time particularly if a person is on remand and does not have prison employment, or if supplies are not immediately available. The CAS Regulation

76 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 14 March 2023 and 25 March 2024.

77 On 11 July 2024 the Acting Commissioner of Corrective Services NSW wrote to the ICS and advised that the Remand Bed Placement policy was being revoked.

78 A standalone minimum security correctional centre in Tumberumba, about 140km from Junee.

79 Corrective Services NSW, *Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures: 17.5 Body Scanning* (version 1.8, 20 August 2024).

80 Information provided by GEO, March 2024.

81 Corrective Services NSW, *Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures: 1.5 Issuing correctional centre clothing and linen* (version 1.4, 22 June 2023) 7.

requires inmates to be provided with sufficient clean bedding to suit the climatic conditions.⁸² After the contract transition in April 2025, CSNSW should maintain the practice to provide doonas at Junee CC.

Recommendation: GEO and CSNSW conduct custodial screening of new reception inmates with increased privacy, and in a private room where possible.

Recommendation: CSNSW continues GEO practice of issuing each new reception inmate to Junee CC with a doona on arrival following contract transition.

Recommendation: CSNSW maintains staff training levels for X-ray body scanners at Junee CC.

Holding cells, intake reception area



3.2.3 Other screening and induction

The contract service specification outlines other screening requirements in addition to health and security matters. For example, the reception screening assessment should address welfare issues which can include relevant notifications to Centrelink, Housing NSW and other relevant government agencies) and inmates must be given the opportunity to contact family or friends to advise them of where they are as well as to make arrangements for the welfare of children and other dependents.⁸³ In addition, Aboriginal inmates should be provided access to an 'Aboriginal Wellbeing/Liaison Officer' within 24 hours of the initial reception.⁸⁴

This function had dedicated resources at Junee CC. It was managed by an intake assessment officer (IAO) as well as two Aboriginal liaison officers (ALOs), who aim to meet with inmates within 24 hours. Following the custodial and health screenings which were completed on arrival, inmates completed an Intake Screening Questionnaire (ISQ) that is equivalent to CSNSW screening.

This intake screening meeting also effectively served as an induction for new inmates. GEO did not have a specific induction policy for Junee CC. This is unfortunate as it means there is no formal quality assurance framework in place for the induction process.

Inmate Handbook

We reviewed the *Junee CC Induction/Orientation Handbook 2022* (handbook), provided to us prior to the inspection. While this refers to a compulsory 'information session', we were later advised that a practice of holding group sessions had been discontinued some time ago. The intake screening interview now served as the induction for new reception inmates, while staff from the rehabilitation and reintegration team (R&R) team attended units to speak to inmates transferred from other correctional centres.

⁸² *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Regulation 2014*, cls36 (2).

⁸³ Contract, Schedule 23 (Output Specification) Part C Services Specification, 2.5.2.6.

⁸⁴ Contract, Schedule 23 (Output Specification) Part C Services Specification, 2.5.2.6 (xiii).

The handbook is a comprehensive document about services and support available at the centre, including information about employment, visits and centre routine. We observed its use onsite. While good, we had some practical observations:

- The language can be complex at times, even for a reader with good literacy skills (particularly when discussing matters such as bail and legal services). Language is an issue because many inmates have limited formal education and literacy skills.⁸⁵
- Copies sighted on inspection had tiny print that we suspect many inmates would struggle to read.
- Based on our observations, we believe different versions were circulating.⁸⁶

We suggest the handbook should be reviewed for plain English or Easy English improvements, and copies printed in an easier to read font. Given the function and general short stay of the women's unit, a specific handbook should ideally be designed for women entering Junee CC as well. It would also be helpful to have an induction video that inmates could watch sometime after their initial meeting, as it can be difficult to retain all information at the outset. This could capture the key features of what inmates *need to know* in their first days and weeks on arrival at Junee CC. This would assist inmates with limited reading skills and leave them less exposed to less accurate information from other inmates. There also needs to be timely support for interpreters for inmates who do not speak English as their first language.

Observations from the inspection

The IAO receives the list of received inmates, conducts some research on the individual (for example, AVOs, speaks to police if necessary), before interviewing them in the accommodation unit. The IAO also provides an initial phone call. (If the inmate is in a medical or observation cell, the IAO will see them there if they are able to engage). This engagement should ideally ascertain needs with Centrelink, money from family, phone lists and initial phone call, and referrals to people who can resolve issues in the community (such as pets and cars). If the IAO is not on duty, inmates are seen by a Rehabilitation and Reintegration (RR) officer. Every Aboriginal person received is referred to the ALOs, who are available on weekdays.

We observed an intake screening which was managed professionally. The inmate was provided with a copy of the handbook and a call to a family member was facilitated, in addition to other questions regarding the inmate's welfare and previous experience in custody.

We think the model of intake officer and Aboriginal liaison officers has good potential. However, all staff had less than two years' experience in the role, so would require ongoing support. Given that the Junee CC induction process relies heavily on the intake role and function and that close to 50% of all new receptions were Aboriginal people, we believe Junee CC should increase resources dedicated to both these functions.

Recommendation: CSNSW maintains the standard required under the Junee CC management agreement that Aboriginal inmates should be provided access to an Aboriginal wellbeing/liason officer within 24 hours of reception into custody.

Recommendation: GEO and CSNSW enhance induction practice at Junee CC through an induction video to assist inmates with low literacy; as well as plain English or Easy English improvements to the handbook and an easier to read font size for physical copies.

85 For example in 2022 one in three (31%) prison entrants had an education level of Year 9 or below. See Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *The Health of People in Australia's Prisons 2022*, (Report, 2023) vii.

86 For example, marked 2017, 2020 and 2022.

3.3 Safety and security

3.3.1 Placement within the centre

Inmates should be placed in accommodation in accordance with the inmate's legal status, security risk, classification status and specific requirements identified in the screening assessment.⁸⁷ Also as a general principle, inmates should be held at the lowest level of security appropriate to their individual circumstances.⁸⁸

Until early 2023, Junee CC had not fully utilised all (four) new accommodation blocks in the maximum security Sector A. One block had been used for management of COVID-19 quarantine and isolation during the pandemic, and one had remained more or less empty.

In May 2023, three of the four units in the medium security Sector B were completely emptied of inmates, who were transferred to Sector A. We were advised that this was in order to conduct some security upgrades to the B units and to see if wireless connectivity could be improved for the rollout of inmate tablets, which began that month.⁸⁹

Regardless of the background, Junee CC was operating under a relatively new dynamic at the time of the inspection. It resulted in people being managed in more restrictive units than their classification requires.

We acknowledge some of the sensible efforts that management was making in the circumstances. With most of the medium security accommodation offline:

- Junee CC aimed to use A3 pod primarily for new receptions/new arrivals (and likewise to avoid placing new receptions in A1 or A2 at first).
- Junee CC aimed to accommodate medium and minimum security classified inmates together in A3 and A4, and maximum security inmates in A1 and A2.

However, there was not enough capacity to do the above completely. During the inspection, for example, we observed a medium security inmate who had just been transferred to Junee CC being placed in Unit A2, as there was no room left in A3 or A4. We reviewed placement records for 22 August 2023, and noted that both A1 and A2 were holding over 40 sentenced and remand inmates with a medium B security classification. Further, even though the centre appeared to have successfully separated minimum and maximum security inmates, it was still holding minimum security inmates in maximum security infrastructure.⁹⁰

As discussed above, major refurbishment of the medium security B units is required. If this is done, it should return to use as accommodation for sentenced medium and minimum security inmates, or medium and minimum security inmates on remand who are not considered at-risk (and are not in their 'first days' after reception into custody).

Another issue is that while the coordination of placement within the centre was focused on selecting the most appropriate unit, we did not see evidence of routine risk assessment in relation to specific cell placement (outside of identification of whether the inmate would be in a protection placement). Intake and placement coordinators reviewed alerts, protection status, non-associations, membership of outlaw motorcycle groups (OMCG) and generally determined the unit. We were advised that unit supervisors would then determine the cell the inmate would be placed in. We are concerned that outside of the above factors, individual factors may not be considered, potentially increasing safety risks or risk of standovers to vulnerable inmates. Sometimes vulnerability can be young age (for example, if a young adult was placed in the same cell as a sex offender); sometimes sex offenders will be vulnerable due to the nature of their offending (for example, if placed in a cell with an inmate who is not a sex offender).

87 Contract, Schedule 23 (Output Specification) Part C Services Specification, 2.5.2.6 (xii).

88 Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection Standards for Adult Custodial Services in New South Wales* (May 2020) standard 10.

89 Sector B is operational again at the time of writing.

90 Approximately 44 inmates with either a C1 or C2 classification were being held in A4 on 22 August 2023.

This is not an issue unique to Junee CC. However, with an increasing remand population, and an increasing maximum security population, we believe risk assessment in relation to cell placement and sharing is required. Particularly as this is a centre with long experience managing a medium and minimum security population, but less experience with a significant maximum security population. Assessment regarding cell placement is critical for efforts to minimise the risk of violence or assault between inmates.

In addition, several conversations with both staff and inmates about placement suggested that there is a need to refresh staff training around CSNSW policy on transgender and intersex inmates.⁹¹ We believe there is a deficit in understanding and familiarity with relevant policy, and therefore a deficit in training across the system. Earlier this year we made a recommendation around training for staff at the Metropolitan Remand and Reception Centre (MRRRC) in the management of LGBTIQ+ people, and we make a similar recommendation here.⁹² CSNSW advise they are in the process of updating relevant policy for inclusion in the COPP.⁹³

Recommendation: GEO and CSNSW improve risk assessment regarding cell placement for those entering a shared cell at Junee CC.

Recommendation: GEO and CSNSW provide staff at Junee CC with training in the management of LGBTIQ+ people.

3.3.2 Dynamic security

Custodial staffing

The security of a correctional centre comprises static or procedural security (fences, alarms, cells, CCTV and so on) and dynamic security (custodial officers supervising inmates). Safety and security in prisons are heavily reliant on how well staff interact with people in custody and how much the staffing group knows about the inmate population and what is happening in the facility.

In broad terms, the security rating of the centre (in NSW, maximum, medium, minimum) will be reflected in the ratio of custodial officers to inmates.⁹⁴ For example, a maximum security centre will have a higher ratio of staff to inmates than a standalone minimum security centre. Some centres may have a mix of inmate classifications, resulting in different levels of staff supervision.

We undertook a general desktop review of custodial staffing at other centres inspected by the ICS in recent years in order to gain additional perspective on Junee CC. This showed that the custodial staffing ratio at Junee CC was consistent with other maximum security centres in the sample reviewed. As might be expected, the standalone minimum security centres have very different ratios.

Notwithstanding that Junee CC is rated as a maximum security centre, on 1 January 2023 the inmate population (913) comprised of: 270 maximum security inmates, including 54 with an ‘escape risk’ classification (30%); 331 medium classification inmates (36%), and 312 minimum security inmates (34%).⁹⁵

All correctional centres are different, and as such, there is no “one-size-fits-all” algorithm to determine the ratio of custodial officers to inmates. On the face of it, Junee CC does not look out of step with other (publicly operated) NSW correctional centres.

91 Corrective Services NSW, *Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures: 3.8 Transgender and intersex inmates*, (version 1.2, 16 August 2023).

92 Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection of the Metropolitan Remand and Reception Centre* (Report, February 2024) 22.

93 Information provided by Corrective Services CSNSW, 17 October 2024.

94 Centres are “graded” based on the highest level of inmate classification allowed in the centre. For example, a 500 bed prison with 50 maximum security beds would be regarded as maximum security.

95 Refer to Figure 3 of this report.

Other observations

Following from our comments on infrastructure and capacity, we had the sense that custodial staff were at times overwhelmed with the number of people being managed in Sector A units. Based on our observations it was very busy and hectic in the A units, and staff and management felt incidents were increasing. There were likely a number of factors: the fact that three of the B units were offline reduced flexibility for placement across the centre; Junee CC had a long history of managing medium and minimum security inmates in the B units with smaller pods, and less experience with a maximum security cohort; many of the custodial staffing cohort had less than three years' experience;⁹⁶ Junee CC had recently started receiving inmates from a relatively new 'Outlaw Motor Cycle Gang' (OMCG) group who were reportedly very challenging and making a negative impact.

With the high number of inmates being managed, constant enquiries to officers can be a source of tension. It is quite common for correctional centres to have set times for this, but the signs around units on this topic suggested communication was strained. We are also not sure if the R&R staffing had been correctly calibrated to support the greater proportion of remand inmates who have higher welfare needs.

Feedback from staff and inmates in A2 in particular stood out somewhat during the inspection. We gained the impression that relationships between staff and inmates were not productive, and that both staff and inmates had concerns around safety. Inmates were concerned about standovers from other inmates, and also were less willing for example to request replacement for worn out/destroyed items from staff due to a lack of expectation in response.

A good practice we observed, was that accommodation wings retained presence of correctional managers and supervisors, and staff had ease of access to those officers. We also thought the number of correctional staff we saw on duty in the units during the inspection was appropriate.

Going forward, in addition to reviewing operational capacity and cell placement (discussed above), it will be crucial to continue support and mentoring of less experienced staff, identify areas where more support could be needed, and allocate resources accordingly.

At the time of writing, and as observed on a subsequent visit in August 2024, Sector A is temporarily closed as part of the GEO/CSNSW transition strategy.⁹⁷

Signs in window to officers' station, Sector A



96 CSNSW is of the view that there is an acceptable percentage of staff with extensive experience employed at Junee CC who are able to mentor less experienced staff, Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 17 October 2024.

97 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 17 October 2024.

3.3.3 Assaults

Based on the information provided to us by CSNSW, there were 274 inmates assaulted by other inmates in 2023. Of the 274, eight were recorded in OIMS as serious. This shows a trending increase from the July 2021 to June 2022 period, when 186 were reported, and from the 2022 calendar year, when 231 were recorded.⁹⁸

We were advised that inmates from a particular organised crime network had been transferred from another centre to Junee CC in 2023, increasing incidents. (That centre correspondingly experienced a significant decline in the frequency of assaults in early 2023 following that move).⁹⁹ However it is also important to note the impact of COVID-19 on regimes and time out of cell in 2021 and early 2022. For example, there were comparatively very low assault numbers at Junee CC in January and February 2022 in particular. During these two months however, there were 31 days (half the time) of full centre lockdowns – meaning significantly reduced interaction between inmates. This may have produced artificially low results during that period.

We reviewed data to see if there was a significant increase in inmate on inmate assaults in the period between June and September 2023, when most of the inmates from B units had been moved into the A units, compared with the same time the previous year. This showed 79 between June-September 2022 and 91 between June and September 2023, a modest increase.

Overall, the volume of incidents at Junee CC was in excess of targets in the performance regime. In the 2023 Annual Report, GEO reported 14 inmate victims of a substantiated serious assault by other inmates (KPI 5A). The target in the performance regime is nil. For significant assault (KPI 5B)¹⁰⁰, two incidents were recorded (target is nil). For all other substantiated assaults (KPI 5C), the target is less than 1.5% of inmate population, and the result was 2.38%.¹⁰¹

For assaults on non-inmates (staff), information provided by CSNSW showed eight in 2023, the same number as the previous year. None were recorded as serious. In the 2023 Annual Report (covering a similar but slightly different reporting period), GEO recorded no serious assaults on non-inmates (KPI4A), one significant assault (KPI 4B) (spitting), and three substantiated assaults (KPI4C).¹⁰² The target is nil for all categories.

We undertook a review of incident reports for assaults on inmates and staff for the months of August and September 2023. There was one assault on staff in August (minor injury recorded) and one in September (no injury recorded).¹⁰³ For inmate on inmate assaults, there was a total of 20, with 17 of those taking place in either A1, A2, A3 or B1. A review of incident reports suggests none of those units were grossly over-represented. No assaults were recorded in Sector C (minimum security) during this period.

3.3.4 Self-harm and deaths in custody

According to the information provided by CSNSW, there were 74 incidents of actual self-harm at Junee CC in 2023.¹⁰⁴ Serious self-harm is a KPI in the performance regime (KPI 7).¹⁰⁵ GEO reported seven serious incidents between November 2022 and December 2023. The target is nil.

98 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW 14 March 2023 and 14 May 2024, and document tabled by the Commissioner of Corrective Services NSW in NSW Parliament containing statistical data on assaults in correctional centres during the 2021/22 financial year, 24 October 2022.

99 See Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection of Shortland Correctional Centre and Cessnock Correctional Centre* (Report, June 2024) 33.

100 Generally defined to mean spitting or (transferring other bodily fluid) onto a person's face or unhealed wound, as well as biting. See Schedule 19 Performance Regime, 1.4 definitions, 5-6.

101 GEO, Junee Correctional Centre Annual Report, December 2022-November 2023, 25-27. Category 5C assaults are generally defined as those not requiring admission to hospital or any offsite medical centre (so could include injury treated by onsite medical personnel). The performance regime calculates 750 quality failure points per incident in the 1.5-5% range and 1000 quality failure points per failure above 5%. See Schedule 19 Performance Regime, 5-6 and 21-23.

102 GEO, Junee Correctional Centre Annual Report, December 2022-November 2023, 23-24.

103 Information provided by GEO 21 March 2024.

104 Information provided by Corrective Services 14 May 2024.

105 Generally defined as resulting in immediate transfer to hospital or any offsite medical centre and medical treatment there.

Prior to the inspection, we reviewed self-harm incident reports at Junee CC for the month of October 2022. In this month there were seven instances of actual self-harm and 16 instances where an inmate either made a threat of self-harm or was assessed as at-risk. Some other observations:

- On five occasions risk was assessed during the reception screening process by health staff.
- Most of the instances of actual self-harm involved inmates letting staff know either through the cell call button or attending the unit office to inform staff.
- Some threats of self-harm were related to wanting a change of cell/unit, wanting to escalate a medical appointment or in response to segregation. Most involved inmates sharing thoughts/feelings of self-harm with staff.
- In almost all instances, the inmate was then managed under GEO's HRAT (high risk assessment team) policy for a period of time.

Under the contract, GEO is required to develop, implement and maintain assessment and management systems that prevent in so far as possible, inmate suicide or self-harm.¹⁰⁶

The HRAT convened 11 times in November 2022. Between four and ten persons were discussed at each of these meetings. The HRAT process and our inspection observations are discussed further in Chapter 4.

Deaths in custody from self-harm

In the year prior to the extension of the contract, 2018, there was one death in custody at Junee CC.¹⁰⁷ This was subsequently found by the Coroner to have been intentionally self-inflicted, as a result of hanging, 'in circumstances of being held in custody with inadequate mental health care in the preceding months.' The Coroner made a number of recommendations around provision of health care and mental health resources. There was also a recommendation to GEO in consultation with CSNSW to examine replacing or altering the bed frames of the kind used at the time within the B2 unit at Junee CC to remove possible hanging points.¹⁰⁸ Prior to the inspection, CSNSW advised that between 2019 and 2021 remediation works occurred in the B units to replace 101 beds with new designs to reduce anchor points, and that in addition, unit brackets and shower fittings were removed/replaced to also reduce hanging points.¹⁰⁹ While this is important, as discussed earlier in this chapter, hanging points do remain in the B units.

Between 2020 and 2023, CSNSW issued two default notices to Junee CC, both related to deaths in custody from unnatural causes, a term which broadly includes homicide, suicide, accidental cause or drug overdose. One death in custody occurred on 1 April 2022, and was found by the Coroner to have been intentionally self-inflicted, with the cause of death plastic bag asphyxia.¹¹⁰ It was found that there were no warnings given in relation to any demise in the inmate's mental health state, that he did not indicate to anyone any thoughts of self-harm, and that he had not sought any treatment for mental health. No recommendations were included in the inquest report.¹¹¹ GEO reported to the Coroner that garbage bin liners had been removed from cells in accommodation units and only used in common areas, and no longer used to distribute items for buy-ups. It was also reported that COPP 3.7 had since been amended by CSNSW to limit and oversee the access and distribution of garbage bags to inmates, although that is unclear to us on reviewing that section.¹¹² Following the incident and investigation and review by both CSNSW and GEO, a PIN notice was issued in addition to the default notice, for deficiency in onsite health solution. CSNSW found that the inmate's charge sheet was

¹⁰⁶ Contract, Schedule 23 (Output Specification) Part C Services Specification, 2.2.2.2 Self-harm and suicide prevention.

¹⁰⁷ Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 14 March 2023.

¹⁰⁸ *Inquest into the death of Jonathon Hogan* (Coroners Court of NSW, Deputy State Coroner Magistrate Harriet Grahame, 6 May 2020) paras 305-306.

¹⁰⁹ Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, March 2023 (Item 18).

¹¹⁰ *Inquest into the death of Steven McHugh* (Coroners Court of NSW, Deputy State Coroner Magistrate E. Kennedy, 11 October 2023).

¹¹¹ *Inquest into the death of Steven McHugh* (Coroners Court of NSW, Deputy State Coroner Magistrate E. Kennedy, 11 October 2023) 6-8.

¹¹² Corrective Services NSW, *Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures: 3.7 Management of inmates at risk of self-harm or suicide* (version 1.10, 21 May 2024).

not provided to health screening staff at the time of his reception screening assessment, meaning that the screener was not aware of the seriousness of offences the inmate was charged with, which could have impacted on the assessment of risk factors for self-harm/suicide. They also found that no COVID-19 daily checks were undertaken in the four days prior to the inmate's death, while he was in a period of quarantine.

A second default notice was issued by CSNSW for an unnatural death in custody in February 2023. This matter has yet to be reviewed by the NSW Coroner.

A number of deaths in custody where the cause of death was found to be natural causes/health conditions are discussed in the following chapter on health services.

3.3.5 Drugs and other contraband

The contract requires GEO to implement a range of static and dynamic security systems appropriate to the centre and inmate profile. This includes contraband detection.¹¹³ There are a range of minimum service requirements around targeted and routine searching, and systems and strategies for prevention and deterrence of the introduction of contraband into the centre.¹¹⁴ The contract also references relevant NSW legislation and CSNSW policy around security, control and good order of correctional centres. In addition, GEO had a number of internal operating procedures, relating to searching, urinalysis, intelligence gathering and alcohol testing.

In the period 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022, there were 110 drug finds, giving a rate per 100 inmates of about 8, noting a find may be multiple items.¹¹⁵ The most common drug finds were buprenorphine strips (75 or 68%) and 'crystal substance' (11 or 10%).¹¹⁶

The most common drugs detected in testing (n=20) were buprenorphine-base (8 or 40%) and paracetamol (3 or 15%). The other tests revealed an array of illicit and other drugs in small numbers.¹¹⁷ There were 47 drug paraphernalia finds.¹¹⁸

Random drug testing

Illicit drug use (as detected in random drug testing) is a KPI to the contract. Every month CSNSW randomly selects 5% of the population of eligible inmates for random drug testing at Junee CC.¹¹⁹

According to information provided by CSNSW, there were 354 random urinalysis tests conducted in 2022, resulting in three (0.8%) positive results. This is an excellent outcome. The KPI results overview for 2022 provided to us separately by GEO prior to the inspection recorded five positive results (reflecting 1%).¹²⁰ Notwithstanding this minor inconsistency, this is a very low number for a full year.

In the 2023 Annual Report, GEO reported 20 positive random test results out of 399 conducted between December 2022 and November 2023. This reflected an average of 5.3%, within the target of 0-6%. However it did reflect an increase on previous years, and performance notably dropped from August 2023 onwards.

Overall, Junee CC has demonstrated good performance in recent years. Following inspections of other correctional centres by the ICS over the past two years, records provided by CSNSW sometimes showed no or negligible random drug testing taking place in 2022 (for example at Shortland CC, Bathurst CC, and Mid North Coast CC). For other context, higher rates of positive results from random testing were returned at John Morony CC (18% in 2022), Bathurst CC (17% in 2023) and MSPC (9% in 2023).¹²¹

113 Contract, Schedule 23 (Output Specification) Part C Services Specification, 2.3.2.

114 Contract, Schedule 23 (Output Specification) Part C Services Specification 2.3.2.2 and 2.3.2.3

115 Based on 900 inmates.

116 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 14 March 2023.

117 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 14 March 2023.

118 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 14 March 2023.

119 KPI 6. Eligible inmates includes all inmates except those who have been in custody for less than 30 days.

120 Key performance indicator results 2022, provided by GEO March 2023. The target is between 0-6%, meaning that only positive results greater than 6% result in contract penalties/abatements.

121 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW 2 February 2023 for Shortland Correctional Centre, 3 February 2023 for Mid North Coast Correctional Centre, 3 April 2023 for John Morony Correctional Centre, 11 April 2023 for Bathurst Correctional Centre, 26 October 2023 for MSPC, 8 March 2024 for Bathurst Correctional Centre.

Targeted tests (22) returned a positive rate of 13.6% at Junee CC in 2022.¹²²

Contraband

In addition to the above figures provided by CSNSW, we also reviewed general contraband find records from Junee CC for a sample month of October 2022.¹²³ In October 2022, there were 36 finds, comprising 15 'prohibited goods' finds, 9 'gaol made weapons' finds and 12 drug or drug related finds, noting that a find may involve multiple items.

GEO uses 'item' and 'type' descriptions. For example, (item) 'Gaol made tattoo gun' comes under (type) 'Prohibited Goods'. Other examples of Prohibited Goods recorded that month were alcohol, jewellery and excessive medication.

Junee CC had good, dedicated intelligence staffing.

3.4 Segregation and protective custody

Separation from the general population may be required for a range of reasons, including where an inmate:

- is subject to segregation under section 10 of the CAS Act
- needs to enter protective custody under section 11 of the CAS Act
- is being held separately from other inmates for 'the purposes of the case, control or management of the inmate...' under section 78A of the CAS Act.

3.4.1 Multi-purpose unit (MPU)

Part of the major construction project at Junee CC in recent years was a new multi-purpose unit (MPU), located in the maximum security Sector A. This new infrastructure is modern, and purpose built. There were 20 camera cells over two separate corridors. There were also four AVL rooms in-situ, which is a very sensible aspect of the design.

This unit was one of the locations where in-cell tablets were first rolled out/trialled within the centre. This was a practical idea, due to its size and the restrictions on inmate movement in this area. We observed good management of this during our pre-inspection visit in May 2023.

As observed during the August 2023 inspection, the unit appeared to be well run. We were advised that exercise yards are routinely open all day after breakfast, which is a good practice. This was reflected in unit logbook records we reviewed and was also confirmed by the inmates we spoke with in the unit. We heard that ALOs attend the unit when Aboriginal inmates are present and that psychologists attend weekly, which is a good practice. CSNSW should retain the positive aspects observed at Junee CC in relation to the management of the MPU.

In-cell tablets were issued at 3.30pm when yards were closed. We did, however, observe a sign in the unit warning that 'non-compliant' behaviour will result in tablets not being issued, listing for example 'threats, poor attitude, covering of camera, overuse of stenophone'. Tablets are a mechanism to make phone calls and help people manage time in custody and should not be used as a management tool. Telephone privileges should only be withdrawn as a last resort.¹²⁴

¹²² Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, March 2023.

¹²³ Information provided by GEO, March 2023.

¹²⁴ Corrective Services NSW, *Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures: 14.1 Inmate Discipline* (version 1.2, 9 August 2024) 15. We note that CSNSW is in the process of responding to a thematic review into inmate discipline in correctional centres by the NSW Ombudsman. They advise they plan to undertake substantive systemic reform following internal review of legislation, policy and practice, Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 17 October 2024.

3.4.2 Segregation orders

Section 10(1) of the CAS Act provides that the Commissioner may direct an inmate be held in segregated custody if of the opinion that such segregation is necessary to secure:

- (a) the personal safety of any other person
- (b) the security of a correctional centre, or
- (c) good order and discipline within a correctional centre.

Information reviewed prior to the inspection indicated that there were 108 segregation periods commenced in 2022. Average stays were long, ranging between 23 and 73 days.¹²⁵ Following the inspection we requested a breakdown of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal inmates held in segregation. This breakdown is reflected in the table below.

Table 4: Segregation by month in 2022 (Aboriginal v non-Aboriginal)¹²⁶

Commencements	No.	Total (%)	Longest time segregation	Average time spent (days) monthly
Aboriginal inmates	66	61	73 days	15-75
Non-Aboriginal inmates	42	39	70 days	25-71
Total	108	100		

Aboriginal inmates comprised approximately 33% of the Junee CC population during this period. Therefore, these figures suggest Aboriginal inmates were overrepresented in segregation orders in 2022 (61%). This should be of concern to Junee CC management. Consideration should be given to the possibility of allowing Aboriginal delegates to visit inmates in the MPU, where appropriate.

We attended the weekly segregation meeting during the inspection. The meeting was attended by a range of managers and a psychologist which is good practice. Neither of the ALOs attended, although it was unclear to us if any of the inmates concerned were Aboriginal men.

The meeting took place in the officer's station in the MPU. The information presented was thorough and clear. There was a clear delineation of the different types of orders and why the order was in place. This was positive.

While the meeting was efficient, it did not involve talking to the inmates *before* the review. After the review, managers from the units where the men will return to (as applicable) speak to the inmates and advise them of the outcome of the meeting. Best practice would be for managers to speak to inmates before the review as well.

Recommendation: GEO managers speak to relevant inmates before the weekly segregation meeting.

3.4.3 Separation orders

Section 78A(2) of the CAS Act provides that 'an inmate or group of inmates in a correctional centre may be held separately from other inmates in the correctional centre for the purposes of the care, control or management of the inmate or group of inmates.' A segregation order is not required to authorise a separation of inmates.

CSNSW policy clarifies that separation is not a form of punishment. Separated inmates are entitled to rights, privileges and amenities. Privileges or amenities can only be suspended for proven misconduct.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 14 March 2023.

¹²⁶ Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 25 March 2024.

¹²⁷ Corrective Services NSW, *Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures: 3.1 Separation of inmates* (version 1.5, 13 November 2023) 4.

CSNSW policy allows for inmates to be separated on the basis of:

- Gender – where, in special circumstances, an inmate is held in a centre which does not ordinarily hold inmates of their gender
- Health – where there is a risk to the general population from infectious or contagious disease
- Status of at-risk from others – but only pending re-classification or re-location
- Affiliation with an outlaw motorcycle gang or organised crime network
- Any other reason, but only with the approval of the relevant Assistant Commissioner Custody (ACC).¹²⁸

On 1 January 2023, there were only two inmates designated as protection non-association (PRNA) at Junee CC. There were no inmates designated as National Security Interest (NSI) or Extreme High Risk Restricted (EHRR), and only one Extreme High Security (EHS) designation.¹²⁹

We reviewed separation figures for the 2022 calendar year shown in Table 5 below, which did not reflect any specific over-representation.

Table 5: Separation for Section 78A in 2022 (Aboriginal v Non-Aboriginal)

Commencements	No.	Total (%)	Average time spent (days) monthly
Aboriginal inmates	23	29	4-27
Non-Aboriginal inmates	56	71	16-32
Total	79	100	

Note: Aboriginal inmates comprised about 33% of the Junee CC population during this period

3.4.4 Other protection issues

Historically, Junee CC has received high numbers of protection inmates. While there are still substantial numbers, the cohort has begun to change with the increase of maximum security non-protection inmates. Staff were sensing the change in cohort and noticing an increase in incidents. As mentioned above, inmates sharing cells designed for single use in Sector A was also exacerbating tension.

We continue to have doubts as to whether NSW correctional facilities more broadly (and Junee CC specifically) are adequately managing the removal of the Limited Association designation from the broader SMAP designation. Protection Limited Association (PRLA) was an alternative placement option for people requiring protection. It was removed in October 2020. People previously held under this arrangement then had to be managed within a Special Management Area or under a Protective Custody (Non-Association) direction. Junee CC was still trying to identify and manage separately inmates who may previously have needed a PRLA designation as an ‘informal’ category to enhance safety.

In our recent Shortland and Cessnock Report, we recommended that CSNSW reviews the decision to remove the Protection Limited Association placement option.¹³⁰ We remain of this view, and CSNSW has advised that the decision to remove Protection Limited Association as a placement option is being reviewed.¹³¹

128 Corrective Services NSW, *Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures: 3.1 Separation of inmates* (version 1.5, 13 November 2023) 4.

129 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 14 March 2023.

130 Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection of Shortland Correctional Centre and Cessnock Correctional Centre* (Report, June 2024) 30.

131 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 17 October 2024.

3.5 Use of force, rapid response and training

Use of force

The COPP policy on the use of force includes the following commentary in its summary:

Correctional officers must use alternative non-physical methods to resolve problematic behaviour whenever possible. A peaceful, injury-free solution is the principal objective. The use of force is an option of last resort. A correctional officer may use no more force than is reasonably necessary in the circumstances, and the extent and nature of the force will be dictated by the situation and must be limited to that necessary for control and protection....]¹³²

We requested data from CSNSW on use of force incidents reported at Junee CC in 2023. There were 81 use of force incidents during the year, averaging around 6-7 per month. These instances involved 240 inmates, noting that an incident may have involved one or several inmates, and an individual inmate could have been involved in more than one incident through the year.¹³³

The 240 inmates comprised 101 Aboriginal inmates (42%) and 139 non-Aboriginal inmates (58%). In 2023, Aboriginal inmates accounted for about 33% of the Junee CC inmate population.¹³⁴ Aboriginal inmates were therefore over-represented in use of force incidents, which should be of concern to Junee CC management.

Of the categories/reasons for uses of force recorded, fights between inmates accounted for 39% of all incidents. This was followed by 'to avoid an imminent attack on the correctional officer or some other person, but only if there is a reasonable apprehension of an imminent attack', which was 25%.

There was a significant use of chemical munitions, used in 55% of the use of force incidents. This can be related to the breaking up of fights which accounted for 39% of incidents. In these situations there can be risks to staff to safely physically separate inmates who are engaged in physical violence. This statistic reinforces the importance of specialised training.

Centre emergency response

Junee CC maintained a first level Centre Emergency Response Team (CERT), with four team members rostered for Sector A (maximum security) and four team members rostered for Sectors B and C. Correctional Supervisors of the unit where an incident occurred would assume a team leader role.

In addition there was a Rapid Response Team (RRT), which performed a similar function to Immediate Action Teams (IATs) in publicly operated centres, including targeted cell searches, responding to non-compliance, building rapport with inmate sources, and broadly maintaining a presence in Sector A. Each day three were rostered on a 12-hour shift. We were told that staff in the MPU have the same equipment and provide support to the RRT if required.

We were told that if there are multiple inmates and weapons involved in an incident they will deploy gas. We were also told that smaller aerosols (which every correctional officer is issued with) can be used for cell extractions or unplanned one on one use of force. Based on our observations during the inspection, we were concerned that use of gas or smaller aerosols was preferred over a use of force, and not considered a last option response. The statistics above suggest it is something to review. We were also told during the inspection that only 50% of the RRT team during the inspection had completed the Emergency Response Operators Course (EROC). This is a CSNSW program that takes seven days to complete and is conducted by CSNSW personnel and is required for IAT members. Some staff told us that there was no longer any need to comply with this specialised training.

As the centre now holds large numbers of maximum security and remand inmates, and incidents were increasing, we believe specialised training is essential. Junee CC management indicated a review of RRT was imminent, which we support.

132 Corrective Services NSW, *Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures: 13.7 Use of force*, (version 1.14, 25 June 2024).

133 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 8 April 2024.

134 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 14 March 2023.

Separately, we noted a positive practice regarding regular custodial training. Many correctional centres utilise full-day or half-day lockdowns to facilitate regular staff training, on a designated training day. Junee CC was also locking down for trainings, but for a shorter period in the early mornings. More frequent weekly training sessions, of reduced length, which do not disrupt the whole day for inmates, appears to be a commonsense approach. 12 day shift patterns likely facilitate this practice.

Recommendation: GEO RRT members at Junee CC should be required to complete specialist training, as is required by CSNSW IAT members.

3.6 Inmate discipline

Inmates may be subject to penalties for breaches of prison rules. Table 6 below shows the most common institutional offences in 2022, and Table 7 shows the most common disciplinary sanctions in the same year, both disaggregated by Aboriginal status. These tables show that Aboriginal inmates were over-represented in every category in 2022.¹³⁵ This should be of concern to Junee CC management.

Table 6: Most common institutional offences by category (top five): 2022¹³⁶

Offence	Aboriginal inmates	Non-Aboriginal inmates	Total	Aboriginal inmates (%)
Charges against good order	262	230	492	53
Fighting or assault	168	128	296	57
Abusive behaviour	67	43	110	61
Other drug charges	53	47	100	53
Property damage	59	29	88	67

Table 7: Sanctions imposed for common institutional offences (top five): 2022¹³⁷

Sanction	Aboriginal inmates	Non-Aboriginal inmates	Total	Aboriginal inmates (%)
Off buy-ups	286	220	506	57
Confined to cells	254	210	464	55
Off contact visits	39	44	83	47
Compensation*	43	16	59	73
Reprimand and caution	22	19	41	54

* Paying for damages to prison property.

We note that 'Off contact visits' was in the top five sanctions, notwithstanding that contact with family and friends is an integral and effective management tool. An inmate's contact visit and telephone privileges should only be withdrawn as a last resort.¹³⁸

ICS team members observed one disciplinary process during the inspection. While there were no particular concerns around the way it was handled, (noting that the inmate pleaded guilty and declined to make any comment on the incident, and the penalty was relatively minor) we noted the hearing took place some 10 days after the incident, longer than ideal.

We note that CSNSW is in the process of responding to a thematic review into inmate discipline in correctional centres by the NSW Ombudsman.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ Aboriginal inmates represented approximately 33% of the inmate population, see section 2.3.

¹³⁶ Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 25 March 2024.

¹³⁷ Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 25 March 2024.

¹³⁸ Corrective Services NSW, *Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures: 14.1 Inmate Discipline* (version 1.2, 9 August 2024) 15.

¹³⁹ Ombudsman NSW, *Investigation into Inmate Discipline in NSW Correctional Centres* (Report, August 2024).

4 Health Services

4.1 Introduction

In the majority of NSW correctional centres health services and clinical governance is provided by JH&FMHN. At Junee CC GEO provides health services to people in custody. It is one of three correctional centres in NSW where a private entity provides health services under a contract with CSNSW.¹⁴⁰

New health infrastructure was incorporated in the Junee CC expansion. A satellite clinic was established in the new maximum security sector and the main clinic where most staff are based was completely rebuilt, and became operational in 2020.

Health care is often the issue most frequently raised with us during custodial inspections, regardless of who is providing the service. The ICS annual report for 2022-23 outlines that the highest number of complaints recorded by Official Visitors across all centres in NSW related to medical issues.¹⁴¹ This was unchanged from the previous year.¹⁴²

For Junee CC specifically, the situation was no different with health care the largest area of inmate concern. According to information provided to us by the NSW Ombudsman, approximately one third of all complaints submitted to their office from inmates at Junee CC between July 2022 and June 2023 related to health/medical services. Under that heading, the main topics included OAT (access to methadone, suboxone, Buprenorphine), and access to health care more generally.

The Coroner has also raised concerns about health services at Junee CC and has issued a number of recommendations to GEO specifically around health services following several deaths in custody during the past five years.

Staff and management at Junee CC and GEO appeared to be aware of the challenges and focused on improvement. In discussing health services, the 2022 annual report for the centre described a '[...] tumultuous 12 months with COVID-19 outbreaks, lock-ins and staffing deficiencies causing havoc in the team's ability to deliver their KPI outcomes across the board.'¹⁴³

We found that Junee CC did have some serious pressure points and weaknesses in relation to delivery of health services. Some of this related to the broader challenges of health professional recruitment in regional locations, and some reflected the significant needs of the changing population. However, we also found a number of positives in their model and observed several areas of good practice during our visit.

4.2 Contract framework and monitoring

4.2.1 Framework

Health services is one of the five key 'operational outcomes' in the services specification to the contract. The contract establishes a range of required outcomes and minimum service requirements on GEO related to health care.¹⁴⁴ These obligations are too numerous to outline in full (some 37 pages) however as a brief example:

- Health care facilities and services must be provided to the standards of the public health system, in compliance with NSW Health and JH&FMHN policies and procedures, with special regard to the unique needs of custodial patients.

140 The other two being Clarence Correctional Centre (Serco), and Parklea Correctional Centre where St Vincent's Correctional Health (SVCH) is sub-contracted by MTC to provide health services.

141 Inspector of Custodial Services, *Annual Report 2022-23* (Annual Report, 2023) 12.

142 Inspector of Custodial Services, *Annual Report 2021-22* (Annual Report, 2022) 19-20.

143 GEO Group Australia Pty Ltd, *Junee Correctional Centre Annual Report December 2021-November 2022* (Report, 2022) 48.

144 Contract, Schedule 23 (Output Specification) Part C Services Specification, Health Services, 87-124.

- All custodial patients must have timely access to a coordinated range of health services appropriate to their health needs provided by a multidisciplinary team.
- The operator must ensure custodial patients are referred to appropriate health services, including secondary and tertiary services, in order to meet their immediate and ongoing health needs.
- The operator must deliver health services that address the specific cultural and linguistically diverse health needs of all custodial patients, including Aboriginal custodial patients.¹⁴⁵

The contract also specifies that GEO must ensure custodial patients are ‘comprehensively assessed for their health care needs and have access to a range of health services equivalent to those provided in the public health system’. This includes primary health services, mental health services, allied health services, medication management services, diagnostic services, specialist health services and specific treatment programs.¹⁴⁶

4.2.2 Inspection and monitoring of health services

The delivery of health services by GEO is monitored by JH&FMHN. Under the CAS Act, the CEO of JH&FMHN may have free and unfettered access to all parts of correctional centres, including, all offenders and all medical records.¹⁴⁷ This requirement is specifically enshrined in the contract with GEO for Junee CC.¹⁴⁸

The contract also states that JH&FMHN may undertake a review of health service delivery at a minimum of once per year. During such visits, GEO must ensure that JH&FMHN representatives have free and unfettered access to all relevant documents, physical facilities and staff involved in the provision of health services.

4.2.3 PIN notices related to health services

Prior to the inspection, we requested copies of all PIN notices issued by CSNSW since April 2019. Four (4) of eleven (11) PINS from April 2019-March 2023 related to health services. The notices concerned instances of:

- non-compliance in commencing eligible patients on opioid agonist treatment and hepatitis C treatment
- omissions/lack of required clinical documentation
- failure to report unauthorised inmate access to medication to JH&FMHN
- deficiencies in onsite health service, including suicide and self-harm risk assessment, COVID-19 daily checks, (highlighted following a death in custody).

4.3 Reception health screening

Junee CC has an important reception function for the region. New receptions arrive every day from surrounding courts (for example, Wagga Wagga, Albury, Griffith). As mentioned in section 3.2.1, in 2022 Junee CC received on average around 20 new receptions per week. This is in addition to an average of around 27 inmates transferred from other correctional centres per week. All require health examination by a qualified health professional within 24 hours of arrival.¹⁴⁹

The importance of this reception health screening is incorporated into the contract:

- New arrivals into custody must have a comprehensive health assessment conducted by a

¹⁴⁵ Contract, Schedule 23 (Output Specification) Part C Services Specification, 5.2, 5.4.1, 5.5.1, 5.8.1.

¹⁴⁶ Contract, Schedule 23 (Output Specification) Part C Services Specification, 5.10.1 Context of service delivery.

¹⁴⁷ *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999* s 236B.

¹⁴⁸ Contract, Schedule 23 (Output Specification) Part C Services Specification, 5.3 Right to Inspection of Health Services.

¹⁴⁹ Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection Standards for Adult Custodial Services in New South Wales* (May 2020) standard 78.

registered nurse, nurse practitioner or medical practitioner within 24 hours of initial reception.

- Persons transferred from another correctional centre or from a hospital must receive a health assessment review by a registered nurse, nurse practitioner or medical practitioner within 24 hours of transfer or arrival.¹⁵⁰

An independent health consultant formed part of our inspection team and was able to observe a health screening assessment for a vulnerable person with a number of health complications. The registered nurse conducting the screening had been with Junee CC for less than 12 months, although it was confirmed they were paired with a colleague for the first reception screening assignments. The screening was done well and was thorough and appropriate for the patient with complex health needs. We also followed up on the patient's status the following day and treatment and management appeared to be appropriate for his circumstances. Members of our team observed part of a screening process on a separate occasion. In all instances treatment was polite and respectful. The process was also conducted in line with JH&FMHN procedures and included:

- a full set of appropriate clinical observations taken
- clinical history, current medication documentation and review of clinical records
- risk assessment screens completed and mitigations actioned
- release of health information from outside health service forms
- forms completed for communication confidentiality and appropriately to GEO custodial to maintain safety and observations.

Health screening within 24 hours is also a KPI to the contract (KPI 23) reflecting its importance. Records indicate Junee CC was unable to meet this requirement during the first half of 2022, during which COVID-19 was still affecting staffing levels and services to inmates. KPI reporting showed poor performance for January 2022, with 50 of 85 people (59%) screened within the timeframe. We also reviewed a sample of monthly and quarterly reports submitted by GEO to CSNSW between March and December 2022. In May and July 2022 for example, GEO performed inadequately by this metric, with only 71-72% of new receptions screened within 24 hours. Given the first days following entry into custody is a particularly vulnerable time for people in custody, this is concerning, and would have significantly increased risk managed by the centre.¹⁵¹

For example, the Coroner recently reported on a case where a woman who died in custody at Junee CC in January 2022 had not received an adequate medical screen before her death, 17 days after her reception into custody. This period coincided with a major outbreak of COVID-19 among inmates at Junee CC, and major staffing shortages due to isolation requirements, both of which contributed to elevated workload pressures for remaining staff. Although the Coroner notes that Ms Higgins was seen frequently by nursing staff during her quarantine period (and on arrival), the lack of a comprehensive health assessment during this time was a key finding of the inquest.¹⁵²

In addition, following a death in custody in April 2022 (subsequently found by the Coroner to have been intentionally self-inflicted),¹⁵³ CSNSW issued a notice related to deficiencies in how that person was screened. They found that health staff were not provided with the patient's charge sheet at the time, and therefore were not made aware of the seriousness of offence. They also found there was a training deficiency around ensuring all health screening staff are aware of the relationship between

150 See Contract, Schedule 23 (Output Specification) Part C Services Specification, 5.10.4 Health Assessment. For those transferred from another correctional centre, the health assessment review should 'build on information from previous assessments and include a review of the Custodial Patient's immediate health needs and current health status.'

151 For a discussion around the range of risk factors present in a reception and remand population, see Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection of Parklea Correctional Centre* (Report, June 2022) 36.

152 *Inquest into the death of Vicki Higgins* (Coroners Court of New South Wales, Deputy State Coroner Magistrate Carmel Forbes, 17 May 2024). The coroner found Ms Higgins died as a result of an ischaemic bowel, although other significant health conditions contributed to her death.

153 *Inquest into the death of Steven McHugh* (Coroners Court of New South Wales, Deputy State Coroner Magistrate E. Kennedy, 11 October 2023).

the seriousness of a patient's offence and the risk of self-harm/suicide.

GEO performance reporting mentioned staffing shortages and COVID-19 related lockdowns as factors impacting on all health KPIs. Timeliness had improved in the second half of the year, with 97-100% of new receptions screened within the 24 hour timeframe between August and December 2022. Following the inspection we requested updated information for 2023, which indicated the timeframe was complied with for 95-100% of all new receptions through the full year.¹⁵⁴

Some staff reported that inmates were sometimes spending long periods in holding cells waiting for nursing staff to arrive and conduct screenings. We were not able to verify this, although note this as an issue for management to monitor. With Junee CC holding increasing numbers of remand prisoners, GEO (and CSNSW) need to be constantly vigilant regarding staff training and staff resources dedicated to reception screening.

JH&FMHN will also need to factor in the number of receptions, remand inmates, Aboriginal people, and women in custody at Junee CC in their planning to take over delivery of health services at this centre. JH&FMHN advised they have considered the population mix and care needs as part of its transition planning.¹⁵⁵

Recommendation: JH&FMHN ensures that numbers of remand and reception inmates, including the proportion of Aboriginal and female remand and reception inmates are factored into their planning to take over delivery of health services at Junee CC.

4.4 Scope of health services

The Junee CC health centre is staffed seven days per week, including one nurse covering night shift. Prior to the inspection, we reviewed data from Junee CC on the scope of health services offered onsite for December 2022 and January 2023. This included clinics for: Aboriginal health worker; COVID-19 vaccination; drug and alcohol nurse; dental; diabetic educator; GP; health promotion; metabolic monitoring; mental health nurse; pathology; population health nurse; primary health; psychiatrist and radiology.¹⁵⁶

However, at the time of the inspection in August 2023, the centre did not appear to be running many (if any) dedicated primary health clinics with nursing staff, and while there was routine dispensation of medication in the units, there was no formal sick parade. There were a number of contributing factors reported including the focus on nurse administration of medications, nursing staff shortages and the change to a general practitioner (GP) led model. Urgent wound dressings, sugar level monitoring of patients with diabetes and other nursing interventions were attended to but the request for regular nurse interaction via a primary nurse clinic was not active at the time of the inspection. This introduces a level of risk, and the reliance then becomes on inmate initiation of a request to see the medical officer and triaging of waiting lists rather than regular client visualisation and assessment. This may increase the risk of chronic and complex illnesses being missed or not monitored appropriately. Nurse led metabolic and chronic disease clinics were not operating at the time of the inspection due to nurse shortages, with some activities being undertaken by the Quality Manager (a registered nurse) as a temporary measure.

In early 2023, GEO entered into a new arrangement with an experienced GP who had a medical practice based in Wagga Wagga. This was a change from their previous visiting medical officer (VMO) model which had resulted in higher costs and less hours onsite. The GP was onsite five days per week, from approximately 06.30 to 11.00am. He was also on-call outside of these hours. While we had some questions regarding the sustainability of this arrangement, this was described to us as a cautious period while the GP was settling into the new role and setting expectations among health staff. At this time the GP felt there was no capacity for standing orders or nurse practitioners, as

¹⁵⁴ Information provided by GEO, March 2024. For a broader overview of the impact of COVID-19 on the NSW correctional system, see Inspector of Custodial Services, *Review of the response to COVID-19 in NSW Custody* (Report, November 2023).

¹⁵⁵ Information from Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network, 8 October 2024.

¹⁵⁶ At the time of the inspection in 2023, the Aboriginal Health Worker had moved to a different role, and the position was vacant, with the centre was trying to recruit for a replacement.

his priority was getting staff 'on the same page' as one multidisciplinary team. He also aimed to see every new inmate within seven days to understand their history, although it was unclear whether this goal was able to be met.

We acknowledge the new GP had a sound and cautious approach and was a very important asset to the centre. However there was a concern that things may be missed without more nurse led clinics. Enrolled nurses were primarily occupied with dispensation of medication in the units, a significant workload at Junee CC as the pharmacy technician model of medication dispensing/administration was not active during the inspection due to pharmacy technician shortages.¹⁵⁷

Recommendation: GEO reinstates primary care nurse, metabolic monitoring and chronic care clinics to complement the role of the GP.

4.4.1 Allied health services

While the centre had engaged an optometrist who was ordinarily scheduled to attend once per month, there were some gaps in allied health services. Junee CC was not providing physiotherapy and podiatry on site, which they stated was due to an inability to find/engage service providers. Unfortunately, inmates requiring these services had to be transferred to the Long Bay Correctional Complex in Sydney. We expect many inmates settled at Junee CC would be hesitant to make this trip. Following the contract transition, we hope JH&FMHN will be able to draw on its wider network to ensure services can be provided on site.

4.4.2 Wait list data

Provision of timely primary health services is a KPI to the contract (KPI 18), and there are specific financial consequences for failure to meet required timeframes for Priority 1 and Priority 2 custodial patients.¹⁵⁸ Prior to the inspection, we received Junee CC wait list data as at 24 February 2023. Positively, Junee CC had attended to 100% of urgent (1-3 days) and semi urgent (3-14 days) appointments within recommended timeframes. Likewise, performance on this measure was mostly very good through 2022. KPI reporting indicated there was 100% compliance with priority 1 time frames for the whole year. For priority 2, there was 100% compliance for nine months of the year, with a total of 20 failures in the months of April, May and July.

Clinical priority 3 (non-urgent primary health) should be attended to within three months. This measure is not a KPI. For a population of around 900, waitlist data revealed the relative demand and/or need for health services among the inmate population (and therefore the health services workload) to be very high. For example, on 24 February 2023 there were 425 waitlist entries for mental health, 418 for the GP, 400 for metabolic monitoring, 273 for primary health, 272 for population health, and 261 for dental. Table 8 below provides an overview of the number of waitlist entries that exceeded the recommended wait time on the same date (top 10).

¹⁵⁷ See section 4.4.4 below.

¹⁵⁸ Priority 1 means a patient's health condition is deteriorating and requires attention within one to three days. Priority 2 means a lack of immediate intervention may result in adverse health outcomes and requires attention within three to fourteen days. These do not include emergency treatment and reception assessment, which is dealt with separately. See Schedule 19 – Performance Regime, 43-45.

Table 8: P3 waitlist data outside recommended wait times 24 February 2023¹⁵⁹

Provider	Clinical priority 3 waitlist outside recommended time frame (number of entries)
Metabolic monitoring clinic	154
Population health clinic	118
Mental health clinic	116
Dental clinic	112
Primary health clinic	90
Drug and alcohol clinic	85
Health promotion clinic	63
Optometrist clinic	60
Pathology clinic	58
COVID-19 vaccination clinic	55

During the inspection for example, we noted a pile of inmate self-referral forms dating back five to seven days. Urgent issues were being actioned through referral to the GP but there did not seem to be a process in place for managing Priority 3 (less urgent) clinical issues. These are usually managed and monitored through regular primary nurse, chronic care or metabolic clinics in other centres. Again, the missing of key risk factors for inmates with chronic and complex needs is the risk and these clinics need a focus as well as the higher priority clinical and emergency response needs. These issues had been identified as a potential contributing factor in a previous death in custody.

Recommendation: GEO ensures ongoing monitoring, clinic scheduling and action taken to allow appropriate waitlist management for all clinics, including for Priority 3 patients.

4.4.3 Dental services

The new Junee CC health centre has a good dental suite. At the time of the inspection, GEO had arrangements for two dentists to cover three days per week onsite. The staffing profile also included a dental assistant.¹⁶⁰ Broadly, this is a good level of service, and more onsite hours than many other (perhaps most other) correctional centres in NSW.¹⁶¹ We recommend CSNSW and JH&FMHN maintain this level of service delivery following the transition from GEO.

Unfortunately, waiting lists and the ability to triage were of concern. The flow-on effects from measures related to COVID-19 management between 2020-2022 (lockdowns, quarantine and isolation protocols) were reportedly still being felt. We were advised that at one stage there was a 12 month waiting list, now reduced closer to eight. While this was only an informal estimate, Table 8 above shows that at least 100 inmates had not been seen within recommended clinical timeframes in February 2023.

We consider the lack of efficient transfer of clinical information between JH&FMHN and GEO, as well as the lack of an effective triage system, was resulting in an unacceptable clinical risk being carried by Junee CC. It was disappointing that GEO was still not using/linked into the electronic oral health record system used by JH&FMHN to manage waiting lists (Titanium). This was a recommendation in the 2021 Health Services Report, as well as the 2022 Parklea Report.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ Information provided by GEO Junee CC, March 2023. Where separate numbers were provided for clinics in the main health centre and the maximum security satellite health centre, those numbers have been combined.

¹⁶⁰ 30 hours per week.

¹⁶¹ In the Health Services Report, we noted that in 2018 a dentist was providing clinical services two days per week at Junee CC, which was a relatively high level of service compared with JH&FMHN sites inspected. See Inspector of Custodial Services, *Health Services in NSW Correctional Facilities* (Report, March 2021) 94.

¹⁶² Inspector of Custodial Services, *Health Services in NSW Correctional Facilities* (Report, March 2021) 139 and Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection of Parklea Correctional Centre* (Report, June 2022) 90.

There is phone and email communication between both entities, and a reciprocal arrangement between JH&FMHN and Junee CC (and other private providers) for a weekly handover of dental waitlists. However, we maintain that this is not the most efficient way to ensure access to background treatment history. Having a single electronic record is ideal as this helps provide continuity of care and reduce clinical risk. In August 2023, JH&FMHN advised that on-demand access to Titanium was still being pursued, in line with the recommendation from the Parklea Report.¹⁶³ This information system (or similar software) is standard in public dental services and community dentistry. The use of paper-based files to document and transfer clinical dental records is not appropriate in 2024, particularly when electronic records are available across the majority of other correctional settings in NSW. Given the transition to JH&FMHN for health services is imminent, and Titanium will be utilised under the JH&FMHN Oral Health Services (at a cost to the State), improvements in clinical dental records management prior to the transition is recommended.

Regarding GEO specifically, they did not have the same dental phone line that is available in the public system (the Information System Oral Health or ISOH), that could potentially assist with basic triaging. Likewise, the absence of a traditional nurse-led sick parade at Junee CC was another avenue of potential information not available to the dental team to assist them with triaging before scheduling appointments. Considerable resources are no doubt expended in having a dental service on site three days per week. However the lack of effective triage systems reduces the efficient use of those resources and increases risk.

JH&FMHN advised that they propose oral health coverage of two days per week at Junee CC, provided by a visiting dental officer and dental assistant. While this is one day less, some of the issues and inefficiencies at Junee CC surrounding standardised JH&FMHN Oral Health Service technology and integration with JH&FMHN systems should no longer be relevant after transition.¹⁶⁴

In addition, while a specialised dental Orthopantomography (OPG) X-ray machine was in place, it had not been operational for over six months due to a computer failure. Inmates had to be sent outside if an OPG X-ray was necessary. Standard dental X-ray was available, but this again was not networked and not being utilised or integrated with the JH&FMHN systems. The dental team reported having to repeat X-ray of patients as the digital and hard copy records were often not available.

Finally, given the number of tooth extractions performed onsite, it was positive to hear that the dentist was trying to explore the possibility of some kind of service to provide dentures. We acknowledge this may not be easy to arrange, but it would be good if possible.

Recommendation: JH&FMHN works to maintain the current levels of dental services/hours post transition as a good practice service level model.

Recommendation: GEO implements standardised JH&FMHN Oral Health Service technology prior to transition to JH&FMHN, including Titanium clinical record system, the JH&FMHN oral health access line and digital X-ray services.

4.4.4 Medication management

There must be a safe procedure for the distribution of medication for inmates.¹⁶⁵ The contract specifies in detail a large number of minimum service requirements for medication management, covering elements such as governance, legislation, documentation and audits, prescriptions, storage, administration and dispensing, and medications in transfer and discharge planning.¹⁶⁶

The health services staff profile for Junee CC provided to us prior to the inspection includes positions for one senior pharmacy technician as well as five pharmacy technicians. It is a good model (in theory) and likely a good standard for an urban or large suburban location. However, in August 2023 there was only one pharmacy technician position filled, and that individual was shortly to depart for extended leave. The centre has been unable to recruit and retain sufficient staff in these positions and management acknowledged the model had not proved sustainable for this regional location.

¹⁶³ Letter from JH&FMHN, 4 August 2023.

¹⁶⁴ Information from Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network, 4 October 2024.

¹⁶⁵ Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection Standards for Adult Custodial Services in New South Wales* (May 2020) standard 84.

¹⁶⁶ Contract, Schedule 23 (Output Specification) Part C Services Specification, 5.10.7 Medication Management.

The staffing deficiencies for pharmacy technicians meant the nursing staff needed to be diverted to deliver and administer all medications, despite individual inmate packaged medications, reducing the ability for nurses to undertake nursing clinical care and clinics. Most mornings enrolled nurses were involved in dispensation of medication to inmates in the units. We observed this process in the maximum security sector. While the procedures for administration of medication to inmates were conducted in line with JH&FMHN procedures, the trade-off of resources for clinical nursing activities was clearly observed.

June CC did not have its own pharmacist. They had an arrangement with a pharmaceutical dispensing and supply company for daily packing and delivery of medications. We observed several folders in the administration area containing paperwork dedicated to communicating with the supplier around errors in supply. There appeared to be quite a lot of administration involved. On raising this with GEO managers during the inspection they indicated they had scheduled further meetings with the pharmaceutical supplier management to try and improve the efficacy of the service.

At the time of the inspection the centre was in the process of implementation of the eMEDs program. While this has the likely benefit of significant reduction in medication errors, improved clinical care and reductions in GP time, there were concerns expressed about the ability to interface with the pharmaceutical supplier. OAT was not likely to be able to be integrated at this time and was planned to remain on a manual medication ordering system.

We have been advised that after the inspection, in late 2023, GEO changed its pharmacy provider and together with CSNSW paid for works to enable an interface between eMeds and the external supplier's system. This interoperability is a positive development, and also means that the OAT ordering process has now transitioned to the eMeds system.¹⁶⁷

During the visit methadone administration was observed in the health centre as well as in the maximum security sector satellite clinic. Administration procedure (identification of the patient, confirmation of the prescription, measuring, supervision and documentation) appeared to be undertaken correctly by the two nurses. Custodial staff supervised inmates during this procedure, however there were times where checking for diversion was not fully in line with procedures.

The use of an electronic methadone dispensing machine (rather than manual pumped dosing) is a good practice and reduces the risk of dosing errors. The machine was appropriately cleaned and records of methadone balances and secure storage were appropriately completed.

The role of Buvidal and longer acting OAT has been embraced at June CC. The approach reduces the need for daily dosing of methadone and reduces diversion risks with other OAT methods. The administration of the prescribed Buvidal medication was observed for two inmates. It was completed appropriately, interactions were respectful and there was appropriate provision of health information to the inmates.

4.4.5 Pathology and point of care testing

GEO had invested in a number of point of care testing systems. This has the potential to improve the timeliness of care interventions and potentially reduce the need for transfer to hospital. Testing for cardiac related issues can be time critical, particularly in regional settings. Therefore, point of care troponin, blood and INR tests could be beneficial.

A joint project with the Kirby Institute has provided the opportunity to undertake screening for Hepatitis C and to provide more rapid access to treatment for Hepatitis C positive patients. This is a commendable initiative.

Pathology services were available in Wagga Wagga, but these services appeared to sometimes have delays due to administration support and availability of nursing staff for taking client samples.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ Information provided by Justice Health and Mental Health Network, 4 October 2024.

¹⁶⁸ GEO's internal policy for Pathology Services at June CC outlines an arrangement where the main pathology service provider collects pathology specimens from the centre twice daily on weekdays. However, in the event an urgent pathology has been conducted on a weekend then 'Registered Nurses will deliver the pathology to Wagga Base Hospital Pathology Unit.' June CC Correctional Centre Operating Manual, Policy Number MP334, *Pathology Services*, (Version 13 November 2020) 4.

We also note that in August 2023, reviewing a death in custody from 2019, the Coroner issued recommendations to GEO regarding their internal pathology services policy. The Coroner noted that the policy did not provide explicit guidance around outstanding pathology results, to ensure none are overlooked. The Coroner recommended that GEO consider amending their internal pathology services policy for Junee CC:

[...]to provide that pathology requests are to be reviewed weekly by clinical staff to ensure that results are obtained in a timely manner, consistent with pathology service expected turnaround times, and that senior nursing clinicians are to be advised of any outstanding result of more than seven days so the pathology request can be escalated.¹⁶⁹

4.4.6 Management and treatment of substance abuse

Correctional centres should have effective mechanisms to treat and reduce the harm caused by drug use.¹⁷⁰ This is partly because people entering prison have high rates of alcohol and other drug (AOD) use and dependence, including poly-substance abuse.

To give some indication of demand at Junee CC, wait list data for 24 February 2023 indicated that there were 242 patients on the P3 clinical priority waitlist for a drug and alcohol clinic (recommended to be seen between 14 days and three months). This is at least one quarter of the population. 85 were outside the recommended wait time.

There was a drug and alcohol service at Junee CC, however it was not well resourced considering the population. There was one drug and alcohol nurse at the time of the inspection, who monitored and coordinated OAT as well as counselling and discharge prescriptions.¹⁷¹ While the staffing profile included one drug and alcohol specialist, this (medical) role did not appear to be filled, and nor was there a nurse practitioner or clinical nurse consultant. The role of OAT prescriber was therefore undertaken by the GP who had undertaken an AOD/OAT prescribing course since commencing with the service. We were advised that the centre was actively trying to recruit a second AOD nurse.

The inspection team met with the Inmate Development Committee who raised their concerns regarding the waiting time and access to AOD staff. They highlighted their perspective of challenges in AOD assessment, OAT commencement and changes in medication related to AOD.

During the inspection we observed that a patient who had been identified on entering custody in active drug and alcohol withdrawal was managed in the health centre observation cells, under medical and drug and alcohol review.

While the GP did all charting/scripting for inmates, there were no standing orders allowing the AOD nurse to support acute withdrawal management as can occur in police cells and other locations staffed by JH&FMHN registered nurses. Patients with AOD addiction/dependence can be high risk, particularly acute alcohol withdrawal, and this would be an area to explore.

Junee CC did provide structured AOD counselling. GEO indicated a total of 117 AOD counselling sessions were provided to 41 patients in 2023.¹⁷² These interventions are important (as are AOD programs discussed in Chapter 6.5). Outside of health services, we did not see any evidence of supported peer groups (e.g. relationships with Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous).

Given the volume of work, we believe GEO should review and increase drug and alcohol resources for inmates at Junee CC.

JH&FMHN advised that after transition, they propose the inclusion of a drug and alcohol doctor, drug and alcohol nurse specialist and Connections Coordinator.¹⁷³

169 *Inquest into the death of Peter Gretton* (Coroners Court of New South Wales, Deputy State Coroner Magistrate Derek Lee, 1 August 2023), 18.

170 Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection Standards for Adult Custodial Services in New South Wales* (May 2020) standard 95.

171 The preferred OAT in correctional centres in NSW is now Buprenorphine, which is an injectable long acting version of Buprenorphine.

172 Information provided by GEO March 2024. This indicated that 138 sessions were offered and 117 provided, with 85% attendance. Sessions were described as 30 minutes fortnightly for a maximum of 8 sessions.

173 Information provided by Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network, 4 October 2024.

Recommendation: GEO prioritises recruitment of the full AOD team at Junee CC, including AOD registered nurse or nurse practitioner and AOD medical specialist to reduce waiting times for AOD clinical interventions.

4.4.7 Mental health services

Correctional centres must make appropriate and adequate provision to meet the mental health care needs of inmates. They must also have effective processes to detect and manage inmates in crisis, particularly where they may self-harm.¹⁷⁴

The Junee CC contract states that the provision of mental health services must at a minimum align with the community-based model provided by general practitioners and mental health nurses. There are also a range of minimum service requirements for mental health services, for example relating to: screening assessment and referral; mental health assessments, treatment, care plans and interventions; timely access to non-urgent mental health services; triage and assessment by mental health professionals; documented systems for prioritising referrals, and a range of other requirements.¹⁷⁵

The state retains responsibility for forensic mental health care and patients requiring a higher level of care to manage their symptoms of a mental health illness are referred to a higher level of service provided by JH&FMHN.¹⁷⁶

Service and waitlists

The mental health services at Junee CC included three positions for mental health nurses. These positions had recruitment challenges with likely continued attrition flagged by staff in current positions. Given the population and increase in remand inmates, an additional or higher level mental health position such as a mental health clinical nurse consultant or mental health nurse practitioner should be considered to provide a broader range of supports and clinical supervision. It had reportedly been challenging to keep even those three positions filled, and the centre was struggling to retain experienced staff.

A psychiatrist with a long standing relationship to the centre attended two days per fortnight. According to GEO records for January 2023, 172 hours were booked for mental health nurse clinic appointments, and 48 for psychiatry clinic appointments. Delivered hours were 138 (80%) and 35 (73%) respectively.¹⁷⁷

Notwithstanding the regular service, mental health waitlists were very high indicating large demand (although this is not unusual in correctional centres). On 24 February 2023, there were 421 entries on the P3 mental health clinic waitlist, effectively representing over 40% of the population. While P3 appointments have a time frame of up to 3 months, on the same date there were 116 entries sitting outside this recommended timeframe. We were told during the inspection in August 2023 that the waitlist had reduced to closer to 300, but it is still an area of risk for Junee CC, particularly given the increase in the proportion of maximum security population and short stay inmates being managed by the centre.

A root cause analysis team engaged by GEO to review a death in custody in February 2023 identified referrals to mental health nurses and wait time for review by mental health nurses as areas for system improvement. We note the Coronial Inquest is yet to take place.

JH&FMHN advise they are proposing a mental health clinical nurse specialist and nurse practitioner as part of its staffing and service profile to Junee CC after transition.¹⁷⁸

174 Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection Standards for Adult Custodial Services in New South Wales*, (May 2020) standards 89, 90.

175 Contract, Schedule 23 (Output Specification) Part C Services Specification 5.10.12 Mental Health Services.

176 Contract, Schedule 23 (Output Specification) Part C Services Specification, 5.10.12 Mental Health Services. For example the Mental Health Screening Units at the Silverwater Complex, Long Bay Hospital or other inpatient forensic mental health settings.

177 Information provided by GEO March 2023. A range of factors can contribute to appointments not taking place, including availability of patient and lockdowns.

178 Information provided by Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network, 4 October 2024.

Recommendation: GEO and JH&FMHN consider increasing mental health nursing resources to include an additional position, preferably a higher level mental health nurse position such as a mental health clinical nurse consultant or mental health nurse practitioner to provide a broader range of supports and clinical supervision.

Acute care

Junee CC has no specific or dedicated acute mental health infrastructure, outside of immediate observation cells in the health centre. Male inmates whose mental illness is so acute they are unable to be managed at a correctional centre may be referred to specialised facilities in NSW. These include the Mental Health Screening Unit (MHSU) at MRRC and the Mental Health Unit of Long Bay Hospital. These centres also have step-down units for inmates exiting the acute phase.

Mental health staff and specialists at Junee CC were of the view that they do receive patients transferred from other correctional centres more suited to acute or sub-acute beds, and that the pathway for them to return to the Sydney metropolitan area for care is difficult. A total of 11 inmates were referred to either MHSU or LBH in 2023. Ultimately nine were accepted, although it is not clear how long they waited. It is acknowledged that the competing bed demand priorities across the state can provide challenges for access to the limited metropolitan mental health specialist beds. As we noted in our report on the inspection of the MRRC, the management of bed flow to the specialist units is a chronic challenge faced by JH&FMHN and CSNSW.¹⁷⁹ Participation in the JH&FMHN mental health bed demand meeting and allocation on an equal basis is key to the management of the network demand, regardless of contracted service provider. While Wagga Wagga hospital is available for emergency inpatient care if needed, it is not intended for longer-term management of Junee CC inmates.

A similar issue was discussed in our Parklea report, although the demand and patient turnover at Parklea is much higher. We recommended better collaboration to ensure acutely unwell persons in need of specialised mental health facilities are triaged to MRRC, however this was primarily focused on new inmate receptions into custody.¹⁸⁰ JH&FMHN rejected the recommendation, noting they had limited capacity in police cells to intervene or make decisions about which centre patients go to, before a full assessment is completed at a reception centre. Junee CC is the reception facility in the region, therefore we do not make the same recommendation here. However, there are also small but steady numbers of inmates (an average of 11 per month in 2023) who are staying at Junee CC for seven days or less while transiting to other correctional centres, as well as persons classified to Junee CC. It is from these cohorts that CSNSW and JH&FMHN will need to closely monitor going forward to avoid unnecessary transfers to Junee CC which is ill equipped to manage patients with acute mental health needs.

High Risk Assessment Team (HRAT)

In addition to relevant contractual requirements, GEO has developed an internal policy relating to the prevention and management of people at risk of suicide and self-harm. The High Risk Assessment Team (HRAT) Policy has been endorsed by CSNSW and the process is broadly similar to that outlined in the CSNSW COPP.¹⁸¹

The HRAT is a multidisciplinary team that convenes to manage the risk of suicide or self-harm of identified inmates. It must include at least one member from three departments: health services, rehabilitation and reintegration, and custodial services. It is responsible for ongoing assessments of an at-risk inmate's risk of suicide or self-harm; assessing their risk of harm to and from others; developing and reviewing management plans; referring to specialist assessment or treatment where appropriate; providing continuity of crisis and management interventions.¹⁸² The HRAT policy requires all at risk inmates to be reviewed by the HRAT a minimum of twice per week.

¹⁷⁹ Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection of the Metropolitan Remand and Reception Centre* (Report, February 2024) 54.

¹⁸⁰ Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection of Parklea Correctional Centre* (Report, June 2022) 83-84.

¹⁸¹ Corrective Services NSW, *Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures: 3.7 Management of inmates at risk of self-harm or suicide* (version 1.10, 21 May 2024).

¹⁸² Junee Correctional Centre Operating Manual, *High Risk Assessment Team (HRAT) Policy*, (23 June 2022) 20.

We were impressed with the standard of HRAT meetings we observed during the inspection, and the HRAT team included a mental health nurse, clinician/psychologist and custodial officer. It was also joined by the accommodation manager, a senior custodial position. Inmates were being managed in cells adjacent to the health centre.

We also observed the HRAT 'round' where the full team went and discussed with each person on HRAT as to their current needs, progress plan and issues. We did question whether the use of gowns for patients was necessary in all instances, although acknowledge this is out of caution.

We believe the presence of mental health nurses and clinicians/psychologists enhances the effectiveness of the team. CSNSW and JH&FMHN should consider retaining these roles in the RIT process at Junee CC where possible.

4.5 Aboriginal health

The Aboriginal health worker had left the role shortly before the inspection. The lack of chronic disease clinics and the challenges with providing culturally appropriate comprehensive primary health care through an Aboriginal health worker or Aboriginal health practitioner team was concerning. We were advised that the position was filled again in October 2023.

The adequate management of a high number of Aboriginal inmates requires a tailored approach, and while cultural competence does appear to be an intended focus of the centre, the embedding of Aboriginal primary health models needs further development. This is in order to manage the chronic disease risks and early mortality that has been identified as a potential factor in previous deaths in custody of Aboriginal inmates. Appropriate screening and monitoring for inmates from Aboriginal communities needs to be a priority.

In recent years the Coroner has also recommended increased resources towards Aboriginal health services at Junee CC. In May 2020, reviewing a death in custody in 2018, the Coroner recommended GEO consider creating at least three full time equivalent Aboriginal health worker positions at Junee CC, with at least one with the responsibility for the provision of mental health care and treatment to Aboriginal inmates.¹⁸³ In July 2023 the Coroner recommended that GEO '...prioritises improvement of the staffing ratios of doctors, Aboriginal health workers and nurses to inmates at Junee Correctional Centre to reduce waitlists and to provide culturally appropriate care for the increasing numbers of inmates at the centre.' This decision, concerning a death in custody of an Aboriginal person in September 2020, also expressed concern about the lack of availability of Aboriginal health workers at the relevant time.¹⁸⁴

In the Health Services Report, we observed that training around Aboriginal culture, Aboriginal understandings of health and culturally responsive healthcare had not been provided to GEO health or custodial staff. The report included a number of recommendations to all health service providers, including GEO, regarding health services to Aboriginal inmates. While some progress was made, renewed attention is required.¹⁸⁵

JH&FMHN have proposed the inclusion of an Aboriginal health practitioner as part of its Junee CC staff profile after transition, and advise they plan to augment care delivery and continuity through partnerships with local Aboriginal community-controlled health services.¹⁸⁶

Recommendation: GEO and JH&FMHN prioritise an Aboriginal health primary care program, through direct recruitment of Aboriginal health staff or partnership with an Aboriginal community-controlled health organisation.

183 *Inquest into the death of Jonathon Hogan* (Coroners Court of New South Wales, Deputy State Coroner Magistrate Harriet Grahame, 6 May 2020).

184 *Inquest into the death of Reuben Button* (Coroners Court of New South Wales, Deputy State Coroner Magistrate Harriet Grahame, 21 July 2023), 36-37, 39.

185 Inspector of Custodial Services, *Health Services in NSW Correctional Centres* (Report, March 2021) 78-86.

186 In response to this report, JH&FMHN stated that they consider the integration of Aboriginal health staff within clinical streams as more effective in building cultural competence than standalone Aboriginal health service models, Information provided by Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network, 4 October 2024.

4.6 Staffing and training

The biggest challenge and risk for health services at Junee CC in the years leading up to the inspection had been recruiting and retaining enough suitable staff. It appears there had been numerous hires and departures, for a variety of reasons, leading to some instability. This is notwithstanding some financial hiring incentives employed by GEO.

The health services manager had the support of a GEO clinical governance framework and committee that coordinated nationally and met every three months, including clinical advisors. A new national health services manager GEO Group was appointed around the time of the inspection, but understandably their role was yet to demonstrate local impact from a health service management and quality improvement perspective. This group was exploring the possibility of targeted overseas recruitment (subject to relevant work visas and qualifications) given the acknowledged challenges.

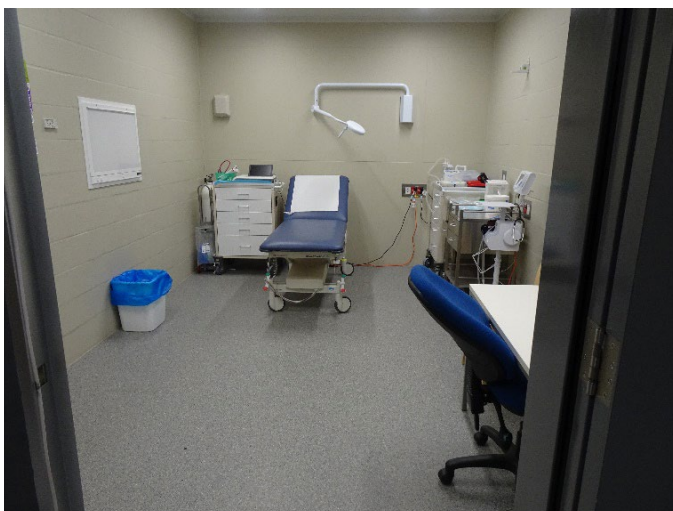
A dedicated role for clinical/nursing education was a gap identified. It was good that a clinical coordinator role had been created, however that person often had to fill in other duties. One root cause analysis had been performed in the 12 months to August 2023. One category 2 and nil category 1 clinical incident reports were completed in the 6 months to August 2023, which seemed low.

We also note that the Coroner made some specific training-related recommendations for health staff to GEO in August 2023. These related to symptoms or observations that should automatically cause nursing staff to request review by a medical officer, training in escalation of care, and ongoing training to ensure competency regarding use of i-STAT machines.¹⁸⁷

Moving forward, the embedding of staff within the JH&FMHN will allow access to the NSW Health training and other supports. We were advised that access to the Health Education and Training Institute (HETI) level online and face to face training was still not accessible to GEO despite GEO advising a willingness to cost subsidise. This should be rectified for the current staff regardless of employer.

Like any regional centre, this will have to be considered by JH&FMHN as they ready to take over health services at Junee CC in April 2025. Furthermore, given the transition back to CSNSW and JH&FMHN, it will no doubt be a particular challenge to retain adequate staffing and resourcing as GEO's time as operator nears an end, with attrition and additional risk a real potential.

Consultation room, health centre



Dental treatment room



187 *Inquest into the death of Peter Gretton* (Coroners Court of New South Wales, Deputy State Coroner Magistrate Derek Lee, 1 August 2023), 18-29. I-STAT machines are a portable blood analysis tool.

5 Amenities and daily life

5.1 Regimes and time out of cell

At the time of the inspection, Junee CC was providing good out of cell hours to most inmates. It is important to acknowledge this good practice. This is in large part because time out of cell is a KPI in the Junee CC contract performance regime (KPI 9) and compliance is part of the contract. Targeted KPIs can drive better performance. For example, in our 2023 inspection of John Morony CC, we found that similar KPIs at a publicly operated correctional centre had driven change around the unlock and lock-in of inmates on time and resulted in more out of cell hours for inmates.¹⁸⁸

Under the contract GEO is required to maximise the amount of time each inmate is out of their cell each day to ensure a minimum of 7.5 hours per day out of cells in secure accommodation and 11 hours per day in open accommodation areas/minimum security.¹⁸⁹ The regime observed during inspection in August 2023 broadly reflected these hours. Also of note, in 2022-23, the NSW Ombudsman received only one complaint from a Junee inmate about time out of cell.¹⁹⁰

Prior to the inspection GEO advised of the following intended hours for the centre daily regime:

- Sector A (maximum security): 9 hours
- Sector B (medium security): 10 hours
- Sector C (minimum security): 11 hours¹⁹¹

During the inspection, Junee CC had modified the regime for A1 and A2 to a slightly shorter day (8.5 hours, with an earlier start and earlier finish) as a strategy to manage an increasing number of incidents. A3 and A4 retained an intended 9 hour day, noting they accommodated mostly medium and minimum security inmates at the time.

The picture on review of CSNSW and GEO reporting is more complicated. GEO reported an average time out of cell between December 2021 and November 2022 of 8.1 hours in secure custody (higher than required) and 10.04 hours in open custody (less than required).¹⁹² Junee CC requested relief from CSNSW regarding this KPI in particular months during 2022 on the basis of lockdowns caused by COVID-19. We note that COVID-19 lockdowns impacted many centres across NSW in the first half of 2022. As discussed below, at Junee CC there were a significant number of days in January and February 2022 where the entire centre was locked down, dramatically reducing out of cell hours. This KPI relief reportedly adjusted the annual average to 8.87 hours for secure custody and 11.29 hours for open custody.¹⁹³

For 2023, data provided by CSNSW showed an average of 7.32 for secure custody and 9.72 for open custody, suggesting deteriorating performance.¹⁹⁴ However GEO's annual KPI performance reporting to CSNSW for December 22-November 23 indicated a higher average of 9 and 11.3 hours respectively. This is an example of inconsistency between data in OIMS produced by CSNSW and data from GEO. This will be less of an issue going forward when the centre returns to public hands.

What is important, is that at the conclusion of the contract, inmates do not suffer a regression in standard time out of cell. CSNSW should consider retaining a specific KPI for Junee CC related to time out of cell after transition back to public hands. Also, given 12 hour shifts were common at Junee

188 Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection of John Morony Correctional Centre 2023*, (Report, March 2024) 12-13.

189 Contract, Schedule 23 (Output Specification) Part C Services Specification 3.7.2. Approved exceptions to the counting rules for time out of cell include things such as inmates in segregation, monthly scheduled searches required under the contract, and variations to the routine following critical or serious incidents (as defined).

190 Information provided by NSW Ombudsman, Junee Correctional Centre 01/07/2022 – 30/06/2023.

191 Information provided by GEO, March 2023 (3.3).

192 GEO Group Australia Pty Ltd, *Junee Correctional Centre Annual Report December 2021-November 2022*, 26.

193 We have not reviewed this methodology applied by CSNSW. According to the annual report, CSNSW provided relief regarding this KPI for January and February 2022 for secure custody and January, February, March and July 2022 for open custody as a result of lockdowns due to COVID-19.

194 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW 25 March 2024.

CC, and facilitated a longer day, they should also consider retaining the possibility of 12 hour shifts to maximise retention of local custodial staff. Transition planning should include a focus on maintaining a good, structured day for programs, education, employment and activities, which is facilitated by good out of cell hours.

We also wish to highlight the good practice we observed at Junee CC when inmates were unlocked in the mornings. The practice was efficient, professional and effective. We did not see protracted 'rolling let-go's', which can delay actual unlock time for inmates, and the approach was relatively calm. At Junee CC, all units appeared to carry out unlock procedure at the same time (at least during our observation), which contributes to consistent out of cell hours across different wings.¹⁹⁵

5.1.1 Lockdowns

We heard fewer reports and complaints about lockdowns during this inspection compared to the inspections of CSNSW operated prisons we conducted across NSW in 2021 and 2022. This is likely related to the receding impact of COVID-19 on correctional centres by the time of the onsite inspection in August 2023, including the lifting of mandatory quarantine procedures for all new inmates in March 2023.¹⁹⁶

Records indicate that Junee CC did experience frequent lockdowns in the first half of 2022. For example, in January and February 2022, there were 17 and 14 days respectively where the entire centre was locked down for a full day.¹⁹⁷ This would have had a heavy impact on inmates' quality of life and access to services. In addition, there were a significant number of partial lockdowns, which means a lockdown of a specific unit or units. We reviewed incident reports for partial lockdowns between October and December 2022, and the most common reason provided was 'staff deficiencies'.

Positively, there were no whole of centre lockdowns recorded in 2023, and the number of partial lockdowns had reduced by almost half compared to 2022.¹⁹⁸ One note of caution, according to the data, almost one third of the partial lockdowns at Junee CC in 2023 happened in one single month, December 2023. This disproportionate number stands out as a concern, and while we have not analysed in detail, note that there appears to have been a significant increase in lockdowns caused by staff absences after the announcement that the centre would return to public hands.¹⁹⁹

5.1.2 In-cell regime for C block minimum security

As discussed in section 3.1.3, accommodation in the separate minimum security sector (C block) incorporates smaller single storey units with shared living area and basic cooking facilities. Inmates in this sector were locked in at 6pm during the inspection period. However unlike some other designated minimum security accommodation across the state, inmates at Junee CC were locked into their cells at this time, as opposed to locked into their unit. This structure does not provide the same focus towards reintegration to the community and self-reliance.

During our time engaging with inmates, we acknowledge we heard mixed views about this: many inmates raised the issue, but some did prefer existing arrangements. We were also advised by GEO that a trial of locking inmates into the unit had been recently attempted and then quickly cancelled due to an assault.

Notwithstanding, we believe there is room to explore a range of incentives and placement options. As discussed above, the minimum security infrastructure (cramped and dated) does not offer any strong incentives for inmate progression. Junee CC is a major regional multi-classification facility that should in theory be offering a range of progressive steps for sentenced inmates from the region,

¹⁹⁵ We heard rolling unlocks do happen on major public holidays, presumably due to lower staffing numbers.

¹⁹⁶ After around three years of quarantine regimes of varying lengths, the quarantining of new reception inmates ceased entirely across NSW in March 2023. Commissioner's Instruction 2023/07.

¹⁹⁷ Information provided by Corrective Services NSW 14 March 2023.

¹⁹⁸ Information provided by Corrective Services NSW 25 March 2024.

¹⁹⁹ Junee CC became a centre under transition after November 2023, and Sector A is temporarily closed as part of the GEO/CSNSW transition strategy, Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 17 October 2024.

including progression within Sector C sector itself. We believe the centre should offer at least one of the three Sector C units with a locked in unit regime, with appropriate behaviour incentives and requirements, and requiring inmate consent to be placed there. Inmates should retain the ability to lock their own door.

Prior to any variation to routine however, we recommend first reviewing relevant procedural security measures in Sector C. We identified some areas for CSNSW to review.

5.1.3 FTU

As mentioned above, the women's unit was well placed near the health centre and reception areas. There were dedicated laundry facilities, and TVs were provided free of charge, as is appropriate for a short stay facility. Services such as psychologists and chaplains attended the women's unit directly on referral, and women had weekly access to the cultural centre for activities. We spoke to a woman in custody (on some days there was only one woman in custody) who confirmed that since her arrival she had managed to speak with her lawyer and had been visited by an Aboriginal liaison officer, who had provided canvas and paints, a good practice we observed during our visit. On other days, women compared Junee CC favourably to other correctional centres that have small women's units.

Recommendation: CSNSW retains time out of cell as a key performance indicator for management of Junee CC (at least to the level required by the current contract) and incorporate 12 hour shifts into the custodial staffing profile to facilitate this.

Recommendation: CSNSW undertakes a security review for Sector C (minimum security) at Junee CC.

Recommendation: GEO and CSNSW review lock-in regimes in Sector C (minimum security), with a view to designating at least one unit where inmates can be locked into their units (and not cells) overnight.

5.2 Food, clothing and bedding

5.2.1 Food

Food preparation

The Junee CC kitchen prepares fresh meals onsite for around 800-900 inmates each day. This is a major difference compared to CSNSW-managed correctional centres that serve re-heated packaged meals prepared centrally in Sydney by Corrective Services Industries (CSI).²⁰⁰ Many inmates commented on their preference for fresh food over CSI meals. It will be disappointing to see this good practice lost in the transition.

The kitchen runs two shifts, 7.30am-1.30pm and 10am-3pm. They can have up to 65 inmates employed in the kitchen and had approximately 57-58 inmates working there when we visited. They must meet the needs of inmates who have religious diets, medically restricted diets and vegetarians. When we visited the kitchen, the dinner meal was fish, but some inmates who had identified that they did not eat fish were given an alternative.

Another positive at Junee CC is that the centre farm supplies vegetables and eggs to the kitchen. They collect around 1,200 eggs per month from chickens raised on the farm. The eggs can be used in the kitchen but cannot be sold to inmates due to quality certification requirements.

In addition to preparing inmate meals, the kitchen provides food for the staff cafeteria/dining room. It was reported that between 65-70 staff eat there each day. The meals are subsidised by GEO. Staff can buy a book of meal tickets which is then deducted from their salary. This is also good practice.

²⁰⁰ We were advised that there were some exceptions during prolonged periods of staff vacancies, when the kitchen has at times ordered in meals from CSNSW on certain days, to ensure staff are not working excessive overtime. For example, the winter/spring menu on display at the time of our inspection indicated the evening meals on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays would be from CSI.

There is also a separate bakery in the maximum security sector which produces fresh bread daily for use in both inmate meals and the staff canteen, as well as contributing to special events, charity days, centre functions etc.

Daily meals

We were provided with a copy of the Summer/Autumn menu. The menu changes weekly on a four-week cycle. Sector C also had a weekly BBQ dinner.

Breakfast (65g cereal, bread, one piece of fruit, together with daily coffee/tea/milk packets) and lunch options such as sandwiches were fairly standard. Dinner included meat dishes most nights, fish once per week and vegetarian alternatives. A dessert was provided four days per week. While we did not sample meals on this inspection, the weekly (dinner) menus appeared quite impressive.

Unusually during an inspection, we did not hear many complaints about food. Typical and frequent complaints at CSNSW managed centres are around CSI rethermed meals and small servings.²⁰¹

Other activities

The kitchen also caters for different events. There is a rotating BBQ that occurs for inmates throughout the gaol and this is catered for by the kitchen. Once per quarter the gaol puts on a big breakfast for the local school as part of their community outreach. The kitchen was also preparing meals on wheels for approximately 10 people in the community. This food for the community looked particularly appetising, we observed a roast dinner with apple crumble dessert. Inmates told us they liked being involved in this program.

At the time of the inspection, the centre was about to cater for Eid al-Fitr celebrations (Ramadan). Similarly, the centre recently had NAIDOC celebrations and the kitchen received funding to provide emu and kangaroo. In the Reintegration and Rehabilitation building the centre has an inmate barista. The kitchen provides the supplies for this service.

Ultimately, it is a credit to Junee CC that they prepare and provide food fresh onsite, which is a rarity in NSW correctional centres. It will be disappointing if this is not continued when CSNSW takes over operations. It is also commendable that the centre supports Meals on Wheels as a community outreach program. No doubt the local community will be hoping for this arrangement to continue.

5.2.2 Clothing and bedding

Clothing was being issued to new inmates correctly. The one issue we observed regarding linen was that only one towel was being supplied per inmate instead of two. After we explained the requirement under the COPP, we were advised that the centre would start providing two towels.²⁰² GEO management should monitor compliance with the COPP regarding provision of towels to arriving inmates for the duration of the contract.

The COPP states that 'used clothing that is in good condition, with the exception of socks and underwear, must be laundered in accordance with Australian Standards (AS/NZ 4146, 2000) and re-issued to inmates.'²⁰³ We take this to mean that inmates must not be issued with used/recycled socks and underwear. At Junee CC all used underwear was being placed in the bin. Only cleaned greens are recycled when in good condition. This is good practice and complies with the COPP.

In addition to the blankets, sheets and pillowcases required by the COPP, the linen packs at Junee CC included a doona and doona cover. It was pleasing to see that inmates were provided with a doona at no cost. As mentioned in section 3.2.2, this is discretionary under the COPP. But at most other centres inmates have to buy doonas.

201 Corrective Services NSW acknowledges that complaints can arise and remain committed to ensuring all meals meet the Dietary Guidelines for Australians and are of high quality, Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 17 October 2024.

202 Corrective Services NSW, *Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures: 1.5 Issuing correctional centre clothing and linen* (version 1.4, 22 June 2023) 7.

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

There was a good supply of work boots in the stores area, and we were advised that inmates are issued with new boots when they commence working. The boots were not recycled which was positive to see. Industry workers may also be given jackets and beanies.

During our time onsite we did receive multiple complaints that inmates cannot exchange clothes/towels/shoes when worn out, and that officers refuse these requests. Inmates have no direct access to the property officer (which is not unusual). We did see examples of worn out items in the units. Having seen the property storage area, which was organised and well-stocked, we attribute this issue more to inmate staff relationships and request processes. GEO should ensure processes are in place to allow inmates to exchange worn out clothing and linen.

Recommendation: CSNSW retains GEO practice for provision of fresh meals prepared onsite at Junee CC, including use of produce from the farm where possible.

Food preparation for local Meals on Wheels



Worn out towel



5.3 Contact with family and friends

5.3.1 Visits policy in NSW

The relevant section of the COPP provides the following:

An unsentenced inmate may receive one visit on reception, and thereafter they may be visited twice weekly.²⁰⁴ Sentenced inmates may receive a visit, and then as often as the Governor of the correctional centre determines. Visits and visit procedures are approved by the Governor of the correctional centre and subject to appropriate staffing arrangements, suitable facilities and security considerations.²⁰⁵

Clause 75(4) of the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Regulation 2014* provides that a visit 'is to be permitted to continue for at least 30 minutes, unless it is terminated or would otherwise extend beyond visiting hours.' We take this to mean that a visit can be as short as 30 minutes. In practice, contact visits in maximum and medium security settings are typically one hour.²⁰⁶

In recent years following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ability for inmates to contact (visit) family and friends using a remote device (tablet or AVL) has become commonplace across NSW. Most correctional centres have arrangements for in-person as well as video visits.

²⁰⁴ This is drawn from the requirement in the CAS Regulation, *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Regulation 2014* cl 76(1).

²⁰⁵ Corrective Services NSW, *Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures: 10.1 Visits to inmates by family and friends* (version 1.10, 24 May 2023) 4.

²⁰⁶ Certain minimum security correctional centres permit extended visits regimes with longer hours.

Division 7A Subdivision 2 of the CAS Regulation now has specific provisions providing for AVL visits.²⁰⁷ It is silent on the duration of visits or frequency. At Junee CC for example, video visits were 30 minutes long compared to 60 minutes for a contact visit. Some inmates relied primarily on video visits due to family members living at some distance (such as in Sydney) and did not understand why visits were shorter.

The relevant section of the COPP dealing with visits also appears to be silent on AVL/video visits.²⁰⁸ We understand that Governors have considerable discretion in relation to visit arrangements, which vary between centres. However, it may be worthwhile to amend the COPP to make specific reference to AVL /tablet visits, potentially including entitlements, frequency and duration.

Recommendation: CSNSW takes action to amend relevant CSNSW policies and procedures, to make specific reference to audio visual link (AVL) visits. This should include entitlements, frequency and duration of AVL visits.

5.3.2 Visits at Junee CC

Junee CC provides three types of family visits for inmates:

- contact visits (where visitors and inmates are not physically separated)
- non-contact ('box') visits, where inmates and visitors are physically separated for security reasons but can see and hear each other
- video visits, through AVL or other tablet devices.

During the inspection, contact visits with family and friends were taking place on Saturdays and Sundays, and video visits were (officially) available on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Unfortunately, video visits were temporarily suspended at the time of the August 2023 inspection due to a problem with the software and connection, that ultimately lasted over a month. We were advised video visits recommenced on or about 19 October 2023. Information provided by GEO also suggests that at times visits take place at Junee CC on Mondays as well, although it was unclear if that was a standard or ad-hoc arrangement.²⁰⁹

It is good that video visits were conducted on Fridays as well as the weekend. We regularly advocate for the importance of visit arrangements to be possible on at least one weekday as well as the weekends, particularly for centres with significant remand populations.²¹⁰ Ideally, Fridays would be available for in-person as well as video visits.

GEO includes information on how to book a visit on its website for Junee CC, with a link for Just Connect, as well as telephone options, which is good. There is also a family friendly video with basic information about visiting a correctional centre.

Information in the inmate handbook

The Junee CC inmate handbook states that one-hour contact visits occur on Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Public Holidays.²¹¹ However from our observation, Friday visits were only available via video. The handbook does say that video visits are available on the same days but does not mention visit duration. The handbook also does not mention that inmates on remand are permitted two visits per week (as per the CAS Regulation). The CSNSW public website advises that in-person visits are available at Junee CC on Saturdays and Sundays, and video visits are available on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. There is no mention of Monday visit options in the handbook or website. Information available to inmates and the public should be regularly updated.

207 *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Regulation 2014*, cl 122C-122H.

208 Corrective Services NSW, *Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures: 10.1 Visits to inmates by family and friends* (version 1.10, 24 May 2023).

209 Information provided by GEO, March 2024.

210 See Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection of Silverwater Women's and Dillwynia Correctional Centres 2022* (Report, November 2023) 35, 82-84.

211 GEO Junee Correctional Centre Induction/Orientation Handbook 2022.

Availability and conditions of contact visits

Notwithstanding some confusion about published visit days, GEO provided the following data for the visits schedule as well as number of actual visits for September 2023:

Table 9: Visits program for September 2023

Number of sessions	Session times	Days
4	9am, 10.30am, 12.30pm, 2pm	Friday
4	9am, 10.30am, 12.30pm, 2.30pm	Saturday
4	9am, 10.30am, 12.30pm, 3pm	Sunday
4	9am, 10.30am, 12.30pm, 2.30pm	Monday

Table 10: Actual number of contact visits for September 2023²¹²

Day	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
Friday	7	5	7	5	10
Saturday	35	35	33	36	36
Sunday	35	39	25	28	-
Monday	5	4	6	9	-

Junee CC has one large indoor visits room. There is a separate minimum security visits area but it was not in use for contact visits. Reportedly maintenance was required (discussed below).

Junee CC allowed up to 20 inmates to attend each contact visit session, and cohorts were separated to some degree by session, based on security classification and protection status. This meant that in a best case scenario, Junee CC could facilitate 80 contact visit sessions per day. The data in Table 10 above shows that the highest number recorded on a single day in September was 39. In general, we found the contact visit numbers quite low for a gaol with approximately 900 inmates, ranging from 25-39 on weekends.²¹³ Some inmates found video visits better suited their circumstances and preferences.

We think this reflects in part that Junee CC was accommodating many inmates from Sydney and other areas outside the region since the expansion. This would make contact visits difficult due to time and expense of travel. We heard from some inmates that their family did not visit because of the distance involved to travel for a one-hour visit. This is another reason why Junee CC’s role and function should be focused on accommodating inmates from the regional area and surrounds.

We observed the in-person visit process during the onsite inspection. The visits area was quite clean and in good condition. Vending machines were mostly well-stocked. There was a kitchenette with a microwave as well as hot and cold water and sachets for tea and coffee. The designated children’s area was very small, with no ‘play’ equipment, but there were welcoming painted murals. Staff were diligent in their supervision, although some stood very close to visitors, close enough to perhaps overhear things. While this may be helpful for intelligence gathering, inmates and their visitors are entitled to some privacy for their personal conversations.

There are a range of entry procedures, including registration and security scanning of visitors, and lockers are available for non-permitted items. One visitor told us that she always tries to arrive an hour early for the visit to ensure she can be on time. Sometimes staff will be searching cars on arrival in the car park, which can be time consuming. Several of the visitors said they thought it was good that the centre made efforts to search/detect contraband. Interactions between staff and visitors appeared simple but courteous.

²¹² Information provided by GEO March 2024. Numbers reference number of inmates per day who received a visitor(s). Note that video visits were unavailable between August and mid-October 2024 due to technical issues.

²¹³ 895 on 21 August 2023, the first day of our inspection.

Inmates passed through a body scanner, which is a good practice, and thus were no longer required to change into overalls for their visit.

Another visitor said that prior to COVID-19 (when all in person visits were suspended for lengthy periods across NSW), Junee CC used to accommodate lengthy multi-hour visits for minimum security inmates in Sector C on weekends. This had simply never been recommenced. We know that inmate delegates in Sector C had raised the issue. While management reportedly wanted this to occur, it was still not happening when we requested an update in March 2024. We believe this should be included in a review of the Sector C regime discussed in Chapter 3, as one hour visits in maximum security conditions is not suitable for minimum security inmates in the pre-release phase of their sentence. This group of inmates need to maintain better connections with friends and family who may provide support post-release. Extended in-person visits should be re-introduced in the minimum security sector.

Video visits

As we noted in a recent inspection report:

Prior to the full onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in Australia in 2020, prisons across the country provided face-to-face social visits as the norm. COVID-19 was a particular risk for vulnerable populations in settings such as prisons, aged care facilities, nursing homes and hospitals where the risk of person-to-person transmission was extremely high. In prisons a major concern was visitors carrying the virus and passing it on during contact visits. One of the protection measures adopted by all jurisdictions at various times during the pandemic was to adopt or expand AVL facilities to allow people in custody to have virtual visits.

An unexpected benefit of AVL was that some prisoners who were never able to receive in-person visits for various reasons could interact with their families rather than just talk over the phone.²¹⁴

Video visits at Junee CC were 30 minutes long compared to 60 minutes for a contact visit. There were no video visits at the time of the inspection due to technical problems with the system. GEO advised us that visits came back online mid-October 2023, meaning they were unavailable for around two months. To provide some perspective on video visits, GEO provided data for the month of February 2024.

Table 11: Video visits at Junee CC for February 2024²¹⁵

Day	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Friday	0	22	25	21
Saturday	26	29	15	24
Sunday	20	20	17	18
Total	46	71	57	93

This reflects a total of 267 per month. We do not think this could be meeting demand. According to information provided by CSNSW, during 2022 (while varying COVID-19 related restrictions on in-person visits continued) there was an average of 560 social/family video visits per month for the year.²¹⁶

We were advised that there have been issues with the tablet visits. The software they are using (*Bluejeans*) is problematic. Junee CC has been in contact with their broadband provider to have them identify if there were any bandwidth problem, but no issues were detected.

²¹⁴ Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection of John Morony Correctional Centre 2023* (Report, March 2024) 43.

²¹⁵ Information provided by GEO, March 2024.

²¹⁶ Information provided by CSNSW 14 March 2023. In-person visits were suspended in January-February 2022, and for the remainder of the year a range of different restrictions applied, relating to the number of visitors, and mask and vaccination requirements. For more detail see Inspector of Custodial Services, *Review of the response to COVID-19 in NSW custody* (Report, November 2023) 26-30.

There has also been an issue recently where the company wants end users (visitors) to start paying to use the service. This is not a GEO requirement but a vendor requirement. GEO was considering approaching the State to see if they can negotiate an alternative solution. With the return of operations to the State this should no longer be an issue.

During the inspection there was a video visit scheduled (perhaps optimistically) in the hope the tablets would work. Ultimately it did not work. Inmates had been brought to the visits area only for them to be told they had been cancelled due to technical errors. We spoke to one inmate on leaving, who reflected on how frustrating it is to come for a visit, only for it to be cancelled. When attending a visit session, we observed that there were 16 tablets set out in the visits area. It was noted that unlike other centres, the tablets were not in a secure case. Some of the tablets had small cracks in the screens.

Given the technical problems, it is unclear as to how many of the weekly scheduled tablet visits were taking place in any given period. Moreover, it was unclear to us if the broader visits regime was reflective of inmate demand, or of considerations around availability of staffing. In February 2024 for example, Junee CC was able to offer a total of 270 visits slots per week (140 contact visits and 130 video visits). We understand that not all inmates receive (or request) regular visits. Based on the numbers provided, many visit sessions had unused capacity. However, given the population (834 on 1 February 2024), the number of remandees (370 on 1 February 2024) who are entitled to receive two visits per week, and the fact that choice of sessions was limited due to segregation of cohorts, it was questionable whether inmates had adequate access to visits.

This is an area where the return of the centre to the State should improve the availability of tablets and access to tablet/video visits.

Non-contact visits

There were eight non-contact visit cubicles ('box visits' for inmates (or visitors)) who had been denied contact visits for disciplinary or security reasons. These cubicles have a 'Perspex' screen to prevent the exchange of contraband, but the inmate and visitor can still talk to each other through a metal vent. Box visits are available on contact visit days. It should be noted that on any one day there may be no inmates on non-contact visits.

Recommendation: GEO and CSNSW ensure in-person visit information available to the public and inmates is regularly updated and that remand inmates are provided with the entitlement to receive two visits per week.

Recommendation: GEO and CSNSW re-introduce a separate extended visits regime for inmates in Sector C of Junee Correctional Centre, reflecting minimum security standards across NSW.

Recommendation: GEO and CSNSW review the visits regime at Junee CC to ensure meeting demand and entitlements regarding in-person and video visits.

Visits area



5.3.3 Phones and in-cell tablets

Since the pilot program in late 2020, in-cell tablets have been introduced on a rolling basis to most correctional centres in NSW. Tablets (provided by CSNSW) were not introduced to Junee CC until 2023. We observed some of the initial roll out in a pre-inspection visit in May, and noted they were in wider use in August 2023.

The tablets are mid-sized devices with a colour touchscreen. They are configured for wireless access to the internet via a secure Wi-Fi connection specific to each centre.²¹⁷ This technology provides a range of features, including access to pre-approved websites, communication from centre management, access to information on a range of correctional centre services and relevant administrative forms, entertainment packages (at additional cost), and voice calls to approved phone numbers. This means that generally after lock-in, inmates are able to use tablets to contact family and friends from their cell.

Not all inmates had been issued with a tablet at the time of the inspection. It was still fairly new, and we were advised that there was no connectivity in Sector B, which was an issue being examined. We also heard from inmates that several cells in Sector A were 'black spots' for connection.

We were pleased to see Junee CC staff had taken responsibility for tablets as part of their duties. Procedures around tablet ID and accountability had been introduced, unlike what we have seen at some other centres. Tablets were charged by staff and each tablet is assigned to a specific inmate with a number recorded on their ID card. In other correctional centres we have observed inmates being issued with a random tablet each day by inmate workers, which can be a problem for inmates if the tablet is damaged or faulty. Inmates who look after their own tablets at Junee CC aren't disadvantaged by other inmates' lack of care.

The system for tablet distribution is also quite efficient. There is a good degree of accountability as staff have a spreadsheet where every tablet number is recorded against the cell number it is given to. Tablets are collected in the mornings before inmates leave their cells.

Unit wall phones

The medium security Sector B did not have an adequate number of phones. There was one wall phone per pod, meaning one per approximately 40 inmates. The ICS Inspection Standards note a de-facto standard of 1 telephone per 20 inmates.²¹⁸ We note that in 2022-23, the Ombudsman received 12 complaints from Junee CC inmates around access to telephones.²¹⁹

217 Corrections Research Evaluation and Statistics (CRES), *Conducting survey research using inmate digital tablets: Lessons learned from research conducted in NSW correctional centres*, (Research Bulletin No.62, December 2023) 3.

218 Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection Standards for Adult Custodial Services in New South Wales* (May 2020) standard 105.2.

219 NSW Ombudsman, Custodial Services, Junee Correctional Centre, 01/07/2022 – 30/06/2023.

While in-cell tablets have comprehensively increased access to calls for inmates, B units did not have tablets at the time of the inspection. In addition, at the time of the inspection it was reported that a number of wall phones were broken in different locations. GEO was not able to independently fix these and had to rely on an independent contractor, which can take some time to respond. We got the impression that with the roll-out of tablets to all units repairing/replacing wall phones is not a high priority. Unfortunately, until all inmates have a tablet, they must use wall phones. Wall phones are also important for telephone calls that can only be made during business hours, noting that tablets are generally provided in the afternoons as inmates are locked in cell.

Recommendation: CSNSW implements the tablet management system adopted at Junee CC by GEO staff at Junee CC and at other correctional centres.

Recommendation: CSNSW improves telephone access in Sector B (medium security).

5.4 Inmate advocacy and complaints mechanisms

5.4.1 Inmate development committee

Inmate development committees (IDC) are a forum in which inmates can raise issues direct with management. They do not deal with individual complaints. According to CSNSW:

An IDC is an inmate nominated body established at each correctional centre to provide the opportunity for inmates to meet with senior management to discuss problems and concerns about inmate services, programs and activities within the correctional centre.

The IDC develops and promotes positive dialogue and understanding between staff and inmates and forms an integral part of correctional centre management in dealing with conflicts and difficulties that may otherwise adversely affect correctional centre life.²²⁰

Junee CC held regular meetings with inmate delegates. Prior to the inspection we reviewed minutes from three meetings held in 2022 (August-October). Our overall impression from these meetings was that the Junee CC was well supported by management, and there was good representation from staff at meetings. There also appeared to be good inmate representation from across different units (and sectors). The minutes reflected a range of issues being raised by delegates, and also progress between the three months on some matters. Some requests that could not be allowed were given a definitive answer and explanation, clarity which is sometimes appreciated by inmates even if it is a negative response. The minutes also reflected a positive rather than dismissive approach to inmate concerns. This is not always the case in other correctional centres.

During the inspection we met with inmate delegates in a private setting. It was pleasing to note that at least four Aboriginal delegates were appointed at the time of the inspection, and they were on Country. Delegates had clearly thought in advance about issues they wished to raise with us, and were well able to articulate both the difficulties and positives for inmates at Junee CC. We also observed a monthly meeting with management, which was well attended.

5.4.2 Inmate complaints

Internal process

The Junee CC *Induction/Orientation Handbook* provides information to inmates about internal 'Inquiries, Requests and Applications' (Chapter 20). The four-step process outlined is stated to cover inquiries, requests for specific information and applications for/to do something. Unfortunately, the same process also includes 'how to complain about something'. While there is separate important information about Official Visitors and the Ombudsman (external complaints) in the same chapter, which is good, we have some concerns about the internal complaints process as described.

220 Corrective Services NSW, *Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures: 9.8 Inmate development committee*, (version 1.2 12 March 2020) 4.

To 'complain about something', (or apply to do something or request certain information) an inmate must follow 'The Four steps':

Step 1: Firstly, you should see your Case/Unit officer who can answer many of your requests. Some of these requests may be referred to others or take a few days to get an answer.

Step 2: You may also be required to fill in an *Inmate Request Form*, which is a document that is registered and checked by the Area Manager weekly. For more formal requests, e.g. legal requests, official statement, you may be required to complete an *Inmate Application*, also known as a "bluey".

Step 3: Some inquiries, requests and complaints have to be referred to the Area Manager. Topics such as inter-unit moves, special visits or requests to speak to the General Manager, will commonly [be] dealt with by the Area Manager. Each week every Area Manager sets aside time to listen to inmate requests and complaints. See your Case/Unit Officer to find out more information.

Be patient, your requests will be seen to but may need to be looked at by a number of staff.
[original emphasis]

Step 4 Corrective Service Support Line (CSSL)

If your issue is still not sorted then you can telephone the Corrective Service Support Line (CSSL) by dialling...CSSL is operational in all centres. The role of the CSSL is to record feedback (that is enquiries, complaints, comments and compliments). The CSSL is not the first point of call and will only assist you if you have tried to resolve the matter with local staff first.

The CSSL will not accept anonymous telephone calls and you will need to identify yourself.

The CSSL will not overturn a decision made in accordance with policy and procedure made by a General Manager.²²¹

Leaving aside, medical, dental and mental health complaints,²²² this appears to suggest a potentially serious complaint would be treated in the same way as a routine inquiry or request for approval of something proposed by inmate. Further, a complaint could be read by an unknown number of staff (Steps 1 & 3), possibly leaving the inmate exposed to recriminations. Even assuming that was not the handbook's intention, we believe this should be clarified. While the handbook does outline that the NSW Ombudsman can investigate serious matters (for example, conduct that may be illegal, oppressive, mistaken, improperly discriminatory, based on a mistake of law or fact), there is a need for clarity for inmates who may wish to report a serious matter internally.

As currently worded, it is an unacceptable process for dealing with inmate complaints. This is a topic which requires focus across the correctional system, and is not specific to Junee CC. The Special Commission of Inquiry into Offending by Former Corrections Officer Wayne Astill at Dillwynia Correctional Centre (2024) reported:

The Inmate Request and Inmate Application forms were often confused with each other in evidence before the Special Commission. It seems that no real distinction is made between the two forms and their use is inconsistent and confused. There was similarly confusion among Correctional Officers as to whom they were to take an Inmate Application form to for actioning, and in particular whether the application was to be provided directly to the Governor or sent up the chain of command. [...]

Witnesses B and C gave evidence that they knew to make a complaint by filling out an Inmate Request form but that it would go through the Wing Officer, which is the officer responsible

²²¹ Junee Correctional Centre Induction/Orientation Handbook 2022, 30-31.

²²² The 'Four steps' don't cover medical or dental complaints, which are directed first to the Junee CC Health Service Manager, and then a range of options are provided, including contacts details for the JHFHM Patient Liaison Officer, the CEO JHFHMN, and the Mental Health Hotline. Inmates are provided the contact details for the Health Care Complaints Commission (also on the free call list) if they are not satisfied with the response to their medical complaints.

for the particular unit the inmate is housed in, and then to the Wing Manager, even though they may be the person who is the subject of the complaint. Further, the fact that the Wing Officer could make their own determination about what to do with the request form was concerning for inmates.²²³

One of the concerns we heard from inmates at Junee CC was that they felt there was no accountability for their internal requests. Their impression was that requests were not followed through or taken seriously. While that impression may not be universal, we think it reflects a systemic issue across the correctional system. One of the recommendations from the Astill Inquiry was that CSNSW should 'ensure all correctional centres have an auditable system that records internal requests and complaints, which can be inspected by CSNSW, the Ombudsman and the Inspector. The auditable system should record the time taken to resolve a complaint'.²²⁴ This therefore applies to Junee CC.

Recommendation: GEO and CSNSW ensure that Junee CC has an auditable system that records internal requests and complaints, which can be inspected by CSNSW, Official Visitors, the Ombudsman and the Inspector of Custodial Services. The auditable system should record the time taken to resolve a complaint.

External process - Official Visitors

There were two Official Visitors appointed to Junee CC in 2022 and 2023 who attended regularly. The Official Visitors reported dealing with a wide range of inmate enquiries (requests for information or advice on how to obtain information, services or assistance). In the first six months of 2023, most common topics included medical issues, property, general discussion, and offender services and programs.

Regarding complaints, in a six month period in 2022, Junee CC Official Visitors reported 52 inmate complaints, the majority concerning medical (20), facilities (15) and phones (15).²²⁵ Fewer complaints (24) were reported in the first six months of 2023, comprising: classification (8) medical issues (8) food (3) buy-ups (1) court matters (1) visits (1) unfair treatment (1) money (1).²²⁶

The data indicates that about 6% of Junee inmates made a complaint to Official Visitors in the reporting period, noting that an inmate may have made more than one complaint.

External process - NSW Ombudsman

The Junee CC handbook notes the role of the NSW Ombudsman regarding inmate complaints. Importantly, it includes the statement that telephone calls to the Ombudsman are not monitored and that letters are confidential, as well as all contact details. It is good that the handbook includes this essential information.

In 2022-23 the Ombudsman received 201 'Actionable complaints' from inmates at Junee CC. The top five categories for actionable complaints (134) related to medical services (65), daily routine (30), property (17), officer misconduct (13), and transfers (9).²²⁷

The majority of complaints in the daily routine category related to access to telephones and placement within the centre. There was only one complaint regarding time out of cell, suggesting this was not a significant issue for inmates.

223 *Special Commission of Inquiry into Offending by Former Corrections Officer Wayne Astill at Dillwynia Correctional Centre* (Final Report, February 2024) 282-283.

224 *Special Commission of Inquiry into Offending by Former Corrections Officer Wayne Astill at Dillwynia Correctional Centre* (Final Report, February 2024) 43, 328.

225 Official Visitor half yearly reports to the Commissioner CSNSW, Minister and Inspector 01/01/22–30/06/22.

226 Official Visitor half yearly reports to the Commissioner CSNSW, Minister and Inspector 01/01/23–30/06/23.

227 NSW Ombudsman, Custodial Services, Junee Correctional Centre, 01/07/2022–30/06/2023. See also Section 5.1 regarding complaints around medical services.

5.5 Legal and library access

5.5.1 Legal matters

Statewide context

Inmates who have legal matters pending should be able to have confidential meetings and communications with their lawyers, consistent with security requirements.²²⁸ The provision of legal information resources to prisoners through their prison library is also mandated by Principle 2.3.6 of the Guiding principles for Corrections in Australia (Corrective Services Administrators' Council, 2018) that states: 'Prisoners are provided with library services for legal, recreational and educational needs'.

In general terms, remand inmates and those involved in appeals have the highest demand for legal support from lawyers, often NSW Legal Aid, and typically need access to prison libraries to read legal correspondence²²⁹ and research their cases. On 1 January 2023, Junee CC was accommodating 351 remand inmates, 545 sentenced inmates and 39 convicted inmates appealing their conviction or sentence.

Types of legal support

Lawyers need to be able to speak with inmate clients via a combination of telephone calls, face-to-face professional visits and AVL professional visits. In a report on the 2023 inspection of John Morony CC, we noted:

Legal Aid NSW told us that there can be long delays in organising AVL visits at NSW prisons due to the high demand. Keeping in mind that Legal Aid NSW don't work on weekends or public holidays, this puts an enormous strain on AVL visits on weekdays in particular.²³⁰

Legal Aid advised us that since the introduction of tablet phone calls in NSW prisons the number of calls from inmates has increased significantly. Lawyers are often unable to conduct in-person visits and rely on AVL and phone consultations.

It should also be noted that 'legal services' include psychiatrists and psychologists who conduct pre-sentencing reports, and on occasions, fit-to-plead reports. Other government agencies such as the Serious Offenders Review Council (SORC) and the State Parole Authority (SPA) may also need to meet or talk with inmates in private.

As discussed below, we observed good practice at Junee CC regarding the management of AVL.

5.5.2 Arrangements at Junee for telephone and AVL contact

Capacity and infrastructure

We were impressed with the capacity Junee CC now has regarding AVL courtrooms and professional suites. Professional suites are used for video meetings with lawyers and other groups such as representatives from community corrections, SORC, SPA, the National Disability Insurance Scheme and others.

The central AVL hub located in the medium security sector had two professional rooms, four court rooms with dual function, and two phone booths. The expansion of Junee CC also sensibly incorporated new AVL infrastructure:

- Sector A accommodation units (A1-A4) each have four dedicated suites (two professional rooms and two AVL suites) with a total of 16 suites.

228 Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection standards for adult custodial services in New South Wales*, 51.1.

229 There are privacy issues about inmates storing/reading paper documents in their cells and it is now not uncommon for lawyers to provide documents to inmates on USB flash drives which can only be accessed on "Green" PCs (not connected to the internet).

230 Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection of John Morony Correctional Centre 2023* (Report, March 2024) 46.

- There is a separate maximum security AVL hub, located outside of the accommodation units, which includes six AVL suites and four professional suites.
- There are two AVL suites and four professional suites in the MPU.
- The FTU has one AVL suite and one professional suite.

With over 40 suites, Junee CC has enough infrastructure to support the population. It is a much better ratio than what we usually see in other correctional centres. In addition, the capacity has been located practically in different sectors, minimising unnecessary movement.

The separate maximum security AVL hub was not in use during the inspection due to a lack of demand at the time. However, Junee's maximum capacity is 1,279, over 300 more than the population it held during the inspection. The centre is well equipped regarding AVL for any increase in its remand numbers to accommodate local people to stay at Junee CC during their time on remand. We acknowledge good planning in this regard.

According to information provided by CSNSW, there were 6,331 court appearance facilitated by AVL at Junee CC in 2023, an average of 528 per month, which is a busy volume. This number may include professional AVL appointments as well, as they were not recorded separately in the Offender Information Management System (OIMS).²³¹

Management and process

There was an experienced and dedicated team managing the AVL contacts and appointments from the central AVL hub (in the medium security area). They were coordinating and managing court and professional calls for inmates in the maximum security units as well. They had established relationships with local courts and practitioners, and we were impressed with how the function was being managed. We believe it is important to have consistent staffing in this function to deal with the centre, the lawyers and the courts. With a large remand population, it is good practice to have an experienced and consistent team.

We were told that suite numbers were adequate for more than 60 legal calls a day. Most professional suites would be booked most days, however there was some flexibility and bookings for legal calls needed to be made by 3pm the day before.

We were advised that generally there were no long delays in calls for lawyers unless they booked at short notice, for example the day before. However, the centre would do whatever it could to fit in such appointments.

Staff stated that after a court process they speak to the inmate to see how they are and what has happened, to try and see whether someone may be at risk of self-harm. They also contact health services and the inmate's accommodation unit if concerned. We also saw signs on the doors of AVL suites in the A units (being managed remotely through the central hub) reminding custodial staff to obtain relevant information from inmates after court appearances and relay it through to AVL management. These are good practices and demonstrated that staff understood that court appearances are times of heightened risk and vulnerability.

Holding cells for medium security AVL hub

At the time of the inspection, holding cells for the main AVL hub were reasonably calm, as only one of the four B units was occupied. However, they were in poor condition and should be refurbished. We also heard that inmates with a court appearance come to this hub at 8.30am regardless of expected court time, meaning there could be up to 40 inmates spending their day there, with 10 inmates at one time in a holding cell. While we did not observe this, this is not good practice as it can lead to assaults and there is little privacy for using the toilet.

²³¹ Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 25 March 2024. This data stated that there were nil legal visits by AVL/video during 2023, which we expect is not accurate.

Recommendation: CSNSW retains a dedicated AVL team at Junee CC and related good management and practice.

Recommendation: GEO and CSNSW refurbish holding cells in the central AVL hub in Sector B and reduce unnecessary crowding in holding cells through timed movement.

5.5.3 Junee Learning Resource Centre (LRC)

Medium/Minimum Security

The Junee CC Learning Resource Centre (LRC) or library for the medium and minimum security sector is an excellent resource. The LRC provides inmates with electronic and/or hard copies of relevant materials. We checked the computer kiosks which worked well and enabled access to legislation and the COPP, legal reference materials as recommended by the NSW State Library Legal Information Access Centre, an approved jobs search website, as well as specific approved websites/information portals for organisations such as NSW Legal Aid, Community Restorative Centre, and the Black Dog Institute.²³²

The LRC supports inmates in producing a monthly newsletter, which was practical and informative and included useful information for inmates. In addition to books for borrowing, there were printed fact sheets with useful information that would be easy for inmates to take back to cell. While we did not observe this, the Annual Report noted that the LRC also supported inmates recording a podcast.²³³

After the inspection we requested further information about the LRC in the month of September 2023. According to this, the LRC was open to inmates for 74 hours, which is an average of around 3.5 hours per day, five days per week, 734 books were borrowed, and inmates accessed a computer on 81 occasions.²³⁴ Positively, minimum security inmates being held in the maximum security sector retained access. For example, in the timetable sighted, SMAP inmates in Unit A4 could attend the LRC on Thursday mornings, and normal discipline inmates in that unit could attend on Friday morning.

Although small, this was one of the best libraries in the state. CSNSW should retain the very good practice by GEO at Junee CC. They should also keep track of visits, borrowing, computer access, distance education enquiries, and accessible opening hours as GEO has done, to ensure standards do not drop. This may require dedicated staffing.

Maximum security

There was a separate LRC in the maximum security sector, used by A1 and A2 units. Each of the four pods had one day in the timetable, and on the fifth day the LRC provided outreach (delivery of books on a trolley) to inmates in the MPU. We did hear some feedback from inmates that access to this LRC was difficult, and sometimes contentious, and stock was outdated. We requested records for this as well, which showed it was open to inmates for 16 hours in September 2023, which is around one hour per day, four days per week. Records suggested a total of 96 inmates accessed library services in that month. While it is good that a library was factored into the Sector A expansion, it would be good to increase access hours for inmates in these pods, particularly as there are fewer inmates employed, and thus have more time on their hands.

Recommendation: CSNSW maintains the level of library access and range of library services provided to inmates at Junee CC.

232 Junee Induction/Orientation Handbook 2022

233 Referred to as the Second Chances Podcast. *Junee Correctional Centre Annual Report 2022-23*, 63.

234 Information provided by GEO, March 2024.

5.6 Religious support

As of 1 January 2023, the majority of Junee CC inmates (61% or 567 inmates) identified themselves as having no religion. Of those who identified with a religious affiliation, the largest groups were Catholic (11%), followed by Muslim (7%), Christian (7%) and Anglican/Church of England/Presbyterian (6%). Small numbers also identified as being Buddhist or atheist.²³⁵

The Junee CC inmate *Induction/Orientation Handbook* has a detailed and helpful chapter (16) on religious support and the chaplaincy service.

Chaplaincy service

At the time of the inspection Junee CC had four full time chaplains (three from Salvation Army and one from Baptist Care). This is a significant number. The Centre also had a range of volunteer service providers from a range of faith backgrounds, including Islam (an Imam), Jehovah's Witness, Buddhism, Coptic Christian, Catholic as well as from Karios.²³⁶

Records indicated that in January 2023 (one month), 18 services/events were conducted. These included for example: chapel services, clergy visits, Muslim services, loss and grief.

The chaplains and visiting volunteers also helped with special events.

Church services

Maximum security inmate church services are held on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Other inmate church services are held on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Services start as early as 9.30am and finish as late as 4pm.²³⁷ Documents provided suggested that no services were held on weekends when most inmates are not required to work or attend programs. It was unclear to us how working/occupied inmates attend services during weekdays.

Challenges

We heard that sometimes administrative requirements could interfere with inmate access to services. If an inmate had not been correctly entered into the internal 'Gateway' booking system (system that manages inmate movements), it could mean they would be turned away from seeing the chaplain or attending a service, as the booking system does not reflect that they should be there. Junee CC staff are reminded of the importance of facilitating inmate access to religious services.

235 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, March 2023.

236 Information provided by GEO, March 2023 (4.7.1). Back in 2021, GEO had identified deficiencies in the service delivery to inmates across the following entities: Anglican Diocese, Catholic Diocese and Baptist Care. In April 2022, CSNSW issued a PIN notice to GEO for inadequate compliance with Schedule 23, Outcome 3.8 Inmate Religious and Spiritual Needs.

237 Information provided by GEO March 2023 (4.7.2).

6 Rehabilitation

6.1 Introduction

The GEO structure for Junee CC incorporates a designated Rehabilitation and Reintegration (R&R) department. This reflects the language of the contract, in which Rehabilitation and Reintegration is one of the five core outcomes included in the services specification. This section incorporates a range of minimum service requirements around case planning, programs, education and vocational training, employment, pre-release planning, and specific support for Aboriginal inmates and inmates on remand.²³⁸

The R&R department has a large staffing group, similar to Offender Services and Programs in other correctional centres, with some added functions. As far as performance reporting to CSNSW and KPIs, GEO's Annual Report states that

R&R is primarily responsible for the generation of case plans, and the application of associated assessments (KPI 1); jointly responsible with Vocational Services for the completion of targets within case plans (KPI 2) and for the generation of purposeful activity (KPI 10).

In addition to KPIs there are a range of Performance Indicators (PIs) in the contract specifically related to programs, education and employment. This means the operator is required to report monthly to CSNSW on specific performance, but it does not necessarily impact on payment/ abatements (unlike KPIs). This includes, for example, daily average proportion of eligible inmates employed, proportion of inmates scheduled to complete a vocational education and training intervention who completed said intervention, proportion of inmates scheduled to participate or complete an offence related program who ultimately participated or completed said program.²³⁹

The R&R staffing includes activity officers, Aboriginal liaison officers, chaplaincy, rehabilitation and reintegration officers, classification and placement officers, clinicians, and case planners.

6.2 Activities and purposeful day

In most Australian jurisdictions purposeful activity is described as a 'structured day'. This is typically understood to comprise access to a range of activities such as education and training and library access, criminogenic programs for sentenced inmates and therapeutic programs for sentenced and remand inmates, meaningful paid work, faith services, exercise and recreation, access to legal services (particularly for those on remand), visits and appointments. In essence, the rationale behind a structured day is to keep inmates busy with meaningful activities so they don't become bored and engage with antisocial behaviour such as drug taking and violence.

Including purposeful activity as a performance measure is a good idea at any correctional centre. Purposeful activity is a KPI in the Junee CC contract (KPI 10). It includes a target of 4.8-6 hours per day for sentenced inmates and 3-4 hours for inmates on remand.

The following activities are listed in the KPI as 'purposeful activity':

- commercial industries, service industries or work release
- offence related programs
- adult basic education
- vocational education and training (VET)
- services that support inmate wellbeing²⁴⁰

238 Output Specification -Part C -Services Specification 1.1-1.10.

239 Performance Indicators 1-5, 22-23.

240 Described as 'one to one services that assess or address psychological, motivational, pre-release or welfare factors that impact on an inmate's well-being.'

- personal development and life skills programs²⁴¹
- reintegration programs and services
- exercise²⁴²
- recreational activities (on weekends and public holidays)
- community and social activities (weekends and public holidays).

The 2022 GEO Annual Report listed a monthly average of 114,000 purposeful hours across the centre.²⁴³ This was broadly consistent with the quarterly report provided to CSNSW for September-November 2022, which noted 99,066 hours in September, 109,360 in October and 108,407 in November.

In 2023, GEO recorded an average of 4.89 hours of purposeful activity for sentenced inmates, and 3.56 for remand inmates.²⁴⁴

GEO used an internal reporting system referred to as ‘gateway’, which managed and recorded inmate movements around the centre and allowed detailed performance reporting to CSNSW. We note that this was not automatically harmonized with OIMS. For rehabilitative and purposeful activity in particular, information recorded by OIMS was not always accurate or consistent with GEO data, possibly due to the requirement for staff to double report, or delay.

6.2.1 Observations from the inspection

Junee CC had two dedicated activities coordinators in the staffing structure, who formed part of the rehabilitation and reintegration team. It is good that GEO had specific resources for this function. At other correctional centres we often see activities and recreation as an afterthought, or a custodial staff post that is commonly cancelled due to other priorities. Absent dedicated resources for this function after transition to CSNSW, services for inmates will deteriorate.

Staff acknowledged that boredom and lack of access to meaningful activities can play a part in escalating violence, particularly for remand inmates who have less to do. In addition to sporting activities, staff indicated at times they have arranged BBQs and movie nights subject to behaviour. We saw that most units had a few board games available, and the activities team indicated they can provide guitars and other exercise equipment on request. Activity coordinators also facilitated practice of cultural expression, for example assisting to organise activities to celebrate Waitangi Day and Chinese New Year.

Cultural centre

There is a large room at Junee CC referred to as the ‘cultural centre’ which is a positive multi-purpose resource available to the facility. We were advised that recent activities in the cultural centre included Aboriginal art, ukelele lessons, sport and exercise, and barbecues every Tuesday – rotating units. We requested records for September 2023, and GEO recorded that a total of 401 participants had attended the weekly sausage sizzle and sport/activity day in that month from Units A1, A2, B1 and C.

Other activities

Art classes fall under vocational services and are open to everyone. For a while they were mainly for inmates who were artists and would come to the classes and do their art. Now, they have a six week program with a theme and are being run by a facilitator who has a Fine Arts degree. We saw signs for in-unit cooking classes as well during the inspection, which is a positive initiative.

241 Described as ‘a structured program that address the life skills and well-being of the inmate’s needs.’

242 If contemplated in a case plan for a sentenced inmate, or as otherwise approved by the state, one hour of exercise per day in the open air can be counted as purposeful activity on weekdays.

243 The GEO Group Australia Pty Ltd, *Junee Correctional Centre Annual Report December 2021-November 2022* (Report, 2023) 28.

244 Key Performance Indicator monthly overview 2023, provided by GEO March 2024.

Women's unit (FTU)

The women's unit has an austere outdoor L shaped concrete yard, with a few tables and two simple exercise machines and no shade structures. As discussed in Chapter 3, it is only suitable for short term stays. We observed books on a shelf in the central corridor, accessible to women and a table tennis table folded in the corner.

The cultural centre was made available to women one morning per week. Various activities could be made available for the women here, such as carpet bowls, chess, ten pin bowling, table tennis and general exercise. Activities officers supervised this attendance. Some of the women who spoke to us said they wanted more time in the cultural centre and believed two hours a week was not enough especially as the interior of the FTU is bare and restrictive. While this is true, we understand the challenge for Junee CC to balance access for the entire population of the centre, noting that stays are generally quite short at the FTU. CSNSW should maintain consistent weekly access for women to activities in the cultural centre as a minimum standard, and increase where possible.

Recommendation: CSNSW retains KPIs for purposeful activity and maintains dedicated activities officers in the staffing profile for Junee CC that cannot be absorbed into the regular custodial staff pool.

Internal courtyard, rehabilitation and reintegration building



Cultural centre



6.3 Support for Aboriginal people in custody

One third of the population of Junee CC are Aboriginal people.²⁴⁵ Most Aboriginal inmates were on Country retaining their family and belonging to land connections. This was seen to have a more positive impact on their wellbeing compared to other correctional centres where many Aboriginal people were removed from Country. Aboriginal inmates expressed that a men's group would benefit those Aboriginal men that are off Country.²⁴⁶

GEO's Annual Report sets out five areas of priority: improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people in custody; providing culturally safe and responsive services; preventing the self-harm and suicide of Aboriginal people in custody; decreasing ongoing justice involvement and recidivism (through addressing offending behaviours and increasing skills) and ensuring a culturally aware and capable workforce. These are appropriate.

At the centre itself, we observed good leadership and modelling around support for Aboriginal people at the management level, and we did observe specific examples of good practices in different areas during the inspection. Junee CC also had a positive focus on employment of Aboriginal staff.

However, we found that there were not sufficient culturally safe programs or avenues for cultural participation and cultural connection. There were also deficiencies in cultural competence across the broader staffing group which require increased training and improvement.

6.3.1 Aboriginal staff

In June 2023 Junee CC advised they had 26 staff who identified as Aboriginal. GEO reported that Aboriginal employee engagement was 6.3% in November 2022 and 6.5% in November 2023.²⁴⁷ This is reasonably good compared to our observations at other correctional centres. CSNSW has a target to increase the proportion of Aboriginal staff to 8% by 2030. The centre is well placed to meet this target. We hope that after contract transition CSNSW will be able to maintain focus on recruitment and retention of Aboriginal staff at Junee CC.

GEO includes information on Aboriginal participation at Junee CC (staffing, recruitment and training updates, other initiatives) in its monthly performance reporting to CSNSW. This is another area where the requirement to report on performance monthly and quarterly (as opposed to just annually) encourages sustained focus. The staffing structure also includes three identified positions: two Aboriginal liaison officer (ALO) positions and one Aboriginal health worker.²⁴⁸ CSNSW should retain at least this level of resourcing following the transition, although we argue that more resources are justified. This is discussed specifically in section 6.3.3 below as well as section 5.5 on Aboriginal health.

It is possible that the actual number of Aboriginal staff was higher than reported. During the onsite inspection we met some Aboriginal staff who did not identify as such, possibly as they did not feel comfortable to do so among their colleagues. Some chose not to mention their Aboriginality because they are not culturally educated (connected to their culture) or were not feeling culturally safe to do so. Some had also observed direct racism towards Aboriginal inmates. Some staff at Junee CC displayed a somewhat superficial understanding of matters affecting Aboriginal people in custody. A lack of cultural competence in interactions with inmates can also create a less welcoming working environment and act as a barrier to retaining and recruiting more Aboriginal staff. All GEO and CSNSW staff must treat Aboriginal people with decency and respect for Aboriginal culture, preventing and calling out any prejudice and racism observed.

The Annual Report stated that a mentor was appointed to support Aboriginal trainee correctional officers undertaking the pre-service training and through the graduation period as a correctional

245 34% on 1 January 2023 and 35% on 1 February 2024. Information provided by Corrective Services NSW March 2023 and March 2024.

246 While all Aboriginal people in custody should generally be kept within their local area, it is acknowledged that some people may need to be held in highly specialised facilities such as high security units or mental health units.

247 GEO Group Australia Pty Ltd, *Junee Correctional Centre Annual Report December 2022 – November 2023* (Report, 2024) 10.

248 The Aboriginal Health Worker position was vacant at the time of the inspection in August 2023 (with the previous individual moving to another role) but we were advised the new occupant commenced in October 2023.

officer. We were told a new position of cultural strategy coordinator (0.5 FTE) had also been created. The Annual Report noted that the role was to 'assist with the development of cultural awareness and inclusivity within the centre' for both staff and inmates and envisaged 'to bring further community stakeholders back inside the Centre with the continued easing of COVID-19 protocols.'

In the 2021-22 Annual Report GEO stated:

While GEO has taken strides to better understand, support and deliver culturally responsive services, we recognise more must be done. Some of our actions are evident in GEO's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), which demonstrates our commitment to reconciliation and to developing opportunities within GEO to improve socio-economic outcomes for Aboriginal people and their communities.

When we asked about the status of the position in 2024, we were advised that the role had changed since the notification that there would be no contract renewal and Junee CC would transition to the State as of 1 April 2025. In particular, we were advised that the focus on engaging with community to establish and foster positive community partnerships to work with Junee CC was discontinued, and the role was now focused on supporting ALOs and facilitating cultural events. This reduction in scope is unfortunate, and there was no mention in the Annual Report that the scope of appointment was subject to further contract extensions. GEO knew at the time of the 2022 Annual Report that that there was no certainty of a contract extension beyond 31 March 2025.

6.3.2 Programs, services, cultural awareness and competence at Junee CC

Overall, performance was mixed. We again saw good initiatives and some good practice, as well as areas that were lacking. For example, the Annual Report refers to a cultural program for On Country Management for Aboriginal inmates that was in development in 2023. While the initiative sounds promising in the report, it is unclear how far it had actually progressed prior to the decision to hand the centre over to public hands. We encourage CSNSW to try and build on any progress here.

Similarly, a group of senior staff were invited to a cultural awareness and education session 'Walking on Country', led by a Community Elder. These are positive steps, although reportedly not all persons invited could or did attend, and some absences were not explained. We acknowledge the positive initiative, and collaboration with community representatives. Junee CC should continue to offer cultural education opportunities to staff.

At the centre level, cultural competence needs improvement. During the inspection we asked about cultural programs for Aboriginal people, and were referred to NAIDOC and the Yarning Circle, as well as arts programs. When we mentioned that NAIDOC, while important, happens once a year and a Yarning Circle cannot be considered a cultural program, some responded that there is no other program in the centre for Aboriginal inmates.

It was not always clear what different staff were referring to regarding 'art programs'. The provision of small paint packs to new Aboriginal inmates for example was a positive practice at Junee CC. We also note that CSNSW recorded 38 enrolments in visual arts classes in 2022. It is important to understand that Aboriginal art is a way of maintaining and sharing culture and can also be a way of healing. It should be supported as a cultural activity in addition to any classes or education. We observed some footballs that had been painted by Aboriginal inmates and were told that they were to be auctioned for a charity. There was also a statement made by staff that Aboriginal artworks were donated to another organisation. While CSNSW advise that the provision of inmate artwork for charity or external organisations is done with the agreement and permission of the inmate/s, the therapeutic exercise of participating in art should be of benefit to the artist.

There was evidence that there was a lack of suitable cultural spaces for Aboriginal people to engage in respectful interactions with each other, significant community members and centre staff. Junee CC has a Yarning Circle located in Sector C which is only accessible whilst being accompanied by custodial staff. Inmates from Sector C could make requests to use the Yarning Circle but we heard that this mainly only happened at the yearly NAIDOC event. Yarning Circles are not programs, they hold cultural significance for Aboriginal people to come together and speak respectfully, enabling

them to communicate knowledge. There was one Yarning Circle in Sector B, however it was not accessible unless accompanied.

We attended the 2023 annual NAIDOC celebration at Junee CC. The event was celebrated with only some Aboriginal inmates in attendance and three staff members. There were no significant community members or local Elders present. The Aboriginal men shared their culture through dance, art and music. Junee CC should build on the cultural knowledge of Aboriginal inmates and encourage shared engagement as part of the daily routine. The staff at Junee need to ensure cultural competence to authentically engage with Aboriginal people including staff, inmates and the local Aboriginal community. Cultural safety training for staff should be ongoing and practiced in conjunction with local Aboriginal knowledge holders.

As mentioned earlier, the cultural centre at Junee CC was a positive resource, with several artworks around the walls. It was obviously well regarded by staff, who were proud of this space. It was essentially used as a multi-purpose centre. Although the name implies a place of reflection and learning, it was effectively a useful mixed use room, for example for recreational activities if the weather was bad, or visitor-led ukelele lessons. The inmates who are not eligible to attend the cultural centre receive a small paint pack however they can also purchase larger paint packs through the buy up system. When we visited the cultural centre we observed women playing table tennis. The room is definitely a positive asset in terms of facilitating activities and time out of cell, but we wondered if the name was a misnomer. CSNSW advise it was designed as a multi-purpose centre to accommodate all cultural backgrounds and a variety of activities.²⁴⁹

The practice of Sorry Business is a time of mourning for Aboriginal people and includes cultural obligations and responsibilities. An understanding of Aboriginal protocols for Sorry Business needs to be demonstrated by all staff members. Sorry Business can still be observed in a culturally appropriate way within the centre. Staff did express that cultural competency training would be beneficial in understanding the practice of Sorry Business for Aboriginal people.

During the inspection we viewed paperwork for an Aboriginal inmate who was going to Queanbeyan for a funeral. He was to be escorted by two staff at no cost to the inmate. This was a commendable decision by management to allow the inmate to engage in Sorry Business.²⁵⁰

6.3.3 Aboriginal liaison officer function

We were pleased to see two dedicated, identified ALO roles at Junee CC, which is more than usually seen at other correctional centres in NSW. The role serves a crucial function at Junee CC. For example, the role is an important liaison with staff working on inmate classification and placement when someone doesn't want to be transferred off their Country. We heard this is generally/often successful unless the person is required to complete a program at another location. Importantly, the ALOs meet with Aboriginal people within 24 hours of their arrival into custody at Junee CC (after weekends it may be a Monday). The role had good support and understanding from the General Manager. Some custodial staff also told us the ALOs have been an excellent resource through regularly attending units and engaging with Aboriginal inmates. However, it was acknowledged that the centre needs to utilise them more to make its services culturally safe and better meet the needs of Aboriginal people in custody.

Optimally, resources should be increased here, given the Junee CC population (315 Aboriginal people in custody on 1 January 2023 and 290 on 1 February 2024). At the time of the inspection both ALOs were women, which means they cannot involve themselves in 'men's business' that might come up.²⁵¹ Ideally, there would be one or two additional (male) ALOs, in addition to the two current positions, that would reduce the ALO to inmate ratio and provide additional cultural support to male Aboriginal inmates.

249 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 17 October 2024.

250 Commonwealth Fair Work Ombudsman: 'Sorry Business is an important time of mourning that involves responsibilities and obligations to attend funerals and participate in other cultural events, activities or ceremonies with the community.'

251 Men's business and women's business are terms that refer to particular roles, ceremonies and Lore that is specific and sacred to Aboriginal men and women individually.

We were informed that the practices of men's business that promote factors of dignity for Aboriginal men were not happening, due to the lack of Aboriginal men on staff. One of the main concerns for Aboriginal men was the lack of availability to interact and connect with younger Aboriginal men with mental health and wellbeing anxieties whilst incarcerated. We have already noted the overrepresentation of Aboriginal men in the segregation data. Separately, Junee CC should allow Aboriginal delegates to visit Aboriginal men in segregation/MPU. This could help identify and resolve welfare issues of inmates in the MPU and potentially reduce risks of self-harm.

By way of example, we note that the Alexander Maconochie Centre (ACT) had an average daily number of 100 Aboriginal inmates in 2021-22.²⁵² This centre has an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services Unit (ATSISU) which 'consists of a team of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff [similar role to Junee ALOs] that specialise in coordinating welfare, liaison support and cultural programs/services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees...with a staffing level of approximately 4 FTE.' This equates to one ATSISU staff to 25 Aboriginal inmates (1:25)²⁵³ compared to 1:150 at Junee. While the ACT jurisdiction is many times smaller than NSW and therefore not suitable for easy comparisons, not least in relation to recruitment, the contrast is nevertheless notable.

6.3.4 Other observations

Junee CC had a good number of Aboriginal delegates participating in monthly meetings with management. There were at least four appointed at the time of our inspection, and they were on Country. We also noted the General Manager began the delegate meeting by welcoming everyone using language (Māori), a good example of leading by example to promote respect for culture.

Also, Junee CC and GEO had a longstanding relationship with the Ngana Barangarai (Black Wallaby) project. Led by a Wadi Wadi Elder (Illawarra), tutors attend Junee CC over a few days and work with inmates, resulting in a publication called *Dreaming Inside*, which includes poetry, songs and other writing of Aboriginal inmates. The 12th volume is being published this year, which is a credit to all involved. We hope this positive relationship with Junee CC will continue.

The routine provision of small paint packs to arriving Aboriginal inmates was also good practice.

Recommendation: GEO and Corrective Services NSW provide programs with a focus on strengthening cultural connectedness with traditions and contact with Elders and Mentors at Junee CC.

Recommendation: GEO takes immediate steps to improve Aboriginal cultural awareness for non-Aboriginal staff at Junee CC. This should also be included in custodial officer recruit training.

Recommendation: CSNSW prioritises retention of Aboriginal staff at Junee CC, retain the Aboriginal liaison officer function in the staffing profile and increase resources directed to that function: aim for a staffing complement of at least four, with gender balance, on transition to CSNSW operation.

Recommendation: GEO and CSNSW ensure Yarning Circles at Junee CC are accessible to inmates within the daily regime.

252 ACT Inspector of Correctional Services, *Healthy Prison Review of the Alexander Maconochie Centre 2022* (Report, November 2022) 40.

253 ACT Inspector of Correctional Services, *Healthy Prison Review of the Alexander Maconochie Centre 2022* (Report, November 2022) 127-128.

6.4 Clinicians and psychology services

GEO's 'clinical services delivery model' sits within the R&R functional area and performs services including risk assessment and management of persons at-risk, clinical assessment and psychometric testing, individual or group-based interventions and case plan formulation.²⁵⁴ It can be multidisciplinary, with clinicians reportedly drawn from a range of allied disciplines. Under the GEO model as described, in addition to psychologists, a 'clinician' could be a qualified counsellor, occupational therapist, or social worker, but must be competent to undertake 'all required services unless specifically proscribed.'

The Junee CC staffing model included one senior clinician and three clinicians. To GEO's credit all positions were filled at the time of the inspection, with two psychologists and two provisional psychologists (counsellors). This is often not the case when we visit correctional centres.

We found some good practices at Junee CC, including the clinician's role on the HRAT, as well as participation in multi-disciplinary meetings such as segregation reviews. Clinicians attended the MPU regularly, and managed ongoing interventions (counselling) and crisis assessments. While R&R officers deliver offender programs, sometimes the senior clinician observes and provides feedback to colleagues, which is good practice.

Clinicians receive referrals to see people in custody from a range of staff, including custodial, mental health nurses, intake officer, and Aboriginal liaison officers. We were advised that clinicians do provide training and send email reminders to custodial staff about how to refer an inmate to clinical services, and to include reasons or descriptions so the team does not receive misdirected referrals. Staff can enter a basic 'referral to psychologist' on OIMS, and then clinicians triage referrals under one of the relevant service lines in OIMS. We requested two months of details prior to the inspection. In January 2023 there were 27 general referrals and 730 specific referrals. In December 2022 there were 42 general referrals and 456 specific referrals. In both months the highest volume of referrals was level 2 priority for sub-acute suicide/self-harm and level 2 priority sub-acute mental health impairments. Psych 2 lines are high priority referrals to be addressed at intervals between four working days and 12 weeks as a face to face contact. These numbers are significant. We were advised at the time of the inspection in August 2023 that there were 343 open referrals to the clinicians.

We heard that inmates in maximum security Sector A can be difficult to access, as there is competition for the interview rooms in the units, and custodial staff also use them to access the wings (although there is an alternate access point). As we noted in Chapter 3, collectively, all staff at Junee CC need to make better use of purpose built interview rooms in the Sector A R&R area, which may require inmate escort.

While Junee CC would benefit from an additional clinician, compared to several other large centres inspected by our office, Junee CC was relatively well resourced here.²⁵⁵ Our bigger concern is that Junee CC should retain the resources they have. Prior to the contract transition, CSNSW should ensure they have reviewed the proportion of new reception inmates (and other high risk populations), as well as anticipated program delivery when determining staffing levels for psychologists and counsellors. Any reduction in access to clinicians for Junee CC's population would carry risk. CSNSW advised that they expect the CSNSW staff establishment will exceed the current GEO establishment in a number of roles.²⁵⁶

6.5 Case planning

At Junee CC, case planning falls within the rehabilitation and reintegration functional area. The requirement for every inmate serving a sentence of three months or more to have a current case plan that sets out their intervention pathway is the same regardless of whether that inmate is at a

254 Information provided by GEO, March 2023 (4.6.1).

255 For example, Parklea CC and Wellington CC.

256 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 17 October 2024.

publicly or privately operated centre. Plans need to be done within six weeks of sentencing or within six weeks of being transferred into Junee CC. Current case plans (for eligible inmates) and timely case plan interventions are KPIs for GEO under the contract (KPI 1 and 2). The contract incorporates a range of minimum service requirements for case planning, and the Junee CC Rehabilitation Plan (2022-2023) broadly describes the model.²⁵⁷

Junee CC had 3.75 FTE in the case planning team (1 x senior case planner and 3 x case planners) and had one vacancy at the time of the inspection. All were former custodial officers. There are some differences in the programs on offer at Junee CC compared to other centres (see section 6.6 below). So for inmates transferred to Junee CC with an existing case plan, staff either adapt case plans to Junee CC's offerings, or they will seek to transfer the inmate to a place where they can complete their case plans. While we do not have definitive figures on this topic, from discussions with staff and inmates, it did not appear to be unusual for inmates to be transferred to Junee CC requiring a program that was not possible to undertake there.

Staff confirmed they used the PARRCC assessment model and had completed training for this.²⁵⁸ This is good, as following our inspection of Parklea CC we recommended the operator (who was still using LSI-R) align case planning assessment tools with CSNSW.²⁵⁹ Staff reported good liaison with other correctional centres (including seeing how they do their case plans). However they stated they still used LSI-R sometimes.

In terms of performance reporting and contract requirements, Junee CC performed extremely well for the case planning KPIs. For example, the December 2022 monthly report for Junee CC recorded 96 out of 96 eligible inmates with a case plan completed or updated/revised during the month (100%), and also included reasons for two non-completions of case planning interventions. Similarly, the Junee CC Annual Report for December 2021-November 2022 and the KPI indicators for 2023 effectively report 100% compliance with timely case plans.

This was another area where data recorded in OIMS and provided by CSNSW prior to the inspection appeared confusing or inaccurate when compared to monthly reporting by GEO to CSNSW. In information provided by CSNSW before the inspection, on 1 January 2023, only 6% of eligible inmates (34 out of 557) had a current/up to date case plan.²⁶⁰ This was clearly not reliable. We were told that Junee CC case plans appeared pending in OIMS even though they were completed as they did not go through the same CSNSW approval process within OIMS. Given the planned transition to the public sector we have not made a recommendation about these discrepancies. Also, data received from CSNSW more recently appeared to be more consistent. This showed that on 1 February 2024, 95% of eligible inmates (432 out of 457) had a current case plan.²⁶¹

We reviewed a sample of case plans (nine) completed or updated over one week in August 2023. In terms of a programs pathway, most reviewed were either ineligible for criminogenic programs (whether due to assessed need or insufficient time in custody to complete needed programs, or suspended pending appeal status). One inmate identified as eligible for IDATP (intensive drug and alcohol treatment program) was later transferred to Bathurst CC to enrol in the HIPU (High Intensity Programs Unit) as IDATP was not offered at Junee CC. Goals in custody tended to include things such as participation in employment; participation in an education skills course (foundational literacy and numeracy); connecting with R&R officers closer to release dates to organise pre-release needs. 'Steps' or interventions included referral to a mental health nurse, or 'self-referral to psychology/ health services chaplaincy if required'; maintaining contact with custodial case officer monthly, for example, 'To work on responsivity issues prior to release'; referral for Skills Check; maintain social habits through consistent employment; maintain regular contact with nominated family member(s) etc. Some interventions were not outcome focused, beyond joining a waitlist. However, it is still an improvement on former KPIs based on 'hours delivered' which were also more linked to activity rather than outcome.

257 Contract, Schedule 23 (Output Specification) Part C Services Specification, 1.2 Case planning.

258 The Planning for Adjustment, Responsivity, Reintegration, Criminogenic Needs and Communication (PARRCC) assessment tool replaced the Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R) as the primary case plan assessment tool for CSNSW in 2020.

259 Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection of Parklea Correctional Centre*, (Report, June 2022) 103-105.

260 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 14 March 2023.

261 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 25 March 2024.

We also had a question regarding how case plans and case notes were linked. While case notes are a very important aspect of custodial officer work as they supervise and engage with inmates, making interventions part of the custodial case officer review was linking case plans and behaviour. We do not believe that is what case planning is for. Case plans should be a tool to ensure that CSNSW and the inmate know what interventions they need to complete, and then they can be placed at the right place to complete those interventions.

We have observed similar issues in the state system. In our report on the inspection of Silverwater Women's and Dillwynia Correctional Centres, we recommended that CSNSW includes case plan implementation and achievement as measurable indicators of case management success.²⁶² Improving case planning requires concerted effort across the corrections system. CSNSW advise that they are conducting a comprehensive review of policy, procedures, practice and systems in relation to case management.²⁶³

6.6 Programs

The R&R section at Junee CC was delivering the CSNSW EQUIPS suite of programs (Foundation, Addiction, Aggression and Domestic and Family Violence) for sentenced inmates. According to information provided by CSNSW, during 2022, 143 inmates were enrolled in an EQUIPS program. According to information provided by GEO, 103 ultimately participated in an EQUIPS program that year. Notwithstanding this discrepancy, more importantly there were 74 completions. In 2023, there were 130 enrolments and 85 completions. One positive observation from the data received was that Aboriginal inmates had proportional access to EQUIPS programs, and that between 39% to 47% of EQUIPS program completions in 2022-2023 were by Aboriginal inmates.²⁶⁴ This is commendable.

Junee CC was also approved by CSNSW to deliver a range of GEO programs for both sentenced and remand inmates, primarily related to substance abuse as well as general life skills. These programs are aimed at improving health outcomes and are separate to programs that address inmates' criminogenic risks and needs.²⁶⁵ Noting that the GEO contract is now ending after a lengthy association with Junee CC, CSNSW and JH&FMHN should assess (if not done already) whether there is any good practice from Junee CC programs that could be incorporated into their program and health service delivery. It would be unfortunate for these programs to disappear from NSW corrections without incorporating the most beneficial practice.

Table 12 below provides an overview of programs that were facilitated at Junee CC during 2022 and the first half of 2023, based on information provided by GEO prior to the inspection. Some of the GEO suite of programs that could potentially be offered on an 'as needs' basis had not been run at Junee CC during this period, for example Cannabis and Me (2 x 3 hour sessions for remand inmates) and Skating on Thin Ice (a crystal methamphetamine-specific program for sentenced inmates).

262 Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection of Silverwater Women's and Dillwynia Correctional Centres 2022* (Report, November 2023) 104.

263 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 17 October 2024.

264 Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 28 May 2024.

265 For example, Skating on Thin Ice (for sentenced inmates) and Ice and Me (a shorter 6 hour version for remand inmates) are programs related to crystal methamphetamine use. These are discussed in *Special Commission of Inquiry into crystal methamphetamine and other amphetamine-type stimulants* (Report, Volume 3, January 2020) 917-918.

Table 12: Overview of program delivery at Junee CC 2022-June 2023²⁶⁶

Program	Program type	No. of sessions in full program	Summary of program	Participants
EQUIPS Foundation (CSNSW)	Criminogenic	20 x 2hr sessions	A general therapeutic program available regardless of offence type	43 in 2022, 17 in 2023 (first half)
EQUIPS Aggression (CSNSW)	Criminogenic	20 x 2hr sessions	Criminogenic program that addresses aggression and behaviours using CBT principles	15 in 2022, 17 in 2023 (first half)
EQUIPS Addiction (CSNSW)	Criminogenic	20 x 2 hr sessions	Targets addictive behaviours of eligible offenders	35 in 2022, 27 in 2023 (first half)
EQUIPS Domestic and Family Violence (CSNSW)	Criminogenic	20 x 2hr sessions	Criminogenic program that addresses domestic violence and assists participants to use CBT principles	10 in 2022, 13 in 2023 (first half)
GEO Life Skills program	Life skills	18 x 3hr sessions	Five wellbeing modules: straight talking, healthy living, me, myself and I, money wise and ready for work.	18 in 2022, 24 in 2023 (first half)
Know the Score (GEO)	AOD	10 x 3hr sessions	Understanding substance abuse, identifying triggers and risk, coping strategies, relapse prevention.	8 participants in 2022, 0 in 2023 (first half)
Ice and Me (GEO)	Remand AOD	2 x 3hr sessions	Understanding short and long term effects, costs and benefits, coping strategies, withdrawal and relapse, goals, harm minimisation.	8 participants in 2022, 10 in 2023 (first half)
Alcohol and Me (GEO)	Remand AOD	2 x 3hr sessions	Understanding effects of alcohol use and health risks, thinking about change, harm minimisation, setting goals.	0 participants in 2022, 12 in 2023 (first half).

There are a good range of programs offered, and it is particularly good to see a variety of short interventions available around substance abuse. However, the numbers of participants were not particularly high. Staff told us that the need and practice at Junee CC to separate cohorts based on security classification restricted how many programs could be run. It also reflected feedback and impression that limited programs were available for the maximum security and remand population. It is unclear whether there was appropriate planning into expanded program delivery when the new maximum security units came online, and with the change of cohort.

266 Provided by GEO, June 2023.

While there is a sex offender cohort at Junee CC, there are no sex offender programs being offered. It is unlikely that Junee CC can be a suitable therapeutic location for intensive sex offender programs. This is primarily due to feasibility and sustainability of recruiting and staffing the additional specialist psychology positions required at the regional location. This is a structural gap across corrections in NSW. Some staff also felt that it would be inappropriate at Junee CC as there is no separate therapeutic unit to accommodate the inmates who would participate. Having participants in a general unit, even in a 'protection' pod, could expose the inmates to risk of harm, or indeed other inmates 'on protection' to risk of harm from convicted sex offenders. This raises the question about whether Junee CC is an appropriate placement for convicted sex offenders requiring treatment via a sex offender program. CSNSW advise that at the current time there are no plans to run intensive sex offender programs at Junee CC.²⁶⁷

Junee CC would however be a suitable location to deliver the CSNSW Real Understanding of Self-Help (RUSH) program, for example, as it is a general offending program that can be offered to sentenced or unsentenced inmates.²⁶⁸

Recommendation: CSNSW ensures GEO-specific programs for substance abuse and life skills delivered at Junee CC are reviewed and any best practice incorporated where possible into program and service delivery in NSW correctional centres.

Recommendation: GEO and CSNSW review and increase program offerings for remand cohorts at Junee CC, including short term programs relevant to substance abuse.

Recommendation: GEO and CSNSW review staffing to ensure sufficient capacity for regular welfare support to reception and remand inmates, as well as program delivery for a large multi-sector correctional centre.

6.7 Employment

6.7.1 Overview

Junee CC had a good range of employment opportunities for its medium and minimum security cohort, with several long established industries onsite, farming and agriculture work on the property, and a variety of work in prison services. Positively, several are able to incorporate good vocational training and trade skills. Inmate workers and vocational staff also contributed to the local community through charitable donations and community services.

While the centre had established some specific prison services in the maximum security sector, and obviously made efforts to provide inmates work as sweepers/cleaners, the expansion and change in prison cohort meant large numbers of maximum security inmates lacked employment.

6.7.2 Observations from the inspection

We attended the large medium security industries area which included space for metal fabrication, textiles, woodwork/furniture making, spray painting, laundry, and other activities.

Metalwork

We observed a trainer and assessor who was teaching one of the inmates to weld in one of the welding bays. Other inmates were welding together large metal bins which would be taken offsite as part of an external contract. There was a display of some of the creative metal work inmates had made from scrap metal.

267 At the time of writing there is only one correctional centre in NSW that facilities intensive sex offender treatment programs, the Metropolitan Special Programs Centre (MSPC) in Sydney. CSNSW advise that inmates who require these programs will be classified and placed across NSW, until 24 to 12 months prior to their earliest possible release date, when they should be transferred to MSPC to commence the program.

268 The RUSH program, as described by Corrective Services NSW, 'addresses anti-social attitudes/beliefs, poor self-control, impulsivity, difficulties with self-management such as poor decision making, and lack of interpersonal skills.' It is a medium intensity program with 22 x 2 hour sessions. See CSNSW Compendium of Offender Behaviour Change Programs, October 2023, page 31.

Woodwork

The woodwork section had inmates creating children's furniture toys from timber that had been donated to the centre on the basis that it is not used to create commercial products. We were advised that these toys are generally donated to childcare centres or charities or not for profit organisations.

Spray Painting

The centre has a spray booth where they can paint work related items. We observed a large sign in the booth which had received a clear coating over the top and was going to be hung in town. Inmates were restoring a historic trailer at the time of the inspection which had been stripped back and resprayed and a new timber floor put into it. The booth is also used for car projects from time to time. It was identified that it had been difficult to get a TAFE trainer for instruction in spray painting.

Laundry

One of Junee CC's external contracts was to wash clothing for the local abattoir workers. Inmate workers in this section were primarily located in Sector C minimum security, and some related traineeships were available.

Textile Manufacturing

The area has a small textiles workshop which creates and repairs inmate clothing, mattress covers and other items. Inmates were observed sewing inmate clothing on sewing machines in the area.

Outside of the medium security industries space, we also observed the following work locations:

Farm

Junee CC incorporates farming property outside the secure perimeter. We were impressed with the range of different activities taking place around the farming property, and that the centre tries to incorporate fresh vegetable and egg production into meal preparation for the inmates.

A range of vegetables, crops and fruit trees have been established, and there was also a small greenhouse for seed breeding. It also includes livestock breeding and management (mainly sheep and lambs) as well as egg laying chickens whose eggs are collected and used in the kitchen. We also observed inmates managing beehives, from which they extract honey that can be used in the kitchen.

The farm is of considerable scope, and at the time of the inspection, approximately 29 inmates were employed on the farm. These were minimum security Sector C inmates who had a 6.2 permit to work off-complex, i.e., outside the secure perimeter. We were advised it had been difficult sometimes to attract sufficient inmates to work on the farm and the pay rates had been raised not long prior to the inspection. Inmates have the opportunity to undertake vocational training on the farm including forklift, white card, and 'stop and go' traffic control. The centre was having difficulty finding an agriculture teacher, but the year prior (2022) some inmates had undertaken vocational training in horticulture.

Town crew (Community projects)

The town crew undertake community work outside the centre, normally having four to six inmates. At the time of the inspection, we noted five inmates were carrying out grounds maintenance at the Junee cemetery. The crew also looks to assist with community events, such as grounds preparation for football events. The 2023 Annual Report includes an impressive list of community locations where the centre provided labour (and inmate work experience), including ovals and other sporting grounds, show grounds, community halls, cemeteries, churches and a range of other areas.²⁶⁹ This is a credit to GEO, as well as to staff and inmates.

269 The GEO Group Australia Pty Ltd, *Junee Correctional Centre Annual Report December 2022 – November 2023*, (Report, 2024) 16.

Maximum security industries- Bakery and Laundry

The new maximum security Sector A incorporated industry employment in a bakery and laundry, which provided employment for approximately 15 and 10 maximum security inmates respectively. The bakery produces fresh bread daily for use in both inmate meals and staff canteen, as well as contribution to special events, charity days and centre functions. The bakery could produce a range of quality products and the centre was justifiably proud of the bakery and its contributions to celebrating different occasions. We acknowledge these resources can contribute to staff morale.

Also, positively, vocational training was available and supported in both baking and laundry operations.

Older inmates

Junee CC permitted inmates who have reached the age of 65 to exempt themselves from physical activities, including employment.²⁷⁰ In January 2023, 5% of the inmate population (48 people) were aged 65 or over. This is good practice by the centre, noting inmates over 65 could still elect to work if they so choose. There may be other inmates who cannot participate in physical work due to disabilities.

Timber and metalwork products, industry workshop



Bakery



6.7.3 Employment numbers

This was another area where there were discrepancies in information recorded in OIMS and held by CSNSW, compared to information provided by GEO. Based on pre-inspection information provided by CSNSW, as recorded in OIMS, on 1 January 2023 there were 72 inmates employed in industries and 64 employed in services such as cleaning and maintenance (total 136).²⁷¹ This was a small number given the total population of 935 on the same day, and was also at odds with comments heard onsite that approximately 90% of inmates have jobs.

Accordingly, we requested additional details from GEO for the week of the inspection and were provided with information reflected in the table below.

²⁷⁰ This did not include participation in programs.

²⁷¹ Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 14 March 2023.

Table 13: Employment overview for Junee Correctional Centre 21 August 2023²⁷²

Role	Employment profile	Actual number of inmates employed on 21 August 2023
Activities	7	0
AVL	2	0
A1 unit workers	36	37
A2 unit workers	36	25
A3 unit workers	36	21
A4 unit workers	36	19
B1 unit workers	53	54
B2 unit workers ²⁷³	50	0
B3 unit workers	54	1
B4 unit workers	56	3
C unit workers	26	10
Max clinic	1	0
Medium clinic	1	0
Community	33	0
Cultural centre	6	0
Education	17	2
FTU	4	1
Intake/reception	5	4
Max library	1	0
Medium library	5	1
Maintenance building (TAFE)	12	0
Maintenance – internal	23	12
Grounds maintenance (max sector)	4	3
Max segregation unit/operations	2	1
Max programs	3	0
Medium programs	7	4
Stores	4	1
Visits cleaners	4	4
Bakery max sector	30	15
Canteen max sector	3	0
Canteen medium sector	8	7
Durabuilt	16	3
Farm/grounds	38	30

272 Information provided by GEO, 29 April 2024.

273 Note units B2-B4 were not occupied at the time of the inspection.

Kitchen	65	60
Laundry max sector	20	10
Laundry medium	8	7
Maintenance – facilities	12	7
Metal fabrication	41	33
Packaging	15	0
Shopfitting and joinery	32	0
Textiles	17	8
Woodwork – max sector	30	0
Woodwork medium	17	25
Total	876	408

The total population on 21 August 2023 was 894, and of those GEO reported 77 unavailable or ineligible for work (for example due to age, placement in segregation, ill health). It appears that the general use of ‘90+% employment’ onsite in fact reflects the proportion of eligible *sentenced* inmates and did not include the remand population. While remand inmates cannot be required or compelled to work (and in practice should not be prioritised over inmates serving a sentence) they are still eligible for employment.²⁷⁴

Overall, however, these numbers show a considerable effort into ensuring a wide range of employment options for inmates, which is a positive and important aspect of operations at Junee CC. Due to the limited employment opportunities for maximum security and remand inmates, Junee CC had also clearly made efforts to employ large numbers of unit cleaners/sweepers. This is better than nothing, particularly as it allows some basic remuneration. With numbers so large however, perhaps unrealistically so (for example 37 in Unit A1) it is difficult to see how there would be enough work for those inmates, and we assume those roles occupy very limited hours in the day.

The variety of workplace options and potential for skills training is good to see, and something we hope CSNSW will maintain. Looking towards the contract transition, one of the continuing challenges facing the centre following the expansion and change of cohort, will be to find adequate purposeful activity for remand inmates. We have not made a recommendation around consistency of records between CSNSW and GEO as the contract has not been renewed.

Recommendation: CSNSW retains the variety of employment offerings at Junee CC for medium and minimum security inmates and increases options for maximum security inmates where possible.

Recommendation: CSNSW maintains the farm at Junee CC, and the variety of opportunities within the farm, including as a source of employment, local food production for the inmates, vocational training and wellbeing.

²⁷⁴ The proportion of eligible inmates employed is a performance indicator in the contract (PI 5). Eligibility is defined to exclude such persons as full-time students, inmates aged over 65 who have elected not to participate in employment, those with chronic or debilitating health or medical conditions that prevent employment, inmates serving a disciplinary punishment or period in segregation, inmates on approved leave or participating in case plan interventions etc. It does not exclude remand inmates. Contract, Schedule 23 (Output Specification) Part C Services Specification, 67.

Berry growing, Junee CC farm



Honey production, Junee CC farm



6.8 Education and training

Vocational training was a strength for GEO at Junee CC. Unlike CSNSW, GEO was itself a Registered Training Organisation, providing some needed flexibility, and also contracted with private accredited RTOs to deliver training.²⁷⁵ The challenge for the centre was to deliver options for its increasing remand and short stay population.

The data for vocational training provided by GEO showed 359 commencements and 242 completions in 2022. On its face, this was good result for a gaol with a high turnover of inmates and a high remand population. Further, the long courses cover a range of skills that are relevant to post-gaol employment. This included, for example, a range of skill sets in Engineering, Furniture Making, Kitchen Operations, Laundry Operations, Entrepreneurship and New Business, Resource and Infrastructure. GEO reported 24 traineeships were completed between December 2021 and November 2022, which is a good achievement.

There were three inmates enrolled in distance education in September 2023. This is similar to the low numbers we see around the state.

Regarding basic education, Junee CC conducted skills checks for new inmates to assess reading, writing and numeracy, and provided a mandatory skills course (adult basic education) for those assessed with a certain level of need. According to information provided by GEO before the inspection, 420 inmates completed a skills course in 2022. There were also a range of specific short courses related to entry into a workplace, for example, farm machinery induction, industries equipment inductions, as well as a GEO Life Skills program.

Recommendation: CSNSW maintains the variety of vocational training opportunities offered at Junee CC.

6.9 Preparation for release

6.9.1 Work release and progression to C3 classification

There was one inmate on work release on 1 January 2023, and there were none participating in work release at the time of the inspection. Some staff suggested that they do not receive enough suitable inmates from CSNSW to support regular work release opportunities and progression to a C3 classification. C3 classification is a pre-requisite for eligibility for work release (and other external leave programs such as day release or education leave).²⁷⁶

²⁷⁵ Fusion Training Solutions and Walan Miya.

²⁷⁶ A C3 security classification is for inmates who 'need not be confined by a physical barrier at all times and who need not be supervised.' See *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Regulation 2014* cl 12.

Information provided by CSNSW showed that the number of inmates with a C3 classification was low. On 1 January 2023 there were only six inmates at Junee CC classified at the C3 level, and on 1 January 2024 this had reduced to three (out of a total of 136 minimum security inmates).

It was unclear if other eligibility factors were at play. However, numerous inmates reported to us their impression that the C3 procedure was problematic at Junee CC. They believed it was not only time consuming (something we do sometimes hear at other locations) but that there were excessive or different local criteria or practice that were not based in CSNSW classification policy (for example, requiring inmates spend time working on the farm beforehand). Inmates noted that longer timeframes reduced potential time to be earning wages prior to release.

We reviewed the classification and placement internal policy from the Junee CC Operating Manual.²⁷⁷ Section 5.19 on progression to C3 and external leave programs does not outline any centre-specific procedure, but rather acknowledges relevant legislation and states that 'all processes are outlined in CSNSW Progression to C3/Category 1 and External Leave Programs (ELP) procedures document.'²⁷⁸

While the local practice was unclear, as a multi-sector correctional centre located within a regional town, it is important for work release opportunities to be available.

Recommendation: GEO and Corrective Services NSW identify and establish work release opportunities at Junee CC and ensure local practice for progression to C3 classification is consistent with policy.

6.9.2 Other observations and initiatives

The majority of inmate departures from Junee CC were transfers to another correctional centre, a total of 1,330 in 2022 for example. That year there were 264 persons released on bail, 255 persons released to a community based order, and a small number (63) released from Junee CC at the expiration of their sentence.²⁷⁹

We observed some releases during the inspection, and we generally saw good custodial practice. Staff were organised and respectful, and it was good to see a simple thing like a released inmate being walked through the ordinary exit, and not through the driveway or sally port as we see sometimes at other correctional centres.

GEO highlighted an initiative providing backpacks to certain inmates on release from Junee CC, including helpful 'first day' items such as water, snacks, torch, sleeping bag. While any additional provisions for inmates is welcome and positive, it was unclear if they were going to the inmates with greatest need. Also, it appeared to be funded by a one-off charitable donation, as opposed to embedded into regular practice, so we were unsure if this was sustainable. The Annual Report noted that 40 inmates received one of the backpacks between December 2022 and November 2023.

Finally, Junee CC held several 'employment expo' sessions in 2023. Events of this type, where local employers and job network agencies attend, and information is reinforced to inmates around courses at Junee or post-release services that may be available, are encouraged.

²⁷⁷ The GEO Group Australia Pty Ltd, *Junee Correctional Centre Operating Manual, OP234, Classification and Placement*, 31 May 2023.

²⁷⁸ This is a reference to the 40 page CSNSW Classification Policy document which includes directions on the application of inmates progression to C3 security ratings, and applies to all staff involved in the inmate classification processes within NSW correctional centres, including privately operated ones.

²⁷⁹ Information provided by Corrective Services NSW, 14 March 2023.

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