

Rod Whitehead  
Auditor-General  
Tasmanian Audit Office

Dear Auditor-General

**Management Response to the Performance Audit – Tasmania Prison Service: use of resources**

Thank you for your letter of 7 November 2019 inviting comment in relation to the Performance Audit, Report of the Auditor-General No. 3 of 2019-20 *Tasmania Prison Service: use of resources*.

The Department and the TPS work together to provide a safer Tasmania by ensuring the secure containment of prisoners and by offering opportunities for rehabilitation and personal development. This is done by maintaining facilities that provide care and custody, at various levels of security, for prisoners and persons detained in custody and by providing safe, secure transport between prison and courts.

As you would be aware, the Tasmania Prison Service (TPS) has undertaken significant change in recent years, following a number of enquiries into its operations including the Risdon Prison Complex Inquiry 2011 (the Palmer Inquiry), the Legislative Council Sessional Committee into the Overtime Cost of the Tasmania Prison Service in 2013 and, more recently, the Custodial Inspector inspection reports in 2018 and 2019. The Department of Justice (the Department) and the TPS have implemented numerous recommendations and improvements in recent years and are already working on a number of strategies which will address the recommendations of this Performance Report.

I would like to make the following comments with respect to the recommendations outlined in the Performance Audit:

**Recommendation 1**

Appropriate governance is crucial to ensuring strategic objectives are planned, integrated, delivered and reported on in a timely fashion. With my recent appointment as Secretary, I am undertaking a review of the Department's existing governance structures, and will ensure that appropriate governance structures are retained and added to where necessary.

**Recommendation 2**

The Department is aware of its capability and capacity restraints and will work within its available resources to continue to develop and deliver improvements within the TPS.

### **Recommendation 3**

Additional funding was provided as part of the 2017-18 Budget to improve the Department's justice system demand analysis modelling. The Department completed the model on 30 June 2019, with the interagency Criminal Justice System Working Group providing input into the model in October 2019. This input is being incorporated within the model, which will be ready for use from December 2019, in time for the 2020-21 Budget Process. The model will continue to be modified and refined as more data becomes available.

### **Recommendation 4**

The Department has invested significant time and effort to improve workforce planning processes at the TPS, including:

- Undertaking a review of rosters and operations, which was completed in 2019. The TPS is in the process of implementing the last of the new rosters.
- Recruiting an additional 119 correctional officers since May 2016, with another 20 expected to commence in January 2020.
- Restructuring and reallocating internal resources to bolster the workers compensation management team, to improve the management of workers compensation claims and support staff to recover and return to work as quickly as possible.
- Developing an Agency-wide People Strategy (to be finalised by the end of 2019) with a focus on recruitment, leadership and management capability, developing our people, performance management and managing significant change.

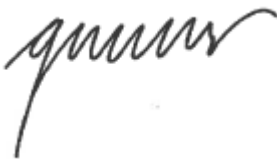
### **Recommendation 5**

The TPS has developed a new suite of KPIs and benchmarked KPIs for internal and external reporting for the 2019-20 financial year. All departmental outputs are required to develop annual business plans which address operational and government priorities, risks, funding and reporting on KPIs and other outcomes. The Agency Executive review these business plans each quarter, in addition to meeting with senior managers on a regular basis. The Department and TPS will continue to work together to improve KPI reporting and benchmarking.

I would like to thank the correctional and non-correctional staff of the TPS for their hard work and commitment to their roles in this challenging environment, particularly during the recent period of increasing prisoner numbers. I would also like to affirm my commitment to working with the TPS to improve outcomes for prisoners and to working towards a more sustainable staffing profile.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the report.

Yours sincerely



Ginna Webster  
**Secretary**

18 November 2019