CHAPTER 3 - FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Overview

3.1 The Committee observed and sought information on the following issues:

- Buildings;
- Health services;
- Welfare services;
- Education services and facilities;
- Religious services and facilities;
- Recreational services and facilities;
- Food services;
- Interpreting services; and
- Complaint procedures.

This chapter provides a brief description of each of these services provided in the four centres inspected by the Committee.

Current detention facilities

Villawood IDC

3.2 This IDC is located in Miowera Road, in a Sydney residential suburb. The IDC consists of two complexes, which separately accommodate high risk and short duration detainees in stage one and low risk and longer-term detainees in stage two. Stage one, built in 1976, is a brick construction with a single storey accommodation block and a two-storey administration centre. Stage two, originally built as a migrant hostel, was converted in 1991. It consists of 12 two storey brick buildings and several temporary demountable buildings for the mess, school and entry building.

3.3 Stage One can accommodate 72 persons in a 44-bed dormitory, a 20 bed dormitory and family units bedding eight. Stage two uses four blocks for single male accommodation housing a maximum of 118 beds, one block for single females housing a maximum of 36 beds and one block for families with a maximum of 46 beds. Stage one is located on approximately 1.35 hectares and stage two occupied 3 hectares.

Maribyrnong IDC

3.4 This IDC is located at 53 Hampstead Road, Maidstone in a light industrial area of Melbourne. Constructed in 1966, the single storey brick construction has a capacity of 80 persons. The IDC can accommodate a maximum of 58 single males and 8 single females in dormitory style accommodation and has four family units with a maximum of 14 beds. This IDC occupies around 0.4of a hectare of land.

Perth IDC

3.5 This IDC is located on the corner of Baker Road and McCombe Avenue, Redcliffe at the Perth Airport. Constructed in 1981, this purpose built brick construction has a capacity of 42 persons. The IDC can accommodate 34 single males and 8 single females. No family accommodation is available but, in the past, the female dormitory has been used because of the traditionally low numbers in that dormitory. The IDC occupies around 0.13 of a hectare.

Port Hedland IRPC

3.6 This centre is located in Dempster Street, Cooke Point in a residential area of Port Hedland. Formerly a mining company's single men quarters, it was purchased in 1991. The centre has a capacity of 700 persons and consists of one brick and eleven prefabricated cyclone proof blocks with ancillary buildings such as the mess, bulk store freezer room and maintenance sheds. On completion of the refurbishment, the centre will have a maximum of 218 single male beds, 21 single female beds and 44 family units with 264 beds. The IRPC occupies more than 3 hectares of land.

Health services

Villawood IDC

3.7 This centre has a Health Services Coordinator and a General Practitioner, on site or on 24-hour call. General health and welfare services are supplied by five registered nurses (with Mental Health, Midwifery, early childhood and postgraduate tertiary qualifications) rostered 24 hours seven days a week. The doctor sees patients in clinic sessions while out-of-hours matters are dealt with by nursing staff. Other more specialised services include a Clinical Psychologist who visits weekly and an optometrist who visits fortnightly.

3.8 Psychiatrists in the nearby public hospital deal with mental health cases. Staff are trained in seminars to refer behaviour and possible mental health problems to trained on-site counsellors and psychiatric trained nurses. Isolation and lock-up facilities are available and, in emergencies, staff have access to the community health crisis team and liaise with local mental health hospitals and personnel. Staff also attend "Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors" (STARTS) conferences and have access to literature.

Maribyrnong IDC

3.9 This centre has a visiting doctor providing clinic services on two afternoons a week. Two nurses are rostered to provide care seven days a week. These nurses, both trained in psychiatric care, also provide mental health services supported by trained custodial staff. Counselling services are provided by one of the nurses and a trained counsellor.

Perth IDC

3.10 Perth IDC has a nurses centre and private consulting room fitted out with basic level medical equipment. The centre is staffed with a full time Registered Nurse (40 hrs per week) and has a medical officer who attends for 2 x 1 hour sessions per week. Health screening services at the centre are limited, however, all detainees are tested for Tuberculosis. Local emergency medical facilities are available if required.

3.11 Medical practitioners engaged at the centre have been trained to identify mental health problems through the ASeTTS GP Program.[1] The nurse employed at the centre is also a Registered Mental Health Nurse. A counsellor and a psychiatrist are on call as needed, with the Mill Street Hospital available for mental health emergencies. Mental health support facilities at the centre include a 'time out' room and relaxation sessions for detainees.

Port Hedland IRPC

3.12 Medical facilities at the centre comprise a consulting room with office, an examination room, a counselling room and a dispensary/treatment room. Basic emergency equipment is on hand with a medical clinic operating 5 days per week. Access to local emergency services includes an ambulance service, the Port Hedland Regional Hospital and telephone consultation with a GP.

3.13 A general nurse with additional training in mental health, midwifery, family planning and child health is employed full time at the clinic and is on call 24hrs/7days per week. The centre manager is also a Registered Nurse with training in mental health and is available as an on call relief nurse.

3.14 In addition, the centre has a counsellor with qualifications in both counselling and cultural studies. The clinic nurse is trained in suicide assessment and management and acute crisis management skills. All custodial staff undergo pre-service training which includes the identification of mental health problems, suicide, self harm risk and correct referral to specialist staff. An active referral system to the North West Mental Health Service operates and telephone contact with ASeTTS in Perth is available to specifically address problems associated with trauma and torture.

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1 Association for Services to Torture and Trauma Survivors - a program funded by the Department of Health and Family Services and DIMA which provides education programs for health professionals and General Practitioners in the referral of trauma survivors, in particular, refugees, to appropriate services.

Dental services

3.15 Medical, but not cosmetic, dental services are available at all detention centres. These services include all necessary dental treatment, including crowns, fillings, root canals and the removal of dead teeth.

Welfare services

Villawood IDC

3.16 One counsellor with the qualifications of: BSc (major in psychology); MA Psych; postgraduate training in individual and family therapy; and Graduate Certificate in Management Psychology, is available during working hours. A clinic operates in both stages.

Maribrynong IDC

3.17 One counsellor with tertiary qualifications in social welfare is available 40 hours per week. Detainees can access the counsellor direct or be nominated by staff or medical staff.

Perth IDC

3.18 Counselling services are available for detainees at the centre 8.00am-4.00pm weekdays. Services are provided by a Registered Mental Health Nurse and drug and alcohol counsellors. Referral and interpreter services are readily available for counsellors to utilise.

Port Hedland IRPC

3.19 A full time counsellor with qualifications in Counselling and Cultural Studies is available Monday to Friday, 8.30am-4.30pm and after hours as required. Access to the service for detainees is through self or staff referral and through Immediate Risks Needs Assessment on arrival at the centre.

3.20 The counsellor has access to a range of facilities and equipment at the centre including: office space; access to interpreter and referral services; cassette players and relaxation tapes; library membership; and foreign newspaper subscriptions. An extensive network of support agencies is readily available to provide written information and advice.

Education services

Villawood IDC

3.21 An on-site School operates between 9.00am to 2.00pm (4 hours) catering for seven children aged between 6 to 15 as at 22 May 1998. The classroom is a prefabricated building. One teacher with a Diploma in Education, BA (English) and

ESL Certificate teaches a primary curriculum with an emphasis on Maths and English. Art supplies, sporting equipment, a computer and books are available.

3.22 The same teacher provides classes for adults based on an ESL Migrant Program from Western Australia. The centre holds conversation groups and advanced classes based on a Cambridge English Course.

Maribyrnong IDC

3.23 School aged children are placed in the local Catholic school system. A teacher with a BA (Primary Teaching) and a Masters in Theology conducts adult education classes. Any resident may access the teacher for up to 16 hours per week. Facilities include computers, books, art and craft materials together with some language materials.

Perth IDC

3.24 Adult detainees have access to English tuition for 1 hour per week facilitated by a teacher with an ESL background. An art therapy session is also offered for one hour per week.

3.25 Learning aids and equipment at the centre are limited to whiteboards, TV/video and art equipment.

Port Hedland IRPC

3.26 One education officer is employed to provide schooling for children at the centre. The schoolroom operates Monday to Thursday from 9.00am to 12noon. The pre-school curriculum and supporting materials offered are appropriate for children from Non English Speaking Backgrounds with an emphasis on basic numeracy, the alphabet and cooking. Equipment appropriate for pre-primary aged children is provided both indoors and outdoors. Learning facilities include books, pencils, paints, musical instruments, television and video.

3.27 External schooling is available, chiefly for social interaction, if considered appropriate. A weekly placement in a day care centre is also provided for the children as an opportunity for socialisation. The centre has unrestricted access to Hedland College and the District Education Office for education and learning resources.

3.28 An adult education program is offered to interested participants Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday mornings and every afternoon, with an excursion to Hedland College provided every Friday afternoon. The curriculum for adult detainees is flexible and based on assessed need or individual interest. Subjects include Maths (all levels), Engineering, Literacy, Numeracy, ESL and English 1K, pottery, sewing, music and art. Learning aids and equipment include television and video, library access (on and off site), sewing equipment, art materials and a potting wheel.

Religious practices

Villawood IDC

3.29 Detainees able to retain all important religious icons and the centre houses two Mosques and a number of smaller shrines to facilitate personal worship. Detainees have access to pastoral care from religious service providers in the normal visiting hours in private rooms are available to groups.

3.30 The centre observes most religious festivals of significance with special arrangements, which may include fasting, altering of meal times, prayer times and dietary needs.

Maribyrnong IDC

3.31 Similar religious opportunities are provided at this centre. Several private rooms are available for worship during festivals and for religious services. Catholic and Uniting Church ministers visit each week. During Islamic festivals, the TV room is converted into a mosque for prayers and the staff cater for the requirement of special foods and changes to eating times.

Perth IDC

3.32 A room at the centre has been designated and configured as a place of worship. A Catholic Priest attends weekly to say Mass and a bible study group meets regularly. A Muslim Oman makes a monthly visit. Appropriate arrangements are made in accordance with requests from residents wishing to practice other types of religion.

3.33 Religious festivals are acknowledged and celebrated in accordance with the religious calendar.

Port Hedland IRPC

3.34 A room in C Block is available to detainees as a place of personal worship. A Catholic Priest says Mass each week in this room with other religions catered for by request from residents.

3.35 Access to pastoral services is readily available to detainees and is provided through the Catholic Church and the Islamic Association of North Western Australia. A specially designated room is soon to be available for service providers.

3.36 The centre celebrates religious festivals such as Easter, Christmas, Ramadan and Eid-Ul-Adah[2] and facilitates catering accordingly.

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2 An annual Islamic festival when an animal is sacrificed in commemoration of Abraham's sacrifice of his son.

Recreation facilities and services

Villawood IDC

3.37 Detainees are able to participate in activities such as craft, conversational groups via the adult education program as well as general sporting activities. Detainees are encouraged to participate in as many programs and activities as they wish.

3.38 The equipment available for organised recreational programs includes pool tables, table tennis tables, soccer, basket and volleyballs, a gym, board games, a library, five TVs and three videos are all available on request.

3.39 The library facilities include approximately 500 books in languages such as Tamale, Arabic, English, and French. Newspapers in other languages are delivered daily which include Arab World, China Independent Daily, Chinese Herald, Daily Telegraph, El-Telegraph, Middle East Herald, Sing Tao, The Australian and the Sydney Morning Herald.

Maribyrnong IDC

3.40 Organised sports include table tennis, basketball, volleyball, pool and soccer. The centre has a small gym with weight equipment, boxing bags and gloves. Seven TVs and 4 video players provide unlimited access to available free to air services. A multilingual library together with some overseas and Australian newspapers provides access to print materials.

Perth IDC

3.41 There are no organised sporting or leisure activities at the centre. Sporting equipment available to detainees includes: volleyballs; soccer balls; table tennis; and badminton. Leisure equipment includes television, videos and access to reading material in the library.

Port Hedland IRPC

3.42 Detention Officers, the Counsellor and the Education Officer provide activities. Programs available include fishing, swimming, shopping, pottery, sewing, technical visits to geological sites and the Port Hedland College library, and a regular volleyball competition. In winter, soccer replaces swimming as an activity. Each resident is permitted to spend up to 10 hours per week participating in recreational activities. Detainees are entitled to leave the centre for recreational activities.

3.43 A wide selection of sporting equipment is available to detainees including volleyballs; table tennis gear; basketballs; soccer balls; and, fishing rods. Residents have ready access to the library at the centre as well as the local library. The centre subscribes to a variety of multilingual newspapers and magazines. Televisions and video equipment are provided in recreational rooms at the centre.

Interpreting services

Interpreting services are provided at all centres as needed.

Consultative Committees

Villawood IDC

3.44 A telephone interpreting service is available on a 24 hour a day basis. A face to face interpreter service is available for a non-English speaking person visiting the nurse/doctor or ACM management. A detainee consultative committee meets approximately fortnightly so the detainee body can be informed of decisions that are relevant to their management.

Maribyrnong IDC

3.45 Maribyrnong offers the same service as Villawood.

Perth IDC

3.46 Services offered are the same as at Villawood, however the consultative committee meets on a monthly basis.

Port Hedland IRPC

3.47 The Port Hedland Centre offers the same consultative system, with residents meeting as required.

Description of complaints services

Villawood IDC

3.48 A detainee must complete a general request form to lodge a complaint. It is reviewed, initially at supervisor level, then passed back to the detainee. A further review by the ACM Centre Manager is conducted if the detainee is not satisfied with the initial decision. Detainees are notified of the complaint procedure on admission to the IDC.

Maribyrnong IDC

3.49 The procedure mirrors Villawood though residents may raise their complaint verbally and obtain the result in a similar fashion.

Perth IDC

3.50 Residents are advised on arrival of their right to make a complaint and the procedures by which this might be done. The first mechanism for complaints is the monthly detainee meetings. A centre supervisor reviews the complaint and refers to ACM management if required. DIMA is advised of all complaints by residents and

will hold meetings to resolve issues. The detainee is informed of the outcome of their complaint either personally or at the monthly meeting.

Port Hedland IRPC

3.51 A complaints box is provided at the centre for residents to advise management or DIMA in writing of any problems. Centre staff are also available to listen to complaints and convey them to management. Residents are advised of the complaints mechanism on arrival at the centre. A complaint continues to be addressed either by ACM management or DIMA until resolution is effected. Detainees are also advised of their right to lodge a complaint with the Ombudsman.

Food services

Villawood IDC

3.52 The menu is set and reviewed by independent consultative dietician. All meat supplied to Villawood IDC is hal-al killed to conform to requirements of the Muslim population and a comprehensive vegetarian menu is available. Current menu guidelines are advised by a dietician and endorsed as culturally sensitive. Under supervision of catering staff, some detainees assist in food preparation. Detainees have access to snacks and drinks outside of meal hours through vending machines situated in stage 1 and stage 2.

Maribyrnong IDC

3.53 A nutritionist sets the menu. Three chefs prepare international meals, which are subject to comment by a resident committee. Detainees do not assist in food preparation but their suggestions are considered. Vending machines and a residents' refrigerator provide access to food outside of meal times.

Perth IDC

3.54 Detainees at the centre are consulted on menus that are also checked by a dietician for suitability. The menu operates on a four weekly rotation. Vegetarians and residents with other special dietary needs are catered for at the centre. All meat is hal-al killed. Chinese cuisine and pork are offered on weekends. Tea and coffee and a snack vending machine are available for residents at all times. Detainees assist in food preparation.

Port Hedland IRPC

3.55 Residents prepare the food at the centre under supervision. Asian and Muslim cultures are catered for separately with the provision of Asian spices and hal-al food. Snack foods such as noodles and drinks such as cordial, tea and coffee are available to residents outside regular meal hours.

Illegal substances and conflict resolution

3.56 In the event that detainees are found in possession of illegal substances, the police are contacted and the normal law enforcement processes are initiated. If detainees are involved in conflict which manifests itself in a physical manner, staff are able to use minimum force to restrain those involved to ensure the security of safety of all persons within the detention centres.