

28 March 2025

Mr Brad Royce  
Commissioner of Corrective Services  
Department of Justice  
141 St George Terrace  
PERTH WA 6000

By email: [brad.royce@justice.wa.gov.au](mailto:brad.royce@justice.wa.gov.au)  
CC: [Minister.Papalia@dpc.wa.gov.au](mailto:Minister.Papalia@dpc.wa.gov.au)

Dear Commissioner Royce

### **RECENT TRANSFER OF PRISONERS FROM HAKEA PRISON**

I refer to an opinion piece by Ben Harvey published in The West Australian newspaper on 2 February 2025 entitled *Department of Justice moves inmates from overcrowded Hakea Prison as WA swelters*.

The Law Society of Western Australia has a strong commitment to upholding the rights and well-being of all individuals within the justice system and for many years has advocated for improved conditions in prisons. As such, we are concerned about the reported transfer and seek clarification on the following:

- The rationale for the decision to transfer inmates from Hakea Prison;
- The specific location/s to which inmates were transferred;
- The current living conditions and availability for access to essential services for the transferred inmates;
- Measures implemented to ensure the safety and well-being of the transferred inmates.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss the above, please contact Susie Moir, General Manager Advocacy and Professional Development on [smoir@lawsocietywa.asn.au](mailto:smoir@lawsocietywa.asn.au) or telephone 9324 868.

Yours sincerely



Gary Mack  
**President**

*Encl.*

# The West Australian

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Wednesday, 26 February 2025

Ben Harvey Courts & Justice Opinion

**OPINION**

# Ben Harvey: Department of Justice moves inmates from overcrowded Hakea Prison as WA swelters




**Ben Harvey** The West Australian

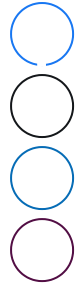
Sun, 2 February 2025 2:00AM [Comments](#) +

Ben Harvey



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 The mass exodus came after guards refused to let inmates out of their cells on the grounds that the jail was perilously overcrowded. Credit: Justin Benson-Cooper/The Sunday Times



As we all sweated through 41C on Wednesday, about 100 prisoners were quietly moved out of Hakea Prison.

The mass exodus came after guards refused to let inmates out of their cells on the grounds that the jail was perilously overcrowded.

Prison officers claimed it was dangerous to have so many angry blokes wandering around, so the only convicts let out were the ones in essential services, such as the kitchen and laundry.

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Hakea was built for 600 men. At a push, it can accommodate 900.

On Monday, there were about 1300 people in the jail.

A few months ago, an extra mattress was put on the floor of about 90 cells.

A cell at Hakea Prison is 2m wide and 3m long. That's about the size of a modern bathroom.



COURTS &amp; CRIME



## Security guard jailed for filming women in the toilet

Justin Bianchini

Into that space were sardined three fully-grown men.

On Monday and Tuesday many of them spent every minute inside.

The keys never turned the locks because the prison officers refused to.

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It's so cramped inside a triple-bunked cell that if someone wants to use the toilet, their feet will often be on the mattress on the floor.

Imagine trying to get some sleep when the bokie having a crap next to you has accidentally wedged his big toe in your ear.

That would make a funny scene for Ronnie Barker's convict character Norman Fletcher in *Porridge* but the reality isn't so slapstick.

The only advantage of drawing the short straw and being on the floor is that you might get a little bit of a breeze from under the cell door.



📷 That would make a funny scene for Ronnie Barker's convict character Norman Fletcher in *Porridge* but the reality isn't so slapstick. Credit: [www.express.co.uk/www.express.co.uk](http://www.express.co.uk/www.express.co.uk)

Like most of the State's penitentiaries there's no air-conditioning at Hakea, so the faintest puff of fresh air is welcome.

You would have especially appreciated that breeze on Monday and Tuesday because it was about 35C in those cells.

On Wednesday the mercury was set to clip 40C.



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God knows what the temperature would have been inside, but probably not far off the low-and-slow heat used for a Texas barbecue.

Porridge? More like brisket.

With prison officers still refusing to touch a lock the Department of Justice folded.

Jail bosses agreed to move inmates out of Hakea so no cells had more than two people inside.

The destination of the deported crims is a mystery. Every one of WA's 14 prisons is absolutely rammed.

Maybe they're sleeping in prison vans in the carpark.



BEN HARVEY



## Police must be supported to wage WA's war against DV

Ben Harvey

Last week's methodical evacuation means Hakea is still dangerously overcrowded, but not catastrophically so.

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It's only a matter of time before prisoners are triple-bunking again, because the only thing fuller than Hakea prison is Perth Magistrates Court.

A lot of people will be doing their time in a 2sqm space.

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To qualify as free range, a chicken must have at least 4sqm of ground to itself.

Lambs in feedlots are usually given at least that much space.

Up until Wednesday, just shy of 100 people at Hakea prison were living in what is the legislated minimum size of a sow stall.

Is it any wonder that they act like animals when we treat them like pigs?

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