



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Prison crowding a major concern

The issue of overcrowding at the Bunbury Regional Prison is not a new one according to the Community and Public Sector Union.

Inspector of Custodial Services Neil Morgan this week released a report into inmate numbers at the regional facility that highlighted it was almost more than 50 percent higher than capacity.

CPSU Branch Secretary Toni Walkington said she raised the issue with the Department of Corrective Services Ian Johnson in November 2009 and that it was an ongoing concern for their members employed in prisons and associated services.

In a letter written to Mr Johnson back then she said with the increase in prison muster and the reduction in staff and resources the union was worried about the impact on staff, prisoners and the community.

Ms Walkington said there were insufficient staff for programs, education, health and counselling leading to ongoing workload issues and increased stress for both staff and prisoners.

"We believe that the resultant increase in workload and stress for staff is contributing to an increase in sick leave and overtime, both paid and unpaid," Ms Walkington said.

"We are concerned that the conditions and heightened prisoner stress in a growing prison population will lead to a critical incident with major ramifications for staff and prisoners."

In 2009 Ms Walkington asked for detailed explanation as to how the above concerns would be addressed to prevent a further deterioration in prison resources and services.

She said this week they are now asking the same questions.

**FOR COMMENT:**

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