

Appendix A:

Submissions and comments

We have consulted with DJCS, GEO and Project Co, and we considered their views when reaching our audit conclusions. As required by the *Audit Act 1994*, we gave a draft copy of this report, or relevant extracts, to those agencies and asked for their submissions and comments.

Responsibility for the accuracy, fairness and balance of those comments rests solely with the relevant agency head.

Responses received

Agency	Page
DJCS	A-2
GEO	A-4

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Department of Justice and Community Safety

Secretary

Level 26
121 Exhibition Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000
Telephone: (03) 9915 3759
www.justice.vic.gov.au

Our ref: EBC 25123585

Mr Andrew Greaves
Auditor-General, Victorian Auditor-General's Office
By email: [REDACTED]

Dear Mr Greaves

Thank you for your letter of 10 December 2025 providing the proposed report: *Ravenhall Prison: Rehabilitating and Reintegrating Prisoners, Part 2* for final response. The department has reviewed your report and acknowledges the value in some of the findings.

However, it is disappointing that the report still fails to reflect the complexity of the environment and omits important context, despite consistent requests from the department to do so. This includes failure to acknowledge the significant impact of the high volume/churn of people on remand and on eligibility or willingness to participate in programs. The report also fails to convey all key factors that impact on eligibility for programs, including the research-backed risks of exposing those with low-risk of reoffending to some programs. These omissions skew the findings about program participation.

The department notes that VAGO's 2020 report better reflected the complexities of the environment and presented more nuance of the underlying profile and associated challenges for service delivery. In response to the end-of-conduct brief, provisional report and proposed report, the department asked VAGO to address key issues and the potential for misinterpretation. The department was told that adding additional analysis was either out of scope or would make the report too long and complicated for a public audience. The department was also told during the last round of feedback that it was too late in the audit to do little more than tweak the findings, it wasn't possible to reflect key data to better explain the impact of the remand population and that delays would impact VAGO meeting a KPI relating to number of engagements completed during the year.

The department is committed to offering services for the successful rehabilitation and reintegration of sentenced and remanded people back into the community and has accepted your recommendations in principle. If you have any questions or require further information, please contact Fiona Dowsley, Executive Director, Data and Performance, on [REDACTED] or via email to [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

Emma Cassar PSM
Secretary

14 / 01 / 2026



DJCS action plan

Ravenhall Correctional Centre: Rehabilitating and Reintegrating Prisoners – Part 2

#	VAGO recommends that DJCS:	Response	DJCS will:	By:
1	Evaluate Ravenhall Correctional Centre's rehabilitation and reintegration programs, including its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rehabilitation approach, to identify possible success factors to scale up to other prisons.	Accept in principle (subject to funding)	1.1 Add evaluation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rehabilitation approach to the Ravenhall evaluation framework and finalise the framework.	Dec-26
			1.2 Ensure GEO's Research Team conducts research and evaluation on the effectiveness of programs at Ravenhall, including its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rehabilitation approach. This work is subject to funding and evaluation priorities for the corrections system.	Dec-26
			1.3 Use the results of GEO's evaluation of Ravenhall programs to consider opportunities for improvement to programs provided in the public prison system.	Dec-27
2	Establish a mechanism to accurately measure and monitor the delivery of reintegration services.	Accept in principle (subject to funding)	2.1 Work with the contractor/GEO to identify ways to improve measuring, reporting and monitoring of reintegration services at Ravenhall.	Dec-26
			2.2 Review the existing Service Indicator Framework to determine possibilities for inclusion of measures and monitoring.	Review Dec-26
			Any amendment to this framework may have commercial implications, therefore is subject to funding and/or contract negotiations.	Jun-27
3	Work with GEO Group Australia to strategically align program delivery with prisoner needs, including programs for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offending behaviour • alcohol and other drugs • vocational training. 	Accept in principle	3.1 Through the existing contractual framework, ensure that the contractor/GEO is adjusting its service and program delivery to cater for needs of the people located at Ravenhall.	Dec-26

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Head Office
Level 12, 44 Market Street
Sydney NSW 2000
PO Box Q134, QVB Post Shop
Sydney NSW 1230
Tel: (02) 9262 6100
ABN 24 051 130 600
geogroup.com.au

13 January 2026

Auditor-General
Victorian Auditor-General's Office
35 Collins Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Dear Sir

Report on Ravenhall Prison: Rehabilitating and Reintegrating Prisoners — Part 2.

In response to your proposed report, The GEO Group Australia Pty Ltd (GEO) would like to take this opportunity to detail the current challenges we face with rehabilitating and reintegrating prisoners at Ravenhall Correctional Centre (Ravenhall).

Firstly, when looking at our reoffending results, we are statistically compared to a Victorian cohort that includes female prisoners. Since female prisoners historically reoffend at a much lower rate than male prisoners, this places us at a relative disadvantage when making comparisons to the wider system.

Secondly, GEO is now receiving far greater numbers of prisoners serving shorter sentences, typically of less than three months. This has also negatively impacted our opportunity to offer criminogenic programs that make a meaningful difference to reoffending outcomes.

Thirdly, and lastly, GEO now receives a significantly higher proportion of men with mental illnesses (including more acute symptoms) compared to other Victorian prisons. This was never contemplated at the time the rehabilitation and reintegration benchmarks were established. The accompanying increased complexity and level of need negatively impacts upon our ability to engage with these men in throughcare and community-based programs with a corresponding impact on our comparative reoffending rates.

In conclusion and despite the factors set out above, I would like to highlight the wonderful outcomes we have achieved with the Aboriginal men in our care at Ravenhall and the meaningful reduction in reoffending achieved through our post release work at The Bridge Centre.

Yours sincerely

Dr Frank Thorn
Managing Director

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