

New era for state prisons

AFTER more than 600,000 hours of labour and at a cost of \$110 million, Queensland's first dedicated reception and assessment prison officially opened at Wacol last week.

With a new capacity of 540 prisoners (an increase of 216 beds) the former Sir David Longland Prison will mostly house prisoners just sentenced and on their way to other prisons in the south-east corner.

The facility will also house up to 150 sentenced prisoners based at the prison throughout their imprisonment, who will take on prison jobs such as working in the kitchen, garden and laundry.

Corrective Services Minister Judy Spence said the new Brisbane Correctional Centre cemented Queensland's reputation as an international leader in corrective services.

"By having a dedicated reception facility we can streamline our sentence management plans, run effective health assessments and provide prisoners a fair and safe introduction into Queensland Corrective Services," she said.

"We have also established a state-of-the-art maximum security unit, for housing Queensland's most dangerous prisoners who pose a significant risk to other prisoners, staff or themselves.

"And the centre also includes a special unit for 17 year olds, so this particularly challenging group of offenders can be housed separately and managed on their unique management plans."

Ms Spence said the centre set new benchmarks in a range of areas, including electronic secur-



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ity technology and environmentally-friendly design principles.

"We have installed world-class computerised security management systems, surveillance cameras, perimeter intrusion detection systems, x-ray machines and drug detection scanners," she explained.

"The key challenge here was the integration of the various independent security systems such as video, audio, biometrics, staff duress tracking, movement control and perimeter security, into the one system."

Ms Spence said the new centre also included a \$3 Million water conservation system including eight 22,000 litre rainwater tanks on site, new toilets with flush valves that control the number of flushes in a 24-hour period and three-minute timers on all showers.

"The demolition work paved the way for three, new 100-bed cell blocks, while a further eight cell-blocks and the industries workshops have been gutted and fully refurbished," Ms Spence said.

"The redevelopment also included a new prisoner reception and visitor processing areas, and an upgrade of the existing administration and kitchen facilities."

State Member for Inala Annastacia Palaszczuk said she wanted



**THIS REFERS TO
RBA'S MASTER TROL
SYSTEM**

The inside of a cell block at the new Brisbane Correctional Centre which will house 50 prisoners.

to pay tribute to staff who worked at the prison and the number of community groups who attended the opening ceremony.

Inala Neighbourhood Watch area co-ordinator Jim Horsfall was one of about a dozen community group representatives to attend and take a tour of the prison.

He said he was impressed with what he saw.

"They (prisoners) have everything they need to reform here," he said.



State Member Annastacia Palaszczuk with Police Minister Judy Spence.