

# Executive Summary

This is a joint report of the quarterly statutory inspections of both the Brisbane and Cleveland Youth Detention Centres (BYDC and CYDC). Statutory detention centre inspections are conducted by delegated Inspectors, located within the office of the Director-General, Department of Youth Justice. This report which covers both inspections, is provided to the Director-General and contributes to improving youth detention centre operations across both centres.

The on-site inspection of BYDC occurred from 9 to 13 March 2020. Due to safety precautions implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the inspection of CYDC was conducted remotely from 23 to 27 March 2020. CYDC has a high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and staff who are connected to remote communities. Considering the risk to the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities, and to limit spread of COVID-19 within CYDC and Townsville, the physical inspection of this facility could not proceed. Future inspections are likely to be conducted remotely at both centres until restrictions are lifted.

The focus areas under inspection in this quarter were education and training, restorative practice and trauma informed practice and connection to culture and community. In gathering evidence at BYDC, Inspectors visited all units over the inspection week and spoke to staff and young people in each unit. At CYDC, interviews were conducted via telephone and video-call technology. Emerging issues and themes were corroborated through consultation with relevant managers and inspection of available data. The key observations, findings and recommendations in relation to the focus areas are summarised below.

## Focus Area 1 – Education and Training

Schools within the detention centres continue to deliver education during most scheduled classes and both centres deliver some programs and certificates that offer future vocational benefit for young people over the age of 15. During the inspection, the Inspectors were able to observe several vocational units being delivered under the instruction of a qualified instructor. All young people reported they were enjoying the opportunity to undertake vocational courses and appeared positively engaged in the practical aspects of the courses.

Further, both centres are currently exploring avenues to increase VET opportunities for young people, including a program in partnership with TAFE Queensland that will allow young people to gain overviews of the different types of trades available.

The finding in relation to education and training, centres around funding to increase educational opportunities for young people in detention. This adds to the Inspectorate's previous recommendation around increasing course availability within detention, as the solution to this relies on collaboration with outside agencies such as the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training, TAFE Queensland and the Department of Education.

The Inspectorate recommended that The Department of Youth Justice work with all relevant stakeholders to conduct an analysis of the current education and training opportunities available to youth detention centres with a particular focus on transition from detention.

The Inspectorate also recommended increased communication between multi-agency stakeholders involved in transitional planning to ensure all elements, particularly educational

content of Transition/Reintegration plans are communicated effectively, and where appropriate, uploaded onto the relevant departmental client information sharing system.

## **Focus Area 2 – Restorative Practice and Trauma Informed Practice**

The Inspectorate noted some good examples of restorative practice processes and meetings in both centres where outcomes have been positive for both the young people and staff. Staff in particular spoke about being able to use restorative language and techniques to manage conflicts and prevent escalation and use of force. Young people spoke about how restorative meetings have helped them to develop increased empathy and appreciation for how actions can affect others.

While there have been examples of restorative practice processes and trauma informed language being utilised, the Inspectorate found that increased centralised oversight, professional development and training would enhance communication and relationships within the detention centres, assist in embedding restorative practice more thoroughly, and potentially reduce incidents.

## **Focus Area 3 – Connection to Culture and Community**

There are no recommendations in relation to this focus area. The Inspectorate noted the work of the Cultural Units in providing cultural education and programs for young people in both centres as well as maintaining family contact through family visits. Both centres have a regular visits program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders groups.

Inspectors also noted the work of the BYDC Restorative Practice Team in facilitating culturally sensitive restorative meetings with young people, their families and support workers to mend relationships and reconnect young people to the community prior to release.

Although there are no recommendations, the Inspectorate notes a recommendation from the *Building pride and Spirit Report 2018* which outlines the need for a culturally safe space for young people to participate in cultural programs and other culturally specific activities including sorry business with their families and other culturally significant people. The Inspectorate acknowledges the importance and consideration shown at both detention centres in availing culturally appropriate spaces and facilitating culturally appropriate activities for young people.

# List of Recommendations

## Focus Area 1 – Education and Training

### Recommendation 1

The Inspectorate recommends that the Department of Youth Justice work with all relevant stakeholders to conduct an analysis of the current education and training opportunities available to youth detention centres with a particular focus on transition from detention and provide a gap analysis to the Inspectorate by 30 September 2020.

### Recommendation 2

It is recommended that increased communication occur between multi-agency stakeholders involved in transitional planning to ensure all elements, particularly educational content of Transition/Reintegration plans are communicated effectively, and where appropriate, uploaded onto the relevant departmental client information sharing system (e.g. ICMS, iDocs, Unify).

## Focus Area 2 – Restorative Practice, Trauma Informed Practice and Relationships

### Recommendation 3

It is recommended that centralised oversight is established to enable strategic direction and formalisation of processes and monitoring to ensure outcomes are achieved, integrity and best practice is maintained and Restorative Practice is fully implemented within the detention centres.

### Recommendation 4

It is recommended that Restorative Practice and Trauma Informed Practice training is prioritised to ensure all staff, including executive and management at BYDC and CYDC attend the Two day Restorative Practice General Training at a minimum, and Trauma Informed Practice training when available.

## Focus Area 3 – Connection to Culture and Community

Nil recommendations made.