

Executive Summary to Inspection Report Brisbane Youth Detention Centre September quarter 2012

The inspection of the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre (BYDC) required under s263(4) of the *Youth Justice Act 1992* occurred from 17–20 September 2012. The focus area was the centre's behaviour development system, and the monitored area was the separation of young people in locked rooms. The Brisbane Children's Court Cells were also inspected as the court cells are managed by the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre.

In relation to the focus area of behavioural development, the Inspectors acknowledge that this can be a complex and challenging subject, and one which requires a clear direction based on sound theoretical evidence; an understanding of 'what works'; and realistic expectations of outcomes for young people who are accommodated in a closed institution.

In regards to the inspection findings, the Inspectors identified that there are different strategies and models in place within the accommodation units at BYDC. Some of the reasons for this include the complexity of BYDC i.e. housing a diverse mixture of short and long term remanded young people as well as those who are sentenced, and the various age groups of young people need to be taken into consideration when arranging accommodation. Other considerations required are the cultural, gender or mental health issues that a young person might have.

The primary inspection finding identified that there is a divergence of opinions amongst staff at BYDC in relation to what behaviour development model would best suit the centre. Some staff and management believed that a 'therapeutic' model is preferable, while others believed that that a model focused on institutional compliance should be maintained.

The Inspectors also identified that that there are various applications of behavioural development models currently in place at BYDC. The reasons for this are to suit the different ages, genders and sentenced status of young people. However, the Inspectorate notes that too much variance can also influence the divergence between staff as to which model is best suited to developing a young person's behaviour while in custody. The Inspectorate recommends that a clearer direction and philosophy of what the department's preference is to behaviour development would support centre management as well as address any disagreement between staff in relation to the future direction of the behaviour development system.

As part of the ongoing monitoring process the Inspectors also examined the separation of young people in a locked room, in particular the Inspectors examined the use of any behavioural management plans, which colloquially had been referred to as 90/30ⁱ plans. The Inspectors did not identify any instances of the use of 90/30 rotational lockdowns and were satisfied that the Centre Director had implemented previous inspection recommendations to cease these types of plans.

The inspectorate also inspected the Brisbane Children's Court Cells. The cells were well maintained and the staff were able to demonstrate a good understanding of the requirements of managing the young people held in the court cells waiting for their court hearing. At the time of the inspection the Inspectors did not have any concerns with this focus area.

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- ⁱ 90/30 plans were separation plans which required the young person to be separated in a locked room for 90 minutes and allowed out for 30 minutes, before being separated again in a locked room for another 90 minutes. This style of separation did not meet the requirements of the *Youth Justice Regulation 2003*.