

Executive Summary to Inspection Report Brisbane Youth Detention Centre September quarter 2015

The Inspection of the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre occurred from 17 to 21 August 2015. The primary inspection focus areas were Bullying and Relationships between Staff and Young People. The monitored areas were Behaviour Development and Behaviour Management.

Staff were friendly co-operative and informative during the inspection. Detention Youth Workers were observed to be busy with tasks and/or engaged with young people. There also appeared to be a collaborative team approach amongst the Detention Youth Workers, Supervisors and Caseworkers. The structured day operation was observed to run effectively and efficiently and on time.

Since the previous inspection the Centre management team has introduced weekly inspections of Centre facilities covering the complete Centre on a monthly basis. A Centre based painting program has been introduced involving two staff members and young people painting cells and common areas. This is making an improvement to the presentation of accommodation units whilst providing young people with opportunities to develop a work ethic and skills.

During the admission and induction process young people are advised of the required behaviour standards in relation to behaviour including bullying. Young people are provided with strategies for avoiding identifying themselves as a target for bullying behaviour such as not publicising their alleged offences. Additionally young people are advised of the avenues to report bullying should it occur.

Inspectors found that detention youth workers and caseworkers were alert to and actively looking for any indications of bullying of young people and had strategies in place to address incidents of bullying. The strategies include mediation, counselling and consequences for perpetrators. Inspectors found that there is currently a low level of reported bullying within the Centre.

In relation to the area of Staff Relationships with Young People, Inspectors found good practices in operation with staff in all areas of the Centre treating young people with respect and dignity. The young people reported that staff treat them well and were observed initiating and reciprocating positive interactions with staff.

The Centre staffing contains a core group of staff with extensive experience and knowledge in the field of youth detention, this group were observed by inspectors to be positive role models to both young people and other staff. This staff group also mentor and provide on the job guidance to newly recruited staff. Inspectors are of the opinion that this experienced staff group has a significant positive contribution to the interaction style and operation of the Centre resulting in maintaining healthy and positive relationships with young people.

The Centre admission induction provided to all young people in both verbal and documented format details how they should expect to be treated by staff and how to make a complaint regarding perceived mistreatment. The complaint system provides for verbal and written complaints to the Centre. The Centre addresses all complaints it receives from young people and refers serious complaints to the Ethical Standards Unit or the Queensland Police Service.

The Centre is visited by a Community Visitor and Child Advocate from the Office of the Public Guardian which accepts both written and verbal complaints from young people.