

**Office of the Assistant Director-General
Youth Justice****Response to the Youth Detention Inspectorate September 2017
Report of Brisbane Youth Detention Centre**

Youth Justice welcomes the Youth Detention Inspectorate Report for the September 2017 quarter for the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre (BYDC).

In order for the youth justice system in Queensland to be effective in addressing the underlying causes of offending, there must be rigorous oversight mechanisms to ensure young people in detention are managed appropriately, safely and securely in accordance with the *Youth Justice Act 1992* and the *Youth Justice Regulation 2016*.

This report was delivered to the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and signed by the Director-General at the time. However, due to caretaker conventions, the 2017 State Election and Machinery of Government changes, the response to the report now falls under the responsibility to the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women.

The September 2017 BYDC quarter report made two new recommendations for BYDC and the Department's response to each of those recommendations are included.

It is worth noting two important issues that have arisen since the YDI undertook their review.

First, the number of young people in CYDC has increased. The preparedness work for the anticipated entry of 17 year olds noted by the Inspectorate has enabled the detention centre to effectively manage the recent increases.

Second, on 12 February 2018, the Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women, Di Farmer MP, reinforced the Government's commitment to historic youth justice reforms, including the transition of 17-year-olds into the youth justice system from the adult system. Due to an increased number of young people in both Cleveland and Brisbane Youth Detention Centres, the process of moving 17-year-olds currently in adult prisons to youth detention is being delayed to ensure there is sufficient capacity in detention centres to safely cater for additional people.

The Minister also announced oversight of the final implementation of reforms would be undertaken by former Police Commissioner Bob Atkinson. That work is very important and will inform future directions about detention centre capacity management, diversion and restorative justice opportunities, and strategic workforce development. This latter point aligns with the observations from the Inspectorate regarding recruitment and selection and employee retention.

As the youth justice reforms continue to roll out it is critical that the voice of young people, in detention and in the community, is heard and responded to. The work of the Inspectorate is a valued avenue of engagement with young people as well as an important oversight mechanism of our detention centres.

Youth Justice is also continuing to work actively on the implementation of the recommendations arising from the Independent Review of Youth Detention. This work complements the significant reforms Youth Justice have undertaken since 2015 in recognition that an effective youth justice system could not be determined by compliance alone but must provide real outcomes for young people that lead to positive changes in their lives which address the underlying causes of offending.

I want to thank the Youth Detention Inspectorate for their work in compiling this report for the September 2017 quarter which contributes to the effectiveness of youth detention in Queensland and ultimately provides better outcomes for young people in the youth justice system.

I also want to thank youth detention staff who work in these challenging environments on a daily basis and who are committed to improving the lives of those young people who they work with.

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Brisbane Youth Detention Centre (BYDC)

The September 2017 quarter Inspectorate report identified two recommendations for BYDC

Recommendation	Youth Justice Response
<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p><i>That the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre ensure that the planned changes to the administrative roles and responsibilities of Section Supervisors do not impair their ability to maximise their availability and visibility in unit common areas.</i></p>	<p>Accepted and complete</p> <p>Youth Justice will ensure staff are provided with the necessary training and support to deal with any issues of their role becoming administrative. Youth Justice believes that by training, empowering and upskilling Section Supervisors they will be better placed to provide leadership, coaching and mentoring to other staff providing a consistent approach to managing young people.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p><i>Youth Justice and the First Nations Action Board urgently review the current Detention Youth Worker recruitment process to ensure that physical and psychological requirements are not unduly stringent; that the process obtains towards the greatest possible intake of appropriate Indigenous and non-Indigenous applicants; and that there is a clearly measurable benefit for the cost, whether that be in quantity and/or calibre of resulting staff.</i></p>	<p>Accepted and complete</p> <p>Consultation with Youth Justice's First Nations Action Board is already occurring through the implementation of the Youth Detention Review recommendations which is providing opportunities to strengthen cultural capacity within youth detention. This includes strengthening the role of identified positions to provide cultural leadership and to increase the recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to provide better outcomes for young people in detention. Youth Justice will continue this work through the implementation of the Youth Detention Review recommendations</p>