

# Executive Summary

This is a report of quarterly statutory inspections of both the Brisbane and Cleveland Youth Detention Centres (BYDC and CYDC). The on-site inspections occurred from 6 to 10 December 2021 (CYDC) and 13 to 17 December 2021 (BYDC). Statutory detention centre inspections are conducted by delegated inspectors, located within Learning and Development, Department of Children, Youth Justice, and Multicultural Affairs (DCYJMA). This report aims to contribute to improving youth detention centre operations and will be provided to the Director-General.

Inspections conducted during the December quarter each year are to verify the progress of implementing recommendations previously made by the Inspectorate and accepted by Youth Detention Operations and Reform (YDOR) in past inspection reports. The verification process involves inspectors interviewing youth detention staff across relevant occupational groups, reviewing policies, procedures, and data, and visiting accommodation units to speak with staff and young people. The West Moreton Youth Detention Centre (WMYDC) was not included in the December 2021 inspection as there were no open recommendations requiring verification within this centre. It is noted a number of references to WMYDC have been included in the report to provide broader context of themes occurring across youth detention centres.

The status of active recommendations from previous reports are detailed in the Recommendations Registers at Appendix A. At the time of this inspection, the Inspectorate's September 2021 quarter recommendations were undergoing consultation, therefore the September 2021 quarter recommendations were not subject to verification and are not included in this report.

At the time of the December 2021 inspections, there were 35 open recommendations. Of this total, 32 were joint recommendations i.e. 16 relevant to both BYDC and CYDC, two were specific to BYDC, and one was specific to CYDC.

A total of 19 recommendations will be closed, ten relating to BYDC and nine relating to CYDC. It should be noted that although several recommendations are closing, some have been superseded by more contemporary recommendations or been adapted to acknowledge progress and reflect current system improvement needs.

## Other Observations and Issues

The Inspectorate raises observations and issues on-site during the inspection, directly with staff throughout the inspections, with the Executive Directors at the exit interviews, and with the Senior Executive Director, Office of the Senior Executive Director, YDOR at the preliminary finding's meeting. Issues are monitored through the Issues Register (Appendix B), which outlines the response action taken by centre management and/or YDOR.

At BYDC, there was one open issue from December 2019 regarding the consideration of offence history and decisions around placement of young people in particular accommodation units. This issue was reviewed, and clear strategies were identified to support decision-making however, it was recognised that competing demands, external pressures, and high numbers of young people on remand can also influence this process. As a result of the information obtained, the Inspectorate has agreed to close this issue.

At CYDC, there was one issue in progress from March 2021 relating to hygiene and cleanliness within accommodation units. This issue was reviewed and can now be closed. Units were observed to be clean, and the Inspectorate was advised professional cleaners had been engaged to ensure accommodation units maintained a level of hygiene and cleanliness.

Issues and observations raised during the December Inspection include:

#### **Recruitment of new accommodation staff**

During the inspection, the Inspectorate obtained information from a number of occupational groups within both BYDC and CYDC in relation to the centres' current recruitment processes. Feedback from Training Officers highlighted a high attrition rate of new staff during the induction process and soon after commencement in the Youth Detention Worker role. In addition, more experienced operational staff raised concerns regarding the potential safety implications and the additional pressure placed on them when multiple new inductees commence employment.

#### **Mitigating risks associated with matters referred to Professional Standards Unit (PSU)**

During the 2021 verification of Recommendation 2, September 2020 – BYDC (Complaints Records per Policy), the Inspectorate was advised of serious concerns and risks associated with the delay in finalisation of incidents referred to the department's Professional Standards Unit (PSU). The inability for YDCs to directly address identified behaviours with staff once a referral has been made, due to confidentiality and process issues, may pose potential risk to young people, staff, and the department. The Inspectorate raised this with Executive Directors and were advised this matter has been raised with PSU and the Senior Executive Director, YDOR. The Inspectorate also met with PSU and have been advised they are reviewing their processes and participate in regular discussions with YDCs to address identified issues.

#### **Dietary requirements**

During DDG consultation for the June 2021 Inspection Report, the Inspectorate was advised that concerns had been raised by a non-government organisation regarding the portion sizes of food provided to young people in YDCs. This focus area was explored in the June 2021 report and Inspectors noted the changing demographic in Queensland detention centres since legislative reform was introduced to include 17-year-olds under the *Youth Justice Act 1992*. This has resulted in an increase in the number of young people aged 17 years and over being accommodated in YDCs since reforms were implemented in 2018. In addition, there have been changes in the

cultural demographics of young people in detention centres which may warrant a review of the current dietary requirements of young people in custody.

### **Key staff unaware of open recommendations**

During the verification process, most staff interviewed stated they were not aware of the Inspectorate's open recommendations. This was raised with the EDs at both centres. The inspectorate has made a commitment to notify the EDs when Inspection Reports have been published and it will be at the discretion of the EDs to establish a process of filtering information to the relevant staff.

### **New Recommendation – Information management and record keeping processes**

During the December 2021 verification of Recommendation 2, March 2020 – BYDC and CYDC (Communication and Multi-Agency Information Sharing – Transition/Education Planning) the Inspectorate identified discrepancies in information management processes and record keeping across centres and staff.

Given these observations, the Inspectorate has closed Recommendation 2, March 2020 and opened a new recommendation to enhance record keeping processes and increase transparency of information to support young people.

### **New Recommendation – Case work processes and the role of the Detention Centre Caseworker**

During the December 2021 verification of Recommendation 2, June 2020 – BYDC and CYDC (Case Planning – Cross Agency Information Sharing), and Recommendation 1, December 2020 – BYDC and CYDC (Identifying Criminogenic Needs and Implementing Interventions), the Inspectorate identified limitations with the information contained in risk assessments and case review documents, and how assessment processes correlate to interventions and referrals to address offending behaviour.

In addition, the Inspectorate identified discrepancies between the role of the YDC caseworker as outlined in the position description and the YDC Operations Manual, and how the current role is functioning within the centres.

Given these observations, the Inspectorate has closed Recommendation 2 (June 2020) and Recommendation 1 (December 2020) and opened new recommendations to address these issues to enhance consistency and best practice within the YDCs in relation to case work processes and role clarity.

## List of closed recommendations following December inspection (BYDC)

<p><b>September 2019 - Rec 3 (Search Practice Review)</b></p> <p>The Inspectorate recommends that the centres review searching practices based on the effectiveness of current search methods as shown in the data.</p>
<p><b>March 2020 - Rec 2 (Communication and Multi-agency Information Sharing - Transition/Education Planning)</b></p> <p>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).</p>
<p><b>June 2020 - Rec 2 (Case Planning - Cross Agency Information Sharing)</b></p> <p>It is recommended that Youth Detention and Operations conduct a review of interagency and external communication methods and procedures and implement necessary changes to improve communication across agencies to ensure all relevant information can be considered in intervention and case planning for young people.</p> <p>It is further recommended that Youth Detention and Operations review youth detention centre caseworker responsibilities and practice guidelines with the goal to improve coordination and collection of information to guide more effective case planning to better support the holistic needs of young people.</p> <p>Whilst the Inspectorate acknowledges constraints within the current client information system, it is further recommended that feedback is provided to the business liaison officer for the new upcoming information system (ie Unify) regarding improvements to be made to centralised recording of confirmation and outcomes of assessments and testing (if relevant) for intervention and case planning with young people.</p>
<p><b>September 2020 - Rec 1 (Prioritisation of Video Link Court)</b></p> <p>BYDC consult with internal and external stakeholders, to develop a collaborative response to improve the process and prioritisation of video link court appearances and connection to duty lawyers prior to court.</p>
<p><b>September 2020 - Rec 2 (Complaints Records Policy)</b></p>

BYDC take necessary action to ensure record keeping and complaints categorisation is in line with policy, and that this discrepancy be monitored for the next quarter via the central monitoring and oversight process.

**September 2020 - Rec 3 (Complaints Correspondence in 'Easy English')**

As part of the existing program of work by the Senior Speech Language Pathologist, a resource guide on preparing 'Easy English' correspondence for young people be developed and available for use by the Manager Client Relations and other staff as required.

**September 2020 - Rec 4 (Section Supervisor Training and Mentoring)**

That opportunities be explored for specific Section Supervisor training modules, with a focus on leadership and role clarity, to be available on-line and in a self-paced format ensuring easy and consistent access, irrespective of staffing pressures or experience levels of supervisors. Further, as an ongoing initiative, it is recommended that section supervisors be prioritised to deliver training to new inductees as a resource-effective method for establishing a shared understanding of what is taught in inductee training and consistent application of practice.

**December 2020 - Rec 1 (Identifying Criminogenic Needs and Implementing Interventions)**

It is recommended that the identification of young peoples' criminogenic needs is enhanced through the training of detention centre caseworkers in YLS/CMI 2.0 and consultation with caseworkers in the community when case planning. It is further recommended that the ability to deliver the departments evidence-based, professionally endorsed criminogenic interventions within detention is also enhanced.

**March 21 – Rec 2 (Positive Behaviour Support Schemes)**

The current Incentives scheme within the Positive Behaviour Support Policy, Youth Detention Centre Operational Manual and any further centre specific consequence schemes implemented within each centre be reviewed by qualified practitioners to ensure they are in line with contemporary evidence.

**March 21 – Rec 4 (Therapeutic Service Delivery to Support Behaviour Management)**

Develop a strategy to increase the ability of CPT within both centres to conduct therapeutic sessions to ensure young people receive therapeutic services as intended to support behaviour management.

## List of closed recommendations following December inspection (CYDC)

<p><b>September 2018 – Rec 5 (Program and Education Attendance)</b></p> <p>The Inspectorate recommends that YDOR and CYDC devise a clear and transparent way to record program attendance in line with intended improvements to education attendance recording, and which permits individual and group data analysis of delivery and outcomes.</p>
<p><b>September 2019 - Rec 2 (Search Practice Review)</b></p> <p>The Inspectorate recommends that the centres review searching practices based on the effectiveness of current search methods as shown in the data.</p>
<p><b>March 2020 - Rec 2 (Communication and Multi-agency Information Sharing - Transition/Education Planning)</b></p> <p>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).</p>
<p><b>June 2020 - Rec 2 (Case Planning - Cross Agency Information Sharing)</b></p> <p>It is recommended that Youth Detention and Operations conduct a review of interagency and external communication methods and procedures and implement necessary changes to improve communication across agencies to ensure all relevant information can be considered in intervention and case planning for young people.</p> <p>It is further recommended that Youth Detention and Operations review youth detention centre caseworker responsibilities and practice guidelines with the goal to improve coordination and collection of information to guide more effective case planning to better support the holistic needs of young people.</p> <p>Whilst the Inspectorate acknowledges constraints within the current client information system, it is further recommended that feedback is provided to the business liaison officer for the new upcoming information system regarding improvements to be made to centralised recording of confirmation and outcomes of assessments and testing (if relevant) for intervention and case planning with young people.</p>
<p><b>September 2020 – Rec 1 (Complaints Correspondence in ‘Easy English’)</b></p> <p>As part of the existing program of work by the Senior Speech Language Pathologist, a resource guide on preparing ‘Easy English’ correspondence for young people be developed and available for use by MCRs and other staff as required.</p>
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