

Executive Summary to Inspection Report Brisbane Youth Detention Centre March quarter 2013

Inspections of Queensland's youth detentions are required by s263 of the *Youth Justice Act 1992* to be conducted quarterly. These statutory inspections are carried out by delegated Principal Inspectors within the Youth Detention Inspectorate, located within the Ethical Standards Unit.

The March quarter 2013 inspection of the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre occurred from 25 to 28 March 2013. The major focus areas were:

- young people's recreational time (a low-risk focus area as determined by the Inspectorate's risk matrix, but which had become due for review); and
- use of mechanical restraints (including leg cuff usage but nearly always handcuffs) as distinct from manual restraints techniques - in fulfilment of a recommendation of the Child Guardian's June 2012 report *Investigation into the Use of Force in Queensland Youth Detention Centres* that the Youth Detention Inspectorate conduct particular monitoring of this area.

The focus areas were evaluated against the Inspectorate's approved Expectations, derived from state and international law as well as key recommendations from relevant inquiries and committed to by governments (including the Forde Inquiry and the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody).

Other regularly-monitored areas that fell due in this inspection were:

- complaints by young people, including an examination of the volume and type of complaints, potential changes to centre processes, and the confidence of young people to use the complaints system
- the use of force more generally (of which mechanical restraints form a subset), in order to examine current and historical usage rates, local monitoring practices and upcoming changes to training packages and techniques.

The following themes and opportunities for improvement emerged from this inspection, for which recommendations were made and accepted:

- Most criteria regarding the use of force and mechanical restraints were met. A recommendation was made to improve these areas further through improved monitoring and analysis to ensure that:
 - handcuffs, in particular, are always used as a last resort, and therefore not as a standard practice to escort young people within the centre unless absolutely required for presenting safety and security reasons
 - rises in the last year of both manual and mechanical restraint usage are examined, and that close statistical scrutiny occur to prevent practice drift.

- The need to improve emergency evacuation points and routes at the Brisbane Childrens Court cells, which may involve landscaping and other building works.
- Further improvements to the complaints management system, including the ability for young people to directly correspond with the Centre Director, and to raise lower-level issues outside the more cumbersome complaints process (ideally alongside greater impetus that BYDC would give to the Young Person's Liaison Committee process).