

# Executive Summary

This is a joint report of quarterly statutory inspections of both the Brisbane and Cleveland Youth Detention Centres (BYDC and CYDC). The on-site inspections occurred from 11 to 15 March (BYDC) and 25 to 29 March (CYDC) 2019. Statutory detention centre inspections are conducted by delegated Inspectors in the Department of Youth Justice. As the issues across both detention centres shared common findings and recommendations, this is a joint report covering both inspections provided to the Director-General, which aims to contribute to improving youth detention centre operations across both centres.

The focus areas under inspection in this quarter were personal protective equipment, use of force, incident reporting (including harm reporting) and CCTV review and retention. In gathering evidence, Inspectors visited all units over the inspection week and spoke to staff and young people in each unit. Emerging issues and themes were corroborated through consultation with relevant managers and inspection of available data. The key observations, findings and recommendations in relation to the focus areas are summarised below.

## Focus Area 1 – Personal Protective Equipment

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including padded body armour and helmets with face shields can be deployed when there are projectiles or weapons being used by young people. Current policy on the use of PPE is approved for defensive use. The Inspectorate has recommended a review of policy to provide clarity and confidence in the reasonable use of PPE to efficiently resolve incidents. The Inspectorate has also recommended enhanced training for incident controllers including regular scenario-based training in the strategic use of PPE.

## Focus Area 2 – Use of Force

The Inspectorate found that youth detention staff vary in their ability to risk assess and confidently use appropriate control and restraint techniques due to a variety of factors such as length of employment, level of experience and frequency in using the techniques. In this regard, the Inspectorate has recommended using an assessment of competency to inform the frequency and individualised content of refresher training.

## Focus Area 3 – Incident Reporting (includes Harm Reporting)

The Inspectorate noted a rise in incidents at BYDC resulting from staff shortages caused by an increase in capacity to enable more young people to move from police watchhouses before scheduled staff recruitment had been completed. This results in frustration amongst young people who have to remain indoors, in their rooms or in a common area with other young people with limited opportunity for outside physical activity. The Inspectorate recommends that rotational staffing distribution be considered to increase opportunities for young people to participate in outside physical activity.

Young people from all regions are having contact in the Brisbane watchhouse and transferring between centres which increases the risk of information sharing and copied behaviour by young people who may become aware of differing security practices at BYDC/CYDC. The Inspectorate recommends the implementation of a 'Security Alert' process, whereby alerts and learnings following relevant incidents are shared between both detention centres and communicated with all staff.

The Inspectorate has confidence in the harm identification and follow-up process at both detention centres and acknowledges that all suspected harm to young people is considered by multidisciplinary teams with daily monitoring of young people and advice regularly provided to parents and guardians.

## **Focus Area 4 – CCTV Review and Retention**

The Inspectorate noted the increased capability in incident review and suicide observation compliance monitoring as a result of the BYDC CCTV upgrade and will be further enhanced following the pending roll-out of body-worn cameras at both detention centres. No recommendations are made by the Inspectorate in this focus area.

## **Other Issues**

Two further recommendations have been made outside of the focus areas. The first relates to the specialised needs of young people whose behaviours carry a high risk of harm to themselves or staff, such as mental health issues, young people experiencing disability and substance abuse. In cases where young people are assessed as suitable to be housed in a youth detention centre the Inspectorate recommends interdepartmental strategies to manage the risks associated with these behaviours.

The second issue relates to partially-clothed searching of young people. In this regard, the Inspectorate recommends the use of electronic contraband detection technology and alternative search methods and investigating potential differing application of policy between the two centres.

# List of Recommendations

## Focus Area 1 – Personal Protective Equipment and Emergency Response

### Recommendation 1

It is recommended that Youth Justice Services reviews policy and procedures to provide clarity and confidence in the reasonable minimum use of PPE to efficiently resolve incidents and ensure the safety of persons and property.

### Recommendation 2

It is recommended that following the reviews of PPE policy and procedures, Youth Justice Services considers developing new intermediate training for staff, particularly those likely to be incident controllers, with a focus on strategic use of the equipment relevant to various possible scenarios, to be delivered on a regular basis at both centres.

## Focus Area 2 – Use of Force

### Recommendation 3

It is recommended that Youth Justice Services considers delivering Protective Actions Continuum (PAC) training using an assessment of competency to inform the frequency and individualised content of PAC refresher training. The assessment may include, for example:

- Self-assessment;
- Supervisor assessment (including incident review using CCTV showing the staff member using PAC);
- One-on-one trainer assessment in which the staff member demonstrates selected PAC techniques;
- Online assessment of theoretical knowledge; and
- Data analysis: time employed, number of incidents using PAC and without using PAC, appropriate use of PAC, training undertaken.

## Focus Area 3 – Incident Reporting (includes Harm Reporting)

### Recommendation 4

The Inspectorate recommends that Youth Justice Services consider alternatives to lockdowns and restrictions on outside physical activity in response to incidents, for example, regularly rotating staff across sections every two hours to ensure each section is fully staffed on a regular rotational basis, i.e. two hours inside followed by two hours of outside activity for two to three rotations or more if possible.

### Recommendation 5

It is recommended that Youth Justice Services establish a 'Security Alert' process, whereby alerts and learnings following incidents are shared between both detention centres and communicated

with all staff, to promote awareness and the implementation of consistent security improvements across both centres. Methods of communication could include, for example, text messaging.

#### **Recommendation 6**

It is recommended that detention centre management implement increased compliance monitoring to enhance discipline and adherence to operational security processes.

### **Focus Area 4 – CCTV Review and Retention**

Nil recommendations made.

### **Other Issues**

#### **Recommendation 7**

It is recommended that Youth Justice Services, in consultation with relevant government departments, develops multi-agency strategies to respond to the needs of young people with high risk behaviours related to issues including but not limited to mental health issues, young people experiencing disability and substance misuse. This may include, for example:

- contracting the services of appropriately trained staff to work at a detention centre (when required) with young people with extreme psychological/behavioural needs;
- providing specific training in mental illness, disabilities and/or drug and alcohol related behavioural issues for staff being rostered to work with young people with these diagnoses; and
- accommodating young people with specialised needs differently from the general youth detention population, with access to education and/or programs separate from other young people.

#### **Recommendation 8**

It is recommended that Youth Justice Services investigates the potential difference in the application of policy between both detention centres in relation to partially-clothed searching of young people and implement less invasive search methods including:

- utilising the Milliwave Scanner or similar technology; and/or
- allowing young people to wear a gown when required to remove clothing for a search to ensure effective techniques can be performed without staff having to view the exposed anatomy of young people.