

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Brisbane Youth Detention Centre

June 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 June quarter 2013 inspection of the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre (BYDC) occurred from 17 to 21 June 2013. The focus areas were:

- cultural and religious needs
- facilities and environment.

Both focus areas were considered to be of lesser risk, as determined by the Inspectorate's risk matrix, but had become due for review. They were evaluated against the Inspectorate's approved Expectations, which are derived from state and international law as well as key recommendations from relevant inquiries and committed to by governments (including the Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions (Forde Inquiry) and the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody).

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

- separations of young people in locked rooms
- behaviour development plans
- operation of the Brisbane Childrens Court cells.

The following themes emerged as the most significant during this inspection:

- BYDC has a range of cultural initiatives for young people that see the centre well-placed to build these into a fully-fledged cultural program (as recommended by the Forde inquiry, and either outsourced or delivered directly by a tutor) to reduce the likelihood of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people returning to detention.
- In relation to the facilities and environment, BYDC has been consistently operating with numbers over (built) capacity for approximately one year. This has been driven by the persistence of relatively-high population of detained females — in most months from July 2012 to January 2012 they numbered in the 20s, and from February 2013 that has increased further, with recent months showing females numbering in the 30s.
- This puts added strain on BYDC to fill shifts and to pay overtime costs. Family visits for the young people and new staff training in Aggressive Behaviour Management were forced to undergo temporary cancellations after the inspection. Furthermore, Inspectors were advised that only seven staff from the last recruitment course (first quarter of 2013) remain in active employ (out a hoped-for 20-30). If this trend were to continue, the next course of new recruits due online in September may do little to

alleviate existing staffing pressures. This strain could be slightly alleviated should the department expedite the transfer of detained young females to the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre (CYDC) — on 23 July 2013, eight young females would have been eligible for transfer there from BYDC, based on current geographical boundaries.

The report makes two recommendations, both of which were accepted by the Director BYDC and the Acting Assistant Director-General, Youth Justice Services, according to their area of responsibility.