

Office of the Senior Executive Director
Youth Justice Services

Response to the Youth Detention Inspectorate March 2018 – Cleveland Youth Detention Centre

Youth Justice welcomes the March 2018 quarterly Youth Detention Inspectorate report for the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre (CYDC).

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*.

The focus areas under inspection in this quarter were security, the use of force (in particular, mechanical restraints i.e. handcuffs), the reporting of harm, relationships between staff and young people, and programs and purposeful activity.

The report makes one new recommendation and acknowledges that CYDC is performing well in the focus areas of this inspection, however, does note the high populations of children and young people coming into CYDC and those remaining in Queensland Police Service (QPS) watch houses as an ongoing concern. Youth Justice Services acknowledges this and is working with the QPS, legal stakeholders and with staff to minimise the time children and young people remain in watch houses and address bail merit where possible.

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.

As we know, youth detention can at times be volatile and challenging environments for staff who work with young people in the youth justice system. Youth Justice Services is committed to continuous improvement to ensure services evolve with contemporary best practice.

Youth Justice Services is also actively working on the implementation of the recommendations arising from the Independent Review of Youth Detention and the Cleveland Youth Detention Cultural Review.

This work complements the significant reforms Youth Justice Services 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.

I thank the Inspectorate for their important work. I also acknowledge the efforts of youth justice staff around Queensland who are helping to build a better youth justice system and improve the lives of young people.

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.

Frances Biddulph-Amaral
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