

Executive Summary to Inspection Report

Brisbane Youth Detention Centre

September quarter 2016

The Inspection of the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre (BYDC) occurred from 26 to 30 September 2016. The primary inspection focus areas were **Cultural and Religious Beliefs** and **Recreational Time**. The monitored area was **Use of Force**, which also took in an examination of Mechanical Restraints, Personal Protective Equipment, and the adequacy of CCTV coverage for reviewing incidents involving force and assaults.

In relation to Cultural and Religious Beliefs, BYDC placed evident emphasis on programs with an Aboriginal focus to cater to that significant proportion of its young people. The centre has an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group that provides advice on cultural issues and events. Members of the group felt supported by management. The centre puts on a full week of programs and festivities to celebrate the National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) week. Young people, staff and community members participate in these together. There is also regular visitation to young people by Aboriginal Elders from the Brisbane, Cherbourg and Inala communities. The Mental Health, Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Service employs three on-site Aboriginal health service workers, who were seen visiting young people in accommodation units. The centre grounds feature a yarning circle and a cultural dance area that are utilised for various events and programs. In relation to religious faith, no significant issues were identified or raised other than an opportunity to provide weekly church services on Sundays for those young people who would choose to attend.

In relation to Recreational Time, it was found that BYDC has a range of sporting and other recreational facilities on offer to young people. An opportunity was identified to increase the usage of these facilities, particularly during school holidays. At the time of the inspection the centre was running a school holiday timetable featuring a range of art-and-craft and other recreational programs, but these did not seem adequate to alleviate the level of under-activity observed by Inspectors within accommodation units. Young people themselves advised Inspectors that they would like to be taken out of their units to play sport more often.

In relation to the remaining areas, it was found that many staff at BYDC did not hold current competencies in the use of force and handcuffs. More training sessions need to be scheduled to address this. There was a range of personal protective equipment for staff to use during serious incidents, but a lack of policy, procedure and training delivery governing its usage. CCTV coverage at the centre is inadequate to properly review all incidents involving force and/or assaults, and thereby enhance the safety of staff and young people alike. There is a complete lack of surveillance cameras within the incident-prone common areas of accommodation units and also program areas.

This inspection reports makes a total of five recommendations, all of which have been accepted by BYDC and the Assistant Director-General, Youth Justice. The Inspectorate will continue to monitor the implementation of these and other recommendations.