

**Office of the Senior Executive Director
Youth Justice Services**

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

Youth Justice welcomes the March 2018 quarterly Youth Detention Inspectorate report for the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre (BYDC).

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.

Overall, the report is positive with the Inspectorate acknowledging BYDC is managing high populations of children and young people and have commended staff and the Queensland Police Service for their professionalism in managing this.

The Report makes three new recommendations which Youth Justice Services have responded in the attachment to this response.

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 Centre Incident Investigation. This work complements the significant reforms Youth Justice 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
**Acting Senior Executive Director
Youth Justice Services
Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women**

Brisbane Youth Detention Centre (BYDC)

The March 2018 quarter Inspectorate report identified three recommendations for BYDC

Recommendation	Youth Justice Services Response
<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>It is recommended that BYDC revise its not-to-mix classification process forthwith. The revised process should feature sufficient managerial oversight to ensure that only genuine and significant conflicts are captured, that further disruptions to education and centre operations are reduced to the extent possible, and that any decision to cancel school is fully transparent.</p>	<p>Accepted and in progress</p>
<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>Youth Justice investigates demand on detention centre capacity across the state to inform strategies to manage demand pressures, with the view to improving the safety and wellbeing of young people in youth detention centres and to reducing the need to hold young people in watch-houses for extended periods.</p>	<p>Accepted and in progress</p>

At the same time, Youth Justice should position the imminent rollout of the revised Behaviour Development Model towards greater rehabilitation and reintegration of young people through on- and off-centre activities and rewards in an effort to reduce returns to custody.

Recommendation 3

It is recommended that Youth Justice investigate strategies that improve recruitment, retention and work attendance at BYDC; reduce the reliance on overtime; and remove some of the current risks to young people's service delivery and safe custody.

The resulting workforce model should be developed on the same footing as the response to Recommendation 2 of this report (i.e. accounting for demand on the detention system), and the Inspectorate's previous recommendation referred to above (i.e. regarding the suitability and cultural appropriateness/capability of future applicants).

Accepted and in progress