



Inspection of Youth Custodial Services in Tasmania, 2018 - Custody Inspection report

The report into Tasmania's youth custodial system was tabled in Parliament today by the Minister for Human Services, The Hon Roger Jaensch MP.

In February 2018, a theme-based inspection of Ashley Youth Detention Centre (AYDC) was undertaken focusing on custody.

The standards relating to custody of young people in detention are directed to the treatment of young people and the conditions in which they are kept while in custody, as well as the services provided to support positive behaviour. The performance of AYDC was reviewed and assessed against the 'Inspection Standards for Youth Custodial Centres in Tasmania'.

Custodial Inspector Mr Richard Connock said that the treatment of young people at AYDC was satisfactory as were the conditions and facilities of the detention centre.

"The management of, and interactions with, young people by AYDC staff was observed at inspection to be positive and conducted with respect and politeness. Cleanliness is kept to a high standard and facilities are well maintained," he said.

“AYDC’s daily routine also places high importance on education and programs tailored to each individual addressing rehabilitation and development skills and also providing life skills. Notably, lockdowns for extended periods are rare in the facility,” he stated.

The Report contained 38 recommendations for the Department of Communities Tasmania to address.

“Reporting practices and procedures at the facility were considered to be vulnerable consisting mostly of hard copy communication which does not allow ‘real time’ reporting and makes it difficult to measure outcomes accurately. Evidence of compliance is therefore somewhat difficult and untrustworthy,” Mr Connock said.

“The inspection found that hard copy documents are open to being misplaced and there is a real risk that important documents are not being stored and maintained in a central records repository. A move towards electronic reporting is recommended to address these issues and it is hoped that changes will lead to more effective reporting and management for the centre,” he elaborated.

“The system for managing complaints by young people also needs closer attention to provide confidentiality and allow AYDC residents to make complaints without fear of discrimination, punishment or reprisal” he said.

“The lack of evidence of a drug strategy for the facility was also concerning given reports that 95% of remanded youths admit to drug use prior to admission. This is an area which requires improvement,” according to Mr Connock.

Use of force was highlighted as an area of concern and a recommendation included in the report was that Communities Tasmania ensures that all AYDC staff are up to date with training in use of force and de-escalation techniques. Deficiencies were identified with reporting in this area and Mr Connock recommended that as a priority Communities Tasmania implements processes to ensure use of force is reported and reviewed in accordance with AYDC procedures.

Similar concerns were raised regarding isolation of young people with recommendations that processes be implemented to ensure that accurate records are maintained when a young person is isolated.

Mr Connock has recommended that all use of force and isolation at AYDC be reported to the Custodial Inspector to ensure adequate independent oversight of this area.

“Furthermore, many of AYDC’s operating procedures are also well past their review date. Whilst the inspection noted overall positive behaviours at the facility, updated processes will assist in the delivery of more effective outcomes,” he said.

“Overall, AYDC and its operations met the majority of inspection standards and there is a positive sentiment towards the management and treatment of young people in the facility,” he concluded.

Custody Inspection Report

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Tasmania, 2018

August
2019



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