

Executive Summary

This is a report of second quarterly statutory inspection of the West Moreton Youth Detention Centre (WMYDC) which partially opened in December 2020 with eight beds. WMYDC has undergone a staged opening with additional accommodation sections (20 beds) becoming operational in March 2021. The last four bed section opened in May 2021 which brought the centre to its full accommodation capacity of 32 beds. The on-site inspection occurred from 1 to 3 June 2021.

Statutory detention centre inspections are conducted by delegated inspectors, located within the office of Youth Justice Statewide Services, Operations and Commissioning in the Department Children, Youth Justice, and Multicultural Affairs. This is the second report covering the inspection of WMYDC within the first six months of opening and is provided to the Director-General to advise of on-site observations during the progressing stages of operation. No recommendations are made in this report.

As WMYDC is now fully operational this the final stand alone report for the centre. Future inspection reports will cover WMYDC, plus the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre and the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre.

General

The three main cultures of young people accommodated at WMYDC are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Approx. 40%), Polynesian (Approx. 20%) and African (Approx 20%). Elders from these communities are engaged in regular communication with WMYDC staff and young people. Youth Justice Service Centre staff from Western Districts and Ipswich visit WMYDC weekly to maintain contact with young people, participate in team building exercises and facilitate transitional activities in preparation for release from detention. Youth Justice Service Centre staff have been involved in the WMYDC recruitment and office space is also available for Youth Justice Service Centre staff to work from WYMDC. WMYDC is in the planning stages for a transitional panel for young people, involving YJSC's, community elders and other services to share the responsibility for a seamless transition from detention back into the community.

Staffing

Recruitment was ongoing during the June quarter for positions including Cultural Liaison Officers, Supervisors, Youth Workers, administrative staff and middle management. Some absenteeism had occurred during May and June 2021, resulting in restricted movement of young people. This was being addressed through ongoing Youth Worker recruitment and tailoring of the staff allocation

model. The WMYDC staffing model is new and seeks to promote close collaboration and understanding between both operational and professional streams to create a seamless delivery of reintegrative and logistical functions.

Restorative Practice

Restorative practice aims to encourage open communication and understanding amongst staff and young people to resolve conflict and promote healing following incidents. The Restorative Practice Coordinator was appointed at WMYDC in May 2021 and is being supported by a Group Facilitator from the Southern Outlook to imbed restorative practice across the centre. Senior members of the community have also been engaged to repair relationships in order to reduce conflict outside of WMYDC when young people are released.

Education

During the June 2021 quarter, the Department of Education, West Moreton Education and Training Centre was providing classes for all 32 students at WMYDC. As part of the staged opening of the centre, educational facilities were still under construction, therefore, unit-based programs and education in the temporary buildings continued to be used for classes throughout Term 2. Construction of the permanent education facilities was completed on 21 June 2021 and classes will commence in these facilities in Term 3 (late July/early August 2021). The West Moreton Education and Training Centre reported the majority (72%) of students had demonstrated improvement in their reading and nil had been suspended from class.

Incidents

Data shows that the majority of the incidents recorded at WMYDC during the April-June quarter involve aggressive and/or disruptive behaviour, assaults amongst young people, program refusals and minor property damage. With the population increase from 8-32 young people from March to May 2021, incidents have increased to similar rates (in proportion to population) compared with BYDC and CYDC. Restorative practice and incident review processes aim to reduce incidents at WMYDC through enhanced communication and relationships, and operational improvements.