

Inspection of Six Youth Justice Centres in NSW report

15 December 2020

The Inspector of Custodial Services (ICS) has released a report looking at the safety and wellbeing of young people in custody, as well as the security and management of every Youth Justice centre (YJC) in New South Wales (NSW).

The *Inspection of Six Youth Justice Centres in NSW report* contains individual reports on the facilities in NSW that accommodate young people in custody aged between 10 and 21 years: Reiby; Cobham; Frank Baxter; Acmena; Orana; and Riverina. The inspection considered where centres are performing well and identified areas for improvement.

“Overall, staff were very engaged throughout the inspection process and we spoke to many staff that perform an outstanding job in challenging circumstances,” Inspector of Custodial Services, Fiona Rafter said.

“However, we also found a number of centres where staff needed additional training. It is important that YJNSW continues to invest in staff and to provide ongoing training to ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff and young people at YJCs.”

The report found that each centre has strengths and weaknesses and makes 51 recommendations aimed at improving the conditions and treatment of young people in custody and enhancing staff professional practice.

Inspections of Youth Justice centres occur every three years compared to adult custodial facilities, which are inspected every five years.

“Youth Justice centres are inspected more frequently as young people are fundamentally different from adults, and the needs of a 10 year old child are very different from those of a 17 year old or 21 year old young person,” the Inspector said.

Many young people in custody have complex behavioural needs and vulnerabilities due to their age, gender, diagnosed and undiagnosed mental health issues, drug and alcohol use, disability, cultural background, experience of trauma and neglect and lower levels of educational attainment.

The ICS was established in October 2013 to provide independent oversight of the NSW correctional system including Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) and YJNSW.

YJNSW, Justice Health & Forensic Mental Health Network and the Aboriginal Legal Service were consulted as part of the inspections.

The report is available at the following link

<https://www.inspectorcustodial.nsw.gov.au/documents/inspection-of-six-youth-justice-centres-in-NSW.pdf>

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