

## Media release

19 March 2025  
For immediate release

### **Inspector's report on Southern Queensland Correctional Centre released**

The Southern Queensland Correctional Centre inspection report prepared by the Inspector of Detention Services, was tabled by the Honourable Pat Weir MP, Speaker of the Queensland Parliament on 19 March 2025.

Under the [Inspector of Detention Services Act 2022](#) (IDS Act) the Queensland Ombudsman, Mr Anthony Reilly, is also the Inspector of Detention Services (Inspector).

Under the IDS Act, the Inspector must inspect each prison in Queensland every five years and release a report about the inspection.

The report makes 37 recommendations for areas of improvement for the women's prison. Concerns we identified during the inspection include significant waitlists for health services; lack of overnight medical care; waitlists and low completion rates for training programs; monitoring of women in the safety unit, including menstruation management; lack of consideration of human rights when separating women; majority male staff; and a non-child friendly environment for children. It also acknowledges positive practices observed during inspection.

During our inspection, the centre presented as a clean and well-maintained facility that was not overcrowded. However, the number of women detained there is increasing.

The interactions observed between the staff and the women were respectful.

Our inspection identified several other positive practices at the centre, including:

- the innovative use of an induction hub to provide the women with information about services, and make staff accessible
- use of a body scanner to reduce the number of strip searches
- an increase in employment positions available to the women and reduced waitlists for a position
- an evident commitment to enable women to have their young children with them at the centre.

Mr Reilly said it was positive to see the centre operating a separate Parental Support Unit for pregnant women, mothers and resident children.

“Keeping a young child with their mother in prison has been shown to have positive impacts on both mothers and children,” Mr Reilly said.

“Impacts, such as improved mother-child relationships, mental health, quality of life and rehabilitation, and reduced reoffending.

“There are counsellors and a playgroup, but it needs to go further, especially with the non-child friendly environment that was recorded during our inspection.

“We have made several proposals to improve these conditions, such as the installation of a shaded outdoor play area and installing cooking and washing facilities to support the women in developing their skills to support them on release.

“The inspection of the women’s prison also found the ratio of male to female staff was inequitable,” Mr Reilly said.

“The majority of staff are male, which is problematic when monitoring women who hurt themselves that are placed in the safety unit.

“Through recruitment since 1 July 2022, Queensland Corrective Services had employed 55 new officers to roles at the centre, of which 43.6% are women. While this is a positive step, it is not enough.

“We recommend that ratio should be 70% female and 30% male staff for the women’s prison.

“We have also identified concerns with the management of female prisoners when placed in the safety and detention units and recommended trauma and mental health training for staff.

“Due to the high representation of First Nations women at the centre, nearly half the prisoners at the centre are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, we recommend a recruitment strategy for First Nations staff and a new role.

“Our aim is always the humane treatment of prisoners and the prevention of harm, and we expect the agencies involved to reflect on the recommendations of this report to improve conditions at the women’s prison.”

### **About the Inspector of Detention Services**

The Queensland Ombudsman and Inspector of Detention Services is an independent officer of the Parliament. Staff from the Office of the Queensland Ombudsman support the Inspector’s functions under the IDS Act.

The goal of the IDS Act is promoting the humane treatment of detainees and the prevention of harm through reviews, inspections and independent reporting.

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