

Appendix C: Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service submission

Enquiries to: Office of the Chief Executive
Telephone: 4226 3205



Cairns and Hinterland
Hospital and Health Service

Anthony Reilly
Queensland Health Ombudsman and
Inspector of Detention Services
Email: Inspector@ombudsman.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Reilly

Thank you for your letter dated 10 July 2024, in relation to the program of inspections under s8(1)(b) of the *Inspector of Detention Services Act 2022*, focussed on children in watch-houses for longer than 24 hours, and in particular the draft inspection report in relation to the Cairns and Murgon watch-houses.

The Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service (CHHHS) are fully committed to ensuring the care we provide to all persons within the watch house is of a high standard and meets their needs.

In relation to the recommendations pertaining to health based services contained in the report, I would like to provide an update on the progress made in some of the areas within the health sphere of influence.

CHHHS have recently updated the procedures and protocols in place for mental health in-reach to the Cairns watch-house. These procedures and protocols have had feedback and curation by our staff and relevant stakeholders in response to concerns raised recently around the care of young people in custody. The improvements that we have made which will address some of the issues raised in the report include:

- A review of group communication strategies to ensure confidentiality and privacy but also optimise outcomes for young people in the Cairns Watchhouse.
- Prior to attendance at the watch-house new employees undergo orientation training to the service in relation to cultural practice, trauma informed care and employee self-care.
- In addition, Mental Health services have improved clinical governance with the appointment of a Child and Youth Forensic Outreach Service (CYFOS) Team Leader.

It is important to note, that CHHHS only provides mental health assessment and care within the Watchhouse, not general health services. The Queensland Police Service directly engage agency nurses to provide general healthcare for the incumbents of the watch house.

We note within the report you make reference to delays with respect to mental health intervention of

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young people. I can confirm that CHHHS has a responsive model once a referral is made. The model utilised by the mental health team is by referral from the initial risk assessment through the watch-house, Youth Empowered Towards Independence (YETI), Youth Justice or other agencies. The mental health team are only able to respond once a referral is received and as such I would request that the emphasis be placed on ensuring an adequate and timely referral to CHHHS is highlighted in the report.

In terms of the recommendation of placing a 24/7 nurse at the watch-house, the Queensland Police Service should consider into their decision-making whether the nurse would support general healthcare or general healthcare and mental health combined support model.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft report, CHHHS remains very committed to ensuring an exemplary mental health service is provided to our young people. Should you require any further information to the feedback provided, I have arranged for [REDACTED] Chief Operating Officer, on telephone 4226 8679, to be available to assist you.

Yours sincerely



Leena Singh
Chief Executive
Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service
07 / 08 / 2024