

Appendix B: Department of Education submission

20 MAY 2024

Mr Anthony Reilly
Queensland Ombudsman and
Inspection of Detention Services
Email: inspector@ombudsman.qld.gov.au



Office of the
Director-General

Department of
Education

Dear Mr Reilly

Thank you for your letter dated 24 April 2024 providing the Department of Education (DoE) with the opportunity to comment on the Draft Cleveland Youth Detention Centre inspection report: the use and effects of separation.

I appreciate the work you and your team have undertaken during the inspection and preparation of the draft report, particularly your efforts to ensure the rights of children in detention centres to access education services are upheld.

DoE suggests the following clarifications be considered to more accurately reflect existing operational processes:

- At page 35, the draft report currently states that: *A 48-week school year has been introduced at all youth detention centres (compared to a 41-week school year in Queensland state schools) to provide more opportunity for education and programs to be delivered to children.*
 - It is suggested the report notes that Queensland state schools generally operate across a 40-week school year. While the 2024 school year extends to 41 weeks, this represents an exception due to the scheduling of school terms and holidays across the 2024 calendar.
- The discussion of school attendance at page 35 notes that: *However, on the days children can attend school, very few attend for a full day (that is, all four sessions of school).*
 - It is suggested the report acknowledges that in addition to the impact of separations and segregations, existing physical infrastructure at the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre is not sufficient to enable all students to attend four sessions a day, particularly when the Centre is operating at or near the extent of its physical capacity. Students may also be unable to attend education sessions due to a range of competing demands, such as the provision of therapeutic support, medical treatment, meetings with case workers, court attendance or meetings with legal representatives.
- The report also notes at page 36 that: *We were advised by school staff that the Department of Education is willing and able to fund an officer to help with escorting children to the school, to reduce the impact of separation on their education.* Recommendation 19 subsequently states that: *The department identifies (with the centre's school) how best to use a Department of Education funded officer to improve children's access to support from teachers in their education activities.*

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- DoE will continue to work with the Department of Youth Justice (DYJ) to support improved access to the education program; however, notes that responsibility for escorting young persons to and from the education program would be expected to remain as the responsibility of officers from DYJ. This is consistent with the existing interdepartmental *Memorandum of Understanding for Education Delivery in Queensland Youth Detention Centres 2021–26*, in which Youth Justice officers are responsible for ensuring that each young person held in the detention centre has access to the education program.

If you require further information of assistance, please contact Ms Kathy Morrison, School Supervisor, Alternative Learning and Detention Centres, on 0451 152 523 or by email at kathy.morrison@ged.qld.gov.au.

I trust this information is of assistance and look forward to working with you to ensure that children in youth detention have the opportunity to achieve their potential.

Yours sincerely



MICHAEL DE'ATH
Director-General

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