

MEDIA RELEASE

15 December 2010

REPORT OF AN ANNOUNCED INSPECTION OF RANGEVIEW REMAND CENTRE

Keeping young people out of custody has to be a key focus as the Department of Corrective Services develops its new model for youth justice services according to the latest report from the Inspector of Custodial Services.

'Despite some important initiatives to reduce the number of unnecessary remands, we saw record high numbers of young people being held in custody earlier this year. Rangeview reached an all-time population peak of 96 detainees on 20 May 2010. Given the physical conditions and available resources, the appropriate population for the Centre would be closer to 60,' Inspector Neil Morgan said.

'It is troubling that, as the President of the Children's Court has pointed out, many of these young people are being held in custody for very short periods of time and are in fact released as soon as their cases reach the court. Holding young people for such short periods presents serious problems for the management of the Centre and involves a questionable use of public resources. And it is not in the best interests of any young person to be exposed to the custodial system unless this is absolutely necessary'.

The numbers held at Rangeview have subsequently declined and the Inspector applauded a number of strategic developments that should help to further reduce the number of cases of avoidable detention. They include significant extra resources for the supervised bail program and the allocation of \$43.9 million over the next four years to establish Youth Justice Service initiatives in the Pilbara and Kimberley regions.

Overshadowing the inspection was the spectre of the closure of the centre as a youth custody centre in late 2011 and the accommodation of all young people at Banksia Hill. The Inspector is adamant that a number of matters identified in the report should not be left unaddressed because of the move.

'Generally speaking, the young people at Rangeview are both high risk and high need. That is why they are there. We found that there are opportunities to develop more structured and integrated models of case management. Ideally the young person's health, mental health, education and program needs should be wrapped up in a more holistic way, with better links back into community-based services and programs on release. Any work that is undertaken to develop a more coordinated model can then be used when the remandees move to the remodelled Banksia Hill in 2011.'

The report also identified several other areas for improvement, including reducing the unacceptable levels of graffiti, improving some aspects of security and staff training, working to increase the amount of community input to the Centre, and reducing the number of times at which the young people are locked down.

'The Department has accepted most of the recommendations in the report, and we look forward to significant progress as the new model for youth justices services is implemented,' Professor Morgan said.

Neil Morgan

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Neil Morgan will be available for comment from 12 noon on Wednesday 15 December and can be contacted on **9212 6200**

The full Report will be available on the Inspector's website (www.oics.wa.gov.au)