

Inspector of
Custodial Services

Inspector of Custodial Services

Unannounced Inspections of Six Youth
Justice Centres (2025)

Acknowledgement of Country

The Inspector of Custodial Services acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and live. We celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of NSW.

We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that contributed to the development of this report.

We advise this resource may contain images, or names of deceased persons in photographs or historical content.

Inspector of Custodial Services

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Inspector's overview

The Inspector of Custodial Services (ICS) is required to inspect all New South Wales youth justice centres at least once every three years, in accordance with Section 6 (1)(b) of the *Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2012*.

This is the fifth report concerning youth justice centres, and the first time we have completed unannounced inspections of all six youth justice centres (YJCs).¹ This report provides an analysis of key data related to the youth justice system, as well as an overview of the unannounced inspection of each centre, including the health services delivered at each centre. The individual centre reports include an assessment of whether the recommendations addressed to individual centres in our last two reports have been implemented.

I was extremely impressed by centre managers and staff, who responded positively to the unannounced inspections. I also found the Youth Justice NSW (YJNSW) executive to be responsive to issues identified during the unannounced inspections. Many of the recommendations in this report have been implemented or implementation is underway. It is acknowledged that the implementation of some recommendations will require budget enhancements.

The first two youth justice reports were thematic inspections that addressed a specific issue.² The last two reports involved inspections of individual YJCs.³ In contrast to our earlier thematic inspections, the third and fourth inspections focused on all areas of operation of the six YJCs. The last inspection report was tabled in March 2024 and made fifty recommendations. Forty eight of the recommendations were directed to Youth Justice NSW (YJNSW), and two recommendations were directed to Justice Health & Forensic Mental Health Network (JH&FMHN).

I wish to acknowledge the significant work that YJNSW has undertaken to implement recommendations from our earlier reports.⁴ A full list of the recommendations can be found in Appendix 3 of this report. This includes the suite of reforms being undertaken across YJNSW to try to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal young people in custody. These include:

- The Youth Justice Strategic Plan (aligned with Closing The Gap priority reforms)
- Youth Justice Anti-Racism Plan
- Youth Justice Aboriginal Employment Plan
- Aboriginal Practice Mandate⁵

Change is evident across YJNSW. Despite this, the incarceration rate of Aboriginal young people remains high (59.8%), as is the number of young people on remand (71.8%).⁶ Young people in YJCs are predominantly Aboriginal,⁷ known to child protection and out of home care (OOHC) services⁸ and have multiple disabilities and complex needs.⁹

Youth Justice staff perform a difficult job and must use restrictive practices at times to keep young people and staff safe. Some young people are violent and dangerous and pose a risk to other young

1 We have previously conducted unannounced visits and announced inspections.

2 Inspector of Custodial Services (NSW), *Making Connections: providing family and community support to young people in custody* (Report, 2015); Inspector of Custodial Services (NSW), *Use of force, separation, segregation and confinement in NSW juvenile justice centres* (Report, November 2018).

3 Inspector of Custodial Services (NSW), *Inspection of Six Youth Justice Centres in NSW* (Report, December 2020); Inspector of Custodial Services (NSW), *Inspection of Six Youth Justice Centres in NSW 2022* (Report, March 2024).

4 Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspector of Custodial Services Annual Report 2024-25* (Report, October 2025).

5 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 29 January 2026.

6 NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, *New South Wales Custody Statistics Quarterly Update* (June 2025).

7 NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, *New South Wales Custody Statistics Quarterly Update* (June 2025).

8 Baidawi S and Sheehan R, *Cross-over kids: Effective responses to children and young people in the youth justice and statutory Child Protection systems* (Report to the Criminology Research Advisory Council, December 2019).

9 Eileen Baldry, Damon B. Briggs, Barry Goldson and Sophie Russell; 'Cruel and unusual punishment: an inter-jurisdictional study of the criminalisation of young people with complex support needs' (2018) 21(5) *Journal of Youth Studies*, 636-652; Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Young people in child protection and under youth justice supervision: 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2017* (October 2018); Stewart Boiteux and Suzanne Poynton, 'Offending by young people with disability' (Crime and Justice Bulletin No 254, NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, January 2023).

people and staff. We note the increase in the numbers of assaults by young people on other young people and staff. Some young people pose a risk to themselves. Although overall there has been a reduction in the use of restrictive practices, we have highlighted where centres are not in alignment with the overall trend and require ongoing monitoring and intervention.

While it is acknowledged that YJNSW has implemented many of the recommendations from our previous reports, there remains some long standing issues (identified in earlier reports) that still require attention. They are addressed throughout the report and include the following:

- increasing time out of room
- implementing body worn cameras in all YJCs
- provision of new underwear
- improving complaints processes
- improving misbehaviour and punishment practices so they comply with legislation
- improving staff training, recruitment and retention
- closing old accommodation units (Tandarra and Taralga) and holding cells at Cobham YJC.

I would like to acknowledge the assistance provided by all YJNSW employees and JH&FMHN staff during the inspection. Assistance from the principals and teachers at each YJC also warrants our appreciation. I would also like to thank our consultants, former ACT Inspector of Correctional Services Neil McAllister, and our health consultant, Ms Michelle Eason, for her expertise in health service delivery in custodial settings and her contribution to all six inspections.

Fiona Rafter
Inspector of Custodial Services

Glossary of terms and acronyms

Aboriginal	'Aboriginal' when used in this report is inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
Act	<i>Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987</i> (NSW)
APO	Aboriginal Practice Officer
AVL	Audio-visual link –often used for court appearances
BAP	Behaviour Assistance Pathways Plan
CAM	Client assessment meeting occurs on a weekly basis in all youth justice centres and give young people an opportunity to review their progress and achievements from the previous week, identify problem areas and establish new or re-assess current target behaviours and goals for the coming week. The weekly incentive scheme is facilitated through the CAM.
CCTV	Closed circuit television
CIMS	Client information management system (YJNSW)
Child	See 'young people' below.
Confinement	Section 21(1)(d) of the <i>Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987</i> provides that one of the punishments that may be imposed on a detainee found guilty of misbehaviour is exclusion from, or confinement to, a place for a period not exceeding 12 hours, or in the case of a detainee of or over the age of 16 years, not exceeding 24 hours.
Control s19	A young person sentenced pursuant to section 19 of the <i>Children (Criminal Proceedings) Act 1987</i> .
Country	Country is the term often used by Aboriginal peoples to describe the lands, waterways and seas to which they are connected.
CSM	Client Services Meeting (YJC)
Detainee	Young people/person
DRC	Detainee Representative Committee (YJC)
DRMP	Detainee Risk Management Plan
EPIC incentive scheme	A token economy system that encourages positive behaviour and achievement of individualised goals. It is a system of recognising, encouraging, and rewarding young people for their positive behaviour and addressing and reducing instances of problematic and challenging behaviour - there is no specific reference to 'EPIC' in the Act or Regulation.
ETU	Education and Training Unit –the school in a YJC.
Holding room	A room where young people may be taken when placed in separation, segregation or confinement. Holding rooms may be in accommodation units, or in a separate part of the centre (such as within the admissions area).
HRU	High Risk Unit. There is a HRU at Cobham YJC and Frank Baxter YJC.
HRYORP	High risk young offender review panel oversees the management of all young people placed in an HRU.
ICS	Inspector of Custodial Services
ICS Act	<i>Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2012</i> (NSW)

Identified position	Identified positions are positions where an employer may identify that a position is to be filled only by a person with a particular attribute. This might mean an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander applicant, a person with a disability, a person of a particular sex or a person of a particular age.
Inspection	Section 6, ICS Act: The principal functions of the Inspector are as follows – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) to inspect each custodial centre (other than juvenile justice centres and juvenile correctional centres) at least once every 5 years, (b) to inspect each juvenile justice centre and juvenile correctional centre at least once every 3 years.
JH&FMHN	Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network
Regulation	<i>Children (Detention Centres) Regulation 2015 (NSW)</i>
Restraints	Mechanical devices such as handcuffs, ankle cuffs, body belts
Restrictive practices	In the context of youth justice this refers to restricting a child or young person's freedom. This generally refers to the use of force, use of restraints, use of confinement, separation, segregation or isolation.
Segregation	Section 19 of the Act provides that a detainee may be placed in segregation to protect the personal safety of that or any other detainee, or of any other person – this may include confinement to a room.
Separation	Section 16 of the Act provides for detainees or groups of detainees to be detained separately from other detainees for the purposes of ensuring the security, safety and good order of a detention centre – this may include confinement to a room.
Stage	Young people are given a rating from Stages 1 to 4, dependant on their behaviour, with each higher stage attracting more incentives – there is no specific reference to 'Stages' in the Act or Regulation.
SYORP	Serious Young Offenders Review Panel (Schedule 1A of the Act)
UoF	Use of force (c65 of the Regulation)
UoFRP	Use of Force Review Panel (YJNSW)
VET	Vocational education and training programs
Work party	Work party provides an alternative to school for older young people and generally involves grounds and general maintenance and horticulture work within the compounds of the centre (s18 of the Act).
YJC	Youth Justice Centre (NSW)
YJNSW	Youth Justice NSW
Young people or person	The Act (Section 3) refers to various "categories" of people in youth custody: 'child', 'detainee', 'older detainee', 'person on remand', 'person subject to control', 'serious young offender'. For ease of reference, ICS uses 'young people or person' unless we need to be specific about a category such as remand.

Recommendations

The Inspector recommends:

1. Youth Justice NSW establish a central reporting system for children and young people's actual out of room hours.
2. Youth Justice NSW provide a clear definition of 'restriction in leisure activities' referred to in Section 21(1)(b) of the *Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987* NSW with particular reference to what is a leisure activity, what does 'restriction' mean and whether a restriction includes confinement to a place.
3. Youth Justice NSW ensures Acmena Youth Justice Centre cease the practice of recording a 'loss of leisure' punishment when they are confining children and young people to their room, and ensure they record the punishment as confinement.
4. Youth Justice NSW ensure that young people are afforded their rights under Section 20 of the *Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987* regarding allegations of misbehaviour.
5. Youth Justice NSW develop a simplified version of the *Guidelines: Managing Client Feedback and Complaints* for youth officers.
6. Youth Justice NSW establish a secure system to allow children and young people to make confidential complaints direct to their centre manager.
7. Youth Justice NSW ask each Aboriginal child or young person if they wish to nominate their Country and if nominated, the Country must be recorded on the Client Information Management System.
8. Youth Justice NSW establishes an Elders Program for YJNSW and provides remuneration to Elders engaged to visit Youth Justice centres.
9. Youth Justice NSW implement evidence-based nutrition standards and menus for youth justice centres that align with Australian Dietary Guidelines, in collaboration with Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network. The standards should address all aspects of food provision and access, including routine meals, special diets, buy-ups, portion control and fast food.
10. Youth Justice NSW use body scanners and cease the practice of requiring young people to change into adult maximum security prison-type overalls to attend visits.
11. Youth Justice NSW review the selection process for youth officers with regard to psychological assessments relevant to working with young people in custody, and provide a more extensive period of pre-service training with a focus on the special characteristics and needs of young people.
12. Youth Justice NSW ensure that youth officers are routinely equipped with body worn cameras when dealing with children and young people in custody, subject to robust training, policies and procedures being in place.
13. Youth Justice NSW upgrade Youth Justice Centre room intercom systems to enable recording and date/time stamping of calls.

Acmena YJC

14. Youth Justice NSW reduce high levels of use of force and restraints in Acmena Youth Justice Centre.

15. Youth Justice NSW ensures Acmena Youth Justice Centre acknowledges Traditional Custodians of the Grafton region and encourage engagement with the local Aboriginal community.
16. Youth Justice NSW ensures all staff at Acmena Youth Justice Centre complete ongoing cultural competency training and engage with the local Aboriginal community to maintain awareness of local Aboriginal issues.
17. Youth Justice NSW implement cultural programs that include Aboriginal history for children and young people detained at Acmena Youth Justice Centre.
18. Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network strengthen its partnership with the local Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS) to support delivery of culturally appropriate and connected health care for young people at Acmena Youth Justice Centre, and as they return to the community.

Frank Baxter YJC

19. Youth Justice NSW appoint an identified position at Frank Baxter Youth Justice Centre to support the Aboriginal practice officer and promote a cultural agenda at the centre.
20. Youth Justice NSW ensures Frank Baxter Youth Justice Centre acknowledge Traditional Custodians of the Gosford region and encourage engagement with the local Aboriginal community.
21. Youth Justice NSW implement cultural programs that include Aboriginal history for children and young people detained at Frank Baxter Youth Justice Centre.
22. Youth Justice NSW ensure all staff at Frank Baxter Youth Justice Centre complete ongoing cultural competency training and engage with the local Aboriginal community to maintain awareness of local Aboriginal issues.
23. Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network strengthen its partnership with the local Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS) to support delivery of culturally appropriate and connected health care for young people at Frank Baxter Youth Justice Centre, and as they return to the community.

Cobham YJC

24. Youth Justice NSW retire (close) the Tandarra and Taralga units at Cobham Youth Justice Centre.
25. Youth Justice NSW ensures Cobham Youth Justice Centre implements a system to inform Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network after every use of force.

Orana YJC

26. Youth Justice NSW refurbish Orana Youth Justice Centre.

Reiby YJC

27. Youth Justice NSW review its criteria for placing young people in the Reiby Youth Justice Centre Waratah Pre-Release Program with the aim of maximising program participation.
28. Youth Justice NSW ensure Reiby Youth Justice Centre conduct annual training of youth officers in accordance with the (Youth Justice NSW) Use of Force, Protective Equipment and Instruments of Restraint Policy.

29. Youth Justice NSW ensures Reiby Youth Justice Centre acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the local region and encourage engagement from the Dharawal, Darug and Gandangurra Aboriginal community.
30. Youth Justice NSW ensures Reiby Youth Justice Centre allows Aboriginal children and young people from urban, regional, and remote areas and different language groups to attend programs and activities tailored to meet the needs of individuals and access the Yarning Circle.
31. Youth Justice NSW ensure all staff at Reiby Youth Justice Centre complete ongoing cultural competency training and engage with the local Aboriginal community to maintain awareness of local Aboriginal issues.

Riverina YJC

32. Youth Justice NSW implement a statewide policy on personal property that young people can keep in their rooms with particular attention to purchased food, drinks and toiletries.
33. The Inspector recommends that this report is made public immediately upon being tabled in NSW Parliament, in accordance with section 16(2) of the *Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2012*.

1 Introduction

1.1 The Powers and Functions of the Inspector of Custodial Services

The Inspector of Custodial Services (ICS) was established in October 2013 by the *Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2012* (the ICS Act). The mandate of the office is to provide independent scrutiny of the conditions, treatment and outcomes of people in custody, and to promote excellence in staff professional practice. The ICS is required to inspect all New South Wales YJCs at least once every three years, in accordance with Section 6 (1)(b) of the *Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2012* and report on each inspection to the NSW Parliament with relevant advice and recommendations.

The powers of the Inspector are set out in section 7 of the ICS Act¹⁰, which provides:

The Inspector in the exercise of the Inspector's functions:

- a. Is entitled to full access to the records of any custodial centre (including health records) and may make copies of, or take extracts from, those records and may remove and retain those copies or extracts,
- b. May visit and examine any custodial centre at any time the Inspector thinks fit, and
- c. May require custodial centre staff members to supply information or produce documents or other things relating to any matter, or any class or kind of matters, concerning a custodial centre's operations, and
- d. May require custodial centre staff members to attend before the Inspector to answer questions or produce documents or other things relating to a custodial centre's operations, and
- e. May refer matters relating to a custodial centre to other appropriate agencies for consideration or action, and
- f. Is entitled to be given access to persons in custody, detained or residing at any custodial centre for the purpose of communicating with them.

1.2 The inspections

This report is one of the required three-year inspections of NSW YJCs. Earlier reports can be viewed via the ICS website.¹¹

The Inspector conducted onsite inspections of the six YJCs in New South Wales on the following dates in Table 1.

Table 1: Inspection dates

Centre	Dates
Acmena YJC	31 March – 2 April 2025
Reiby YJC	14 – 16 April 2025
Riverina YJC	5 – 7 May 2025
Orana YJC	7 – 9 May 2025

¹⁰ *Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2012* s 7.

¹¹ Inspector of Custodial Services, 'Youth reports' (Web Page, 27 October 2025) <<https://inspectorcustodial.nsw.gov.au/reports-and-publications/inspection-reports/youth-reports.html>>.

Cobham YJC	22 – 24 May 2025
Frank Baxter YJC	26 – 28 May 2025

The inspection team consisted of the Inspector, a Principal Inspection and Research officer and the Aboriginal Inspection and Liaison officer. An external consultant with a clinical background in custodial health settings was engaged to accompany the inspection team and assist with the inspection of health services in each centre. The former ACT Inspector of Correctional Services was also engaged to assist with all six inspections.

1.3 Methodology

It was not intended that this inspection would replicate the detail of the 2020 and 2022 inspections, rather it was aimed at assessing whether YJCs had implemented previous ICS recommendations and a spot-check on each centre to see how they were performing on an ordinary day. Unlike most inspections conducted by the ICS (pre-announced) the six YJCs did not know about the inspection until we “knocked on the door”.

The inspection methodology involved:

- analyses of centre data and information from YJNSW and JH&FMHN
- onsite inspections of the six YJCs (including health centres)
- interviews with YJNSW staff, young people (individually and in small groups) and relevant stakeholders including, NSW Department of Education staff, and JH&FMHN staff.
- observation of centre practices and routines
- review of relevant YJC registers and records, incident reports, and CCTV footage (if necessary)
- review of relevant legislation, policy and literature .

The inspection considered sensitive information and methodologies. In accordance with section 15 of the ICS Act, the Inspector must not disclose information in a report to Parliament if there is an overriding public interest against disclosure of the information.¹² This is where there are public interest considerations against disclosure and, on balance, those considerations outweigh the public interest considerations in favour of disclosure.¹³ Section 15(3) of the ICS Act provides that there are public interest considerations against disclosure of information if disclosure of the information could reasonably be expected to have one or more of the following effects:

- a. prejudice the supervision of, or facilitate the escape of, any person in lawful custody or detention
- b. prejudice the security, discipline or good order of any custodial centre
- c. prejudice national security (within the meaning of the *National Security Information (Criminal and Civil Proceedings) Act 2004*)
- d. reveal or tend to reveal the identity of an informant or prejudice the future supply of information from an informant
- e. identify or allow the identification of a person who is or was detained at a juvenile justice centre or in custody in a juvenile correctional centre
- f. endanger, or prejudice any system or procedure for protecting, the life, health or safety of any person who is in custody, detained or residing at a custodial centre (including but not limited to systems or procedures to protect witnesses and other persons who may be separated from other persons at the centre for their safety)

¹² *Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2012* s 15(1).

¹³ *Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2012* s 15(2).

- g. identify or allow the identification of a custodial centre staff member or endanger, or prejudice any system or procedure for protecting, the life, health or safety of such a staff member.

A draft report or relevant parts thereof were provided to YJNSW and JH&FMHN, in accordance with section 14(2) of the ICS Act. Submissions were received from YJNSW, and JH&FMHN. In accordance with section 14(1) of the ICS Act, the Inspector provided the Minister for Youth Justice, the Hon. Mr Jihad Dib with the opportunity to make a submission in relation to the draft report. In accordance with section 14(3)(b) of the ICS Act, each submission and the Minister’s response was considered before the finalisation of the report for tabling.

1.4 Key issues

1.4.1 NSW Youth Justice population

Figure 1: NSW youth custodial population by quarter July 2023 - June 2025¹⁴

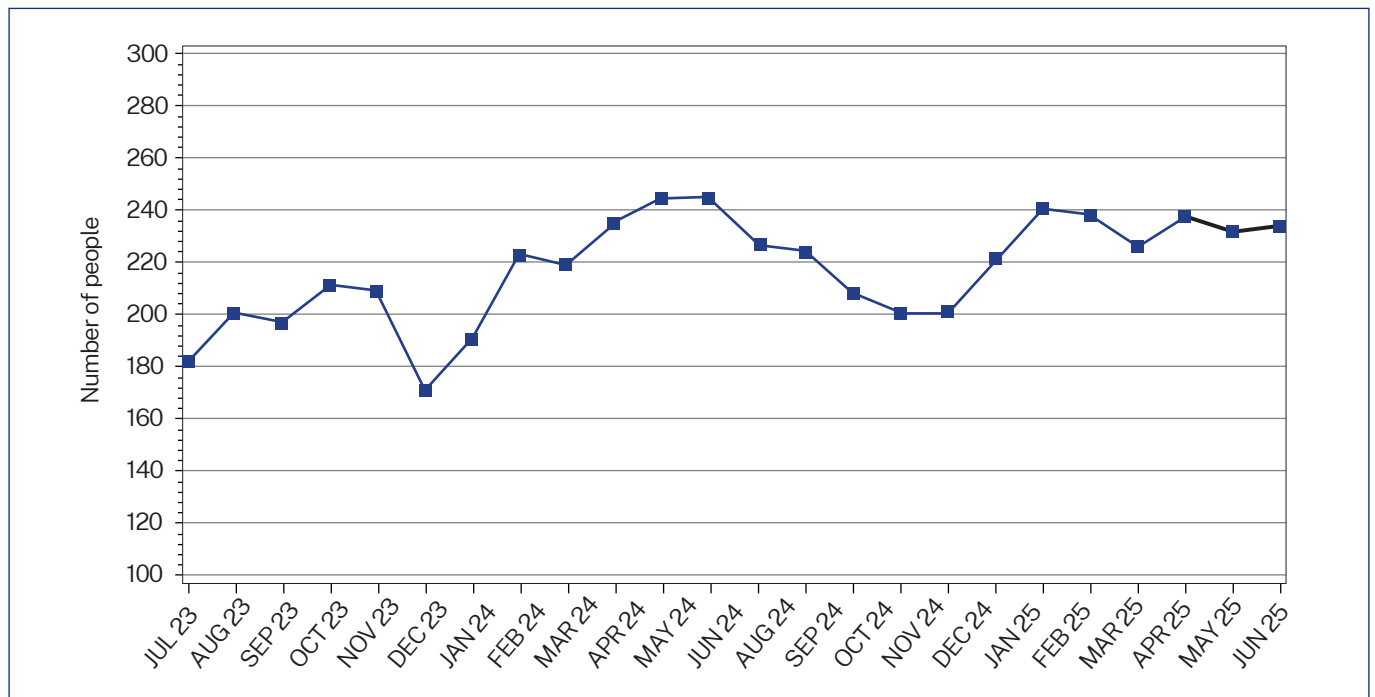


Table 2: Average daily populations by detainee status 2021-22 to 2024-25¹⁵

Financial year	Detainee status	Average daily population		
		Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Unknown
2021/2022	Control	18	18	0
	Control s19	3	15	0
	Remand	63	65	2
2022/2023	Control	25	15	0
	Control s19	1	16	1
	Remand	76	57	0

¹⁴ Data provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

¹⁵ Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 25 March 2025.

2023/2024	Control	22	12	0
	Control s19	6	12	1
	Remand	97	57	1
2024/2025	Control	28	11	0
	Control s19	8	15	1
	Remand	97	62	2

Table 3: Average days spent on remand 2021-22 to 2024-25¹⁶

Financial year	Average days		
	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Unknown
2021/2022	13.6	17.8	10.5
2022/2023	14.5	18.0	8.6
2023/2024	17.4	13.9	1.6
2024/2025	18.8	13.0	1.6

Table 4: Average days on remand before grant of bail 2021-22 to 2024-25¹⁷

Financial year	Average days		
	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Unknown
2021/2022	9.2	7.3	2.7
2022/2023	9.2	7.1	8.9
2023/2024	11.2	6.3	1.1
2024/2025	10.4	5.3	1.3

Table 5: Admissions by age 10-13 years 2021-22 to 2024-25¹⁸

Financial year	Age	Admissions		
		Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Unknown
2021/2022	10 years	1	0	0
	11 years	1	12	2
	12 years	35	29	0
	13 years	116	72	5
2022/2023	10 years	13	0	0
	11 years	33	6	0
	12 years	111	39	0
	13 years	172	108	3
2023/2024	10 years	4	0	0
	11 years	16	1	0
	12 years	86	47	1
	13 years	205	138	2

¹⁶ Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 25 March 2025.

¹⁷ Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 25 March 2025.

¹⁸ Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 25 March 2025.

2024/2025	10 years	1	0	0
	11 years	11	0	0
	12 years	59	33	3
	13 years	204	157	10

Table 6: Average days on remand age 10-13 years 2021-22 to 2024-25¹⁹

Financial year	Age	Average days		
		Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Unknown
2021/2022	10 years	8.7	0.0	0.0
	11 years	0.9	1.0	0.5
	12 years	2.1	1.4	0.0
	13 years	7.3	10.6	0.6
2022/2023	10 years	4.8	0.0	0.0
	11 years	5.8	13.9	0.0
	12 years	3.7	2.4	0.0
	13 years	7.3	3.9	1.8
2023/2024	10 years	0.6	0.0	0.0
	11 years	3	0.5	0.0
	12 years	4.3	3.4	0.7
	13 years	7.0	6.2	0.5
2024/2025	10 years	3.3	0.0	0.0
	11 years	10.8	0.0	0.0
	12 years	4.6	1.1	0.7
	13 years	6.2	3.9	2.0

General comment on the tables above

The data provided by YJNSW in Tables 2 to 6 shows that the youth justice population increased between July 2023 and June 2025. The average daily population of Aboriginal children in custody climbed and the number of non-Aboriginal children in custody remained relatively static. The data shows that Aboriginal young people generally spend longer on remand now than non-Aboriginal young people and spend longer on remand before being granted bail.

Of concern, Aboriginal children aged ten years are still being remanded in custody. No non-Aboriginal children aged ten years were remanded in custody. The data shows that higher numbers of Aboriginal children aged 11, 12 and 13 years were remanded in custody than non-Aboriginal children.

The most recent NSW Bureau of Crime and Statistics Research report shows that in December 2025, 225 young people were in detention in NSW, an increase of 51 young people (29.3%) since December 2023, but unchanged from December 2024. The majority of young people in detention were on remand (75.6%) and over the two years to December 2025, the number of young people on remand increased by 39, a 29.8% rise from December 2023. Of those detained on 31 December 2025, 127 were Aboriginal, representing 56.4% of the youth detention population.²⁰

¹⁹ Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 25 March 2025.

²⁰ NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, *New South Wales Custody Statistics Quarterly Update*, (September 2025 to December 2025).

1.4.2 Calculating time out of rooms for young people

ICS Standard 9.8: Young people should have a minimum 10 hours out of room each day, including at least one hour in the open air.²¹

In response to our request for time out of room data we received centre routines. Time out of room has been calculated from the centre routines provided.

Table 7: YJC out of room hours May 2024

(Days of 10+ hours highlighted in green)

(A) Acmena YJC

Centre	Stage*		Total Time out of Room
Acmena YJC	Standard Bed time	Mon/Tue/ Thu/Fri	9hr 35mins
		Wed (School)	8hr 20mins
		Wed (Holidays)	6hr 20mins
		Sat/Sun/PH	7hr 15mins
	Stage 1	Mon/Tue/ Thu/Fri	10hr 05mins
		Wed (School)	8hr 50mins
		Wed (Holidays)	6hr 50mins
		Sat/Sun/PH	7hr 45 mins
	Stage 2	Mon/Tue/ Thu/Fri	10hr 35mins
		Wed (School)	9hr 20mins
		Wed (Holidays)	7hr 20mins
		Sat/Sun/PH	8hr 15mins
	Stage 3	Mon/Tue/ Thu/Fri	11hr 05mins
		Wed (School)	9hr 50mins
		Wed (Holidays)	7hr 50mins
		Sat/Sun/PH	8hr 45mins
	Stage 4	Mon/Tue/ Thu/Fri	11hr 35mins
		Wed (School)	10hr 20mins
		Wed (Holidays)	8hr 20mins
		Sat/Sun/PH	9hr 15mins

21 Inspector of Custodial Services, NSW Youth Justice Inspection Standards (June 2020) 9.8.

(B) Frank Baxter YJC

Centre	Area**		Total Time out of Room
Frank Baxter YJC	Nurranga	Mon/Tue/ Wed/Fri	10hr 10mins Non school 7hr 15mins
		Thu (CAMS)	9hr 15mins Non school 7hr 50mins
		Sat	6hr 50mins
		Sun	8hr 15mins
	Tasman	Mon/Tue/ Wed/Fri	10hr 50mins Non school 7hr 30mins
		Thu (CAMS)	8hr 20 mins Non school 6hr 50mins
		Sat	7hr 20mins
		Sun	8hr 50mins
	Katandra	Mon/Tue/Wed/Fri	12hr 15mins Non school 10hr 30mins
		Thu (CAMS)	9 hours
		Sat	7hr 45mins
		Sun	9 hours 15mins
	Elliot	Mon/Tue/Wed/Fri	12hr 15mins Non school 10hr 30mins
		Thu (CAMS)	9 hr
		Sat	7hr 45mins
		Sun	9hr 15mins
	Strickland	Mon/Tue/Wed/Fri	10hr 50mins Non school 7hr 30mins
		Thu (CAMS)	8hr 20mins Non school 7hr 20mins
		Sat	7hr 20mins
		Sun	8hr 50mins
Penang	Mon/Tues/Wed/Fri	12 hr 10 mins Work release 14 hr 45 mins	
	Thu (CAMS)	11 hr 10mins Work release 14 hr 45mins	
	Sat	8hr 50mins	
	Sun	9hr 50mins	

(C) Cobham YJC

Centre	Stage		Total Time out of Room
Cobham YJC	Stage 1	Mon/Tue/ Thu/Fri	9hr 40min
		Wed (CAMS)	6hr 50mins
		Sat/Sun/PH	8hr 30mins
	Stage 2	Mon/Tue/ Thu/Fri	10hr 40mins
		Wed (CAMS)	7hr 50 mins
		Sat/Sun/PH	9hr 30mins
	Stage 3	Mon/Tue/ Thu/Fri	11hr 10mins
		Wed (CAMS)	8hr 20 mins
		Sat/Sun/PH	10hr
	Stage 4	Mon/Tue/ Thu/Fri	11hr 40mins
		Wed (CAMS)	8hr 50mins
		Sat/Sun/PH	10hr 30mins

(D) Orana YJC

Centre	Stage		Total Time out of Room
Orana YJC	Stage 1	Mon – Fri	9hr 30mins
		Sat/Sun	8 hr
	Stage 2	Mon – Fri	10hr
		Sat/Sun/PH	8hr 30mins
	Stage 3	Mon – Fri	10hr 30mins
		Sat/Sun/PH	9hr
	Stage 4	Mon – Fri	11 hr
		Sat/Sun/PH	9hr 30mins

(E) Reiby YJC

Centre	Stage		Total Time out of Room
Reiby YJC	Stage 1	Mon/Tue/ Thu/Fri	10hr 25mins
		Wed (CAMS)	9hr 5mins
		Sat	7hr 45mins
		Sun/PH	8hr 15mins
	Stage 2	Mon/Tue/ Thu/Fri	10hr 25mins
		Wed (CAMS)	9hr 5mins
		Sat	7hr 45mins
		Sun/PH	8hr 15mins
	Stage 3	Mon/Tue/ Thu/Fri	10hr 55mins
		Wed (CAMS)	9hr 35mins
		Sat	8hr 15mins
		Sun/PH	8hr 45mins
	Stage 4	Mon/Tue/ Thu/Fri	11hr 25mins
		Wed (CAMS)	10hr 5mins
		Sat	8hr 45mins
		Sun/PH	9hr 15mins

(F) Riverina YJC

Centre	Stage		Total Time out of Room
Riverina YJC	Stage 1	Mon – Fri	10hr 15mins
		Sat/Sun/Holidays	9hr 15mis
	Stage 2	Mon – Fri	10hr 45mins
		Sat/Sun/Holidays	9hr 45mins
	Stage 3	Mon – Fri	11hr 15mins
		Sat/Sun/Holidays	10hr 15mins
	Stage 4	Mon – Fri	11hr 45mins
		Sat/Sun/Holidays	10hr 45mins

*Stage reflects a reward for positive behaviour, which includes a later bed time. Stage 1 is the lowest and Stage 4 is the highest stage a child or young person can reach. A later bed time will result in longer time out of room.

** Area reflects the unit a child or young person is accommodated in. Different units may have different bedtimes resulting in different time out of room.

These centre timetables show the inconsistencies between the centres in the scheduled time out of room for young people. Riverina YJC is the centre with the simplest timetable that comes very close to providing 10 hours out of room each day. We note that all YJC timetables struggle to meet ten hours out of room on weekends.

However, the timetables do not necessarily reflect reality on the ground. For example:

- whether unlock and lock-in times happened as planned (late unlock or early lock-in)
- whether the out of room hours include young people on confinement, segregation and separation orders (if confined to a room)
- unplanned lock-ins.

This makes it difficult for the ICS to determine the extent to which young people are spending 10 hours out of their room. YJNSW should ensure that actual out of room hours are recorded for each YJC and reported to YJNSW on a regular basis. This would enable YJNSW and the ICS to monitor and assess out of room hours accurately.

We note that the High Risk Units located at Frank Baxter YJC and Cobham YJC record actual time out of room (see Table 8). Central recording of time out of rooms is supported in principle by YJNSW but is currently not resourced.²²

Table 8: Time out of room on HRYORP and DRMPs/BAPs 2024-25²³

Month	HRYORP DRMP average time out of room (hours)	Centre DRMP average time out of room (hours)
July	6:59	5:15
August	7:13	6:15
September	6:42	4:57
October	6:02	5:56
November	7:09	3:13
December	7:02	5:02
January	6:33	6:43
February	6:52	5:59
March	6:33	5:41
April	6:39	4:59
May	6:44	6:19
June	6:05	6:35

Recommendation: YJNSW establish a central reporting system for children and young people’s actual out of room hours.

1.4.3 Restrictive practices

ICS Standard 8.3: Force (including any form of restraints) must only be used as a last resort and for the shortest time required. Its use must be safely and humanely applied, properly prescribed and monitored, and reported.

ICS Standard 8.6: Behaviour management systems must define fair and consistently applied rules for behaviour, where responses to misbehaviour are escalated as appropriate.

Restrictive practices and young people

YJNSW has a responsibility to care for young people in custody. This responsibility is reflected in the *Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987*:

4 Objects of Act

(2) In the administration of this Act –

(a) the welfare and interests of persons on remand or subject to control shall be given paramount consideration, and

(b) it shall be recognised that the punishment for an offence imposed by a court is the only punishment for that offence.

²² Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 29 January 2026.

²³ Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 April 2025.

We note the YJNSW *Use of Force, Protective Equipment and Instruments of Restraint Policy* (2020) states:

The key objectives of the policy are to:

promote the safe use of communication and other non-physical means as the standard for managing young people's behaviour

provide direction on the approved types and methods of use of force to be used as a last resort ...'²⁴

We requested data from YJNSW in relation to incidents and restrictive practices. While reportable incidents are not 'restrictive practices' they are often a driver of use of force events, separation orders, segregation orders and confinement orders.

Table 9: Centre reportable incidents 2023-24²⁵

Centre	Average population	Number of incidents	Rate per young person*
Acmena	23	151	6.6
Frank Baxter	55	421	7.7
Cobham	65	235	3.6
Orana	14	329	23.5
Reiby	30	264	8.8
Riverina	18	71	3.9
Total	205	1471	7.2

* Number/Average population

Data in red is a cause of concern.

Table 10: Misbehaviour punishment type and number 2023-24²⁶

Centre	Additional duties [%]	Caution [%]	Confinement to a place [%]	Exclusion from a place [%]	Restriction from leisure activities [%]	Restriction from sport activities [%]
Acmena	28 [2%]	107 [8%]	664 [51%]	2 [0%]	487 [37%]	10 [1%]
Frank Baxter	62 [6%]	132 [12%]	730 [67%]	0	157 [14%]	2 [0%]
Cobham	24 [3%]	80 [10%]	723 [87%]	0	3 [0%]	0
Orana	150 [17%]	109 [12%]	494 [57%]	0	118 [14%]	2 [0%]
Reiby	94 [7%]	259 [20%]	913 [70%]	1 [0%]	27 [2%]	2 [0%]
Riverina	44 [17%]	39 [15%]	172 [67%]	0	3 [1%]	0

Note: Percentages are rounded and may not add to 100.

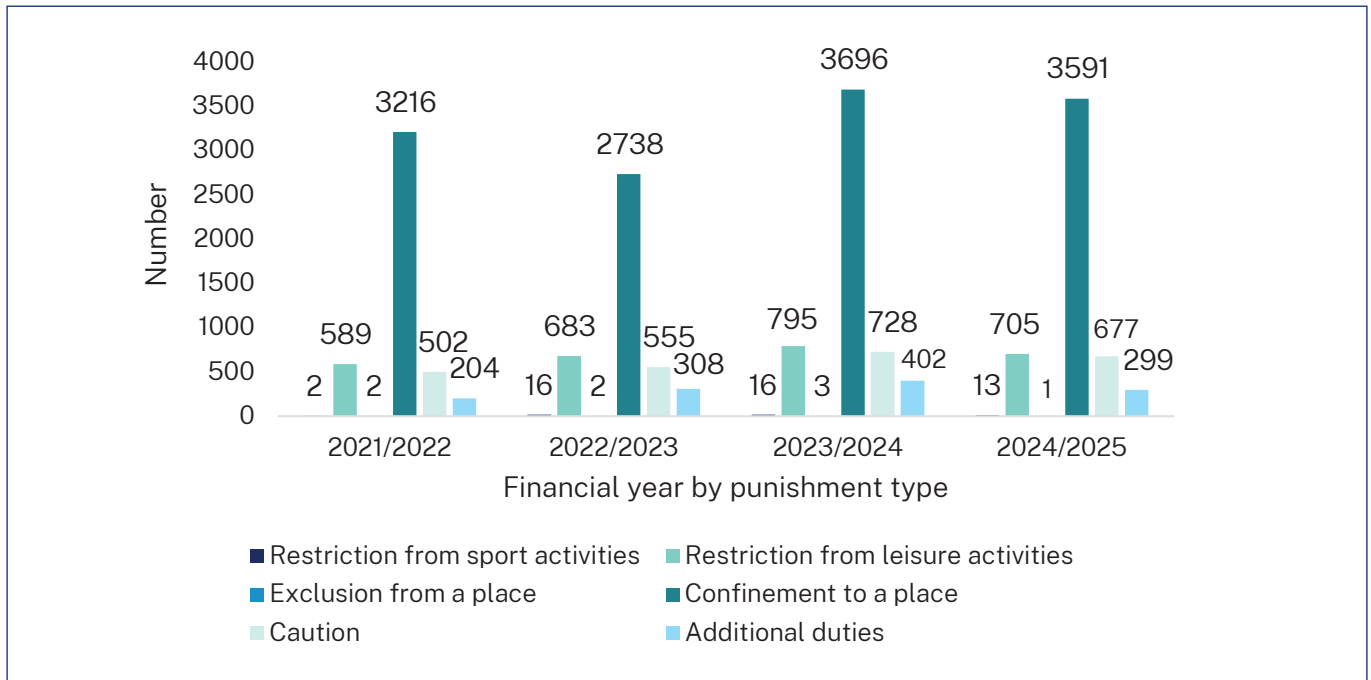
Data in red is a cause of concern.

²⁴ Youth Justice NSW, *Use of Force, Protective Equipment and Instruments of Restraint Policy* (version 12.6, September 2024) 4.

²⁵ Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

²⁶ Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

Figure 2: Punishments for misbehaviour by type across YJCs 2021-22 to 2024-25



Punishments for misbehaviour include:

- (d) exclusion from, or confinement to, a place for a period not exceeding 12 hours or, in the case of a detainee of or over the age of 16 years, not exceeding 24 hours²⁷

As shown in Figure 2, the most common punishment was confinement to a place, usually the young person’s room. It is concerning that ‘confinement to a place’ accounted for 87% of punishments at Cobham YJC compared to 67% at Frank Baxter YJC –both high security centres. However, the confined to a place hours need to be viewed as a rate per young person rather than just the total (table 12).

It is also of concern that s21(1)(b) of the Act lists ‘restriction from participation in sport or leisure activities’ as a punishment for misbehaviour but the Act, Regulation and YJNSW Misbehaviour Policy do not provide any guidance as to the meaning of restriction from participation in leisure activities. This raises the question about how YJCs are interpreting ‘restriction from participation in ‘leisure activities’’, noting for example, that the punishment was applied on 487 occasions at Acmena YJC in 2023/2024 compared to three occasions at Cobham YJC and three occasions at Riverina YJC.

Acmena YJC can and does confine young people to their rooms under a ‘loss of leisure’ (their name) punishment for misbehaviour. We observed a ‘loss of leisure’ incident during the inspection (young person making sexist remarks to another young person).²⁸ The problem is that ‘loss of leisure’ does not appear in the *Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987* and ‘loss of leisure’ confinement hours are not being reported by Acmena YJC.

Having reviewed a sample of Misbehaviour Reports during the inspections, it is not clear whether the young people concerned pled guilty or made statements which they can do if they choose. Having observed staff dealing with alleged misbehaviour during the unannounced inspections, it was clear that staff did not know how to conduct a hearing if a young person did not plead guilty.

Recommendation: YJNSW provide a clear definition of ‘restriction in leisure activities’ referred to in Section 21(1)(b) of the *Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987* with particular reference to what is a leisure activity, what does ‘restriction’ mean and whether a restriction includes confinement to a place.

²⁷ *Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987* s 21.

²⁸ The reporting officer said to us that he did not know if ‘loss of leisure’ was in the Act but he was following instructions.

Recommendation: YJNSW ensures Acmena YJC cease the practice of recording a ‘loss of leisure’ punishment when they are confining children and young people to their room, and ensure they record the punishment as confinement.

Recommendation: YJNSW ensure that young people are afforded their rights under Section 20 of the *Children (Detention Centres) Act 1987* regarding allegations of misbehaviour.

Figure 3: Confinements by duration across YJCs 2021-22 to 2024-25²⁹

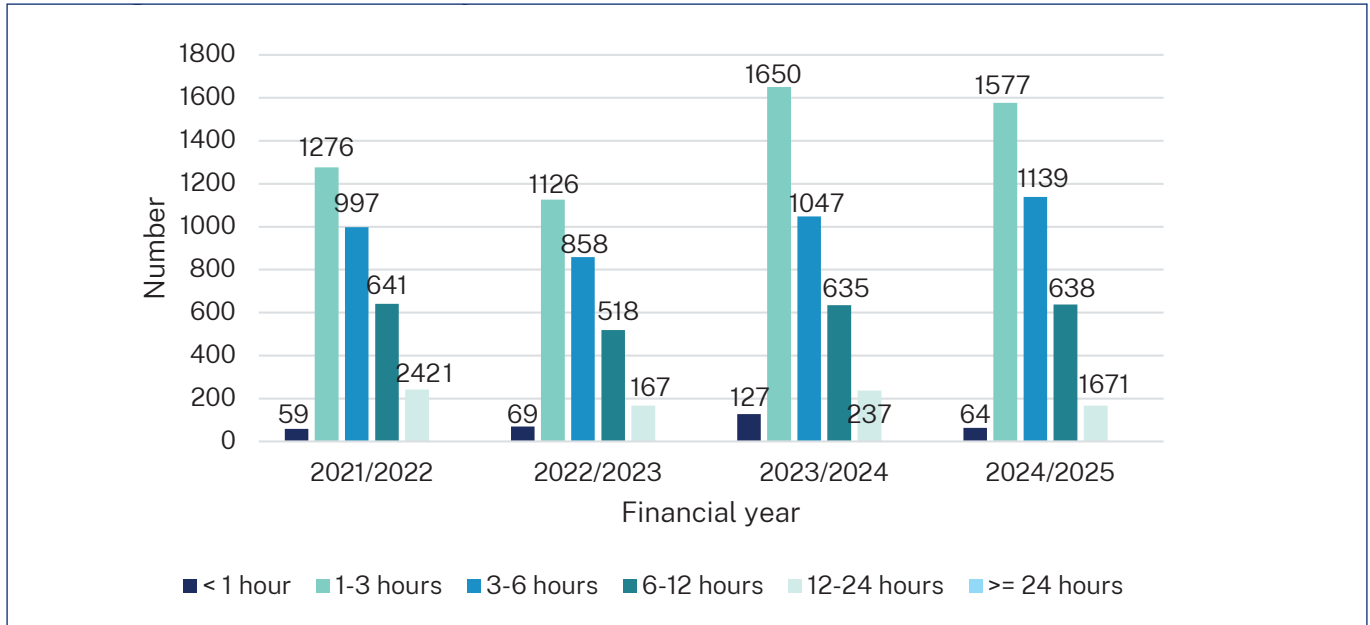


Table 11: Confinements by centre 2021-22 to 2024-25³⁰

Financial year	Centre	Acmena	Frank Baxter	Cobham	Orana	Reiby	Riverina
2021/2022		757 (22 involving females – 21 Aboriginal)	636 (4 involving females – 2 Aboriginal)	498	449 (5 involving females – no Aboriginal)	613 (237 involving females – 168 Aboriginal)	263
2022/2023		607 (3 involving females – 3 Aboriginal)	696 (1 involving a female – Aboriginal)	522	261	483 (92 involving females – 47 Aboriginal)	169
2023/2024		664 (4 involving females – 4 Aboriginal)	730	723	494 (14 involving females – 14 Aboriginal)	913 (234 involving females – 67 Aboriginal)	172

²⁹ Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 25 March 2025.

³⁰ Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 25 March 2025.

2024/2025	647 (3 involving females –1 Aboriginal)	612	902	458 (16 involving females –16 Aboriginal)	758 (323 involving females –255 Aboriginal)	172
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Table 12: Confinement rates by centre 2023-24³¹

Centre	Average population	Number of incidents	Rate per young person*
Acmena	23	664	28.9
Frank Baxter	55	730	13.3
Cobham	65	723	11.1
Orana	14	494	35.3
Reiby	30	913	30.4
Riverina	18	172	9.6
Total	205	3696	18.0

* Number/Average population

** We believe Acmena YJC hours are under-reported because they do not include the penalty of 'loss of leisure'.

Data in **red** is a cause of concern.

Table 13: Use of force across YJCs 2021-22 to 2024-25³²

Financial year	Reason	Number		
		Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Unknown
2021/2022	Move young person	230	99	2
	Prevent escape	12	1	0
	Prevent property damage	16	6	0
	Prevent self-injury	48	20	0
	Prevent riot	59	47	0
	Protect from harm	481	314	6
	Search detainee	0	0	0
	Seize Dangerous item	4	3	0
	Protect drug dog	1	0	0
	Prevent entry by force	0	0	0
	Allow medic to treat	0	0	0

31 Table devised by the Inspector of Custodial Services.

32 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

2022/2023	Move young person	224	56	0
	Prevent escape	5	2	0
	Prevent property damage	15	7	0
	Prevent self-injury	54	32	0
	Prevent riot	73	47	0
	Protect from harm	534	271	0
	Search detainee	1	0	0
	Seize Dangerous item	6	1	0
	Protect drug dog	0	0	0
	Prevent entry by force	0	0	0
	Allow medic to treat	3	0	0
2023/2024	Move young person	379	104	0
	Prevent escape	13	9	0
	Prevent property damage	30	8	0
	Prevent self-injury	120	36	0
	Prevent riot	120	61	0
	Protect from harm	842	391	0
	Search detainee	3	2	0
	Seize Dangerous item	12	1	0
	Protect drug dog	2	0	0
	Prevent entry by force	0	0	0
	Allow medic to treat	3	0	0
2024/2025	Move young person	327	96	3
	Prevent escape	4	3	0
	Prevent property damage	25	7	0
	Prevent self-injury	119	29	1
	Prevent riot	84	45	1
	Protect from harm	961	438	9
	Search detainee	1	1	0
	Seize Dangerous item	11	5	0
	Protect drug dog	0	0	0
	Prevent entry by force	2	0	0
	Allow medic to treat	2	1	0

Table 14: Use of force (UoF) and restraint occurrences by centre 2021-22 to 2024-25³³

Financial year	Centre	Occurrences	
		UoF	Restraint
2021/2022	Acmena	115	57
	Frank Baxter	269	172
	Cobham	222	93
	Orana	134	32
	Reiby	198	93
	Riverina	105	24
2022/2023	Acmena	128	64
	Frank Baxter	260	157
	Cobham	251	106
	Orana	109	26
	Reiby	191	42
	Riverina	77	11
2023/2024	Acmena	213	79
	Frank Baxter	303	139
	Cobham	318	120
	Orana	231	50
	Reiby	414	102
	Riverina	80	15
2024/2025	Acmena	255	83
	Frank Baxter	311	162
	Cobham	371	159
	Orana	174	33
	Reiby	377	94
	Riverina	84	14

Table 15: Use of Force (UoF) incidents by centre 2023-24³⁴

Centre	Average population	Number of incidents	Rate per young person*
Acmena	23	213	9.3
Frank Baxter	55	303	5.5
Cobham	65	318	4.9
Orana	14	231	16.5
Reiby	30	414	13.8
Riverina	18	80	4.4
Total	205	1559	7.6

* Number/Average population

Data in red is a cause of concern.

³³ Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

³⁴ Table devised by the Inspector of Custodial Services.

Table 16: Separation and segregation orders by centre 2021-22 to 2024-25³⁵

Financial year	Centre	Orders	
		Separation	Segregation
2021/2022	Acmena	799	389
	Frank Baxter	891	373
	Cobham	1019	130
	Orana	533	364
	Reiby	925	582
	Riverina	450	378
2022/2023	Acmena	881	392
	Frank Baxter	959	170
	Cobham	701	112
	Orana	620	163
	Reiby	792	317
	Riverina	216	77
2023/2024	Acmena	891	318
	Frank Baxter	736	147
	Cobham	634	110
	Orana	360	276
	Reiby	475	651
	Riverina	120	69
2024/2025	Acmena	530	293
	Frank Baxter	663	424
	Cobham	634	108
	Orana	249	208
	Reiby	489	659
	Riverina	114	74

Table 17: Rate of segregation by centre 2023-24³⁶

Centre	Average population	Number of incidents	Rate per young person*
Acmena	23	318	13.8
Frank Baxter	55	147	2.7
Cobham	65	110	1.7
Orana	14	276	19.7
Reiby	30	651	21.7
Riverina	18	69	3.8
Total	205	1571	7.7

* Number/Average population

Data in **red** is a cause of concern.

³⁵ Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

³⁶ Table devised by the Inspector of Custodial Services.

Table 18: Rate of separation by centre 2023-24³⁷

Centre	Average population	Number of incidents	Rate per young person*
Acmena	23	891	38.7
Frank Baxter	55	736	13.4
Cobham	65	634	9.8
Orana	14	360	21.4
Reiby	30	475	15.8
Riverina	18	120	6.7
Total	205	3216	15.7

* Number/Average population

Data in red is a cause of concern.

General comment on the tables above

Cobham YJC and Frank Baxter YJC (high security centres) have quite low 'Rate per young person' results compared to the other four lower security YJCs. For example, in Table 17 segregation hours in 2023-24 at Reiby YJC was at a rate of 21.7 compared to 1.7 at Cobham YJC and 2.7 at Frank Baxter YJC.

The data provided by YJNSW shows that Acmena, Orana and Reiby YJCs have rates of use of force, separation and/or segregation that are cause for concern and which must be addressed by YJNSW as a matter of urgency. This could involve a staff culture review, further staff training and a change of management direction.

1.4.4 Management plans for young people

Detainee Risk Management Plans (DRMP) are no longer in use by YJNSW and have been replaced by Behaviour Assistance Pathway Plans (BAP). A difference between a DRMP and a BAP is that a BAP must have a segregation and/or separation order attached to it if a young person is confined to or restricted from a place. This was not the case with DRMPs which could result in unofficial (unlawful) segregation or separation of young people.

Table 19: DRMPs/BAPs by centre 2021-22 to 2024-25³⁸

Financial year	Centre	DRMPs	
		Number	Average hours
2021/2022	Acmena	28	17.05
	Frank Baxter	102	174.67
	Cobham	60	27.67
	Orana	29	30.26
	Reiby	17	23.98
	Riverina	0	0.0

37 Table devised by the Inspector of Custodial Services.

38 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 25 March 2025.

2022/2023	Acmena	8	16.77
	Frank Baxter	92	40.17
	Cobham	68	19.74
	Orana	11	6.89
	Reiby	8	8.60
	Riverina	0	0.0
2023/2024	Acmena	17	19.24
	Frank Baxter	144	32.93
	Cobham	101	15.71
	Orana	13	7.10
	Reiby	39	11.66
	Riverina	1	24.62
2024/2025	Acmena	12	8.06
	Frank Baxter	93	14.36
	Cobham	150	19.35
	Orana	2	20.52
	Reiby	47	16.01
	Riverina	1	7.42

This is an example of a recent (May 2025) Cobham YJC BAP:³⁹

This BAP will provide a structured and consistent approach to managing the risks the young person may pose to staff and others, supporting safe and appropriate interaction and engagement. YP's [young person's] communication, compliance with instructions, and overall behaviour will be key indicators in determining his daily risk level. YP will continue working collaboratively with his Psychologist, Caseworker, and unit manager to develop strategies that strengthen his problem-solving skills and reduce his reliance on violence behaviours. Ongoing monitoring of YP's physical and psychological wellbeing will be maintained. YP is expected to follow staff instructions, engage safely with others, and resolve conflicts without the use of threats or violence.

IF THIS PLAN INVOLVES SEGREGATION FROM THE GENERAL POPULATION OF YOUTH JUSTICE CENTRE IN LINE WITH CLAUSE 10(2)(B), CHILDREN (DETENTION CENTRES) REG 2015, THE BAP MUST BE APPROVED BY THE DIRECTOR CUSTODIAL OPERATIONS PRIOR TO IMPLEMENTATION.

IF THIS PLAN INVOLVES SEPARATION FROM THE GENERAL POPULATION OF A YOUTH JUSTICE CENTRE IN LINE WITH SECTION 16(3) OF THE CHILDREN (DETENTION CENTRES) ACT 1987, THE DRMP MUST BE APPROVED BY THE DIRECTOR CUSTODIAL OPERATIONS PRIOR TO IMPLEMENTATION.

BAPs do not take a punitive approach, a major problem we have seen with DRMPs. We reviewed minutes of a BAP meeting held on 20 May 2025.⁴⁰ The meeting was chaired by the centre manager and attended by 20 people, including psychologists, caseworkers, health staff and education staff. The minutes were comprehensive and informative on each of the young people. This is good practice. We will review the success or otherwise of BAPs on the next YJC inspection.

³⁹ Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 25 May 2025.

⁴⁰ Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 30 May 2025.

1.4.5 Young people making complaints

ICS Standard 1.14: The centre has an effective and confidential complaints mechanism in place that promotes the protection from repercussions of those who use it.

YJNSW states:

When managing complaints, YJNSW employees must recognise the inherent dignity of the person who has made the complaint and treat them with courtesy and respect. Complainants should be given clear and comprehensive information about the process that will be followed to manage their complaint, as well as the possible outcome – including options to have the matter reviewed and how they are treated.

It is now well recognised that people are likely to care as much about how their complaint is dealt with as they do about the issue that triggered the complaint. These Guidelines and procedure detail the process for managing feedback and complaints. They are designed such that when followed the process should be seen to be fair, treating complainants in ways they think are reasonable (including with respect), and providing adequate information at appropriate times.

In responding to complaints, YJNSW:

- protects the rights and wellbeing of any young people involved in the complaint
- takes appropriate action to support young people to make a complaint
- establishes clear procedures for dealing with complaints
- makes information about the complaints process accessible to all employees, young people, their families and carers, and any other interested parties
- affords procedural fairness to all parties
- resolves complaints as quickly as possible
- keeps the parties informed of progress and outcomes
- maintains appropriate confidentiality of all parties
- protects complainants from any subsequent victimisation and reprisal
- keeps proper records of decisions made and the reasons for the decisions
- makes use of the complaints system as feedback to improve the quality of services.⁴¹

Young people can fill in a paper Feedback and Complaints Form. During the inspection of Acmena YJC we observed an old Juvenile Justice form and a more recent Youth Justice form in use which are somewhat different. The new Youth Justice form notes:

‘What happens next?’

- The Unit Manager will look at the form and decide the best way to respond.
- If your issue is a complaint about the quality of care you are receiving, or you feel unsafe, the Unit Manager will talk to you as soon as possible. **You will be helped to make a formal complaint**’ (emphasis added).⁴²

The form is potentially confusing to young people who might *think* filling in the form is a formal complaint but not according to the Guidelines:

In Youth Justice Centres using the Feedback and Complaints Triage system, the process supports young people to determine whether the issue they raise should be handled as a formal complaint or is better managed as feedback. Formal complaints usually concern the quality of care a young person is receiving and/or issues of safety.⁴³

41 Youth Justice NSW, *Guidelines: Managing Client Feedback and Complaints* (version 1.1, November 2020) 7.

42 Youth Justice NSW, *Guidelines: Managing Client Feedback and Complaints* (version 1.1, November 2020)

43 Youth Justice NSW, *Guidelines: Managing Client Feedback and Complaints* (version 1.1, November 2020) 9.

In simple terms, the YJC decides whether a complaint is formal or just needs feedback to the complainant. The Guidelines define formal complaints as, 'All details of the complaint are recorded, and a formal process is followed to reach a resolution, which is recorded in the complaints file.'⁴⁴

As an extreme example of an actual complaint we examined, a young person wrote:

[staff member] is a child grooming [expletive] he give yp [name] he's glasses and hat to wear also gives ... he's food he brings from home. He also takes [name] in the corner and touches ... up he is [expletive] who keeps kids in his basement to touch up during the night [sic].

The unit manager noted on the form 'Spoke to (complainant) regarding complaint. YP [Young Person] don't want any action states (they) was angry at the time (sic).'

This was not for the unit manager to decide. It should have been referred to the centre manager for mandatory reporting. The Guidelines state:

Allegations of physical, emotional or sexual abuse involving an employee must be dealt with in accordance with the Child Safety and Mandatory Reporting Policy and associated procedures.⁴⁵

Allegations of a criminal offence, such as an alleged assault, will be dealt with in accordance with the Incident Management Policy: Reporting, Debrief and Review.⁴⁶

Any and all allegations of abuse or harm made by a young person must be treated seriously and dealt with as a matter of urgency. **These allegations are not investigated as complaints and are subject to mandatory reporting requirements.** Allegations of abuse or harm are handled in accordance with the mandatory reporting procedures (both internal and external reporting) in the Child Safety and Mandatory Reporting Policy (original emphasis).⁴⁷

The purpose of this example is to highlight the influence that YJCs can have in dealing with young people's complaints and to some extent to explain (as we were told) that young people do not bother making complaints because nothing ever happens (Acmena YJC inspection).

The *YJNSW Guidelines: Managing Client Feedback and Complaints* (2020) is a lengthy (27 page) and complex document which does not lend itself to easy use by YJC staff. It also has obtuse provisions such as:

An appeal against a YJNSW decision is not a complaint unless the complainant is complaining about how the decision was made or the process undertaken to deal with the complaint. In this case, a new complaint should be opened, registered and managed as with any other complaint.⁴⁸

Recommendation: YJNSW develop a simplified version of the *Guidelines: Managing Client Feedback and Complaints* for youth officers.

We also had concerns at YJCs about complaints "letter boxes" being in view of unit staff and whether unit staff could access and read complaints.

In our opinion some complaints, orally or in writing, can and should be handled by the unit manager if they are of a routine nature such as food, room maintenance, lost property and so on. However, any complaints (confidential) about abuse or harm related to a young person must go directly to the centre manager for their personal attention. This could be handled by providing young people with a sealable coloured envelope which may only be opened by the centre manager. The current process is also not appropriate if the complaint concerns the unit manager.

The centre manager must record confidential complaints and, as necessary, refer them to YJNSW in accordance with *YJNSW Guidelines: Managing Client Feedback and Complaints*.

44 Youth Justice NSW, *Guidelines: Managing Client Feedback and Complaints* (version 1.1, November 2020)

45 Youth Justice NSW, *Guidelines: Managing Client Feedback and Complaints* (version 1.1, November 2020) 10.

46 Youth Justice NSW, *Guidelines: Managing Client Feedback and Complaints* (version 1.1, November 2020) 10.

47 Youth Justice NSW, *Guidelines: Managing Client Feedback and Complaints* (version 1.1, November 2020) 10.

48 Youth Justice NSW, *Guidelines: Managing Client Feedback and Complaints* (version 1.1, November 2020) 10.

Recommendation: YJNSW establish a secure system to allow children and young people to make confidential complaints direct to their centre manager.

1.4.6 Aboriginal young people

ICS Standard 1.4: Aboriginal young people in custody should have fair and equitable access to services, activities and amenities, including services specifically relating to their Aboriginality.

ICS Standard 4.2: Wherever possible, Aboriginal young people participate in cultural activities and celebrations with other Aboriginal people...Community events and promotions are incorporated into the centre's routine and activities. For example, NAIDOC week, Harmony Day.

ICS Standard 6.1: Recognising the high proportion of Aboriginal young people in custody and that the centre is built on traditional Aboriginal land, there is visual acknowledgement of Aboriginal young people and Country in the design, decoration and fittings of the centre.

Young people may identify themselves as being Aboriginal when admitted to custody or afterwards. It is entirely their choice and is not influenced by YJNSW. In that regard, the following data from YJNSW is based on self-identification only, which may understate the actual numbers of Aboriginal people.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics:

In New South Wales 278,000 people **identified** as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in the 2021 Census of Population and Housing. **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people represented 3.4% of the New South Wales population.** This is up from 2.9% in 2016, and 2.5% in 2011⁴⁹ (emphasis added).

This 3.4% figure should be kept in mind when considering the following tables.

Table 20: Average daily population at Acmena YJC 2021-22 to 2023-24⁵⁰

Financial year	Female (if applicable)			Male		
	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Unknown	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Unknown
2021/2022	1	0	0	17	4	0
2022/2023	0	0	0	16	3	0
2023/2024	0	0	0	20	3	0
Total all	1	0	0	53	10	0
Aboriginal	100%	0%	0%	84%	16%	0%

Table 21: Average daily population at Frank Baxter YJC 2021-22 to 2023-24⁵¹

Financial year	Female (if applicable)			Male		
	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Unknown	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Unknown
2021/2022	0	0	0	18	29	1
2022/2023	0	0	0	28	21	1

49 Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'New South Wales: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population summary' (Web Page, 1 July 2022) <<https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/new-south-wales-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-population-summary>>.

50 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

51 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

2023/2024	0	0	0	35	19	1
Total all	0	0	0	81	69	3
Aboriginal	0%	0%	0%	53%	45%	2%

Table 22: Average daily population at Cobham YJC 2021-22 to 2023-24⁵²

Financial year	Female (if applicable)			Male		
	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Unknown	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Unknown
2021/2022	0	0	0	20	37	0
2022/2023	0	0	0	24	37	0
2023/2024	0	0	0	29	36	0
Total all	0	0	0	73	110	0
Aboriginal	0%	0%	0%	40%	60%	0%

Table 23: Average daily population at Orana YJC 2021-22 to 2023-24⁵³

Financial year	Female (if applicable)			Male		
	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Unknown	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Unknown
2021/2022	0	0	0	9	1	0
2022/2023	0	0	0	11	1	0
2023/2024	0	0	0	14	0	0
Total all	0	0	0	34	2	0
Aboriginal	0%	0%	0%	94%	6%	0%

Table 24: Average daily population at Reiby YJC 2021-22 to 2023-24⁵⁴

Financial year	Female (if applicable)			Male		
	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Unknown	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Unknown
2021/2022	6	5	0	5	7	0
2022/2023	4	4	0	7	8	0
2023/2024	7	5	0	10	8	0
Total all	17	14	0	22	23	0
Aboriginal	55%	45%	0%	49%	51%	0%

52 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

53 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

54 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

Table 25: Average daily population at Riverina YJC 2021-22 to 2023-24⁵⁵

Financial year	Female (if applicable)			Male		
	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Unknown	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Unknown
2021/2022	0	0	0	8	12	0
2022/2023	0	0	0	10	11	0
2023/2024	0	0	0	9	9	0
Total all	0	0	0	27	32	0
Aboriginal	0%	0%	0%	46%	54%	0

In summary, across the three years the representation of Aboriginal young people was:

- Acmena YJC: 84%
- Frank Baxter YJC: 53%
- Cobham YJC: 40%
- Orana YJC: 94%
- Reiby YJC (males): 49%
- Reiby YJC (females): 55%
- Riverina YJC: 46%

Staff should be aware of the significant differences between Aboriginal groups from different regions and ensure that no group or individual is disadvantaged, excluded or ignored. It was identified that Aboriginal children and young people are not asked which Aboriginal Country they are from; therefore, it is not recorded. Under-reporting of Aboriginal children and young people was an issue we identified during our previous inspection of YJCs and is still occurring. Asking and recording which Aboriginal Country a child or young person is from may assist with keeping accurate records of Aboriginal children and young people, educating YJ staff, and ensuring culturally appropriate services are being delivered to Aboriginal children and young people from different Countries.

Being off Country limits the ability of children and young people to have face-to-face visits with family or contact with significant cultural community members. Aboriginal staff, community leaders and Aboriginal families should be consulted to limit distress caused to Aboriginal children and young people when entering the custodial environment. Children and young people who are off Country would like to meet with a local Elder on admission for an Acknowledgment as this is a culturally appropriate practice. Establishing an Elders Program and providing remuneration to visiting Elders is recommended.

Recommendation: YJNSW ask each Aboriginal child and young person if they wish to nominate their Country and if nominated, the Country must be recorded on the Client Information Management System.

Recommendation: YJNSW establishes an Elders Program for YJNSW and provides remuneration to Elders engaged to visit YJ centres.

⁵⁵ Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

1.4.7 Health and young people

ICS Standard 9.1: Young people in custody should have their health needs addressed by appropriate health and ancillary services.

ICS Standard 9.2: Young people in custody with actual or suspected mental health issues should have access to age and culturally appropriate mental health services in a timely manner.

ICS Standard 9.3: Young people at risk of self-harm or suicide are promptly identified and a support plan is created.

ICS Standard 9.4: An initial medical and psychological assessment of each young person must be conducted within 48 hours of their admittance to the centre.

ICS Standard 9.5: Young people are aware of the health services available and how to access them.

Across all six YJCs inspected, concerns were raised regarding the diet and nutrition of young people in custody. While the responsibility for health care rests with JH&FMHN, food provision and dietary management fall under the remit of YJNSW.

Health staff consistently reported that:

- Young people have unrestricted access to refined carbohydrates such as white bread, rice, pasta, and sugary items through daily meals and the “buy-up” systems.
- Food is frequently used as a behavioural incentive or reward, including fast food as part of cultural or programmatic initiatives. While cultural inclusion is important and supported, this practice sometimes conflicts with the clinical needs of young people with obesity or metabolic health risks.
- There is inconsistent accommodation of medical dietary requirements, including for those needing pureed food or modified diets due to sensory issues related to autism, eating disorders, or malnutrition.
- Despite consultations with JH&FMHN dietitians and eating disorder specialists, health staff lack the authority to implement recommended interventions, resulting in frustration and diminished capacity to support healthy behavioural change.

Multiple cases of extreme and rapid weight gain were observed, including examples of young people gaining 30–60 kilograms within six to eight months. Some of these cases required pharmacological management, highlighting the significant health implications of the current nutritional environment.

Recommendation: Youth Justice NSW implement evidence-based nutrition standards and menus for youth justice centres that align with Australian Dietary Guidelines, in collaboration with Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network. The standards should address all aspects of food provision and access, including routine meals, special diets, buy-ups, portion control and fast food.

1.4.8 Young people’s clothing

ICS Standard 9.10: All young people must be provided with clean clothing and bedding appropriate to the climate, as well as necessary toiletries and sanitary products.

Unfortunately, as we reported in our last inspection, we again observed and photographed Reiby YJC issuing pre-owned (used) underwear to children and young people, despite YJNSW and centre managers assuring us this did not happen. We immediately reported this to the Acting Executive Director YJNSW who was very responsive and provided the following advice:

The day immediately prior to your visit to Reiby [Director Operations and Metropolitan Custody] had personally instructed all Centre Managers to ensure that no used underwear was being kept in stores, and each CM had made a commitment to do so. I cannot explain why this instruction was

not carried out in the case of Reiby but have since taken the following steps to ensure this does not happen again.

I personally emailed all CMs on 16 April (see attached) instructing them to take personal responsibility for checking clothing stores to ensure that no second-hand underwear is being kept to be re-issued to young people in custody.

[Director Operations and Metropolitan Custody] issued an additional operational direction on 22nd April 2025. This direction further reinforces and complements the instruction given by me to all Centre Managers on 16 April. The combined impacts of these directions mean that:

- The centre manager will personally check clothing stores/areas on a weekly basis.
- Any further discovery during these weekly checks will require the centre manager inspections to increase to three per week.
- The Centre Manager must ensure that adequate supply exists of new clothing for boys and girls.
- The Centre Manager must ensure that no second-hand underwear is kept. It must all be thrown out.

Centre Managers are now required to update a spreadsheet confirming that the above requirements have been undertaken on a weekly basis. The Custodial Support Team will monitor the spreadsheet each Monday morning to ensure the previous week's compliance and report any discrepancy to the relevant Director.

[Director Operations and Metropolitan Custody] has personally discussed this issue with each Centre Manager during the weekly custodial forum, to ensure that they understand the requirement and that their staff, particularly those in admissions areas, also understand the requirements.

I am hopeful that the above measures will mean that we do not see a repeat of what occurred at Reiby but if there are other safeguards you see that I can put in place to mitigate this risk then please let me know.⁵⁶

It seems this matter is now resolved and we trust that references to 'underwear' also includes socks for hygiene reasons.⁵⁷

1.4.9 Visits to young people

ICS Standard 4.1. Family support should be encouraged.

- Contact with family and friends, where safe to do so, is treated as a basic entitlement and is promoted as essential to the young person's psychological wellbeing and to their successful reintegration into the community.
- The visits system is flexible and visitor-friendly and allows for relaxed communication.
- Security measures are discreet and sensitive to privacy.

All YJCs require young people to change into adult maximum security prison-type overalls (no pockets) to attend contact visits with family and friends to deter visitors from passing contraband.

While the overalls reduce the need for physical body searches, we consider this practice demeaning for young people and their visitors. If there is an identified risk⁵⁸ of visitors attempting to pass contraband, a visitor(s) should be offered a non-contact visit (physical separation from the young person).⁵⁹

56 Email from A/Executive Director YJ to Inspector of Custodial Services April 2026.

57 Mayo Clinic, 'Athlete's foot' (Web Page, 6 January 2026) <<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/athletes-foot/symptoms-causes/syc-20353841>>.

58 For example, reliable intelligence report.

59 Youth Justice NSW, *Personal Visits and Contact Policy* (version 17.2, July 2025) 19.

Each YJC has a body scanner, and these should be used after visits rather than making young people wear adult maximum security prison-type overalls to visit with family and friends.

Recommendation: YJNSW use body scanners and cease the practice of requiring young people to change into adult maximum security prison-type overalls to attend visits.

1.4.10 Selection and training of YJC staff

ICS Standard 7.1: Recruitment, supervision and retention strategies should be in place to ensure there is sufficient and appropriate staff with experience to meet the needs of the centre and the population of young people at all times.

The recruitment process should ensure suitable individuals are selected (through appropriate screening and assessments, including but not limited to security and Working with Children checks) and trained prior to commencement of duties.

Several staff raised concerns with us about some youth officers taking a punitive approach to young peoples' behaviour.

We note a 2024 advertisement for NSW Youth Officer positions at Cobham YJC:⁶⁰

Requirements of the role

- Meet citizenship or residency requirements
- Possession of a minimum Provisional 2 NSW driver's licence
- National Background Police Check
- NSW Working with Children Check Clearance
- Possession or willingness to obtain the 'Provide First Aid Certificate' (HLTAID011)
- Good verbal and written communication skills
- Ability to work in a team environment
- Medical and Fitness Assessment to determine that you are fit to safely carry out the duties of the role without significant risk to yourself or others
- Availability to complete 5 weeks of full-time training to prepare you for entry level duties – the Induction Training and Assessment Program (ITAP).
- You must pass the assessments during these initial 5 weeks of full-time training to be declared as ready for entry-level duties.

We note the advertisement did not specify any psychological suitability assessments. We also note that '5 weeks of full-time training' is significantly shorter than NSW correctional officers receive, which was 12 weeks in 2026.⁶¹ It is concerning that youth officers have special responsibilities for children in their care who often have traumatic backgrounds. The Australian Children's Commissioners and Guardians (ACCG) reported:

It is well recognised that children and young people are continuing to develop physiologically, psychologically and emotionally, and this must be taken into account when responding to their criminal offending. In addition, the small group of children and young people who enter the youth justice system experience increased vulnerability in a range of ways. Many children and young people in youth justice detention have a history of trauma, neglect and abuse, and child protection involvement. They are also more likely to experience family violence, have mental health problems or a disability, engage in drug and alcohol misuse, be disengaged from school and experience homelessness. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people

60 NSW Government, 'Youth Officer recruitment advertisement' (Wed Page, undated) <<https://iworkfor.nsw.gov.au/job/youth-officer-orana-562666>>.

61 NSW Government, 'Correctional Officer recruitment advertisement' (Web Page, undated) <<https://iworkfor.nsw.gov.au/job/correctional-officer-junee-correctional-centre-566726>>.

experience intergenerational trauma and the continuing impacts of dispossession, colonisation and discrimination.⁶²

We believe youth officers require *more* pre-service training than correctional officers and need to be assessed as psychologically suitable to work with vulnerable children.

Recommendation: YJNSW review the selection process for youth officers with regard to psychological assessments relevant to working with young people in custody, and provide a more extensive period of pre-service training with a focus on the special characteristics and needs of young people.

1.4.11 Protecting the rights and safety of staff and young people

ICS Standard 1.13: There should be robust and accountable recording and reporting systems for major aspects of the centre’s activities.

Table 26: Assaults by category 2021-22 to 2024-25⁶³

Financial year	Age	Assaults		
		Assault – Physical	Assault – Verbal	Assault with weapon
2021/2022	YP on YP	139	25	12
	YP on staff	88	51	8
	Other	14	2	2
2022/2023	YP on YP	149	11	4
	YP on staff	105	32	8
	Other	6	2	4
2023/2024	YP on YP	215	22	5
	YP on staff	149	46	9
	Other	12	6	3
2024/2025	YP on YP	261	2	7
	YP on staff	159	0	8
	Other	13	0	3

In the event of an incident at a YJC video footage from CCTV can be of evidentiary value in later determination of what staff and young people did or did not do. However, not all areas of a YJC are covered by CCTV (young peoples’ rooms in particular) and CCTV does not record sound which means that allegations of, for example, verbal abuse or threats cannot be proven or disproven by CCTV alone.

Some YJCs have Incident Response Teams (IRT) with officers equipped with a Body Worn Camera (BWC). Other youth officers do not wear BWCs.

We note the increase in physical assaults between 2021 and 2025, and that assaults by young people on other young people continued to be more prevalent than assaults on staff. YJNSW owe a duty of care to both young people in its custody and its staff. An announcement was made on the 29th March 2026 that \$138 million dollars in funding would be allocated to youth justice NSW to increase security across all six centres.⁶⁴

62 Australian Children’s Commissioners and Guardians, *Statement on conditions and treatment in youth justice detention* (November 2017) 9.

63 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 25 March 2025.

64 NSW Government, “Safer, more secure youth justice centres” (Webpage, 29th March 2026).

Figure 4: Example of a BWC⁶⁵



BWCs are commonly used in NSW adult correctional centres. Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) states:⁶⁶

Video and audio recordings can be used to capture an event or occurrence. Recordings provide impartial evidence which can assist in a variety of administrative, legal, disciplinary, or complaint resolution processes.

Video evidence may provide the following benefits to custodial operations:

- deter persons from committing offences
- provide compelling evidence
- modify the behaviour of persons and de-escalation of incidents
- a more comprehensive presentation of evidence to all parties to assist in decision making
- decrease in frivolous or vexatious complaints against staff
- assist in resolving complaints against staff
- enhance transparency and accountability

BWCs are also being trialled by NSW Health:⁶⁷

In addition to extensive actions to make hospitals across NSW safer, some specific hospitals will trial body worn cameras for security staff. The purpose of the trial is to evaluate whether body worn cameras are effective in de-escalating incidents where there is an imminent risk to safety. It does not replace existing de-escalation practices.

We believe there is a strong case for all youth officers to wear BWCs, however note additional funding will be required to roll out body worn cameras to all youth officers.⁶⁸

Recommendation: YJNSW ensure that youth officers are routinely equipped with body worn cameras when dealing with children and young people in custody, subject to robust training, policies and procedures being in place.

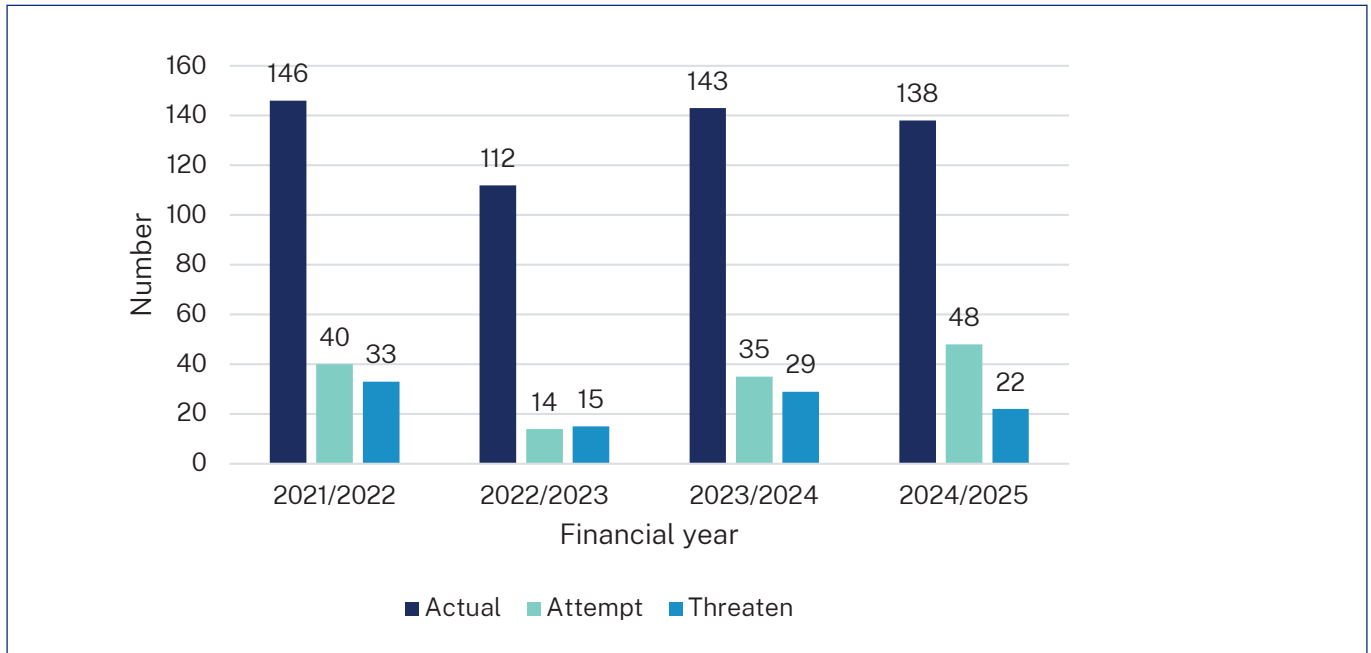
65 Sales stock photo.

66 Corrective Services NSW, *Custodial Operations Policy and Procedures: 13.09 Video evidence* (version 2.3, December 2024) 5.

67 NSW Health, 'Body worn cameras FAQ' (Web Page, 8 October 2025) <<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Hospitals/securityreview/Pages/body-worn-cameras.aspx>>.

68 Information provided by YJNSW 29 January 2026.

Figure 5: Actual, attempt and threaten self-harms across YJCs 2021-22 to 2024-25⁶⁹



NSW YJCs have intercom units in young people’s rooms and holding cells that allow them to talk to staff by pressing a call button for routine matters and importantly, in case of an emergency such as a medical or self-harm incident. Room calls are answered by the nearest officer station if staffed or automatically divert to a central control room if not answered within a short period of time.

Figure 6: Intercom unit⁷⁰



Most high security adult correctional centres in NSW and other jurisdictions use the same type of system but calls are recorded and date/time “stamped”. For example, 21/05/25 – 15:05:45.

69 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 25 March 2025.

70 VSL-354+ photo from manufacturer website (Jacques).

YJNSW does not record or “date/time stamp” calls. This is a significant flaw in accountability in the event of an emergency call. Recording calls is also a protection mechanism for staff if allegations are made by a young person about the conduct of an officer during a call (abuse, bad language, threats and so on). We note additional funding will be required to upgrade intercom systems.⁷¹

Recommendation: YJNSW upgrade YJC room intercom systems to enable recording and date/time stamping of calls.

71 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 29 January 2026.

2 Acmena YJC

The unannounced inspection was conducted on 31 March 2025 (early evening), 1 April (all day) and 2 April (early morning).

Acmena YJC is located on the land of the Gumbayngirr people at Grafton in northern NSW. The centre accommodates young males aged between 10 and 21. Young women and girls may also be accommodated for short periods. The centre has the capacity to accommodate up to 45 young people. The number of Aboriginal young people is high, at around 80 percent. We suspect that the data is inaccurate (under reporting) as it relies on young people identifying that they are Aboriginal.

The centre is spacious with extensive green areas, mature trees, ovals and vegetable gardens. The building interiors are generally in good condition and much improved since our 2022 inspection.

Figure 7: Entrance at Acmena YJC



Looking to the future, Acmena YJC will be pursuing budget bids for further developments:⁷²

- Upgrade of the front entrance into the centre providing appropriate spaces for visitors to be screened and lockers provided
- Upgrade of the staff amenities area which includes the centre training room
- Redesign of the visits areas and provide visitation rooms for families to have private visitation⁷³
- Redesign C block so the Senior Managers offices can be closer to the staff and young people
- Upgrade of the kitchen area
- Fix the centre pool which is currently out of order.

ICS is supportive of the proposed infrastructure developments which will be important to maintaining Acmena YJC as a suitable and functional place for young people in custody.

2.1 General overview

At the time of the inspection Acmena YJC was accommodating 40 children and young people of whom 37 identified as Aboriginal people. While the centre has a capacity of 45 children and young people not all rooms are available (non-operational) due to maintenance issues. Rooms are single occupancy only.

⁷² Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 8 April 2025.

⁷³ ICS observed that the visits area is functional but austere and could be more “family friendly.”

Table 27: Acmena YJC profile 2021-22 to 2024-25⁷⁴

Financial year	Bed capacity	Average daily population	Average time (days)	Average percentage on remand	Average time on remand (days)
2021/2022	45	22	26.1	80.20%	15.7
2022/2023	45 (9 non-operational)	20	18.0	80.90%	14.9
2023/2024	43 (13 non-operational)	23	16.6	78.60%	12.6
2024/2025	41 (4 non-operational)	26	21.0	80.8%	17.9

Table 27 shows the average daily population was well below bed capacity in all years. Sentenced and remand (unconvicted) young people had quite short stays at Acmena YJC ranging from 16.6 days to 26.1 days. The remand cohort had the shortest stays ranging from 12.6 days to 17.9 days.

Table 28: Average daily population by gender at Acmena YJC 2021-22 to 2024-25⁷⁵

Financial year	Gender	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
2021/2022	Female	1	0
	Male	17	4
2022/2023	Female	0	0
	Male	16	3
2023/2024	Female	0	0
	Male	20	3
2024/2025	Female	0	0
	Male	23	2

While Youth Justice has no control about who comes into custody, the over-representation of Aboriginal young people at Acmena YJC means that the centre must always be mindful of the needs of Aboriginal children and young people. Employing Aboriginal youth officers should be a high priority. Although Table 28 records several years with no (zero) girls or young women this is because it is a daily average population tally which would not account for an occasional one or two days stay.

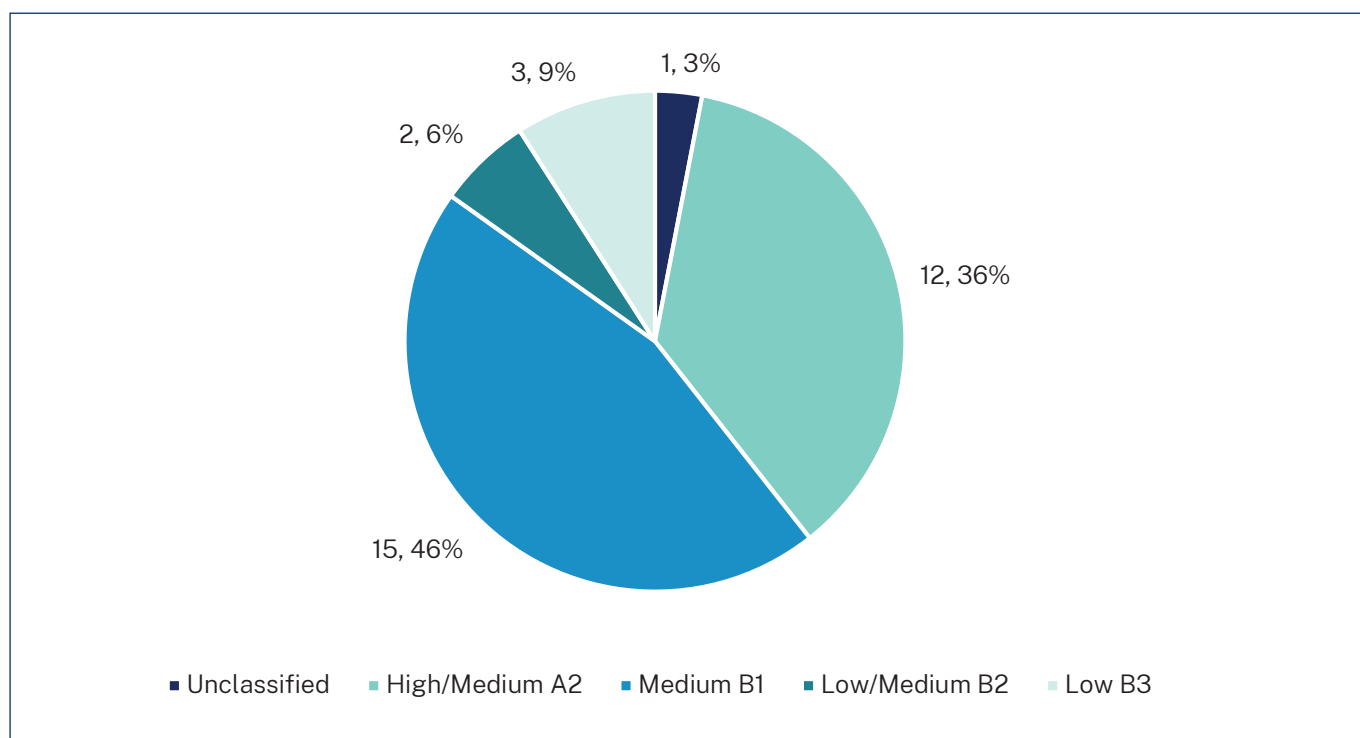
74 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

75 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

Table 29: Average daily population by detainee status at Acmena YJC 2021-22 to 2024-25⁷⁶

Financial year	Detainee status	Average daily population		
		Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Unknown
2021/2022	Control	3	0	0
	Control s19	1	0	0
	Remand	13	4	0
2022/2023	Control	3	0	0
	Control s19	0	0	0
	Remand	13	3	0
2023/2024	Control	3	0	0
	Control s19	1	0	0
	Remand	16	2	0
2024/2025	Control	3	0	0
	Control s19	1	0	0
	Remand	19	1	0

Figure 8: Classification of detainees at Acmena YJC as at 30 June 2025⁷⁷



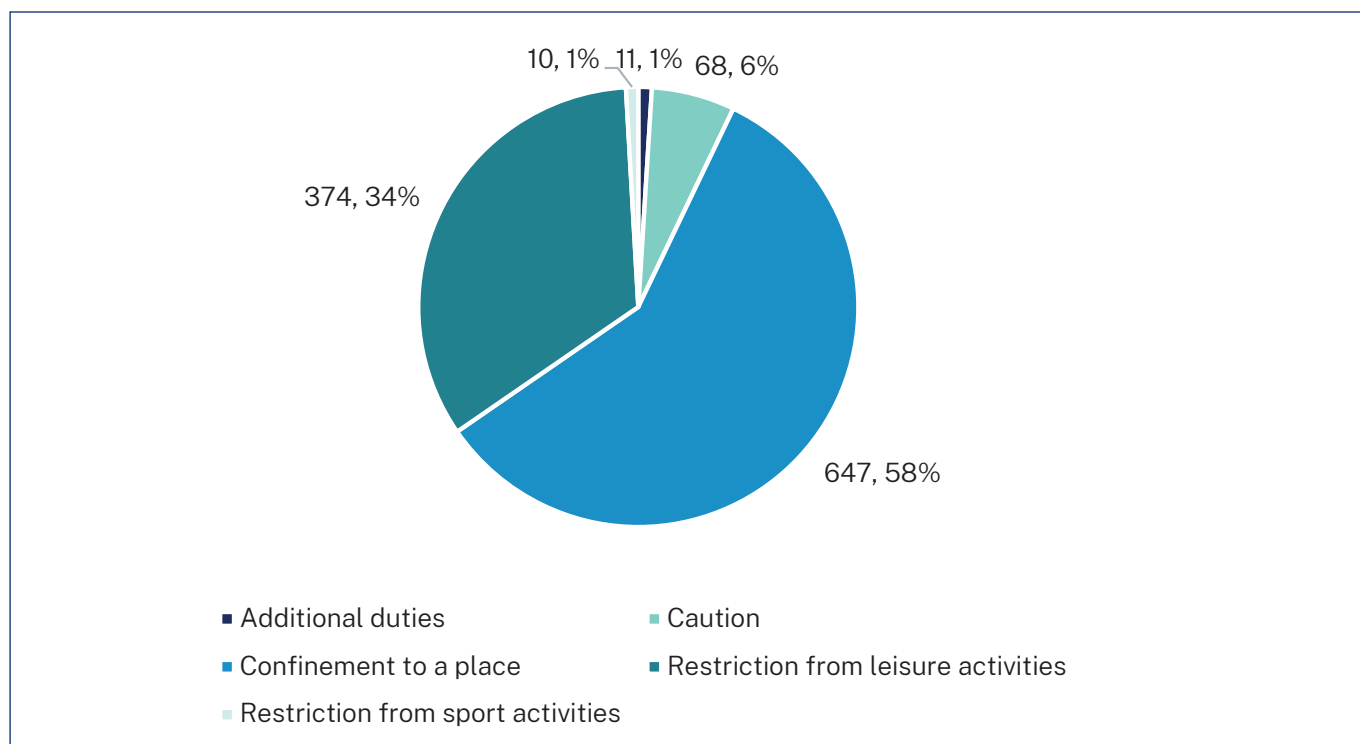
⁷⁶ Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

⁷⁷ Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

Table 30: Incident types and numbers at Acmena YJC 2024-25⁷⁸

Category	Number
Alleged Criminal Activity	2
Assault – Physical	37
Assault – Sexual	0
Assault – Verbal	4
Assault with Weapon	1
Attempt Escape	0
Contraband	21
Escape	0
Fire	0
Inappropriate Behaviour	4
Injury/Accident	1
Medical /Hospital Treatment	26
Other	1
Property Damage/Loss	2
Security Breach	20
Self-harm	15
Threat to Worker	16
Unauthorised Discharge	0

Figure 9: Punishment types and numbers at Acmena YJC 2024-25⁷⁹



78 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

79 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

Confinement, Segregation and Separation orders

Table 31: Confinement orders at Acmena YJC 2024-25⁸⁰

	<1hr	1-3hrs	3-6hrs	6-12 hrs	12-24 hrs	> 24hrs
Female Aboriginal	0	0	1	0	0	0
Female non-Aboriginal	0	2	0	0	0	0
Female Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0
Male Aboriginal	4	273	199	92	4	0
Male non-Aboriginal	0	22	29	17	2	0
Male Unknown	0	0	1	0	0	0

Table 32: Segregation orders at Acmena YJC 2024-25⁸¹

	<1hr	1-3hrs	3-6hrs	6-12 hrs	12-24 hrs	> 24hrs
Male Aboriginal	170	84	5	1	1	4
Male non-Aboriginal	8	17	1	0	0	2
Male Unknown	178	101	6	1	1	6

Table 33: Separation orders at Acmena YJC 2024-25⁸²

	<1hr	1-3hrs	3-6hrs	6-12 hrs	12-24 hrs	> 24hrs
Female Aboriginal	1	0	3	5	6	10
Female non-Aboriginal	1	0	0	2	2	7
Female Unknown	0	0	1	1	0	0
Male Aboriginal	238	156	3	2	15	38
Male non-Aboriginal	23	9	2	0	1	2
Male Unknown	1	1	0	0	0	0

80 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

81 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

82 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

Table 34: Confinement, Segregation and Separation at Acmena YJC 2021-22 vs 2023-24 vs 2024-25⁸³

Order type	Financial year	Number
Confinement	2021/2022	734
Confinement	2023/2024	660
Confinement	2024/2025	646
Segregation	2021/2022	389
Segregation	2023/2024	318
Segregation	2024/2025	586
Separation	2021/2022	799
Separation	2023/2024	891
Separation	2024/2025	528

The data in Tables 31-34 show a reduction in the use of separation orders and an increase in segregation orders. We believe the confinement orders are understated because Acmena YJC can and does confine young people to their rooms under a ‘loss of leisure’ penalty for misbehaviour. This issue is discussed further in the section 1.4.3 Restrictive practices section of this report.

Use of force (UoF) and restraints

Table 35: Use of force (UoF) and restraints at Acmena YJC 2021-22 to 2024-25⁸⁴

Financial year	UoF	Restraints
2021/2022 22 young people on average	115	57
2022/2023 19 young people on average	128	64
2023/2024 23 young people on average	213	79
2024/2025 23 young people on average	255	83

Table 36: Reasons and numbers for UoF at Acmena YJC 2024-25⁸⁵

UoF reason	Number	HRU
To allow a Medical Practitioner to carry out medical treatment on a detainee	0	No HRU at Acmena YJC
To move a Young Person who refused to move from one location to another in accordance with an Officer’s order	61	
To prevent a person from entering a detention centre by force	0	
To prevent a Young Person from escaping	0	
To prevent a Young Person from inflicting serious damage to property	5	

83 Tabled devised by the Inspector of Custodial Services.

84 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

85 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

To prevent a Young Person from injuring himself or herself	16	
To prevent or quell a riot or other disturbance	17	
To protect a dog being used to assist in the detection of drugs in a detention centre from attack or harm	0	
To protect the officer or other persons from attack or harm	222	
To search a detainee in circumstances in which the detainee refuses to submit to being searched	0	
To seize any dangerous or harmful article or substance that is in the possession of the Young Person	2	

Table 35 shows over the four-year period there has been a marked increase in UoF and use of restraints.

The most common reasons for UoF were:⁸⁶

- To protect the officer or other persons from attack or harm (539 in 4 years)
- To move a Young Person who refused to move from one location to another in accordance with an Officer's order (234 in 4 years)
- To prevent or quell a riot or other disturbance (85 in 4 years)
- To prevent a Young Person from injuring himself or herself (32 in 4 years)

Use of restraints is often associated with UoF but can occur in other situations such as a secure escort off-site.

Unfortunately, we must repeat the 2022 inspection recommendation.

Recommendation: YJNSW reduce high levels of use of force and restraints in Acmena Youth Justice Centre.

2.2 Matters arising from previous (2020 and 2022) inspections

We are satisfied that some of our recommendations from previous inspections of Acmena YJC have been implemented. However, there remains some work to do:

1. 2020 inspection recommendation 43: Acmena YJC ensures young people spend ten hours out of their room each day and young people not attending school are provided with meaningful time out of their room.

The centre manager advised that Acmena JYC has made changes to routines which (they told us) has resulted in young people spending, on average, at least 10 hours out of rooms. This is to be commended. However, calculating actual out of room hours at all YJCs is problematic. This is discussed in detail in section 1.4.2 *Calculating time out of rooms for young people* in this report.

2. 2020 inspection recommendation 44: Acmena YJC ensures that caseworkers have regular meetings with young people and for there to be a defined, private meeting space for them to meet with young people.

We note advice from Acmena YJC that a new building is being constructed to be occupied by JH&FMHN, Caseworkers and the Psychology team and a 'contract has been recently awarded to a

⁸⁶ YJNSW notes 'No. of UoF Reasons is greater than UoF numbers ... as multiple reasons may be given for each UoF'. Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 9 July 2025.

contractor to start the design and build process).

This should address our previous recommendation.

3. 2022 inspection recommendation 36: Youth Justice NSW reduce high levels of use of force and restraints in Acmena Youth Justice Centre.

Refer to Use of force (UoF) and restraints section above.

4. 2022 inspection recommendation 37: Youth Justice NSW provide more training to staff at Acmena Youth Justice Centre in professional conduct and the duty of officers and staff to report misconduct.

This recommendation had not been fully achieved when we reviewed progress in 2023/2024. We have now been advised:⁸⁷

Reportable allegations are discussed during the initial ITAP training during the Identify and respond training day and there is also information in the ITAP learner guide.

All staff must complete the Reportable Allegations eLearning course every 3 years. This eLearning covers the following:

This course contains information about reportable allegations and their connection to a number of different pieces of legislation and Divisional policies. At the completion of this module, you will be able to identify:

- Specific legislation related to reportable allegations,
- Youth Justice employee responsibilities regarding reportable allegations, and
- What is and is not reportable to the Office of the Children's Guardian and the Ombudsman as a reportable allegation.

We are satisfied that this recommendation has been achieved in full.

5. 2020 inspection recommendation 40: The centre manager at Acmena YJC, in compliance with legislation, maintains a complaints management system and ensures that both young people and staff are aware of, and understand, the process.

This recommendation has been partly addressed in that there are posters on display about contacting the Ombudsman and Official Visitors and letter boxes for young people to send complaint forms to the centre manager. However, the in-house complaint forms (inexplicably, there are two different forms depending on which unit the young people live) provide quite complicated instructions for young people who may have limited literacy skills, noting that some are quite young.

A further concern is that the letter boxes are behind a slot in the wall below officer station windows, meaning that officers could see a young person posting a complaint which might be about an officer. The forms also note that a complaint made to the centre manager might be forwarded to the unit manager where the young person is accommodated.

In our view this an overly complex system which risks the privacy of young people making complaints. During a casual conversation with three young people, we asked if they ever made in-house complaints. The responses were along the lines of 'we don't bother because nothing happens'.

Refer to section 1.4.5 Young people making complaints in this report.

Other observations

Young people were provided with individual meals in reusable plastic containers and ate before staff. The hot meals are prepared in the kitchen and were generous portions of mixed ingredients. We observed a breakfast, lunch and dinner with no complaints from the young people. Other centres could follow this example.

87 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 10 April 2025.

The accommodation units were in better condition than we observed in previous inspections. There was graffiti on many polycarbonate windows (probably scratched on with pebbles) dating back years but we did not see anything offensive or that posed a security risk. Replacing these panels is expensive so Acmena YJC has installed blackboards in rooms and other places and provided chalk so the young people can daub without causing damage.

The grounds and exercise yards were clean and tidy and young people were involved in growing vegetables.

Young people are required to attend education classes unless they are unwell – a duty of the State for school age children.

The YJC clothing and footwear provided to young people on admission was new and seemed to be of good quality.

2.3 Aboriginal young people at Acmena YJC

Importance of Country

Staff should be aware of the significant differences between Aboriginal groups from different regions and ensure that no group or individual is disadvantaged, excluded or ignored. It was identified that Aboriginal children and young people are not asked which Aboriginal Country they are from; therefore, it is not recorded. Every Aboriginal child and young person interviewed during the inspection knew who they were and where they were from. Although centre records recorded 28 Aboriginal children and young people and two non-Aboriginal children and young people, we established that every child and young person in the centre identified as being Aboriginal, with 10 being on Country and 20 being placed off Country. Under-reporting of Aboriginal children and young people was an issue we identified during our previous inspection of youth justice centres and is still occurring. Asking and recording which Aboriginal Country a child or young person is from may assist with keeping accurate records of Aboriginal children and young people, educating YJ staff, and ensuring culturally appropriate services are being delivered to Aboriginal children and young people from different Countries.

Kinship visits and external leave

Being off Country limits the ability of children and young people to have face-to-face visits with family or contact with significant cultural community members. The centre reported that one visit was recently facilitated for a family member from Moree.

Aboriginal staff, community leaders and Aboriginal families should be consulted to limit distress caused to Aboriginal children and young people when entering the custodial environment. At the time of the inspection the centre reported that it had not approved any home or external day leave for a very long time due to the classification of the children and young people at the centre. It was explained that leave supervisors are screened and must have the ability to supervise children and young people that have classification for approved leave.

Traditional Aboriginal Custodians

The traditional custodians of the Clarence region include the Gumbayngirr, Yaegl and Bundjalung people. A Welcome to Country demonstrates respect for the local traditional custodians and is an important cultural practice. At the time of the inspection Acmena had a 100% Aboriginal population. The children and young people reported that a Welcome to Country is not performed at events. It was noted by an ICS team member attending NAIDOC that a Welcome to Country was not performed. The children and young people who are off Country would like to meet with a local Elder on admission for an Acknowledgment as this is a culturally appropriate practice.

Recommendation: YJNSW ensures Acmena YJC acknowledges Traditional Custodians of the Grafton region and encourage engagement from the local Aboriginal community.

Aboriginal Staff

There has been a considerable effort to recruit and retain Aboriginal people to work at the centre. At the time of the inspection, 19 staff members identified as Aboriginal and a cultural healing day for all Aboriginal employees was being held at a local culturally significant place. Two identified caseworkers and two Aboriginal practice officers work closely with the centre. Monthly meetings are held for Aboriginal staff to support each other.

Recommendation: YJNSW ensures all staff at Acmena YJC complete ongoing cultural competency training and engage with the local Aboriginal community to maintain awareness of local Aboriginal issues.

Aboriginal services, Mentor Visits and participation of Aboriginal young people in cultural activities

Community members from the Kempsey Shine for Kids Elders group visit Acmena YJC. The centre also works with local community Elders and the Bulgarr Ngaru Medical Aboriginal Corporation to provide programs for children and young people at the centre. It was reported that local Elders are invited and encouraged to attend NAIDOC celebrations, end of year graduation ceremonies for the children and young people and on many other special occasions. A respected Uncle from Moree regularly attends as an off Country Mentor for children and young people from Kamilaroi Country.

A range of Aboriginal services visited the centre, including the local Aboriginal Medical Service and Police Community Youth Centre, which runs a weekly fitness program called Lives Lived Well. The Strong Community – Aboriginal Resilient Kids Program is also offered. The Miinggi Gilinggal residential rehabilitation treatment and live-in program is provided for Aboriginal children and young people who are in contact with the criminal justice system when released. The centre reported a coaching clinic that aims to meet the spiritual and cultural needs through sport is also offered. We recommend that the centre also implements cultural programs that include teaching Aboriginal history to children and young people.

There are two Yarning Circles at Acmena, however both are inaccessible, with one being under reconstruction.

Figure 10: Yarning Circle near program shed



Recommendation: YJNSW implement cultural programs that include Aboriginal history for children and young people detained at Acmena YJC.

Funeral and cultural obligations

Approval to attend funerals and other significant events must consider the extended family structures and obligations of Aboriginal people. The children and young people said some applications to attend family funerals had been denied. The centre reported that five young people had recently been approved to attend family funerals.

2.4 Health of young people at Acmena YJC

This report is based on a site inspection conducted on 6 April 2025. The review included direct observation of nursing staff delivering care in both the health centre and accommodation units, interviews with JH&FMHN staff, and a meeting with the centre manager.

Health services

JH&FMHN delivers health services to young people at Acmena YJC. The health service operates daily:

- Monday to Friday: 7am to 4.30pm
- Saturday to Sunday: 7am to 3.30pm

Table 37: Staffing at Acmena YJC⁸⁸

Role	Budgeted FTE	Filled FTE
Nursing unit manager (NUM)	1.0	1.0
Registered Nurse (RN)	1.4	1.4
Health Centre Clerk (HCC)	0.4	0.4
Total	2.8	2.8

Table 38: Visiting clinic services at Acmena YJC⁸⁹

Clinic	Scheduled hours	Delivered hours	Format
Aboriginal Sexual Health and Harm Reduction Officer	As required	Nil	NA
General Practitioner (GP)	4 hours per fortnight	4 hours	In-person
Adolescent Forensic Mental Health Nurse – Dual Diagnosis	40 hours per fortnight	40 hours	In-person
Psychiatrist (DD)	8 hours per month	8 hours	In-person

Findings

The NUM reported strong working relationships among the health team and between JH&FMHN staff and Youth Justice staff. This sentiment was echoed by the centre manager, who described the collaboration as highly effective. Staff expressed that there are currently few constraints to delivering health services, outside of the physical space limitations. The health centre remains too small and unfit for purpose. These issues were raised in the 2022 inspection report and continue to impact service delivery, privacy and safety. It was reported that the new build of the health centre was due to commence in June 2025.

A recent improvement reported by the NUM was installing a medication window in the medication room. Previously, nurses accessed medication through the assessment room, which compromised privacy, confidentiality, and safety due to frequent interruptions in the assessment room. The new window enables safe, private, and more efficient medication access while preserving the integrity of assessments conducted in the adjoining room.

The NUM reported a strong focus on ear health, particularly in response to the high prevalence of otitis media and hearing loss among Aboriginal young people. At the time of inspection, Acmena YJC had achieved a 100% assessment rate for ear health, including audiometry and tympanometry screening. Several referrals to Hearing Australia had been made, and at least one young person had

88 Information provided by Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network, 28 April 2025.

89 Information provided by Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network, 28 April 2025.

received hearing aids.

The health team demonstrated proactive engagement in health promotion, including:

- visible and accessible winter influenza immunisation campaigns
- planned sexual health education to coincide with Close the Gap events.

The NUM reported that the staff do not use/have access to virtual care. Nurses sometimes rely on speaker phone or Microsoft Teams to connect with off-site specialists, which may impact access to timely specialist input.

There has been no Aboriginal Health Worker on site for the past two years. Furthermore, a relationship with the local Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS) appears to be lacking. Staff reported that the local AMS had ceased providing several key services in recent years, resulting in limited external cultural health supports for young people.

Recommendation: JH&FMHN strengthen its partnership with the local Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS) to support the delivery of culturally appropriate and connected health care for young people at Acmena Youth Justice Centre, and as they return to the community.

3 Frank Baxter YJC

The unannounced inspection was conducted on 26 May 2025 (evening), 27 May (all day) and 28 May (early morning).

Frank Baxter YJC is located in Kariong approximately 70 kilometres north of Sydney, on the land of the Darkinjung people. It has the capacity to hold 118 boys and young men aged from 15 to 21 years, who are on remand or a detention order and in some cases both. Young women and girls may also be accommodated for short periods. It has an open campus layout and is the largest YJC in NSW.

Figure 11: Dance circle at Frank Baxter YJC



Figure 12: Yarning Circle at Frank Baxter YJC



3.1 General overview

At the time of the inspection Frank Baxter YJC was accommodating 59 males of whom 36 were Aboriginal children and young people.

Table 39: Frank Baxter YJC profile 2021-22 to 2024-25⁹⁰

Financial year	Bed capacity	Average daily population	Average time (days)	Average percentage on remand	Average time on remand (days)
2021/2022	120 (37 non-operational)	49	37.9	57.90%	18.4
2022/2023	120 (47 non-operational)	50	33.0	62.80%	18.5
2023/2024	120 (51 non-operational)	55	22.1	59.30%	14.5
2024/2025	120 (42 non-operational)	61	30.5	62.20%	16.4

The average daily population was below bed capacity in all years due to the number of non-

⁹⁰ Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

operational beds. Sentenced and remand (unconvicted) children and young people had short stays ranging from 22.1 days to 37.9 days. The remand cohort had the shortest stays ranging from 14.5 days to 18.5 days.

Table 40: Average daily population by gender at Frank Baxter YJC 2021-22 to 2024-25⁹¹

Financial year	Gender	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Unknown
2021/2022	Female	0	0	0
	Male	18	29	1
2022/2023	Female	0	0	0
	Male	28	21	1
2023/2024	Female	0	0	0
	Male	35	19	1
2024/2025	Female	0	0	0
	Male	39	20	2

Although Table 40 records no (zero) girls or young women this is because it is a daily average population tally which would not account for an occasional one or two days stay by a female young person.

Table 41: Average daily population by detainee status at Frank Baxter YJC 2021-22 to 2024-25⁹²

Financial year	Detainee status	Average daily population		
		Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Unknown
2021/2022	Control	7	8	0
	Control s19	1	5	0
	Remand	11	17	1
2022/2023	Control	9	4	0
	Control s19	0	4	0
	Remand	18	13	0
2023/2024	Control	9	5	0
	Control s19	2	5	1
	Remand	23	8	1
2024/2025	Control	10	2	0
	Control s19	3	6	1
	Remand	26	11	1

91 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

92 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

Figure 13: Classification of detainees at Frank Baxter YJC as at 30 June 2025⁹³

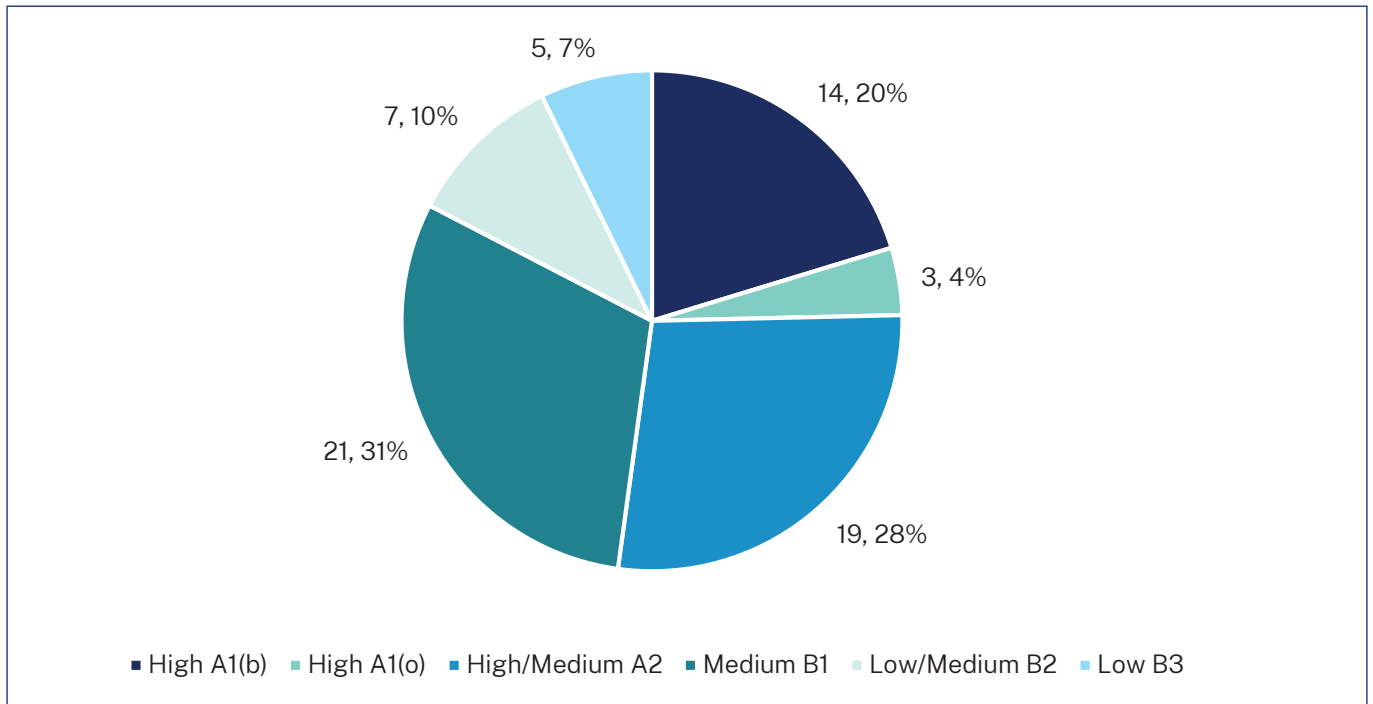


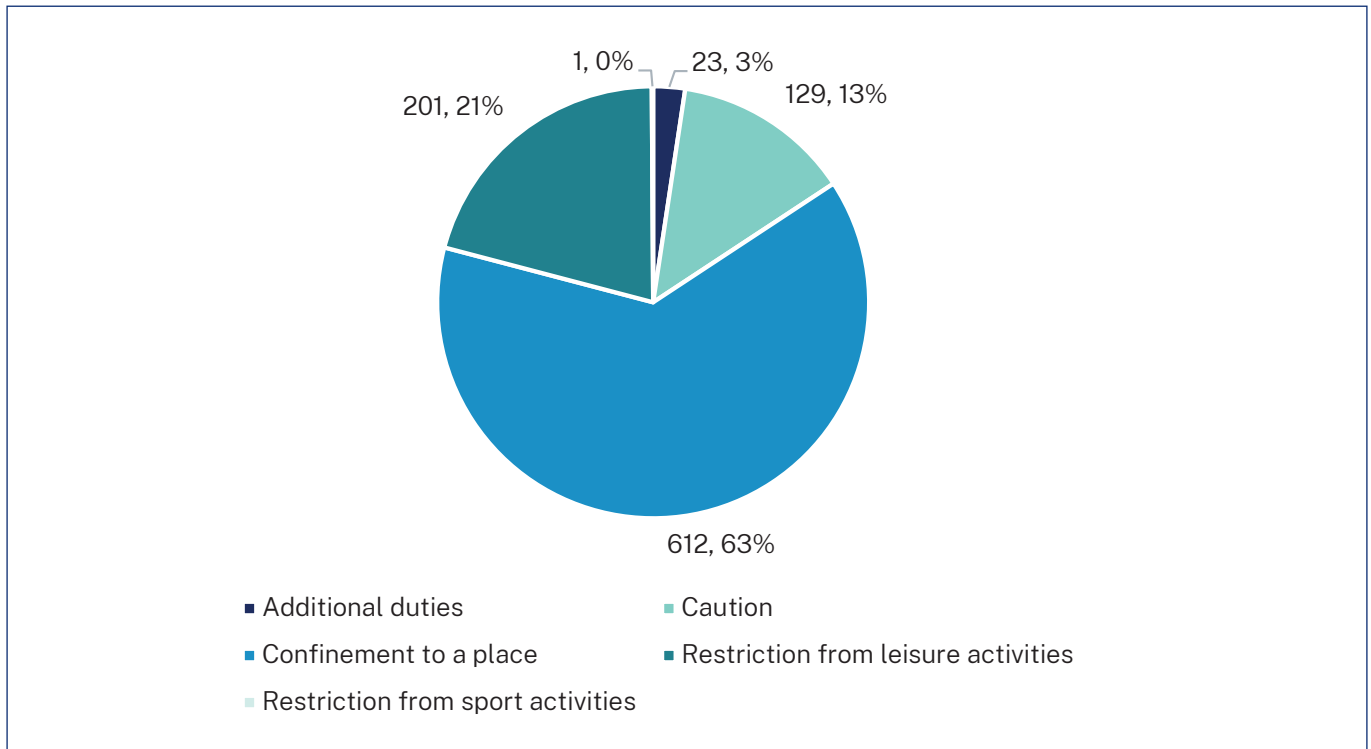
Table 42: Incident types and numbers at Frank Baxter YJC 2024-25⁹⁴

Category	Number
Alleged Criminal Activity	0
Assault – Physical	87
Assault – Sexual	0
Assault – Verbal	9
Assault with Weapon	3
Attempt Escape	0
Contraband	49
Escape	0
Fire	0
Inappropriate Behaviour	5
Injury/Accident	8
Medical /Hospital Treatment	17
Other	1
Property Damage/Loss	17
Security Breach	78
Self-harm	61
Threat to Worker	105
Unauthorised Discharge	0

93 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

94 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

Figure 14: Punishment types and numbers at Frank Baxter YJC 2024-25⁹⁵



Confinement, Segregation and Separation orders

Table 43: Confinement orders at Frank Baxter YJC 2024-25⁹⁶

	<1hr	1-3hrs	3-6hrs	6-12 hrs	12-24 hrs	> 24hrs
Female Aboriginal	0	0	0	0	0	0
Female non-Aboriginal	0	0	0	0	0	0
Female Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0
Male Aboriginal	8	168	153	110	18	0
Male non-Aboriginal	1	65	49	26	8	0
Male Unknown	0	1	0	0	0	0

Table 44: Segregation orders at Frank Baxter YJC 2024-25⁹⁷

	<1hr	1-3hrs	3-6hrs	6-12 hrs	12-24 hrs	> 24hrs
Male Aboriginal	94	184	33	6	3	36
Male non-Aboriginal	15	36	5	3	0	7
Male Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0

95 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

96 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

97 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

Table 45: Separation orders at Frank Baxter YJC 2024-25⁹⁸

	<1hr	1-3hrs	3-6hrs	6-12 hrs	12-24 hrs	> 24hrs
Female Aboriginal	0	4	8	17	32	8
Female non-Aboriginal	0	3	5	18	18	5
Female Unknown	0	1	1	4	4	0
Male Aboriginal	41	44	20	43	63	146
Male non-Aboriginal	22	26	13	18	25	54
Male Unknown	1	1	0	3	2	6

Table 46: Confinement, Segregation and Separation at Frank Baxter YJC 2021-22 vs 2023-24 vs 2024-25⁹⁹

Order type	Financial year	Number
Confinement	2021/2022	636
Confinement	2023/2024	730
Confinement	2024/2025	607
Segregation	2021/2022	373
Segregation	2023/2024	147
Segregation	2024/2025	422
Separation	2021/2022	891
Separation	2023/2024	736
Separation	2024/2025	656

It was pleasing to see a reduction in confinement and separation numbers, but we note a significant increase in segregation orders.

Use of force (UoF) and restraints

Table 47: Use of force (UoF) and restraints at Frank Baxter YJC 2021-22 to 2024-25¹⁰⁰

Financial year	UoF	Restraints
2021/2022 48 young people on average	269	172
2022/2023 50 young people on average	260	157
2023/2024 55 young people on average	303	139

98 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

99 Table devised by the Inspector of Custodial services.

100 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

2024/2025 61 young people on average	311	162
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Table 48: Reasons for and numbers of UoF at Frank Baxter YJC 2024-25¹⁰¹

UoF reason	Number	HRU
To allow a Medical Practitioner to carry out medical treatment on a detainee	1	0
To move a Young Person who refused to move from one location to another in accordance with an Officer's order	62	9
To prevent a person from entering a detention centre by force	1	0
To prevent a Young Person from escaping	0	0
To prevent a Young Person from inflicting serious damage to property	5	0
To prevent a Young Person from injuring himself or herself	29	6
To prevent or quell a riot or other disturbance	7	3
To protect a dog being used to assist in the detection of drugs in a detention centre from attack or harm	1	0
To protect the officer or other persons from attack or harm	273	40
To search a detainee in circumstances in which the detainee refuses to submit to being searched	0	0
To seize any dangerous or harmful article or substance that is in the possession of the Young Person	1	0

Use of restraints is often associated with UoF but can occur in other situations such as secure escorts off-site. The four-year data shows a mixed result for UoF (up) and restraints (down) from 2021/2022.

The most common reasons for UoF were:¹⁰²

- To protect the officer or other persons from attack or harm (925 in 4 years)
- To move a Young Person who refused to move from one location to another in accordance with an Officer's order (314 in 4 years)
- To prevent a Young Person from injuring himself or herself (122 in 4 years)
- To prevent or quell a riot or other disturbance (40 in 4 years).

3.2 Matters arising from previous (2020 and 2022) inspections

We are satisfied that most of our recommendations from previous inspections of Frank Baxter YJC have been implemented. However, there remains some work to do:

1. 2020 inspection recommendation 45: Frank Baxter YJC ensures regular and meaningful detainee representative committee meetings occur.

YJNSW has provided evidence of regular and meaningful IDCs taking place.

2. 2020 inspection recommendation 46: Frank Baxter YJC reviews the misbehaviour process to ensure young people receive procedural fairness.

¹⁰¹ Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

¹⁰² YJNSW notes 'No. of UoF Reasons is greater than UoF numbers ... as multiple reasons may be given for each UoF.' Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 9 July 2025.

Accompanied by the centre manager, we reviewed CCTV footage of a recent incident involving two young people which resulted in misbehaviour reports for both for fighting. It was clear from the footage that there was no fight but rather person “A” assaulted person “B”. We were told it was labelled ‘fighting’ because there is no misbehaviour offence of assault. The victim pled not guilty and was found not guilty. However, this was a flawed process in that it was evident that the victim was not to blame and should not have been charged with misbehaviour, which would have remained on his conduct record. The centre manager undertook to remove the victim’s misbehaviour report.¹⁰³

This incident demonstrates that Frank Baxter YJC needs to do provide more training to staff on the misbehaviour provisions of the Act. On a positive note, staff responded immediately to the assault and restrained the perpetrator with minimal force.

3. 2020 inspection recommendation 47: JH&FMHN prioritise the recruitment of health staff at the centre.

JH&FMHN had no vacancies at the time of inspection.

4. 2020 inspection recommendation 48: YJNSW ensure young people in the High Risk Management Unit and Enhanced Support Unit at Frank Baxter YJC are placed on detainee risk management plans that provide for a minimum number of hours out of their room and access to a nurse and psychologist seven days a week.

Detainee Risk Management Plans (DRMP) have been replaced by Behaviour Assistance Pathway Plans (BAP) (refer to section 1.4.4 Management plans for young people). An ongoing problem with DRMPs at Frank Baxter YJC was that the centre was not recording the minimum out of room hours for young people.

We were advised that young people in the Frank Baxter YJC High Risk Unit and Enhanced Support Unit (capacity of six people each) are on BAPs. We reviewed BAP Meeting Minutes of 26 May 2025 and 28 May 2025¹⁰⁴ and found the proceedings to be thorough and detailed.

5. 2022 inspection recommendation 28: Youth Justice NSW develop a system of regular checks and compliance recording sheets for the cleaning and maintenance of reception holding rooms at Frank Baxter Youth Justice Centre.

We found all the holding rooms were clean, and room intercoms worked.

6. 2022 inspection recommendation 29: Youth Justice NSW review induction processes at Frank Baxter Youth Justice Centre and ensure a timely transition to a mainstream unit.

We were satisfied that YJNSW had addressed this recommendation.

7. 2022 inspection recommendation 30: Youth Justice NSW ensure the young people at Frank Baxter Youth Justice Centre have access to necessary intervention programs and that caseworkers are trained and supported to deliver those programs.

We were satisfied that YJNSW had addressed this recommendation.

8. 2022 inspection recommendation 31: Youth Justice NSW appoint an identified position at Frank Baxter Youth Justice Centre to support the Aboriginal practice officer and promote a cultural agenda at the centre.

We found resourcing to support the Aboriginal Practice Officer (APO) was still an issue. The APO is expected to provide information for Aboriginal matters and promote a cultural agenda at the centre. The APO liaises constantly with community Elders and cultural educators. It is the responsibility of the APO to integrate cultural respect and responsibility in the work with Aboriginal young people, their families, staff and the wider community. It was considered that the APO will drive and oversee Aboriginal programs, groups, cultural safety and culture in the centre with the assistance of the Aboriginal caseworker. This resourcing is not sustainable as the responsibilities of their role are

103 The victim chose to not make a complaint to police.

104 Attended by the Inspector.

substantial. YJNSW should appoint an additional identified position at Frank Baxter YJC.

During the inspection we found the NSW Audit Office was onsite as part of an audit focusing on support for First Nations people in custody and post release to reduce recidivism. The audit is described as follows:¹⁰⁵

According to the NSW Treasury Indigenous Expenditure Report 2023-24, in 2021-22 the NSW Government is estimated to have spent \$1.4 billion on First Nations people for services related to the criminal justice system.

This audit will assess whether Youth Justice NSW effectively and efficiently provide supports, programs and opportunities for the rehabilitation of First Nations peoples in custody and post release to reduce recidivism. In doing so, the audit will address the following lines of inquiry:

1. Have agencies established effective governance and accountability arrangements to ensure First Nations people are effectively supported in custody, upon and post release?
2. Do agencies effectively plan and design relevant supports, programs and opportunities for rehabilitation of First Nations peoples in custody, upon and post release?
3. Do agencies effectively deliver and continuously improve relevant supports, programs and opportunities for rehabilitation of First Nations people in custody, upon and post release?

The NSW Audit Office released its report on 12th March 2026.

General observations

Frank Baxter YJC is rated as 'high security' which results in the centre receiving high security classification young people from anywhere in NSW. This means young people can be isolated from their families by distance and Aboriginal children and young people are often off Country. This necessitates close attention to in-person visits, AVL visits and young peoples' family telephone calls. In response to our 2022 inspection additional telephones have been installed in two units. Visiting Elders must also be encouraged and facilitated by YJNSW.

Overall, Frank Baxter YJC appeared to be in good physical condition with covered walkways and well-maintained gardens thanks in part to work by young people. Even though there are some two bed rooms at Frank Baxter YJC it was pleasing to see a one person per room practice is in place. However, there can be benefit in family members sharing rooms, if they wish to do so, for emotional support.

Education NSW runs "job ready" classes for white cards (general construction induction)¹⁰⁶, horticulture, laundry services and café barista classes.

As we have seen at other centres, a young person who pled not guilty to a misbehaviour charge was immediately found guilty and segregated with confinement to his room. This is an example of staff not following the explicit process set out in s20 of the Act and c82 of Regulation regarding allegations of misbehaviour. Refer also to section 1.4.3 Restrictive practices in this report where we make a recommendation about misbehaviour practices in YJCs.

The meals served to young people were generous and appetising but as noted for other centres, there was a preponderance of carbohydrates (such as large servings of white bread) at the expense of high protein foods.¹⁰⁷ Refer to section 1.4.7 Health and young people in this report.

105 Audit Office of NSW, 'Support for First Nations people in custody and post release to reduce offending 2025-26' (Web Page, undated) <<https://www.audit.nsw.gov.au/our-work/reports/support-for-first-nations-people-in-custody-and-post-release-to-reduce-recidivism>>.

106 Service NSW, 'Apply for a general construction induction card (white card)' (Web Page, 23 January 2026) <<https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/apply-for-a-general-construction-induction-card-white-card>>.

107 Harvard Health Publishing, 'High-protein foods: The best protein sources to include in a healthy diet' (Web Page, 1 December 2023) <<https://www.health.harvard.edu/nutrition/high-protein-foods-the-best-protein-sources-to-include-in-a-healthy-diet>>.

Figure 15: Evening meal during inspection at Frank Baxter YJC



3.3 Aboriginal young people at Frank Baxter YJC

Importance of Country

Staff should be aware of the significant differences between Aboriginal groups from different regions and ensure that no group or individual is disadvantaged, excluded or ignored. It was identified that Aboriginal children and young people are not asked which Aboriginal Country they are from; therefore, it is not recorded. Every Aboriginal child and young person interviewed during the inspection knew who they were and where they were from. Of the 59 children and young people in the centre at the time of the inspection 36 identified as being Aboriginal. It was reported that most staff are not aware of the difference and diversity of Aboriginal children and young people. The Country of Aboriginal young people was not asked immediately on admission and therefore not recorded. Under-reporting of Aboriginal children and young people was an issue we identified during our previous inspection of youth justice centres and is still occurring. Asking and recording which Aboriginal Country a child or young person is from may assist with keeping accurate records of Aboriginal children and young people, educating YJ staff, and ensuring culturally appropriate services are being delivered to Aboriginal children and young people from different Countries. The inspection found high numbers of young Aboriginal people being held off Country, which is not ideal. It is important for young people to remain close to their family and community.

Aboriginal Staff

The Aboriginal Practice Officer (APO) was expected to provide information for Aboriginal matters and promote a cultural agenda at the centre. The APO liaises constantly with community Elders and cultural educators. It is the responsibility of the APO to integrate cultural respect and responsibility in the work with Aboriginal young people, their families, staff and the wider community. It was considered that the APO will drive and oversee Aboriginal programs, groups, cultural safety and culture in the centre with the assistance of the Aboriginal caseworker. This resourcing is not sustainable as the responsibilities of their role are substantial. YJNSW should appoint an additional identified position at Frank Baxter YJC. We are pleased to note a role was created and the position was filled in late 2025.¹⁰⁸

Recommendation: YJNSW appoint an identified position at Frank Baxter YJC to support the Aboriginal practice officer and promote a cultural agenda at the centre.

Traditional Aboriginal Custodians

The traditional custodians of the Gosford area are the Darkinjung people. A Welcome to Country demonstrates respect to the local traditional custodians and is an important cultural practice. At the time of the inspection of the 59 children and young people in the centre at the time of the inspection 36 identified as being Aboriginal with the majority reporting as being off Country. The centre reported that Elders from the mid north coast attended the opening of the Dance Circle. It would be respectful to perform a Welcome to Country on celebration days that are significant to Aboriginal people.

Recommendation: YJNSW ensure Frank Baxter YJC acknowledge Traditional Custodians of the Gosford region and encourage engagement from the local Aboriginal community.

Aboriginal services, Mentor visits and participation of Aboriginal young people in cultural activities

It is essential that Aboriginal communities have a voice and are drivers of programs affecting their young people and families. Taking steps to address the immediate issues affecting the youth justice system is important. However, it is critical that strategies with long term impact are pursued, and greater attention given to front end strategies that address family, housing, education and health care support; and funding community initiatives (culturally inclusive) in places that are needed.

A respected Kamilaroi Uncle attends the centre regularly to paint with the young people.

The centre has a Dance Circle and a Yarning Circle; however, both are inaccessible. The young people reported either not attending or not being aware of these cultural spaces.

Recommendation: YJNSW implement cultural programs that include Aboriginal history for children and young people detained at Frank Baxter YJC.

Funeral and cultural obligations

Approval to attend funerals and other significant events must consider the extended family structures and obligations of Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal cultural awareness for all staff

There was interest among the executive staff for broader cultural training and Aboriginal cultural safety training. Youth Officer recruits must complete a unit titled 'Supporting Aboriginal Young People' as part of the Induction, Training and Assessment Program (ITAP) before commencing formal duties in YJC. '8 Aboriginal Ways of Learning', '8 Ways Workshop', 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Good Practice Guide' and 'Aboriginal Cultures and Histories' are offered for staff.

Recommendation: YJNSW ensure all staff at Frank Baxter YJC complete ongoing cultural competency training and engage with the local Aboriginal community to maintain awareness of local Aboriginal issues.

3.4 Health of young people at Frank Baxter YJC

This report is based on a site inspection conducted on 27 May 2025. The review included direct observation of nursing staff delivering care in the health centre and interviews with JH&FMHN staff.

Health services

JH&FMHN is responsible for delivering health services to young people at Frank Baxter YJC. The health service operates daily:

- 7am to 9pm, seven days a week.

Table 49: Staffing at Frank Baxter YJC¹⁰⁹

Role	Budgeted FTE	Filled FTE
Nursing unit manager (NUM)	1.0	1.0
Registered Nurse (RN)	5.8	5.8
Health Centre Clerk (HCC)	0.6	0.6
Clinical Support Officer (CSO)	0.4	0.4
Total*	7.8	7.8

Table 50: Visiting clinic services at Frank Baxter YJC¹¹⁰

Clinic	Scheduled hours	Delivered hours	Format
Aboriginal Sexual Health and Harm Reduction Officer	As required	Nil	NA
General Practitioner (GP)	6 hrs per week	6 hrs per week	In person
Adolescent Forensic Mental Health Nurse – Dual Diagnosis	40 hrs per week	38 hrs per week	In person
Psychiatrist (DD)	12 hrs per week	9 hrs per week.	In person and virtual care
Oral Health	As required	2.7 hrs per month	In person

Findings

Gosford Hospital provides emergency care, diagnostic imaging, and outpatient services for young people at Frank Baxter YJC. JH&FMHN staff reported a strong and well-established working relationship with the hospital, which supports access to external medical services. Young people requiring specialist care are also referred to community-based providers, with appointments coordinated by the Justice Health team.

Nursing staff described a respectful and collaborative relationship with YJNSW staff. However, access to children and young people for healthcare appointments was reported to be ‘sporadic’. The absence of a dedicated clinic support role or escort officer means that access to young people relies on YJNSW staffing and priorities on the day. Movements to the health centre compete with other operational demands, including external escorts and scheduled programs. Only one young person is escorted to the health centre at a time, significantly limiting the number of young people who can be seen daily. This also restricts the ability of health staff to maximise visiting specialist appointments.

While two nursing staff are rostered each afternoon, staff reported minimal access to young people in the health centre after 4pm, further reducing opportunities for health service delivery during this period.

There is currently no access to Aboriginal health services at the centre. Health staff advised that there is no formal relationship with the local Aboriginal Medical Service or Aboriginal Health providers, and limited engagement with JH&FMHN Aboriginal Health staff. This was identified as a gap in culturally responsive care.

Health staff also raised concerns about the quality and quantity of food provided at the centre. Staff reported difficulty promoting healthy eating habits among young people, due to the unlimited

109 Information provided by Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network, 28 April 2025.

110 Information provided by Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network, 28 April 2025.

availability of refined carbohydrates such as white bread and sugary foods, which is compounded by access to buy-ups. Food is often used as an incentive and reward in the centre. Instances of significant weight gain were noted, with some young people requiring medical intervention to manage associated health risks. Refer to section 1.4.7 Health and young people in this report.

Recommendation: JH&FMHN strengthen its partnership with the local Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS) to support the delivery of culturally appropriate and connected health care for young people at Frank Baxter YJC, and as they return to the community.

4 Cobham YJC

The unannounced inspection was conducted on 22 May 2025 (all day), 23 May (all day) and 24 May (morning).

Cobham YJC is located in Werrington, approximately 50 kilometres west of Sydney CBD and is located on Dharug Country.

It is a remand centre for young males aged 15 years and over. It accommodates up to 109 young people, including those on a detention order who have a high security classification. Young women arrested by police may be held for brief periods pending bail applications or transfer to Reiby YJC.

Figure 16: Centre grounds at Cobham YJC



4.1 General overview

At the time of the inspection Cobham YJC was accommodating 68 males of whom 32 were Aboriginal children and young people.

Table 51: Cobham YJC profile 2021-22 to 2024-25¹¹¹

Financial year	Bed capacity	Average daily population	Average time (days)	Average percentage on remand	Average time on remand (days)
2021/2022	109	57	23.1	75.40%	14.0
2022/2023	109 (6 non-operational)	61	19.5	77.40%	16.7
2023/2024	109 (13 non-operational)	65	18.8	80.30%	13.4
2024/2025	123 (26 non-operational)	69	19.9	71.00%	11.6

The average daily population was well below bed capacity in all years. Sentenced and remand (unconvicted) young people had short stays ranging from 18.8 days to 23.1 days. The remand cohort

¹¹¹ Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

had the shortest stays ranging from 11.6 days to 16.7 days.

Table 52: Average daily population by gender at Cobham YJC 2021-22 to 2024-25¹¹²

Financial year	Gender	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
2021/2022	Female	0	0
	Male	20	37
2022/2023	Female	0	0
	Male	24	37
2023/2024	Female	0	0
	Male	29	36
2024/2025	Female	0	0
	Male	30	38

Although Table 52 records no girls or young women this may be because it is a daily average population tally which would not account for an occasional one or two days stay by a female young person.

Table 53: Average daily population by detainee status at Cobham YJC 2021-22 to 2024-25¹¹³

Financial year	Detainee status	Average daily population		
		Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Unknown
2021/2022	Control	4	6	0
	Control s19	0	4	0
	Remand	16	27	0
2022/2023	Control	3	6	0
	Control s19	0	4	0
	Remand	20	26	0
2023/2024	Control	4	5	0
	Control s19	1	2	0
	Remand	24	28	0
2024/2025	Control	7	5	0
	Control s19	3	5	0
	Remand	20	28	0

112 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

113 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

Figure 17: Classification of detainees at Cobham YJC as at 30 June 2025¹¹⁴

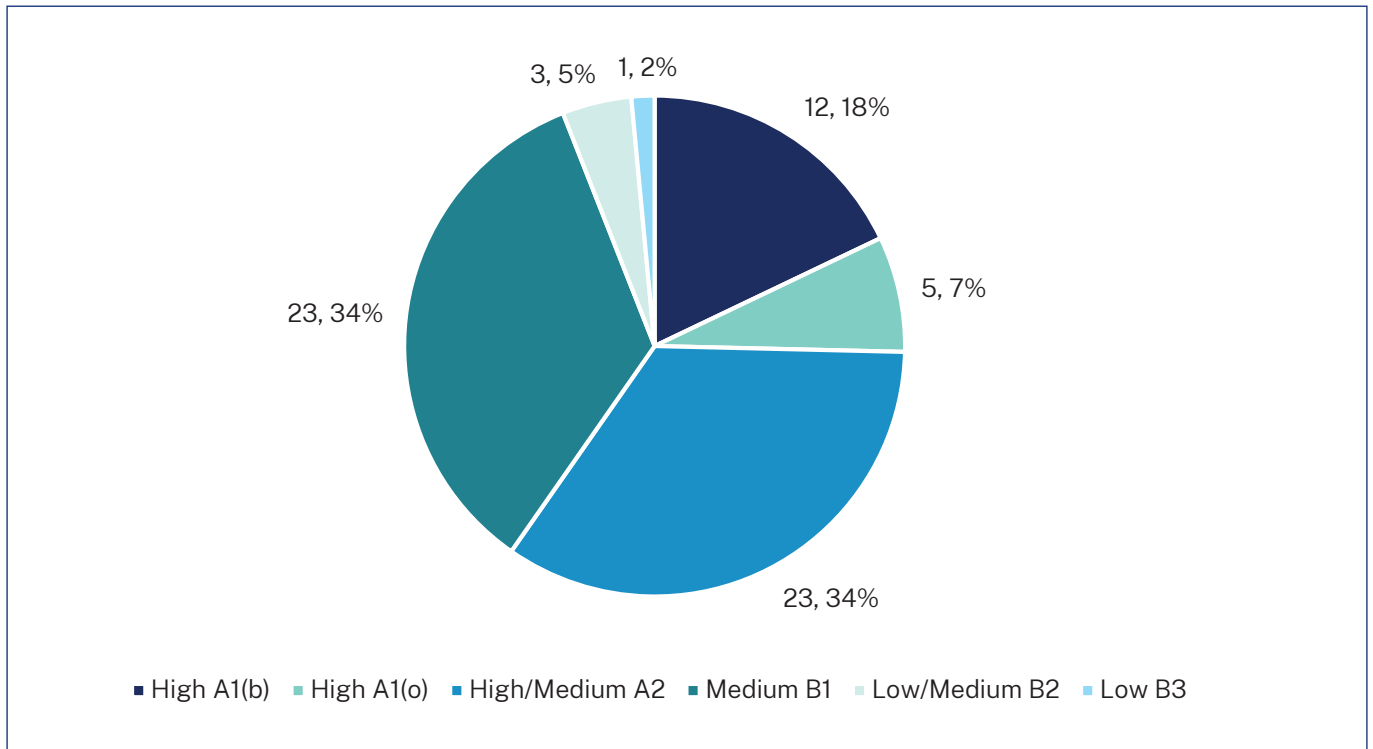


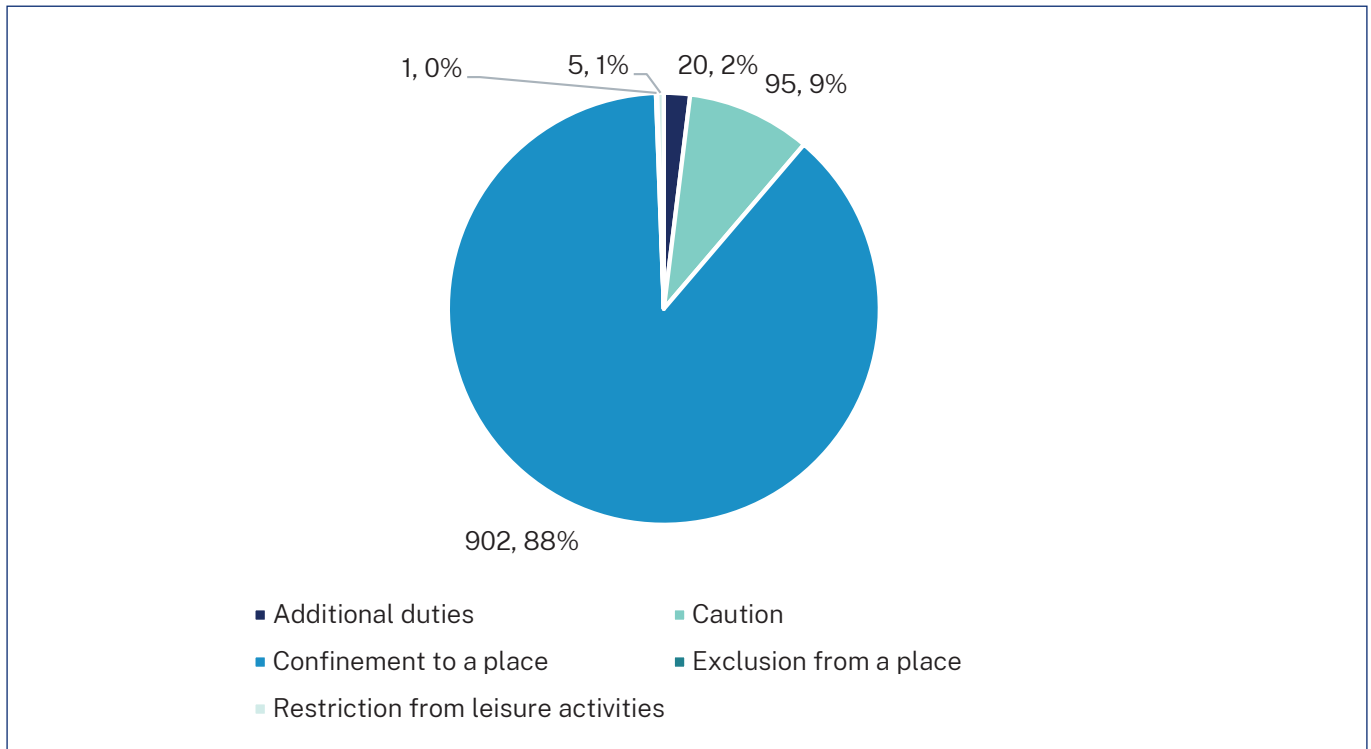
Table 54: Incident types and numbers at Cobham YJC 2024-25¹¹⁵

Category	Number
Alleged Criminal Activity	1
Assault – Physical	126
Assault – Sexual	0
Assault – Verbal	1
Assault with Weapon	4
Attempt Escape	1
Contraband	35
Escape	0
Fire	2
Inappropriate Behaviour	1
Injury/Accident	1
Medical /Hospital Treatment	34
Other	2
Property Damage/Loss	7
Security Breach	20
Self-harm	39
Threat to Worker	1
Unauthorised Discharge	0

¹¹⁴ Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

¹¹⁵ Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

Figure 18: Punishment types and numbers at Cobham YJC 2024-25¹¹⁶



Confinement, Segregation and Separation orders

Table 55: Confinement orders at Cobham YJC 2024-25¹¹⁷

	<1hr	1-3hrs	3-6hrs	6-12 hrs	12-24 hrs	> 24hrs
Male Aboriginal	8	154	140	93	75	0
Male non-Aboriginal	5	106	153	110	58	0
Male Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 56: Segregation orders at Cobham YJC 2024-25¹¹⁸

	<1hr	1-3hrs	3-6hrs	6-12 hrs	12-24 hrs	> 24hrs
Male Aboriginal	10	5	1	0	1	45
Male non-Aboriginal	9	3	3	1	1	26
Male Unknown	0	1	0	0	0	0

¹¹⁶ Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

¹¹⁷ Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

¹¹⁸ Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

Table 57: Separation orders at Cobham YJC 2024-25¹¹⁹

	<1hr	1-3hrs	3-6hrs	6-12 hrs	12-24 hrs	> 24hrs
Female Aboriginal	1	0	0	0	0	0
Female non-Aboriginal	3	0	0	0	0	0
Female Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0
Male Aboriginal	128	76	7	2	6	80
Male non-Aboriginal	165	102	6	6	7	41
Male Unknown	1	0	0	0	0	0

Table 58: Confinement, Segregation and Separation at Cobham YJC 2021-22 vs 2023-24 vs 2023-25¹²⁰

Order type	Financial year	Number
Confinement	2021/2022	636
Confinement	2023/2024	730
Confinement	2024/2025	902
Segregation	2021/2022	373
Segregation	2023/2024	147
Segregation	2024/2025	106
Separation	2021/2022	891
Separation	2023/2024	736
Separation	2024/2025	631

We note an increase in the number of confinement orders and a reduction in segregation and separation orders.

Use of force (UoF) and restraints

Table 59: Use of force (UoF) and restraints at Cobham YJC 2021-22 to 2024-25¹²¹

Financial year	UoF	Restraints
2021/2022 57 young people on average	222	93
2022/2023 61 young people on average	251	106
2023/2024 65 young people on average	318	120

119 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

120 Table devised by the Inspector of Custodial Services.

121 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

2024/2025	371	159
68 young people on average		

Table 60: Reasons and numbers for UoF at Cobham YJC 2024-25¹²²

UoF reason	Number	HRU
To allow a Medical Practitioner to carry out medical treatment on a detainee	0	0
To move a Young Person who refused to move from one location to another in accordance with an Officer's order	43	6
To prevent a person from entering a detention centre by force	0	0
To prevent a Young Person from escaping	1	0
To prevent a Young Person from inflicting serious damage to property	7	0
To prevent a Young Person from injuring himself or herself	15	0
To prevent or quell a riot or other disturbance	43	3
To protect a dog being used to assist in the detection of drugs in a detention centre from attack or harm	0	0
To protect the officer or other persons from attack or harm	350	22
To search a detainee in circumstances in which the detainee refuses to submit to being searched	1	0
To seize any dangerous or harmful article or substance that is in the possession of the Young Person	4	0

Use of restraints is often associated with UoF but can occur in other situations such as secure escorts off-site. The four-year data in Table 59 shows a steady increase in UoF and restraints from 2021/2022. Of particular concern was a 27% increase (+67 instances) in UoF between 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 compared to the average daily population increase of just 7% (+4) (refer to Table 52).

The most common reasons for UoF were:¹²³

- To protect the officer or other persons from attack or harm (1032 in 4 years)
- To prevent or quell a riot or other disturbance (170 in 4 years)
- To move a Young Person who refused to move from one location to another in accordance with an Officer's order (125 in 4 years)
- To prevent a Young Person from injuring himself or herself (15 in 4 years)

4.2 Matters arising from previous (2020 and 2022) inspections

We are satisfied that some of our recommendations from previous inspections of Cobham YJC have been implemented. However, there remains some work to do:

1. 2020 inspection recommendation 22: Cobham YJC undertakes regular cleaning of the Tandarra unit.

The Tandarra unit, opened over 30 years ago, had been used as the induction unit for new arrivals

¹²² Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

¹²³ YJNSW notes 'No. of UoF Reasons is greater than UoF numbers ... as multiple reasons may be given for each UoF.' Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 9 July 2025.

until about one week before the inspection. There is a room set aside for girls and young women which we observed to be unclean, but had toiletries and linen placed on the dirty mattress ready for a new reception into custody.

At the time of inspection, the Tandarra unit was closed temporarily due to a failure of the air conditioning (no heating).¹²⁴ We understand that there is also an asbestos problem in this and other older units at Cobham YJC. We note that the *Asbestos Containing Building Material Report* for Cobham YJC is dated 15 December 2022 and that it is now 2025 with asbestos problems still evident.

In 2022 we commented:

Our previous reports have been critical of older units in YJCs. They do not provide a suitable environment for the care and management of young people. The unit design is oppressive; rooms have little natural light and there is no ability to see beyond the concrete walls. The design and facilities are outdated and reflect the worst of custodial environments for young people in New South Wales.¹²⁵

Nothing has improved since 2022, and we repeat our 2022 recommendation.¹²⁶

Figure 19: Tandarra Unit at Cobham YJC



Recommendation: YJNSW retire (close) the Tandarra and Taralga units at Cobham YJC.

2. 2020 inspection recommendation 23: Cobham YJC ceases the practice of placing young women and girls in the Tandarra unit which accommodates boys and young men.

Young women and girls are still accommodated at Cobham YJC for short stays (a day or so) until they are bailed or moved to Reiby YJC. There is a room set aside for girls and young women which we observed was unclean but had toiletries and linen placed on the dirty mattress.

3. 2020 inspection recommendation 24: YJNSW ensures the induction unit at Cobham YJC is a

¹²⁴ The Taralga unit (15 beds) is currently being used for new inductions.

¹²⁵ Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection of Six Youth Justice Centres 2022*, (Report, March 2024) 56.

¹²⁶ YJNSW have advised they do not support this recommendation as closing these units will reduce capacity and may lead to young people having to share rooms. Information provided by Youth Justice 4 February 2026.

modern unit with communal eating and social spaces.

The Tandarra induction unit is a dismal place to accommodate young people who may be entering custody for the first time and are considered to be at high risk of self-harm. It should be closed as a matter of urgency.

4. 2020 inspection recommendation 25: YJNSW conduct a review of the visits area at Cobham YJC to enable more contact visits to take place with young people and their families.

In 2020 we noted ‘A real and immediate need exists for construction of either additional contact visit rooms or a large communal visit room similar to those in other YJCs in NSW. A large communal visits space would enable more visits to occur’ and ‘There are two contact visit rooms and two non-contact visit rooms.’¹²⁷

On this inspection we found there were still only two contact visits rooms but there were eight non-contact visits rooms (only six in use).

5. 2020 inspection recommendation 26: YJNSW ensures young people in the High Risk Management Unit at Cobham YJC are seen by a nurse and have access to a centre based psychologist seven days a week.

We are satisfied that this recommendation has been addressed.

6. 2020 inspection recommendation 27: Cobham YJC ensures interview rooms or other appropriate space that ensures confidentiality are used to facilitate psychological assessment and intervention.

Psychologists do not have private interview rooms in the old Tandarra and Taralga units but do have reasonably appropriate spaces in the newer units (Bligh, Jamison and Carter). However, these rooms were being used for storage. The psychologists’ preference would be to have a dedicated space like the building at Frank Baxter YJC.

7. 2022 inspection recommendation 20: Youth Justice NSW retire the Tandarra and Taralga units at Cobham Youth Justice Centre.

For the reasons articulated above we restate this recommendation again.

8. 2022 inspection recommendation 21: Youth Justice NSW ensure young people at Cobham Youth Justice Centre are provided with warm bedding (doonas) and new underwear.

We were pleased to find doonas are now standard issue and new underwear was being issued. We did see socks being laundered and reissued. Socks are also a personal hygiene item and must not be re-issued.

9. 2022 inspection recommendation 22: Youth Justice NSW ensure all detainee risk management plans at Cobham Youth Justice Centre include a minimum daily six hours’ time out of room for young people.

Detainee Risk Management Plans (DRMP) have been replaced by Behaviour Assistance Pathway Plans (BAP). Refer to section 1.4.3 Restrictive Practices in this report.

10. 2022 inspection recommendation 24: Youth Justice NSW cease using the holding rooms in the old infrastructure of Cobham Youth Justice Centre.

It seems that holding rooms are still being used on some occasions rather than a young person’s room. The reason for this was not clear to us. In one of the holding cells we attempted to activate the emergency intercom system which was damaged and failed to connect to the control room. This was a serious safety issue which we immediately brought to the attention of the centre manager who advised that the room would be taken offline (closed) until the problem was fixed.

11. 2022 inspection recommendation 25: Youth Justice NSW ensures psychologists have access to interview rooms or other confidential spaces to facilitate psychological assessments and

¹²⁷ Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection of Six Youth Justice Centres in NSW*, (Report, December 2020) 48.

interventions with young people.

As previously stated, this remains an issue.

12. 2022 inspection recommendation 26: Cobham Youth Justice Centre refrain from locking young people in their rooms while client assessment meetings are being conducted.

This was still occurring, however we understand the need for this to occur for safety reasons and to minimise distractions during client assessment meetings.

General observations

Cobham YJC is rated as 'high security' which results in it receiving high security classification young people from anywhere in NSW. This means young people can be isolated from their families by distance and Aboriginal young people are often off Country. This necessitates the need for close attention to in-person visits, AVL visits and young peoples' family telephone calls. Visiting Elders must also be encouraged and facilitated by YJNSW.

As we have recommended on several occasions, the Tandarra and Taralga units should be decommissioned as they are not fit for purpose and contain asbestos.

Meals at Cobham YJC were generally satisfactory, although high in carbohydrates such as large servings of white bread and copious amounts of white sugar and honey added to breakfast foods. This contributes to weight gain problems that we have observed in all centres. We did observe a cardboard box of morning tea fruit (healthy food) being kept in an officers' station because, we were told, the fruit could be used as weapon. Refer to section 1.4.7 Health and young people in this report.

We reviewed some use of force CCTV footage to see if the staff response was appropriate in the way the young person was treated. Nothing of concern was noted.

Misbehaviour confinement punishments continue to be a problem at Cobham YJC. In 2023/2024 there were 830 punishments of which 723 (87%) were 'confinement to a place' compared to 67% at Frank Baxter YJC. We observed a misbehaviour hearing conducted through a young person's room door hatch resulting in 10 hours confinement. This does not sit well with s20 of the Act:

- (3) The person by whom a complaint is being heard shall observe the rules of natural justice and, without limiting the generality of those rules, shall ensure that –
- (a) reasonable notice of the substance of the complaint is given to the person to whom the complaint relates before the hearing commences,
 - (b) reasonable opportunity is given for the making of submissions by or on behalf of the person to whom the complaint relates (including submissions that challenge any allegations made in relation to that person) while the hearing is being conducted, and
 - (c) any submissions made by or on behalf of the person to whom the complaint relates are taken into consideration in any decision made by the person by whom the complaint is being heard.

In our view, Cobham YJC staff need further training specific to s20 (Complaints of misbehaviour) and s21 (Punishments for misbehaviour) of the Act. Mistakes made in relation to s20 or s21 could result in litigation for damages brought against the State by a current or former detained young person.

It was pleasing to note that an Aboriginal young person is commencing a Certificate II Traineeship in Civil Engineering with a statewide company. He will be paid Award wages and has the prospect of ongoing employment in the industry once released from custody.

As in other centres, there were problems with the management of young people's complaints. For example, they must ask staff for a complaint form (privacy issue) rather than having forms available in an accessible container of some sort in each unit.

Apart from making complaints, young people have a Detainee Representative Committee (DRC)¹²⁸ for each unit where they can make suggestions or requests. We reviewed DRC minutes from different units that were held in April and May 2025. The 'Decisions or Actions Planned' were somewhat brief and with one exception, no centre action dates were recorded.

Cobham YJC also has a Centre Representative Committee (CRC)¹²⁹ which has one young person from each unit who meet with two Assistant Managers and other staff members. We reviewed minutes of a meeting held on 26 February 2025. The outcomes of the meeting for young people were reasonably helpful but again no centre action dates were recorded.

On the other hand, it was encouraging to see that Cobham YJC staff are engaged in monitoring each other's conduct in the workplace. We were provided with a *Summary of an Allegation or Complaint Against an Employee Form* which dealt with a use of force by an officer on a young person made by another officer. This allegation was taken seriously and resulted in lessons learned from the incident about 'failure to attempt negotiation' and 'lack of a warning'.¹³⁰ This is an example of good practice by Cobham YJC.

4.3 Aboriginal young people at Cobham YJC

Importance of Country

Staff should be aware of the significant differences between Aboriginal groups from different regions and ensure that no group or individual is disadvantaged, excluded or ignored. The centre reported asking Aboriginal children and young people where they are from. The centre carefully records and acknowledges the Country that each Aboriginal young person identifies as belonging, and records this information in their case plans. Every Aboriginal child and young person interviewed during the inspection knew who they were and where they were from. Of the 68 children and young people in the centre 32 identified as being Aboriginal with the majority being off Country. Asking and recording which Aboriginal Country a child or young person is from may assist with keeping accurate records of Aboriginal children and young people, educating YJ staff, and ensuring culturally appropriate services are being delivered to Aboriginal children and young people from different Countries.

Aboriginal Staff

During the induction process, Aboriginal staff were engaging with young people to begin building a connection. At the time of the inspection there were 14 Aboriginal identified positions. Aboriginal staff play key roles in cultural mentoring and daily engagement with young people, with a focus on embedding Aboriginal cultural knowledge and values.

Traditional Aboriginal Custodians

The traditional custodians of the St Marys region are the Dharug people. A Welcome to Country demonstrates respect to the local traditional custodians and is an important cultural practice. At the time of the inspection of Cobham 44% of the population were Aboriginal. Cobham hosts the Aboriginal Community Consultative Committee every three months with local Aboriginal stakeholders, community members and service providers. The centre maintains relationships with Senior Knowledge Holders. These Elders visit Cobham to support young people and staff.

Aboriginal services, Mentor visits and participation of Aboriginal young people in cultural activities

Local community members visit the centre weekly, maintaining consistent cultural engagement. Aboriginal services provide support in the areas of legal, cultural, and health services for young people. The Men's Group, Koori Touch, cross-centre Aboriginal Practice Officers, and significant community members provide cultural guidance, physical activity, and cultural connection. This

128 DRCs operate at all centres.

129 CRCs operate at all centres.

130 The outcomes for the accused officer were ongoing at the time of the inspection.

network of support allows young people to remain connected to their community.

Funeral and cultural obligations

Approval to attend funerals and other significant events must take into account the extended family structures and obligations of Aboriginal people. The children and young people said some applications to attend family funerals had been denied. The centre reported that one young person had been approved to attend a funeral in the past six months.

Aboriginal cultural awareness for all staff

All staff participate in cultural awareness training as part of the Induction Training And Program (ITAP).

4.4 Health of young people at Cobham YJC

This report is based on a site inspection conducted on 22 May 2025. The review included direct observation of nursing staff delivering care in the health centre and interviews with JH&FMHN staff.

Health services

JH&FMHN is responsible for delivering health services to young people at Cobham YJC. The health service operates daily:

- 7am to 9pm, seven days a week.

Table 61: Healthcare staffing at Cobham YJC

Role	Budgeted FTE	Filled FTE
Nurse Manager (NM)	1.0	1.0
Registered Nurse (RN)	6.4	6.4
Clinical Support Officer (CSO)	1.0	1.0
Total	8.4	8.4

Table 62: Visiting clinic services at Cobham YJC

Clinic	Scheduled hours	Delivered hours	Format
Aboriginal MH Clinical Lead	As required	2 hrs per fortnight	Virtual care
Aboriginal Sexual Health Harm Reduction Officer	8 hrs bi-monthly	Nil	NA
GP	6 hrs per week	6 hrs per week	In person
Adolescent Forensic Mental Health Dual Diagnosis Nurse	32 hrs per week	32hrs per week	In person and virtual care
Psychiatrist (DD)	8 hrs per week	8 hrs per week	In person and virtual care
Oral Health	9 hrs per month	4.7 hrs per month	In person

Findings

JH&FMHN staff at Cobham YJC reported strong working relationships with YJNSW staff, with no significant barriers identified in young people's access to healthcare. The presence of a dedicated clinic support worker was highlighted as a strength, with staff noting a responsive approach to

facilitating health appointments and needs.

Emergency care, diagnostic imaging, and outpatient services are provided by Nepean Hospital, while specialist appointments are supported through community-based providers. Staff reported that these arrangements functioned effectively, ensuring young people's access to external health services.

Health promotion activities occur regularly. In a positive development, health promotion education will soon be delivered via the centre's internal Cobham radio program, which the young people operate.

The JH&FMHN Aboriginal Mental Health clinicians provide cultural health support for Aboriginal young people. They have a good relationship with the Cobham Aboriginal Practice Officer and work well in collaboration for the young people.

Health staff reported concerns regarding the notification process following use-of-force incidents. It was noted that there is no formalised or consistent process for alerting health staff when these events occur, and that notification currently relies on individual YJNSW staff or proactive follow-up by JH&FMHN clinicians.

Nutrition and diet were raised as significant concerns during the inspection. Health staff reported widespread access to high-calorie and nutritionally poor food options, including 'buy-ups'. Multiple cases of excessive weight gain among children and young people were noted, including instances where medication was required to manage associated health risks. Concerns were also raised about the limited ability to accommodate children and young people with specific dietary needs, including those with sensory-based food aversions related to neurodevelopmental conditions such as autism, or those presenting with malnutrition upon entry to the centre from the community. While JH&FMHN has consulted internal specialists, including dietitians and eating disorder clinicians, staff reported that the capacity to implement their recommendations is limited due to the lack of control over the food environment. Refer to section 1.4.7 Health and young people in this report.

Recommendation: YJNSW ensures Cobham YJC implements a system to inform JH&FMHN after every use of force.

5 Orana YJC

The unannounced inspection was conducted on 7 May 2025 (evening), 8 May (all day) and 9 May (morning).

Orana YJC is located in Dubbo, land of the Wiradjuri Nation, and is located approximately 380 kilometres northwest of Sydney. It is a centre for children and young people aged from 10–21 years, who are on remand or serving a detention order. It accommodates up to 30 young people and young women and girls for short periods. The centre was officially opened in 1999, is ageing and needs refurbishment.

Figure 20: Centre grounds at Orana YJC



Figure 21: Yarning Circle at Orana YJC



5.1 General overview

At the time of the inspection Orana YJC was accommodating 22 children and young people of whom 19 were Aboriginal people.

Table 63: Orana YJC profile 2021-22 to 2024-25¹³¹

Financial year	Bed capacity	Average daily population	Average time (days)	Average percentage on remand	Average time on remand (days)
2021/2022	45	10	10.7	86.40%	8.6
2022/2023	45 (3 non-operational)	13	11.5	77.20%	8.5
2023/2024	45 (4 non-operational)	15	12.5	89.00%	11.5
2024/2025	45 (4 non-operational)	17	16.8	76.40%	13.2

The average daily population was well below bed capacity in all years. Sentenced and remand (unconvicted) young people had short stays at Orana YJC ranging from 10.7 days to 16.8 days. The remand cohort had the shortest stays ranging from 8.5 days to 13.2 days.

¹³¹ Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

Table 64: Average daily population by gender at Orana YJC 2021-22 to 2024-25¹³²

Financial year	Gender	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
2021/2022	Female	0	0
	Male	9	1
2022/2023	Female	0	0
	Male	11	1
2023/2024	Female	0	0
	Male	14	0
2024/2025	Female	0	0
	Male	16	1

Although Table 64 records no (zero) young women and girls this is because it is a daily average population tally which would not account for an occasional one or two days stay by a female young person.

Table 65: Average daily population by detainee status at Orana YJC 2021-22 to 2024-25¹³³

Financial year	Detainee status	Average daily population		
		Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Unknown
2021/2022	Control	1	0	0
	Control s19	0	0	0
	Remand	8	1	0
2022/2023	Control	3	0	0
	Control s19	0	0	0
	Remand	9	1	0
2023/2024	Control	2	0	0
	Control s19	0	0	0
	Remand	13	0	0
2024/2025	Control	4	0	0
	Control s19	0	0	0
	Remand	12	1	0

132 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

133 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

Figure 22: Classification of detainees at Orana YJC as at 30 June 2025¹³⁴

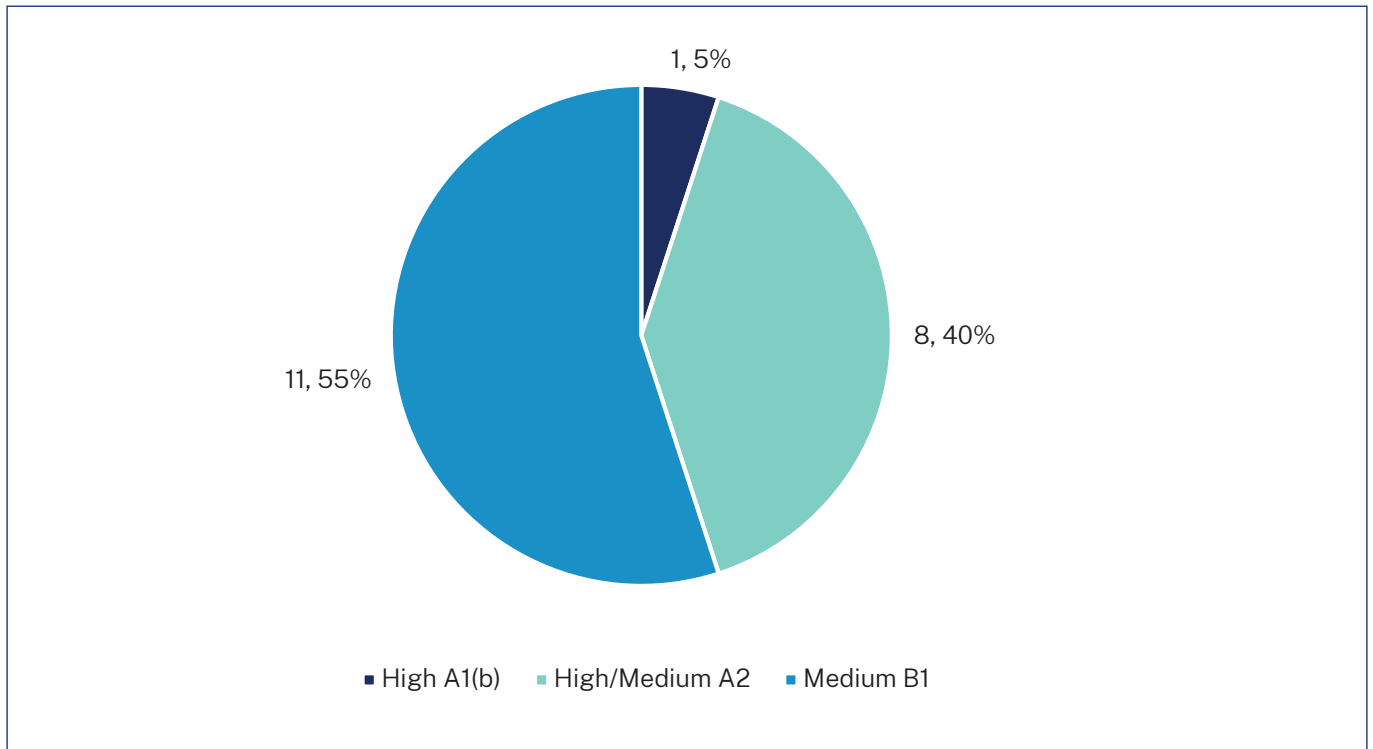


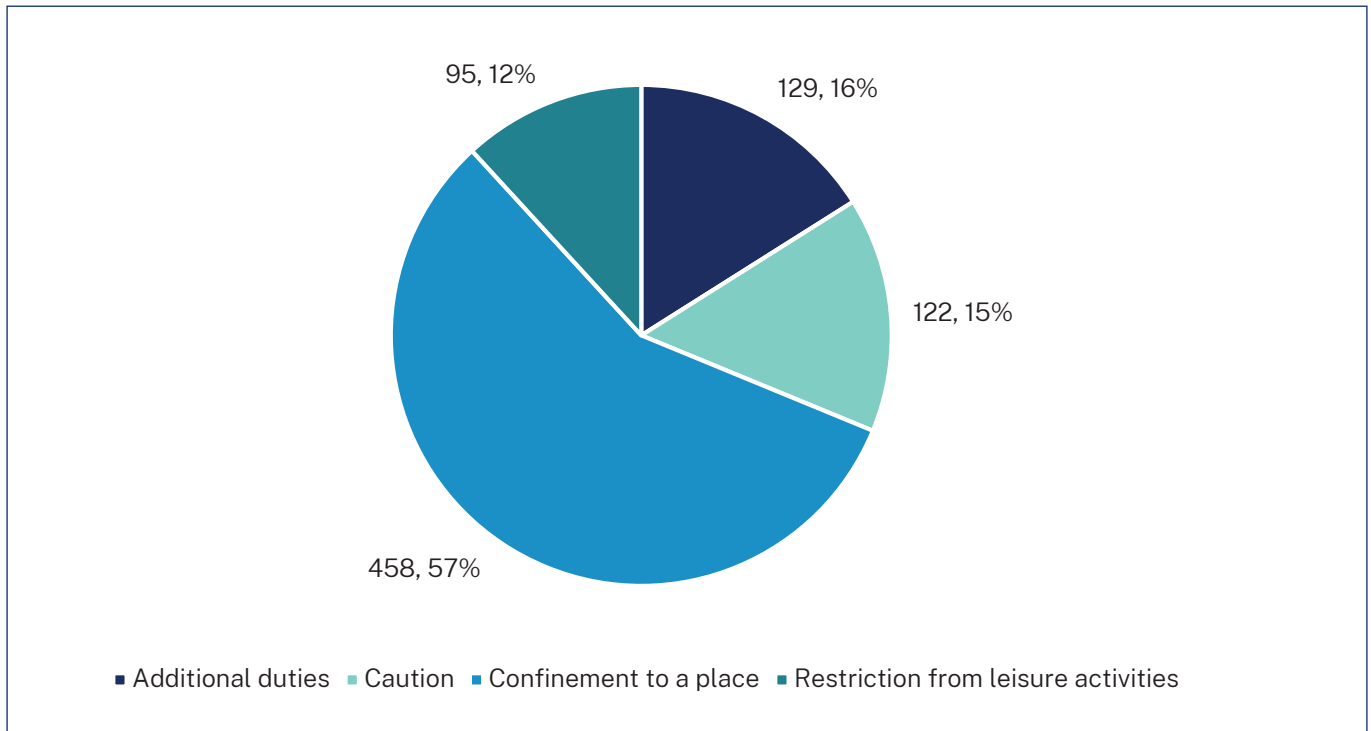
Table 66: Incident types and numbers at Orana YJC 2024-25¹³⁵

Category	Number
Alleged Criminal Activity	0
Assault – Physical	58
Assault – Sexual	1
Assault – Verbal	13
Assault with Weapon	3
Attempt Escape	0
Contraband	20
Escape	0
Fire	4
Inappropriate Behaviour	12
Injury/Accident	3
Medical /Hospital Treatment	6
Other	0
Property Damage/Loss	36
Security Breach	26
Self-harm	21
Threat to Worker	22
Unauthorised Discharge	0

134 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

135 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

Figure 23: Punishment types and numbers at Orana YJC 2024-25¹³⁶



Confinement, Segregation and Separation orders

Table 67: Confinement orders at Orana YJC 2024-25¹³⁷

	<1hr	1-3hrs	3-6hrs	6-12 hrs	12-24 hrs	> 24hrs
Female Aboriginal	2	8	5	1	0	0
Female non-Aboriginal	0	0	0	0	0	0
Female Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0
Male Aboriginal	4	186	152	83	1	0
Male non-Aboriginal	0	3	11	2	0	0
Male Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 68: Segregation orders at Orana YJC 2024-25¹³⁸

	<1hr	1-3hrs	3-6hrs	6-12 hrs	12-24 hrs	> 24hrs
Female Aboriginal	2	0	0	1	0	0
Female non-Aboriginal	0	0	0	0	0	0
Female Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0

136 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

137 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

138 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

Male Aboriginal	111	65	9	2	3	0
Male non-Aboriginal	5	9	1	0	0	0
Male Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 69: Separation orders at Orana YJC 2024-25¹³⁹

	<1hr	1-3hrs	3-6hrs	6-12 hrs	12-24 hrs	> 24hrs
Female Aboriginal	5	1	0	0	1	3
Female non-Aboriginal	0	0	0	0	0	1
Female Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0
Male Aboriginal	97	59	3	2	19	50
Male non-Aboriginal	5	1	0	0	0	2
Male Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 70: Confinement, Segregation and Separation at Orana YJC 2021-22 vs 2023-24 vs 2024-25¹⁴⁰

Order type	Financial year	Number
Confinement	2021/2022	449
Confinement	2023/2024	494
Confinement	2024/2025	458
Segregation	2021/2022	364
Segregation	2023/2024	276
Segregation	2024/2025	208
Separation	2021/2022	553
Separation	2023/2024	360
Separation	2024/2025	249

There was a small increase in confinement orders, but this may be associated with a 40% increase in average population. Noting the population increase, it was pleasing to see a decrease in segregation orders and a significant decrease in separation orders. On balance, these are commendable outcomes.

139 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

140 Table devised by the Inspector of Custodial Services.

Use of force (UoF) and restraints

Table 71: Use of force (UoF) and restraints at Orana YJC 2021-22 to 2024-25¹⁴¹

Financial year	UoF	Restraints
2021/2022 10 young people on average	134	32
2022/2023 12 young people on average	109	26
2023/2024 14 young people on average	231	50
2024/2025 17 young people on average	174	33

Table 72: Reasons and numbers for UoF at Orana YJC 2024-25¹⁴²

UoF reason	Number	HRU
To allow a Medical Practitioner to carry out medical treatment on a detainee	0	No HRU at Orana YJC
To move a Young Person who refused to move from one location to another in accordance with an Officer's order	80	
To prevent a person from entering a detention centre by force	0	
To prevent a Young Person from escaping	1	
To prevent a Young Person from inflicting serious damage to property	6	
To prevent a Young Person from injuring himself or herself	26	
To prevent or quell a riot or other disturbance	10	
To protect a dog being used to assist in the detection of drugs in a detention centre from attack or harm	0	
To protect the officer or other persons from attack or harm	110	
To search a detainee in circumstances in which the detainee refuses to submit to being searched	1	
To seize any dangerous or harmful article or substance that is in the possession of the Young Person	0	

Use of restraints is often associated with UoF but can occur in other situations such as secure escorts off-site. The four-year data shows an increase of 72% in UoF and a 56% increase in use of restraints from 2021/22 to 2023/24) followed by a decline in the 2024/2025 year.

The most common reasons for UoF were:¹⁴³

- To protect the officer or other persons from attack or harm (370 in 4 years)
- To move a Young Person who refused to move from one location to another in accordance with an Officer's order (305 in 4 years)

¹⁴¹ Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

¹⁴² Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

¹⁴³ YJNSW notes 'No. of UoF Reasons is greater than UoF numbers ... as multiple reasons may be given for each UoF.' Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 9 July 2025.

- To prevent a Young Person from injuring himself or herself (69 in 4years)
 - To prevent or quell a riot or other disturbance (10 in 4 years).
-

5.2 Matters arising from previous (2020 and 2022) inspections

We are satisfied that most of our recommendations from previous inspections of Orana YJC have been implemented. However, there remains some work to do:

1. 2020 inspection recommendation 12: The Bail Assistance Program at Orana YJC is replicated in all youth justice centres in NSW, with particular priority for children under 14 years of age, in order to address the issues around finding timely and suitable accommodation for young people.

The Bail Assistance Program (BailP) at Orana YJC has been very active and achieving good outcomes for young people. It is positive to hear that the BailP will be rolled out to other centres by YJNSW.

2. 2020 inspection recommendation 29: YJNSW identify and repair structural and design weaknesses within Orana YJC and its buildings.

There are three accommodation units at Orana YJC. Two original units and a third more modern unit. One of the two original accommodation units had been closed for months due to a noticeable sewerage problem. It and the other original unit are in a state of disrepair inside and outside. The outside appearance is not helped by makeshift roof “anti-climb” modifications.

The interiors of the functioning units require painting and repairs and are festooned by years of graffiti scratched on every window (polycarbonate) in reach.

The centre manager told us that a major refurbishment plan is with YJNSW, and he is hopeful that work will begin sooner rather than later. We support the refurbishment of the centre as it is not a suitable place to accommodate young people or an acceptable work environment for staff.

3. 2020 inspection recommendation 30: Orana YJC utilises both the indoor and outdoor visits area.

Unlike the rest of the centre, the indoor and outdoor visits areas have had a complete makeover and are now pleasant family spaces. However, young people are required to wear overalls to their family visits like the overalls used by CSNSW in their maximum-security facilities. Each facility now has an operational body scanner which can be used to scan children and young people after visits.

4. 2020 inspection recommendation 31: YJNSW ensures young people at Orana YJC have access to psychology services.

The centre manager told us the centre now has four psychologists (three FTE with two job sharing). Pleasingly, one of the psychologists is an Aboriginal person. There is also a speech therapist who visits twice each fortnight, which is a good arrangement.

5. 2022 inspection recommendation 41: Youth Justice NSW replace scratched windows at Orana Youth Justice Centre and ensure unobstructed vision is maintained.

Scratched graffiti on windows remains an issue at Orana YJC.

6. 2022 inspection recommendation 42: Youth Justice NSW ensure young people are provided with new underwear.

We were assured that the “used underwear” practice is now prohibited at Orana YJC. On checking the clothing store, we found only new underwear and young people confirmed they received new underwear.

7. 2022 inspection recommendation 43: Youth Justice NSW support Orana Youth Justice Centre to develop cultural connections with Elders and the local Aboriginal community and enable meaningful connections with Aboriginal young people in the centre.

Local Aboriginal Elders, families and members from the local Aboriginal community are invited to the centre when significant events are held.

8. 2022 inspection recommendation 44: Youth Justice NSW prioritise the delivery of recreational programs and activities at Orana Youth Justice Centre and ensure young people have access to the gymnasium.

This problem seems to have rectified. We saw young people engaged in activities such as volleyball. The gym is operated by an outside service provider four days per week.

9. 2022 inspection recommendation 45: Youth Justice NSW address staff culture at Orana Youth Justice Centre and provide support to the centre to effect necessary change.

The centre manager joined Orana YJC about 12 months ago. He thinks the workplace culture is now satisfactory. However, he believes the centre infrastructure contributes to low staff morale. To address staff taking an overly punitive response to misbehaviour by young people the centre manager reviews all misbehaviour and incident reports. This is good practice.

10. 2022 inspection recommendation 46: Youth Justice NSW and Justice Health & Forensic Mental Health Network ensure appropriate signage is installed in Orana Youth Justice Centre to identify the location of the health centre to young people.

In the 2022 inspection report we noted that ‘Permission for a sign showing where the health centre was in the centre was refused by local YJNSW managers for “security reasons”¹⁴⁴. We were pleased to find a sign has been affixed to the entry door since the last inspection.

11. 2022 inspection recommendation 47: Youth Justice NSW ensure that psychologists have access to a confidential space to facilitate consultations with young people.

A new area has been provided for psychologists, and they are happy with the new facilities.

12. 2022 inspection recommendation 48: Youth Justice NSW remodel and refurbish the visits area at Orana Youth Justice Centre.

We were pleased to find the visits area had been refurbished.

General observations

As noted earlier, ‘The interiors of the functioning units are in need of painting and repairs and are festooned by graffiti scratched on every window (polycarbonate) in reach.’ Unless YJNSW takes remedial action to refurbish most of Orana YJC a serious consideration would be full closure of the centre as it is currently not fit-for-purpose for young people or staff.

In the 2022 inspection report we commented that ‘Clean drinking water should be freely available to young people to drink as needed and it should not be incumbent on the young person to request something as essential as clean drinking water’.¹⁴⁵ Young people are now provided with refillable plastic water bottles on admission to the centre and we noticed young people carrying them around. The meals being provided to young people were ample, but we observed staff not putting out morning tea or afternoon tea for young people (held in the office) which had been provided by the kitchen.

We had previously reported that ‘young people are not participating in programs and activities, which leaves them bored and open to engaging in disruptive behaviour’.¹⁴⁶ This was mainly associated with young people not at school (on holidays or not required to attend school). We observed young people attending a TAFE barista class which they enjoyed. It was also pleasing to learn that the swimming pool was being used in summer months for an hour per day for each unit after school sessions.

As at other YJCs, children and young people attending family visits are dressed in maximum security prison-type overalls, despite the centre having a working body scanner. Refer to section 1.4.9 Visits to

144 Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection of Six Youth Justice Centres 2022*, (Report, March 2024) 168.

145 Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection of Six Youth Justice Centres 2022*, (Report, March 2024) 163.

146 Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection of Six Youth Justice Centres 2022*, (Report, March 2024) 171.

young people in this report.

The ability of young people to make confidential complaints at Orana YJC is another system-wide problem that must be addressed by YJNSW. At this centre, complaint boxes were in officer stations. Refer to section 1.4.5 Young people making complaints in this report.

Recommendation: YJNSW refurbish Orana YJC.

5.3 Aboriginal young people at Orana YJC

Importance of Country

Staff should be aware of the significant differences between Aboriginal groups from different regions and ensure that no group or individual is disadvantaged, excluded or ignored. It was identified that Aboriginal children and young people are not asked which Aboriginal Country they are from; therefore, it is not recorded. Every Aboriginal child and young person interviewed during the inspection knew who they were and where they were from. Of the 21 children and young people in the centre at the time of the inspection 19 identified as being Aboriginal with 11 being off Country. Asking and recording which Aboriginal Country a child or young person is from may assist with keeping accurate records of Aboriginal children and young people, educating YJ staff, and ensuring culturally appropriate services are being delivered to Aboriginal children and young people from different Countries.

Aboriginal Staff

There has been a considerable effort to recruit and retain Aboriginal people to work at the centre. At the time of the inspection Orana YJC reported having 38% Aboriginal people on staff. An Aboriginal identified unit manager role has been created. The centre manager is an Aboriginal man and 50% of the senior management team are Aboriginal people.

Traditional Aboriginal Custodians

The traditional custodians of the Dubbo region are the Wiradjuri people. A Welcome to Country demonstrates respect to the local traditional custodians and is an important cultural practice. At the time of the inspection Orana had a 98% Aboriginal population.

Aboriginal services, Mentor visits and participation of Aboriginal young people in cultural activities

Local Aboriginal Elders, families and members from the local Aboriginal community are invited to the centre when significant events are held. Children and young people are taught the importance of an Acknowledgement to Country and perform this at events held for the young people and invited guests. An event was held for the expansion of the Yarning Circle; the young people carved a coolamon and were taught the significance of the practice. The Yarning Circle is used frequently by the young people and staff.

Funeral and cultural obligations

Approval to attend funerals and other significant events must take into account the extended family structures and obligations of Aboriginal people. One out of three funeral applications were approved in the last six months. A live stream of the funeral of a local young person was available to watch for all children and young people.

Aboriginal cultural awareness for all staff

All staff must complete cultural awareness training during the Induction and Assessment Program. There is also annual refresher training that all staff complete on an on-line platform.

5.4 Health of young people at Orana YJC

This report is based on a site inspection conducted on 6 May 2025. The review included direct observation of nursing staff delivering care in the health centre and interviews with JH&FMHN staff.

Health services

JH&FMHN is responsible for delivering health services to young people at Orana YJC. The health service operates daily:

- 7am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday
- 7.30am to 4pm, Saturday and Sunday

Table 73: Healthcare staffing at Orana YJC

Role	Budgeted FTE	Filled FTE
Nursing unit manager (NUM)	1.0	0.8*
Registered Nurse (RN)	1.4	1.6*
Health Centre Clerk (HCC)	0.4	0.4
Total	2.8	2.8

*Notes: The Nursing unit manager changed to reduced permanent hours during the reporting period. The additional budget is being used to provide additional nursing coverage.

Table 74: Visiting clinic services

Clinic	Scheduled hours	Delivered hours	Format
Aboriginal Sexual Health and Harm Reduction Officer	As needed to a maximum of 3-4 hrs fortnightly	21.5 hours delivered in FY 23-24	In person
General Practitioner (GP)	2 hrs weekly	2hr weekly	In person
Adolescent Forensic Mental Health Nurse – Dual Diagnosis	16 hrs weekly	16hr weekly	In person
Psychiatrist (DD)	6hrs fortnightly	8 hr fortnightly	In person
Oral Health	As required	2.7 monthly	In person

*Sexual health services at Orana YJC are delivered by Dubbo Sexual Health Service, under a formal MOU between JH&FMHN and Western NSW Local Health District.

Findings

Since the previous inspection, JH&FMHN has implemented improvements to the delivery of health services at Orana YJC, including re-establishing regular on-site access to a General Practitioner. The NUM reports no wait for care at the centre, which is supported by service activity data provided by JH&FMHN.

There has been a significant improvement in young people accessing care through the health centre. Young people are now brought to the health centre for medication administration, scheduled appointments, and walk-in consultations. This represents a significant improvement from the previous inspection, when all care was delivered in accommodation units. Relationships with external service providers, including Dubbo Base Hospital and the Western NSW Local Health District, are reported to be productive, and specialist care when required is being facilitated through private providers.

JH&FMHN and YJNSW staff interactions were observed and described as positive. While access to health services has improved, staff report that young people being escorted to the Health Centre can still depend on the individual YJNSW staff. It was noted that health staff are often required to be assertive to ensure timely access to young people, and that health care is prioritised appropriately.

JH&FMHN staff reported a high prevalence of mental health diagnoses and intellectual disability among young people at Orana YJC. Access to appropriate mental health care was identified as a challenge, primarily due to limited mental health nursing and psychiatry hours. While YJNSW psychology services were seen as beneficial, health staff noted difficulties related to information sharing and overlapping role boundaries. The recent recruitment of additional youth officers was viewed positively and seen as contributing to a shift in the centre's culture. However, health staff emphasised the need for further training to equip these recruits with the knowledge and skills required to work effectively with young people with complex needs.

There is now a formal process for administering after-hours medication. Shift supervisors are available to support compliance with medication policy, addressing a key concern raised during the previous inspection.

Health staff report positive engagement with the local Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS) and other Aboriginal community organisations supporting young people in the centre and upon release. Health promotion activities continue to be delivered, with group programs held during school holidays in collaboration with education staff. It was also reported that a significant amount of health promotion occurs on a one-to-one basis, tailored to the individual needs of young people during health appointments.

Concerns were raised about young people's diet and nutrition within the centre. Health staff reported that young people have unrestricted access to refined carbohydrates, such as white bread, rice, pasta, and sugar, as well as frequent access to "buy-ups." Staff provided concerning examples of rapid and excessive weight gain, including cases of 30 and 60 kilograms gained over eight-month and six-month periods, respectively. Such weight gain poses serious long-term health risks. Refer to section 1.4.7 Health and young people in this report.

Figure 24: Breakfast during inspection at Orana YJC



6 Reiby YJC

The unannounced inspection was conducted on 14 April 2025 (evening), 15 April (all day) and 16 April (morning).

Reiby Youth Justice Centre (YJC) is located southwest of Sydney at Airds, land of the Dharawal, Dharug and Gundungurra nations. It is the only facility with a dedicated area for holding young women and girls in NSW. It accommodates young women and girls from across NSW aged between 10 and 21 years and boys up to the age of 15 years. Reiby YJC can accommodate up to 55 young people who are either on remand or serving a detention order. It is also home to the Waratah pre-release program which accommodates up to 10 young men and women.

Figure 25: Centre grounds at Reiby YJC



6.1 General overview

At the time of the inspection Reiby YJC was accommodating 16 males and 11 females of whom 10 (six males/four females) were Aboriginal people.

Table 75: Reiby YJC profile 2021-22 to 2024-25¹⁴⁷

Financial year	Bed capacity	Average daily population	Average time (days)	Average percentage on remand	Average time on remand (days)
2021/2022	55	22	12.0	81.40%	9.4
2022/2023	55	25	9.2	75.10%	7.4
2023/2024	55 (1 non-operational)	29	10.8	80.20%	8.6
2024/2025	55 (1 non-operational)	28	9.5	82.10%	7.0

The average daily population was well below bed capacity in all years. Sentenced and remand (unconvicted) young people had quite short stays at Reiby YJC ranging from 9.2 days to 12 days. The remand cohort had the shortest stays ranging from seven days to 9.4 days.

147 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

Table 76: Average daily population by gender at Reiby YJC 2021-22 to 2024-25¹⁴⁸

Financial year	Gender	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Total
2021/2022	Female	6	5	11
	Male	5	7	12
2022/2023	Female	4	4	8
	Male	7	8	15
2023/2024	Female	7	5	12
	Male	10	8	18
2024/2025	Female	7	6	0
	Male	7	8	0

Unlike other Centres, Reiby YJC has a significant population of girls and young women.

Table 77: Average daily population by detainee status at Reiby YJC 2021-22 to 2024-25¹⁴⁹

Financial year	Detainee status	Average daily population			
		Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Unknown	
2021/2022	Control	1	2	0	
	Control s19	0	1	0	
	Remand	9	9	0	
2022/2023	Control	1	2	0	
	Control s19	0	3	0	
	Remand	11	7	0	
2023/2024	Control	2	1	0	
	Control s19	0	2	0	
	Remand	14	10	0	
2024/2025	Control	1	1	0	
	Control s19	0	2	0	
	Remand	12	11	0	

148 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

149 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

Figure 26: Classification of detainees at Reiby YJC as at 30 June 2025¹⁵⁰

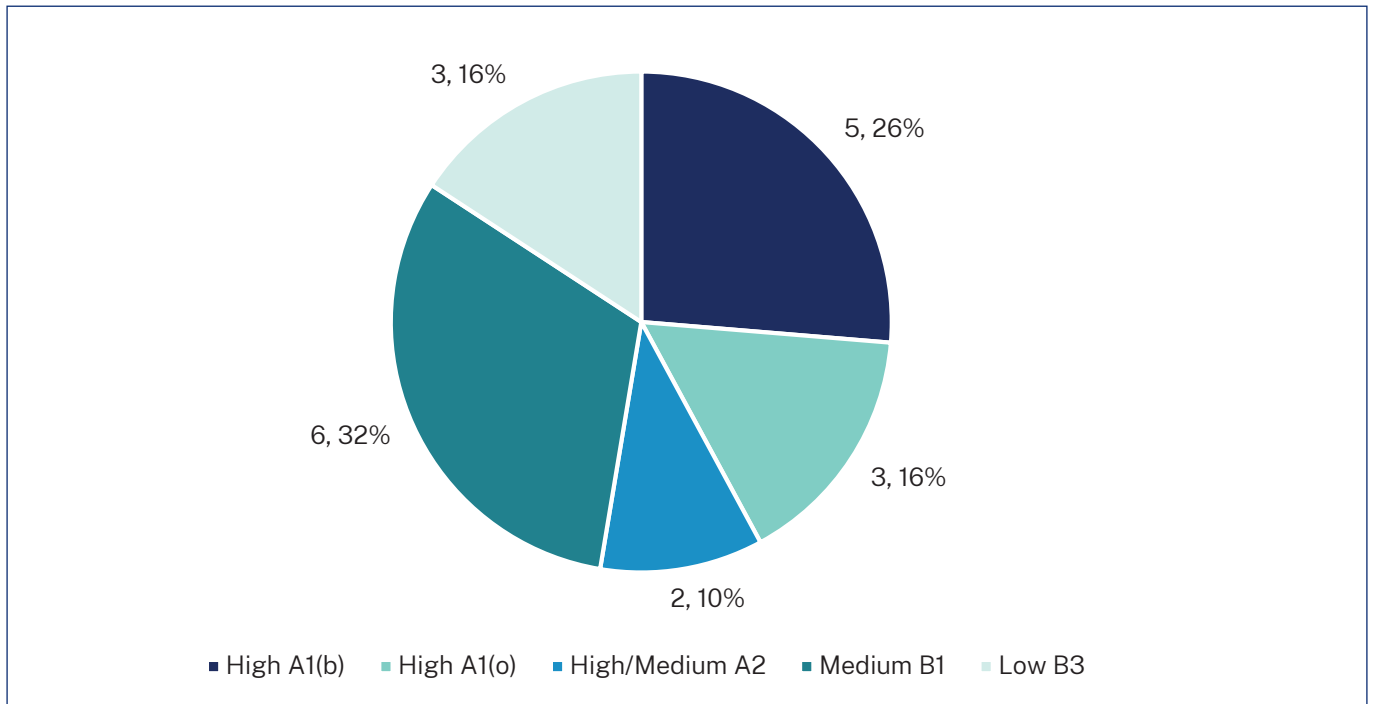


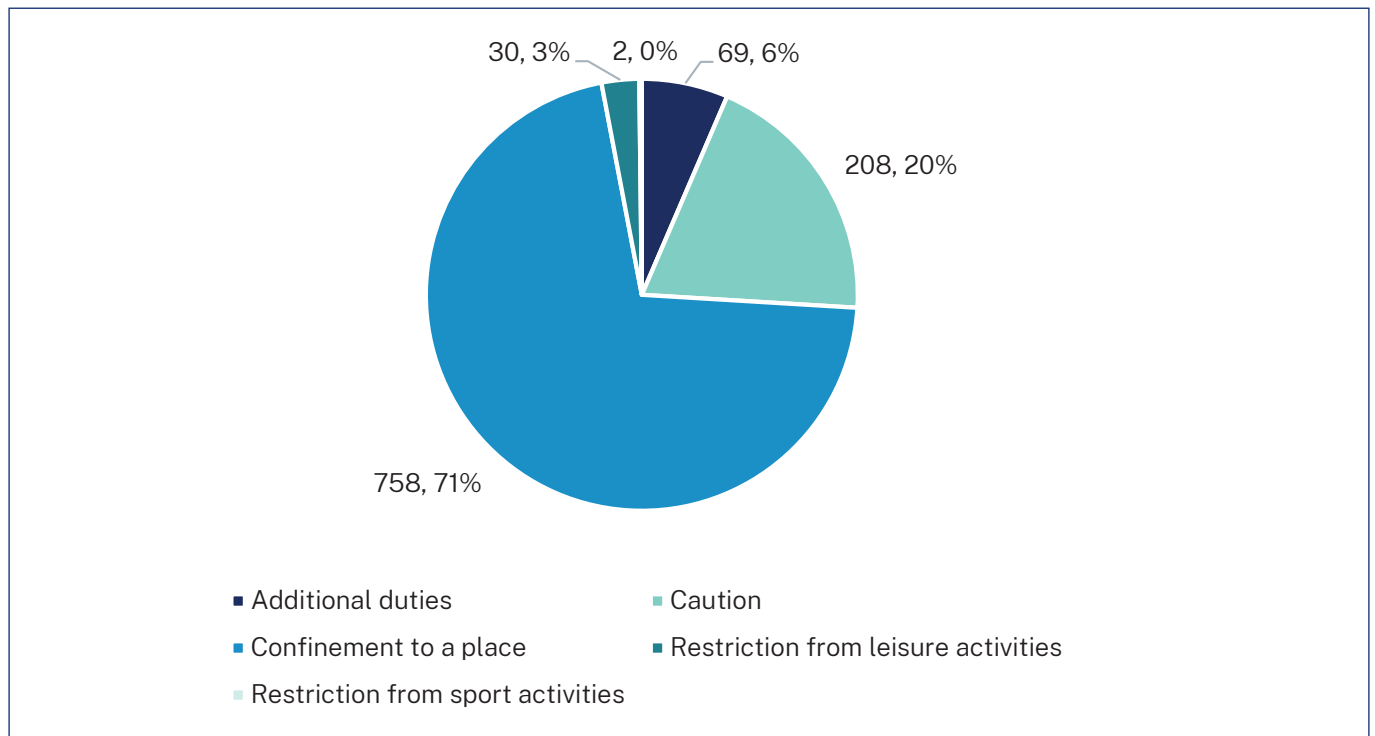
Table 78: Incident types and numbers at Reiby YJC 2024-25¹⁵¹

Category	Number
Alleged Criminal Activity	0
Assault – Physical	99
Assault – Sexual	1
Assault – Verbal	15
Assault with Weapon	5
Attempt Escape	1
Contraband	57
Escape	0
Fire	6
Inappropriate Behaviour	2
Injury/Accident	0
Medical /Hospital Treatment	11
Other	3
Property Damage/Loss	5
Security Breach	19
Self-harm	57
Threat to Worker	13
Unauthorised Discharge	0

150 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

151 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

Figure 27: Punishment types and numbers at Reiby YJC 2024-25¹⁵²



Confinement, Segregation and Separation orders

Table 79: Confinement orders at Reiby YJC 2024-25¹⁵³

	<1hr	1-3hrs	3-6hrs	6-12 hrs	12-24 hrs	> 24hrs
Female Aboriginal	15	153	54	33	0	0
Female non-Aboriginal	2	46	15	3	0	0
Female Unknown	0	0	1	1	0	0
Male Aboriginal	9	173	69	23	0	0
Male non-Aboriginal	3	103	34	21	0	0
Male Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 80: Segregation orders at Reiby YJC 2024-25¹⁵⁴

	<1hr	1-3hrs	3-6hrs	6-12 hrs	12-24 hrs	> 24hrs
Female Aboriginal	25	139	29	9	0	15
Female non-Aboriginal	8	17	4	2	0	0

152 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

153 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

154 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

Female Unknown	1	0	0	1	0	1
Male Aboriginal	39	91	35	5	0	16
Male non-Aboriginal	45	77	48	29	1	21
Male Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 81: Separation orders at Reiby YJC 2024-25¹⁵⁵

	<1hr	1-3hrs	3-6hrs	6-12 hrs	12-24 hrs	> 24hrs
Female Aboriginal	25	20	8	4	4	8
Female non-Aboriginal	25	24	4	1	0	12
Female Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0
Male Aboriginal	63	17	22	16	16	18
Male non-Aboriginal	67	26	27	31	21	28
Male Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 82: Confinement, Segregation and Separation at Reiby YJC 2021-22 vs 2023-24 vs 2024-25¹⁵⁶

Order type	Financial year	Number
Confinement	2021/2022	613
Confinement	2023/2024	913
Confinement	2024/2025	758
Segregation	2021/2022	582
Segregation	2023/2024	651
Segregation	2024/2025	658
Separation	2021/2022	925
Separation	2023/2024	475
Separation	2024/2025	581

It was pleasing to see a significant decrease in separation orders. However, there was an increase in confinement orders. Segregation orders increased by 12% (75 orders). This data may reflect the numbers of young people in custody: an average of 23 in 2021/2022 compared to 30 in 2023/2024. Even so, young people at Reiby YJC were subject to restrictive practices for hundreds of orders in one form of order or another.

The centre manager, Reiby YJC, must 'Ensure staff make informed decisions when intervening with detainee behaviour through observation, intelligence gathering, assessment of needs and based on

155 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

156 Table devised by the Inspector of Custodial Services.

risk-based decision making principles¹⁵⁷ before reverting to restrictive practices.

Use of force (UoF) and restraints

Table 83: Use of force (UoF) and restraints at Reiby YJC¹⁵⁸

Financial year	UoF	Restraints
2021/2022 22 young people on average	198	93
2022/2023 25 young people on average	191	42
2023/2024 29 young people on average	414	102
2024/2025 27 young people on average	377	94

Table 84: Reasons and numbers for UoF at Reiby YJC 2024-25¹⁵⁹

UoF reason	Number	HRU
To allow a Medical Practitioner to carry out medical treatment on a detainee	2	No HRU at Reiby YJC
To move a Young Person who refused to move from one location to another in accordance with an Officer's order	146	
To prevent a person from entering a detention centre by force	1	
To prevent a Young Person from escaping	3	
To prevent a Young Person from inflicting serious damage to property	7	
To prevent a Young Person from injuring himself or herself	55	
To prevent or quell a riot or other disturbance	33	
To protect a dog being used to assist in the detection of drugs in a detention centre from attack or harm	0	
To protect the officer or other persons from attack or harm	259	
To search a detainee in circumstances in which the detainee refuses to submit to being searched	0	
To seize any dangerous or harmful article or substance that is in the possession of the Young Person	5	

Use of restraints is often associated with UoF but can occur in other situations such as secure escorts off-site. Table 83 shows that UoF incidents doubled from 2022/2023 to 2023/2024 (191 to 414), noting use of restraints also doubled. We note a modest decrease in the 2024/2025 year of both.

The most common reasons for UoF were:¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ Department of Attorney General and Justice, *Juvenile Justice Detainee Behaviour Intervention Framework* (November 2009) 6.

¹⁵⁸ Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

¹⁵⁹ Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

¹⁶⁰ YJNSW notes 'No. of UoF Reasons is greater than UoF numbers ... as multiple reasons may be given for each UoF'. Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 9 July 2025.

- To protect the officer or other persons from attack or harm (793 in 4 years)
- To move a Young Person who refused to move from one location to another in accordance with an Officer's order (453 in 4 years)
- To prevent or quell a riot or other disturbance (124 in 4 years)
- To prevent a Young Person from injuring himself or herself (145 in 4 years).

6.2 Matters arising from previous (2020 and 2022) inspections

We are satisfied that most of our recommendations from previous inspections of Reiby YJC have been implemented. However, there remains some work to do:

1. 2020 inspection recommendation 3: YJNSW ensures young women and girls remanded in custody in the greater Sydney region are received at Reiby YJC.

The centre manager told us that this is occurring but noted that there could be NSW Police transport delays depending on where the young people were remanded into custody.

2. 2020 inspection recommendation 32: Reiby YJC ensures the segregation unit is regularly cleaned and maintained.

The centre manager told us Reiby YJC no longer has a segregation unit (referred to as Main Unit). If young people need to be confined, separated or segregated this will usually happen in their room. We did inspect the unoccupied Main Unit which has CCTV camera rooms that can be used for young people at risk of self-harm. The unit appeared clean and tidy with minor graffiti on some walls.

3. 2020 inspection recommendation 33: YJNSW ensures that CCTV footage of use of force incidents is retained as per NSW Government record keeping requirements [at least 6 months].

We were advised that Reiby YJC retains CCTV footage indefinitely on computer hard drives rather than unreliable VCR tapes.

4. 2020 inspection recommendation 34: Reiby YJC identify adequate counselling space for psychology services.

The centre manager advised that there is one psychologist consulting room in each unit. The centre employs five psychologists (including one part-time and one student). This is a significant staffing complement for a centre accommodating about 20-30 young people in recent years.

5. 2020 inspection recommendation 35: YJNSW makes necessary structural and security changes to the Waratah Pre-release Unit to separately accommodate young women.

We observed that the Waratah unit (eight single rooms) can now accommodate young women behind a lockable corridor door which prevents male young people accessing the female area after hours.

In the 2020 inspection we commented:

... conditions in the Waratah pre-release unit had deteriorated. Basic maintenance and cleaning was required. Equipment was not being stored appropriately and the outdoor activity area required cleaning. The yard was also unkempt with pieces of broken equipment laying on the ground as well as visible rubbish including food scraps.¹⁶¹

It was pleasing to see the Waratah Unit was in excellent condition with none of the problems identified in 2020. Further, it was also pleasing to see that the three young people in Waratah were all out on excursions when we visited the unit.

The Waratah Unit is an excellent facility. It was therefore disappointing to hear that it is underutilised

¹⁶¹ Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection of Six Youth Justice Centres in NSW*, (Report, December 2020) 72.

(not fully occupied). This is a YJNSW responsibility, not Reiby YJC.

Recommendation: YJNSW review its criteria for placing young people in the Reiby YJC Waratah Pre-Release Program with the aim of maximising program participation.

6. 2022 inspection recommendation 33: Youth Justice NSW continue to reduce the use of restraints on young people in Reiby Youth Justice Centre.

In response to the 2022 inspection report, 'YJNSW advise that they will strive to continue to reduce all restrictive practices, including at Reiby YJC'¹⁶². As shown in Table 83 the centre has a long way to go to reduce its use of restraints and use of force incidents. We were told that young people being received at Reiby YJC had become more "problematic" to handle in recent times, but it was conceded that some youth officers resorted to UoF as a first option rather than engaging in de-escalation techniques which they were trained to employ.

Recommendation: YJNSW ensure Reiby YJC conduct annual training of youth officers in accordance with the (Youth Justice NSW) Use of Force, Protective Equipment and Instruments of Restraint Policy.

7. 2022 inspection recommendation 34: Youth Justice NSW provide access to a body scanning machine for visits.

In the 2022 inspection report we noted '... the body scanning machine is in the admissions area, away from where visits occur'.¹⁶³ This is still the case which means that young people are required to wear pocket-less "overalls" to visits and are subject to body searches before they can return to their units.¹⁶⁴ It is unsatisfactory and demeaning for young people to greet their visitors dressed like adult inmates in a maximum-security prison. Refer to section 1.4.9 Visits to young people in the report.

8. 2022 inspection recommendation 32: Youth Justice NSW ensure young people are provided with new underwear and girls have access to sanitary items.

This recommendation related to the inspection of Reiby YJC but was directed to YJNSW to apply at all centres. We noted:

Another issue raised with ICS and the Official Visitor is the provision of used underwear in the accommodation units. It is accepted that the high turnover of young people through Reiby YJC can result in underwear being used on only a few occasions. However, hygiene requirements do not allow the reuse of underwear. The centre manager [Reiby YJC] has acknowledged this practice must cease.¹⁶⁵

However, on this inspection we saw and photographed used underwear in the clothing store. When this was brought to the attention of the centre manager (we showed him) he appeared quite shocked and said he was unaware of why or how this was happening, and it would cease immediately.

¹⁶² Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection of Six Youth Justice Centres 2022*, (Report, March 2024) 123.

¹⁶³ Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection of Six Youth Justice Centres 2022*, (Report, March 2024) 128.

¹⁶⁴ The overalls and searches are intended to prevent the concealment of contraband introduced by visitors.

¹⁶⁵ Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection of Six Youth Justice Centres 2022*, (Report, March 2024) 113.

Figure 28: Used socks at Reiby YJC



Figure 29: Used underwear at Reiby YJC



Refer to section 1.4.8 Young people's clothing in this report.

General observations

There are special challenges at Reiby YJC because it is the only centre that accommodates girls and young women on a regular basis.¹⁶⁶ These young people can be sent to Reiby YJC from anywhere in NSW regardless of their security classification or legal status (remand or convicted). This separation from family, including contact visits (travel distance), is an important factor to be kept in mind by all Reiby YJC staff members.

We inspected Reiby YJC during school holidays, so it was pleasing to see young people out of their units making use of the oval and other green spaces and that the young people (three) in the Waratah Pre-release Unit were all out on excursions.

The gym was not being used. It lacks natural light and is quite cluttered with old equipment. A particular concern was an old weights stand that had removable steel rods which could be used as a weapon. The centre manager told us that, funds permitting, he would like to freshen up and declutter the gym.

Figure 30: Gym at Reiby YJC



166 Other centres may accommodate girls and women for short stays (day or so) pending transfer to Reiby YJC.

6.3 Aboriginal young people at Reiby YJC

Importance of Country

Staff should be aware of the significant differences between Aboriginal groups from different regions and ensure that no group or individual is disadvantaged, excluded or ignored. Aboriginal children and young people are not asked which Aboriginal Country they are from; therefore, it is not recorded. Every Aboriginal child and young person were spoken to during the inspection and knew who they were and where they were from. Of the 27 children and young people in the centre at the time of the inspection 10 identified as being Aboriginal, and all were off Country.

Asking and recording which Country Aboriginal children and young people are from will assist Youth Justice to have accurate records of the number of Aboriginal and young people in their care, minimise under-reporting, and assist in service provision.

Aboriginal staff, community leaders and Aboriginal families should be consulted to limit distress caused to Aboriginal children and young people in detention. The centre has reported that good relationships with community groups have been established to support the children and young people in custody. We were also told that the centre provides accommodation, transport and extended visits for families from regional areas. However, the children and young people reported that they do not receive visits from family as it is too far. Only one young person reported receiving visits from family that reside in the Sydney metropolitan area. It was reported that due to the classification and placement of the children and young people keeping them on Country is not possible.

Aboriginal Staff

There are seven Aboriginal-identified positions at Reiby YJC: one Aboriginal Practice Officer, one shift supervisor, and five youth officers. There are two Aboriginal identified Case Workers reporting to an identified Assistant Manager in the local community office. Fifteen staff members identify as Aboriginal which is an increase from the last inspection.

Reiby YJC recently hosted the Aboriginal Community Consultative Committee meeting, which allows Aboriginal staff and management to network with Aboriginal community leaders to collaborate on services and programs that could assist children and young people. The centre reported that Aboriginal staff are supported to attend a number of culturally appropriate events. It was reported that cultural immersion days for all staff have been introduced.

Traditional Aboriginal Custodians

The traditional custodians of the Airds area are the Dharawal, Darug and Gandangurra people. A Welcome to Country demonstrates respect to the local traditional custodians and is an important cultural practice. At the time of the inspection there were 10 Aboriginal children and young people detained at Reiby YJC and all were off Country. It was pleasing to see Elders from neighbouring regions engaging with the children and young people at the centre. It would be respectful to perform a Welcome to Country on celebration days that are significant to Aboriginal people.

Recommendation: YJNSW ensures Reiby YJC acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the local region and encourage engagement from the Dharawal, Darug and Gandangurra Aboriginal community.

Aboriginal services, Mentor Visits and participation of Aboriginal young people in cultural activities

At the time of the inspection two Elders were visiting the centre and were engaging with the children and young people. The centre reported having four Aboriginal Mentors visit the centre to provide advice, support and facilitate programs and activities. Reiby YJC has engaged the services of an Aboriginal artist with a focus on inspiring and uniting young Aboriginal women nurturing creativity and cultural pride. The centre facilitates My Journey My Life and My Journey My Life (Yinnar) programs. Yinnar is a modified My Journey My Life program developed by Aboriginal women

for Aboriginal young women and girls. This program aims to address anti-social and aggressive behaviours in a culturally sensitive way and challenges young people's attitudes and beliefs with offending behaviours.

The centre has also employed a Cultural Practice Officer to provide advice and support for cultural inclusion and responsivity. It was reported that the centre partners with external organisations such as PCYC, Youth off the Streets, SHINE for Kids and St Gregory's College to provide activities and mentoring programs. The young Aboriginal girls can participate in a regular Women's Business Cultural program. The Yarning Circle at Reiby YJC is inaccessible for the children and young people. The centre reported that Aboriginal programs suitable for individual language groups and different backgrounds are not offered.

Figure 31: Inaccessible cultural space at Reiby YJC



Recommendation: YJNSW ensures Reiby YJC allows Aboriginal children and young people from urban, regional, and remote areas and different language groups to attend programs and activities tailored to meet the needs of individuals and access the Yarning Circle.

Funeral and cultural obligations

The centre did not provide evidence of children and young people attending external cultural obligations or funerals.

Aboriginal cultural awareness training for all staff

The centre reported that as of December 2024, 74% of all staff had completed online cultural awareness training.

Recommendation: YJNSW ensure all staff at Reiby YJC complete ongoing cultural competency training and engage with the local Aboriginal community to maintain awareness of local Aboriginal issues.

6.4 Health of young people at Reiby YJC

This report is based on a site inspection conducted on 15 April 2025. The review included direct observation of nursing staff delivering care in both the health centre and accommodation units, as well as interviews with JH&FMHN staff.

Health services

JH&FMHN is responsible for delivering health services to young people at Reiby YJC. The health service operates daily:

- 7am to 4.30pm, seven days a week.

Table 85: Healthcare staffing at Reiby YJC¹⁶⁷

Role	Budgeted FTE	Filled FTE
Nursing unit manager (NUM)	1.0	1.0
Registered Nurse (RN)	1.4	1.4
Health Centre Clerk (HCC)	0.4	0.4
Total	2.8	2.8

Table 86: Visiting clinic services¹⁶⁸

Clinic	Scheduled hours	Delivered hours	Format
Aboriginal Sexual Health and Harm Reduction Officer	As required	nil	In person
General Practitioner (GP)	4hrs per week	4hr	In person
Adolescent Forensic Mental Health Nurse – Dual Diagnosis	38hrs per week	38hr	In person
Psychiatrist (DD)	8hrs per week	8 hr	In person
Oral Health	6-8hrs month	5.3h	In person

Findings

The NUM described the health team as cohesive and effective and reported a strong working relationship with YJNSW staff. Several staff noted that collaboration between health and YJNSW staff had improved recently following a change in YJNSW leadership.

The NUM also reported positive relationships with Campbelltown Hospital accessed for emergency care and specialist referrals, and with the local Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS). A JH&FMHN Adolescent Aboriginal health worker visits the centre to support Aboriginal young people. They collaborate when onsite with the Youth Justice Aboriginal Programs Officer (APO) to provide culturally appropriate services.

Access to young people for health appointments at the centre was identified as a persistent challenge. Two main issues were reported:

1. Limited clinic space – Due to the need to share a limited number of assessment rooms, only one young person can typically be seen at a time.
2. Delays in escorting young people to the health centre - Staff reported regular delays in bringing young people to the clinic, often requiring escalation to the Duty Manager. For safety reasons, two officers are required to escort young people, and competing operational priorities frequently limit availability.

Despite these barriers, the NUM was confident that young people who request care are seen the same day, and that urgent or essential care is not delayed. The data provided by JH&FMHN supports this.

Health promotion activities were evident. Highlights included:

- 100% of children and young people who opted to receive an influenza vaccination were immunised during the winter program

¹⁶⁷ Information provided by Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network, 28 April 2025.

¹⁶⁸ Information provided by Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network, 28 April 2025.

- Health promotion packs and education sessions for International Women's Day
- Ear health awareness initiatives were conducted within the health centre.

Health staff reported an increase in sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among young people. While primary health staff provide some sexual health education, time and staffing constraints limit this. There are currently no dedicated internal sexual health promotion resources. The NUM has reported engagement with external providers to support the delivery of age-appropriate sexual health education and resources.

Although health staff identified challenges in bringing young people to the health centre, it was noted that this situation has been improving in recent times. As such, this is not presented as a formal recommendation but rather as a consideration for JH&FMHN to continue monitoring this issue.

7 Riverina YJC

The unannounced inspection was conducted on 5 May 2025 (evening), 6 May (all day) and 7 May (morning).

Riverina YJC is located approximately 468 km southwest of Sydney in Wagga Wagga, land of the Wiradjuri people. The centre accommodates young people aged between 10 and 21 years. Young women and girls may also be accommodated for short periods. The centre has the capacity to accommodate up to 45 young people.

Figure 32: Centre grounds at Riverina YJC



Figure 33: Yarning Circle at Riverina YJC



7.1 General overview

At the time of the inspection Riverina YJC was accommodating 24 males of whom 12 were Aboriginal people.

Table 87: Riverina YJC profile 2021/2022 to 2024-25¹⁶⁹

Financial year	Bed capacity	Average daily population	Average time (days)	Average percentage on remand	Average time on remand (days)
2021/2022	45	20	31.4	56.70%	18.3
2022/2023	45	21	36.7	42.30%	19.5
2023/2024	44 (5 non-operational)	18	28.0	72.00%	18.2
2024/2025	43 (9 non-operational)	22	39.8	63.60%	18.3

The average daily population was below bed capacity in all years. Sentenced and remand (unconvicted) young people had short stays at Riverina YJC ranging from 28 days to 39.8 days. The remand cohort had the shortest stays ranging from 18.3 days to 19.5 days.

¹⁶⁹ Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

Table 88: Average daily population by gender at Riverina YJC 2021-22 to 2023-24¹⁷⁰

Financial year	Gender	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
2021/2022	Female	0	0
	Male	8	12
2022/2023	Female	0	0
	Male	10	11
2023/2024	Female	0	0
	Male	9	9
2024/2025	Female	0	0
	Male	11	11

Although Table 88 records no (zero) young women or girls this is because it is a daily average population tally which would not account for an occasional one or two days stay by a female young person (rounding of data).

Table 89: Average daily population by detainee status at Riverina YJC 2021-22 to 2024-25¹⁷¹

Financial year	Detainee status	Average daily population		
		Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Unknown
2021/2022	Control	3	2	0
	Control s19	1	4	0
	Remand	5	6	0
2022/2023	Control	5	3	0
	Control s19	1	4	0
	Remand	4	4	0
2023/2024	Control	1	1	0
	Control s19	1	2	0
	Remand	7	6	0
2024/2025	Control	3	2	0
	Control s19	1	2	0
	Remand	7	7	0

170 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

171 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

Figure 34: Classification of detainees at Riverina YJC as at 30 June 2025¹⁷²

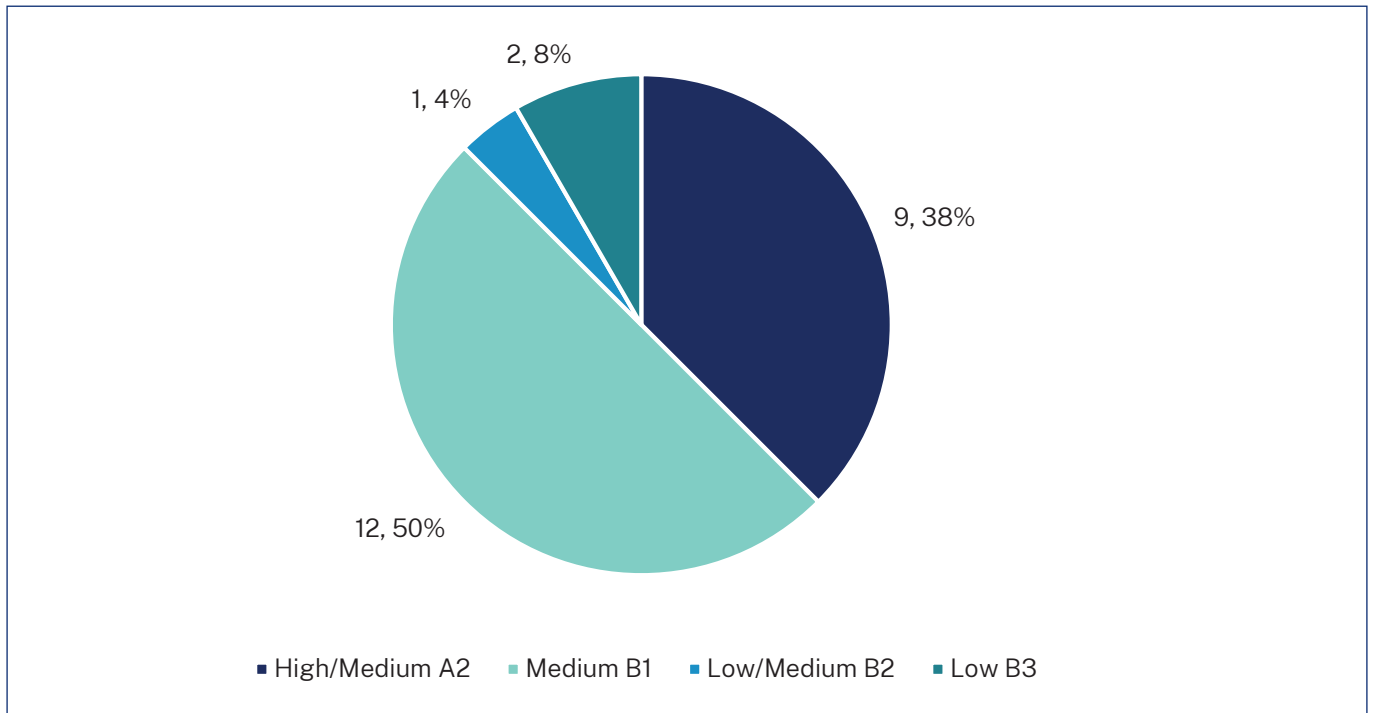


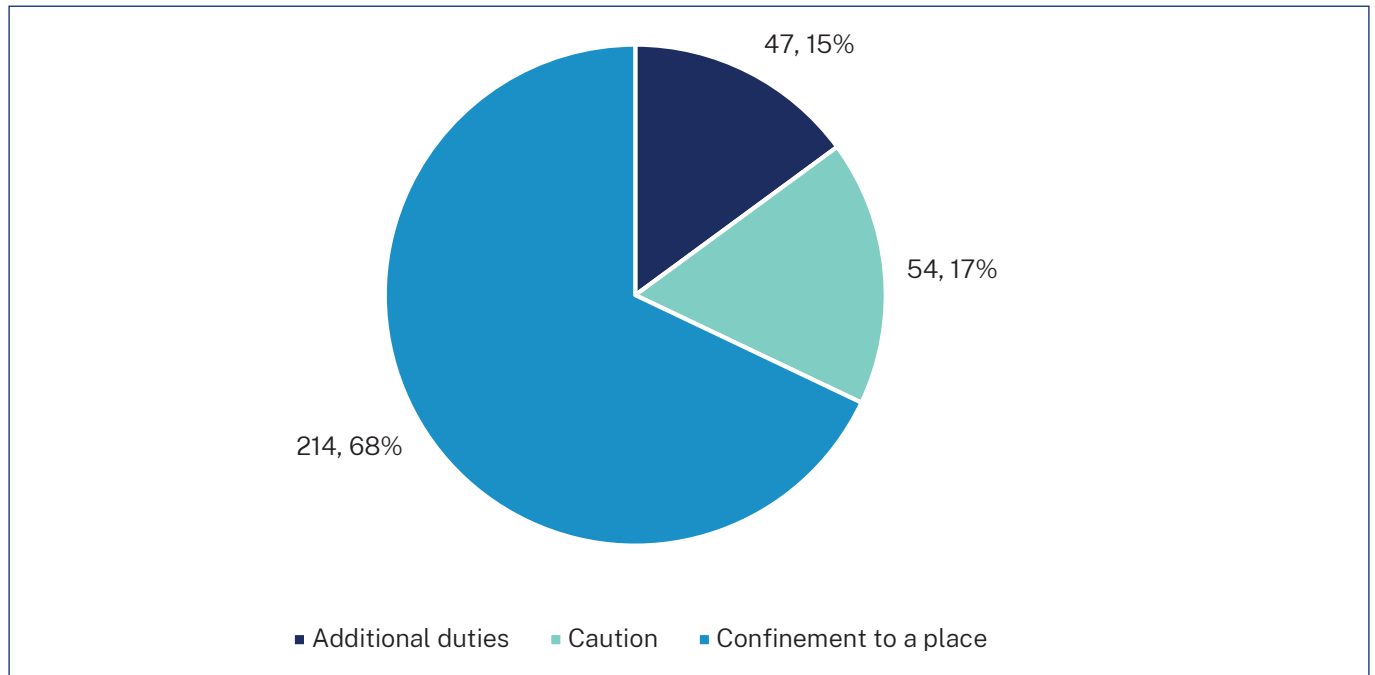
Table 90: Incident types and numbers at Riverina YJC 2024-25¹⁷³

Category	Number
Alleged Criminal Activity	0
Assault – Physical	24
Assault – Sexual	0
Assault – Verbal	1
Assault with Weapon	1
Attempt Escape	0
Contraband	11
Escape	0
Fire	0
Inappropriate Behaviour	0
Injury/Accident	1
Medical /Hospital Treatment	11
Other	1
Property Damage/Loss	12
Security Breach	1
Self-harm	8
Threat to Worker	6
Unauthorised Discharge	0

172 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

173 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

Figure 35: Punishment types and numbers at Riverina YJC 2024-25¹⁷⁴



Confinement, Segregation and Separation orders

Table 91: Confinement orders at Riverina YJC 2024-25¹⁷⁵

	<1hr	1-3hrs	3-6hrs	6-12 hrs	12-24 hrs	> 24hrs
Male Aboriginal	3	76	54	16	0	0
Male non-Aboriginal	0	37	19	8	1	0

Table 92: Segregation orders at¹⁷⁶ Riverina YJC 2024-25¹⁷⁷

	<1hr	1-3hrs	3-6hrs	6-12 hrs	12-24 hrs	> 24hrs
Male Aboriginal	22	16	3	0	0	0
Male non-Aboriginal	20	13	0	0	0	0

Table 93: Separation orders at Riverina YJC 2024-25¹⁷⁸

	<1hr	1-3hrs	3-6hrs	6-12 hrs	12-24 hrs	> 24hrs
Female Aboriginal	0	0	0	0	2	1
Female non-Aboriginal	0	0	0	0	0	1
Male Aboriginal	18	15	2	5	6	10

174 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

175 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

176 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

177 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

178 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

Male non-Aboriginal	22	12	2	3	7	7
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Table 94: Confinement, Segregation and Separation at Riverina YJC 2021-22 vs 2023-24 vs 2024-25¹⁷⁹

Order type	Financial year	Number
Confinement	2021/2022	263
Confinement	2023/2024	172
Confinement	2024/2025	214
Segregation	2021/2022	378
Segregation	2023/2024	69
Segregation	2024/2025	74
Separation	2021/2022	450
Separation	2023/2024	120
Separation	2024/2025	113

It was very pleasing to see a decrease in confinement orders, an 80% decrease in segregation orders and a 75% decrease in separation orders. The other five YJCs should take note of these commendable outcomes from Riverina YJC.

Use of force (UoF) and restraints

Table 95: Use of force (UoF) and restraints at Riverina YJC 2021-22 to 2024-25¹⁸⁰

Financial year	UoF	Restraints
2021/2022	105	24
20 young people on average		
2022/2023	77	11
21 young people on average		
2023/2024	80	15
18 young people on average		
2024/2025	84	14
22 young people on average		

Table 96: Reasons and numbers for UoF at Riverina YJC 2024-25¹⁸¹

UoF reason	Number	HRU
To allow a Medical Practitioner to carry out medical treatment on a detainee	0	No HRU at Riverina YJC
To move a Young Person who refused to move from one location to another in accordance with an Officer's order	16	
To prevent a person from entering a detention centre by force	0	
To prevent a Young Person from escaping	0	
To prevent a Young Person from inflicting serious damage to property	0	

179 Table devised by the Inspector of Custodial Services.

180 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

181 Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 1 July 2025.

To prevent a Young Person from injuring himself or herself	6	
To prevent or quell a riot or other disturbance	7	
To protect a dog being used to assist in the detection of drugs in a detention centre from attack or harm	0	
To protect the officer or other persons from attack or harm	73	
To search a detainee in circumstances in which the detainee refuses to submit to being searched	0	
To seize any dangerous or harmful article or substance that is in the possession of the Young Person	1	

Use of restraints is often associated with UoF but can occur in other situations such as secure escorts off-site. The four-year data in Table 95 shows a reduction in UoF and restraints from 2021/2022 and is to be commended.

The most common reasons for UoF were:¹⁸²

- To protect the officer or other persons from attack or harm (366 in 4 years)
- To move a Young Person who refused to move from one location to another in accordance with an Officer's order (47 in 4 years)
- To prevent a Young Person from injuring himself or herself (27 in 4 years)
- To prevent or quell a riot or other disturbance (27 in 4 years).

7.2 Matters arising from previous (2020 and 2022) inspections

We are satisfied that most of our recommendations from previous inspections of Riverina YJC have been implemented. However, there remains some work to do:

1. 2020 inspection recommendation 49: YJNSW installs additional telephones for young people at Riverina YJC.

Two phone boxes have been installed in each unit compared to the previous one per unit. There are occasions when telephones are out of use due to damage by young people experiencing "bad calls" with friends or relatives.

2. 2020 inspection recommendation 50: Riverina YJC implements monthly detainee representative committee meetings.

We understand that while representative committee meetings do occur, they are not being held on a regular monthly cycle. Riverina YJC needs to address this issue.

3. 2020 inspection recommendation 51: Riverina YJC staff undertake further training relating to when and how to use force.

The 2020 inspection noted 'there was at least one incident that revealed practice issues where, as a result of staff not intervening, an incident escalated into a serious incident.'¹⁸³ Clearly, there is a fine line between when use of force is a necessary intervention and when other measures such as de-escalation can achieve the same ends. We reviewed a sample of recent use of force CCTV footage and were satisfied that there were no examples of concern in those incidents.

4. 2022 inspection recommendation 49: Youth Justice NSW create a sensory space for young people at Riverina Youth Justice Centre.

¹⁸² YJNSW notes 'No. of UoF Reasons is greater than UoF numbers ... as multiple reasons may be given for each UoF.' Information provided by Youth Justice NSW, 9 July 2025.

¹⁸³ Inspector of Custodial Services, *Inspection of Six Youth Justice Centres in NSW*, (Report, December 2020) 107.

We confirmed that a “sensory room” with appropriate furnishings has been built and is being used by children and young people.

5. 2022 inspection recommendation 50: Youth Justice NSW monitor the workload of caseworkers at Riverina Youth Justice Centre with consideration of any need to allocate an additional caseworker position to the centre.

Riverina YJC had not been allocated an additional caseworker as at May 2025.

General observations

Riverina YJC is spacious with pleasant grounds and good facilities such as the gym and swimming pool. Overall, while the physical security is evident, we were impressed by the degree of relational security between staff and children and young people.

The meals being provided to young people were ample but as mentioned elsewhere in this report, we have concerns about dietary issues at all YJCs related to significant weight gains by some young people whilst in custody. Refer to section 1.4.7 Health and young people in this report.

As at other YJCs, young people attending family visits are dressed in maximum security prison-type overalls to deter visitors from passing contraband. We consider this is unacceptable and demeaning for young people and should not happen. Refer to section 1.4.9 Visits to young people in this report.

The ability of young people to make confidential complaints at Riverina YJC is another system-wide problem that must be addressed by YJNSW. Refer to section 1.4.5 Young people making complaints in this report.

We saw quite a lot of graffiti at Riverina YJC (as in other centres), most often involving scratching on polycarbonate (“plastic”) windows. This graffiti inhibits staff vision into rooms, cannot be cleaned off and may result in expensive window replacements. Other centres have installed blackboards (with chalk) in rooms to give young people a less destructive graffiti option.

One unusual observation at Riverina YJC was some young people accumulating large quantities of “junk food” from their (EPIC) incentive scheme rewards – their rooms resembled supermarkets. Our concern is that goods could be gambled on card games or be used to bribe other young people to do things. Riverina YJC needs to significantly limit the quantity of goods that young people can store in their rooms.

Recommendation: YJNSW implement a statewide policy on personal property that young people can keep in their rooms with particular attention to purchased food, drinks and toiletries.

On a positive note, Riverina YJC does not lock young people in their rooms when staff are conducting weekly EPIC sessions. However, we did observe young people being confined to their rooms as punishment for having coloured pens in their possession. We have made a system wide recommendation about the need for further staff training.

7.3 Aboriginal young people at Riverina YJC

Importance of Country

Staff should be aware of the significant differences between Aboriginal groups from different regions and ensure that no group or individual is disadvantaged, excluded or ignored. The centre reported asking Aboriginal children and young people where they are from however this is not recorded. Every Aboriginal child and young person interviewed during the inspection knew who they were and where they were from. Of the 24 children and young people in the centre 12 identified as being Aboriginal with 58% being on Country. Asking and recording which Aboriginal Country a child or young person is from may assist with keeping accurate records of Aboriginal children and young people, educating YJ staff, and ensuring culturally appropriate services are being delivered to Aboriginal children and young people from different Countries.

Aboriginal Staff

Riverina YJC is committed to increasing the representation of Aboriginal staff across all roles, including Aboriginal caseworkers. The centre reported currently having 17 Aboriginal staff, working across most roles in the centre including youth officers, shift supervisors, unit managers, and both custodial caseworkers (100%). Overall, this represented approximately 18% of staff. An increase of Identified roles during the last 12 months included an additional three youth officers, and one unit manager.

Traditional Aboriginal Custodians

The traditional custodians of the Wagga Wagga region are the Wiradjuri people. A Welcome to Country demonstrates respect to the local traditional custodians and is an important cultural practice.

Funeral and cultural obligations

Approval to attend funerals and other significant events must take into account the extended family structures and obligations of Aboriginal people. The children and young people said some applications to attend family funerals had been denied. The centre reported that one young person had been approved to attend a funeral in the past 12 months.

Aboriginal cultural awareness for all staff

All staff participate in cultural awareness training as part of the Induction Training And Program (ITAP). Ongoing online training, 8 Ways learning and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Good Practice Guide are mandatory for staff to complete. Staff can participate in online or face to face training to become trainers in My Journey My Life and Dthina Yuwali Aboriginal Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) Program. The centre also provides healing days for Aboriginal staff.

7.4 Health of young people at Riverina YJC

This report is based on a site inspection conducted on 8 May 2025. The review included direct observation of nursing staff delivering care in the health centre and interviews with JH&FMHN staff.

Health services

JH&FMHN is responsible for delivering health services to young people at Riverina YJC. The health service operates daily:

- 7.30am to 4pm, Monday to Friday.
- 8am to 4.30pm, Saturday to Sunday.

Table 97: Healthcare staffing at Riverina YJC¹⁸⁴

Role	Budgeted FTE	Filled FTE	Vacant FTE
Nursing unit manager (NUM)	1.0	1.0	
Registered Nurse (RN)	1.6	0.8	0.8
Health Centre Clerk (HCC)	0.8	0.8	
Total	3.4	2.6	0.8

184 Information provided by Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network, 28 April 2025.

Table 98: Visiting clinic services¹⁸⁵

Clinic	Scheduled hours	Delivered hours	Format
Aboriginal MH Clinical Lead	As required	2hrs per fortnight	Virtual care
Aboriginal Sexual Health Harm Reduction Officer	8 hrs Fortnightly	Nil (role recently recruited)	In person
GP	8 hrs per fortnight		In-person
Adolescent Forensic Mental Health Nurse – Dual Diagnosis	8 hrs per week		In person
Psychiatrist (DD)	8 hrs per fortnight		In person and virtual care

Findings

Access to emergency care, imaging, and outpatient services for young people at Riverina YJC is facilitated through Wagga Wagga Base Hospital. JH&FMHN staff reported a strong working relationship with the hospital, which supports timely access to urgent care.

Specialist appointments are coordinated through positive partnerships with a range of private providers in the community. However, it was noted that there is no formalised relationship with the local Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS). In response, the health team has proactively established connections with the local Primary Health Network (PHN) to deliver drug and alcohol programs and to support culturally appropriate engagement through Aboriginal cultural connection programs.

There is a strong focus on health promotion at Riverina YJC. JH&FMHN staff have established productive partnerships with community-based services to deliver a range of sexual health and alcohol and other drug programs to the young people. A comprehensive calendar of health promotion and education initiatives has been implemented, targeting specific issues identified within the centre. These have included sessions on stress management, nail and foot care, drink driving, harm minimisation, and healthy eating.

Nursing staff reported positive working relationships with YJNSW staff. No concerns about young people's access to the health centre for medication, scheduled appointments, or walk-in consultations were raised.

Mental health service provision was identified as an area requiring review. It was reported that one day per week of mental health nursing and psychiatry support was insufficient to meet the current needs of the children and young people at Riverina YJC.

The inspection also highlighted the ongoing vacancy of a 0.8 FTE Registered Nurse position. This staffing gap, compounded by leave taken by existing staff, has placed additional pressure on the Nurse unit manager (NUM), who has been working additional days to ensure continuity of care. Recruitment to fill this vacancy was reported to be in progress at the time of the inspection.

¹⁸⁵ Information provided by Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network, 28 April 2025.


















Appendix 1 - List of Previous Recommendations

Making Connections: Providing family and community support to young people in custody	CSNSW	JH&FMHN	YJNSW ¹⁴
1. The Inspector recommends JJNSW reviews the phone contact policy to ensure that contact with family is not apportioned according to behaviour. This should not result in a reduction in the current available number of calls for young people.			●
2. The Inspector recommends that JJNSW regularly reviews the maintenance of phone headsets and the quality of calls.			●
3. The Inspector recommends that JJNSW install phone booths or phone bubbles for acoustic protection and to promote detainee privacy.			●
4. The Inspector recommends that Reiby and Juniperina trial an additional visits day on Sunday and that this initiative is made widely known to visitors and detainees.			●
5. The Inspector recommends that JJNSW ensure that the physical environment of visits should promote family interaction, including: improved use of colour and decoration, access to outdoor areas, a variety of age appropriate toys for visiting children, baby change facilities, games for young people to play with their family and consistent access to refreshments and snacks across centres.			●
6. The Inspector recommends that JJNSW actively monitor visits through CCTV allowing for a reduced staff presence in the family visit area.			●
7. The Inspector recommends JJNSW replace the roof tiles at Reiby with a material that cannot be penetrated or used as a weapon. This would reduce the risks associated with roof ascents, which, in turn, would permit the removal of razor tape on building roofs.			●
8. The Inspector recommends that JJNSW should immediately prioritise the facilitation of family visits through AVL suites located in all JJNSW offices. These suites could also be used to facilitate better contact between a young person in detention and their JJO.			●
9. JJNSW should explore scheduling family visits through AVL suits at courts for those young people from regional areas who do not have access to a JJNSW office.			●
10. The Inspector recommends that JJNSW should not carry out strip-searching on a routine basis and should replace this practice with a rigorous risk-based assessment process to target the trafficking of contraband.			●

11. The Inspector recommends that JJNSW halt the practice of using overalls for non-contact visits.			●
12. The Inspector recommends that JJNSW should have the latent capacity to facilitate a secure environment for young mothers to maintain custody of their child in detention. This would enable best interest determination processes to include options for young mothers to be accompanied by their children in detention.			●
13. The Inspector recommends that JJNSW develop temporary leave arrangements for young mothers who are separated from their children that promote the maintenance of mother-child relationships.			●
14. The Inspector recommends JJNSW bring to the attention of the NSW DEC the adverse impact of the Smart & Skilled program on access to vocational training for young people. JJNSW should ensure continued equitable access for all young people to apprenticeships and traineeships.			●
15. The Inspector recommends that JJNSW integrate community and NGO engagement within the framework of service delivery for young people. This would support each centre in developing a strategic approach to relationships with NGOs and communities.			●
16. The Inspector recommends that JJNSW provide the same opportunities to engage with media and technology to girls as to boys.			●
17. The Inspector recommends that JJNSW ensure that young women who are eligible and appropriately risk assessed are provided with an equal opportunity to access a transitional program such as that provided at Waratah Unit.			●

Inspection of Six Youth Justice Centres in NSW	CSNSW	JH&FMHN	YJNSW
1. YJNSW ensures all holding rooms are cleaned on a daily basis to ensure that hygiene requirements are met.			●
2. YJNSW and JH&FMHN ensure that young people take part in an initial risk assessment within two hours of reception and full health assessment within 48 hours of reception.		●	●
3. YJNSW ensures young women and girls remanded in custody in the Greater Sydney region are received at Reiby YJC.			●
4. YJNSW review the way in which young people, who are considered to be at risk of self-harm and suicide, are managed and review the number of camera rooms in each centre.			●

5. YJNSW introduce stock-management controls to maintain sufficient stock of clothing and bedding to meet entitlements of young people in custody.			●
6. YJNSW staff are trained on the legislative provisions around partially clothed body searches and cease routine partially clothed body searches before and after visits.			●
7. YJNSW develops a contraband detection strategy using technological capabilities, such as body scanners.			●
8. YJNSW reviews centre menus to ensure they meet dietary and nutritional standards for young people in custody.			●
9. YJNSW custodial staff are provided with training on their legislative obligations in regards to complaints handling.			●
10. Secure letter boxes are placed in each accommodation unit in all YJCs so young people can make a confidential complaint to the centre manager, Official Visitor or NSW Ombudsman.			●
11. YJNSW review the adequacy of Aboriginal legal services to Aboriginal young people in detention and levels of appropriate funding.			●
12. The Bail Assessment Program at Orana YJC is replicated in all youth justice centres in NSW, with particular priority for children under 14 years of age, in order to address the issue around finding timely and suitable accommodation for young people.			●
13. YJNSW provide all staff with additional training in relational security.			●
14. YJNSW regularly audits at least one third of all video footage of incidents involving the use of force across all centres to ensure compliance with section 5 of the UOF, Protective Equipment and Instruments of restraint policy.			●
15. YJNSW consider the introduction of body worn cameras for staff to record incidents including use of force.			●
16. YJNSW work with JH&FMHN to establish extended health centre hours to ensure all medication is distributed by nursing staff and when necessary YJNSW staff who are appropriately trained in the administering of prescribed medication.		●	●
17. YJNSW ensures staff training and refresher training addresses self-harm behaviours of young people in custody.			●
18. YJNSW create a programs and activities co-ordinator to ensure all centres implement a programs and activities plan.			●

19. YJNSW implements an Aboriginal Elder program to support and provide guidance to Aboriginal young people.			
20. YJNSW provides ongoing support and training for caseworkers.			
21. YJNSW coordinates access to the NDIS for eligible young people.			
22. Cobham YJC undertakes regular cleaning of the Tandarra Unit.			
23. Cobham YJC ceases the practice of placing young women and girls in the Tandarra unit which accommodates boys and young men.			
24. YJNSW ensures the induction unit at Cobham YJC is a modern unit with communal eating and social spaces.			
25. YJNSW conduct a review of the visits area at Cobham YJC to enable more contact visits to take place with young people and their families.			
26. YJNSW ensures young people in the HRU at Cobham are seen by a nurse and have access to a centre-based psychologist seven days a week.			
27. Cobham YJC ensures interview rooms or other appropriate space that ensures confidentiality are used to facilitate psychological assessment and intervention.			
28. YJNSW provides training in Islam and associated cultural practices.			
29. YJNSW identify and repair structural and design weaknesses within Orana YJC and its buildings.			
30. Orana YJC utilises both the indoor and outdoor visits area.			
31. YJNSW ensures young people at Orana YJC have access to psychology services.			
32. Reiby YJC ensures the segregation unit is regularly cleaned and maintained.			
33. YJNSW ensures that CCTV footage of use of force incidents are retained as per NSW Government record keeping procedures.			
34. Reiby YJC identify adequate counselling space for psychology services.			
35. YJNSW makes necessary structural and security changes to the Waratah unit to separately accommodate young women.			

36. YJNSW regularly audits Acmena YJC to ensure all holding rooms, including toilet and shower facilities, are cleaned daily and comply with applicable regulations and cleaning standards.			●
37. Acmena YJC install privacy screens so as to afford appropriate privacy to young people in the admission area.			●
38. YJNSW consider constructing yards adjoining the Jacaranda and Clarence accommodation units, to enable young people to participate in outdoor activities in a safe and secure location.			●
39. Acmena YJC install additional telephone for use by young people.			●
40. The centre manager at Acmena YJC, in compliance with legislation, maintains a complaints management system and ensures that both young people and staff are aware of, and understand, the process.			●
41. Acmena YJC and Aboriginal Legal Service establish a schedule of regular visits to the centre.			●
42. Acmena YJC reviews the Client Assessment Meeting process to ensure young people are treated fairly.			●
43. Acmena YJC ensures young people spend ten hours out of their room each day and young people not attending school are provided with meaningful time out of their room.			●
44. Acmena YJC ensures that caseworkers have regular meetings with young people and for there to be a defined, private meeting space for them to meet with young people.			●
45. Frank Baxter YJC ensures regular and meaningful detainee representative committee meetings occur.			●
46. Frank Baxter YJC reviews the misbehaviour process to ensure young people receive procedural fairness.			●
47. JH&FMHN prioritise the recruitment of health staff at the centre.		●	
48. YJNSW ensures young people in the HRMU and ESU at Frank Baxter are placed on DRMPs that provide for a minimum number of hours out of their room and access to a nurse and psychologist seven days a week.			●
49. YJNSW installs additional telephones for young people at Riverina YJC.			●
50. Riverina YJC implements monthly detainee representation committee meetings.			●
51. Riverina YJC staff undertake further training relating to when and how to use force.			●

Use of force, separation, segregation and confinement in NSW Juvenile Justice Centres	CSNSW	JH&FMHN	YJNSW
1. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice consider whether to retain the separate categories of pre-planned, situational or immediate use of force, or whether to use only two categories.			●
2. The Inspector recommends that Juvenile Justice reduces the use of force to move young people.			●
3. The Inspector recommends that forcible searching of young people should only be conducted on the basis of reasonable suspicion.			●
4. The Inspector recommends that Juvenile Justice finalise the draft memorandum of understanding with the NSW Police Force.			●
5. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice review the detainee incentive scheme and consults with young people to improve consistency across centres.			●
6. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice have regard to the lessons learned from the Chisholm Behaviour Program in developing future programs and policies.			●
7. The Inspector recommends consideration is given to amending the Children (Detention Centres) Regulation 2015 to reflect the Objective Classification System.			●
8. The Inspector recommends that Juvenile Justice conduct a review to ensure consistent safeguards are in place in relation to separation, segregation and confinement.			●
9. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice regularly reviews delegations to ensure they reflect existing legislative and governance arrangements and level of seniority of youth officers authorised to make particular delegations.			●
10. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice provides copies of records about segregation over 24 hours to the Executive Director of Juvenile Justice.			●
11. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice ensures young people placed in separation, segregation and confinement are not routinely handcuffed to, from or during visits or exercise; or required to have non-contact visits; and that decisions to impose such restrictions are based on an individual risk assessment.			●
12. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice ensures DRMPs include a requirement for six hours out of room each day; and that young people on separation, segregation or subject to a DRMP spend at least six hours out of their room each day, including access to an outdoor area and physical activity for at least one hour each day, and that decisions to limit time out of room are based on an individual risk assessment.			●

13. The Inspector recommends that Juvenile Justice review the policy and procedure in relation to the use of force, protective equipment, and instruments of restraint and the policy and procedure in relation to DRMPs to ensure consistency with legislation.			●
14. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice should not carry out strip searching on a routine basis and should replace this practice with a rigorous risk-based assessment process to target the trafficking of contraband.			●
15. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice develops an organisational framework which is evidence based, trauma informed, and consistent with being a child-safe and culturally competent organisation.			●
16. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice and JH&FMHN conduct a review of the management of young people who are in engaging in or threatening self-harm with input from an expert in forensic mental health.		●	●
17. The Inspector recommends that young people are not confined for using bad language that is not abusive or threatening.			
18. The Inspector recommends that Juvenile Justice reduces the use of confinement as punishment.			●
19. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice ensures young people are confined or segregated in their room whenever possible, subject to an individual risk assessment; to avoid having to wake young people at night to return them to their room.			●
20. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice ensure that wherever possible, subject to an individual risk assessment, young people on separation or segregation are permitted to eat outside of their room.			●
21. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice regularly reviews the meals available for at risk young people to ensure they meet nutritional standards; and investigate the provision of cutlery that is not able to be used for self-harm.			●
22. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice review the amount and range of items and activities, including watching television that are provided to young people placed in separation, segregation and confinement, in consultation with young people.			●
23. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice works with the Department of Education to ensure that young people in separation, segregation and confinement are provided with educational lessons or materials; and any decisions to exclude young people from school are reviewed regularly.			●

24. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice provides programs and activities as part of the implementation of a structured day, particularly in school holidays.			●
25. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice considers whether and how young people in separation, segregation, and confinement may be provided with programs in a modified format, or with program material.			●
26. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice reviews decisions to exclude young people from programs regularly.			●
27. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice reviews centre routines with a view to reducing routine lockdown periods, and increasing the hours that young people spend out of their room each day.			●
28. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice decommissions or refurbishes the Uralba, Taralga, and Tandarra units which were used for the Chisholm Behaviour Program.			●
29. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice outlines and monitors the type and frequency of training permanent and casual staff are expected to complete, as well as the requisite skills and qualifications of trainers.			●
30. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice should record the training undertaken by youth officers and ensure refresher training is undertaken as required.			●
31. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice reviews its training in protective tactics to provide guidance about the circumstances when force or restraints may be used and best practice in using force and restraint on young people, including when young people are located in elevated positions, non-compliant, or when moving a young person who is non-compliant.			●
32. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice considers whether additional measures need to be put in place to mitigate the risk of injuries to staff occurring when force is used.			●
33. The Inspector recommends that Juvenile Justice provides training to youth officers about the circumstances in which a young person's room should be entered for the safety of staff and young people.			●
34. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice provides training to youth officers about the use of handheld video camera.			●
35. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice develops guidelines in relation to how to use footage for training purposes.			●
36. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice reviews the use and practice of debriefs for staff and young people.			●














37. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice ensure all youth officers receive comprehensive and ongoing training about trauma informed practice; managing challenging behaviours; effective communication and negotiation; effective conflict management; including de-escalation techniques; and incident management, including non-violent crisis intervention.			●
38. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice reviews the role descriptions and recruitment processes for youth officers to attract suitably qualified and skilled youth officers to work with young people.			●
39. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice provides training in report writing to ensure all relevant information is accurate and documented and training to reviewing officers to ensure reports are accurate, and how to identify breaches of legislation and policy; and identify areas of good practice and areas of concern.			●
40. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice provides training to staff in relation to the circumstances in which young people may be criminally charged.			●
41. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice provides training on the difference between separation, segregation and confinement and the circumstances in which a young person should be segregated on the basis of an individual risk assessment.			●
42. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice provides training to youth officers about the importance of making decisions in accordance with their delegated authority.			●
43. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice provides training to staff about when, why and how to conduct reviews of confinement.			●
44. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice provides training to staff on the impact of separation, segregation and confinement on Aboriginal young people.			●
45. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice provide training to officers about the circumstances in which a young person should be placed in a dignity gown to prevent self-harm; and allowing a young person to place the dignity gown on themselves, wherever practicable.			●
46. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice provides training about the circumstances in which a search involving the removal of clothing may occur and best practice processes for conducting these searches.			●
47. The Inspector recommends that Juvenile Justice review the type, number and content of reports to be completed following use of force; who is authorised to review and approve incident and use of force reports; and the role of different approving officers.			●
48. The Inspector recommends that Juvenile Justice records, monitors, and analyses data about use of force to identify anomalies, gaps and trends, and establishes a system for auditing incidents where force is used to ensure that concerns about practice, reporting and reviews are identified.			●

49. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice implement a system to record the use of restraints and analyse when, how and why individual young people are restrained, and the length of time restraints are applied.			●
50. The Inspector recommends that Juvenile Justice records, monitors, and analyses the hours that young people spend in separation, segregation, or confinement or a combination of orders to identify anomalies, gaps and trends; and establishes a system for auditing the use of separation, segregation, or confinement to ensure that concerns about practice, reporting and reviews are identified.			●
51. The Inspector recommends that Juvenile Justice notifies JH&FMHN of every young person who is subject to a preplanned, situational or immediate use of force.			●
52. The Inspector recommends JH&FMHN assess every young person who is subject to a pre-planned, situational or immediate use of force as soon as practicable and record whether the young person has sustained injuries or not; and take photographs of any injuries with a young person's consent.		●	
53. The Inspector recommends JH&FMHN consider extending the hours that nurses are onsite at Juvenile Justice centres.		●	
54. The Inspector recommends that Juvenile Justice notifies a parent, carer, or other appropriate adult following a use of force against a young person if the young person is injured or there is a related investigation.			●
55. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice ensures that during investigations child complainants and witnesses are interviewed and provided with an appropriate support person; and advised of the outcome.			●
56. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice provides information to staff about the role of the Ethics & Professional Standards Unit; the circumstances in which investigations will be conducted; the process that will be followed during an investigation; and support staff will receive during an investigation.			●
57. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice work with the Department of Justice, Professional Conduct Committee to review its terms of reference to include identification of practice issues or systemic issues.			●
58. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice notifies the NSW Ombudsman if a young person is placed in separation, segregation, or confinement or a combination of orders that results in a young person being removed from the centre routine or alone in a room for over 24 hours.			●
59. The Inspector recommends Juvenile Justice works with the NSW Ombudsman to develop a system of notification of pre-planned use of force of young people and strip searching of young people.			●

The Management of Radicalised Inmates in NSW	CSNSW	JH&FMHN	YJNSW
10. The Inspector recommends that CSNSW and Juvenile Justice NSW review the 2006 Memorandum of Understanding to include information-sharing protocols.	●		●

Review of the response to COVID-19 in NSW custody	CSNSW	JH&FMHN	YJNSW
1. Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network, Youth Justice NSW, Corrective Services NSW and private operators undertake an internal review of the management of COVID-19 in custodial centres to inform future pandemic planning. This review should include input from people in custody and staff.	●	●	●
2. Corrective Services NSW and Youth Justice NSW ensure they have lawful authority to restrict in person social visits to custodial centres for health reasons.	●		●
11. Youth Justice NSW ensures young people in custody with COVID-19 have time out-of-room and can mix with other young people with COVID-19, subject to an assessment of their risk to and from other young people.			●
15. Youth Justice NSW develops state-wide and local documented protocols for facilitating communication between young people in isolation and their legal representatives.			●
16. Youth Justice NSW ensures young people in isolation can access fit-for-purpose AVL facilities or alternative means of technology for legal communication.			●
18. Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network undertakes a review with Corrective Services NSW and private operators, and Youth Justice NSW of the impact of COVID-19 on the provision of health care in adult and youth custodial centres.	●	●	

Inspection of Six Youth Justice Centres (2022)	CSNSW	JH&FMHN	YJNSW
1. Youth Justice NSW review the training and resource needs of regional centres to help them manage young people who demonstrate challenging behaviour.			●
2. Youth Justice NSW extend the hours of operation of the Bail and Accommodation Support Service.			●
3. Youth Justice NSW review centre routines to ensure young people have a minimum 10 hours time out of room per day.			●
4. Youth Justice NSW establish the roles of Aboriginal practice officer and Aboriginal mentor for all youth justice centres.			●

5. Youth Justice NSW centralise oversight of recreational programs and activities in all youth justice centres to their agency.			
6. Youth Justice NSW cease the practice of providing young people on confinement or a detainee risk management plan with a different meal to that served to all young people in the centre, unless risk assessed otherwise.			
7. Youth Justice NSW continue to take action to address racism, bullying and harassment in youth justice centres.			
8. Youth Justice NSW use body scanners to search young people after visits and cease the use of visit overalls.			
9. Youth Justice NSW regularly examine misbehaviour and punishment practices across youth justice centres and provide training to all youth officers in NSW on misbehaviours and punishment practices as prescribed by legislation.			
10. Justice Health & Forensic Mental Health Network review the level of mental health nursing hours at each centre to ensure there are sufficient hours funded to meet the needs of the population.			
11. Youth Justice NSW develop a state-wide policy position on the use of sensory tools in youth justice centres which enables the use of these tools in the circumstances where they are required.			
12. Youth Justice NSW provide occupational therapy and speech pathology services to all youth justice centres in NSW.			
13. Youth Justice NSW consider endorsement of a modified dialectical behaviour therapy program for delivery in all youth justice centres.			
14. Youth Justice NSW ensure young people in all youth justice centres have access to culturally safe psychology services and continue efforts to recruit Aboriginal psychologists in centres.			
15. Youth Justice NSW review the detainee representative committee and develop a format that is child centred, gives a voice to young people and helps them to develop communication, negotiation and resolution skills.			
16. Youth Justice NSW implement the encouraging positive improvement and change model in all youth justice centres and provide lead in and post implementation support to staff.			
17. Youth Justice NSW review the client services meeting and develop guidelines, manuals and training for implementation in all youth justice centres.			

18. Youth Justice NSW explore ways of enabling enhanced support unit services to be available to as many young people as possible, including girls.			●
19. Youth Justice NSW centralise the process of identifying suitable placements for the Waratah prerelease program with their agency.			●
20. Youth Justice NSW retire the Tandarra and Taralga units at Cobham Youth Justice Centre.			●
21. Youth Justice NSW ensure young people at Cobham Youth Justice Centre are provided with warm bedding (doonas) and new underwear.			●
22. Youth Justice NSW ensure all detainee risk management plans at Cobham Youth Justice Centre include a minimum daily six hours' time out of room for young people.			●
23. Youth Justice NSW endorse the Men's Group and Pasifika programs as state-wide intervention programs and explore program adaptations for young people of differing cultures.			●
24. Youth Justice NSW cease using the holding rooms in the old infrastructure of Cobham Youth Justice Centre.			●
25. Youth Justice NSW ensures psychologists have access to interview rooms or other confidential spaces to facilitate psychological assessments and interventions with young people.			●
26. Cobham Youth Justice Centre refrain from locking young people in their rooms while client assessment meetings are being conducted.			●
27. Youth Justice NSW ensure custodial training schedules in regional centres address managing problem behaviours in young people.			●
28. Youth Justice NSW develop a system of regular checks and compliance recording sheets for the cleaning and maintenance of reception holding rooms at Frank Baxter Youth Justice Centre.			●
29. Youth Justice NSW review induction processes at Frank Baxter Youth Justice Centre and ensure a timely transition to a mainstream unit.			●
30. Youth Justice NSW ensure the young people at Frank Baxter Youth Justice Centre have access to necessary intervention programs and that caseworkers are trained and supported to deliver those programs.			●
31. Youth Justice NSW appoint an identified position at Frank Baxter Youth Justice Centre to support the Aboriginal practice officer and promote a cultural agenda at the centre.			●

32. Youth Justice NSW ensure young people are provided with new underwear and girls have access to sanitary items.			●
33. Youth Justice NSW continue to reduce the use of restraints on young people in Reiby Youth Justice Centre.			●
34. Youth Justice NSW provide access to a body scanning machine for visits.			●
35. Youth Justice NSW remodel the reception and admissions area of Acmena Youth Justice Centre.			●
36. Youth Justice NSW reduce high levels of use of force and restraints in Acmena Youth Justice Centre.			●
37. Youth Justice NSW provide more training to staff at Acmena Youth Justice Centre in professional conduct and the duty of officers and staff to report misconduct.			●
38. Justice Health & Forensic Mental Health Network review health service space at Acmena Youth Justice Centre, the number of treatment rooms and the feasibility of including a dental suite.		●	
39. Youth Justice NSW create an identified Aboriginal caseworker position at Acmena Youth Justice Centre.			●
40. Youth Justice NSW provide training and support to staff at Acmena Youth Justice Centre in the encouraging positive improvement and change model.			●
41. Youth Justice NSW replace scratched windows at Orana Youth Justice Centre and ensure unobstructed vision is maintained.			●
42. Youth Justice NSW ensure young people are provided with new underwear.			●
43. Youth Justice NSW support Orana Youth Justice Centre to develop cultural connections with Elders and the local Aboriginal community and enable meaningful connections with Aboriginal young people in the centre.			●
44. Youth Justice NSW prioritise the delivery of recreational programs and activities at Orana Youth Justice Centre and ensure young people have access to the gymnasium.			●
45. Youth Justice NSW address staff culture at Orana Youth Justice Centre and provide support to the centre to effect necessary change.			●
46. Youth Justice NSW and Justice Health & Forensic Mental Health Network ensure appropriate signage is installed in Orana Youth Justice Centre to identify the location of the health centre to young people.		●	●

47. Youth Justice NSW ensure that psychologists have access to a confidential space to facilitate consultations with young people.			●
48. Youth Justice NSW remodel and refurbish the visits area at Orana Youth Justice Centre.			●
49. Youth Justice NSW create a sensory space for young people at Riverina Youth Justice Centre.			●
50. Youth Justice NSW monitor the workload of caseworkers at Riverina Youth Justice Centre with consideration of any need to allocate an additional caseworker position to the centre.			●

Inspector of Custodial Services

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