

Juvenile Justice – Therapeutic Unit update

The PSA remains in dispute with Juvenile Justice on the need of establishing a Therapeutic Unit to manage high risk/high need detainees.

This matter is now currently under the direction of Chief Commissioner Kite in the Industrial Relations Commission.

There has been an ongoing compulsory conference before Chief Commissioner Kite noting the Department's continued statement of managing these high needs/high risk detainees under the current framework of "DRMP" (Detainee Risk Management Plans), the use of segregation, detainee classification and incentive scheme.

Because of the continuing staff injuries and assaults across the State, the PSA re-affirmed that these controls are not enough in managing these small numbers of high risk, high need detainees.

The PSA again under the advice of Chief Commissioner Kite attended meetings specific to Frank Baxter, Cobham and Reiby Detention Centres with the purpose of using the Department's terminology of establishing flexible accommodation.

There is now a draft Terms of Reference established with the overarching principles:

- » The foundation of the Working Party is to maintain the safety of staff, young people and the broader community. Its focus will be on the small cohort of young people who display escalating high risk behaviours and increased instances of self-harm within the Frank Baxter, Cobham and Reiby Juvenile Justice Centres.

- » Whilst the primary focus of the working party is Frank Baxter, Cobham and Reiby Centres, the scope of the working party may include Acmena, Orana and Riverina Juvenile Justice Centres, in instances where there is a change in detainee behaviour which increases risk to staff and the young person.

The PSA is encouraged that there has been progress in finally breaking the Department's view on the need for a better management system for these high risk high needs detainees and that there is now some common ground reached.

Whilst the meetings are viewed positively by both delegates and the PSA, unfortunately, staff injuries and assaults continue with recent incidents at both Frank Baxter and Orana Detention Centres.

The Department again refuted this, and said that these staff injuries and assaults are unfortunate incidents where pre-planned use of force went wrong.

The PSA stated to Chief Commissioner Kite that, regardless of whether this was pre-planned force or outside of the current pattern of challenging detainee behaviour, the injuries and assaults to staff must be addressed as a matter of urgency.

In order to progress the matter, the PSA put forward to Chief Commissioner Kite on 29 March 2018 that an urgent meeting must be called and using the recommendation of Chief Commissioner Kite that the meeting must be arranged at the highest levels of Justice that address these concerns but also shows leadership from the Department.



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This meeting was held on Wednesday 4 April 2018 and chaired by Mr Michael Baldi, Executive Director, Justice HR.

In this meeting the PSA stated that the following steps must be enacted as a matter of urgency:

- » Flexible accommodation is enacted now and formalised;
- » Clear, consistent penalties applied by all centres in detainee behaviour management;
- » Independent safety review looking at recent incidents at Baxter and Orana and why pre-planned use of force still has resulted in staff injuries;
- » Establishment of a committee to assess each incident with representatives from both Justice and the PSA;
- » What and how are incident debriefs used.

Mr Baldi stated within this meeting that staff safety and well-being is of the highest concern and has affirmed that he will oversee this process with Juvenile Justice and the PSA in managing these challenging detainees.

