

**MEDIA RELEASE – EMBARGOED UNTIL 12 NOON ON TUESDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2018**

**Report No. 116 – Banksia Hill Detention Centre**

In his sixth report on Banksia Hill Juvenile Detention Centre in six years, the Inspector of Custodial Services found signs of improvement in the centre’s stability and service delivery. But the Inspector warned that there are still some weaknesses and that the momentum must be maintained.

Acting Inspector Andrew Harvey said that since Banksia Hill became the sole custody option for young people six years ago, it has been plagued with volatility, instability and uncertainty:

‘While definite progress has been made in the last nine months, the model of a single detention centre remains flawed.

Banksia Hill must hold all ages, genders, cultures and backgrounds, and every young person there has complex health and developmental needs. A single centre cannot meet the needs of such a diverse and high need group of young people. For very good reason, no other state or territory has such a large facility or a “one-stop shop”.

Put simply, there are too many young people in the one place. In 2017, the government committed to examining a broader range of more appropriate options. That will take time if it is to be done properly but it does need to be done.’

Mr Harvey said that despite this problem, a new management team and new policy settings had improved the centre’s stability and sense of direction over the last nine months. Staff felt more supported, committed, and engaged. Improvements included:

- a general sense of safety for young people and staff
- improved security processes
- reduction in strip searches
- good policies for managing transgender and transsexual youth
- some record keeping improvements.

Mr Harvey said, however, that several basic service areas were still lacking. The most significant of these was education, a right of all young people and a key factor to keep them out of detention in the future.

At the time of the inspection in July 2017, the Inspector was very concerned that Banksia Hill still had no operational philosophy that clearly stated its aims and principles and how this flowed into operational practice. Mr Harvey said he was pleased to report that since the inspection this has been developed and committed to by the Department:

‘This is a definite positive, but the signs are mixed as to whether the philosophy can be implemented and sustained. Given the chaos of the last seven years, staff and management should be commended for their commitment. But the Department cannot afford for Banksia Hill to fail again.

Momentum must be maintained. Fundamental to this is a commitment to alternative placement options, an investment in infrastructure at Banksia Hill (especially for crisis care

and therapeutic support), sticking to plans and commitments made, consistent leadership, and delivering on promises.'

Andrew Harvey  
**Acting Inspector**

For more detail, please see the Inspector's Overview to the Report and Key Findings (copies attached).

**For Further Media Information:**

The Acting Inspector, Mr Andrew Harvey, will be available for comment from 12noon on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2018 and can be contacted on 0477 307 559.

The full report will be available on the Inspector's website ([www.oics.wa.gov.au](http://www.oics.wa.gov.au))