

A. Entity responses

As mandated in Section 64 of the *Auditor-General Act 2009*, the Queensland Audit Office gave a copy of this report with a request for comments to:

- the Premier, the Minister for Education and Minister for Youth Justice, the Minister for Police and Community Safety and the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence.
- the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, the Department of Youth Justice, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and the Queensland Police Service.

This appendix contains their detailed responses to our audit recommendations.

The heads of these entities are responsible for the accuracy, fairness, and balance of their comments.



Comments received from Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence



The Honourable Yvette D'Ath MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice
Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence

1 William Street Brisbane Q 4000
GPO Box 149 Brisbane Q 4001
Telephone +61 7 3719 7400
Email attorney@ministerial.qld.gov.au

Our ref: 587827/1, 7048077

24 JUN 2024

Mr Brendan Worrall
Auditor-General
Queensland Audit Office
QueenslandAuditOffice@gao.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Worrall

Thank you for your correspondence dated 31 May 2024 regarding the Queensland Audit Office's (QAO) proposed report Reducing serious youth crime (the Report) and for the opportunity to provide a response.

The Department of Justice and Attorney-General (the Department) supports the review being undertaken by the QAO and acknowledges the importance of providing coordinated and effective responses to address youth crime in Queensland. I note the Report makes 12 recommendations primarily directed at the Department of Youth Justice and the Queensland Police Service in their capacity leading the Government response to youth crime. The Department looks forward to working collaboratively with these agencies as a key stakeholder to consider the recommendations.

I refer you to the response to your report from Ms Jasmina Joldić PSM, Director-General of the Department, for further information.

If you have any questions in relation to the above, I invite you to contact [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

YVETTE D'ATH MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice
Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence

Comments received from Director-General, Department of Premier and Cabinet

For reply please quote: SocPol/CC – TF/24/11460 – DOC/24/119721



Department of the
Premier and Cabinet

Mr Brendan Worrall
Auditor-General
Queensland Audit Office
qao@qao.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Worrall

I refer to the email of 31 May 2024 from your office providing the Queensland Audit Office's draft audit report on *Reducing serious youth crime*. I appreciate the opportunity to provide a formal response to this report.

Recommendations 1 and 5 concern the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC). DPC accepts these recommendations.

DPC is committed to progressing the systems evaluation of the 2023 youth justice reforms. DPC notes that its role in, and responsibility for evaluation is limited to the 2023 reforms only, and does not extend to subsequent or future reforms. DPC will continue to support all Queensland Government efforts to increase the evidence base around what works to reduce youth offending and keep communities safe.

While DPC has no legislative responsibility for the youth justice system, DPC will continue to actively work with all relevant agencies to increase community safety through reducing youth crime. This includes fostering and supporting collaborative governance, comprehensive program evaluations and enhanced service integration.

If you require any further information on these matters, please contact

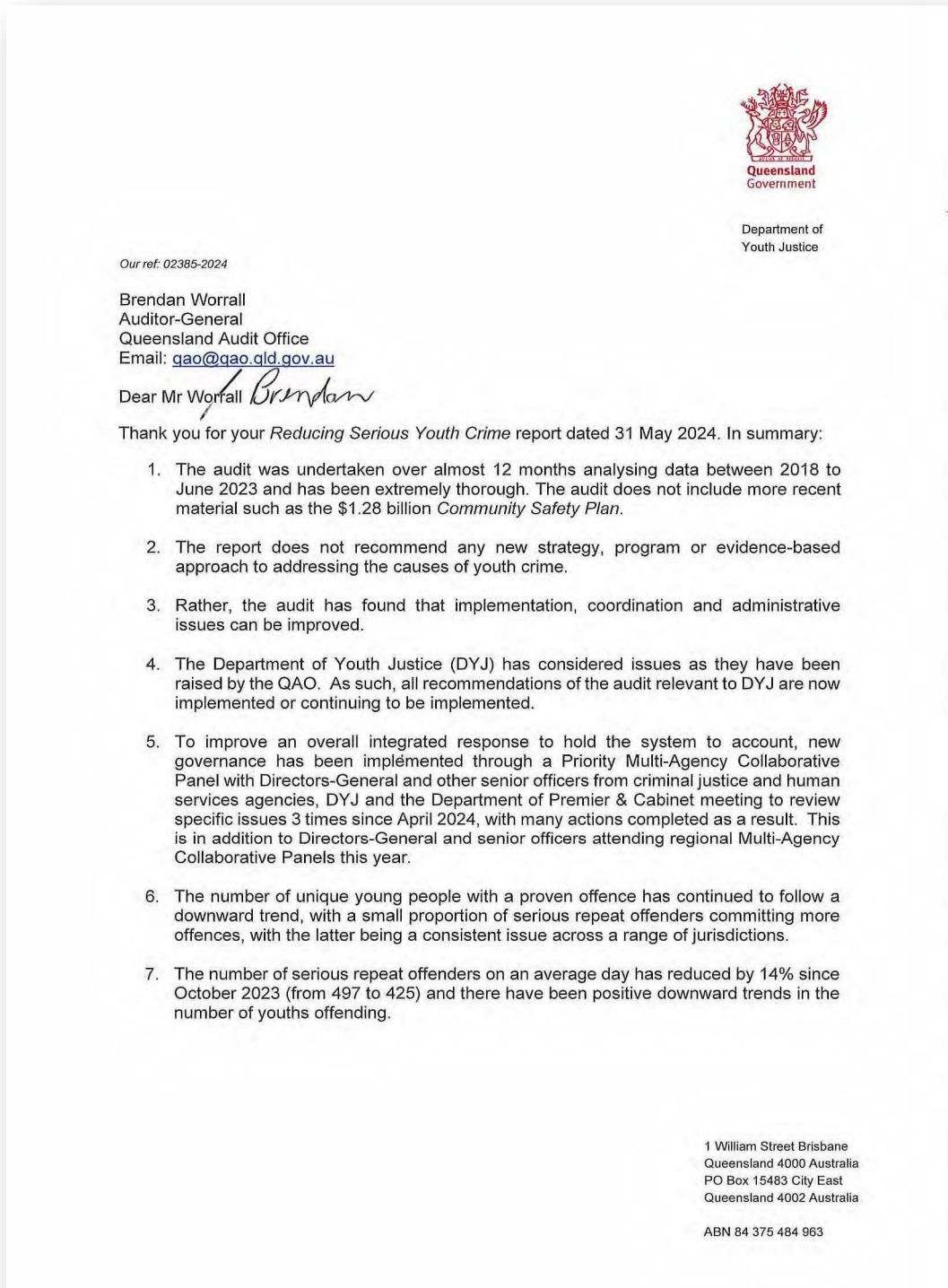
Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mike Kaiser'.

Mike Kaiser
Director-General
2516 124

1 William Street Brisbane
PO Box 15185 City East
Queensland 4002 Australia
Telephone 13 QGOV (13 74 68)
Website www.premiers.qld.gov.au
ABN 65 959 415 158

Comments received from Director-General, Department of Youth Justice



Auditor-General's response: As highlighted in my foreword on page 1, the Auditor-General must not question the merits of government policy objectives. This means we cannot make recommendations on the specific direction or strategies government should take.

The report acknowledges the "significant work entities do to identify at-risk young people and intervene early in their lives". The audit points out that "this work, in areas such as education, health and housing, is critical to deter young people from entering the system", but this report does "not assess or conclude specifically on these areas".

The report includes comments about a "greater need to regularly test the market", and "possible increases in the risk that investments do not achieve value for money or meet the needs of young offenders". The report would have been strengthened by acknowledging that in human services, there are "thin" markets, especially in regional areas. This means there are few (and sometimes no) capable service providers, and so continually retesting the market can have adverse effects on fledgling or small service providers (especially community-controlled organisations).

There is work underway to implement the Government's recently developed *Best Practice Industry Conditions for Social Services Procurement*, outlining key principles to be adopted across the government. DYJ is working with the Social Services Category Council Industry Reference Group, to develop guidelines and policies that strengthen social procurement capability in what is an increasingly complex environment for social services organisations. This includes moving to five-year contracts and early provision of advice that a contract will cease where requirements are not being met.

The report also mentions that of "7 significant procurements, 5 were the result of direction and decisions from ministers rather than based on the department's advice. These decisions, including who made the decision and the rationale for the decision could have been documented more clearly. The department needs strong controls in place to ensure the Minister is adequately briefed about the provider's capability and the procurement risks".

The providers are established providers of services and previous recipients of Federal and State funding (including for example, one or more evaluations of the providers work). The providers have been subject to the necessary due diligence and conformity checks.

The focus in the report on serious repeat offenders only, seems to be a little at odds with the findings about system-wide approaches and processes. For example, there is significant evidence about prevention and early intervention, with the system having seen a reduction of 31 percent in the number of young people with a proven offence across Queensland over the past 10 years.

Reducing the number of young people entering or in the system has been a significant achievement which evidence suggests has prevented more serious repeat offenders.

There is strong evidence: (1) about what works in terms of preventing the causes of crime by investment in families and children in their early years; (2) which explains why many young people offend, including clear connections between lack of economic participation by a family, offending behaviour and exposure to violence; and (3) to inform problem-oriented policing, restorative justice and support for victims.

While it does not excuse the behaviour, many young people have experienced domestic and family violence, have contact with the child protection system or have a parent who has been incarcerated. Issues such as disengagement with schooling, problematic drug, alcohol and substance misuse, untreated mental health issues, developmental disorders, and cognitive and intellectual disabilities can significantly affect a young person's ability to learn and make sensible decisions, making them more likely to take risks and unable to consider the



consequences of their actions. To this end, it is promising that the audit has called for better implementation of the current evidence-based approaches which have been the result of significant reform since 2019.

Some of these reforms include:

- legislative change each year from 2019;
- establishment of and improvements to Multi Agency Collaborative Panels;
- establishment and expansion of Early Action Groups;
- establishment of a Youth Justice Peak Body;
- implementation of the *Youth Justice Outcomes Framework*;
- Youth Response and Diversion including the Mt Isa Hub;
- extension of after-hours services, drug and alcohol treatment services and On Country programs;
- Community Based Crime Action grants and Targeted Responses for Youth Crime grants (\$7.5 million in 2023-2024);
- expanded restorative justice conferencing;
- a new therapeutic detention centre with additional centres to be built;
- 24/7 Youth Co-Responder Teams (over 140 DYJ staff with matching police resources) in 15 locations with over 96,000 contacts with young people;
- 82 staff to provide Intensive Case Management through 16 locations across the state, working with over 300 young people with an evaluation demonstrating reduced offending by 50%, with a 72% reduction in offences against the person;
- trialled and expanded electronic monitoring;
- extended bail support initiatives;
- outsourced service delivery with 41% delivered by community-controlled organisations;
- significant safety and accountability improvements (e.g., body worn cameras) and improved training within detention centres along with extended education, training, rehabilitation and health services.

As part of a whole-of-systems approach, a new *Community Safety Plan for Queensland* has been released. The *Community Safety Plan* is centred on five targeted pillars of action, supported by \$1.28 billion in additional investment and drives focus and investment across government agencies and Non-Government Organisations. The soon to be released *Youth Justice Strategy* supports the *Community Safety Plan* released on 30 April 2024 and is further supported by new investment over \$500 million in the *Putting Queensland Kids First Plan*.

These plans build on the successful measures that we have seen reduce youth offending in the first part of this year, with new investment and expanded initiatives. These measures bring together different agencies to provide direct, one-on-one support for high-risk young people and their families. This typically includes getting young people back into education, training or employment, helping families to improve parenting skills and home environments, and connecting them to support services to tackle issues such as substance abuse.

There are more young people in detention (309 on an average day in 2023 compared to 236 on an average day in 2019) who are now detained for longer (55 days in 2023 compared to 44 days in 2019). Staff shortages of around 50 vacancies in May 2023 have been rectified, with detention services now having 120 staff over allocated strength which provides a strong base for better rehabilitation and accountability. In addition, the Wacol Youth Remand Facility will soon be finalised, with new youth detention centres funded, so that young people are not detained any longer than necessary in police watchhouses.

We also undertake regular monitoring and review of existing youth justice programs and services to help us better understand not only 'what works', but what works for specific cohorts of young people, where and why. Where the evidence indicates programs or services are not effective, we will change or stop them and the recommendations provided support this ongoing work.

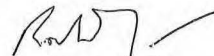
Thank you for acknowledging the complexity of delivering highly specialised tertiary responses and the operational decisions across multiple individually registered or qualified professionals that are often needed to deal with one individual young person (e.g. paediatric psychiatrists; specialist psychologists; speech pathologists; specialist education and training; disability support; specialist medical care; specialised and qualified law enforcement and legal officers; child protection specialists; cultural support along with support for parents and families; youth detention workers; youth justice officers and non-government agencies that provide after hours services).

Each of these professionals must operate within the rule of law, according to the requirements of their registered profession given the often intrusive intervention required or complex, interrelated causes of behaviour (e.g. mental and physical health, substance abuse, disability, offending behaviour, lack of a parent or kin, housing, education or training difficulties, impacts of sexual or physical violence, poverty, law enforcement and administration of justice). Coordination of these scarce, highly specialised resources across regional areas continues to be a focus.

If you require additional information or would like to discuss this matter further, including the specific responses to recommendations attached, I invite you to contact me [redacted]

I acknowledge you and your staff's efforts to provide real-time advice during the audit so that any improvements to implementation and administration could be acted on immediately.

Yours sincerely



Robert Gee APM
Director-General

26.6.24



Responses to recommendations

Department of Youth Justice

Reducing serious youth crime

Response to recommendations provided by Robert Gee, Director-General, Department of Youth Justice on 21 June 2024.

Recommendation	Agree/ Disagree	Timeframe for implementation (Quarter and financial year)	Additional comments
<p>We recommend that the Department of Youth Justice and the Queensland Police Service, in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders:</p> <p>2. strengthen its leadership and governance of the youth justice system (the system). This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring relevant leadership committees, including the Youth Crime Taskforce, are attended by appropriate entity delegates with appropriate decision-making authority. identifying and prioritising key challenges across the system and implementing appropriate strategies and actions. improving cross-entity collaboration to ensure entities share relevant information in a timely manner, including making the Multi-Agency Collaborative Panel (MACP) data dashboard available to relevant entities. 	Agree	Implemented. Q4, 2023-24	<p>The Department of Youth Justice (DYJ) notes that (1) no new strategy, program or evidence-based approach to addressing the causes of youth crime have been recommended by this audit; and (2) the audit has found that implementation and administrative issues can be improved.</p> <p>Emphasis on direct system oversight by Directors-General has increased with three meetings of a new governance arrangement for oversight of cross agency responses to youth offending, attended by Directors-General & Commissioners [DYJ (Chair), Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC), Queensland Police Service (QPS), Department of Education (DoE), Queensland Corrective Services (QCS), Department of Child Safety Seniors and Disability Services (DCSSDS), Department of Justice & Attorney General (DJAG), Queensland Health (QH), Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities & the Arts (DTATSIPCA), Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning & Public Works (DHLGPPW)] and Deputy Directors-General.</p> <p>Directors-General now meet with the cross agency Senior Officers Reference Group (SORG) (Deputy Director-General level) that was overseeing the Youth Crime Taskforce, including updated terms of reference.</p> <p>In April 2024, the Government permanently established the Youth Crime Taskforce, enhancing the capability to respond to youth offending.</p> <p>In addition to a completed review of the roles and responsibilities of the Youth Crime Taskforce, and the SORG, key thematic issues and specific operational issues arising from MACPs (case management) have been addressed to improve statewide service coordination.</p> <p>A MACP dashboard is regularly shared with panel members including information on serious repeat offenders. Directors-General and other senior officers are now meeting with or attending MACPs and Early Action Groups to support delegates with decision-making authority.</p> <p>Ministers for the following portfolios: Community Safety, YJ, Health, JAG, Education, TATSIPCA, and HLGPPW, Corrective Services, CSDDS, are represented on the Community Safety Cabinet Committee, which provides a cohesive whole of government response to adult and youth crime, and ensures there is an accountable governance system that can operate effectively across the State including the regions, and across multiple government agencies.</p>

Recommendation	Agree/ Disagree	Timeframe for implementation (Quarter and financial year)	Additional comments
<p>We recommend that the Department of Youth Justice, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders:</p> <p>3. review, update, and implement its new Youth Justice Strategy. The Strategy should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include indicators of success to measure performance across the system. • include clear system-wide actions aimed at reducing the over-representation of First Nations young offenders in the system. • clearly define roles and responsibilities across the system to inform entity-level strategies and plans. 	<p>Agree</p>	<p>Implemented. Q4, 2023-24</p>	<p>A new <i>Youth Justice Strategy</i> will be released imminently. Consultation with targeted stakeholders, including the Youth Justice Strategy Reference Group, Independent Ministerial Advisory Council, and government and non-government agencies is currently being finalised now that this audit and the Youth Justice Reform Select Committee have reported.</p> <p>DYJ notes that (1) no new strategy, program or evidence-based approach to addressing the causes of youth crime have been recommended by this audit; and (2) the audit has found that implementation and administrative issues can be improved.</p> <p>The <i>Youth Justice Strategy</i> includes indicators of success to measure performance across the system. The Strategy highlights the responsibilities of other government strategies and plans, for example, through links with the <i>Education Reform Package</i>, <i>Putting Queensland Kids First</i>, <i>Homes for Queenslanders</i> and <i>Community Safety Plan</i>, and reflects responsible entities for current and future programs.</p> <p>The Strategy includes a focus on reducing the over-representation of First Nations young offenders in the system, through co-design with First Nations organisations and a commitment to place and evidenced-based community-led and First Nations led justice solutions. DYJ will also continue engaging with community-controlled organisations and working with First Nations young people to support re-engagement with education and divert them away from crime.</p>



Recommendation	Agree/ Disagree	Timeframe for implementation (Quarter and financial year)	Additional comments
<p>We recommend that the Department of Youth Justice:</p> <p>6. formalise and execute a plan for measuring the effectiveness of programs using its outcomes framework.</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>Continuing to Implement. Q1, 2024-25 when "Unify" goes live</p>	<p>Program evaluations routinely include measures of effectiveness using outcome data that aligns with the <i>Youth Justice Outcomes Framework</i>.</p> <p>The <i>Youth Justice Outcomes Framework</i> was developed to measure the outcomes achieved from programs and services. The framework identifies the primary needs of a young offender that must be addressed to reduce the likelihood of reoffending. These include their health and wellbeing, accommodation, and how connected they are to family, culture, and community. The Framework clearly identifies the outcomes needed in the short, medium, and long term to reduce reoffending and increase public safety.</p> <p>Program logics for new initiatives are developed to align with outcome measures in the Framework. The consistent collection of outcome measures will be achieved through the implementation of a new IT system ('Unify') in 2024, that will improve and standardise processes and systems for collecting, recording, and disseminating departmental data.</p>

Recommendation	Agree/ Disagree	Timeframe for implementation (Quarter and financial year)	Additional comments
<p>We recommend that the Department of Youth Justice:</p> <p>7. strengthen its investment and procurement practices to ensure that all investment decisions are based on sound market analysis, with the rationale for decisions clearly documented in line with evidence. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regularly mapping its investment against youth crime trends across Queensland. • ensuring its contracts contain sufficient performance measures and targets that assess outputs and outcomes. • developing a framework to build capability in the sector. 	<p>Agree</p>	<p>Continuing to Implement. Q4, 2023-24 Q2, 2025-26 for investment mapping.</p>	<p>DYJ has strengthened its investment and procurement practices in line with the <i>Queensland Government Social Services Category Strategy 2023-2025</i>. A key priority of the Strategy is increased collaboration with the sector and improved access to data to support investment decisions, ensuring services are community-led and client-focused to achieve better outcomes for vulnerable Queenslanders.</p> <p>DYJ will work collaboratively with the Social Services Industry Reference Group to implement the Government's recently developed <i>Best Practice Industry Conditions for Social Service Procurement</i> and develop guidelines and policies that strengthen social procurement capability. This includes moving to five-year contracts and early provision of advice that a contract will cease where requirements are not being met.</p> <p>A reporting dashboard is regularly provided for departmental governance to review investment against identified priorities.</p> <p>All outsourced service delivery contracts include key performance indicators and output and outcome measures, which providers are required to routinely record in the Outsourced Service Delivery Client Management System (Service Record System). Specific targets are included where relevant, appropriate and necessary. Supplier performance is monitored and reviewed quarterly to ensure alignment with contractual obligations.</p> <p>Market and demand analysis is undertaken for all investment decision-making and a clear rationale with supporting evidence is now included in relevant briefing material.</p> <p>A Queensland Youth Justice Peak Body has been established to drive evidence-based approaches to improve community safety. A key deliverable for the Peak is the development of strategies to deliver a capable and effective Youth Justice workforce. This includes building the capability of service providers in rural and remote locations and those providing services to First Nations and culturally diverse communities. DYJ is developing an Employee Value Proposition to support development of the Workforce Strategy, which will include a range of professional development and workplace engagement initiatives. As part of the <i>Youth Justice Evaluation and Monitoring Program of Work</i>, investment mapping will be undertaken to map place-based youth justice investment across the State by location, program, and service mix. This work will be drawn on in conjunction with consideration of evaluation findings to inform future cost benefit analyses of initiatives in scope.</p>

Recommendation	Agree/ Disagree	Timeframe for implementation (Quarter and financial year)	Additional comments
<p>We recommend that the Department of Youth Justice and the Queensland Police Service, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders and governance committees:</p> <p>8. agree on a uniform, evidence-based approach to identifying those young offenders with the highest risk of reoffending and ensure this information is shared with relevant stakeholders across the system.</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>Implemented. Q4, 2023-2024</p>	<p>The QPS and DYJ agree that legislative amendments in 2023 enables courts to declare a child a serious repeat offender if the eligibility criteria is met. It is also agreed that a separate measure, the Serious Repeat Offender Index (SROI) is a tool that can provide an overview of a young person's offending and custodial history.</p> <p>It is also well understood across agencies that DYJ systematically applies an evidence-based risk assessment tool, the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI), to identify a young person's highest priority needs and risk of reoffending.</p> <p>The YLS/CMI is the most widely implemented and investigated risk assessment tool worldwide and proven to be one of the best tools available to assess young people's reoffending risk.</p> <p>DPC are leading a process with relevant criminal justice and human service agencies to revitalise the Youth Justice system governance including roles and responsibilities of key decision-making groups, and mechanisms to support statewide collaborative service coordination for young people who are identified as high-risk offenders.</p> <p>As a key contributor of the MACPs, DYJ works collaboratively to improve coordination of service delivery, identify themes and trends to improve service responses, problem solve, address local barriers and identify best use of existing services and improve information sharing across key agencies.</p>

Recommendation	Agree/ Disagree	Timeframe for implementation (Quarter and financial year)	Additional comments
<p>We recommend that the Department of Youth Justice:</p> <p>10. improve and standardise its processes and systems for collecting and recording data about its core rehabilitation programs and support services. This should include providing appropriate training and guidance to staff to ensure data is collected as required.</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>Implementing, Q1, 2024-25</p>	<p>DYJ is implementing a new IT system ('Unify') and data governance framework that will improve and standardise its processes and systems for collecting, recording, and disseminating departmental data (including data about its core rehabilitation programs and support services).</p> <p>Unify goes live in 2024, introducing increased structured data aligned with the <i>Youth Justice Outcomes Framework</i> which will improve ability to analyse outcomes and compare effectiveness of service provision. The program benefits include better monitoring and reporting with improved access to information for service delivery (for individual young people) and reporting (across programs).</p> <p>DYJ has developed the <i>Youth Justice Data Governance Framework and Operating Model</i> to outline the Department's approach to the governance of youth justice data and embed best-practice data governance at DYJ. The program includes appropriate training and guidance to staff to provide clarity about their roles and responsibilities with regards to Youth Justice data.</p>



Recommendation	Agree/ Disagree	Timeframe for implementation (Quarter and financial year)	Additional comments
<p>We recommend that the Department of Youth Justice:</p> <p>11. continue to implement plans to address staff shortages at detention centres, including considering alternative methods to rehabilitate young offenders while centres are in lockdown.</p>	Agree	Implemented. Q4, 2023-24	<p>In May 2023 when this audit was commenced, DYJ detention services had about 50 FTE vacancies. In May 2024, DYJ is currently 120 FTE over strength in detention services.</p> <p>DYJ notes the ongoing competitiveness of the labour market, particularly in human services in regional areas and continues a range of activities to address staffing across detention centres. Recruitment initiatives include ongoing investment in staff training, utilising analytics to refine processes, strengthening applicant supports, improving staff compensation, building a diverse workforce, redeploying staff as required and partnering with a range of education and employment service providers to build an ongoing applicant pool for scheduled recruitment cycles.</p> <p>The Department has developed an Employee Value Proposition to support the development of the Workforce Strategy, which will include a range of recruitment, retention, professional development and workplace engagement initiatives.</p> <p>Separations due to staff shortages have reduced significantly over the last year (e.g., by about 50% at CYDC). Separations are subject to strict approvals and supervision protocols in line with legislative requirements. At all times whilst separated, young people have access to operational staff and a range of support staff including nurses, cultural staff, caseworkers, psychologists and speech-language pathologists.</p> <p>Additionally, Queensland Youth Detention Centres have one of the most comprehensive and frequent observation protocols in the nation. The separation policy also clearly states the need for young people to be provided time outside of the room for each day separated, unless it is unsafe to facilitate this.</p>

Recommendation	Agree/ Disagree	Timeframe for implementation (Quarter and financial year)	Additional comments
<p>We recommend that the Department of Youth Justice:</p> <p>12. ensure there is effective and sustained support to young offenders transitioning from detention into the community. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluating the length of time a young offender requires support. • implementing a more structured process for planning a young offender's release. • communicating in a timely way with relevant stakeholders about the young offender's risk, needs, and transition plan. • providing appropriate support to meet the young offender's social and cultural needs. 	<p>Agree</p>	<p>Implemented. Q4, 2023-24</p>	<p>DYJ applies a <i>Youth Justice Case Management Framework</i> across the entire youth justice system, including for young offenders transitioning from detention into the community. This approach supports a service delivery model where intervention is planned, integrated, goal-oriented and accountable while ensuring each young person receives culturally appropriate services in an effective and efficient manner that is consistent throughout the youth justice system.</p> <p>Service Response Plans are developed for all young people in detention to support ongoing community-based responses that address criminogenic risk factors. Other tools, such as 72-hour transition plans which are focused on information sharing and practical activities post release, are designed to complement the response plans. An evaluation of transitional planning policies and procedures for those exiting detention is occurring and DYJ will continue to refine processes and practice.</p> <p>DYJ will also be conducting performance reviews of this process.</p>



Comments received from Director-General, Department of Justice and Attorney-General



Department of Justice and Attorney-General
Office of the Director-General

In reply please quote: 601874/1, 7046104

17 JUN 2024

Mr Brendan Worrall
Auditor-General
Queensland Audit Office
QueenslandAuditOffice@gao.qld.gov.au

1 William Street Brisbane
GPO Box 149 Brisbane
Queensland 4001 Australia
Telephone 13 74 68 (13 QGOV)
www.justice.qld.gov.au

ABN 13 846 673 994

Dear Mr Worrall

Thank you for your email dated 31 May 2024, seeking a formal response to the Queensland Audit Office's (QAO) proposed report *Reducing serious youth crime* (the Report).

The Department of Justice and Attorney-General (the Department) welcomes the Report, aimed at addressing serious youth crime through a comprehensive systems approach, building stronger collaboration, leadership and accountability across the system.

The Department notes the 12 recommendations in the Report relating to the management of Queensland's youth justice system, investment in youth justice services, and rehabilitation and community safety.

The Department is committed to working collaboratively with government agencies and stakeholders to improve community safety and reduce crime by serious repeat offenders. Through the *Community Safety Plan for Queensland*, the Queensland Government has committed \$39.14 million for strengthening and sustaining court reforms, including Fast Track Sentencing. Fast Track Sentencing is a whole-of-government initiative, led by the Department, to ensure timely finalisation of matters before the Childrens Court (Magistrates Court). This initiative drives collaboration across key youth justice stakeholders involved in court proceedings. The Department will consider the findings of the Report and take into consideration enhancements recommended relevant to this initiative.

I thank the QAO for its positive engagement throughout the performance auditing process.

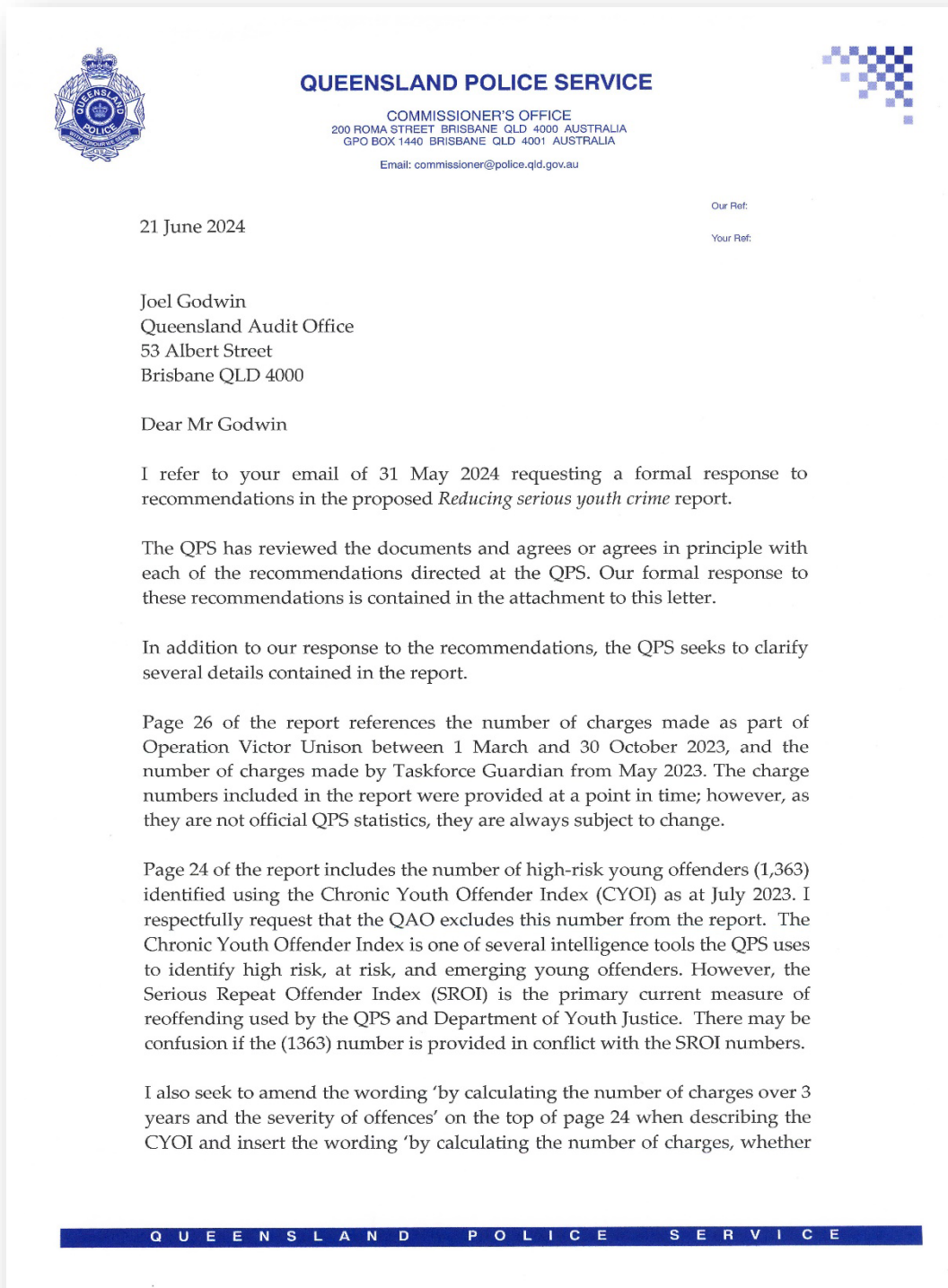
Should you require further information, please contact [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely



Jasmina Joldić PSM
Director-General

Comments received from Commissioner, Queensland Police Service



Auditor-General's response: We have updated the description of the Chronic Youth Offender Index (CYOI) based on this feedback.

The number of high-risk young offenders has been retained as it highlights the variance in methods used by different entities. Recommendation 8 of this report requires entities to agree on a uniform, evidence-based approach to identifying the cohort of high-risk offenders.

a weapon was used in the offending, the seriousness of the offending and whether the offender was on bail at the time of the offending’.

Page 27 of the report refers to the Youth Co-Responder Teams (YCRT) which pairs QPS officers with Youth Justice staff 24/7 in 13 of our 15 police districts. The rotation of staff through these teams has been seen as a significant benefit to the individual officers and the organisation, and this aspect of the team’s make-up has been key to their ongoing success. Whilst in some part this model inhibits the ability of the young person to form a deeper and meaningful relationship with the police officer, there is the broader application of this model where more police officers become more exposed to troubled youth in their particular District and therefore have greater visibility of their needs and overall support required. Notwithstanding this, Youth Justice staff maintain consistency within the YCRT across all 13 police districts.

A recent evaluation of the Co-Responder Teams by the ‘Nous Group’ found that as of 31 March 2024 YCRT have had nearly 90,000 engagements with at risk young-people in total. YCRT currently engages with approximately 6,000 distinct young people per month. Almost half of YCRT engagements are with 15 to 17-year-olds (49 per cent), followed in frequency by 12 to 14-year-olds (38 per cent) and 9 to 11-year-olds (7 per cent). Of the unique young people engaged by YCRT, approximately 39 per cent were female and 46 per cent were First Nations.

As a direct result of these interactions the ‘Nous Group’ made the following findings;

- 12 per cent of young people did not reoffend in the six months following engagement with YCRT among a sample where 79 per cent had one or more offences six months before their engagement;
- A general reduction of reoffending was observed across the sample of youth who had previously offended, with an overall reduction of six offences on the average when comparing offending six months pre and post engagement with YCRT;
- The greatest reduction in reoffending was with serious repeat offenders, where the average amount of offending reduced by 73 per cent among those who had ten (or more) offences, with youth responsible for an average of 25 offences in the six months before engaging YCRT reducing to an average of 7 offences in the period after YCRT engagement;

- YCRT was contributing to reductions in specific types of offending including significantly reduced rates of breaking and entering, illegal use of a motor vehicle, and theft.

In relation to the observations about bail monitoring on page 27 of the report the current bail monitoring 'app' used by the QPS currently doesn't have the functionality to prioritise which young people are checked nor if or when they are checked. The Youth Crime Task Force is currently reviewing those procedures and KPMG are currently working with the Task Force to impose the governance required to address this shortfall.

Also, on page 27 the report makes reference to the QPS having inadequate systems to track the number of times the QPS makes an objection to bail of a young person appearing in court. The current QPS Q-Prime system has challenges in retrieving data for bail objections and when data is retrieved it can often be inaccurate. As bail can be opposed either at the watchhouse, Childrens Court or District Court the system has difficulty identifying when this occurs. QPS works with partner Government agencies to obtain accurate information when required. Future updates to Q-Prime functionality will be required to address this issue.

I also would like to acknowledge that the report uses or references ABS data rather than data provided by the Queensland Government Statisticians office.

Should you require any further assistance or wish to discuss the QPS feedback, please contact [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely


STEVE GOLLSCHESKI APM
COMMISSIONER



Responses to recommendations

Queensland Police Service

Reducing serious youth crime

Response to recommendations provided by Stephan Gollschewski, Commissioner, Queensland Police Service on 21 June 2024.

Recommendation	Agree/ Disagree	Timeframe for implementation (Quarter and financial year)	Additional comments
<p>We recommend that the Department of Youth Justice and the Queensland Police Service, in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders:</p> <p>2. strengthen its leadership and governance of the youth justice system (the system). This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring relevant leadership committees, including the youth justice taskforce, are attended by appropriate entity delegates with appropriate decision-making authority identifying and prioritising key challenges across the system and implementing appropriate strategies and actions improving cross-entity collaboration to ensure entities share relevant information in a timely manner, including making the multi-agency collaborative panel data dashboard available to relevant entities. 	Agree		<p>The QPS recognises the scope of this audit focused on (1) what the work entities are doing to address crime by high risk and serious repeat offenders; and (2) found that there was a lack of cohesion across the system in part largely due to an ineffective authorising environment across the range of governance and inter-departmental committees and working groups.</p> <p>The QPS has always ensured that committees for which we chair are attended by substantive members in line with the agreed Terms of Reference. The Assistant Commissioner, Youth Crime Taskforce, and the Director General Youth Justice, currently chair the Directors General Senior Officers Reference Group and are committed to leading a whole of Government approach to address the drivers and thematic issues affecting youth crime in Queensland. Information sharing across all Government Departments is a key cornerstone of the operations of this Reference Group which ensures informed decisions can be made with respect to preventative interventions with young people.</p>

Recommendation	Agree/ Disagree	Timeframe for implementation (Quarter and financial year)	Additional comments
			<p>The QPS is also engaged in ongoing collaboration with the Justice Reform Office (JRO) positioned within the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and other Queensland Government stakeholders regarding initiatives to reduce demand on Queensland's prisons and across the criminal justice system. The Justice Reform Committee oversees the JRO and provides oversight of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce Reforms and recommendations stemming from the Independent Commission of Inquiry into Queensland Police Service Responses to Domestic and Family Violence (QPS COI). The QPS is represented at this forum.</p> <p>A continued focus of the JRO is to strengthen the foundational elements of the criminal justice system including better understanding, monitoring and addressing the impacts of policy and legislative changes on outcomes for First Nations peoples and enhancing the governance and decision-making architecture.</p>



Recommendation	Agree/ Disagree	Timeframe for implementation (Quarter and financial year)	Additional comments
<p>We recommend that the Queensland Police Service:</p> <p>4. Finalise its youth justice strategy, ensuring it includes measurable objectives and aligns to the state strategy.</p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>Q2 2024/2025</p>	<p>Strategy finalisation is currently dependent on finalisation of the youth justice strategy.</p> <p>The QPS will consider the issues raised by the QAO as it finalises the QPS Youth Crime Strategy and subsequent measures, noting this work relies upon the release of the state's overall youth justice strategy to ensure alignment of measures to break the cycle of offending.</p> <p>The QPS equally recognises the relevance of the strategies aligning to the new <i>Putting Queensland kids first: Giving our kids the opportunity of a lifetime plan</i> to ensure initiatives target the risk factors associated with offending during a young person's formative years. The Queensland Community Safety Plan is also relevant providing investment to support victims and make the community feel safe.</p> <p>The Queensland Government has invested \$501.9 million to implement the <i>Putting Queensland kids first: Giving our kids the opportunity of a lifetime plan</i> and committed an extra 1.28 billion to deliver the Community Safety Plan for Queensland.</p>

Recommendation	Agree/ Disagree	Timeframe for implementation (Quarter and financial year)	Additional comments
<p>We recommend that the Department of Youth Justice and the Queensland Police Service, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders and governance committees:</p> <p>8. agree on a uniform, evidence-based approach to identifying those young offenders with the highest risk of reoffending and ensure this information is shared with relevant stakeholders across the system.</p>	<p>Agree in principle</p>		<p>The QPS recognises the benefits of having a uniform, evidence-based tool to identify those young offenders with the highest risk of reoffending.</p> <p>The QPS agrees with this recommendation in-principle, noting it currently collects and analyses a range of data from various sources and products.</p> <p>The QPS also recognises the Serious Repeat Offenders Index as being the current measure of Serious Repeat offenders within Queensland with both the QPS and Youth Justice using this index to monitor and assess young offenders throughout Queensland. Such assessment is undertaken by Youth Justice using their YLS/CMI tool.</p> <p>The QPS however is committed to undertaking further work to explore new opportunities to trial structured and validated assessment tools to identify young offenders with the highest risk of reoffending, combined with the risk of harm they present to the community by measuring static factors, criminogenic needs, treatment needs and overall offending risk profile. The QPS also recognises potential value in adopting the Risk-Needs-Responsivity Framework used in other Australian jurisdictions amongst the youth cohort and intends to undertake further assessment of that framework.</p>



We recommend that the Queensland Police Service:

- monitor bail checks for serious repeat offenders to ensure timely and appropriate action.

Agree

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The QPS conducts bail checks on young people, particularly those subject to specific conditions. A framework is in development to help prioritise bail response frequency and action focused on those young persons who pose the highest risk to the community.

The QPS will consider Recommendation 47 of the Youth Justice Select Reform Committee Inquiry into ongoing reforms to the youth justice system and support or victims of crime which recommended existing intensive bail initiatives be evaluated to ensure children and young people with complex needs receive the help they need to comply with their bail conditions. The QPS will consider this recommendation as it implements the Queensland Government commitment to intervene when young people offend.

The Youth Co-Responder initiative is a joint program between the QPS and DYJ, where specialist staff connect with young people who come into contact with the criminal justice system or are at risk of doing so. They assist in referring young people to relevant support services and ensure they comply with bail conditions.

The Youth Co-Responder initiative originally commenced at five locations before expanding around the state. The Queensland Government has recently committed to \$13.55 million to extend the current teams and add two more. This investment will expand Youth Co-Responders to the Sunshine Coast and the South West locations.

The QPS and DYJ is currently trialling electronic monitoring for serious repeat offenders with an evaluation to inform future state.