

## B. Audit scope and methods

### Performance engagement

This audit has been performed in accordance with the *Auditor-General Auditing Standards*, incorporating, where relevant, the standards on assurance engagements issued by the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board. This includes the Standard on Assurance Engagements ASAE 3500 *Performance Engagements*. This standard establishes mandatory requirements and provides explanatory guidance for undertaking and reporting on performance engagements.

### Audit objective and scope

The objective of this audit is to assess whether youth justice strategies and programs are effective in reducing crime by serious repeat offenders and improving community safety. We addressed this through the following criteria.

#### Criteria

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| 1.1 | Entities design effective strategies and programs to reduce crime by serious repeat offenders                              |
| 1.2 | Entities implement effective strategies and programs to reduce crime by serious repeat offenders                           |
| 1.3 | Entities monitor and report on the outcomes of their strategies and programs and use learnings to improve community safety |

### The entities we audited

- Department of Youth Justice (the department) – responsible for leading the youth justice system and supporting the needs of young offenders to keep the community safe (see [Appendix D](#) for details on machinery of government changes)
- Department of Justice and Attorney-General – responsible for administering the courts who sentence young offenders
- Department of the Premier and Cabinet – responsible for system-wide evaluation
- Queensland Police Service – responsible for preventing youth crime and keeping the community safe.

### Scope exclusions

We included young offenders whom the department identified as ‘serious repeat offenders’ and the department’s management of select programs and initiatives these offenders could be involved in. This did not include programs and services designed to intervene early and keep children out of the court and custody.

We did not audit or assess the effectiveness of individual programs and services that entities deliver.



## Method

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### Field interviews and site visits

We conducted interviews with key people, staff, and stakeholders from across the youth justice system, including regional areas of Queensland. This included but was not limited to:

- Department of Youth Justice
- Queensland Police Service
- Department of Justice and Attorney-General
- funded non-government organisations
- non-funded non-government organisations.

The audit team conducted site visits to:

- Cleveland Youth Detention Centre
- Brisbane Youth Detention Centre
- West Moreton Youth Detention Centre
- Mount Isa Watch House
- Brisbane Watch House
- Caboolture Watch House
- North Townsville and South Townsville youth justice service centres
- Caboolture youth justice service centre
- Toowoomba youth justice service centre
- Mount Isa youth justice service centre
- Logan youth justice service centre
- Gold Coast youth justice service centre.

### Document review

We obtained and reviewed relevant documents from the entities involved in the audit. This included legislation, strategic plans, operational procedures, guidelines, correspondence, performance reports, reviews, evaluations, transition plans, case notes, and meeting minutes. We also considered research from other jurisdictions and academia.

### Data analysis

We analysed the following data from the Department of Youth Justice covering the period from 2018–19 to 2022–23:

- alleged offences for all serious repeat offenders
- serious repeat offender detention
- overdue risk assessments
- serious repeat offender ratings over time
- funding over time
- staffing numbers



- reoffending rates
- youth detention incidents and lockdowns.

Due to limitations with the Department of Youth Justice’s procurement data, we were unable to obtain data that showed the number of open offer and limited offer procurements it made for the period from 2018–19 to 2022–23. As such, we analysed the department’s open offer and limited offer procurements between July 2022 to September 2023.

## Subject matter experts

We engaged subject matter experts. This included a criminologist specialising in youth crime and a criminologist focusing in First Nations research. We also met with a range of academics with knowledge in youth crime and program delivery.

