

Question on Notice

No. 360

Asked on 31 March 2021

MR N DAMETTO asked the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON L LINARD)—

QUESTION

With reference to Question on Notice No. 116 asked on 24 February 2022—

Will the Minister (a) advise whether the Minister will request the Community Support and Services Committee to undertake an inquiry into the operation of the Cleveland Bay Detention Centre in Townsville and (b) if not, outline the pathway for staff members to report workplace concerns that include allegations of (i) safety issues, (ii) bullying, (iii) assaults and sexual and physical harassment from fellow staff members and detainees?

ANSWER

The safety and security of Queensland's youth detention centres (YDCs), and the staff and young people in these centres, is of paramount importance to the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs (DCYJMA). While YDCs are dynamic and challenging environments to work in, violence is unacceptable and never tolerated.

As outlined in the response to Question on Notice No. 116, Queensland's YDCs are monitored and inspected frequently by external and internal bodies to examine the security and management of YDCs to ensure the safety of those environments for both young people and staff alike.

Complaints or grievances made by staff are taken seriously and are managed appropriately through either local management action or the People and Culture unit within DCYJMA. All YDCs have onsite staff dedicated to managing complaints from staff and young people. These staff work closely with the Professional Standards Unit and the Queensland Police Service (QPS) to action any required referrals.

YDCs have comprehensive protocols in place to support the safe resolution of incidents and emergency situations, including local arrangements with QPS to provide critical incident support. Staff are encouraged and supported to make a complaint following any alleged criminal conduct involving serious misconduct and corrupt conduct.

Dedicated Safety, Wellness and Injury Management advisors, and Staff Wellbeing Officers are allocated to each YDC to support the safety, health and wellbeing of employees. In accordance with legislation, YDCs have safety management policies and systems in place to ensure health and safety by eliminating or minimising, so far as reasonably practicable, risks to health and safety. There are Health and Safety Representatives (HSR) at each YDC, who are workers that have been elected by employees and trained to represent them on health and safety issues. Health and Safety Committees operate in all YDCs, which are a group of workers, HSR and YDC management, that facilitate cooperation between management and staff to provide a safe place of work.

I also take every opportunity when I am in Townsville to meet with staff at the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre to discuss their experiences and listen to any concerns they may have.

DCYJMA is committed to continuous quality improvement, including strengthening practices at the YDCs. Given the breadth of existing internal and external accountability mechanisms, the Member's request for a referral to the Community Support and Services Committee is not supported.