



# QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENT **COMMITTEES**

## **Consideration of Auditor-General Report No. 15: 2023-24 – Reducing serious youth crime**

Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee



**Report No. 20**

**58th Parliament, October 2025**



## **Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee**

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All references and webpages are current at the time of publishing.

## **Acknowledgements**

The committee acknowledges the assistance provided by the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Department of Youth Justice and Victim Support, the Queensland Police Service and the Queensland Audit Office.

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## Chair's Foreword

This report presents a summary of the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee's (the committee) examination of the *Auditor-General Report No. 15: 2023-24 - Reducing Serious Youth Crime*.

As a portfolio committee, the committee can consider reports of the Auditor-General referred to it by the Committee of the Legislative Assembly. Report No. 15 was first referred on 22 August 2024 to the Community Safety and Legal Affairs Committee, which is the predecessor of the Committee. The former committee's consideration of the report lapsed with the dissolution of the 57<sup>th</sup> Parliament. On 21 February 2025, in the newly established 58<sup>th</sup> Parliament, the committee self-referred the report for continued consideration.

The committee engaged with the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC), Department of Youth Justice and Victim Support (DYJVS), and the Queensland Police Service (QPS) regarding the implementation of recommendations contained in the report. The committee also undertook a site visit to the Wacol Youth Remand Centre (WYRC).

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank the entities for their written responses and work with the committee. I also thank the staff of the WYRC who supported the committee on its site visit.

I commend the report to the House.



Marty Hunt MP

Chair

## **Executive Summary**

The committee made 1 recommendation, found at page v of this report.

## **Recommendations**

### **Recommendation 1 ..... 8**

**The committee recommends that the House note the contents of this report.**

## Glossary

<b>FLP</b>	Fundamental Legislative Principle
<b>HRA</b>	<i>Human Rights Act 2019</i>
<b>LSA</b>	<i>Legislative Standards Act 1992</i>
<b>DYJ</b>	Department of Youth Justice (now the Department of Youth Justice and Victim Support)
<b>DYJVS</b>	Department of Youth Justice and Victim Support (formerly the Department of Youth Justice)
<b>DPC</b>	Department of Premier and Cabinet
<b>SROI</b>	Serious Repeat Offender Index
<b>WYRC</b>	Wacol Youth Remand Centre
<b>QPS</b>	Queensland Police Service
<b>QAO</b>	Queensland Audit Office
<b>CLA</b>	Committee of the Legislative Assembly



## 1. Role of the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee

The Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee (committee) was established by the Queensland Legislative Assembly on 28 November 2024 as a portfolio committee.<sup>1</sup>

The committee's portfolio areas of responsibility include:<sup>2</sup>

**Attorney-General,  
Justice and  
Integrity**

**Police and  
Emergency  
Services**

**Youth Justice,  
Victim Support and  
Corrective Services**

In addition, the committee has a monitor and review function in relation to the performance of the functions of the Electoral Commissioner, Information Commissioner, Integrity Commissioner, Queensland Ombudsman, Queensland Family and Child Commission, Queensland Human Rights Commission and the Victims' Commissioner.<sup>3</sup>

### 1.1. Role of the Auditor-General

The Auditor-General, supported by the Queensland Audit Office (QAO), is Parliament's independent auditor of all of Queensland's state and local government public sector entities. These entities include departments, government owned corporations, statutory bodies, controlled entities, and the state's 77 councils.<sup>4</sup>

The Auditor-General provides the Parliament with independent assurance of public sector accountability and performance by reporting to Parliament on the results of its financial<sup>5</sup> and performance<sup>6</sup> audits.

### 1.2. Reports to Parliament

As a portfolio committee, the committee considers reports of the Auditor-General (a Report to Parliament) referred to it by the Committee of the Legislative Assembly (CLA).<sup>7</sup>

On 22 August 2024—in the 57<sup>th</sup> Parliament—the CLA referred Auditor-General Report No. 15: 2023-24 – *Reducing serious youth crime* (Report No. 15) to the Community Safety and Legal Affairs Committee (the predecessor of the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee). The committee's consideration of the report lapsed with the dissolution of the 57<sup>th</sup> Parliament on 1 October 2024. On 21 February 2025—in the 58<sup>th</sup> Parliament—

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<sup>1</sup> *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, section 88 and Standing Order (SO) 194, Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

<sup>2</sup> SO 194 and schedule 6, Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

<sup>3</sup> SO 194 and schedule 6, Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

<sup>4</sup> Queensland Audit Office (QAO), Annual Report 2023-24, p 4.

<sup>5</sup> A financial audit assesses whether the information contained in the financial statements of public sector entities is accurate, can be relied upon and is prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and relevant legislative requirements. (QAO Practice Statement – Financial statement audit, p 1).

<sup>6</sup> A performance audit evaluates whether an agency or government program is achieving its objectives effectively, economically and efficiently, and is compliant with relevant legislation. It does not consider the merits of government policy. Rather, it focuses on how that policy is implemented. (QAO Factsheet - About us, p 2).

<sup>7</sup> SO194B, Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee self-referred the report for consideration.

### 1.3. Committee consideration of the QAO's report

The committee engaged with the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC), Department of Youth Justice and Victim Support (DYJVS), and the Queensland Police Service (QPS) regarding the progress of their implementation of the recommendations of Report No. 15.

#### 1.3.1. Committee site visit

The committee undertook a site visit to the Wacol Youth Remand Centre (WYRC) on 19 September 2025 to assist with its consideration of Report No. 15.

The WYRC was opened in March 2025 as a 76-bed facility to house young people from across the state. It will work to address capacity issues and prevent young people from being held in watch houses for extended periods of time.

While it is legally designated a 'youth detention centre', the WYRC has an operating model and infrastructure which is distinct to the state's three other detention centres (one in Townsville and two in Brisbane). The WYRC is a temporary facility which will be transferred to the Queensland Police Service for their operational use in the future.

The WYRC is co-located with the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre (BYDC) and West Moreton Youth Detention Centre (WMYDC) at Wacol. While young people are housed at the WYRC, they can access educational and other programs offered at the nearby detention centres. It also features "state of the art security management systems and exercise areas".<sup>8</sup> Offering these programs will work to address several of the recommendations made by Auditor-General Report No. 15 and ensure young people are offered opportunities for rehabilitation and education.



#### Recommendation 1

The committee recommends that the House note the contents of this report.

## 2. Report 15: 2023-24 – Reducing Serious Youth Crime

### 2.1. Background

As part of their performance audits, the QAO provides reports to Parliament on the results of their audit work providing insights and advice as well as recommendations for improvement. Performance audit reports will cover the QAO's evaluation of some, or all, of the entities' efficiency, effectiveness and economy in providing public services.<sup>9</sup>

While the Auditor-General has a broad mandate, they cannot make recommendations on the specific direction of strategies government should take.<sup>10</sup> To track the implementation of recommendations, the QAO asks entities to self-assess their progress, which means

<sup>8</sup> About Youth Detention in Queensland, Department of Youth Justice and Victim Support, <https://www.youthjustice.qld.gov.au/parents-carers/youth-detention/about>.

<sup>9</sup> QAO, Report 15: 2023-24, foreword.

<sup>10</sup> QAO, Report 15: 2023-24, foreword.

the QAO has not audited the actions entities have taken and cannot provide assurance over their responses.<sup>11</sup>

## **2.2. Summary of QAO findings**

### **2.2.1. Types of recommendations**

The report acknowledged that ‘youth crime is a complex problem that has touched the lives of many Queenslanders’ and that ‘the causes of youth crime are multi-faceted’.<sup>12</sup> In conducting the audit and developing recommendations, the report focused on the actions of serious repeat offenders<sup>13</sup> and audited those entities that deliver and fund programs for these offenders.<sup>14</sup>

As part of the audit, the QAO examined the design and implementation of the in-scope entities’ strategies and programs, and assessed how they measure and report on their effectiveness.<sup>15</sup>

Report No. 15 made 12 recommendations which fell under one of the following three themes:

- managing Queensland’s youth justice system
- investment in youth justice services, and
- rehabilitation and community safety.<sup>16</sup>

### **2.2.2. Overall status of implementation of recommendations**

The QAO directed the recommendations to the following entities:

- the Department of the Premier and Cabinet
- the Department of Youth Justice and Victim Support, and
- the Queensland Police Service.<sup>17</sup>

Report No. 15 contains responses and comments to the recommendations received from the entities in mid-2024, shortly after the report was released. As part of its consideration of Report No. 15, the committee contacted the entities to obtain an update on the implementation of the report recommendations.

## **2.3. QAO recommendations and departmental responses**

The 12 recommendations, respective departmental responses received by the committee, and the status updates are summarised in the following table.

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<sup>11</sup> QAO, Report 1: 2024-25 - 2024 status Auditor-General recommendations (Report 1), p 2.

<sup>12</sup> QAO, Report 15: 2023-24, p 2.

<sup>13</sup> QAO, Report 15: 2023-24, p 2.

<sup>14</sup> QAO, Report 15: 2023-24, p 10.

<sup>15</sup> QAO, Report 15: 2023-24, p 11.

<sup>16</sup> QAO, Report 15: 2023-24, p 6.

<sup>17</sup> QAO, Report 15: 2023-24, p 10.

Recommendation	Department response
<b>Managing Queensland's youth justice system</b>	
<p>The DPC continue to work with key system stakeholders to ensure more effective coordination, integration, and delivery of youth justice-related initiatives, including facilitating whole-of-government investment and implementation where appropriate.</p> <p><b>(recommendation 1)</b></p>	<p>Status: Fully implemented</p> <p>DPC progressed youth justice initiatives to support government priorities and improve coordination, implementation, delivery, and evaluation. DPC collaborated with key stakeholders and the cross-agency Youth Justice Monitoring and Evaluation Steering Committee.<sup>18</sup></p>
<p>The DYJ and the QPS, in collaboration with other stakeholders, strengthen their leadership and governance of the youth justice system (the system). This should include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensuring relevant leadership committees, including the youth justice taskforce, are attended by appropriate entity delegates with appropriate decision-making authority</li> <li>• identifying and prioritising key challenges across the system and implementing appropriate strategies and actions</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul> <p><b>(recommendation 2)</b></p>	<p><u>DYJVS</u></p> <p>Status: Fully implemented</p> <p>DYJVS implemented a new governance arrangement to oversee cross-agency responses to youth offending. In April 2024, the Queensland Government permanently established the Youth Crime Taskforce, which has now been replaced by the Rapid Response Teams, aimed at enhancing responses to youth offending. The Director-General of DYJVS convenes regular cross-agency meetings with other Directors-General and Commissioners to discuss whole-of-system challenges, opportunities and priorities.<sup>19</sup></p> <p><u>QPS</u></p> <p>Status: Partially implemented</p> <p>The QPS continues to work across agencies to deliver on government commitments and to strengthen leadership and governance of the youth justice system. The QPS is a member for the Multi Agency Collaborative Panel which works to bring together relevant information and planning skills to oversee and coordinate services for young people identified as high risk and requiring a collaborative approach.</p>

<sup>18</sup> DPC, correspondence, 9 July 2025, p 1.

<sup>19</sup> DYJVS, correspondence, 17 July 2025, Attachment 1, p 1.

	Panel members meet to discuss and facilitate a holistic response to identified young people who are serious repeat and high-risk offenders. <sup>20</sup>
<p>The DYJ, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, reviews, updates, and implements its new youth justice strategy. The strategy should</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• include indicators of success to measure performance across the system</li> <li>• include clear system-wide actions aimed at reducing the over-representation of First Nations young offenders in the system</li> <li>• clearly define roles and responsibilities across the system to inform entity-level strategies and plans.</li> </ul> <p><b>(recommendation 3)</b></p>	<p>Status: Fully implemented</p> <p>DYJVS developed A Safer Queensland – Youth Justice Strategy 2024-28 which included performance measures and highlighted responsibilities within other government strategies and plans. The strategy included a focus on reducing the over-representation of First Nations youth offenders in the system through co-design with First Nations organisations and a commitment to place-based, evidence-based, community-led solutions.</p> <p>Following the change of Government in November 2024 a new Youth Justice Strategy is being developed.<sup>21</sup></p>
<p>The QPS finalises its youth justice strategy, ensuring it includes measurable objectives and aligns to the state strategy.</p> <p><b>(recommendation 4)</b></p>	<p>Status: Partially implemented</p> <p>The QPS is in the process of finalising the youth crime strategy which is being guided by the recommendation to have measurable objectives and alignment to the state strategy.<sup>22</sup></p>
<p>The DPC, in collaboration with the DYJ, finalises its system-wide monitoring and evaluation framework and commences evaluation of 2023 youth justice reforms. This should include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developing a plan for ongoing evaluation across the system</li> <li>• reporting outcomes of monitoring and evaluation regularly and transparently to the Department of Youth Justice, the Queensland</li> </ul>	<p>Status: Fully implemented</p> <p>DPC developed a system-level monitoring and evaluation framework for youth justice initiatives. DPC will continue to engage with key stakeholders to facilitate whole-of-Government collaboration, investment, implementation, and monitoring of youth justice priorities.<sup>23</sup></p>

<sup>20</sup> QPS, correspondence, 11 July 2025, Attachment 1, p 1.

<sup>21</sup> DYJVS, correspondence, 17 July 2025, Attachment 1, p 1.

<sup>22</sup> QPS, correspondence, 11 July 2025, Attachment 1, p 2.

<sup>23</sup> DPC, correspondence, 9 July 2025, p 1.

<p>Police Service and other relevant entities, and to the public, as required, to help inform whether the Queensland Government's actions are reducing youth crime.</p> <p><b>(recommendation 5)</b></p>	
<p>The DYJ, formalises and executes a plan for measuring the effectiveness of programs using its outcomes framework.</p> <p><b>(recommendation 6)</b></p>	<p>Status: Ongoing</p> <p>DYJVS developed a framework to measure outcomes achieved by programs and services. Consistent collection of outcome measures will be achieved through the new Unify system, scheduled for implementation in 2025.</p> <p>Following the change of Government in November 2024 work is underway mapping performance measures and developing key performance indicators against youth justice programs, which will be delivered in late-2025.<sup>24</sup></p>
<b>Investment in youth justice services</b>	
<p>The DYJ strengthens 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"> <li>regularly mapping its investment against youth crime trends across Queensland</li> <li>ensuring its contracts contain sufficient performance measures and targets that assess outputs and outcomes, and</li> <li>developing a framework to build capability in the sector.</li> </ul> <p><b>(recommendation 7)</b></p>	<p>Status: Ongoing</p> <p>DYJVS continues to strengthen its investment and procurement practices. In addition to the work outlined in the response to Recommendations 3 and 6, the DYJVS structure has been adjusted with a dedicated Senior Executive Director being appointed to lead an expanded Commissioning, Investment and Innovation team. Procurement policies and procedures are being updated, including the process for managing exceptions from competitive purchase. DYJVS plans to develop an investment strategy and finalise its performance management framework.<sup>25</sup></p>
<b>Rehabilitation and community safety</b>	
<p>The DYJ and the QPS, in collaboration with</p>	<p><u>DYJVS</u></p>

<sup>24</sup> DYJVS, Correspondence, 17 July 2025, Attachment 1, p 1.

<sup>25</sup> DYJVS, Correspondence, 17 July 2025, Attachment 1, pp 1-2.



<p>relevant stakeholders and governance committees 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><b>(recommendation 8)</b></p>	<p>Status: Fully implemented</p> <p>DYJVS uses an evidence-based risk-assessment tool to identify a young person's priority needs and risk of reoffending. Legislative amendments in 2023 enabled courts to declare a child a serious repeat offender.<sup>26</sup></p> <p><u>QPS</u></p> <p>Status: Partially implemented</p> <p>Both the QPS and the DYJVS use the Serious Repeat Offender Index (SROI) to identify serious repeat offenders. The index considers a range of factors, including number of charges over the last 2 years, severity of offences, time spent in custody, and the young offender's age.</p> <p>Both the QPS and the DYJVS recognise young persons aged 10-17 who score above a 6 on the SROI as high priority and in need of strategies to reduce reoffending.<sup>27</sup></p>
<p>The QPS monitors bail checks for serious repeat offenders to ensure timely and appropriate action.</p> <p><b>(recommendation 9)</b></p>	<p>Status: Partially implemented</p> <p>The QPS developed the Youth Bail Framework and Response (YBFR) pilot in response to this recommendation. The YBFR uses evidence-based assessment tools to provide police with a consistent and evidence-based approach to identifying a young person's level of risk. It was initially implemented in Cairns, Moreton and Mount Isa in early November 2024 for a nine-month period and recently expanded to Mackay and Toowoomba.</p> <p>This enables the QPS to prioritise resources to appropriately respond to high-risk young people and to reduce over-servicing young people who are considered low risk.</p>

<sup>26</sup> DYJVS, Correspondence, 17 July 2025, Attachment 1, p 2.

<sup>27</sup> QPS, correspondence, 11 July 2025, Attachment 1, pp 3-4.

	The YBFR incorporate best practice approaches to support and educate a young person to comply with their bail conditions. <sup>28</sup>
The DYJ improves and standardises 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. <b>(recommendation 10)</b>	Status: Fully implemented  DYJVS implemented a new data governance framework and information technology system to improve and standardise the way it collects, records, and disseminates data. The system provides structured data aligned with the youth justice outcomes framework. It offers better monitoring and reporting, with improved access to information for service delivery. <sup>29</sup>
The DYJ continues to implement plans to address staff shortages at detention centres, including considering alternative methods to rehabilitate young offenders while centres are in lockdown. <b>(recommendation 11)</b>	Status: Fully implemented  DYJVS implemented a range of activities to address staffing across detention centres, including regular recruitment cycles, staff training, support for applicants, improved remuneration, a focus on diverse recruitment, and partnering with educational and employment providers to build an applicant pool.  DYJVS developed an employee value proposition and has developed a workforce strategy. Separations in youth detention have reduced and are monitored by the Inspector of Detention Services.  Through the new Detention with Purpose initiative DYJVS continues to work with the Department of Education to embed compulsory education and change-oriented program for all young people. <sup>30</sup>
The DYJ ensures there is effective and sustained support to young offenders transitioning from detention into the community. This should include	Status: Fully implemented  DYJVS applies a youth justice case management framework across the youth justice system, including for young offenders

<sup>28</sup> QPS, correspondence, 11 July 2025, Attachment 1, p 4.

<sup>29</sup> DYJVS, Correspondence, 17 July 2025, Attachment 1, p 2.

<sup>30</sup> DYJVS, Correspondence, 17 July 2025, Attachment 1, p 2.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• evaluating the length of time a young offender requires support</li> <li>• implementing a more structured process for planning a young offender's release</li> <li>• communicating in a timely way with relevant stakeholders about the young offender's risk, needs, and transition plan</li> <li>• providing appropriate support to meet the young offender's social and cultural needs.</li> </ul> <p><b>(recommendation 12)</b></p>	<p>transitioning from detention into the community.</p> <p>Service response plans are developed for all young people in detention to support ongoing community-based responses that address offending risk.</p> <p>The new Staying on Track program (\$225M over 5 years and \$50M ongoing per annum) will provide 12-month post-release support to young people exiting youth detention. DYJVS is evaluating its transitional planning policies and procedures and conducting performance reviews.<sup>31</sup></p>
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#### Committee comment



The committee notes that across the 12 recommendations contained in Report No. 15, entities have reported that eight are fully implemented, four are partially implemented, and two are ongoing.<sup>32</sup> The committee acknowledges the work of the entities in progressing the implementation of these recommendations. It also appreciates the time taken by staff of the Wacol Youth Remand Centre to host the committee on its site visit.

<sup>31</sup> DYJVS, Correspondence, 17 July 2025, Attachment 1, p 3.

<sup>32</sup> Some of the recommendations involve two entities that have reported different stages of progress.