



MEDIA RELEASE

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Great responsibility. Whose responsibility?

The first formal inspection of South Australia's only youth justice detention centre has found that the potential for rehabilitation is undermined by inadequate resourcing and a correctional environment.

Findings from the inspection point to the need for more comprehensive support and programs to meet the complex needs of residents and promote their health, growth and positive reintegration with the community.

Great Responsibility: Report on the 2019 Pilot Inspection of the Adelaide Youth Training Centre (now known as the Kurlana Tapa Youth Justice Centre) pulls together the voices of young people and those of the centre's staff and management to paint an unprecedented picture of what life in the centre is like.

The report finds that despite the aspirations of the centre and committed staff, a lack of resources and staff training are key barriers to rehabilitation for the young people, many of whom have significant needs in relation to trauma, developmental disadvantage, mental ill-health and disability.

"The children and young people in the centre are not 'bad'," Training Centre Visitor Penny Wright said. "Most of them have been exposed to poverty, family violence, substance abuse and highly traumatic life events, including some who are as young as ten. Unless we address these experiences, which lead to offending behaviour, we risk punishing them for having punishing lives."

The report makes 10 recommendations which include better programs for girls and young women, Aboriginal children, drug and alcohol support, independent living skills and anti-bullying and peer support.

"Many of these kids want to and can be rehabilitated, if given the right chances," Ms Wright said.

"They have told us they want more support, more opportunities for leadership and greater access to services that will give them a better chance at life once they have left the centre."

One young person, who had been coming into the centre since he was ten, told us, "I don't want to end up in the big jail. I want to get a job, get paid."

"Since the inspection we have seen some encouraging developments at the centre, and some of our concerns have been allayed, or there is at least a process underway. But we still have a long way to go to make a difference for these young people while they are detained."

Read the report on our website at www.gcyp.sa.gov.au/research/.

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