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Subject: REPORT ON EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF YOUTH DETENTION CENTRES

RECEIVED  
COMMUNITY AND YOUTH SUPPORT  
SECTION

Attached is a copy of the Report on Effectiveness and Efficiency of Youth Detention Centres compiled by Mr Bernie Crawford of Qual Corp Consulting Pty Ltd.

Mr Crawford has provided an in-depth evaluation of the present activities of detention centres and has made suggestions to improve the efficiency of detention centres. You may recall that SEMT decided to engage Mr Crawford to undertake this activity.

It is suggested that, as a number of recommendations involve not only detention centres but the corporate area of the department, SEMT establish a working party to examine the report in detail. I would suggest that the working party consist of myself; the Deputy Director-General (Corporate Support); the Executive Director (Youth Support); the Director, Finance and Property Services; the Director, Organisational Services; and Mr Chris Hansen as a representative of the detention centre managers.

The purpose of the working party will be to examine the ways and means of implementing the report. It is also suggested that after the working party reports to SEMT any recommendations made be implemented in a staged way.

G.E. Nix  
Deputy Director-General  
(Community and Youth Support)





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REPORT ON  
EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY  
OF  
YOUTH DETENTION CENTRES

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY SERVICES

QUEENSLAND

John Oxley Youth Centre

Westbrook Youth Centre

Cleveland Youth Centre

April, 1989.

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REPORT ON

EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY

STUDY

YOUTH DETENTION CENTRES

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY SERVICES

JOHN OXLEY YOUTH CENTRE  
WESTBROOK YOUTH CENTRE  
CLEVELAND YOUTH CENTRE

Prepared by:

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Qualcorp Consulting Pty. Ltd.  
February, 1989.



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The balance between effectiveness and efficiency of the Youth Detention Centres was studied from a managerial perspective. The focus of this was on whether, from a management theory point of view, the procedures and practices can be expected to result in the outcomes desired by the Department of Family Services, and as stated by the purpose of each centre.

To do this, notional key result areas were established. Both subjective and objective criteria were developed as performance indicators, and these were used to assess effectiveness within each key result area.

The key result areas adopted were:-

Development/Rehabilitation  
Behaviour Management  
Security/Safety

Having assessed apparent effectiveness in the key result areas, factors contributing to efficiency were considered. The exercise was to find means of achieving greater efficiency in ways which maintained or enhanced effectiveness.

The major findings of this study were:-

1. All three centres can be considered effective in security and safety. John Oxley Youth Centre has been ineffective in relation to behaviour management, but is correcting this. All three centres score poorly in some of the criteria that would indicate effective development and rehabilitation of youth, and centres can be considered to be only moderately effective on this dimension.
2. There is a need to shift a proportion of staff resources from security and safety towards development and rehabilitation, in order to improve the overall effectiveness in meeting stated purposes. Some capital costs would be incurred in this.
3. The management approach adopted with the centres has not focused on balancing effectiveness and efficiency. The assumption which has been made is that increasing efficiency means cutting costs, which in turn means reducing services. Experience in other public organisations has shown that this need not be the case. The future management focus has to be on improving both effectiveness and efficiency simultaneously.
4. Some cost-cutting measures taken to date have resulted in reduced spending on development/rehabilitation programs - a slight reduction in cost has had a major impact on certain programs. This runs counter to sound cost-effectiveness principles.
5. Centres will be able to reduce costs significantly without curtailing effectiveness, if a greater range of staffing options are made available. Managers should then be able to renegotiate staffing practices at each centre. The principle should be to staff for the routine needs of each centre, and use flexible staffing arrangements for short term, ad-hoc variations to the basic work load, e.g. close call for night shift, casuals to cover escorts instead of floaters, permanent part time employment for the busy periods of the day.



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6. Savings made in staffing capacity can be offset against increased development and rehabilitation activities, and enhanced staff training, to obtain a higher level of overall effectiveness for the same or reduced overall cost.
7. The budget base will need to be re-calculated following negotiation of new practices. Continual re-negotiation implies the need for a simple zero-base approach to all future budgets. Management indicators should be included in budget figures to link cost considerations with effectiveness criteria.
8. Some potential savings in operational practice were identified. Centre management has been conscientious in finding cost savings within their current operating practices, but have not felt able to challenge the status quo sufficiently to make the changes that can result in major savings. They will need firm direction and strong support from the Department of Family Services, if they are to successfully gain staff co-operation in instituting changes.



LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1:

That each Youth Detention Centre be required to pursue both greater effectiveness and greater efficiency in a way which is balanced within the defined purpose of that centre. That each centre be viewed independently rather than comparatively in its efforts to achieve these improvements.

Recommendation 2:

That the Department of Family Services specify the types of improvement in effectiveness and efficiency that is expected of each Youth Detention Centre, and ratify the types of option that centre managers are expected to implement in achieving this.

Recommendation 3:

That centre managers implement options in ways which are most suited to the purpose of each youth detention centre, in consultation with staff of the centre.

Recommendation 4:

That the overall management of improvements in Youth Detention Centres be controlled and monitored by a simple form of zero-based budgeting, supported by a number of easily assessed management indicators.

EFFECTIVENESS RECOMMENDATIONS

All Centres

Recommendation 5:

That the Department of Family Services require each centre to develop a system for individual development planning for youth on detention for more than a month. That this system be supported by practices that enhance integration of the various staff groups relating to youth. That the centres be given 2 years to have the system fully operational.

Recommendation 6:

That the Department of Family Services increase the number of youth worker (practical) positions to achieve higher levels of effectiveness in program activities with youth.

Recommendation 7:

That all positions in centres where the staff member can work with youth and provide back-up to other youth workers be designated as youth workers, e.g. yardman, cook.





Recommendation 8:

That the Department of Family Services provide the funds needed to service the basic program needs of each centre, with commonwealth funds considered as providing extras.

Recommendation 9:

That the Department of Family Services negotiate to obtain industrial agreement for teachers to work a 48 week year, or at least to stagger their holiday times in order to provide teacher coverage for at least forty eight (48) weeks per year.

John Oxley Youth Centre

Recommendation 10:

That one additional youth worker (practical) position be provided at John Oxley Youth Centre, to run an appropriate broad-based program.

Westbrook Youth Centre

Recommendation 11:

That the Farm work party be discontinued, and youth be assigned to these general farming activities only when the work is sufficient to keep them properly occupied.

Recommendation 12:

That the Department of Family Services fund additional commercial activities at Westbrook, which meet the criterion of providing labour intensive work environments, and have the potential to be self-funding. That grain production be phased out and capital invested in it be liquidated where possible to fund these additional activities.

Recommendation 13:

That the Department of Family Services recognise that technical training programs exist primarily for skills training purposes. That contracts to supply taken out in relation to these programs not include delivery deadlines that will force a commercial production-line situation, to the detriment of the skills training program.

Recommendation 14:

That the Department of Family Services increase the teaching establishment at Westbrook Youth Centre by one full-time teacher.

Recommendation 15:

That the General Work Party be abolished and the activities carried out in it be included as part of the chores to be done in the centre, outside normal programmed activity time.



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Recommendation 16:

That an additional youth worker at Westbrook be assigned to full-time recreational activities.

Recommendation 17:

That Westbrook set up an activities program to cater for the numbers of youth who currently are not occupied in worthwhile development activities during the day. That two youth worker (practical) positions be established to develop and co-ordinate this program in conjunction with other youth workers.

Recommendation 18:

That the two child care officer positions in Westbrook Aftercare be relocated to Westbrook, to support the development and rehabilitation activities within the centre.

Training

Recommendation 19:

That a short, basic training package be developed for use by centres for inducting and training new staff and casuals.

Recommendation 20:

That necessary job-related training and team liaison activities be carried out as a planned activity within work time.

Recommendation 21:

That each Youth Detention Centre build up a pool of casual staff to use for escorts and relief where this is appropriate. That these casuals be given basic training in the skills necessary for the security and behaviour management roles before they are used in this capacity.

EFFICIENCY RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 22:

That the Department of Family Services seek a variation to the Youth Workers award to include a provision for close-call. That Youth Detention Centres plan for the accommodation facilities to allow this. That physical and electronic security be boosted where necessary to ensure staff confidence in the arrangement.

Recommendation 23:

That the Department of Family Services have the position of Youth Worker approved as one which is open to appointment on a part-time basis, and seek a variation to the Youth Workers award to this effect.



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Recommendation 24:

That the Department of Family Services withdraw the requirement that Youth Workers work rotating shifts. That this be implemented in conjunction with other staffing initiatives.

Recommendation 25:

That the Department of Family Services develop an education program for Residential Care Workers, with core competences and skills as well as specialist electives, so that staff can rotate through various types of institution as they choose to study additional electives.

Recommendation 26:

That the Department of Family Services pursue award restructuring to achieve structural efficiency, incorporating the award changes proposed in this report.

Recommendation 27:

That the managerial control of provisions be based upon per meal costs as well as upon the budget allocation.

Recommendation 28:

That Cleveland Youth Centre investigate the costs and savings potential in a partial conversion of the kitchen to gas.

Recommendation 29:

That hats, parkas, pullovers and overcoats issued to youth workers at Westbrook be replaced on a "worn out" basis, with the worn out item being handed in.

Recommendation 30:

That John Oxley Youth Centre have youth launder their own linen, and that laundry facilities be improved to allow this.

Recommendation 31:

That each youth detention centre phase out the use of domestics and replace them with contract cleaning services wherever this is the more cost-effective option.

Recommendation 32:

That the role of the housekeeper at Westbrook be directed towards the domestic welfare of youth, and that the use of this position for routine deliveries and messages be replaced with delivery services. That the position be abolished if and when the domestic welfare of youth is being maintained satisfactorily by youth workers in the spirit of the original recommendation to establish the position.



Recommendation 33:

That the double shift arrangements at Westbrook be discontinued, and other means be found to staff sporting and other activities as required.

Recommendation 34:

That the Department of Family Services give departmental approval for a uniform system of time-off-in-lieu for youth detention centres, based on the systems in use at John Oxley and Cleveland Youth Centres.

Recommendation 35:

That each centre develop a positive strategy for changing staff expectations about the taking of sick leave.





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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This report outlines the findings of a study of the effectiveness and efficiency of three (3) Youth Detention centres in Queensland. It expresses an independent opinion of how the centres are performing on these two dimensions, and makes recommendations about how they might improve the balance between effectiveness and cost efficiency.

The emphasis taken in this study was on finding ways to make programs and activities more effective, and at the same time reducing costs in those areas which do not contribute to effectiveness. Effectiveness in this context can be defined as the extent to which the programs and activities meet the purposes espoused by the Department of Family Services, and by each centre. Efficiency can be defined as how well resources are utilised, to carry out activities.

These issues were addressed from a management perspective, rather than from a professional caregiver's perspective. The study does not question whether these centres should exist within the Juvenile Justice system, or which theories of delinquency are most appropriate. It asks the short-term management question "Are these activities demonstrably consistent with the defined purpose of the centre, and based on accepted theory and practice?" Any study which encompassed effectiveness in terms of social outcomes would necessarily take many years, and would not provide information for management decisions in the shorter term. Similarly, it asks the question "Are the practices adopted likely to result in the optimal use of resources?"

## 2. THE STUDY

This exercise was carried out largely on site through interviews, observation and analysis of available data. The specific questions that were addressed are:

- (i) Are the programs and activities being undertaken in each of the Centres likely to be effective in achieving the government policy for offenders?
- (ii) Are these programs provided at an acceptable cost, and is there potential for cost savings within operational practices, staffing, administration and hotel services?
- (iii) Are there other programs, or approaches to programming that could be just as effective as the present approaches, or more effective than them?
- (iv) Do any of these alternatives, or combinations of alternatives, offer any potential for greater cost-effectiveness?
- (v) Is there any evidence of wasteful practices?
- (vi) Is there an inherent flaw in the budgeting process, which contributes to consistent over-runs?



The centres studied were the John Oxley Youth Centre, Westbrook Youth Centre and Cleveland Youth Centre.

### 3. MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The basis used for this study is the concept of key result areas and performance indicators. Key result areas are normally linked with a corporate strategy, to achieve the overall purpose and goals of an organisation. Performance indicators are used by management to aid the monitoring of performance within these key result areas.

Key result areas should relate to the purpose of the organisation in a logical way. The Department of Family Services has a program structure which has not extended yet down to the level of a centre. As no key result areas were in use in youth detention centres, a notional set were developed from the stated purpose of these centres.

Management indicators are essential to an effective management information system. They are developed from basic data. They give ratings to those things which are measurable and which are thought to contribute to achieving results within a key result area. The centres do not keep a lot of information relating to performance, and what is kept is not routinely converted to information. Consequently, performance within the notional key result areas has been assessed through a combination of objective data, observation, and subjective assessment.

For the efficiency question, the guiding principle has been that of achieving control over resource allocation so that they are applied flexibly to gain better performance in key result areas, rather than being utilised in ways which do not contribute, or contribute poorly, to the key result areas. In doing this, major cost items were considered in depth, as these have the most potential for savings in resources. Minor cost items were checked briefly to see whether centre management is controlling them.

### 4. MANAGEMENT OF YOUTH DETENTION CENTRES

#### 4.1 Current Strengths

The management and staff of each of the centres are dedicated and conscientious people who are doing a difficult job under increasingly restricted funding. The orientation of these people is understandably strongly towards the welfare of youth in detention and towards supporting each other in a task which can be depressingly unrewarding. The operational management of the day to day activities is good, both in established procedures and in response to crises.

Considerable effort has been put into making the current operational practices and systems more efficient. Cost savings have been made in areas over which centre management believes it has direct control, without altering the status quo markedly.



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The overall level of service that is provided in this very difficult area of social welfare is commendable, and the ideals towards which staff are striving provide a strong impetus for future development.

#### 4.2 Improvements Required

Where the management of centres needs to development is in its capacity to respond appropriately to the financial and structural pressures which our society is placing on all levels of industry and service throughout Australia. In order to do this, centre management needs to adopt a different approach to the questions of effectiveness and efficiency.

Centre management needs to be prepared to alter the status quo in order to achieve a better balance between effectiveness and efficiency. This is the only viable path to achieving the high ideals that they espouse, in today's economic climate. The changed weekend cooking arrangements at Westbrook are an example of the type of change to the status quo that management has to institute.

At the moment centre management and staff are too ready to believe that things which challenge the status quo cannot be done.

At the same time, the Department of Family Services needs to place a clear expectation that centre management pursue both effectiveness and efficiency in a balanced manner. This requires that centre management be given the means to make the changes that are expected, and the flexibility to implement these by negotiation with staff in each centre. The Department needs to give the encouragement and commitment that these things can be done.

#### 4.3 Centre Differences

One of the key factors governing the management of these centres is that each centre deals with a different population of youth. Each has a different philosophy in the way it cares for youth in custody. In the context of the different populations, each of these philosophies appears to be valid within the overall context of the New Direction for the Department of Family Services.

John Oxley Youth Centre has a small population of younger boys and girls, many of whom are in residence for several months. It attempts to intervene comprehensively with individual youth to overcome delinquent behaviour at an early stage. It has normalisation as a goal, where conditions and expectations are made as close as possible to those which would apply in a normal environment for youth.

Westbrook Youth Centre has a large population of older male youths, some of whom spend a long period at the centre. It emphasises employment or working skills in groups so that youth are better able to cope with life in employment outside the centre. The level of intervention is not as comprehensive as at John Oxley.



Cleveland Youth Centre has a small population of younger boys and girls, most of whom are resident for short periods. It attempts to provide youth with learning experiences which will help them to re-integrate in the community. Intervention is not as comprehensive as at John Oxley, and the capacity to work with larger groups is much less than at Westbrook.

Attempts to make efficiency comparisons between the centres is therefore meaningless. John Oxley must be the most expensive centre because it attempts to do more with each youth. Conversely, Westbrook must be the cheapest because so much of the activity can be carried out with groups of youth. Each centre should be assessed separately, and each should attempt continuously to improve its balance between effectiveness and efficiency.

Comparisons between centres are useful to assess ideas for transfer from one to another, and for basic cost items such as cleaning, yard maintenance and perhaps provisions.

Recommendation 1:

That each Youth Detention Centre be required to pursue both greater effectiveness and greater efficiency in a way which is balanced within the defined purpose of that centre. That each centre be viewed independently rather than comparatively in its efforts to achieve these improvements.

4.4 Actions Required

This report outlines a range of options that can be taken by the Department of Family Services in order to improve both effectiveness and efficiency. These give the management of each centre the potential to increase efficiency, to increase effectiveness, or to do both. This concept should become the guiding management principle of future efforts to improve performance, so that neither effectiveness nor efficiency is ignored in initiatives taken.

The Department of Family Services will need to ratify these options and negotiate for industrial agreement where necessary. Each centre will then need to assess the most productive application of these options, in consultation with staff, in order to achieve clearly stated departmental goals for improvement in effectiveness and efficiency components.

Recommendation 2:

That the Department of Family Services specify the types of improvement in effectiveness and efficiency that is expected of each Youth Detention Centre, and ratify the types of option that centre managers are expected to implement in achieving this.

Recommendation 3:

That centre managers implement options in ways which are most suited to the purpose of each youth detention centre, in consultation with staff of the centre.





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#### 4.4.1 Budgeting and Performance Monitoring

The budget process used to date with Youth Detention Centres has been the traditional base plus escalation. If the options outlined in this report are adopted, the base must change. As the appropriate management approach is to continually seek better ways of implementing these options, and of finding other options, the base should no longer be stable. This necessitates a simple form of zero-based budgeting, where the base is recalculated each year. This base should demonstrate improved effectiveness, improved efficiency or a combination of both, in real terms for each successive year.

Traditional budget items do not give a lot of information. These need to be supported by a range of management indicators, along the lines of those discussed in this report. These indicators can be provided manually in the short term from data which is available in Youth Detention Centres. Subjective indicators similar to those in this report can be monitored, as well as the objective ones. In time, the objective indicators may be integrated with the MSA Financial Accounting Package.

#### Recommendation 4:

That the overall management of improvements in Youth Detention Centres be controlled and monitored by a simple form of zero-based budgeting, supported by a number of easily assessed management indicators.

#### 4.5 Other Change Factors

Other changes are occurring which can affect the implementation of the recommendation of this report.

A major influence could come through the recommendation of the Kennedy Report into the Queensland Prison System, that seventeen year old youth no longer be detained in adult prisons. The full ramifications of this were unclear at the time of preparation of this report, so no specific allowance was made for it. The recommendations of this report should be implemented in the context of the requirements arising out of the Kennedy Report. In fact, these requirements may create the opportunity to implement the recommendations of this report.

A second influence is the possibility of providing a specialist remand centre within Brisbane. Such a remand centre would help to stabilise the population and hence the programs at John Oxley, as it would run with committed youth as originally intended. It would create some efficiencies with the transport to and from Westbrook. An assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of a separate remand centre is beyond the scope of this study. Any decision to set up a separate remand centre would require some modifications to the recommendations of this report, particularly at Westbrook.

The third influence which must be considered is the general push for structural efficiency and negotiations for award restructuring that are commencing. The opportunity to achieve restructure of awards would allow many of the required improvements in centres to be implemented.



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##### 5. EFFECTIVENESS CONSIDERATIONS

Within the broader philosophical framework of the New Direction, youth detention centres can be seen to have a range of complementary purposes. These purposes form an hierarchy where each level of purpose is dependent upon the lower level being satisfied.

Development/Rehabilitation

Behaviour Management

Security and Safety

Security and safety is necessary to ensure that the basic requirements of the judicial system are met, and that fundamental human rights are maintained for young offenders. A behaviour management system is necessary for the orderly functioning of a centre, and to ensure that the experience of detention causes the least damage possible. The development/rehabilitation of youth aims at giving them some positive learnings to help them to cope better with the pressures of life.

Without sufficient security and safety, behaviour management of young offenders appears to be difficult to achieve. Without a clearly understood and consistently practised behaviour management system, the ability to focus upon development and rehabilitation is greatly impaired.

These three levels have to be viewed as separate functions within each centre. Disagreements can be caused through confusion of purpose in any one situation. This does not mean that there is no interaction between the three: an effective behaviour management system will ease the demands for overt security; the behaviour management system may teach behaviour that a youth uses appropriately outside the centre. However, the fundamental purpose of the behaviour management system is to achieve order in the centre.

Paradoxically, excessive attention to any one of the levels can impair the achievement of higher levels, just as much as will insufficient attention to it. This may be linked to the need for youth to accept responsibility for their actions. Each higher level on the hierarchy requires that the young offender is given and takes more responsibility for decisions and actions.



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Development/Rehabilitation

Responsibility

Behaviour Management

Requirements

Security and Safety

If insufficient responsibility is given to young offenders, because of requirements of a lower-order purpose, they will not achieve as well at the higher-order purpose.

The other dimension of purpose is that of caring. While all actions should be underpinned by a caring regard of the young offenders as people, the capacity and opportunity for expressed caring is greater within the higher order purposes.

Development/Rehabilitation

Expressed

Responsibility

Behaviour Management

Caring

Requirements

Security and Safety

The highest level of expressed caring would be in the context of an individually tailored program for each young offender. At the behaviour management level, caring for the individual has to be balanced against caring for others, caring for the group and caring for staff.

From a management perspective, each of these levels in the hierarchy can be treated as a key result area. Each of these key result areas would have performance indicators, which would also reflect on the caring and responsibility dimensions.

In the absence of a developed set of performance indicators, this study focused on observation of activities, the ability of staff to give internally consistent explanations for the activities they were undertaking, and analysis of the data which was available to see what information it could provide about performance. Effectiveness considerations and the discussion of it will concentrate on these three areas.



A note on management indicators:

Management indicators do not tell exactly what is happening in a work environment. They only indicate when there may be problems. They also do not cover the whole range of activity and they do not replace subjective observation. They can also be misleading, if based upon incorrect assumptions. Some extremely important areas in any enterprise cannot be assessed by practical indicators.

Any management indicator must always be interpreted, in the context of the situation at the time.

5.1 Security and Safety

5.1.1 Security

All three centres have well documented security procedures, which appear to be generally well understood and followed by staff. No facility can be made totally secure, and each centre adopts a somewhat different approach to this. The breaches of security which were observed were associated with troubled young people and lapses of attention by staff.

John Oxley Youth Centre and Cleveland Youth Centre have more overt physical security. John Oxley classifies both young people and physical areas according to security risk.

Absconding rates for each centre in 1988 were:

Westbrook Youth Centre	10 actual 17 attempted
John Oxley Youth Centre	14 actual 2 attempted (7 while on escort)
Cleveland Youth Centre	5 actual approx. 6 attempted

Note: Definitions of abscondings and attempted abscondings varies between centres and a common definition is needed before reliable comparisons can be made. The total figure of actual and attempted abscondings gives a similar picture for each centre. Ignoring the very secure remand section at Westbrook, abscondings vary between approximately 0.55 and 0.7 of the capacity of each centre during 1988, with Westbrook showing figures at the lower end.

The level of technological support for security appears to be low. This is one area that should be considered to relieve the pressure on staffing resources for basic security purposes.

One example of this is the inadequacy of communications at the John Oxley Youth Centre. While the internal alarm system is being upgraded, the search communication and associated procedures for an absconding are presently inadequate. Westbrook has effective search communication, but poor electronic surveillance within the centre. Cleveland has a simple but effective capacity to listen through the intercom, and to be called by pager to each room.

The reliance on observation/watching varies between centres.





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Security will always be dependent on the vigilance and the ability of staff to sense when youth are likely to attempt an absconding. However, this may not necessitate constant observation.

The intent of the work value component of the latest Youth Workers award was that staff should carry out a dual role of custody and direct care with young people. This is interpreted as meaning that staff should not be watchers of youth, but should work with them and exercise supervision in a less obvious way. There will be times, particularly at night and during free time for young people, that watching and observation is the only appropriate role. During the active part of the day it should be expected to be minimal.

Cleveland exhibits the least "watching" behaviour. John Oxley has more than this, particularly when an additional youth worker sits in on a session run by a youth worker (practical), for security reasons. Westbrook varies between the absolute minimum of watching behaviour on most work parties, to extreme head counting and watching at times in sections. This is particularly evident during the day when some youth are in the sections and some are being watched at the same time on the General Work Party. Remand section has a high level of watching, but also a high level of participative sport with youth. A higher need to observe youth is to be expected in this situation.

#### 5.1.2 Safety

Data is either not kept on frequency of accidental or self-inflicted injury or is not readily accessible. These would seem to be obvious indicators of part of the safety component and should be included amongst the management indicators referred to in Recommendation 4. Psychological damage is more difficult to assess, but if caused within the centre would be associated with the behaviour management system.

A subjective assessment of these factors is that the level of safety is high in the context of the physical and social environment of each of the centres, and that the issue is generally dealt with in a concerned manner.

Medical services are adequate in each centre, with the highest pressure on them experienced in Westbrook. The service at John Oxley appears to be very well organised.

#### 5.1.3 Findings: Security and Safety

All three centres perform satisfactorily in relation to security and safety. However, the level of technological support could be upgraded, to reduce the reliance on continuous staff presence in some situations (see efficiency discussions).

John Oxley Youth Centre has to upgrade its capacity to respond to absconding, both through better communication technology and a more clearly defined and understood search procedure. This action is in hand.



## 5.2 Behaviour Management

The key factors in behaviour management appear to be consistency and clarity of rules and consequences. Provided the rules are not too restrictive, unjust or demeaning, the nature of the rules themselves seems to be less relevant to the effectiveness of the system for maintaining acceptable behaviour.

The actual type of rule applied can be important in shaping the culture of each institution. This is exemplified at Cleveland Youth Centre, where newly admitted youth do not receive any normal privileges for the first few days, while they learn the behaviours that are expected of them. This appears to be a powerful socialising force.

While some aspects of a given centre's culture may not appeal to some people (e.g. Westbrook's male-oriented "tough" environment), this does not mean that the behaviour management system within it is not working effectively.

Indicators of effective behaviour management are things such as the frequency of assault, the amounts of property damage, the level of co-operativeness and the extent to which youth complete chores. More significant, but impossible to assess objectively, is the sense of calm or tension amongst staff and youth. While the level of tension can be affected by the youths and the combination of personalities, the behaviour management system and the caring with which it is applied, is the major tool for addressing these situations.

Note: Management indicators should not assess the frequency of application of consequences within the system itself (e.g. frequency of privilege removal), as to monitor the system in this way would affect the system itself. Any monitoring of these factors should only be for the purpose of assessing staff performance within the system.

The consistency factor in behaviour management applies particularly to the wing or section situation. A different set of behaviour expectations can exist in a work party, program or school setting. However, it appears to be important that expectations in these other areas of the centre not be inconsistent with the basic expectations of a wing, and certainly not to contradict or undermine them.

For this reason, all staff who work with youth should be aware of the behaviour management of youths and be familiar with the current behaviour issues in their wing or section. (See later comments about staffing most positions with youth workers.)



5.2.1 Findings: Cleveland Youth Centre

Of the behaviour management systems in the various centres, that at Cleveland Youth Centre seems to be the most effective. This is judged on the sense of calm, the high level of co-operativeness, the obvious and consistent compliance with the system as documented, all seeming to be administered in a personally caring manner.

5.2.2 Findings: Westbrook Youth Centre

Westbrook Youth Centre also has an effective behaviour management system. While the culture is more "rough and ready" and regimented, the youth and staff are very clear about limitations and consequences.

The behaviour of the youth is generally co-operative and communication between staff and youth is rational and civil. The overt expression of caring is much less than in Cleveland, but relationships appear to have a level of "no nonsense" respect that seems appropriate.

Variations in apparent effectiveness of the system do exist between the various sections. This is a reflection of the system of graduated privileges between the sections. Proserpine section has fewest privileges and the newest young people. The level of calmness and co-operation is lowest here, but still operates at an effective level. There is a higher level of expressed caring in the privilege sections.

Remand is a most difficult section, with its own set of behaviour problems and a high level of tension in youth due to the uncertainty in their life, the higher level of confinement required and the pressures of court appearances. Even here the behaviour management system manages to maintain a workable level of calm and co-operation.

5.2.3 Findings: John Oxley Youth Centre

The behaviour management system at John Oxley Youth Centre has been ineffective. The level of tension amongst youth and staff has been high. While the level of co-operation in favoured programs and in the school has been good, the behaviour in the wings has been of youth frequently testing the limitations, allowing little energy for productive interaction between youth and staff. Staff have been confused about limits and standards and there has been inconsistent application of these between youth workers and senior youth workers. This was observed to occur with inter-wing standards such as visits between wings, when wing doors can be open, and encroachment by youth into the youth workers' room.

Although figures are difficult to assess, staff comment that the level of damage within the centre has been very high.

Each wing at John Oxley works independently within the centre, setting its own "house" rules and expectations. This appears to be a valid exercise in normalisation, but it makes greater difficulty in having the behaviour management system seen as consistent by youth. It means that the centre-wide limitations and standards have to be very uniformly maintained, so that the young people can easily distinguish between wing rules and other rules.



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Because of the self-determination of rules in each wing, the level of effectiveness can vary between them. Certain wings have a better reputation for calmness and control than others, but this is also affected by the selection of staff and youth for each wing.

Youth at John Oxley appear to do fewer chores than at other centres. Youth workers will set the table, for instance, whereas at other centres this is routinely done by the youths. This does not appear to be consistent with encouraging responsibility within the behaviour management system, nor does it appear to be consistent with normalisation, i.e. most households would expect more to be done by children of this age. Youths at Cleveland Youth Centre also wash their own linen, as part of their Saturday chores.

John Oxley Youth Centre does not use the triple-bed units in the wings. The arguments against their use are that the young people are uncontrollable if put together, and that it results in excessive numbers of people using the "living" areas of the wing in the context of normalisation.

While the general thrust of the argument about the living areas must be accepted, other centres do have youth in dormitory-style settings, and this would be a quite normal domestic arrangement. Perhaps if the daily routine were even closer to a normal household (e.g. leave the wing before 9.00 a.m.) the crowding effect would not be as great. The incidence of misbehaviour in these rooms reflects badly on the effectiveness of the behaviour management system.

In contrast to Westbrook Youth Centre, John Oxley Youth Centre has negative consequences of behaviour that appear less extreme - the isolation room vs. "the pound". However, Westbrook has more flexibility as it can make graduated use of the pound, e.g. just being in the pound, or being locked in a cell in the pound. Westbrook also has access to a greater range of positive consequences of behaviour - notably the ability to earn promotion to a section with greater privileges, being assigned to work parties where there is a greater sense of freedom (although assignment to work parties should not be primarily for behaviour management purposes) and until recently, smoking.

In this respect, a behaviour management system is harder to maintain at John Oxley. Even Cleveland has advantages with the shorter length of stay and apparently greater ease of arranging casual outings for small groups, to the city or the beach.

During the currency of this study, a number of the observed deficiencies at John Oxley have been addressed. A new behaviour management system has been finalised, and standards of behaviour reaffirmed and made more explicit throughout the centre (e.g. out-of-bounds areas clearly marked). At the same time the privilege of smoking was reinstated.

During the latest visit, the youth and staff were much calmer, with productive social communication evident, and with none of the gratuitous smearing that was previously so prevalent. Staff generally put this down to the smoking privilege, but this has to be seen in the context of a more clearly defined behaviour management system.





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Circumstances had also led to the closure of one wing, and staff to youth ratios were very high because normal staffing was concentrated in two wings. (This would have also contributed to the calmness of the situation.)

While the smoking is obviously a powerful reward for acceptable behaviour, Cleveland Youth Centre does maintain an effective behaviour management system without cigarettes.

### 5.3 Development/Rehabilitation

#### 5.3.1 Concepts of Rehabilitation

The basic idea of development or rehabilitation appears to be that it is possible to intervene in some way to affects the youths' development. This has the potential to make them more able to cope effectively with the outside world, and not offend again.

In order for this to happen, there has to be established a basic level of trust, in a caring and stable environment. Only then can a young person be expected to take responsibility for decisions, or to learn things which might improve his or her future prospects in life.

The first step of achieving a stable and caring environment is in the daily contact with staff, particularly youth worker staff. This is why the behaviour management system firstly has to be effective, and implemented in a caring manner. The objective appears to be to have youth exercise responsible self-control and to experience sufficient caring, such that the experience of detention is at the least not damaging. Only then can this be built on to make the experience as beneficial as possible.

Note: The detention experience itself is seen by some people as being a salutary lesson, especially for those youth who are one-off offenders. This would result in their deciding to behave differently, and not re-offend. The predominant theory now appears to be that most youth in detention are damaged and need planned intervention that is therapeutic, and that they come from social environments which induce anti-social behaviour. This view is supported by the large numbers of youth who have been through a wide range of alternative placements and programs before being placed in detention.

#### 5.3.2 Modes of Rehabilitation

The issue of development/rehabilitation seems to be approached in three ways. The most obvious way is through a range of training or developmental programs that provide opportunities for youth to learn useful behaviour, skills, or attitudes and to develop higher self-esteem. A second way is through direct counselling, therapy (one-to-one or group) and problem related training by professionally trained child care officers and psychologists. The third way is through the support and encouragement of youth workers and others, which helps to reinforce positive behaviour, provides appropriate role models, and strengthens effective problem-solving skills.



### 5.3.3 Integrated Development Planning

In the ideal situation, each young person would have a development plan which integrates all three types of intervention, so that all of the development activities carried out focus on the outcomes that are considered most appropriate for each child. This plan may have such things as a therapeutic component, a simple behaviour modification component, an educational component and social skills development component.

When all staff are aware of the key development goals for any given youth, the selection of programs and activities can be more appropriate, and the individual staff actions can be tailored specifically to the needs of each youth.

The primary management indicator of effectiveness in meeting the development/rehabilitation purpose is therefore the extent to which youth in detention have an individual plan of intervention that is followed consistently throughout the centre. (Ideally, this would continue beyond the centre, for further reinforcement after the period of detention.)

Obviously, the development and implementation of such a plan would require time for assessment, observation and compilation. At the same time, the young person would need time to settle in before he or she is ready to discuss development needs and goals. The general opinion seems to be that little can be done to provide effective planned intervention in any period of less than one month.

For youth who are detained for a month or less, a plan could be made, but with less effort put into assessment, and planned activities being of a more general nature.

This means that Cleveland Youth Centre cannot be expected to have individual plans to the extent of the other centres. Similarly, Remand section at Westbrook cannot be expected to produce individual plans to any great extent. Programs that are run in these two areas therefore can be of a more generalised nature and should not be expected to be highly effective for development/rehabilitation.

#### Findings:

None of the centres can be assessed as highly effective, using the presence of individualised development planning and intervention as the criterion. All three centres have case planning carried out by child care officers. These are reviewed regularly, and representatives of youth worker staff and teachers attend. These case plans and reviews are important and are effective in managing many aspects of the youths' detention. They address issues regarding sentencing, period of detention, the overall approach that should be adopted with the youth, and placement following release. Useful information is shared about family, social background and behaviour in the centre. Important decisions are made, with input from the various parties attending.



Useful information is shared in an ad-hoc way between staff, and any specific thing requested by a child care officer in relation to the case plan is followed by other staff in their relationship with the youth. However, this tends to be "by exception" for specific things. The danger is that attention can be given to the more visible and pressing needs of certain youth, while missing opportunities to be helpful with others.

What is needed to take these activities to a level where there can be some managerial confidence that effectively co-ordinated individualised planning exists is:

- a procedure for documenting individual development goals such that all staff who relate to youth have access to them, can contribute to them, and can tailor their relationship with youth to the stated goals (c.f. I.T.E.P. - Individualised Training and Environment Plans in Intellectual Handicap Services Branch)
- sufficient flexibility across programs and within programs to allow for individual differences, and assignment according to needs
- a high level of integration on a day-by-day basis between what happens in the wings, on programs and in counselling sessions. In practice this means youth workers (practical) and child care officers making themselves familiar with wing/section activities. It means youth workers in the wings making opportunities to work with a given youth on a particular assessed need.

At present, separate documentation of assessed needs exist in certain areas e.g. teachers, manual training, case notes.

Recommendation 5:

That the Department of Family Services require each centre to develop a system for individual development planning for youth on detention for more than a month. That this system be supported by practices that enhance integration of the various staff groups relating to youth. That the centres be given 2 years to have the system fully operational.

Implementation

Of the centres, John Oxley is probably closest to the stage where such a system could be put together, and this is the direction that their philosophy is taking them. Integration of activities may take longer to achieve, but useful steps are being taken to co-ordinate internal programs by the teacher in charge, and external programs by a principal youth worker. Integration with youth worker activities in wings, under the overall case guidance of child care officers will complete the picture.

Westbrook, because of its work-oriented philosophy, need not have the level of day-by-day interaction between program staff and the sections that is necessary in John Oxley.



However, the present situation is one where activities carried out in work parties, and particularly by child care officers and the teachers, are pursued separately from section activities and often from one another. There is little sense of team cohesion in the treatment of each youth, and each group does what it thinks is best.

Assignment to work parties is done to the best of the principal youth worker's ability, taking into account the youth's preferences, perceived needs, security factors and availability of work parties. Where youth absences leave a work party short, workers are made up from the best available youth.

This often results in logistic difficulties and disruption to these work parties where continuity of attendance is crucial to the program. The outcome of these pressures is that staff lose sight of individual needs or development goals.

Achievement of an individualised planning system here will mean a re-think of programs to integrate the purposes of work parties, educational activities and other programs (see evaluation of programs, below).

The people who initiated the major changes in Westbrook over the last ten years would have expected a system of individualised planning to be in place by now. This cannot be achieved until programs are boosted, and greater practical co-ordination of effort occurs. In fact, Westbrook had apparently progressed further towards this ideal before momentum was lost through the turnover in child care officer staff. Coolibah is one area where this sort of programming has been adopted with a small number of long-term youth.

Cleveland has its activities fairly well integrated and will be even more so with the program being co-ordinated by the teacher in the coming year. Its capacity to carry out individualised planning is high, but the few long term detentions and the more limited scope of programs make this less necessary.

Note: This concept does not require a complicated system, nor should it imply time-consuming group meetings. The key to the system would be simple documentation that is readily accessible, and used routinely by all staff who relate to youth.

#### 5.3.4 Programs

Programs are viewed as having a predominant purpose of development or rehabilitation. They also have the effect of occupying youth, of enhancing behaviour management and of reducing pressure on security. However, evaluation of effectiveness is based on their developmental capacity.

The primary indicator of effectiveness used was whether program staff had a consistent, rational explanation for activities carried out, that could be related to the needs of youth. If staff can do this, there can be greater managerial confidence that the program is achieving what is intended.





There seems to be several types of program:

- e.g. general education
- employment familiarisation
- occupational training
- leisure skills
- living skills
- physical skills

Programs can be categorised according to these differing purposes. They can also be categorised according to scope. Some programs are broad in scope, with the capacity to respond flexibly to individual differences and to change emphasis according to the attention span of youth.

Others are narrow in scope, where youth have to be interested in doing that specific thing, and attention has to be focused on one activity (e.g. making fishing rods). Generally speaking, the broad-based programs are those which can be maintained indefinitely while those of narrow scope have a limited term.

(i) General Findings:

Programs which are staffed permanently, i.e. with youth workers (practical), youth workers (farm) and teachers, are the most reliable and consistent. Those programs run by youth workers are much less reliable. The typical scenario is for a youth worker to be keen and competent to run a program, and develop it, only to be rostered on night and afternoon shift. By the time they are available to run it, the youth who are interested have left.

In effect, youth workers who work on rotating shifts cannot be expected to mount programs. Their developmental activities will be largely confined to helping youth in the wing or section environment.

The idea of having youth workers run programs is worthwhile, but should not be relied upon to provide the basic range of programs (except in Cleveland Youth Centre).

Recommendation 6:

That the Department of Family Services increase the number of youth worker (practical) positions to achieve higher levels of effectiveness in program activities with youth.

Some non-youth worker staff have been able to run useful programs where youth have learned relevant work, life or leisure skills. Unfortunately, difficulties have arisen in some instances because these people are not youth workers. They do not always appreciate the importance of the behaviour management system, sometimes act contrary to it, and suffer because of pay differences.



Recommendation 7:

That all positions in centres where the staff member can work with youth and provide back-up to other youth workers be designated as youth workers, e.g. yardman, cook.

The financial constraints of recent times have led to reductions in both state and commonwealth funds for programs. A relatively minor cost saving has often had a major detrimental effect on a program. Reliance on commonwealth funding is inappropriate for programs that need to be continuing.

Recommendation 8:

That the Department of Family Services provide the funds needed to service the basic program needs of each centre, with commonwealth funds considered as providing extras.

The effectiveness of teaching programs in meeting individualised needs should be recognised, and the input of teachers retained for as much of the year as possible. This would not mean the presentation of "schooling" in formal school holidays, but the maintenance of educational activities.

Recommendation 9:

That the Department of Family Services negotiate to obtain industrial agreement for teachers to work a 48 week year, or at least to stagger their holiday times in order to provide teacher coverage for at least forty eight (48) weeks per year.

(ii) Findings: John Oxley Youth Centre

Programs appear to be largely of types that can be expected to be effective with the age groups of youth in the centre. There is a balance between educative, leisure skills and living skills, with a smaller emphasis on work skills and occupational training. These are school-age youth, and the daily program is structured across times similar to schooling.

Of these programs, the education activities appear to be the most effective in focusing on individual needs. Art and Mechanics are more general in nature, and effectively allow youth to develop their own interests and through this to gain confidence and self-esteem.

The cooking program has been developed but not implemented to the level that it could or to the level that it warrants in terms of life skills. Some cooking is done under supervision in the wings, but this needs to be supported by a planned instruction program. Larger numbers of children should participate before it can be considered a fully effective program.

Several useful programs with a narrow focus are run by youth workers. Looking good, pot plants, yard maintenance, music, B.M.X., weights, library, woodwork and Royal Life Saving programs teach useful leisure skills.



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A few programs run the risk of being "fill in" activities, with no clear rationale or link to the needs of the youth involved. The carpet bowls and ping pong activity was initiated as a response to a need at one time, and should have been phased out. The occasional secure yard duties, weeding and laundry cleaning would for many youths be chores rather than developmental activities. They should be treated as such, and done during chores times. Some of the swimming/sports activities may also belong in the afternoon recreation period, rather than being considered as a developmental program.

The way to avoid "fill in" activities is to provide an additional, broad-based program which can meet the needs of several youth. This could also aid the efficient utilisation of youth worker staff, as numbers of youth on each program could be small enough to avoid the need for staff who just watch. The most likely choice appears to be in the craft/woodwork field. Use of space for an additional program might require some rearranging, but it might also reduce the supervision load.

#### Recommendation 10:

That an additional youth worker (practical) position be provided at John Oxley Youth Centre, to run an appropriate broad-based program.

#### (iii) Findings: Westbrook Youth Centre

Programs at Westbrook have traditionally been oriented towards employment skills and occupational training. This focus appears to be consistent with the age group of youth, and in line with the purpose of the centre. The majority of the programs (work parties) appear to be effective in achieving the purpose of the centre. However, some confusion of purpose has arisen with some programs, and additional types of program could be utilised to improve effectiveness.

Too small a proportion of the youth can be catered for in the current work parties.

#### The Farm Programs

Some question has arisen as to the appropriateness of the farm programs. This is based on the decreasing relevance of farm work in our society, and an expectation that the farm not only pay for itself, but support other parts of the centre.

The primary criterion used in assessing the farm programs is whether they logically can be demonstrated to contribute to the development/rehabilitation of youth. If the purpose of these work parties is to give the youth some familiarity with working routines, the chance to develop work concentration skills, and an ability to work with others to get a job done, the rural nature of the work is incidental.

The full costs for the farm as recorded in Westbrook accounts include everything but the cost of salaries of the youth workers employed. The figures are based on cash accounting, so interpretations have to be cautious (see figure in Appendix III).



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A full conversion to an approximate accrual system may have given a more valid picture of economic viability of the farm. This was not considered warranted as the figures give sufficient insight to evaluate the likely effectiveness of the farm in providing for the development/rehabilitation needs of youth.

In simple cash accounting terms, the piggery has made an apparent "profit" since June 1985 of about \$56,000. The dairy made a "profit" of about \$60,000, and the farm a "loss" of about \$39,000. There were also some large general expenses in 1986/87 that are thought to apply largely to the farm.

The implication of these figures is that apart from the Farm work party itself, the work parties on the farm do pay for themselves. They are at least as cheap to run as other programs in Westbrook, even taking into account the overhead cost of the farm manager's salary (e.g. most programs incur the cost of the youth worker's salary, plus direct costs of up to \$10,000).

A push towards commercial profitability is valid as part of the work environment and should be strongly emphasised, provided it does not jeopardise the developmental purposes. Conversely, the farm need not break even to justify its existence, if it costs no more than other programs.

The Dairy and Piggery work parties satisfy the above effectiveness criterion. While the youth do not work as full or as hard a work day as they might in some occupations, basic work procedures are followed. The Farm work party (ploughing, harvesting, etc.) is highly ineffective against this criterion, as the youth assigned to it have little to do. They spend much of their time watching the youth worker drive the tractor. It has the reputation of being the dumping ground for youth who do not want to do anything.

#### Recommendation 11:

That the Farm work party be discontinued, and youth be assigned to these general farming activities only when the work is sufficient to keep them properly occupied.

#### Other Employment Familiarisation Programs

The kitchen and laundry work parties satisfy the effectiveness criteria. While the youth may be seen to spend long periods sitting on benches, they do have a work routine to follow. The kitchen staff work to an irregular timetable, including early morning starts and weekend work. In balance, it is probably not too different from some real work environments.

#### Commercialised Programs

The idea of commercialisation is valid, provided the activities undertaken are also labour intensive and so provide as normal as possible a work environment for youth. At present, the only truly commercial activities undertaken on the farm are the dairy, the piggery and grain production. Grain production should be phased out and the capital investment in it redirected to other, labour-intensive commercial activities, e.g. utilise a smaller tractor.





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The two effective commercial programs provide work for only 6 to 7 youth out of approximately 47 committed youth. Non-commercial work experience programs (parks and gardens, kitchen, laundry) provide work for a further 14 youths. Thus a total of only 23 youths out of approximately 47 are involved in work experience programs. (A couple may also be in real work experience in Toowoomba at any one time.)

**Recommendation 12:**

That the Department of Family Services fund additional commercial activities at Westbrook, which meet the criterion of providing labour intensive work environments, and have the potential to be self-funding. That grain production be phased out and capital invested in it be liquidated where possible to fund these additional activities.

Technical Training Program

Those three programs, mechanics, woodwork and metalwork have suffered some confusion of purpose. As an exercise in efficiency, there has been a push to recover costs by the sale of products and services from these areas. While the recovery of some costs is possible, moves to commercialise these areas would seem contrary to their training purpose. Contracts to construct furniture can be taken out, and arrangements made to service departmental vehicles. However, if either of these things result in the youth not being able to follow the training schedule, the effectiveness of these programs must be reduced. This commercialisation factor, together with the variability in youth allocations to these work parties, appears to have made these programs much less effective than they might be.

**Recommendation 13:**

That the Department of Family Services recognise that technical training programs exist primarily for skills training purposes. That contracts to supply taken out in relation to these programs not include delivery deadlines that will force a commercial production-line situation, to the detriment of the skills training program.

This would mean, for instance, that servicing of departmental vehicles would be programmed into the weekly activities. If departmental staff cannot provide the vehicle at this time, alternative servicing arrangements should be made.

The Education Program

One full-time teacher with some part-time help provides the education program. This scores high on effectiveness through its demonstrable focus on assessed individual needs. (It also is capable of a high youth/staff ratio.)

This program has an apparent advantage over the programs in John Oxley and Cleveland in that all the participants are volunteers. Most have clearly identified needs that are important to them, e.g. completing Grade 10, learning to read and write, understanding computers.



There is an apparent demand greater than the supply. With the relocation of the teaching facilities to a more secure site in 1989, larger numbers of students could be catered for safely with two full-time teachers. At certain periods of the week the present teacher estimates that two staff could manage the learning activities of up to twelve youth. At other times, more intensive work would be done with fewer students. Extra teaching resources could be made available to Remand section.

Recommendation 14:

That the Department of Family Services increase the teaching establishment at Westbrook Youth Centre by one full-time teacher.

The General Work Party

Other activities that are carried out include the General work party (G.P.).

The G.P. work party does not fulfil the criteria of effectiveness. It is in effect chores carried out under the direction of youth workers in the courtyard, and should be considered as such.

Recommendation 15:

That the General Work Party be abolished and the activities carried out in it be included as part of the chores to be done in the centre, outside normal programmed activity time.

This analysis points to a pressing need to provide more programs, before the centre can be considered highly effective in developmental and rehabilitation activities. Increasing the number of commercial activities will be part of the answer.

The Sports Program

This program appears to be very effective, and allows the level of sports activity that is normal for the average youth of this age group. The usual developmental component of sporting activity is realised, and specific interests such as weight training are being catered for. The ropes course also has obvious potential benefits in the development of individual confidence and self-esteem, as different from team competition sports.

This very useful program has only one youth worker assigned to it full-time. This youth worker (recreation) works to a very flexible timetable, including regular weekend work. Assignment of an additional youth worker to full-time recreation activities would provide a more optimal use of the sporting facilities, and probably reduce the incidence of "watchers" during recreation activities.

Recommendation 16:

That an additional youth worker at Westbrook be assigned to full-time recreational activities.



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Other Programs Required

In all, the programmed activities account for approximately 40 youth.

dairy	4	farm	4
piggery	2	parks & gardens	4
manual	8	mechanics	4
school	3	work release	1
kitchen	7	laundry	3

This leaves an average of seven (7) youth who have to remain in the section precincts, or who are in transit to or from Brisbane. Most are from Proserpine, and are awaiting assignment to a work party when a vacancy occurs.

Added to this number are those youths who do not attend their normal work party for a variety of reasons, for all or part of the day (illness/injury, waiting to see police or child care officers). While attempts are made to replace youths who cannot attend their work party, there are always a significant number left around the centre. Some are assigned to G.P., which take up part of the day and others occupy themselves in their section. These activities are referred to as "lying on concrete" duty.

Additional pressure would be put on these numbers with the disbanding of the Farm work party (4) and if inappropriate replacements in the manual and mechanical training programs are no longer made.

Even more important than additional commercial work parties, is a need to provide worthwhile activities for those youth who are necessarily absent from work parties each day. These would be programs that could provide a "buffer" before first being assigned to a given work party, as well as being areas to which youth could be assigned if this is considered the best to meet their needs.

These programs would have to be such that youth who stay in from a work party can join them temporarily. There would also be no need to fill short-term absences from the technical training programs with another youth, which tends to disrupt these programs.

The type of program which would meet these requirements would be an activities centre, with a range of art, craft and music.

If this were staffed by two youth workers (practical), and other youth workers were available to help with the activities, much of the pressure on youth workers for watching and counting heads throughout the day in various parts of the centre would be removed.

There are very few programs run by the youth workers other than those in the kitchen or on the farm. A number of staff are interested, some have tried unsuccessfully, and a few manage to pick up their programs when their shift allows. An activity centre would create a focal point for maintaining these programs, either by sharing with other youth workers, or by adopting fixed shifts for these staff.



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A suitable location would have to be found for this, in a secure area. Remodelling the pound is one possibility, with a small isolation facility being developed elsewhere.

Recommendation 17:

That Westbrook set up an activities program to cater for the numbers of youth who currently are not occupied in worthwhile development activities during the day. That two youth worker (practical) positions be established to develop and co-ordinate this program in conjunction with other youth workers.

Remand Section

Remand section, with its population of youth with short and often uncertain lengths of stay, requires programs and activities of a short-term nature. Sporting activities are employed effectively to keep youth occupied in an enjoyable manner in remand section, the gym and pool. Some teaching input is provided and a couple of programs are run, largely by visiting presenters.

The criterion to be met with Remand is to have youth occupied in worthwhile activities, which may reduce the potential for the experience to be damaging i.e. the primary focus is on behaviour management, rather than development/rehabilitation, and this is considered appropriate.

This criterion is met moderately well. The effectiveness of programs can be increased as a spin-off from the earlier recommendations, if some additional youth worker (practical) resource were shared between an activity centre and Remand, and if some of the extra teaching capacity recommended is utilised by youth in Remand. Any staff resources released by the activity centre concept and the additional teaching capacity, could also be redirected to Remand section.

The current willingness to allow well-behaved long-term youths on remand to work in secure work parties should continue. If a secure activities centre is set up, this same class of youth on remand could benefit from attendance.

(iv) Findings: Cleveland Youth Centre

As discussed earlier, programs at this centre cannot be expected to achieve high levels of development for youth, because of the generally shorter length of stay occasioned through long-term serious offenders being sent south. During the six months 1st July to 30th December 1988, 27 young people stayed at Cleveland for more than a month, and of these 9 stayed for more than two months. This means that on average there are only 5 youth in the centre for whom a comprehensive individual program of development can realistically be contemplated.

The programs that are run appear to be effective for short-term youth. There is a high emphasis on education, with the teacher often taking an entire wing at a time. Other programs are largely run by the youth workers with some help from outside resources.





These programs are mostly leisure, life and living skills, which are appropriate to the age group of youth in the centre. Expenditure cutbacks have affected these programs to some extent, and funding for these should be restored.

5.3.5 Direct Counselling, Therapy and Problem-Related Training

Direct counselling and therapy on a one-to-one basis occurs in conjunction with other interviews and discussions carried out by child care officers and psychologists. Group therapy may be carried out by a professional with support from other staff.

Problem-related training are things such as drug, sex and A.I.D.S. education, or assertion training. This may be carried out by professionals, visiting specialists, or by youth workers using prepared packages.

The simplest indicator of effectiveness of these activities is the frequency with which they are carried out.

Ideally, all youth who are in a centre for more than about two months should have a chance to address any of these issues that are of significance to them.

Findings:

The level of individual counselling is impossible to observe. Professional staff report that they do carry out useful counselling work with youth. The problem with this appear to be the demands for pragmatic issues such as placements after discharge tend to leave little time for counselling.

No group therapy of any type appears to be done in any of the centres at the present time.

The impression gained is that Cleveland and John Oxley Youth Centres could achieve an acceptable level of counselling and therapy activity, given stability in professional staff. Westbrook cannot hope to achieve an equivalent level of activity, with its very low ratio of professional staff to youth. Even though the purpose of Westbrook is oriented more towards employability, effort should be made to address those issues which may be at the core of offending behaviour.

A number of problem-related training activities have been carried out in all of the centres of recent times. The specifics of how much has been done are hard to obtain. No such activities were actually observed through this study. The topic which has been addressed most commonly of recent times is sex and A.I.D.S.

The overall finding is that these activities are not carried out at an effective level in any youth detention centre at this time.

Turnover

Turnover in professional staff appears to be a major factor contributing to ineffectiveness in this area.



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In particular, getting therapy groups and problem-related training underway takes some time. Momentum is lost if the activities cannot be maintained in some way when one professional leaves and another commences. Where turnover is too great, these activities either don't get started or the effort dissipates.

For example, Westbrook did have a number of these activities under way at one time, but they have been lost during subsequent staff changeovers. Present staff are now trying to build up these activities again, but have to go through the process of gaining personal acceptance and credibility.

These activities should be built into the normal pattern of events in each centre, so that they are less dependent on the person carrying them out, and so that new staff fit into an established activity.

Note: This is an important component of the integrating practices referred to in Recommendation 4.

#### Westbrook Aftercare

The idea behind Westbrook Aftercare is an appealing one - that of helping youth to re-integrate into society. The reality seems to be that staff do not get the opportunity to do much more than find placements. They spend a half day each week in travel to and from Westbrook. Dissatisfaction with the work seems to have been frequent, and turnover high.

The result has been that this unit has not been effective from a developmental/rehabilitation point of view. It would be better to concentrate resources in Westbrook, to at least give the internally managed professional development/rehabilitation activities more chance of success.

#### Recommendation 18:

That the two child care officer positions in Westbrook Aftercare be relocated to Westbrook, to support the development and rehabilitation activities within the centre.

This action would place some pressure on Regions to carry out the placement work done by these two officers. Some placement negotiation would be possible by telephone from Westbrook, but dealing with continuing placement issues would have to fall to local staff in Brisbane, as it does in other centres.

#### 5.3.6 Support and Encouragement

The current industrial award for youth workers recognises in terms of work value that staff are expected to carry out a direct care role as well as a custodial role. The basic activity in this direct care role is being able to provide support and encouragement to youth and so help them to develop personal problem solving skills.



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To be able to fulfil this role, youth workers have to be prepared and able to spend time talking with small groups or individual youth, to allow more personal discussions to develop. An indicator of the level of support and encouragement is the frequency with which such discussions occur.

#### Findings:

Cleveland Youth Centre staff frequently have discussions with youth throughout the daily activities and these by and large appear to be supportive. John Oxley Youth Centre staff also exhibit supportive behaviour. This appears to have increased greatly since the behaviour management system has become clearer and more consistent, both in frequency and apparent quality of interaction. Both of these centres can be considered to operate effectively in providing support and encouragement.

Westbrook Youth Centre is less effective in providing support and encouragement, but this varies between sections. Overt physical expressions of caring are less evident, but this is to be expected with a male population of this age group. Coolibah section has the best record for support, and good relationships are built. Remand section staff take opportunities to spend time with the more distressed youth, and provide general support through involvement in sporting activities.

Direct supportive contact does occur in other sections, by some staff more than others. This does not appear to be as frequent as desirable.

The reasons for this may be partly to do with the custodial orientation that governs much of the staff behaviour. For instance, youth workers who take a meal in the sections do not eat with the youth, but at a separate table where they keep the youth under direct observation. Eating with youth, while keeping them under less overt observation, is the type of behaviour which might be expected to provide opportunities to show a caring interest.

The earlier recommendation for an activities centre would provide a venue where those youth workers who express an interest in being more directly supportive will have an environment where this is possible.

#### 5.3.7 Education and Training

The final indicator of effectiveness is the appropriateness of education and training given to staff. A distinction is made between education and training. Education is occupationally or professionally oriented, and can be expected to impact on the medium to long-term career. Training is provided to help people to do the job as is required at the present time.

#### Findings:

The current training program for youth workers is by the above definition an education activity. As such, the range of topics and the three year time period are appropriate. The expectation that staff also contribute their own time to it in the interests of their career is also appropriate.



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The education program is being effectively pursued at Westbrook and John Oxley. Cleveland is having difficulty with their program at the moment as it was previously run at a local educational institution with non-youth workers participating. This centre cannot be considered to have an effective program at this time, but staff are in the process of developing one.

Professional and other staff obtain education activities through their qualifications and through continuing affiliation with professional bodies.

Training should include induction, procedures training, fire drills, and team development activities. Such training should be provided in a planned way by the centres during work time. At present all centres use informal on-the-job training for all of these activities except fire drills, which are properly carried out. Of particular importance is induction training and team development activities. Neither of these should be left to chance.

Induction and basic training in skills and procedures is important in gaining uniformity of response, emphasising important values, and overcoming the handing on of bad habits or inappropriate behaviours. If the capacity to use casual staff is going to be fully utilised, each centre will need a pool of casuals who have been trained in the basic youth worker skills and expectations.

**Recommendation 19:**

That a short, basic training package be developed for use by centres for inducting and training new staff and casuals.

The other work-related training need that is most evident centres about the teams in wings. There should be time set aside for a variety of activities to strengthen the understanding and consistency of approach taken in the wing, and the integration of wing activities with other activities in the centre. This need is particularly evident at John Oxley Youth Centre, and could be more important in future at Westbrook if other effectiveness recommendations from earlier in this report are adopted.

**Recommendation 20:**

That necessary job-related training and team liaison activities be carried out as a planned activity within work time.

**5.4 Effectiveness Summary**

The assessed levels of effectiveness from a management theory perspective are shown in Table I. As can be seen from this table, the areas where future effort will produce results in effectiveness are in the implementation of more advanced systems and activities for the development and rehabilitation of youth, and having relevant staff training to support all areas of effectiveness.





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Table I Effectiveness Chart

Key Result Areas and Indicators	John Oxley Youth Centre	Cleveland Youth Centre	Westbrook Youth Centre
1. Safety and Security	effective	effective	effective
2. Behaviour Management	not effective, but improving	effective	effective
3. Development & Rehabilitation			
3.1 Individualised Development Planning	not effective	not effective	not effective
3.2 Programs	largely effective	largely effective	some effective, inadequate coverage
3.3 Direct Counselling, Therapy, Problem-focused activities	not effective	not effective	not effective
3.4 Youth Worker Support	potentially effective	effective	not highly effective but for Coolibah
4. Staff Education	effective	not effective	effective
5. Staff Training	not effective	not effective	not effective



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## 6. EFFICIENCY CONSIDERATIONS

The approach taken with reviewing efficiency was to consider resource utilisation and to assess where and how resources might be better utilised in ways which do not reduce effectiveness (and where possible actually enhance effectiveness). Efforts to improve efficiency should focus on those items which are major cost factors, as the potential for efficiencies with these is usually greater. For youth detention centres, the major cost factors are salaries and penalties, and provisions. Electricity, water, telephone, fuel, clothes and uniforms are moderate cost items that can potentially provide small efficiencies. Other one-off cost items may yield some savings, if they are unnecessary items of expenditure.

As outlined earlier in this report, direct comparison of centres is not valid. There is, however, a case for uniformity in some of the operational systems used, and in industrial interpretations. Where one centre carries out an operational activity more efficiently than another, the more efficient practice should be adopted in each centre wherever possible.

Suggestions have been made that closing down one wing of John Oxley is a means of saving money. This notion is rejected on the grounds that John Oxley could shortly become highly effective in meeting the purpose for which it was set up, and it would be inappropriate not to utilise this to the fullest. The overheads occasioned through to management, professional, domestic and other staff would be spread over fewer youth, and so tip the balance between effectiveness and efficiency in the wrong direction. Also, the cost of interest and redemption of the building has the same effect, even though this does not appear in the accounts of the Department of Family Services.

### Findings:

Action taken to date to find efficiencies has concentrated largely on provisions and the smaller cost items. Most of the potential for savings appear to be realised in these areas. As mentioned previously in this report, program funding has been a casualty in this process. However, little has been done to bring about structural change in relation to staffing practices, which is where the greatest potential for improving efficiency exists.

Cleveland Youth Centre has addressed some staffing issues and has achieved greater efficiency in weekend kitchen arrangements. It uses casuals without reducing centre effectiveness. Other centres have not attempted to achieve similar savings. To do much more than Cleveland has will require policy changes and award renegotiations through the head office of the Department.

The types of efficiency measures that could be adopted are as follows:



### 6.1 Salaries and Penalties

Staffing arrangements for the detention centres can be altered provided that the purposes of each centre is met. Historically, the approach to staffing centres has been to have sufficient staff to cover the peak work loads. This leaves staff under-utilised for certain periods of the day. The alternative approach adopted is that of providing the staffing resources necessary for the normal running of the centre, and have flexible arrangements for meeting peak work demands as they occur.

The consequence of the present approach is that centres have staffing levels at night based on the requirements of occasional or rare events such as abscondings, late admissions and fires. They have floaters who cover escorts and sick leave and who therefore may not be fully utilised. They have staff who have heavy demands placed on them for a few hours, then are under-utilised for the rest of the shift.

The alternative approach would utilise close call at night, permanent part-time staff for periods of higher demand, and casuals for unpredictable, intermittent demands. Use of these alternatives can also free resources from less productive periods and make them available to provide increased resources at times when centre effectiveness can be increased.

These should be implemented in a way which does not cause a large reduction in income for staff who continue to do the same class of work. Savings occur through reduced staff numbers.

Some of these possibilities are discussed below:

#### 6.1.1 Casuals

Centres already have the capacity to utilise casuals. To make best use of this capacity, each centre should develop a pool of casuals from which it can draw. These casuals should be trained in basic procedures and practices as discussed in Section 5.3.7 and not simply taken off the street.

Casual staff should be utilised initially as

- \* second staff on double escort duty (i.e. driver)
- \* to relieve staff doing a single escort
- \* to do hospital escort duty for low absconding risk youth
- \* to relieve staff who are absent sick, where they can work with another experienced youth worker
- \* to do some weekend work and holiday relief under the same conditions

Experienced casuals might be used to do single escorts and work with less supervision.

The advantage of casuals is that they can be available on short notice to do the work that would otherwise disrupt the routine of programs in the centre. They might also be used to free other staff for short duration training activities.



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If there ever is any tendency for staff to work the system with sick leave (and there is not clear evidence of this), use of casuals for sick relief will tend to reduce this practice.

The limitations of casuals is that any one centre cannot have so many casuals working at once, that they affect the stability and continuity of the centre. Acceptance of casuals as a group and of each individual casual would have to be carefully managed. Sufficient training, given in conjunction with full-time youth worker staff, would help with this.

Westbrook staff claim to have little chance of developing a pool of casuals in the Toowoomba area. One of the realities is that the majority of people wanting to work as casuals will be women, and possibly older, less fit women. Westbrook staff believe that such people would not be suitable for the work, the implication being that they could not control the youth and that they would be in physical danger.

In contrast to this, the women who are presently on staff are treated very well and very respectfully by youth. These are not young, fit women. Having women in the centre in a direct care role will potentially increase the level of support and encouragement that is expressed. They may even have a positive impact on the behaviour management system. Certainly any who are older and less fit would not be expected to apply physical restraint to a strong youth, any more than an older, less fit man would be.

If a concentrated effort is made to recruit a pool of casuals in Toowoomba, it might produce sufficient people who are capable of carrying out the types of duty listed above.

The potential efficiency advantage of using casuals is difficult to estimate, and would vary with circumstances. Management could be more confident that staff resources are being managed efficiently through their use.

#### Recommendation 21:

That each Youth Detention Centre build up a pool of casual staff to use for escorts and relief where this is appropriate. That these casuals be given basic training in the skills necessary for the security and behaviour management roles before they are used in this capacity.

##### 6.1.2 Close Call Provisions

A close call provision in an award allows for staff to be retained on call within the centre. They are able to sleep and if they are not called out are available to work a normal shift the following day. If called out, the normal 10 hour break applies before they work another shift.

An allowance is paid for being on close call, and penalty rates apply if called out. Normally a system of voluntary rostering works, for those people who are happy to arrive late in the evening and sleep the night.





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The advantage to the centre from such a provision is that night staffing can be reduced to that necessary to do the actual work (i.e. security patrols, youth to toilets), while having a body of staff on hand to respond to occasional duties or emergencies (i.e. late admissions, absconding).

Staff who are on duty would have a full, although not onerous, security routine to follow, reducing the tendency to boredom and sleepiness. Typically, the idea of "finding useful things for night staff to do" does not work, if it is not a task that is necessary on the night.

The centre may then take the option of transferring these resources to the more productive day shift.

The advantage to staff is firstly that they can get some money for simply being available. If they get called out the payment is very good. Secondly, it will retain a reasonable sense of safety for those who are on night shift. When there is a need, the numbers both on duty and on close call can be boosted.

For such a system to work, the physical security needs to be adequate. John Oxley would have to be confident about its doors. Westbrook would have to increase individual room security and boost technological security (e.g. to be able to have a listening routine via intercoms and some limited video surveillance).

Sleeping areas would also have to be provided. These should be secure, and close enough to wings or sections to respond for a fire evacuation. If Westbrook were to have several staff on close call it might be an advantage to have them in two different locations. Buzzer systems and call-out protocols would have to be devised.

The potential efficiency advantage of close call is great, provided that call-out situations are not frequent. In fact, call-out situations are rare at all of the centres. John Oxley had 52 after hours admissions in 1988, but the majority of these would have been before 11.00 p.m. Two calls per month equate to one extra full shift equivalent per month, and this is the highest level of call-out that would be expected, of all the centres.

Conservatively, Westbrook could reduce night staffing by 4 positions, John Oxley by 2 positions and Cleveland by 1.

This represents an approximate annual saving of \$225,000 in salaries and penalties alone, less any call-out payments (see Appendix II). There would be some once-only capital expenditure.

**Recommendation 22:**

That the Department of Family Services seek a variation to the Youth Workers award to include a provision for close-call. That Youth Detention Centres plan for the accommodation facilities to allow this. That physical and electronic security be boosted where necessary to ensure staff confidence in the arrangement.



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### 6.1.3 Permanent Part-Time

The ability to employ staff on a part-time basis would allow centres to concentrate staff resources during the high demand part of the day. That is, one position could be split between two part-time staff, one working in wings or sections in the mornings for two to three hours and one working in the evenings for up to six hours.

Permanency is seen as important for these positions. The wing or section role requires stability so the staff can build a caring relationship with youth. The same part-time staff member would always be with the youth in a given wing in the mornings, and another always present in the evenings. Along with the full-time staff members, this will provide as much stability as at present, and perhaps even more.

Part-time staff would have to receive full training, and be included in team-related activities. This would entail some additional cost, but should still produce an overall cost saving.

Other advantages to the centres is that these staff would be able to focus on the direct care role as well as providing effective security. The shorter work periods could result in their being fresher and able to maintain enthusiasm more easily.

Part-time staff may be less prone to stress-related problems because of reduced exposure to the detention centre environment, and through not having to work rotating shifts. Their work times are such as to leave them free for a large part of the day. There should be many people who would be happy to work under these conditions. Some current full-time staff may prefer to work on this part-time basis. Even Westbrook could hope to find some men who would work under these conditions, especially those who own smaller properties that do not keep them fully occupied.

The other action that might enhance the efficiency of using permanent part-time in this manner is to make the lunch period less labour-intensive, especially in John Oxley and Westbrook. Youth could prepare a cut lunch on most days, and not have to return to the wing or section. Lunch periods could then be supervised more efficiently. This would also be more "normal" for youth of these ages.

The overall cost saving potential of permanent part-time is difficult to quantify separately, but contributes significantly to the savings in the scenario outlined for John Oxley in Appendix I.

#### Recommendation 23:

That the Department of Family Services have the position of Youth Worker approved as one which is open to appointment on a part-time basis, and seek a variation to the Youth Workers award to this effect.



#### 6.1.4 Fixed Shifts

A consequence of reduced staffing on midnight shifts is that rotating shifts would be more difficult to organise. There is nothing inherent in the work which makes rotating shifts necessary. In fact, rotating shifts create difficulties for youth workers who attempt to mount programs. They reduce the stability of the direct care environment, when shifts rotate.

While staff would gain from the more settled fixed shifts situation, many will resist such a change. Loss of one week's leave will be one concern. A second is that midnight shift is seen as a "rest" from contact with youth in the other shifts. A third is that staff with families do not want to work an afternoon-evening shift, as this is an important family time.

These concerns can be alleviated to some extent by an arrangement whereby staff can agree to swap shifts by mutual agreement, after they have been on one shift for a given period.

The cost saving of fixed shifts is the extra week per annum that staff in John Oxley and Westbrook would then work. This is equivalent to approximately two positions, about \$50,000 in salaries per annum.

#### Recommendation 24:

That the Department of Family Services withdraw the requirement that Youth Workers work rotating shifts. That this be implemented in conjunction with other staffing initiatives.

#### 6.1.5 Broad Banding

Many youth workers say that there is a limit to the period that people can work in a detention centre environment. The lack of tangible success in working with these youth eventually gets depressing, and this leads to burnout and stress symptoms.

Child Care Officers and management staff who have the opportunity to move onto other things do so after a few years. This lends credence to the claim by youth workers, and is a good argument for broad-banding residential care workers across different types of residential care institutions.

While some people agree that the types of work are too different to be broad banded, there is common ground in the philosophies of normalisation, of individual responsibility taking, and of developing people to cope more effectively with life. Future education of all residential care staff could be made more rigorous, with core subjects common to all, and electives for people specialising in one area. A person wanting to change to a different type of institution could study the relevant electives, as well as undergoing direct training in the different jobs.



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Recommendation 25:

That the Department of Family Services develop education programs for Residential Care Workers, with core competences and skills as well as specialist electives, so that staff can be used in various types of institution, as they choose to study additional electives.

6.1.6 Award Restructuring

The current push towards structural efficiency has given an opportunity to open industrial negotiations on all of the above ideas, as a complete package. Some action can be taken independently, e.g. to increase the use of casuals and to get approval for permanent part-time status under the Public Service Management and Employment Act. A change to fixed shifts appears to be possible under the current award, but would provide most benefit if initiated in conjunction with other structural changes.

Recommendation 26:

That the Department of Family Services pursue award restructuring to achieve structural efficiency, incorporating the award changes proposed in this report.

6.2 PROVISIONS

There is little scope for making additional major cost savings with provisions. This is one budget item that is scrutinised closely in each centre, and the provision of sufficient wholesome food for youth in detention should not be compromised.

Control of food costs is by way of overall budget amounts. A more valid basis for managerial control is a per meal cost, which can be monitored month by month if numbers of meals are recorded. Cleveland does record numbers of meals, and Westbrook was able to calculate approximate meal numbers. Average meal costs for these two centres during the latter part of 1988 were:-

Cleveland	\$1.45
Westbrook	\$1.50

John Oxley was unable to estimate meal costs because of the variable numbers of meals taken in the wings. A running estimate of meals taken in the centre could be taken, to provide average meal costs in the future.

Managerial control of provisions costs could then be based on both budget allocation and per meal costs. The variations to budget caused by fluctuating numbers of youth in residence should be acceptable, provided the per meal costs are maintained at budgeted levels.

Recommendation 27:

That the managerial control of provisions be based upon per meal costs as well as upon the budget allocation.





### 6.3 OTHER COST FACTORS

Most of the moderate cost items have been carefully reviewed by each centre and sensible steps taken to address them.

Electricity costs are high at Cleveland, with continuous air conditioning and an electric kitchen. The most favourable tariff structure is such that costs cannot be saved by shutting down parts of the air conditioning after hours. Some saving may be possible through part-conversion of the kitchen to gas.

#### Recommendation 28:

That Cleveland Youth Centre investigate the costs and savings potential in a partial conversion of the kitchen to gas.

Water bills for each centre have caused some concern. Action taken to date appears to be sufficient to control this cost factor.

Telephone usage in the centres is high. A considerable amount of liaison with other people is necessary for these centres to operate, and youth must be allowed reasonable contact with family. High telephone usage must be accepted as necessary.

Clothing is a cost which is highest at Westbrook. Youth provide their own clothing at other centres. Given the nature of the environment and activities at Westbrook, the issue of clothing to youth is appropriate. If the nature of activities and section organisation changes in the future, it may be feasible for youth to provide their own clothing and achieve the savings that have occurred in other centres.

Uniforms are provided at Westbrook only. Having a distinctive uniform is in keeping with the nature of the centre and the types of activity carried out. This may change in the future as the type of program changes, but at the present time the uniform could be retained.

These uniforms costs approximately \$230 per annum per youth worker compared with \$144 per youth worker for uniform allowance in other centres. The issue of a tie, three trousers and shirts and one pair of shoes each year appears reasonable but the hat might be expected to last more than a year on average. The parka and pullover would often last longer than the two years allowed, and the overcoat could last much longer than five years. Some savings can be made if the hats and coats were replaced on a "worn out" basis.

Savings might be expected in the order of \$4,000 per annum.

#### Recommendation 29:

That hats, parkas, pullovers and overcoats issued to youth workers at Westbrook be replaced on a "worn out" basis, with the worn out item being handed in.



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#### 6.4 OTHER PRACTICES

There are a few practices carried out in certain youth detention centres which are accepted as the norm, and which are not evident from budget items. Some of these have potential for cost savings which have not been realised in efforts to date to reduce costs.

##### 6.4.1 Laundering - John Oxley Youth Centre

All of the linen used by youth is sent to a laundry each week. This incurs direct costs, as well as some hidden costs.

The direct cost of laundering is about \$1,000 per annum.

The indirect cost is in the logistics of gathering, distributing and accounting for the laundry. The two domestic staff spend two days each (week) in sorting and bundling the linen into individual packs, which are changed each week. Considerable effort goes into keeping linen movements recorded, and these records are subject to audit.

By contrast, Cleveland issues linen to each wing, and the youth launder it each week. Handling and tracking costs occur only when worn or damaged linen is replaced in the wing. Wing staff and youth are responsible for their supply of linen and the care of it.

Youth taking responsibility for their own linen is more in line with a philosophy of normalisation and responsibility taking, as well as providing cost savings.

There is conflicting opinion about sanitation with linen laundering, but providing there is little danger of youth using each others sheets (e.g. by numbering them) and provided medical opinion is that they are sufficiently sanitised by washing and exposure to the sun, this saving should be made. Some of the potential saving could be used to increase and upgrade laundry facilities within the centre.

This would take a lot of pressure off the housekeeper, who works long hours, and the domestics who have a demanding cleaning schedule because of the nature of the building. Laundry control is estimated to use up 4.5 person-days per fortnight, i.e. about \$8,000 per annum equivalent.

##### Recommendation 30:

That John Oxley Youth Centre have youth launder their own linen, and that laundry facilities be improved to allow this.

##### 6.4.2 Domestic Staff

Having full time domestic staff in youth detention centres appears to be a tradition left over from earlier times when youth were not expected to take as much responsibility for maintaining their domestic surroundings. One of the arguments for retaining them is that they are useful for doing additional things such as answering telephones, getting morning and afternoon teas, etc.



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This is an example of finding activities to utilise fixed staff resources, rather than resourcing a need in the most efficient manner.

Cleveland Youth Centre obtained a quote to have contract cleaners do the specified cleaning tasks of the domestic. The quotation was for \$6,240.00 per annum. This compares with the salary only of the domestic at \$17,500, giving a direct saving of approximately \$11,000 per annum.

The role of the domestic at Westbrook is similar to that at Cleveland, but with more floor space to cover. Staff argue that they need a domestic available, for things such as when youth track mud into the office and matron's waiting room. This is a further example of staffing for occasional needs. If youth do leave mud on the floor surely they can be expected to take responsibility for cleaning it up.

The potential direct savings from introducing contract cleaning to Westbrook is less than at Cleveland because of the larger floor space and additional travel time to the centre, but could still be in the order of \$7,000 per annum.

The role of domestics at John Oxley is more closely linked with the wings than in other centres. They clean floors and windows within the security areas, do monthly cleaning within wings and help with kitchen duties. In addition, they have large areas of flooring which requires constant, careful maintenance and large areas of glass to keep clean. This role is more difficult to replace by contract and the volume of work would probably justify full time domestic services.

If youth do their own linen, there may be scope for letting some of the cleaning go to contract and reducing the domestic staffing by one.

Domestic staff may be approached under the provisions of the redundancy arrangements, or where it is considered better for a given centre, not replaced as turnover occurs.

#### Recommendation 31:

That each youth detention centre phase out the use of domestics and replace them with contract cleaning services wherever this is the more cost-effective option.

#### 6.4.3 Housekeepers

The roles of housekeepers at John Oxley and Westbrook are exercised at different levels. The John Oxley housekeeper takes a role which is central to the operational management of the centre - actively managing and coordinating cleaning, stores, ordering and deliveries, liaising with the kitchen and now managing children's clothing.



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The Westbrook housekeeper works in a reactive role - ordering things required by the kitchen and other areas, recording store movements and running a message service to Toowoomba. She spends about half of each day in Toowoomba doing deliveries and pickups. She manages the special request purchases for youth, from their pocket money. A previous report on Westbrook apparently recommended that a housekeeper position be established but no copy of this report has been found. It is believed that the intent of this recommendation was that some maternal interest be taken in the welfare of the youth - their food, their cleanliness, their domestic surroundings. The role as currently exercised appears to have too little emphasis on this component.

Some staff have questioned the need for a housekeeper. Certainly, deliveries could be organised for food, goods, mail and other items. The kitchen could manage its own ordering and receiving of deliveries, as could other areas of the centre. This would still leave an important role in relation to the domestic welfare of youth, which could receive more attention than it does at the moment. In doing this, the housekeeper would have a daily presence in the sections, and work in conjunction with the matron on domestic and sanitation standards.

Should this role be fulfilled satisfactorily by youth workers, the position would then become unnecessary. Management could be more confident that this is happening in the spirit of the original recommendation if a number of youth workers are women.

Recommendation 32:

That the role of the housekeeper at Westbrook be directed towards the domestic welfare of youth, and that the use of this position for routine deliveries and messages be replaced with delivery services. That the position be abolished if and when the domestic welfare of youth is being maintained satisfactorily by youth workers in the spirit of the original recommendation to establish the position.

6.4.4 Double Shifts - Westbrook Youth Centre

At present youth workers at Westbrook do a double shift on Mondays from 4.00 p.m. to 12 midnight and on Saturdays from 8.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. The reasoning given for this is that the arrangement allows the most appropriate roster cycle. The management rationale for it is that extra activities can be mounted at these times. On Monday evenings plenty of staff are available so escorts for appointments and special activities in Toowoomba can be organised. On Saturdays more staff are needed to help with sporting activities.

While the capacity to provide for special escorts and activities is important and the sporting activities are a highly desirable tradition, the method of staffing them is based on fixed resources principles. This is not only wasteful of resources, but also reduces the flexibility of activities.





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The number of activities that can be scheduled for Monday evening could not always utilise a full extra shift. Trying the schedule activities for a Monday night shift must mean that some youth do not get a chance to attend activities which are only held on other evenings - a reduction in flexibility.

The sporting period on a Saturday is normally after chores are completed, from about 9.30 a.m. until 11.30 a.m. An extra shift is brought on, at penalty rates, for an activity which usually lasts two hours.

The sporting program varies, and need not always require a full extra shift, even for the two hours. It could sometimes conceivably require more than a full shift staffing for this two hours.

Working a full double shift also means that no extra resources are available for an occasional sporting activity on a Sunday, which would allow a more flexible sporting program.

This type of staffing is the reverse of sensible management practice. In effect, Westbrook is staffing to a certain level in these periods, and then finding needs that can be filled by this level of staffing. The better approach is to identify the need first, then staff to meet it. For example, the weekend sporting activities should be decided, to meet reasonable needs and expectations of youth in the centre.

Staffing levels should then be calculated to support these activities, for the period they are required. This of course could happen more easily with the types of industrial/restructuring initiatives mentioned in this report. However, in many instances even two hours of overtime for the required number of staff could have been a more efficient option.

Westbrook staff believe that entering vigorous team sports with youth at the weekend is good for relationships and tends to dissipate tensions between youth and staff built up during the week. For this reason they do not believe that "outsiders" should be used to undertake the sporting activities on a casual basis. While this point is accepted as valid, there appears to be no reason why a few casuals with particular sporting interests or expertise should not be included. Alternatively, casuals could be used for some other activities within the centre and so release more youth workers for sporting activities.

The most efficient mechanism for providing sport, which would also increase the effectiveness of the overall program, would be to have some permanent part-time staff who specialise in sport, and who work with youth during the week as well as on weekends. This would boost the sporting program immensely.

A further point about these double shifts is that they are used to take time off in lieu (see section 6.4.5 below). That is, they are recognised as not actually needing the staffing allocated, as staff are encouraged to take time off at these times.



The direct cost of carrying the double shifts is \$129,000 per annum. \$56,000 of this is for Monday nights and \$73,000 for Saturdays. A significant part of this cost could be saved in the short term through the use of casuals and overtime.

Recommendation 33:

That the double shift arrangements at Westbrook be discontinued, and other means be found to staff sporting and other activities as required.

6.4.5 Time Off in Lieu

All three centres have a system of gaining credit of overtime worked, to take off in lieu of overtime payment. While these systems are beneficial for both staff and management in the flexibility that they provide, some significant differences exist between the Westbrook system and that at other centres.

Other centres credit staff with time on an hour-for-hour basis, with an agreed maximum for an overnight field trip. Westbrook credits staff at the applicable penalty rate (e.g. 1.5 hours for an hour) and is more generous with overnight field trips.

In addition, much of the time credit is taken off when double shifts occur on Mondays and Saturdays. That is, they take time off when that number of staff would rarely be needed on the shift anyway.

The net result is that the centre is paying full overtime rates for the overtime worked, and it is being shown as work done on a Monday or a Saturday. The only advantage to this is that funds come out of salaries rather than contingencies (and this distinction is supposedly to be less relevant now).

Time off in lieu is of advantage to management when it is hour-for-hour and when staff take time off during unpredictable lulls in activity.

Recommendation 34:

That the Department of Family Services give departmental approval for a uniform system of time-off-in-lieu for youth detention centres, based on the systems in use at John Oxley and Cleveland Youth Centres.

6.4.6 Sick Leave

The level of sick leave at all centres is moderately high. Several reasons for this have been postulated, including an ageing workforce, the stressful nature of the work and reaction to the redundancies which have occurred.

While all of these are likely factors, the over-riding impression is of a workforce which is unconcerned about taking sick leave because there is always someone to take their place, and of a management which accepts the level of sick leave as something about which they can do nothing. There is insufficient evidence to suggest that feather bedding is occurring.



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Paying out of sick leave on retirement or resignation has been proposed, but this is rejected on the grounds that it just postpones the problem and is the ultimate resignation to the notion that management cannot do anything about the level of sick leave taken.

Management can address sick leave through developing an awareness and expectation in staff that sick leave should not be taken for granted. Staff who take sick leave can be asked about their illness in a fair and straightforward manner, rather than just accepting the paperwork without question. Persistent sick leave can be analysed and discussed with individual staff members, to see if there is any scope for doing things to help or ease the health situation. Staff in general can be reminded of the expectation that sick leave is for when they are too sick to attend work. Staff with particular health problems can be given some work flexibility and latitude where this is appropriate. Sick leave levels can be made public within a centre, and goals set to reduce them.

This approach, together with a fair treatment of staff and action to address possible morale-related influences on sick leave, can be the basis of a strategy to reduce the level of sick leave taken.

Recommendation 35:

That each centre develop a positive strategy for changing staff expectations about the taking of sick leave.

#### 6.4.7 Grain Production - Westbrook

As mentioned in recommendation L, grain production should be phased out. This will result in potential savings of about \$10,000 per annum in previous losses, the release of one youth worker for other activities and some capital returns (perhaps \$5,000-\$10,000) on the rationalisation of tractor sizes and numbers on the farm.

#### 6.5 Efficiency Summary

The potential areas for increasing efficiency are shown in Table II. The greatest efficiencies come through award restructuring and a commitment by management to manage resources very flexibly.



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Table II Efficiency Chart

Potential Efficiency	Possible Savings
1. Casual staff	varies - assess in conjunction with other initiatives (see Appendix I)
2. Close-call	\$225,000 per annum, less call-out payments and capital costs
3. Permanent Part-time	varies - assess in conjunction with other initiatives (see Appendix I)
4. Fixed Shifts	approximately \$50,000 per annum
5. Convert Cleveland kitchen to gas	minor
6. Westbrook uniform items replaced as worn out	\$4,000 per annum (estimated)
7. John Oxley laundry costs	\$1,000 per annum direct, \$8,000 per annum in staff time, less capital costs of machines
8. Domestics - contract cleaning	\$18,000 per annum, possibly more in conjunction with (7)
9. Disband double shifts- Westbrook	\$129,000 per annum, less the cost of alternative staffing of sport and escorts
10. Sick leave reduced	cannot be estimated
11. Cease grain productions- Westbrook	\$10,00 per annum fewer losses \$5,000-\$10,000 capital liquidation





APPENDIX I

POSSIBLE STAFFING CHANGES - JOHN OXLEY YOUTH CENTRE

CURRENT STAFFING

<u>Time</u>	<u>Staff</u>
<u>Weekdays</u> (approximate times)	
11-7	3YW 1SYW
7-1.30	6YW 1SYW 1YW (floater) 1 Yardman 2YW (P)
1.30-3.00	6YW 1SYW 2YW (floater) 1 Yardman 2YW (P)
3-9.30	6YW 1SYW 1YW (floater)
9.30-11	6YW 1SYW

POTENTIAL STAFFING

<u>Time</u>	<u>Staff</u>
11-7	1YW 1SYW + 2 close call
7-9	3YW 3PPT 1SYW
9-3	3YW 1SYW 1YW (P-yard) 3YW (P) 2YW (programs) casual as needed
3-5	3YW 1SYW 1YW (P-yard) 3YW (P) 2YW (programs) casual as needed
9-11	3YW 1SYW

Total Staffing 31 person-shifts

Total Staffing 26.25 person-shifts  
(27, including some use of casuals)

NOTE: Additional capacity of 4 person-shifts, with an increase in staff numbers dedicated to program activities (less the cost of close-call and call-out)



<u>Time</u>	<u>Staff</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Staff</u>
<u>Weekends</u>			
11-7	3YW 1SYW	11-7	1YW 1SYW + 2 close call
7-3	6YW 1SYW 1YW (floater) overlapping	7-9	3YW 3PPT 1SYW
		9-3	3YW 2YW (programs) 1PPT 1SYW casual as needed
		3-5	3YW 2YW (programs) 1PPT 1SYW casual as needed
3-11	6YW 1SYW 1YW (floater) overlapping	5-9	3YW 3PPT 1SYW
		9-11	3YW 1SYW
<u>Total Staffing</u>	20 person-shifts	<u>Total Staffing</u>	15 person-shifts (plus casuals)

NOTE: An additional capacity of nearly 5 person-shifts, at penalty rates (less the cost of close-call and call-outs).

- KEY:
- YW Youth Worker (residential)
  - YW(P) Youth Worker (practical)
  - YW(programs) Youth Worker (residential) who concentrates on providing or supporting program activities
  - SYW Senior Youth Worker
  - PYW Principal Youth Worker
  - PPT Youth Worker (residential) employed on a permanent part-time basis

