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Escapees still on the run

TWO of the youths who escaped from the John Oxley Youth Centre on Saturday were still missing last night.

Oxley police Sgt Peter Moy said police found the other five youths near the Oxley High School, at 11am yesterday.

"We had a number of calls from the public and made a sweep of the area and found them. They were just on the run, trying to keep dry," Sgt Moy said.

The seven youths, aged between 13 and 15, escaped from the centre at about 7.30pm on Saturday after inmates attacked staff.

A spokesman for Family Services minister Anne Warner said the centre had administrative problems and was overcrowded.

"The place needs a real clean up and it will get it. There have been on-going problems of a similar nature since the riot in March last year," he said.

Ms Warner visited the centre yesterday and had called for an urgent report on the centre's problems.

"We've known of the problems at the centre for a long time and when we took over the ministry our first step was to appoint a new manager which we hoped would solve the problems. But problems do still exist," the spokesman said.

The trouble on Saturday night began when three youths turned on showers and the steam set off fire alarms.

"The staff were in the process of controlling the situation when one (youth) said they'd been injured and that fired them all up and they attacked staff."

The five youths who were found were being held at the Wilson Youth Centre, at Wilston, Sgt Moy said.

— LYNDAL PEARCE