

# Food and Nutrition Inspection Report

Inspection of Youth Custodial Services in  
Tasmania, 2020



**Produced by the Tasmanian Custodial Inspector**

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## From the Custodial Inspector

The purpose of the Custodial Inspector is to provide independent, proactive, preventative and systemic oversight of custodial centres. A custodial centre is defined as a prison within the meaning of the *Corrections Act 1997*, and a detention centre within the meaning of the *Youth Justice Act 1997*.

The *Custodial Inspector Act 2016* requires me to carry out a mandatory inspection of each custodial centre at least once every three years and to report on my findings and recommendations to the responsible Minister and Parliament.

To meet my legislative obligations using the limited resources available, the Custodial Inspectorate undertakes themed inspections of custodial centres focussing on particular inspection standards. At the end of a three year cycle, all aspects of custodial centres will have been inspected against the entire set of standards.

I am required by section 15 of the Act to prepare a report to the Minister outlining my findings and recommendations in relation to each mandatory inspection. I report directly to the Minister responsible for the custodial centre and the responsible Minister is required to table a copy of the my report in each House of Parliament. In this way, the findings and recommendations relating to inspections become a public record. After tabling, all inspection reports are published on [my website](https://www.custodialinspector.tas.gov.au/)<sup>1</sup>.

On 29 September 2020, an unannounced inspection against the Food and Nutrition standards was undertaken at the Ashley Youth Detention Centre (AYDC). This is the second time this suite of inspection standards has been considered, the first inspection being undertaken in 2017, with findings and recommendations forming part of my *Inspection of Ashley Youth Detention Centre in Tasmania, 2017: Health and Wellbeing Inspection Report* (my 2017 Inspection Report). The Department of Communities Tasmania's response to that report indicated that AYDC had commenced implementation of recommendations immediately following the 2017 inspection, which was pleasing.

The inspection undertaken in 2020 considered the Food and Nutrition theme only, and I now present this report detailing the findings of and the recommendations resulting from the inspection.

Prior to publication of this report, the Department of Communities Tasmania was consulted and invited to correct any factual inaccuracies in it and to provide a written response to the recommendations it makes. Appendix 2 details that response.

Richard Connock  
**Custodial Inspector**

August 2021

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.custodialinspector.tas.gov.au/>



## Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Ms Ngaire Hobbins, Dietitian and Nutrition Consultant, who consulted on this inspection and joined the inspection team to supplement their internal expertise. Ms Hobbins' consultant report is at Appendix 1.

I sincerely thank Ms Hobbins for her expert advice and assistance, which has added greatly to the work of my office.

Acknowledgment and appreciation is also extended to all staff at the Ashley Youth Detention Centre who supported the inspection. The inspection team, including Ms Hobbins, noted that all the staff were very accommodating of the unannounced inspection and there had been a positive change in culture since the 2017 inspection. The inspection team also reported to me that enthusiastic engagement by AYDC staff with the young people in their custody was apparent.

The inspection team also noted the commitment of the catering staff at AYDC to the wellbeing of the young people in detention. It was evident that they took dietary requirements and food allergies very seriously, and were more than willing to change the menu to accommodate individual needs.

I would also like to thank the young people at AYDC who shared their experiences with the inspection team.



## Executive summary

AYDC is managed by Child and Youth Services (CYS), an operational unit of the Department of Communities Tasmania. CYS is responsible for providing care and custody, at various levels of security, for young people detained and remanded in custody in Tasmania.<sup>2</sup>

Relevant to the Food and Nutrition inspection the inspection standards for youth custodial services cover themes such as:

- health education and the promotion of healthy lifestyles;
- the provision of nutritious food and drink; and
- the availability of health food items for young people to purchase at their discretion.

For the most part, compliance with the standards was considered through observation by the inspection team during an onsite visit to Ashley Youth Detention Centre (AYDC) on 29 September 2020.

A number of evidence sources were used to assess AYDC against the inspection standards during the inspection. These included:

- meetings with Centre management;
- individual interviews carried out with staff;
- discussions with young people in detention;
- review of documentation; and
- observation by inspectors and the expert consultant.

The key findings of the inspection are summarised below:

- Generally, the food provided to AYDC residents is of a sufficient quality, quantity and variety to meet their nutritional needs, including those requiring vegetarian, religious, cultural and special diets;
- Healthy lifestyles are promoted throughout the Centre by means of classes and programs, but should be supplemented by specific nutritional education for staff and residents; and
- For the most part, AYDC had implemented the recommendations made in respect of Food and Nutrition in my 2017 Inspection Report.

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<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this report, a reference to the term 'detainee' and 'resident' means young people that are lawfully detained in custody at AYDC and includes both those that are remanded and those that are sentenced.



## Summary of recommendations

It is recommended that Communities Tasmania:

1. Implements at AYDC all recommendations made in the Nutrition Solutions Tasmania 2019 review (see page 9 of this report), especially the actions outlined in 7.2 and 7.3 of that report.
2. Implements all recommendations and suggestions offered in the University of Tasmania report *Explore the Ashley Youth Detention Centre Food Environment* published in September 2020 (see page 9 of this report).
3. Engages an accredited practising dietitian to offer education on nutrition and healthy food choices alongside existing programs to staff and residents at AYDC.
4. To determine individual nutrition requirements for residents at AYDC, and in conjunction with an accredited practising dietitian, reviews resident food intake over a number of days to gain an understanding of intakes against activity levels and body weight.
5. Engages a dietitian to provide nutritional education to AYDC residents with respect to healthy choices on the AYDC canteen and promote positive eating behaviours to young people.
6. Regularly surveys AYDC residents with regard to their preferences for food items on the AYDC canteen.



## About Ashley Youth Detention Centre

CYS is responsible for providing care and custody for young people detained and remanded in custody at AYDC.

AYDC is Tasmania's only youth detention facility<sup>3</sup> and is located near Deloraine in northern Tasmania, approximately 230 kilometres from Hobart. The Centre is situated on approximately 36.5 hectares of land, some of which is run as a small farm.

AYDC can accommodate up to 50 young offenders of all genders aged from ten to 18 years, spread across four accommodation units. The Centre is staffed 24 hours per day to cater for the number of young people in detention at any particular time.

The *Youth Justice Act 1997* requires AYDC to rehabilitate young people in conflict with the law, and to protect the community from illegal behaviour whilst providing secure care for young people detained or remanded by the courts. Rehabilitation outcomes may be improved through the provision of programs in accordance with the principles contained in the Act.

There are a variety of recreational facilities for young people at AYDC including:

- an indoor gym with basketball court and fitness area;
- an outdoor swimming pool which is open seasonally;
- an outdoor basketball court;
- cricket nets; and
- a barbeque area.

Young people at AYDC come from various backgrounds and generally face major social and developmental challenges. Risky behaviours are common and most have experienced trauma, neglect, mental health issues, physical abuse or substance misuse.

In 2019-20, on an average day 69% of young people in detention were on remand; that is awaiting the outcome of their court matter – or found guilty and awaiting sentencing. Over two in five (46%) young people in detention were serving a sentence<sup>4</sup> and <sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The *Youth Justice Act 1997* provides that by notice published in the Gazette, the Minister may establish or abolish detention centres, or declare premises to be or not be detention centres. In addition to AYDC, the Minister has declared the Hobart and Launceston Reception Prisons, Risdon Prison and the Ron Barwick Prison to be detention centres for young people. In practice, it would be extremely rare for a young person to be detained for any significant length of time in an adult custodial centre.

<sup>4</sup> Proportions might not sum to 100% because some young people were in sentenced and unsentenced detention on the same day.

<sup>5</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Youth Justice in Tasmania, 2019-20*.

<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/youth-justice/youth-justice-in-australia-2019-20/contents/state-and-territory-fact-sheets/tasmania>



Over the 5 years to 2019–20, on an average day in Tasmania the number of young people in detention rose by 68%, and the rate increased from 1.4 to 2.8 per 10,000 young people.<sup>6</sup>

Studies have found that young people on remand have:

- poorer mental and physical health;
- higher occurrence of suicidal thoughts and behaviours;
- more family difficulties and unstable housing;
- poorer school attendance; and
- more emotional and behavioural problems interfering with schooling and social activities;

than most young people in the general community.

To meet the needs of these young people services at AYDC are provided by a range of organisations including Correctional Primary Health Services, which is responsible for healthcare provision, the Department of Education which is responsible for the Ashley School, and other relevant government and non-government organisations.

At the time of this inspection, AYDC was finalising details of a redevelopment which will see aesthetic changes to the Centre's entry, a new multi purpose staff training facility, and implementation of additional security measures such as metal detectors. The redevelopment also includes a new visits area for family and friends to visit residents, and the inspection team was advised that this will result in the ability to provide longer visits with options such as barbeques and picnics. With respect to the impact of the redevelopment on accommodation units, the inspection team was advised that options for changes to these areas were under consideration.

Relevant to the food and nutrition inspection, the inspection team was advised that the store building where canteen items are warehoused would soon be removed, with a new store to be built outside the AYDC perimeter fence. To prepare for the relocation, most of the store and canteen items had been moved into one half of the building and the number of items in the store was significantly lower than at the previous inspection. A container outside the perimeter fence was being used to store any overflow of items from the current store.

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<sup>6</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Youth Justice in Tasmania, 2019-20*.  
<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/youth-justice/youth-justice-in-australia-2019-20/contents/state-and-territory-fact-sheets/tasmania>



## Inspection methodology

Inspection provides independent, external evaluation including analysis of areas that require improvement. It is based on gathering a range of evidence that is evaluated against an inspection framework.

All inspections of custodial centres are conducted against the Custodial Inspector's published inspection standards, which are based on international human rights standards, and cover matters considered essential to the safe, respectful and purposeful treatment of people in custody.

The inspection standards specify the criteria for inspection. During the Food and Nutrition inspection, a number of sources of evidence were used to assess AYDC against the standards. These sources of evidence are outlined in the Executive Summary:

After an inspection is completed, inspection reports are tabled in Parliament by the Minister responsible for the custodial centre. Prior to tabling, Communities Tasmania is consulted with, and invited to correct any factual inaccuracies in the report.

Because this inspection was unannounced, my office contacted senior management at the Department of Communities post inspection to invite the Department to provide a submission or briefing to the inspection team in relation to the themed inspection. I indicated that my inspection team had obtained sufficient information and documentation during the onsite inspection, and did not have any specific questions or information requests for the Department. The Department responded that on this occasion, it would not provide a submission but would respond to recommendations made in this report. The Department's response is at Appendix 2.

### How will the inspection team make judgements?

The inspection team will ensure that their judgements are:

- secure - based on sufficient evidence;
- first-hand - based on direct observation of processes, detainees and staff<sup>7</sup>;
- reliable - based on the criteria in the inspection standards;
- valid - accurately reflecting what is achieved and provided; and
- corporate - findings reflect the collective view of the inspection team.

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<sup>7</sup> First-hand wherever possible, and if not a direct observations the information relied on will be fact checked and confirmed by another reliable source.



## Inspection standards

The *Inspection Standards for Youth Custodial Centres in Tasmania* provide the structure for reviewing and assessing the performance of custodial centres in relation to the treatment of, and conditions for, young people in detention in Tasmania.

The standards were developed taking into account the range of relevant international treaties and covenants, the *Australasian Juvenile Justice Administrators Juvenile Justice Standard 2009*, and the Australian Children's Commissioners' and Guardians' *Statement on Conditions and Treatment of Youth Justice Detention November 2017*.

The standards are based on the *Inspection Standards for Juvenile Justice Custodial Services in New South Wales*. I consulted with the Department of Communities Tasmania and the (then) Interim Commissioner for Children and Young People and his staff when drafting and finalising the inspection standards.

Independent monitoring and assessment is important to ensure custodial services are meeting standards. An independent perspective can identify issues – both shortcomings requiring improvement and strengths that can be better utilised – that may not be obvious to the custodial centre, thereby providing a continuous improvement framework.

The inspection standards are publicly available on the [Custodial Inspector's website](https://www.custodialinspector.tas.gov.au/)<sup>8</sup>. The inspection standards relevant to this report are at Appendix 3.

The findings of the inspection team in respect of the Food and Nutrition inspection standards are summarised below.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.custodialinspector.tas.gov.au/>



# 1 Food and nutrition

## Inspection standards 9.6 and 9.11

Generally, the expectation of the inspection standards is that food provided at AYDC:

- is of a sufficient quality, quantity and variety to meet the nutritional needs of AYDC residents;
- is hygienically stored and prepared to meet relevant food safety guidelines;
- meets the needs of young people requiring vegetarian, religious, cultural and special diets; and
- is provided at reasonable intervals and served at times consistent with those generally observed in the community.

The standards also require that:

- healthy lifestyles are promoted across the Centre by the provisions of information and education regarding healthy living and the importance of diet and exercise; and
- advice from dietitians or nutritionists is regularly sought to update the menu.

To assess performance against these standards, the inspection team:

- inspected AYDC's main kitchen and stores;
- appraised the kitchen facilities in accommodation units;
- reviewed AYDC's lunch and dinner menus; and
- considered breakfast provisions and arrangements.

Ms Hobbins' assessment of AYDC's performance against the inspection standards is set out at page 10 of her report at Appendix 1.

## Other reviews

Inspection standard 9.11.4 requires that advice from dietitians and nutritionists is regularly sought to update the menu. It was pleasing to hear at the inspection of two recent reviews in relation to Food and Nutrition at AYDC:

1. a review of the AYDC menu was carried out in 2019 by Nutrition Solutions Tasmania. Suggestions for improvement such as the reduction of bread-based meals and deep fried foods were included in that review; and
2. Nutrition students from UTAS Launceston campus also examined the AYDC menus for the paper *Explore the Ashley Youth Detention Centre Food Environment* published in September 2020.



At the time of the inspection, the UTAS report had not been delivered. Centre management indicated it would support the recommendations in both reports, and it was willing to work towards implementing them. The UTAS report was delivered in the week following the onsite inspection.

Ms Hobbins has recommended that:

- all recommendations made in the Nutrition Solutions Tasmania report <sup>9</sup> should be adopted; and
- with regard to the UTAS report, that AYDC closely consider all recommendations<sup>10</sup> and suggestions in that report with a view to implementation where practical.

### Access to food

Young people at AYDC primarily access food through the main kitchen. The main kitchen prepares lunch and evening meals, and provides supplies for breakfasts and snacks to the accommodation units. Young people can supplement this food with purchases from the canteen.

For breakfast options, fresh fruit, yoghurt, cereal and bread are always available in the units. For snacks, smoothies can be made at any time with breakfast provisions, but staff and residents advised that the usual snack is toast with spreads. Ham and cheese is also provided to the units each Thursday so that residents can make toasted sandwiches, and once those ingredients are used they are not replenished until the following Thursday.

Residents indicated that dessert was provided three nights per week, and an evening 'slab' comprising a variety of cheese, dried fruits, seasonal fresh fruit, cakes, slices and biscuits is provided for supper each night. On Sunday evenings, the 'slab' is a fruit platter.

### Nutrition

Generally, meals provided at AYDC are of good nutritional value and the menu planning aligns with dietary guidelines for younger people. There is sufficient variety of food available, both from the menu and from the snacks available. At the time of the inspection, AYDC was operating a nine week menu and residents mostly reported they were satisfied with the food provided.

At the onsite inspection, lunch was being prepared and consisted of two chicken burgers as a standard serve. Ms Hobbins highlighted that one of the main issues was the portion size of the meal, and this was reflected more widely in the menu. She indicated that some AYDC residents need the amount provided, but for younger boys or smaller-framed girls, there is potential for excessive kilojoule consumption. To improve this situation, the reports by Nutrition Solutions Tasmania and UTAS recommended the option of salads, and Centre

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<sup>9</sup> See Appendix 5

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix 4



management indicated to the inspection team that it was supportive of this recommendation. This was also supported by health staff at AYDC.

The young people at AYDC also indicated they like salads when offered by the main kitchen, with some indicating they would like the option to choose a salad with a protein option if they did not like the main menu item, especially in the warmer seasons. At the time of the inspection, residents indicated they make toasted sandwiches if they do not like the main menu item.

The UTAS and Nutrition Solutions Tasmania reports highlighted the evening 'slab' as a concern. In particular, some of the 'slab' items were noted as being nutrient poor, and residents had indicated they'd like healthier options for 'slab' and snacks at other times.

Other concerns highlighted by Nutrition Solutions Tasmania, and evident at the onsite inspection, were:

- *Discretionary foods are often provided at lunch, despite these being made on site they are often energy dense and normalizes these types of offerings as part of a regular healthy diet, which they are not*
  - *This could be improved by reducing the amount of deep fried food provided and replacing with pan fired or oven roasted alternatives*
- *Fish is only offered as a main meal once per week*
  - *Increase the number of fish based main meals*
- *A large amount of bread is consumed in the housing units*
  - *This could be improved by providing smaller quantities more often thereby reducing over consumption on some days*
  - *Switch to high fibre white bread rather than plain white or phase out white bread altogether*

### Food safety and hygiene

The inspection team noted that AYDC met all requirements with respect to local government regulations and food safety standards. Additionally, all catering staff were appropriately trained and qualified to undertake their roles, and all held current food safe accreditation.

### Meal times and presentation

The expectations of inspection standards 9.11.1, 9.11.2 and 9.11.3 are that young people are provided with three meals per day at reasonable intervals, at times consistent with those generally observed in the community, and in a communal setting.

The onsite inspection and consideration of the daily schedule indicated that meals were provided at regular intervals with breakfast being available in the unit at any time prior to programs commencing around 9am, lunch being served between 12pm and 12:30pm, and evening meals being delivered after programs were completed at 5:45pm.



Some residents indicated that they would like a healthier morning tea option at around 10:30am, to replace their current options for snacks of toast, fruit and yoghurt or smoothies which are available in their accommodation units. Other residents indicated that they do not eat morning tea at all. It was also noted that many of the residents at the inspection indicated that they do not eat breakfast, either in the community or while in detention, and it may be that those young people are looking for better options at the later time of morning tea. In this regard, consideration of the needs of individual young people would be appropriate when determining whether any additional options will be provided.

*My Inspection of Ashley Youth Detention Centre in Tasmania, 2017: Health and Wellbeing Inspection Report* made the following recommendation:

**Recommendation 13:**

*Consider moving dining back to a central area for evening meals so that kitchen staff could work on presentation and thus reduce wastage.*

AYDC staff and young people reported to the inspection team that this recommendation had been implemented, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the decision was made to reinstate the arrangement that was in place when I inspected in 2017. That is, evening meals were being delivered to units in a bain-marie, to be dished up after delivery.

Such restrictions in response to the pandemic are understandable, though residents expressed their desire to return to the communal dining setting, and their preference for meals being plated over the bain-marie dish up. Staff indicated that residents generally don't like 'wet' dishes such as are usually delivered in a bain-marie, and residents indicated that they would prefer meals of meat and vegetables or fish and salad. As I noted in my 2017 Inspection Report, the presentation of meals served from a bain-marie is usually poor, and would most likely discourage intake. AYDC management indicated that the Centre would return to mostly communal eating as soon as possible.

Youth workers are provided with lunch and evening meals so that they can eat with young people and provide a communal setting experience, whether in the accommodation units or in the dining room. There were some concerns expressed by staff about the safe movement of staff and young people between the dining area and units in the evenings, particularly in the colder months when it is dark earlier, however AYDC management indicated that there were guidelines in place to facilitate safe movement in these circumstances.

### Special diets and meals out of regular hours

Inspection standard 9.6.8 specifically requires that special diets such as vegetarian, religious and cultural diets should be accommodated. This also include diets to accommodate food allergies and intolerances.

The inspection of the main kitchen indicated that AYDC could accommodate special diets, and catering staff kept good records with respect to allergies and intolerances for residents. There was flexibility in the menu to accommodate changes to meet dietary needs. Catering



and health staff reported that the kitchen had accommodated lactose free, gluten free, vegetarian and Halal diets as well as diets for residents with allergies to egg, peanut and tomato.

Inspection standard 9.11.5 specifically relates to young people in transit or at court, with the requirement that they do not miss out on main meals. In these circumstances, AYDC makes arrangements for the provision of meals for young people going to court, with the meals being appropriately stored and taken on the transport to court. For young people arriving at AYDC after hours, a meal is always arranged when the Centre is advised of the upcoming admission and where it is not possible to have a meal ready for their arrival, a snack pack is provided.

Inspection standard 9.11.6 relates to pregnant young women and nursing mothers, with the expectation that they will receive appropriate extra food supplies. Whilst this was not applicable at this inspection, the flexibility in the menu outlined above could accommodate these requirements, with input from relevant health services at AYDC.

### Health promotion, education and programs

Inspection standards 9.6.1, 9.6.2 and 9.6.3 relate to the promotion of healthy lifestyles through programs, recreation and structured education sessions delivered to an individual or appropriate mix of young people.

At the time of the inspection, barista training and cooking classes were being run, including basic baking. Therapeutic gardens are also in place at AYDC and provide opportunity for case management staff to work one on one with young people.

The delivery of cooking and barista classes had been interrupted during the pandemic but had recommenced with participants working towards cooking a lunch for 10 people. Health staff reported that the cooking classes really assisted young people to expand their palate. The inspection team was provided the example of one young person who only ate toast and Weetbix, but was open to more variety in foods and flavours after participating in the cooking classes.

Both the cooking classes and barista training cover basic food safety and hygiene awareness, and all staff reported that these classes provided good life skills.

While there is no doubt as to the value of these classes, my 2017 Inspection Report highlighted that there was no coordinated approach or particular resource responsible for teaching residents about nutrition and healthy food choices and this inspection highlighted that the situation remains the same. The Nutrition Solutions Tasmania report indicated that:

*Staff and therefore residents would benefit from nutrition specific training*

...

*...having age specific and appropriate nutrition information available to the residents may influence them to choose healthy options and have a basic understanding of good nutrition when they return to the community.*



Fitness and losing weight is a focus for many of the residents at AYDC and catering and health staff reported that the fitness training sessions offered at the onsite gym were very popular, and the facilitators have significant influence on the dietary choices young people make. In this regard, Centre management indicated that to follow on from the UTAS report and recognising the link with food and nutrition, the university will be reviewing sport and recreation at AYDC in 2021.

There are real opportunities for appropriate nutritional education for staff and residents to link in with the gym sessions, cooking classes, barista training and the therapeutic garden and these opportunities should be explored by AYDC.

### Opportunities for self catering

The cooking and barista classes in place at AYDC also provide the opportunity for young people to cater for themselves where appropriate, in line with the expectation of inspection standard 9.11.7.

There are kitchen facilities in all accommodation units, where breakfasts and snacks can be prepared. Staff and residents reported that there was some inconsistency with self catering, with some youth workers allowing residents at appropriate levels on AYDC's behaviour development system to go into the unit kitchens to prepare their own snacks, where other youth workers would not. I understand that there may be situations where risks are posed when young people are allowed in the kitchen, but where the risks have been assessed to be acceptable, young people should be allowed the opportunity to self cater.

### Recommendations

It is recommended that Communities Tasmania:

1. Implements at AYDC all recommendations made in the Nutrition Solutions Tasmania 2019 review, especially the actions outlined in 7.2 and 7.3 of that report.
2. Implements all recommendations and suggestions offered in the UTAS report *Explore the Ashley Youth Detention Centre Food Environment* published in September 2020.
3. Engages an accredited practising dietitian to offer education on nutrition and healthy food choices alongside existing programs to staff and residents at AYDC.
4. To determine individual nutrition requirements for residents at AYDC, and in conjunction with an accredited practising dietitian, reviews resident food intake over a number of days to gain an understanding of intakes against activity levels and body weight.



## 2 Canteen

### Inspection standard 9.13.9

Inspection standard 9.13 states:

*Young people can purchase a suitable range of goods at reasonable prices to meet their needs and can do so safely.*

The AYDC operates a canteen system for residents, which includes food and drink items, as well as toiletries. Residents are required to submit their canteen orders by Friday morning, with the orders being filled and delivered that afternoon. The availability of canteen items for AYDC residents is linked to their placement on the AYDC behaviour development system (BDS), which consists of four colour levels, red, orange, yellow and green with red representing the poorest behaviour and green the best. The aim of the BDS is to improve the behaviour of young people and when their behaviour improves, to move them through the colour levels where they can earn extra privileges, including having more options available on canteen.

Specifically in relation to food and drink, inspection standard 9.13.9 states:

*Healthy food items are available and actively promoted in support of a healthy lifestyle.*

My 2017 Inspection Report noted:

*...the range of discretionary foods available at the canteen is not extensive and purchases that are high in sugar or salt and low in nutritional value foods including confectionery, chips and similar snack foods are limited to two items in each weekly canteen order. There are, however, limited healthy food options for residents to purchase.*

The following recommendation was made in my 2017 Inspection Report:

**Recommendation 12:**

*Introduce a "traffic light" system to categorise foods and drinks on the canteen lists according to their nutritional value and levels of energy, saturated fat, fibre, sugar and salt.*

AYDC management indicated to the inspection team that the canteen had moved to a traffic light system following the Nutrition Solutions Tasmania report, but significant change was still required with regard to the options available. Healthier options and alternatives were still required and while limits had been placed on the purchase of certain items, specifically Coca Cola, and other items such as Powerade had been deleted, staff were mindful that there needed to be balance in allowing young people to have some choice with respect to canteen.



The inspection team noted that the items available from canteen were significantly less than those available at the 2017 inspection, and store staff indicated that this was as a result of both the implementation of the traffic light system and the Centre redevelopment, which would see the store moved outside the AYDC perimeter fence.

Ms Hobbins noted that the overhaul of the canteen system and continuing improvements in reducing excessive use of unhealthy food and drink incentives are warranted, and this was supported by the UTAS report. That report referred to the [National Healthy School Canteens Project's Guidelines](#) for healthy foods and drinks supplied in school canteens<sup>11</sup> which is used broadly across school canteens in Australia and sets out the traffic light system. The guidelines outline three menu categories encompassing three categories of menu items:

- Gold menu – made up of 60% green foods and 40% amber foods;
- Silver menu – made up of 80% green and amber foods and 20% red foods;
- Bronze menu – made up of 75% green and amber foods and 25% red foods;
- Green foods – always on the canteen menu;
- Amber foods – to be selected carefully; and
- Red foods –not recommended on the canteen menu.

The UTAS report's review of the AYDC canteen menu noted:

*Looking at the AYDC canteen menu for the residents, from the first glance it is apparent that 99% of the menu is made up of discretionary food choices with water being the only healthy alternative. The menu is high in sugar and lacks any form of nutrients considered to be good such as fruits or vegetables meeting neither the Gold, Silver or Bronze canteen standard as it contains no fruits or vegetable fillings, has more than 6 Red items... and more than 3 confectionery lines. Whilst, this canteen menu raises concerns for the resident's health of AYDC, it is an issue that can be improved in transition to meet the Bronze standard through implementing change from Red foods to Amber foods and hopefully to Green foods in the future.*

Residents themselves indicated their dislike of the canteen items because those items contained too much sugar, but the UTAS report noted that AYDC residents had little understanding of what healthy food choices look like. There is real opportunity to use the canteen to educate and promote healthy lifestyles and positive eating behaviours to young people.

The need for nutritional education, as outlined in Health Promotion in 1 Food and Nutrition above, extends to the choices young people make from the AYDC canteen, as well as having the ability to provide their views on existing options. Such education would also assist young people expressing their preferences for healthier options and being specific about what those options should be. In this regard, the UTAS report indicates that the preferences of young people should be regularly surveyed to take into account the changing Centre population and their varying wants and needs over time.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2021/03/national-healthy-school-canteens-guidelines-for-healthy-foods-and-drinks-supplied-in-school-canteens.pdf>



## Recommendations

It is recommended that Communities Tasmania:

5. Engages a dietitian to provide nutritional education to AYDC residents with respect to healthy choices on the AYDC canteen and promote positive eating behaviours to young people.
6. Regularly surveys AYDC residents with regard to their preferences for food items on the AYDC canteen.



## Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

| Term or Acronym | Definition |
|-----------------|------------|
|-----------------|------------|

|      |                               |
|------|-------------------------------|
| AYDC | Ashley Youth Detention Centre |
|------|-------------------------------|

|     |                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| BDS | The Behaviour Development Scheme, incorporating the incident management scheme and incentive scheme, which is used by AYDC to classify young people based on their behaviours |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|     |                                                                                                              |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CYS | Children and Youth Services, an operational unit of the Department of Communities Tasmania. CYS manages AYDC |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|



## Appendix 1 - Consultant Report



**Ngairé Hobbins**  
**Dietitian and Nutrition Consultant**

**AYDC REPORT**

prepared for

**The Tasmanian Prisons Custodial Inspectorate**

November 2020

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**BACKGROUND, ACTIONS SINCE INSPECTIONS IN 2017 AND EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW:**

The Tasmanian Parliament passed the *Custodial Inspector Act 2016*, to establish an independent Custodial Inspector for Tasmania's prison system and youth detention centres. Richard Connock was appointed Inspector on 31 January 2017. The Office of the Custodial Inspector consists of Lisa Steele, Principal Officer and Kirsty Bower, Administration and Research Officer.

The purpose of the Custodial Inspector is to provide independent, proactive and systemic oversight of custodial centres in Tasmania. The focus is on systemic issues relating to the management, control and security of the State's custodial centres and the care and welfare of prisoners and detainees. In particular, the Custodial Inspector provides external scrutiny by undertaking inspections of custodial centres followed by the publication of reports and recommendations.

The first themed inspections in 2017 focussed on the health standards - Physical Health, Management and Treatment of Substance Abuse, Hygiene and Environmental Health and Mental Health. Those inspections (with reports titled "Inspection of Adult Custodial Centres in Tasmania 2017. Care and Wellbeing Report" – herein called: 2017 Adult Report; and "Inspection of Ashley Youth Detention Centre in Tasmania 2017. Care and Wellbeing Report – herein called 2017 Ashley Report) included Food and Nutrition as a component of overall wellbeing, with findings reporting against the then draft Food and Nutrition Standards.

The draft standards were finalised in 2019 and are now: *Inspection Standards For Adult Custodial Centres in Tasmania 2019* (ref 1) and *Inspection Standards For Youth Custodial Centres in Tasmania 2018* (ref 2). This 2020 report, which is a standalone Report on Food and Nutrition, assesses Tasmanian Adult Prisons and Ashley Youth Detention Centre against those current standards.

Also, since the first Food and Nutrition Inspection in 2017 the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) released, in 2018, a report: "The Health of Australia's prisoners" (ref 4). This report notes the following:

"People in prison have significant and complex health needs, which are often long-term or chronic in nature. They have higher rates of mental health conditions, chronic disease, communicable disease, acquired brain injury, tobacco smoking, high-risk alcohol consumption, recent illicit drug use, and recent injecting drug use, than the general population (AIHW 2015). Improving the health and well-being of people in prison, and maintaining those improvements after prison, benefits the entire community."

Tasmania's prison population is not dissimilar to the national situation reported by AIHW, with the majority of people in prison or in detention being either on remand or serving sentences under 5 years in length. But there is an increasing number of prisoners on longer sentences who can be classified as 'older' in terms of medical status (65+) and their needs are considered in this report.

I was pleased to be engaged again by Tas Custodial Directorate to provide this review Food and Nutrition at TPS and Ashley as it allows some continuity of observations.

I would also like to express my respect for the kitchen and custodial staff we encountered during our inspection. I observed a high degree of care for inmates balanced by interaction between inmates and custodial staff which was as light-hearted and respectful as possible given the environment in which these interactions occurred.

I would additionally support the unannounced nature of the site visits this time as we received many comments during the 2017 inspections that the food on offer was not what was usually served: that the prison must have 'put on special food for the inspection.' The unannounced visits allowed us to reassure ourselves that we were not provided special meals and thus be able to more accurately assess the concerns of inmates.

Involvement in the custodial system was new to me in 2017 and I am well aware that a full understanding of the many nuances of the system and how my area of work might be impacted by or might impact the expectations and the wellbeing of prisoners/detainees themselves and of the system more widely requires a wider experience. However, there are many similarities in the systems and processes employed within the aged care system where I have mostly worked for 2 decades and the custodial system : this is mainly in the connection (or disconnection) between provision of quality food and whether that food is eaten and thus provides the nutritional benefit intended.

In this inspection – particularly in the adult system - there was occasionally evidence among some in management and in health support systems of an inadequate regard for the vital importance of nutrition and education around the health benefits of good food/drink choices more widely in underpinning not only physical, but cognitive health. An organisation-wide commitment to ensuring a focus on food and nutrition that can support better mental health and potentially improve behaviours is encouraged.

Prisoners in the main are representative of the less privileged groups in Tasmanian society, but that should instil in any directives around food and nutrition a desire to implement initiatives intended to improve understanding around food production and healthy eating. Training in food production and food service, where appropriate, can offer rehabilitation and future employment opportunities as well as offering nutritional benefits. That is not to say that consideration should not be given to the expectations of prisoners around food: many common food preferences do not have a positive nutritional focus, but must be balanced against the rights of individuals to make their own choices.

While research in this area in Australia is somewhat limited, a relatively recent paper from University of Qld (ref 3) expresses the challenge of providing nutritious food in a prison environment which is echoed in the Tasmanian Custodial System, particularly the adult system:

*“the planned food (was) nutritionally adequate, with the exception of vitamin D for older males and long-chain fatty acids, with Na (sodium) above upper limits.” But that “The Australian dietary targets for chronic disease risk were not achieved”. As far as nutrient intakes, apart from Vitamin D which was a potential issue across all age groups, this study found that older inmates were more likely to have inadequate intakes of*

Magnesium, Calcium, Folate, Zinc and Vitamin A and ultimately that “*nutrient intakes were greatly impacted by self-funded snacks.*”

Regarding the latter they further comment on prisoner food practices:

*“The assessment at the group level showed a high level of modification of the prison food including holding back components of meals for inclusion in later meals with addition of ‘buy-up’ foods. For example, cold meat from a lunch time meal being added to noodles (from ‘buy-ups’) with sauces from the group’s rations being a modified meal. This practice was referred to by prisoners and (some) custodial staff as a ‘cook-up’. Group-level meal observations showed sharing and swapping of food, even though officially not permitted in the facility, but tolerated by custodial staff (to ‘keep the peace’) and monitored to ensure that the behaviour was not excessive. Dietary interviews confirmed ‘trading’ practices, particularly in relation to provided food such as milk, ‘buy-ups’ (including cigarettes), tokens for soft drinks and in some areas vegetables from gardens.”*

(Note that this research was conducted in Queensland prisons before they became tobacco and smoke free in May 2014.)

Unfortunately, this is also very apparent in both TPS and Ashley and it is the wider influence of food choices outside what is being prepared and/or delivered by the TPS/Ashley kitchens which often has greater impact on the nutrition and thus the physical and cognitive health status of prisoners and detainees. As a result, Food and Nutrition and its impact on both these outcomes must be viewed from a much wider perspective than the workings of the kitchen alone. The Canteen system in adult prisons and to a lesser extent at AYDC, often have the greatest impact on nutritional status. While there should be access to individual choice through canteen purchases, the items on offer can certainly be reviewed to allow access to more products which facilitate healthier choices to be made in purchases made there.

In addition, given our custodial system has, at its core, the intention to rehabilitate prisoners so they may make positive contribution to society on release and not re-offend, it is also important that there be opportunities to educate and assist prisoners – many of whom have very low health literacy levels and backgrounds with limited exposure to healthy food choices – about food and nutrition. Initiatives which connect prisoners with a wide variety of food options so they can make at least some healthier choices when they are able to, as vital.

Those can be in the support of prisoners who work in the kitchens, in food gardening and in programs which provide appropriate and supportive training in food production. These cannot be considered as ‘additional’ to prison operations, but in a food and nutritional sense, should be central to them. A wider understanding of production, presentation and access to food is essential in building capacity among individuals to engage in productive fulfilling lives for themselves on the outside.

In making such assertions I am well aware that recidivism is high and that such initiatives may not achieve significant reduction in those rates, additionally that there is an immense impact on much more than

nutritional wellbeing as a result of drug usage prior to incarceration. However, it remains important to implement systems that support any initiative that has the potential to improve outcomes for prisoners, detainees and the custodial system more widely: my recommendations in this report are focused on that aim.

## MY COMMENTS ON THE RESPONSE OF DEPT of COMMUNITIES TO THE AYDC 2017 REPORT

DoC's response to the 2017 Inspection was reassuringly positive and their response to that report asserts that AYDC started to make improvements immediately following our 2017 Inspection, some of which had been implemented or the process commenced for their implementation before the report on those inspections was handed down in 2018.

These include providing healthier menu options, the development of food gardens, cooking programs and a wider range of physical activity options. Overall, there has been significant improvement as outlined in my comments (at point 36) following the 2020 Inspections.

|    | <b>Recommendation</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>DoC response in 2018<br/>(some summary used without<br/>impacting relevance)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Outcome</b>                  | <b>Comment</b>                                                          |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9  | AYDC minimises the use of sweets, icy poles and other snack foods as incentives.                                                                                                                                              | Icy poles and other such snacks have been withdrawn from Units. The availability and choice of food is frequently brought up for discussion at Resident Advisory Group meetings. One such meeting was the catalyst to reduce desserts to twice per week and provide healthier food options in the Units. | Largely Achieved                | Improvements are evident. Ongoing CI will support improvements made.    |
| 10 | AYDC develops and implements a strategy to limit the amount of flavouring in the form of bottles of topping, milo or similar milk flavouring, icy poles and ice cream available to the units.                                 | Cordial was significantly reduced at Ashley as a health initiative and replaced with ingredients for making fruit smoothies.                                                                                                                                                                             | Achieved                        |                                                                         |
| 11 | AYDC reduces the availability of less nutritious items in the units, offering instead items such as yoghurt, cheese, fruit, nuts, tuna, eggs, baked beans, wholegrain biscuits, and possibly precooked rice dishes in sachets | Healthier options have replaced unhealthy options and snacks are not automatically provided on request. Baked beans, bread and condiments are always available in the Units.                                                                                                                             | Achieved                        |                                                                         |
| 12 | AYDC introduces a "traffic light" system to categorise foods and drinks on the canteen lists according to their nutritional value and levels of energy, saturated fat, fibre, sugar and salt.                                 | AYDC has made a lot of progress to ensure 'everyday foods' are nutritious and come from the five food groups. The canteen provides young people with the opportunity to purchase 'occasional foods'. Items available in the                                                                              | Ongoing CI supports Achievement | The recent Utas student report will be of assistance in CI in this area |

|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                  |                                                                                                                               |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | canteen are frequently discussed at Resident Advisory Group Meetings. If the services of a dietician become available, the canteen selection will be formally reviewed, including consideration of the information provided about each item.                                                                                                                                            |                  |                                                                                                                               |
| 13 | AYDC considers moving dining back to a central area for evening meals so that kitchen staff could work on presentation to make the meals more visually appealing to encourage consumption and thus reduce wastage.                                      | The reinstating of evening meals in the dining room during daylight savings hours, will be considered. Outside of daylight savings, there are safety and security issues, with the movement of residents in the dark. The kitchen is now open for longer to reduce the time between preparation and consumption of evening meals. This means fresher meals, leading to reduced wastage. | Partly achieved  | Meals in dining room COVID impacted but improvements have been made in the latter part of this recommendation as noted by DoC |
| 14 | AYDC recommences and makes available to all residents, a cooking course, focussed on preparing wholesome food that is not excessively high in sugar and salt.                                                                                           | The AYDC Program Co-ordinator has recently established weekly cooking classes at the School learning kitchen. Cooking and nutrition are discussed and followed. Additionally, AYDC's vegetable gardens are now back in use, as a joint enterprise with the School.                                                                                                                      | Achieved         |                                                                                                                               |
| 15 | AYDC engages ongoing dietician services to support AYDC nutrition education initiatives, to provide education on the nutritional needs of young people to staff and residents, and to provide one-on-one counselling support to residents where needed. | In principle support but implementation is subject to new funding being made available. Work will also need to occur to make sure the service mix and delivery model is the right one. This will need to be determined in collaboration with Department of Health (DoH) taking into account the range of reforms and initiatives already underway.                                      | Not Yet Achieved | Use of Utas students in 2019 has been beneficial. Funding support for dietitian services remains recommended                  |

|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                  |               |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|---------------|
| 16 | AYDC implements the recommendations contained in the student dietitian report Identifying priority area for improvement to support healthy eating promotion within the Ashley Youth Detention Centre setting (2016), with the exception of complete removal of the less nutritious food options provided in the units. | Following on from recommendation 15, if the services of a Dietician were secured, it would be appropriate for the incumbent to determine an overarching strategy for healthy eating at AYDC.                                                                                    | Not yet achieved | As per rec 15 |
| 17 | While allergen management is covered by the food safety program, it should also include reference to the protocol for identifying young people with food allergies when first taken into custody                                                                                                                       | Food allergies and health needs, more broadly, are identified during Induction. Induction commences when the young person arrives at AYDC. The Induction procedure and food safety program will be amended to ensure that any allergies identified are reported to the kitchen. | Achieved         |               |

## THE 2020 INSPECTION PROCESS: NOTES, FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

### TIMING OF MEETINGS, INSPECTIONS 2020:

February 2020

Initial discussions planning for inspections during May (eventually delayed due to COVID)

Contract signed

August 27<sup>th</sup>

Planning meeting in Custodial Inspectorate Offices

In attendance: Lisa Steele and Kirsty Bower.

August 31<sup>st</sup> – Sept 3<sup>rd</sup>

Unannounced visits Risdon Prison Complex and Hobart Reception Prison

Sept 8<sup>th</sup>

Meeting with Food Services Manager and Industries and Facilities Manager

Sept 11<sup>th</sup>

Re-meet with Food Services Manager

Meet CPHS Doctor

Sept 21<sup>st</sup>

Meet with TPS Consultant Accredited Practising Dietitian

Sept 28

Unannounced visit Launceston Reception Prison

Sept 29

Unannounced visit Ashley Youth Detention Centre

October 6<sup>th</sup>

Meeting with Director of Prisons at Custodial Inspectorate Offices

## SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS IDENTIFIED AT THIS 2020 INSPECTION AGAINST THE STANDARDS: ASHLEY YOUTH DETENTION CENTRE.

(shown are only those points relevant to this Food and Nutrition report):

|       | STANDARD                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | OUTCOME          | COMMENT                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9.6   | <b>Healthy lifestyles should be supported through the provision of extensive health promotion and education, nutritious food and drink, and encouragement of exercise and personal hygiene.</b>                                            |                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 9.6.1 | Information and education regarding healthy living and the importance of diet and exercise is provided and supported across the centre, both within the accommodation unit and through recreational and more structured education services | Largely achieved | The input of a dietitian to offer education alongside other programs is advised.<br>An overhaul of the Canteen system and continuing improvements in reducing the excessive use of unhealthy food/drink incentives are warranted |
| 9.6.2 | Health promotion cover a range of issues linked to lifestyle: alcohol, smoking, drug education, hygiene, sleep, nutrition, fitness, sex education, family and domestic violence                                                            | Largely achieved | As 9.6.1 above                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 9.6.3 | Such programs are to be delivered to an individual or an appropriate mix of young people.                                                                                                                                                  | Largely Achieved | As 9.6.1 above                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 9.6.4 | Food should be of sufficient quality, quantity and variety to meet the nutritional needs of young people.                                                                                                                                  | Largely Achieved | A lot has already been done in this regard. Continuous Improvement warrants adoption of recommendations in the 2019 Menu Review (ref 6)                                                                                          |
| 9.6.5 | Food is hygienically stored and prepared in accordance with Food                                                                                                                                                                           | Achieved         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

|        |                                                                                                                         |                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|        | Standards Australia New Zealand guidelines.                                                                             |                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 9.6.6  | Menus should be planned to ensure that high quality, nutritional and varied meals are provided.                         | Achieved         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 9.6.7  | There should be continuous access to clean drinking water.                                                              | Achieved         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 9.6.8  | Young people requiring special diets such as vegetarian, religious, cultural and special diets, should be accommodated. | Achieved         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 9.6.9  | All staff and young people involved in food preparation or food serving have undertaken food safety training            | Achieved         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 9.6.10 | All young people undertake basic food safety and hygiene awareness training.                                            | Achieved         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|        |                                                                                                                         |                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 9.11   | <b>Meal and other daily routines must be conducted at times consistent with community standards.</b>                    |                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 9.11.1 | Young people should be provided with three meals per day at reasonable intervals.                                       | Achieved         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 9.11.2 | Meals are served at times consistent with those generally observed in the community.                                    | Achieved         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 9.11.3 | Meals are eaten communally.                                                                                             | Largely achieved | COVID has impacted this but it will return to mostly communal eating as soon as possible, within the guidelines regarding safe movement in the evenings between the dining area and units during non-daylight saving/winter months when it is dark earlier. |
| 9.11.4 | Advice from dieticians or nutritionists                                                                                 | Achieved         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

|        |                                                                                                                           |                                   |                                                                                                       |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|        | is regularly sought to update the menu.                                                                                   |                                   |                                                                                                       |
| 9.11.5 | Young people in transit or at court do not miss out on their main meal.                                                   | Achieved                          |                                                                                                       |
| 9.11.6 | Pregnant young women and nursing mothers receive appropriate extra food supplies.                                         | Not Applicable at this inspection |                                                                                                       |
| 9.11.7 | Young people are given the opportunity to cater for themselves where appropriate                                          | Achieved                          |                                                                                                       |
|        |                                                                                                                           |                                   |                                                                                                       |
| 9.13   | <b>Young people can purchase a suitable range of goods at reasonable prices to meet their needs and can do so safely.</b> |                                   |                                                                                                       |
| 9.13.1 | Young people have access to a selected range of products at prices comparable to those in the community                   | Achieved                          |                                                                                                       |
| 9.13.9 | Healthy food items are available and actively promoted in support of a healthy lifestyle                                  | Not yet achieved                  | This aligns to comments against 9.6.1, and active promotion of healthy options requires greater focus |

## **OBSERVATIONS MADE DURING UNNANOUNCED VISITS AND MEETINGS AYDC**

### **ASHLEY YOUTH DETENTION CENTRE**

1. There have been big changes both in staffing and culture here and the atmosphere was better – more open and receptive - than my last visit.
2. Centre Manager and all his staff were accommodating and positive. The youth workers, nurses, kitchen staff and the fabulous acting activities coordinator were all delightful. It was a pleasure to see their enthusiasm and engagement with the young people there.
3. The kitchen was well organised and there was a variety of food being prepared. We had the meal of the day which was 2 chicken burgers as a standard serve (we had just one)
4. The main issue at this inspection was that the meal offered was very large and this is reflected in the menu more widely, therefore potentially providing excessive kJ. Some detainees need the amount provided, but many do not (2 chicken burgers for example is excessive for smaller-framed girls and younger boys). However, this is accepted by management and along with the intention to make salads available to the young people (really good salads are made for staff meals currently but they are not available to detainees) and work towards implementation of recommendations made in the 2019 menu review (see point 35.5) wider changes are being held off until the Utas student report (point 35.7) has been delivered. The latter occurred the week following our Inspection (ref 6).
5. A menu review was carried out in 2019 by dietitian Stephen Hodgkinson of Nutrition Solutions Tasmania (ref 5). It commended AYDC on their provision of nutritious high-quality food and their flexibility and adaptability. That review offered some suggestions of which Centre Manager is very supportive including reducing the overemphasis on bread-based meals, reducing reliance on deep-fried options and re-assessing the supply of discretionary foods more widely. It additionally made recommendations that there should be nutrition education delivered by a dietitian for staff and detainees and a food and nutrition policy developed.
6. The evening 'slab' has been improved and we saw a platter of cheese, dried fruits and healthier snack options prepared for the evening following. As well, the 'slab' continues to offer high energy density cakes, slices, biscuits etc. On Sundays detainees receive a big platter of seasonal fruit. Centre Manager has decided to leave any changes until the Utas students have submitted their report (see next point) The issues of concern are well addressed, and recommendations made in these two reports.
7. Since last Inspection, as well as the menu review mentioned in 35.5, just in the past couple of months a project has been done by students in Nutrition at the UTas Launceston campus looking at the Food and Nutrition Environment (ref 6). Both of

these reports are excellent and have been provided to AYDC. Their recommendations are to be supported.

8. The nurses at Ashley commented on concerns they have with menus that are echoed in both the reports mentioned above. They look forward to the reduction in COVID restrictions which will allow the revision of cooking programs and communal dining options. They also commented that salads should be available to the young people.

## **ASHLEY YOUTH DETENTION CENTRE RECOMMENDATIONS:**

### Recommendation 1

All recommendations made in the 2019 menu review (ref 5) should be adopted. That is especially the case with points under sections 7.2 and 7.3 of that report around the need for a Nutrition and Menu Policy and training/education options for staff and young people.

### Recommendation 2

The observations made by the students (ref 6), who were able to spend time over some weeks at the centre are pertinent. All the recommendations and suggestions offered in this report should be given close consideration with a view to implementation where practical.

### Recommendation 3

Following on from these 2 reports and subsequent to our observations at this inspection, there should be a thorough review of the canteen options and education around choices being made. This could be achieved with the assistance of an APD, but could also be accomplished with another supervised UTas student project.

### Recommendation 4

It would also be advisable to find a way to do some nutritional analysis by review of intake over a number of days for at least some of the young people to gain an understanding of their actual intakes against their activity levels, body weight etc. That could be achieved as part of education provided by an APD around healthy eating.

## REFERENCES:

1. Inspection Standards Adult Prisons:

[https://www.custodialinspector.tas.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/546278/FINAL-Inspection-Standards-for-Adult-Custodial-Centres-in-Tasmania-July-2019.pdf](https://www.custodialinspector.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/546278/FINAL-Inspection-Standards-for-Adult-Custodial-Centres-in-Tasmania-July-2019.pdf)

2. Inspection Standards Youth Detention:

[https://www.custodialinspector.tas.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/546279/FINAL-Inspection-Standards-for-Youth-Custodial-Centres-in-Tasmania-July-2019.pdf](https://www.custodialinspector.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/546279/FINAL-Inspection-Standards-for-Youth-Custodial-Centres-in-Tasmania-July-2019.pdf)

3. Hannan-Jones, M and Capra, S. What do prisoners eat? Nutrient intakes and food practices in a high-secure prison. *British Journal of Nutrition* (2016), 115, 1387–1396

4. AIHW Report on Prisoners Health 2018:

<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/prisoners/health-australia-prisoners-2018/contents/table-of-contents>

5. Menu Review for Ashley Youth Detention Centre. May 2019. Stephen Hodgkinson, Nutrition Solutions Tasmania

6. Exploring the Ashley Youth Detention Centre Food Environment. 3rd year Nutrition Science students, School of Health Science, University of Tasmania, September 2020





## Appendix 2 - Department of Communities Tasmania response to recommendations

Communities Tasmania including the Ashley Youth Detention Centre were particularly pleased with this report as it mostly highlighted areas that we are continuing to address for the benefit of young people. This includes offering more options for meals such as including salads. The upcoming changes to rostering will enable evening meals to be served from the main dining room which will facilitate the opportunity to offer a variety of evening meals. This will also reduce the need for the use of bain marie's, meaning meals will be freshly cooked and served which will increase the flavour and nutritional value. Kitchen staff will also be able to oversee portion control of meals and have conversations about what the meals are, and what the ingredients are as well as young people's likes and dislikes. The flow on effect from this strategy will be less waste and provide more of a social aspect to the evening meal.

### Responses to Recommendations

| Recommendation |                                                                                                                                                                          | Response/Acceptance Level                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.             | Implements at AYDC all recommendations made in the Nutrition Solutions Tasmania 2019 review, especially the actions outlined in 7.2 and 7.3 of that report.              | <p>Supported in Part</p> <p>Given the size and occupancy of AYDC, it is not considered feasible to employ a full time dietitian but other options for nutritional input are being considered and implemented where appropriate. Most of the other recommendations are currently in the process of being actioned. Young people are regularly surveyed by kitchen staff regarding meal preferences, likes/dislikes. Any allergies and/or religious diets are catered for as identified and needed. A co-author from the report<sup>1</sup> conducted in September 2020 is now employed on staff at AYDC and continues to provide expertise and knowledge during the implementation of recommendations moving forward.</p> |
| 2.             | Implements all recommendations and suggestions offered in the UTAS report <i>Explore the Ashley Youth Detention Centre Food Environment</i> published in September 2020. | <p>Supported</p> <p>AYDC has now fully implemented all recommendations offered in the UTAS report. The Centre has introduced a traffic light system onto the canteen sheet, with some healthier options now available. Salads are offered to young people with most meals. Fresh fruit is provided with "slab" and is also provided to the units. Meals are being prepared from fresh ingredients which increases the nutritional value and the flavour. More flavours are being explored with the Chefs. We are increasingly moving to eating in season foods. Food is no longer given as a reward by staff.</p>                                                                                                        |

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to the UTAS report 'Explore the Ashley Youth Detention Centre Food Environment' published in September 2020.

|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3. | Engages an accredited practising dietitian to offer education on nutrition and healthy food choices alongside existing programs to staff and residents at AYDC.                                                                                                   | Supported in Part                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p>Given the size and occupancy of AYDC, it is not considered feasible to employ a full time dietitian but other options for nutritional input are being considered and implemented where appropriate. AYDC currently have a qualified Nutritionist onsite through another role and are working with him regarding food options and working with the catering staff to have input into the menu.</p> <p>On further review of this recommendation, Communities Tasmania will look at offering current catering staff a suitable nutritional course/training to further enhance their knowledge in this area to benefit the resident at AYDC going forward.</p> |
| 4. | To determine individual nutrition requirements for residents at AYDC, and in conjunction with an accredited practising dietitian, reviews resident food intake over a number of days to gain an understanding of intakes against activity levels and body weight. | Supported in Part                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p>Given the size and occupancy of AYDC, it is not considered feasible to employ a full time dietitian but other options for nutritional input are being considered and implemented where appropriate. AYDC will discuss options with onsite Health staff and the trained onsite staff member.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 5. | Engages a dietitian to provide nutritional education to AYDC residents with respect to healthy choices on the AYDC canteen and promote positive eating behaviours to young people.                                                                                | Supported in Part                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p>Given the size and occupancy of AYDC, it is not considered feasible to employ a full time dietitian but other options for nutritional input are being considered and implemented where appropriate. Young people undertake a program with Education that includes nutritional and dietary information with Youth Workers in attendance. AYDC seek feedback from young people in regard to canteen items however most options chosen lack nutritional value or fit within the healthy framework.</p>                                                                                                                                                        |
| 6. | Regularly surveys AYDC residents with regard to their preferences for food items on the AYDC canteen.                                                                                                                                                             | Supported                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p>AYDC has undertaken surveys but the responses have not indicated preferences that meet healthy and/or nutritional standards. AYDC will continue to run surveys with the hope that there will be improvement overtime.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |





## Appendix 3 - Inspection standards

- 9.6 Healthy lifestyles should be supported through the provision of extensive health promotion and education, nutritious food and drink, and encouragement of exercise and personal hygiene.**
- 9.6.1 Information and education regarding healthy living and the importance of diet and exercise is provided and supported across the detention centre, both within the accommodation units and through recreational and more structured education sessions.
- 9.6.2 Health promotions cover a range of issues linked to lifestyle: alcohol, smoking, drug education, hygiene, sleep, nutrition, fitness, sex education, positive relationships and family and domestic violence issues.
- 9.6.3 Such programs are to be delivered to an individual or an appropriate mix of young people.
- 9.6.4 Food should be of sufficient quality, quantity and variety to meet the nutritional needs of young people.
- 9.6.5 Food is hygienically stored and prepared in accordance with Food Standards Australia New Zealand guidelines.
- 9.6.6 Menus should be planned to ensure that high quality, nutritional and varied meals are provided.
- 9.6.7 There should be continuous access to clean drinking water.
- 9.6.8 Young people requiring special diets such as vegetarian, religious, cultural and special diets, should be accommodated.
- 9.6.9 All staff and young people involved in food preparation or food serving have undertaken food safety training.
- 9.6.10 All young people undertake basic food safety and hygiene awareness training.
- 9.6.11 Personal hygiene and housekeeping is monitored at unit level.



**9.11 Meal and other daily routines must be conducted at times consistent with community standards.**

- 9.11.1 Young people should be provided with three meals per day at reasonable intervals.
- 9.11.2 Meals are served at times consistent with those generally observed in the community.
- 9.11.3 Meals are eaten communally.
- 9.11.4 Advice from dietitians or nutritionists is regularly sought to update the menu.
- 9.11.5 Young people in transit or at court do not miss out on their main meal.
- 9.11.6 Pregnant young women and nursing mothers receive appropriate extra food supplies.
- 9.11.7 Young people are given the opportunity to cater for themselves where appropriate.

**9.13 Young people can purchase a suitable range of goods at reasonable prices to meet their needs and can do so safely.**

- 9.13.9 Healthy food items are available and actively promoted in support of a healthy lifestyle.



## Appendix 4 - Recommendations from the UTAS Report *Exploring the Ashley Youth Detention Centre Food Environment*

### Recommendations from the UTAS Report *Exploring the Ashley Youth Detention Centre Food Environment*

#### 1. Alternative rewards

To help initiate a process that will eventually eliminate food rewards, alternative rewards or as a thank you for their hard work, extra money could be put into their savings account, or healthier foods can be distributed. This step forward will eventually lead to produce being grown in the garden and the reward being the harvesting and eating of the food. The goal is that residents will learn a life lesson from this experience; that a reward is not always given or received when a good deed has occurred, and that sometimes we give to help others and not just to gain something for ourselves.

#### 2. Therapeutic gardens

Plans are currently in place to have a bigger garden at the centre, which means more space for residents but also more work to be done. For those looking to join the workforce once they leave the centre, it would be a great opportunity for them to start working at AYDC and start earning more money, which could be added to their savings to help them have a head start once they leave.

Spending more time outside and expanding life skills would give them a greater sense of pride in what they have achieved and can plant a seed of hope for the future.

#### 3. Money management

Residents receive a payment from the government while in AYDC. Most of it goes into a savings account for when they leave, and the rest is provided to them so they can buy items off the canteen menu. This is a great system as it allows the residents to both have some control over what and how they spend their money, but also have some set aside for when they leave so it is not all spent on site. While AYDC has no control over what or how residents spend their money once they leave the centre, staff do have a substantial influence on the residents and could therefore teach them how they can put their best foot forward in a monetary sense. Residents could have one class a week where they are taught how to manage money. This can help them determine the difference between a need/necessity and a want and come up with a budget for how much is a reasonable amount to spend on food and clothes a week. Also, any bills they may have such as rent, power, water, car related or other forms of transport. A staff member mentioned that some do not know how to cash a cheque at the bank, this could also be taught.



## Appendix 5 - Recommendations from the Nutrition Solutions Tasmania Report

### Recommendations from the *Nutrition Solutions Tasmania Report*:

The following recommendations are in no way criticism of the menu being provided but should be taken as a constructive way of improving both the short and long term nutrition of the residents in your care. Please see the report for more detail on the key recommendations.

Key points from the review:

- Discretionary foods are often provided at lunch, despite these being made on site they are often energy dense and normalises these types of offerings as part of a regular healthy diet, which they are not
  - This could be improved by reducing the amount of deep fried food provided and replacing with pan fried or oven roasted alternatives
- Fish is only offered as a main meal once per week
  - Increase the number of fish based based main meals
- A large amount of bread is often consumed in the housing units
  - This could be improved by providing smaller quantities more often thereby reducing over consumption on some days
  - Switch to a high fibre white bread rather than plain white or phase out white bread altogether
- Staff Training – Staff and therefore residents would benefit from nutrition specific training
  - A process is in place for residents with food allergies but staff have received little training in allergen identification and requirements other than label reading
  - Youth workers and catering staff have received minimal if any training for the specific nutritional needs for young people and adolescents
    - The majority of residents are still growing and it is crucial they consume a wide range of food and educating staff of the key



nutrients required is essential given their ability to influence the food choices of the young people

- This training could include detail on managing portion sizes and appropriate ratios of meat, vegetables and carbohydrate foods and weight management in this age group
- Further, having age specific and appropriate nutrition information available to the residents may influence them to choose healthy options and have a basic understanding of good nutrition when they return to the community
- Youth workers have had minimal training in food service and presentation
  - Food service training could improve food safety and the presentation of the meals making them more appetising especially presentation of vegetables and salads, therefore encouraging consumption of these items
- There is not a policy document in place driving present and future decisions in food service
  - Developing a food and nutrition policy would help to shape minimum standards for staff training, quality and variety of food on offer
  - A policy document could include the following:
    - Menu planning
      - Describe quality and amount of fresh produce used with limits or use of highly processed foods
      - Limits on discretionary foods as described by the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating
      - Amount of choice provided
      - Minimum standards and variety for special diets including diabetics, food allergies, and pregnancy
      - Hydration needs



## *Appendix 5 – Recommendations from the Nutrition Solutions Tasmania Report*

- Dictate minimum training requirements for staff and need for continuing professional development in regard to nutrition
- Timetables for menu reviews, changes, seasonal variations, monitoring and training
- Incorporate detail on learning experiences for young people in regard to healthy eating and provenance of food



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