

“You’ve got nothing else to do...”

Understanding Isolation at Ashley Youth Detention Centre (AYDC)

What we did:

- Listened to what young people at AYDC had to say about isolation
- Looked at government records about how isolation is used at AYDC.

Hi, I’m Ros Cornish

I’m the Interim Commissioner for Children and Young People. It’s my job to help everyone understand what’s important to children and young people from all over Tasmania, as well as standing up for their rights and wellbeing.

What is isolation?

Isolation means a young person is kept alone in a locked room, away from other people. They can’t join in normal activities while they are in isolation.

The law says staff can only use isolation when a young person’s safety is at risk or when there are concerns about the security of AYDC.

At AYDC, we found that isolation is used when there are not enough staff to support young people in other ways.

What needs to change?

1. More activities and support

Young people need:

- things to do every day like school, sport, art, cooking
- support from trusted adults
- less time sitting alone and bored in rooms.

2. Better communication

Young people should:

- know why staff have placed them in isolation
- be told how long the isolation will last
- be spoken to clearly and respectfully.

3. More things to do in rooms

When young people are in their rooms they need:

- activities they enjoy (like games, art and music)
- safe digital options where possible
- comforts and basic items (like comfy chairs and personal care items)
- safe ways to stay connected with others
- a way to keep track of time.

Isolation is not okay

Isolation affects young people’s rights and wellbeing.

Young people told us that isolation makes them feel lonely, depressed, bored, fed-up, and that isolation makes things worse instead of helping.

Young people in detention have a right to:

- be treated with respect and dignity
- have access to education, programs and support
- be heard and informed about decisions.

What happens next?

Right now, the Interim Commissioner and her team are:

- sharing this report with the Government
- speaking up and advocating for change
- working with AYDC leaders to improve what’s happening.

We will also:

- keep talking and listening to young people at AYDC
- keep an eye on whether things are improving
- remind the Government and AYDC about the changes they need to make.