

# Ashley Youth Detention Centre

1999 –

**Other Names:**

- Ashley Detention Centre
- AYDC

## Details

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The Ashley Youth Detention Centre, established in 1999, was previously known as the Ashley Home for Boys. It is in Deloraine. In 2013, it is a government-run custodial institution for boys and girls, aged between 10 and 18.

The 1997 *Youth Justice Act* established the Ashley Youth Detention Centre. It is the only institution of this kind in Tasmania – all young people between the ages of 10 and 18 years who are held on remand, and others who have been sentenced to an actual custodial penalty, serve time at the Centre.

The Centre has accommodation for 51 young people in four different units, Bronte, Huon, Franklin, and Liffey. It offers four levels of programs with the first two being compulsory:

- Level 1: involves learning skills and attitudes to assist with living in a detention facility.
- Level 2: helps young people learn how to live in the community. The program addresses issues such as employment, school, accommodation, reunification with family, and leisure activities.
- Level 3: helps the young person avoid breaking the law again. It includes programs to deal with substance abuse and to address attitudes and peer or family influences that lead to law breaking.
- Level 4: provides professional treatment for clinically diagnosed mental conditions.

Ashley School, run by the Education Department, opened on the site of the Detention Centre in 2003. The age range of the students is from 12 to 19. Apart from the usual curriculum, the School runs courses in horticulture and aquaculture.

In 2006, Ashley Youth Detention Centre was prominent in the Tasmanian media, with reports of breakouts, and allegations of violence, drug smuggling, and substance abuse within the institution. This led to the establishment of a Select Committee to review the impact of the *Youth Justice Act 1997* (proclaimed in February 2000) on Tasmania's treatment of young offenders. In the words of the Chairman, 'We have asked is the new way a better way?'

The Committee's report was released in July 2007 and made 32 recommendations relating to the Centre. These included amending the *Youth Justice Act* to give magistrates more diversionary options when sentencing young offenders, and changing the name of the institution to Ashley Secure Care Centre. Neither of these happened.

In 2008, an Ashley Rights Advocate, who was independent of the government, was appointed.

On 25 October 2010, a death in custody occurred at Ashley.

In 2012, the Office of the Commissioner for Children published a book entitled *Views: life inside Ashley Youth Detention Centre*. It commemorated the twentieth anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. In his introductory letter, the Children's Commissioner, Paul Mason, explained that two aspects of the

Convention had inspired the book. The first, Article 12, states:

*Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in matters affecting the child.*

The second, Article 40, states:

*Children have the right for youth justice systems to promote reintegration and for them to assume a constructive role in society.*

Mason reasoned that if placing children at Ashley was supposed to reform them, then we need to hear their point of view in order to work out what they need.

The Ashley Residents' Advocate, Ashley Management, and the teachers at Ashley School helped the children to write their pieces.

The publication contains the young people's descriptions of the good and bad aspects of life inside Ashley. Quite a few said that Ashley School, run by the Education Department, was a strength of the Centre and that they would not have reached grade 10 without it. One wrote: 'The school helps you with everything'. Others praised the programs, activities, counselling, and learning self discipline as well as the opportunity to get fit and stop taking drugs.

There were also downsides. Most of all the young people appear to have missed their families and friends. They also missed their mothers' cooking, their own beds, hot showers or baths, 'proper' clothes, and the mobile phone. Phone calls at the Centre were too short, 'you just get started having a conversation and you have to stop'. One young person said that she or he did not like seeing family in the visiting room: 'I don't want my family to see me in there'. The young people disliked the restrictions on them, especially not being able to eat, drink or go to the toilet when they wanted.

## Gallery

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### **Aerial view of Ashley Youth Detention Centre**

**Description:** This webpage is no longer in operation. This version was taken from the Wayback Machine and is dated 13 April 2021.

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### **Ashley Youth Detention Centre aquaculture**



### **Ashley School corridor**

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## Ashley Youth Detention Centre horticulture

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## More info

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### Chronology

- Boys' Reformatory (1869 - 1876)
  - Boys' Training School (1884 - 1926)
    - Ashley Home for Boys (1926 - 1999)
- **Ashley Youth Detention Centre (1999 – )**

### Related Entries

#### Run by

- [Department of Health and Human Services, State of Tasmania \(1998 - 2018\)](#)
- [Department of Communities Tasmania \(2018 - 2022\)](#)
- [Department for Education, Children and Young People, Tasmanian Government \(2022 - current\)](#)

#### Related Legislation

- [Youth Justice Act 1997, Tasmania \(1997 - current\)](#)
- [Children, Young Persons and Their Families Amendment Act 2009 \(2009 - current\)](#)

### Resources

- Tresidder, Julie & Putt, Judy, [Review of data on juvenile remandees in Tasmania : final report](#), 2005

## Records

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For more information and to access your records, follow the links below:

### Records

- [Record of Admissions and Discharges, Ashley Home for Boys \(1984 - 2010\)](#)
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You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/ashley-youth-detention-centre/>