

Banksia Hill Detention Centre

1997 –

Other Names: • Banksia Hill

URL: <https://www.correctiveservices.wa.gov.au/youth-justice/youth-detention/banksia-hill.aspx>

Details

Banksia Hill Detention Centre in Canning Vale, was established by the government of Western Australia in October 1997, replacing the Longmore Training Centre and the Nyandi Detention Centre. It is a secure facility for up to 120 young people (male and female) aged 10 to 17 years who have been sentenced, are on remand or are awaiting sentencing. In October 2012, with the closing of Rangeview Juvenile Remand Centre, Banksia Hill became the sole juvenile detention centre in Western Australia.

'The Banksia Hill Detention Centre Redevelopment Project' (a report written by the Auditor General in Western Australia in 2013) confirms that Banksia Hill was established in 1997 as a government-run detention facility originally for up to 120 young people aged 10-18 years (p.15) .

Young people aged over 17 years may be detained at Banksia Hill rather than being sent to an adult prison.

After a riot in January 2013 some young people were transferred to Hakea adult prison, but were returned to Banksia Hill in October 2013.

In March 2005, Banksia Hill was inspected by the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (OICS) and was well-regarded. Initially both girls and boys were admitted to Banksia Hill. However, the OICS reported (2008, p.1) that girls had been removed from Banksia Hill in October 2005 following a 'sexual encounter between a male and female detainee' there.

By 2007, Banksia Hill was taking males on remand as well as those who had been sentenced.

In June 2008, the OICS inspected Banksia Hill again. The Inspection found (p.iii) that Banksia Hill had not maintained the high levels of performance that had been noted in the OICS' previous report. The critical issue, from the Inspector's viewpoint (p.iii) flowed on from the October 2005 decision to accommodate all female detainees at Rangeview Remand Centre, which reportedly resulted in Banksia Hill having to manage 'a more volatile, unsentenced, shorter stay male population, and Rangeview housing sentenced females without the facilities or adequate services to meet their needs'.

Overall, this was, according to the Inspector, a 'wholly unsatisfactory situation'. The report also confirmed (p.27) that the Harding Unit at Banksia Hill was used to accommodate 'unsettled or at-risk detainees for short periods of time'. The OICS reported (p.6) that there had been a 31 percent increase in the number of young people held at Banksia Hill between July 2004 and June 2007, resulting in the daily average number of young people resident rising from 110 in 2004 to 145 in 2007. These young people were also being sentenced for shorter periods but spent longer on remand. According to the OICS, this mix made it harder for offending behaviours to be addressed.

The OICS report was critical of a number of practices at Banksia Hill, including the practice of strip-searching detainees (pp.13-15), especially those who had previously experienced abuse (p.13). The OICS reported (p.14) that young people in detention at Banksia Hill were 'routinely strip-searched on every entry into and exit from the centre', including young people transferred from Rangeview, who had been strip-searched prior to leaving Rangeview.

The OICS documented (p.15) that contraband had been discovered on only four occasions in a twelve-month period where 1,719 strip searches had been conducted at Banksia Hill, and recommended that the practice be reviewed so that, if they had to happen, searches were conducted in a manner that protected the human rights and dignity of the young people who were strip-searched.

On 5 October 2012, when the last of the young people from Rangeview Juvenile Remand Centre were transferred, Banksia Hill became the sole juvenile detention centre in Western Australia.

The Auditor General reported (2013, p.18) that Banksia Hill was expanded in September 2012 to include young people transferred from Rangeview, which was converted into the Wandoo adult detention facility. Prior to the redevelopment, Banksia Hill was used for up to 120 'sentenced male detainees'. After the 2012 upgrade at Banksia Hill, the bed capacity increased to 222, mostly single cells with some cells able to 'accommodate two detainees' (p.15).

Banksia Hill was inspected by the OICS in 2012. Their report documented (p.iv) a continued rise in population at the centre, with a peak of 227 young people accommodated on 27 April 2011. The number of young people in 2011 had ranged from 185 to above 200. The practice of strip-searching detainees which the OICS had recommended reviewing in its 2008 inspection had been modified. In the 2012 report, the Inspector found (p.46) that young people who were 'subject to punitive confinement' were still strip-searched but it was 'less clear' whether young people in 'regression' were strip-searched. 'Regression' (p.iv) was a method used to 'manage adolescent misbehaviour' at Banksia Hill. The OICS was concerned (pp.v-vi) about 'regression' because it was an 'informal' type of punishment that was not governed by the rules prescribed by the *Young Offenders Act 1994* for the punishment of detainees who committed detention centre or criminal law offences while in detention. Another area of concern for the OICS (p.v) was the amount of time young people at Banksia Hill spent in 'lock-down', which included (p.21) an hour each day after school and before 7pm at night.

The report also confirmed (p.16) that the Harding A Wing was used mainly for orientation of young people new to Banksia Hill; (p.5) that Harding B Wing was used for confinement cells and that Harding C and D wings were used for young people who had been in confinement and whose restrictions were being 'progressively lifted' as they demonstrated 'more compliant behaviour'.

On 20 January 2013, there was a riot at Banksia Hill. The OICS was instructed to conduct a review into the riot. The OICS report ('Directed Review into an Incident at Banksia Hill Detention Centre on 20 January 2013') confirmed: (p.1) that 185 males and 21 females were detained at Banksia Hill at the time of the riot and that 61 young people 'escaped from their cells' and had 'run amok', and around 73 detainees had been involved in the riot and in causing damage, including some females; (p.2) that 73 male detainees were 'immediately' transferred to the nearby adult prison, Hakea, with transfers were completed by 8 February 2013 to (p.ix) what was called the Hakea Juvenile Facility; and (p.2) that males younger than 14 years and some others with specific commitments or needs, had remained at Banksia Hill.

All the young people who had been transferred to Hakea after the riot had been returned to Banksia Hill by late October 2013.

The OICS' 2013 report also described (p.19) some of the accommodation at Banksia Hill: The Turner Unit opened in 2009; Yeeda (female) and Urquhart (male) units opened in 2012 as double-storey. By 2013, 38 single cells 'had been retrofitted with double bunks to cope with the detainee population'. According to the Inspector of Custodial Services this practice is contrary to both 'the original intent and accepted practice for juvenile detention in Australia'.

In 2013, the OICS also conducted a review of female facilities at Banksia Hill. Their report, 'The Management of Young Women and Girls at Banksia Hill Detention Centre' identifies (p.iii) the name of the unit for young women and girls at Banksia Hill as the 'Yeeda Unit' and confirms that the first residents of Yeeda were transferred from Rangeview in September 2012. It also confirms (p.iii) that younger boys were detained in the 'Yeeda Unit' from February to October 2013 after the riot and (p.iv). The report includes a 'Fact Sheet' (p.vi) that indicates: an alternative name for the Yeeda Unit was the Yeeda Young Women and Girl's Precinct and it was designed to accommodate 33 young people; and there were 23 single cells and one double cell in the Yeeda Unit.

The report (p.vi) also gives details about other accommodation units at Banksia Hill: there were four self-care rooms in the Peel Unit; there were four 'observation and isolation cells' in the Cue Unit; the Nichol Unit had staff offices, amenities and a nursing station; and there were three classrooms, an activity room, programs room and an education office.

More info

Chronology

- Longmore Detention Centre (1993 - 1997)
- Riverbank (1960 - 1996)
- Rangeview Remand Centre (1994 - 2012)
- Nyandi (1970 - 1997)
 - **Banksia Hill Detention Centre (1997 –)**

Related Entries

Run by

- [Department of Justice, State of Western Australia \(2017 - current\)](#)
- [Ministry of Justice, State of Western Australia \(1993 - 2001\)](#)
- [Department of Justice, State of Western Australia \(2001 - 2006\)](#)
- [Department of Corrective Services, State of Western Australia \(2006 - 2017\)](#)

Related Organisations

- [Hakea Juvenile Facility \(2013\)](#)
Following a riot at Banksia Hill Detention Centre, young male detainees were sent to Hakea adult remand prison.
Date: 21 January 2013 - October 2013

Records

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

Records

- [Youth Justice Records \(July 1994 - current\)](#)

You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/banksia-hill-detention-centre/>