-A look at life on the inside at ..

If you are over 10 and under 17, this is where you will end up should you continually get on the wrong side of the law.

Exclusive by CHRISTOPHER TAYLOR

The grim reality of life inside a juvenile detention centre would be enough to turn the most rebelllous teenager a long way from a life of crime.

Malak House is no Hillon but then it is not supposed to be It is a world of wire mesh, bolted doors,

bare and unwelcom-ing "bedrooms" and ing "bedrooms" an uniformed children

If you are over 10, under 17, this is where you will end up should you continually flaunt yourself on the wrong side of the law.

But the appearance of the centre is in stark contrast to its atmosphere

The sounds of chatter – even laughter – fill the air as the centre's inmates take a craft course in the

The inmate inmates are often from broken

They are almost always repeat of fenders - many with alarming records for housebreaking and

Many have alcohol or chronic petrol-sollling habits.

Their average age

Matak House with a calm but iron hand.
But he is far from the full-bellied giant

of a prison boss you would expect — quite the opposite in fact.

He scema always ready with an under standing car, advice for his immates.

lesy of Mr Grace.
He has the final say
on who enters and
leaves the cell.

is a very serious of the message is not delivered by solitary confinement, an inmate may be transferred to the Giles House centre in Alice Springs where security is geared to cape with high-risk

Malak House works on a theory — the better behaved you are, the more you get. It is a system of levels,

Level one inmates are usually new to the

are usually new to the centre
They are at the level because they are not known to staff—it is not known if they can be trusted
Level one means bed at 8 pm, confinement to the compound, very few privileges outside of television.

A step up the ladder to level two can mean bed an hour later, use of the centre's swimming pool, possible work detail in the kitchen. Level three inmates

can be entitled to day passes for outside work, school or a visit to their families.

to their families.
Each prisoner under the age of 15 must attend the centre's school.
It is geared toward personal development, personalised education and specialised featurent. lalised treatment for

Bed time means a room devoid of furniture or color

A single bed, wire meshed security win-dows and heavily bolted barred doors

Designed

Their average age is 14
Acoholics Anonymous runs a course at makes but can hold up to 20
The AA represent atives are not always treating the children's problems but the psychological nightmares left over from a life with a coholic relatives
Superintendent Mr
Kerry Grace rules

Lessigned
The centre is designed to hold 22 in makes but can hold up to 20
Al the request of many of the young abortginal inmakes — dreammendation by incomplete in Custoled Commissioner Jumes
Muirhead — the children's more three shares Muirhead - the chil-dren sometimes share

dren sometimes snare a cell Although security at the centre appears to be tight, the long list of cecapees this year stands as a dam-

ning indictment.
The inmales claim
escape is easy —
some of the time any.

He is respected.
But muck about with the centre's rules and you could find yourself in 'time out' — a tiny, depressing on a group of ring-isolation cell — cour-

since left Malak House.
They say security is as tight as it can be— as tight as it is at any

as tight as it is at any other Australian juvenile facility.
The department has high hopes for the new \$10 million Don Oale Juvenile Detention Centre, to be opened at Berrimah next year



The controversial juvenile detention centre, Malak House

Girl, 13, prefers

She reckeded the had stolen 20 cars since the was 11 and the giggled as the said it. She did it because the hated her mother, hated her borne and did not want to live on the

duventle prison meant a hot meal and a roof over her head. It was her fifth time in Malak House. She is 13 years old.

But Tracey (not her real ame) says she wants to get or the sorted out before she saches 17. hor Ilta

She does not want to graduate to the adult prison system.

"I can't stand living with my except all around and parents and I don't want in live television," she said, on the streets," she said.

home."
But despite the fact that
Tracey has led a rightening
life of crime and prefers to be
behind bars than with ber par-

shealing cars.

She gave herself up for the same reason she says she es.
caped - beredom.

"There was nothing to do smoke." 'We should be allowed to smoke." 'the said.

Amother time she was dragged into solitary common ment for a two-day stint.

It was punishment for beahlog s guard.

behind barn than with bor parbents, also keeps breaking out.
She was on the outside for three days — staying with friends, robbing bouses and stealing cars.
She gave been up for the about Maiak House is about Maiak House is disarmingly childish.

"Wa should be allowed to

Bradley: Locked up for 4 days

Eight months ago Eight montas ago
Bradley was
thrown into a small,
barred, cold coll
where he was to
stay for four long

an ugly confrontation with the boys in khaki.

khald.
Bradley (not his real name) bashed a cop in the Malak House car park.
The police had been returning the 16-year-old from a court appearance where he was sentenced for breaking and entering and stealing cars.

and entering and stealing cars.
He says it was not his fault
"The cops started it." he said.
It taught Bradley a leason, but he still complaints that stints in solitary are far too long.

long.
Under the law,
prisoners can be held in solliary confine-ment only for 12 hours without a

Bradley's four days were broken by short trips to the shower and dining

room.
"It was still too "It was still (so long - especially when I didn't even start the right," he sald.

Bradley - like most Malak House

most Malak House
Inmales - Is a repeat offender
He has spent many
months at the Justitution
But in many ways

But in many ways
he is one of the juvenile justice system's
greatest success
stories — breezing
through the system
with only the odd hic-

cup.

He is looking forward to his release in nine days.

His complaints about Malak House are many, but seem trivial.

He says occasion-ally the youth workers (guards) pick on kids for no

pick on kids for no reason.

He said they are sometimes deliber-ately provocative, attempting to rile the inmates and punish

He does not like the temale inmates either, calling them ""(ttle bitches".

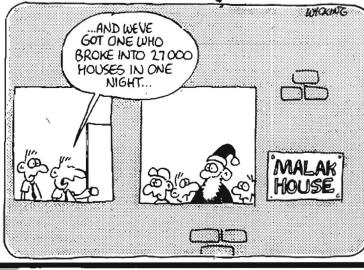
"Mittle bliches".

He, Ilke many others, has escaped.
"I kicked out a mesh window and they sent these two blokes around to fix it," he sald.
"They left it open and they weren't watching so I just bolled."

bolted."
He was on the run for three weeks but eventually gave himself up — he could not see the point in running any longer. He believes it is far the east of the country of the coun

too easy for lamates

"But this place is not too bad — it's all right sometimes "Over all they treat us pretty well."



Malak House denies claims of cover-ups

By CHRISTOPHER TAYLOR

The doors of the controversial Malak Housevenile detention contro were opened exclusivenile invenile detention centre were opened exclusively to the Northern Territory News yesterday, ending a year of public debate and allegations of lax security at the facility.

The Correctional Services Department opened the centre after siarming claims of bugs departmental cover-ups by a Maisk House worth service.

youth worker.

The youth worker, who refused to be identified, approached the NT News with the allegations.

gations.

The youth worker said physical violence against inmates, the rupe of an immate by another prisoner, a rush of excapes and escape attempts, and burbaric prison procedures, were being hidden by staff from the department and the medican began to the department.

The youth worker also claimed the centre was The youth worker also claimed the centre was a health risk, inmactor as young as eight were subject to violence at the hands of the centre's staff and the spate of recent escapes could be blamed on the future of officers to do their job adequately.

adequately.

Correctional Services Department officials have angrity denied the employee's claims.

They say Malak House is being run as afficiently as possible. The officials accompanied the NT News on a tour of the facility to try to dispel the claims.

to try to dispet the chaims.

The Probation, Parole and Juvenile Justice director. Ma Lyu Keogh, said the department had nothing to hide in its running of the centre. Ma Keogh said children younger than 10 by law could not be housed at the centre.

usw count not on noticed at the centre.
"So any claim about the mistreatment of children as young as that is without foundation," she said.
She also denied chaims of bashings and rapes of prisoners, saying if they were true police would have become involved.

She said security at the centre was as tight as ould be expected at a juvanile detention bellity.

facility.
The youth worker who spoke out elaimed to be acting in the interests of the centre's lumites.

centro's liminstes.

"I know I will probably lose my Job —
I'm prepared for that,
I'm prepared to pack
up and leave town,"
the guard said.

"I feel dirry having
to come to the press
but where else is there
to go?

bul where one in more to go?

'Malak House doesn't need stories like this - it's just the administration is not

administration is not doing its job.
"I know it looks like we are all doing a had job ~ we probably

are.
"But without the numbers of staff that are required and without the funding for extra staff it impossible to do."
The rash of escapes was a direct result of low staffing numbers.

was a direct result of low staffing numbers, the guard claimed. "Security is a joke — It is rotten," the worker said.

The inside

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LAGUE

By LEONIE BIDDLE

A north Queensland scientist has warned that the next Wet season could boost cane toad numbers to almost plague pro-portions through-

out the Top End.
James Cook University research (ellow, Dr Rick Speare, urged authorities to mount a search-anddestroy campaign for cane toads at Borro-loola following their arrival there

across the north Queenstand guif area at the rate of 30 km a year. He said the toads would have been relatively dormant during the cooler dry season but once the weather warmed up and the rate started they would multiply rapidly. He said if the advance

He said if the advance He said if the advance continued the effect on the Territory's wildlife, particularly carnivor-ous marsuplais such as goannas and snakes, would be calastrophic.

Or Speare, heading a research project into cane toad diseases, said urgent action was essential to curb the num-

A mass collection and Dr Speare said cane erudication campaign toads were advancing in the Borrolools area

was one way of reduc-ing numbers to buy He said similar cam-

paigns were under way in Queensland centres. "Science is still try-ing to find a biological answer to the ecological threat posed by the cane toads," Dr Speare said.

In the meantime collection programs were worth a go until a long-term solution was found.

He said the Territory and Federal Governments should consider starting a collection program at Borroloola and paying people to collect and destroy cane loads

Dr Speare said his The iridovirus learn's disease rebeen found to kill search had identified a poles and toadlets.

soll fungus which was fitted to cane loads.

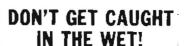
But he said the fungus But he said the fungus did not spread signifi-cantly through cane toad populations and only between 1 and 6 per cent of Loods died of the

cent of loads died of the tangus bian area where it was prevalent.

NT Conservation Commission widther researcher. Dr Bittereland, is also involved in the research

volved in the research project.

Dr Froeland had helped identify a virus in frogs he collected in Costa Rica which could be used in conjunction with an iridovirus found in native Australian in native Australian frogs.



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