

# Inspection standards for Queensland prisons

## Quick guide

### Standards for all prisoners

These standards recognise the vulnerability and specific needs of people who are deprived of their liberty, and the importance of ensuring the humane treatment of all prisoners. These standards apply to all prisoners who are detained in a prison.

### Early days in custody

#### Reception and admission

- 1 The admission and reception of a prisoner triggers the gathering of all relevant previous information and the generation of new information necessary to effectively manage the individual needs and risk of each prisoner.
- 2 Prisoners are safe and treated with respect on arrival and during the initial period of detention. Risks are identified and prisoners are supported according to individual needs.
- 3 Newly admitted prisoners can immediately inform their families and gain access to services to resolve any family, domestic and economic issues.

#### Health screening on reception

- 4 Prisoners receive an appropriate initial health and psychological assessment to identify any immediate health problems, needs or risks, with follow-up assessments arranged to address any issues.

#### Orientation

- 5 Prisoners receive a prompt, effective and supportive orientation to understand life in prison, including their rights and obligations.

#### Remand prisoners

- 6 The prison regime for remand prisoners reflects that they have been charged with, but not convicted of, an offence.
- 7 Remand prisoners who are granted bail are provided with information about their conditions.
- 8 The management and care of remand prisoners acknowledges and minimises the stress and uncertainties they face.

## Duty of care

### Access to legal representatives and resources, and attendance at court

- 9 Prisoners have confidential access to legal representatives and resources.
- 10 The prison assists prisoners to prepare for their court appearance.

### Bullying and violence reduction

- 11 The prison environment is one where bullying, harassment, intimidation and racism is not tolerated.
- 12 The prison works to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism from being organised or supported by any prisoner.

### Victims of abuse or trauma

- 13 Prisoners identified as victims of abuse or trauma experienced prior to coming into prison or during their imprisonment, receive appropriate interventions and support and can seek redress if they wish to do so.

### At-risk prisoners

- 14 Prisoners at risk of self-harm or suicide are treated with dignity and respect.

### Protection

- 15 Prisoners who seek protection are identified and safely managed to prevent harm, abuse or neglect.

### Solitary confinement and separation of prisoners

- 16 Prison staff consider and strictly comply with the requirements of domestic legislation relevant to separation.
- 17 Prisoners are separated only in accordance with the limited grounds prescribed by law, as a last resort, and where there is a demonstrated need to do so. The separation must be carried out in the least restrictive way and for the shortest possible time.
- 18 Where a prisoner is separated from other prisoners, they are treated with respect and dignity, and have meaningful opportunities to leave the unit, associate with other prisoners and earn privileges.
- 19 There is reduced reliance on solitary confinement and separation as a management tool over time.

## Accommodation

- 20 Prisoners are accommodated in single cell accommodation unless they request to share a cell with another prisoner.
- 21 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners are placed in an accommodation environment that considers their risks and individual needs.

## Transfers

- 22 Prisoners who are transferred between prisons are well prepared and supported.

## Requests and complaints

- 23 There are mechanisms in place for consulting with prisoners about matters which affect them
- 24 Prisons and health service providers have effective, transparent and confidential complaint processes in place for prisoners and staff.
- 25 Prisoners can make requests and lodge complaints without being victimised and can appeal decisions easily.

## Managing behaviour

### Encouraging positive behaviour

- 26 The relationship between staff and prisoners is positive and respectful.
- 27 There are clearly defined rules and codes of conduct for staff, prisoners and visitors.
- 28 Prisoners are encouraged to develop pro-social behaviours and to take responsibility for their actions.
- 29 Appropriate and effective systems exist to manage feuding and payback.

### Punishment and disciplinary procedures

- 30 Disciplinary action and outcomes are created under law or regulation and are clearly communicated to all prisoners.
- 31 Secondary punishment (additional to imprisonment) and prisoner discipline is open, efficient, fair, proportionate and in line with legislation and natural justice.

## Use of force, weapons and restraints

- 32 Force is only used as a last resort, for the shortest time required, and never as a punishment. When used, force is lawful, necessary and proportionate. It is safely and humanely applied, and subject to rigorous governance.
- 33 Instruments of restraint are only used in exceptional circumstances when no lesser form of control would be effective to address the risks posed by unrestricted movement. The use of restraints is proportionate in the circumstances.
- 34 Weapons are only used as a last resort when no lesser form of control would be effective to address the risks posed in the circumstances. The use of weapons is legitimate, necessary, proportionate and subject to rigorous governance.
- 35 Prisoners are not held in special accommodation and placed in mechanical restraints or anti-rip clothing except as a last resort and when properly authorised.

## Daily life

### Regime

- 36 The regime is purposeful and sufficiently flexible to account for the diversity of the prisoner population.

### Living conditions and hygiene

- 37 The prison provides a clean and suitable environment that is fit for purpose and compliant with public health practices.
- 38 Prisoners are encouraged to keep themselves, their cells and communal areas clean.
- 39 Prisoners are held in a safe environment where security is proportionate to risk and not unduly restrictive.
- 40 Accommodation units and prisons do not exceed design capacity.
- 41 The built environment is culturally appropriate, particularly for the high over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners.

### Clothing and bedding

- 42 Prisoners have adequate clothing, which is clean, presentable and suitable for their needs.

- 43 Prisoners can wear non-prison clothing when attending court and on release.
- 44 Prisoners have a bed and clean bedding suitable for their needs.

## Family and community contact

- 45 The prison provides adequate resources for Virtual Prison Visits (VPVs), as well as phone, email and mail contact.
- 46 Appropriate measures prevent the inappropriate use of phone and mail systems without unduly interfering with privacy.
- 47 Prisoners are encouraged to maintain and develop relationships with family and friends through visits.
- 48 Prisoners have safe, secure and direct contact with their visitors.
- 49 The prison has an accessible and child-friendly visitor centre with adequate amenities.
- 50 Visit facilities are comfortable, pro-social and safe.
- 51 Prisoners can visit sick relatives and attend the funeral of a family member.
- 52 Prisoners are kept up to date with news and current events.

## Recreation

- 53 All prisoners can spend at least two hours recreating in open and fresh air every day.
- 54 Prisoners have regular access to physical exercise and recreational activities.
- 55 Prisoners have regular access to a suitable library which meets Australian Standards and are encouraged to use it frequently.

## Food and nutrition

- 56 Prisoners have a varied, healthy and balanced diet which meets their individual needs.
- 57 Prisoners' food and meals are stored, prepared and served in line with hygiene regulations.
- 58 Special diets are provided for medical reasons, religious beliefs, lifestyle choices and other reasonable special needs.

## Religious and spiritual support

- 59 Prisoners' freedom of religion is respected. They can practise their religion or beliefs fully and in safety.
- 60 Prisoners are supported by the chaplaincy, contributing to their overall care, support and rehabilitation.

## Property

- 61 Prisoners' property held in storage is secure, and prisoners can access it on reasonable request.

## Incentives, earned privileges and gratuities

- 62 The incentive scheme is applied fairly, consistently and transparently.
- 63 The gratuity system is fair and transparent, and based on prisoner engagement and skill levels.

## Prisoner purchases

- 64 Prisoners can purchase a range of items to meet their needs.

## Health and support

### Physical health care

- 65 Health care services in prison are equivalent to those in the community and meet the needs of prisoners in an environment that promotes dignity and maintains privacy.
- 66 Prisoners give informed consent for health care and information sharing.
- 67 Prisoners receive a health examination by qualified health staff within 72 hours of reception.
- 68 Health service delivery is culturally appropriate.
- 69 Allied health and specialist services are provided on referral.
- 70 Prisoners are supported and encouraged to optimise their health and wellbeing.
- 71 Medication is safely distributed to prisoners.
- 72 Health services promote continuity of care on release or transfer.
- 73 Prisoner health information is available to treating health practitioners and is accessed with the consent of the prisoner.

- 74 Health staff are qualified and have input into the prison regime.

## Mental health care

- 75 Prisoners have access to mental health services equivalent to those in the community so that their mental health needs are adequately and appropriately met, in line with individual preferences.
- 76 Effective multidisciplinary processes detect and support prisoners in crisis.
- 77 Staff have suitable and culturally appropriate mental health training for the safe management of prisoners.
- 78 The prison promotes and supports resilience in all prisoners.

## Substance use treatment

- 79 The prison has strategies to safely reduce the demand for drugs and alcohol.
- 80 Prisoners with histories of substance misuse receive specialised and individualised treatment, and culturally appropriate support, equivalent to that available in the community.

## Support

- 81 Effective and valued cultural support and peer support programs meet the diverse risks and needs of the population.
- 82 An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders program enhances the cultural life of the prison.

## Security

### Procedural security

- 83 Prisoners' wellbeing is safeguarded by effective security systems.
- 84 Effective systems control access to the prison.
- 85 Decisions relating to leave of absence applications adhere to the requirements of domestic legislation.
- 86 The prison has an effective contraband and drug supply reduction strategy.
- 87 Incident prevention and emergency response capabilities align with assessed risk.

## Searches

- 88 All searches are lawful, reasonable and proportionate to the risk posed. They are carried out in the least obtrusive way, only conducted when absolutely necessary, and in a manner that is respectful of the inherent dignity of the person being searched.
- 89 Searches of all visitors and contractors are conducted when necessary and with regard for the person's dignity and privacy.
- 90 Cell searches are only conducted when necessary and with respect to the prisoner's dignity and privacy.
- 91 The strip searching of prisoners is only conducted when absolutely necessary, in accordance with legislative requirements and with respect for their individual rights, dignity and comfort.

## Emergency Management

- 92 The prison is prepared for emergency management incidents and monitors centre occurrences for predictors of disturbance.
- 93 Specialised services that can control, limit or modify an emergency to reduce its consequences are readily available and rapidly deployed for emergency management incidents.

## Deaths in custody and serious incidents

- 94 The prison promptly notifies all relevant parties about serious incidents and facilitates a comprehensive investigation.

## Maximum security management regimes

- 95 Prisoners under maximum security management regimes are treated with decency and humanity (consider standards 16-19 relevant to solitary confinement).

## Transport

- 96 Transport arrangements ensure the safety and security of prisoners.
- 97 Prisoners being transported are treated with respect and decency, and attention is paid to their individual needs.
- 98 Escorts ensure the safety and security of the community and have regard for the welfare and dignity of prisoners.

## Rehabilitation and reparation

### Classification, sentence administration and case management

- 99 Prisoners are held in custody and released in accordance with the law.
- 100 Prisoners know the details of their custody.
- 101 The security classification of a prisoner is based on their individual risks and needs.
- 102 A prisoner is held in a prison that is as close as possible to their family and community of interest.
- 103 All prisoners have an individual case management plan which meets their assessed needs and risks.
- 104 Prisoners are supported to achieve the goals of their individual case management plans.
- 105 Appropriate information is shared with relevant authorities and stakeholders.

### Programs

- 106 All prisoners are assessed to identify their risks and program needs.
- 107 Prisoners' risks and needs are addressed through relevant programs.
- 108 All programs and counselling services are best practice and evidence based.
- 109 Life skills courses meet the needs of the prisoner population.

### Education

- 110 All prisoners are assessed to identify their educational needs, wants and abilities.
- 111 Educational opportunities are relevant to the needs and interests of prisoners.

### Employment

- 112 All prisoners can engage in work that is purposeful and increases their employability on release.
- 113 Prisoners' work is not exploitative, harmful or for the private benefit of staff.
- 114 Prisoners' work provides specific benefit to the community.

## Preparation for release

- 115 The prison adequately prepares all prisoners for their release (consider standard 6 for remand prisoners).
- 116 Prisoners near release are accommodated at low security centres.
- 117 Prisoners receive all necessary practical support and information for the day of their release.

## Equity and diversity

### Younger prisoners

- 118 The distinct gender-specific needs of young prisoners are identified and appropriately responded to.

### Culturally and linguistically diverse prisoners

- 119 Prisoners from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds have fair and equitable access to services, activities, employment, and education including those relating specifically to their CALD status.

### Foreign national prisoners

- 120 Foreign national prisoners are supported to maintain connection with their family and community of interest.

### Sexual orientation

- 121 The needs of prisoners of all sexual orientations are recognised with equitable access to services, activities and facilities.

## Female prisoners

### Early days in custody

#### Reception and admission

- 122 Female prisoners feel safe and respected during their first days in custody.

#### Gender-responsive health assessment on reception

- 123 Female prisoners receive a comprehensive, gender-specific health examination on reception.

#### Orientation

- 124 Induction processes are gender-specific and culturally appropriate.

### Duty of care

#### At-risk female prisoners

- 125 At-risk female prisoners are treated with dignity and respect through individualised urgent and ongoing care.

#### Placement and accommodation

- 126 Female prisoners are held in accommodation suitable to their needs and under the least restrictive regime for their assessed risks.

## Daily life

### Regime

- 127** The regime for female prisoners is purposeful, respectful and gender responsive.

### Living conditions and hygiene

- 128** Female prisoners are held in conditions that are clean and dignified. Women are encouraged to maintain their own personal care and hygiene.

### Clothing

- 129** Female prisoners have adequate access to clean, gender-appropriate clothing that is in good condition.

### Family and community contact

- 130** Female prisoners are encouraged to develop and maintain strong relationships with family and community.

### Incentives, earned privileges and gratuities

- 131** Female prisoners' access to incentives and earned privileges is not less than that available to male prisoners.

## Health and support

### Physical health care

- 132** Health care services meet the complex needs of female prisoners in a safe and dignified environment.
- 133** Pregnant prisoners' health care needs are met by services and support equivalent to that in the community.
- 134** Gender-specific preventative health care services, including promotional information, are available.

### Mental health care

- 135** Female prisoners' gender-specific mental health needs are identified, treated and supported by services equivalent to those in the community.

### Substance use treatment

- 136** Female prisoners receive gender-specific substance use treatment and support.

## Security

### Searches

- 137** Search practices maintain the inherent dignity of female prisoners, resident children and child visitors.

### Solitary confinement

- 138** Solitary confinement for female prisoners is used only in exceptional circumstances and for the shortest possible period of time. Prisoners with resident children and those who are pregnant or breastfeeding are not placed in solitary confinement.

### Punishment and disciplinary procedures

- 139** Disciplinary processes and outcomes for female prisoners are fair, reasonable and gender responsive. They do not unduly affect prisoners' children.

### Use of force and restraints

- 140** Use of force and restraint practices are respectful and gender responsive.

## Rehabilitation and reparation

### Classification, sentence administration and case management

- 141** The classification, sentence administration and case management of female prisoners account for their specific risks and needs.

### Access to gender-responsive programs

- 142** Female prisoners can access gender-specific programs that are culturally appropriate.

### Education and employment

- 143** Education and employment opportunities for female prisoners are diverse, of interest to this cohort, and increase the likelihood of successful reintegration.

### Preparation for release

- 144** Female prisoners are prepared for their release.

## Prisoners and children

### Pregnancy and postnatal support

- 145** Pregnant and postnatal prisoners are adequately supported and treated with dignity and respect.

### Child wellbeing

- 146** Female prisoners can access programs and support to develop and maintain their relationship with their child, where it is in the child's best interests. This includes prisoners who are mothers, as well as those who are the recognised primary carers of children.

### Resident children

- 147** Policies for the resident children program are comprehensive, and the processes are fair, equitable and inclusive.
- 148** Resident children are always safe.

### Health care for resident children

- 149** The health care needs of resident children are adequately met.

### The removal of a child from prison

- 150** Female prisoners are supported when their children are removed from the prison.

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females

- 151** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female prisoners are treated with dignity and respect.

### Prison staff

- 152** Prison staff are adequately trained in the distinct needs of female prisoners.

## Transgender prisoners and gender diverse prisoners

### Early days in custody

#### Gender identity

- 153** Where a person identifies as transgender or gender diverse on admission to custody, they must be treated as the gender they identify with.

#### Respect

- 154** The dignity, sensitivity and privacy of transgender prisoners and gender diverse prisoners is respected.

#### Bullying and violence reduction

- 155** Transgender prisoners and gender diverse prisoners are safe from violence and abuse.

#### Placement and accommodation

- 156** Decisions about the placement and accommodation of transgender prisoners and gender diverse prisoners involve a comprehensive assessment of their safety and wellbeing and include consideration of their preference. These decisions also reflect the prisoner's self-identified gender.

- 157** Transgender prisoners and gender diverse prisoners are managed under the least restrictive regime for their assessed needs and risk, and they are not unduly segregated.



## Daily life

### Property, clothing and appearance

- 158** Transgender prisoners and gender diverse prisoners can access personal effects to maintain their gender expression and appearance.

## Health and support

### Health care

- 159** Access to physical and mental health care, including both treatment and assessment, adequately and appropriately meets the needs of transgender prisoners and gender diverse prisoners, and is equivalent to that which they can receive in the community.

### Support

- 160** Comprehensive and individualised support plans meet the needs of transgender prisoners and gender diverse prisoners.

## Security

### Searches

- 161** Search procedures maintain the inherent dignity of transgender prisoners and gender diverse prisoners.

### Transport

- 162** Transport arrangements for transgender prisoners and gender diverse prisoners ensure their safety and security.

### Rehabilitation and reparation

- 163** Transgender prisoners and gender diverse prisoners have equal access to rehabilitative and reparative opportunities.

## Intersex prisoners

### Gender identity

- 164** Intersex prisoners are addressed as, and referred to in, the gender they identify with.

### Respect

- 165** The dignity, sensitivity and privacy of intersex prisoners is respected.

### Bullying and violence reduction

- 166** Intersex prisoners are safe from violence and abuse.

### Placement and accommodation

- 167** Decisions about the accommodation of intersex prisoners reflect the prisoner's self-identified gender and consider their preference. These decisions are made after a comprehensive assessment of the safety and wellbeing of the prisoner and others.

- 168** Intersex prisoners are managed under the least restrictive regime for their assessed needs and risk, and they are not unduly segregated.

## Daily life

### Property, clothing and appearance

- 169** Intersex prisoners can access personal effects to maintain their appearance.

## Health and support

### Health care

- 170** Access to physical and mental health care, including both treatment and assessment, adequately and appropriately meets the needs of intersex prisoners, and is equivalent to that which they can receive in the community.

### Support

- 171** Comprehensive and individualised support plans meet the needs of intersex prisoners.

## Security

### Searches

- 172** Search procedures maintain the inherent dignity of intersex prisoners.

### Transport

- 173** Transport arrangements for intersex prisoners ensure their safety and security.

### Rehabilitation and reparation

- 174** Intersex prisoners have equal access to rehabilitative and reparative opportunities.

## Older prisoners

### Early days in custody

- 175** Older prisoners' age-specific needs and risks are identified early so they can be appropriately managed in prison.

### Duty of care

#### Placement and accommodation

- 176** Older prisoners' age-related needs are a prioritised consideration in their placement.
- 177** Older prisoners with age-related health issues are managed respectfully and fairly.

### Daily life

#### Regime

- 178** The regime for older prisoners is purposeful, respectful and allows variation from the primary design aimed at younger prisoners.

### Health and support

#### Health care

- 179** Older prisoners receive proactive, compassionate and respectful health care for their age-related needs.

#### Support

- 180** Adequate support is provided to older prisoners.

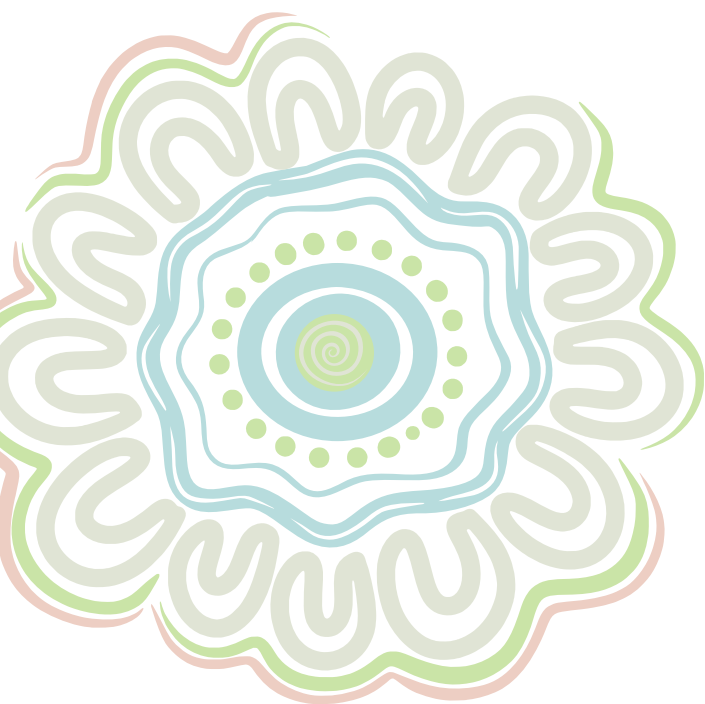
### Rehabilitation and reparation

#### Employment, education and programs

- 181** Older prisoners have access to appropriate and meaningful education, employment and program opportunities that meet their needs.

#### Preparation for release

- 182** Older prisoners are adequately prepared for their release.



## Prisoners with disability

### Early days in custody

#### Disability screening

- 183** The needs of prisoners with a disability are assessed on admission and specific assistance is provided to support their needs.

### Duty of care

#### Guardianship

- 184** Prisoners under legal guardianship are appropriately represented while in prison.

#### Bullying and violence reduction

- 185** Prisoners with disability feel safe from bullying and victimisation and are supported to integrate within the prison.

#### Requests and complaints

- 186** Prisoners with disability can access disability advocacy support.

#### Placement and accommodation

- 187** Prisoners with disability are integrated within the prison and accommodated safely to support their needs and to positively address risks.

### Managing behaviour

#### Disciplinary procedures and punishment

- 188** Disciplinary processes and punishment adequately and respectfully account for a prisoner's specific impairment.

#### Use of force and restraints

- 189** Use of force and restraint practices ensure the inherent dignity of prisoners with disability.

### Daily life

#### Regime

- 190** Prisoners with disability are meaningfully and purposefully involved in a regime that accounts for their individual needs and positively addresses risks

### Health and support

#### Health care

- 191** The specific health care needs of prisoners with disability are appropriately met.

#### Support

- 192** Prisoners with disability receive comprehensive and individualised support to meet their needs.

### Security

#### Searches

- 193** The needs of prisoners with disability are understood and they are treated with dignity and respect during all searches

#### Transport

- 194** Prisoners with disability can attend court, medical appointments and other leave of absence activities in person. The transportation used is safe, secure and has regard for the dignity of the prisoner.

### Rehabilitation and reparation

#### Employment, education and programs

- 195** Prisoners with disability have equitable access to tailored rehabilitative and reparative services and activities to meet their needs

#### Preparation for release

- 196** Prisoners with disability are adequately prepared for release, with reasonable and necessary supports in place prior to their release.

## Governance

### Strategic planning

**197** A strategic vision informs a comprehensive plan of the prison's general aims, principles, values and strategic actions.

### Prison and community relations

**198** A wide range of community-based service providers are regularly involved with the prison.

**199** The community knows about and has input into prisons, staff and their work.

### Records management

**200** There are robust and accountable recordkeeping, auditing and reporting systems for major aspects of the prison's activities.

## Workforce

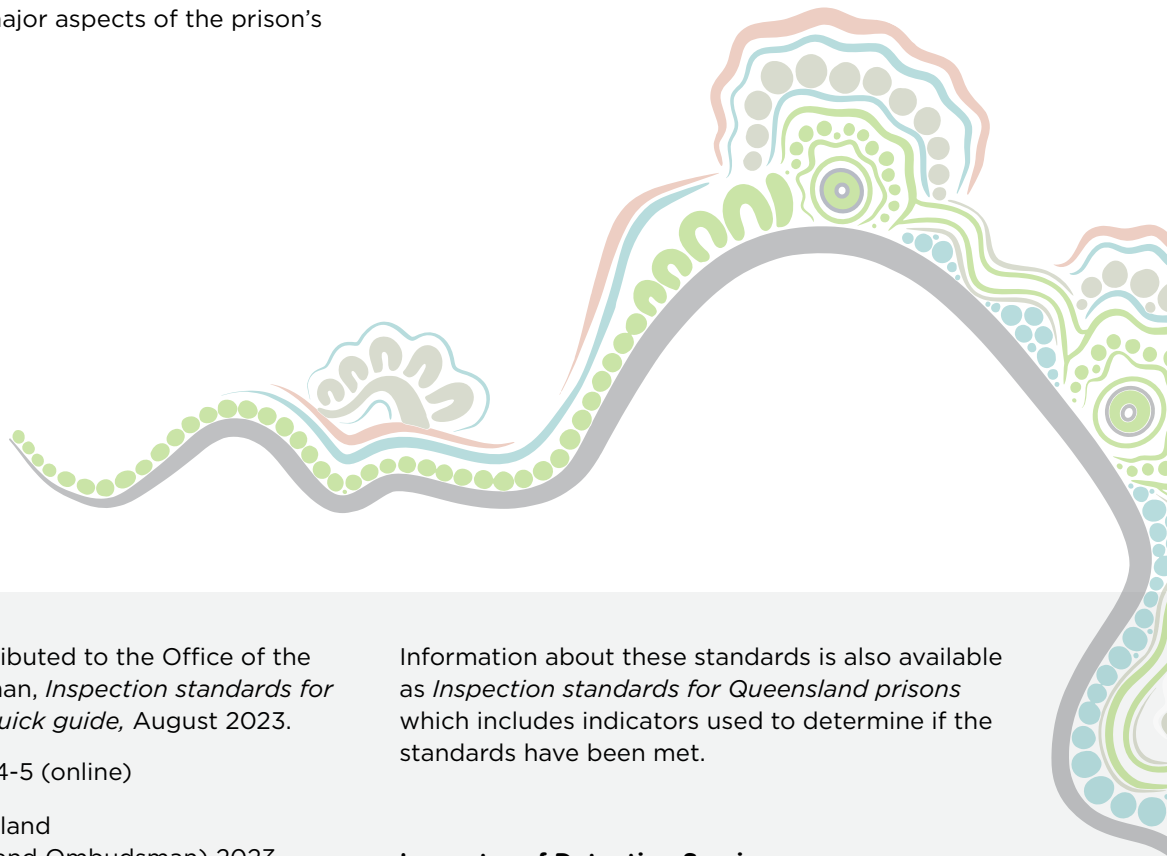
### Prison staff

**201** All staff have the necessary knowledge, skills and authority to work in a prison, and are trained to the highest standards of professional competence, integrity and honesty.

**202** Prison staffing meets the needs of the prison to manage prisoners safely and meet the aims of imprisonment.

### Staff grievances

**203** Staff are supported and have avenues to raise and address grievances that affect them in a timely and effective way



Content should be attributed to the Office of the Queensland Ombudsman, *Inspection standards for Queensland prisons: Quick guide*, August 2023.

ISBN 978-0-6457780-4-5 (online)

© The State of Queensland  
(Office of the Queensland Ombudsman) 2023

The Office of the Queensland Ombudsman supports and encourages the dissemination of its information. The copyright in this publication is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives (CC BY-NC-ND) 4.0 International licence. To view this licence visit:



<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Under this licence you are free, without having to seek permission from the Office, to use this publication in accordance with the licence terms. For permissions beyond the scope of this licence contact the Office.

Information about these standards is also available as *Inspection standards for Queensland prisons* which includes indicators used to determine if the standards have been met.

### Inspector of Detention Services

Office of the Queensland Ombudsman  
Level 18, 53 Albert Street  
Brisbane QLD 4000  
GPO Box 3314  
Brisbane QLD 4001

Phone: (07) 3005 7000

Email: [inspector@ombudsman.qld.gov.au](mailto:inspector@ombudsman.qld.gov.au)

Web: [www.ombudsman.qld.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.qld.gov.au)

August 2023 | PUBLIC