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MEDIA RELEASE

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STRENGTHENING YOUTH JUSTICE SECURITY

The NSW Government will strengthen security and establish dedicated units to house high-risk offenders in line with recommendations of an independent review into an incident at the Frank Baxter centre earlier this year.

Former NSW Police Assistant Commissioner Lee Shearer APM's report into the incident has recommended infrastructure and security improvements as well as changes to operations and training.

Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services Gareth Ward said the Government's response would create safer and more secure facilities.

"Ms Shearer has made 63 recommendations that focus on improving safety for staff and detainees and putting an increased focus on rehabilitation," Mr Ward said.

"The review also supports measures our Government has already put in place, including the Memorandum of Understanding with Corrective Services NSW, enabling the deployment of its Specialist Operations Group to Youth Justice centres."

The Government will make a suite of immediate operational improvements including:

- Refurbishment and hardening of units that house high-risk detainees;
- Upgrades to security infrastructure; and
- Introduction of a staff uniform in all centres.

There will also be a new classification for high-risk offenders, based on offence as well as their behaviour in custody, enabling improved separation from other detainees.

"Our Government's success in diverting young people away from the system has resulted in a 40 per cent decrease in detainees over the last decade," Mr Ward said.

"The report identifies the need to better manage the remaining cohort of complex and high-risk detainees through stronger policies, support and infrastructure upgrades."

A committee of government and non-government representatives led by Ms Shearer will oversee the implementation of the report's recommendations for the next 12 months.