

# RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

## Translating Policy to Practice

**Dr Ann Dadich of the School of Business and Associate Professor Brian Stout of the School of Social Sciences and Psychology are developing an evaluation framework to determine the effectiveness of the Detainee Behaviour Intervention Framework (DBIF), developed by Juvenile Justice NSW. This project is funded by the NSW Department of Attorney General and Justice, Juvenile Justice.**

'In 2010 there were, on average, 434 young people in custody everyday in NSW', says Dr Dadich. 'Many of the individuals who are detained in one of NSW's nine juvenile justice centres have complex needs, influenced by mental health and/or substance use issues. To ensure the safe and secure care of its young custodians, Juvenile Justice NSW has a framework – the DBIF – which aims to optimise the effective management of detainee behaviour within custodial environments. This guides staff decision-making practices in relation to pro-active, active and reactive intervention. After two years of implementation, it is now time to ascertain whether the DBIF meets its stated aims. These include its capacity to ensure staff members are able to manage incidents effectively and promote an environment where detainees are encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour. This project will form the first stage of a larger, full-scale research program.'

The aim of this first stage is to understand the organisational contexts in which the DBIF is implemented. This involves mapping the demographic and operational activities of eight Juvenile Justice Centres in NSW. These include staff and detainee composition, implementation activities, as well as associated outcomes. This map will reveal areas of greater and lesser effectiveness for evaluation purposes.



Given the complex needs of young detainees, it is important that those who work with them are well-equipped to support them. This includes guidance on effective behaviour management strategies. This project – and the subsequent evaluation – will identify the factors that can help and hinder the translation of the DBIF policy to practice. This will unveil opportunities to strengthen the capacity of Juvenile Justice Centres to ensure that young detainees remain safe and secure.

**Project Title:** The evaluation of detainee behaviour intervention framework

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