



STATEMENT FROM THE MONITOR

12 February 2026

Ashley Youth Detention Centre closure timelines

With events at the Ashley Youth Detention Centre once more in the headlines over the last week, it is time to again reflect on timelines for its closure.

Central to this is progression of the planned therapeutic youth justice facility at Pontville.

This year will mark five years since former Premier Peter Gutwein pledged to close Ashley Youth Detention Centre within three years.

Weeks of harrowing public evidence before the Commission of Inquiry concerning the treatment of vulnerable young people at AYDC was followed by the subsequent recommendation in August 2023 that it be closed as soon as possible.

The United Nations Human Rights Council has again recently highlighted AYDC as a site of particular concern.

I am very concerned about further delays.

Government has expressed determination to close AYDC, however events have conspired to slow this process down.

After Tasmania's Upper House last year voted against fast-tracking the Pontville replacement, the Southern Midlands Council in December approved a planning permit for the Pontville site - a site carefully chosen by experts.

While construction could have started, that decision has now been appealed against in the Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (TASCAT).

Should appeal fail in coming months, the matter may face further appeals in other legal jurisdictions, potentially drawing the process out for years more while vulnerable young people remain at AYDC, placing prolonged and immense pressure on all concerned.

While the right of appeal is important, if it appears delays are to continue in the longer term, I implore our parliamentarians to explore all options and powers to enable the new therapeutic youth justice facility to go ahead, as a matter of urgency.

- **Robert Benjamin AM KC**