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QSSU

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Queensland State Service Union

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The QSSU is seeking a commitment from from Family Services Minister Beryce Nelson to implement changes to improve the security at the John Oxley Youth Centre at Wacol.

The Union, along with the Queensland Professional Officers' Association, the Queensland Teachers' Union and the Australian Workers' Union, all of whom have members employed at the Centre, is concerned that there is too high a ratio of children to staff and this has been a factor in security problems which have included assault and sexual abuse.

The Unions are seeking a reduction in the current maximum number of children at the centre from 30 to 24 by the abolition of three rooms in which three children sleep and their conversion to single occupancy rooms as is the case with the 21 other rooms at the Centre.

Youth workers have been unable to guarantee the safety of children in the triple occupancy rooms, where the majority of cases of assaults and sexual abuse have occurred.

The Unions have made representations to Mrs. Nelson, who acknowledged the triple occupancy rooms were "difficult to manage" but failed to take action to rectify the problem.

The problems associated with overcrowding at the John Oxley Youth Centre have been exacerbated by the scaling down of operations at the Sir Lesley Wilson Youth Centre and the closure of the Warilda Youth Centre.

