

Good Practice, Strengthening Services for Youth
in Juvenile Justice.

**Youth Connections and School, Business
Community Partnership Broker National
Networks**

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Acronyms

YC:	Youth Connections Program
PB:	School Business Community Partnership Broker program
DEEWR:	Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.
FNQ:	Far North Queensland
PCYC:	Police and Community Youth Club
YATMIS:	Youth Attainment and Transition Management Information System
FaHCSIA:	Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

Terminology

“Indigenous” is used to refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people. In some states there is a preference for the term Aboriginal. In others, the advice has been to use the term Indigenous. In this report, both terms have been used. The author wishes to express respect for the original custodians of the lands upon which this work has been conducted and asks for understanding in relation to the use of these terms.

1. CONTEXT

Report Context

This report focuses on how Youth Connections services, School Business Community Partnership Broker services, or a partnership of both, are strengthening services and building capacity resulting in improved outcomes for young people along the juvenile justice continuum. The eleven case studies featured in the report illustrate that even in the challenging area of juvenile justice, perseverance, collaboration, vision and innovation make a positive difference.

The case studies present ideas that can be adopted by others involved with working with young people with exposure to the juvenile justice system. There are also key messages for change and improvement for the Australian Government who funds the programs, for service managers and for frontline staff. While it is clear that work needs to be done if practice across the Juvenile Justice sector is to consistently achieve the Australian Juvenile Justice Standards, these case studies are an example of the contribution these DEEWR funded programs are making to strengthen services and build capacity.

The Youth Connections program supports young people who are disengaged or who are at risk of disengaging from education to return to education with the goal of attaining Year 12 (or equivalent) qualifications. Service delivery is characterised by flexible and individualised case management to assist young people to remain engaged or re-engage with education and to improve their ability to make positive life choices. Youth Connections providers also run outreach and re-engagement activities for young people in the community and work to strengthen services in their regions so young people are better supported.

The goal of the School Business Community Partnership Brokers (Partnership Brokers) program is to building partnerships to support young people to attain Year 12 or equivalent qualifications and reach their full educational and social potential. The program is designed to foster a strategic, whole of community approach to improving education and transition outcomes for all young people.

The report showcases the ‘on-the-ground’ learning from the eleven case studies and sets these within the context of the key issues in juvenile justice in contemporary Australia.

Key issues in juvenile justice in contemporary Australia

Two trends are of concern in juvenile justice in contemporary Australia:

- the continuing very high over-representation of Indigenous young people; and
- the significant rise in young people held on remand.

While there are differences across the states and territories arising from local policy differences, there is a decrease in the overall number of young people involved in the juvenile justice system. However, it would seem that the strategies being utilised to reduce offending in the non-Indigenous group, are not working for Indigenous young people. Two in three Indigenous males and one in four Indigenous females have had an offending contact by the age of seventeen, compared to one in ten and one in twenty respectively of non-Indigenous young people¹. Young people in detention (approximately 1015) are much more likely to be male, be fourteen years or older, be on remand (59%), and identify as Indigenous (54.7%)².

Research sponsored by the NSW Government³ notes the following strategies are effective in addressing Indigenous overrepresentation in the juvenile justice system:

- maximising access to and utilisation of, alcohol and substance abuse programs;
- avoidance of incarceration wherever possible;
- promotion of sustained engagement with the education system;
- a high level of participation by the Indigenous community in formulating and implementing responses to Indigenous youth crime; and
- adequate provision of local community-based support and parental training for disadvantaged families.

The increase in young people being held on remand is contrary to the national and UN agreed use of detention for juveniles as a last resort. It gives a young person a detention experience when their offence itself may only attract a non-custodial sentence. Periods of remand, while sometimes repeatedly experienced by the

¹ *Trends in juvenile detention in Australia* in Trends & Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice no. 416 Kelly Richards Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology, May 2011

² *ibid*

³ *Review of Effective Practice in Juvenile Justice Report* for the NSW Minister for Juvenile Justice, Noetic Solutions Pty Ltd January 2010 (summarises elements of systems internationally)

same individual, are often for such a short time that meaningful engagement in rehabilitation is difficult. It is also high cost⁴.

The increase in the number of young people on remand and the length of time they are held on remand seems driven by factors such as welfare concerns including homelessness, stricter bail conditions than those that apply to adults and administrative delays. It is also driven by young people not even applying for bail under the misconception that a custodial sentence is likely⁵.

There are differences in addressing this issue across jurisdictions. In Victoria for instance, the Victorian Government's "After Hours Bail Placement Support Service" provides after hours support to children and young people aged from 10 to 18 years who are being considered for remand or who need accommodation options in order to access bail. An Australian Institute of Health and Welfare review assessed the service as reducing inappropriate remands⁶.

What is generally accepted is that juvenile offending is closely linked to health, social, and behavioural issues, the breakdown in social norms in some communities and the challenges of access to housing and other services.

As with many health and social issues, community based prevention can be seen as an optimal strategy for both social and economic reasons. However this requires investment in community capacity. This is summed up well in the Review of Northern Territory Youth Justice System⁷:

"Apart from assisting these young people for compassionate reasons there are sound economic reasons for doing so. This underpins the concept of justice reinvestment...It requires realigning expenditure so that, over time, custodial operations are reduced and community interventions are increased (p.iii)."

The Commonwealth Government has shown its support for prevention and a broad community approach in this area with an investment of \$490 million over three years (2011-12 to 2013-14). This funding provides support for families, improves child wellbeing and safety and builds more resilient communities, as part

⁴ *Review of Effective Practice in Juvenile Justice Report* for the NSW Minister for Juvenile Justice, Noetic Solutions Pty Ltd January 2010 (summarises elements of systems internationally)

⁵ Ibid

⁶ *Juvenile Justice in Australia 2009-10* 21 October 2011 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

⁷ *Review of the Northern Territory Youth Justice System: Report September 2011* Northern Territory Government

of their response to the review of the Northern Territory youth justice system in September 2011.

2. INTRODUCTION TO THE CASE STUDIES

Process of selection of case studies

Nominations for case studies were sought from Youth Connections and School Business Community Partnership Brokers Program providers. The Youth Justice Project Working Party selected eleven case studies from the twenty six nominated. All the twenty-six case studies are included in a brief summary table as Appendix 1 of the report, with contact details to promote sharing of promising practice across the network of service providers. The strong response demonstrates the level of interest in sharing promising practice and the power of the network model for both Youth Connections and the School Business Community Partnership Brokers Program.

The eleven case studies were chosen taking into account the extent to which the case study is:

- demonstrating building capacity and strengthening services;
- the level of innovation and potential for broader application; and
- demonstrating evidence of promising practice.

Other factors considered included ensuring as far as possible:

- examples of services concerning reducing substance abuse and teen parents;
- a national and urban, regional and remote representation;
- representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people; and
- representation along the continuum from prevention to exiting detention.

Scope of case studies

When reading the case studies it is important to note that they cover a wide range of levels of practice. Some, such as Case Studies 2 and 6, have a very local scope. Others such as Case Study 3 describe a whole-of-state strategy. Case Study 11 demonstrates how a local approach in a remote community is helping to open the door to a whole of territory impact.

Some case studies may at first appear to be just routine practice. However, each example demonstrates something we can learn from, such as the innovation in Case Study 6, about the clever use of human resources; or, as in Case Study 10, the

unusually close collaboration between state juvenile justice workers and the focus on an often neglected cohort: remote, teenage, mostly Indigenous girls.

The key issues in juvenile justice noted above are reflected by and being dealt with in the case studies. For example:

- The effective practice of Indigenous community engagement and skilling parents is demonstrated in practice, to various extents, in Case Studies 8, 9, 10, 11.
- Promoting sustained engagement in education is a key theme of all the case studies
- The complexities of social and economic issues which are the background for much juvenile offending are referenced in all the case studies.
- The issue of homelessness linked to bail breaches or not achieving bail was highlighted by those interviewed for Case Study 4.
- The issue of lack of accurate information about the law, leading as noted in Section 1 to sometimes not even applying for bail, is addressed in Case Study 2. Case Study 7 shows how the relationship developed with the police has allowed young people to deepen their understanding of how their rights apply under the law.

Sources of information for the case studies

Information in the case studies has been sourced largely from the workers involved and in some cases other stakeholders such as those delivering a specialist service, state and territory government colleagues and the police.

All case study drafts have been checked for accuracy by those interviewed.

3. CASE STUDIES

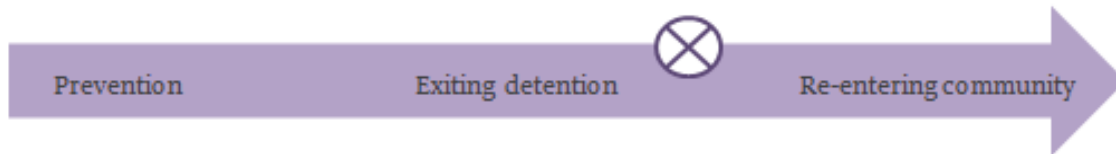
The eleven case studies selected follow. Each case study also shows where it falls on the juvenile justice continuum, whether it is focused on prevention, exiting detention, or re-entering the community.

All Youth Connections participants' names have been changed in the case studies to protect their identity.

A table of all case studies nominated is at Appendix 1.

Case Study 1: Metropolitan WA Indigenous young men preparing to exit detention

The Life Wise Program: serving young people in detention



The Context

This case study centres on work that Youth Futures WA is carrying out at the Perth based Banksia Hill Detention Centre. The aim of their Life Wise program is to assist teenage boys, sixteen to eighteen years, 80% of whom identify as Indigenous, to develop the life skills they will need to maintain independent housing when they are released from detention.

The story so far

Youth Futures WA manages a broad suite of programs that they combine to provide a safety net for vulnerable young people. The largest of these programs is Youth Connections (YC). For many years, Youth Futures WA has worked on a referral and joint case management basis with young people leaving detention.

In this example, it became apparent that some young people were failing their transition into mainstream society partly because they lacked basic living skills. For example, they didn't understand the responsibility of maintaining their tenancies or possess the skills to do this. Recognising this very tangible need, Youth Futures WA leveraged their established reputation with the police to gain funding from the Strategic Crime Prevention Division of WA Police and combined this with National Partnership Homelessness funding to begin developing and then delivering the Life Wise program for juveniles in detention.

Taking an action research approach, a way of working that is embedded in the Youth Futures WA organisational culture, staff began to work out how to start helping young people to develop their life skills before they left detention. They built the program based on their broad experience in skilling young people but ongoing feedback received from the participants and from detention staff would be vital to make it work.

Meeting with young people within the detention centre weekly, in groups of 4, they delivered 90 minute sessions of basic skills training in areas such as personal

hygiene and cooking. In recognition of the very low literacy level of participants, highly interactive teaching methods were used to maintain attention and a positive learning environment. As most of the young people were Indigenous males, the support and guidance of an Indigenous staff member within Youth Futures WA was used to give the trainers culturally specific insight and important information about relationships within the community. Ongoing feedback is used to tailor the curriculum to young people undertaking the training.

The aim is that these young people begin their life after detention with a better chance of taking up a positive pathway. This program is new but has been positively received by staff, students and other key stakeholders and is developing into a promising practice. With improved life skills these young people will be better equipped to take advantage of the support of programs available to them, such as YC.

Negotiating entry into the Banksia Hill Detention Centre to deliver the program was not easy. Bureaucratic processes and the turnover of key personnel slowed the negotiations. The importance of perseverance and patience were part of the action learning.

What's working?

“On the prowl for dollars”: Youth Futures WA is able to bring together the funding from a range of sources to respond to identified and specific need. To resource their vision of services to meet the needs of young people exiting detention, they dedicate a staff member to be aware of and apply for funding from the wide range of Commonwealth, State and other funding sources. They also access gifts-in-kind through utilising the “GIVIT.ORG.com” website and other voucher donations.

A strong network of relationships: The strong reputation Youth Futures WA had established with the police enabled them to prove they were a “safe pair of hands” to manage funding in the juvenile justice area. This relationship includes having a community police officer on their steering committee.

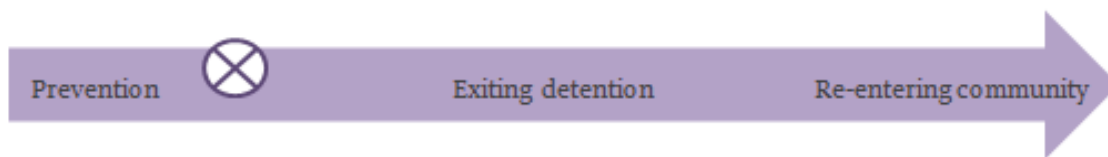
Meeting a need: The program was developed to meet an obvious, tangible need. The demonstrated benefit to the young people’s attitude helps to keep the program welcomed by the detention centre staff.

A culture of trial and error: Working in the challenging environment of a detention centre was new to Youth Futures WA staff. It was important to bring a quality program but they also recognised that they needed to learn “on the job” in many ways. Being able to position themselves as learners and to take an approach of continuous improvement through the action learning methodology helped give them the confidence to develop a way to meet this new need.

Perseverance: Youth Futures WA took account of the very different timeframe applying to approvals in government departments dealing with juvenile justice. Patience and perseverance were key in gaining entry to work in the detention centre and creating this partnership.

**Case Study 2:
Metropolitan Victoria
Prevention: helping young people access legal advice**

YOUTHLAW Outreach Skype Service, facilitated by Youth Connections in the Outer Eastern Region of Melbourne: aiming to improve young people’s access to and use of legal advice and support



The Context

The Youthlaw Outreach Skype Service operates in partnership with various agencies in Victoria. This case study concerns the partnership with Youth Connections in a part of Melbourne which the Victorian State Government Community Service Department reports is characterised by “Low commitment to school and academic failure”.

The area is defined as the Outer Eastern, encompassing Yarra Ranges, Knox and Maroondah. Students in the Shire of Yarra Ranges, particularly in the Upper Yarra region, are leaving school earlier and are less likely to achieve a year 12 qualification.

Transport infrastructure in the Upper Yarra region is poor with no rail services and limited bus transport. Students not yet able to drive are often entirely reliant on adults with a car to move around the area for school, work or service access and many routinely hitch-hike. Many disengaged young people are from families where the adults do not necessarily have regular access to a reliable car or can afford to buy petrol or even have a valid driver’s license. There are no emergency hospital facilities in the Yarra Valley or Upper Yarra region, and access to specialised health, education and support services is limited, patchy and poorly coordinated.

Among initiatives to address this need, is a Victorian Government program to skill all teachers in the region in alternative education strategies.

The story so far

Young offenders and young people at risk can miss out on the legal advice they need to make good decisions about their lives. Without timely legal advice they can enter a cycle of minor offending leading to more serious reoffending by ignoring fines and failing to understand the seriousness of their behaviour, such as driving and fare evasion offences. The Outer East YC has seized an opportunity provided by Youthlaw, a community legal service jointly supported by Blake Dawson Waldron law firm, the Victorian State Government and the Commonwealth Government. YC is now one of a small number of services which host an innovative way to bring legal advice to disempowered young people.

At two sites, YC is hosting the Youthlaw program and young people who are being case managed can access legal advice over Skype. They can have their trusted case manager involved if they choose. Even if a young person faces serious charges, the intensive legal case management Youthlaw can provide can be accessed in the YC office. Young people who may be reluctant or unable to seek advice through Youthlaw's website or by travelling to Youthlaw offices have the service brought to them. Other youth service providers, such as the Salvation Army have brought young people in to use the service as well.

This works for young people such as Jenny and Carol:

Jenny is a young woman accruing ticket infringement fines for travelling on public transport without a ticket or valid concession card. Through YC she was linked in with Youthlaw via Skype to discuss her legal rights and obligations to resolve the matter before it went to Court.

Carol is 15 and renting privately. She has no family support and minimal income. Since signing up with Outer East YC, it has been identified that Carol's rights as a tenant are potentially being abused and she has very little knowledge and understanding of what her legal rights as a private tenant are. YC has linked Carol in with Youthlaw via Skype to seek legal advice and gain a better understanding of her rights to ensure she is no longer at risk of having those rights abused.

What's working?

Understanding the particular issues of the region's young people and targeting prevention and early intervention in a way that works for them, is clearly an important factor here. YC workers with a thorough understanding of the region recognise that the lack of public transport and lack of access to a range of services in the region can lead to young people committing driving offences and also having difficulty meeting commitments for meetings and other obligations. As well as these physical access challenges, workers understand that to access legal advice the young people need

“...tools, motivation and life skills that the majority of these people don't have. They are likely just to go 'oh yeah' and just ignore fines to avoid the whole thing and end up getting into trouble.” YC Case Worker

The Skype access combined with the relationship developed with their case manager or local worker gives them quick easy access to legal assistance.

A thorough understanding of the operating environment and the issues and opportunities: The YC location and relationships make Youthlaw work in this community. An attitude of being aware of the broader environment and being willing to do the work to take up an opportunity and integrate it into work practice is at the core of the success of this collaboration. The Youthlaw opportunity has been available for the organisation since 2009 but the YC manager, with long experience in this region of Melbourne and well aware of the juvenile justice issues for young people, recognised the potential of this collaboration. The manager worked hard to re-establish the relationship after the arrangement had become inactive due to staffing changes.

Making the effort to build trusting relationships: The take up from YC clients is assisted by the regular meetings for relationship development and trust building between YC and Youthlaw workers that has marked this collaboration and ensures that the relationship is mutually beneficial.

A barrier Youthlaw still faces is effectively communicating and promoting the service so it is more widely utilised by young people in the region.

**Case Study 3:
South Australia
Providing state-wide services for youth across the youth justice continuum**



The Context

Supported by the YC program, this is a pilot “whole of state” specialist service focussing on young people in the Youth Justice continuum across South Australia. This pilot is currently being evaluated and will help inform the South Australian Government’s consideration of future funding of such specialist services in other jurisdictions. The pilot operates alongside other YC service providers in South Australia.

The story so far

The capacity building aspect of the YC Specialist Services began with a focus on demystifying the detention system.

It was clear that once a young person entered detention, other services lost contact with that individual and the young person became inaccessible until they returned to their community. The negative consequence of this is obvious. Progress that the young person may have made in detention, both in education and training and in attitudinal change can easily be lost in transition. The young person can also easily fall through cracks between the various bureaucracies that manage their detention, exit and reintegration.

The demystifying process began with discussions with key personnel such as Education Aboriginal Inclusion Officers and Regional Support Service Managers, school principals, the police and community service providers. These open ended and wide-ranging discussions helped to identify some key issues which gave a focus for two day-long forums in two key regional centres. The conversations at the forums were carefully structured to gain a shared understanding and ownership of the issues and to agree to a set of recommendations. Some of the recommendations were across government agencies; some were for the Department of Education and Child Development (DECD) and some were suggested and adopted by SA Police.

For the organisations involved, this process has led to changes that have “closed many of the gaps in the system of support”.

One outcome of the forums is that an improved system of communication has been established. Confidentiality concerns can often prohibit sharing sensitive information across service systems. Without a high level systemic commitment this issue would need to be negotiated on a case by case basis. Through YC Specialist Services a Memorandum of Understanding was signed at the CEO level to facilitate information exchange. This has broken down the barriers and allowed front line staff to share information and negotiate better protocols. For example, previously it was only on day six of entry to detention that schools were notified that a young person was in detention. This delay damaged the relationship between the parents and the school. The parents believed the school should know sooner and now the school is notified by day two.

There is also an improved information flow between schools and detention staff. The detention centre is informed of important information such as whether the young person is Indigenous, whether they have a disability and their family contact. This improvement has also led to increased expectation for information, with schools requesting and welcoming information about diagnostic testing and education achievements during detention. Previously there was little interest or understanding that the young person was participating meaningfully in education during detention. As a result, an email is sent to the student’s enrolled school and DECD Regional Support Services at point of exit, which includes a summary of diagnostic testing, a Learning Plan and the latest Student Report, if these documents are available.

In addition, an improved system of providing social and emotional support for young people has been implemented, particularly as a number of young people come from families and schools which are long distances away from the youth training centres. Through the YC Specialist Services pilot, a school principal has been able to visit their students in detention. Contrary to initial expectations, the young people were thrilled to see a familiar face and eager to demonstrate their achievements in the education centre. As part of an ongoing case management process, home school personnel (not students), DECD Regional Support Services providers and Flexible Learning Option personnel are able to talk with their students at the Youth Education Centre via the Centra Virtual Classroom environment.

Finally, a network of close cooperation has been established, replacing a fragmented system. Key workers and school staff now know who to contact, ensuring direct and timely communication that is focussed on the young person’s needs. The Youth Justice teams are more mindful of communication and

managing relationships with others. There is a heightened awareness that getting better outcomes for the young person is a team effort.

What's working?

Addressing issues at a systems level: A systemic approach has helped to remove barriers to cooperation and establish the working environment for the parties in the system to work well together. While these kinds of arrangements may be able to be negotiated regionally or at a community level, and some other case studies demonstrate this, the state wide approach frees up front line workers and service managers to focus on their clients.

Sharing and listening: The YC Specialist Services approach of broad discussion and a shared process of identifying issues and committing to action has helped create the commitment across the system that increases the chance of sustainable change.

Taking time to understand and to map processes that impact across the system: Small details can have big impacts. For example, the discussion and mapping of apparently small issues, such as when schools are notified a young person is in detention, assisted to identify a negative impact and action was taken to address it.

Case Study 4: Regional Queensland Preparing to and exiting detention

A project to support the transition of young offenders in Far North Queensland from detention to mainstream life



The Context

Indigenous Australians make up 14.3% of the population of Far North Queensland (FNQ). A high proportion of these Indigenous people are young adolescents: more than a third under 14 years. A recent Education Queensland survey shows that almost all (78 of 80) early school leavers in the FNQ region identify as Aboriginal

or Torres Strait islander. They are much more likely to be from families suffering very high social and economic disadvantage.

FNQ has the highest rate of juvenile offenders in Queensland and Indigenous young people are grossly over-represented in juvenile detention. High rates of young people re-offend after experiencing detention.

The story so far

The PB and YC providers have begun a partnership with Cleveland Detention Education Centre to create a communication link to services for young people about to exit detention and return to the Far North Queensland region.

A teacher at Cleveland Detention Education Centre became increasingly concerned at the high rate of recidivism. She realised that for her work in the education section of the Centre to be effective, she needed to reach beyond her classroom and beyond the Detention Centre environment.

The Youth Connections and the School Business Community Partnership Brokers provider, Vocational Partnerships Group (VPG), were already aware of the challenges that young offenders returning to the community faced. With some detention centres located a long way from their communities, young offenders are mostly disconnected from their family and community, and return to the same set of family and peer relationships after detention. Sometimes these are the same family settings that were not considered stable enough, and led magistrates to hold them in remand rather than allow family to manage them on bail. Furthermore, the documents of achievement in education, and other enabling documentation such as Birth Certificates that they received in detention, are often lost in transit. The young person returns to a community, including a school environment, that doesn't informed about their progress. Homelessness is common for young people returning from the detention centre environment which puts them at greater risk of substance abuse or crime.

VPG contacted Cleveland Detention Centre to find out more about the young people leaving detention and through that contact, they met the Detention Centre's teacher and the partnership began. The Detention Centre agreed to alert VPG before a young person was returning from detention to their area. They also agreed to allowing VPG to establish phone contact with the young person and begin to establish a relationship with them as well as alerting them to the support they could have when they leave detention.

While this partnership is at a very early stage and has not yet demonstrated direct program outcomes, there are already signs that this initiative is strengthening the service system.

Previously, YC did not often receive referrals from youth justice workers. Communication was almost always initiated through YC in their case management role, to Youth Justice Services. Cleveland Detention Centre identified that there was a growing gap between exit and the time that youth justice workers had the capacity to put in place a transition plan. In some cases this was taking up to six months. The establishment of a direct relationship with the Detention Centre has led to YC being built into the transition plan. The plan informs YC of the young person's achievements during their time in detention, their strengths and needs and creates legitimacy in the eyes of Youth Justice for the YC role. The power of this relationship is now shown very tangibly in the number of referrals from Youth Justice to YC. These referrals are of young people both at risk and post detention.

“In one of our regions, we have had more referrals this year in the short time since we started this relationship with the Detention Centre than we had in the last seven years.” *Youth Connections worker*

This new relationship is also allowing YC to bring an understanding of young people's capability to the Youth Justice transition plan. For instance, many young people are unable to restart in a schooling environment full time once exiting detention without adequate support. YC has helped the negotiation of a phased transition to school building up to a whole week. The YC provider has utilised its regional knowledge and relationships with schools to direct young people to a suitable environment to meet their needs. For example a smaller school might be a more welcoming environment.

This partnership is building on the passion and commitment of a range of staff. The PB role is to create a formalised MOU with the stakeholders so that while personal motivation and effort will always be important, this strengthened service system can survive the turnover in staff, inevitable in remote Australian communities.

What's working?

Youth Connections and Partnership Broker programs working in an integrated way: The collaboration across the two programs that is facilitated within the organisation has enabled this initiative to draw on a range of strategies to establish and manage this partnership. While this is possible between organisations, issues of ownership and accountability to funders for program outcomes can sometimes mean there is a tension about who “owns” the partnership. The in-depth understanding of YC workers of the needs of young people in the region has helped to inform the PB work on particular high priority areas.

Strategic approach: Based on the success of this strategic relationship between the community sector, Youth Justice Services and the Detention Centre: a nationally negotiated relationship between the Detention Centres and YC is suggested to streamline local negotiations.

Attracting and supporting staff: The VPG CEO emphasises the importance of supporting and debriefing staff regularly. The impact of the relationships staff build with young people and the negotiation of relationships with other services can be emotionally draining. Maintaining high morale through skilled leadership enables the service to work well in this challenging area. She also recognises that just making links between services and developing an understanding of the network of services actually creates a resource to draw on to assist a young person.

**Case Study 5:
Regional Tasmania
Outreach through the Nomadic Support Trailer**

Partnership between Youth Connections, Ashley Youth Detention Centre and the Department of Education, brokered by the School Business Community Partnership Broker Program



The Context

Ashley Youth Detention Centre and within it the Ashley School, is based in the North of Tasmania close to Deloraine. It provides secure custody of young people, almost all of whom are being held on remand. The centre caters for males and females; however this project is focussed on males.

The story so far

YC previously had very little interaction with the Ashley Centre. Young people often transitioned into the community without support and often soon returned to Ashley. YC in Launceston in the North of Tasmania identified this as a need in the region and endeavoured to find a solution. The YC provider in Hobart had

developed a trailer that allowed YC to provide mobile outreach activities. This sparked the idea of the development of a trailer service for Northern Tasmania as a project to engage and support Ashley detainees.

To develop this project, YC relied on the assistance of the School Business Community Partnership Broker Program to source partners to provide essential support. The PB negotiated a partnership between YC, the Detention Centre and the Tasmanian Department of Education.

This partnership has had a range of positive outcomes.

Firstly, the trailer is being built from resources provided by local businesses. For example, a tyre company has provided new tyres for the trailer.

Secondly, the trailer is being designed by an Ashley school teacher and built by young people in detention. A spray painter from Hobart is travelling up to teach young people the skills to decorate the trailer. This project within the Detention Centre has energised staff and students. The exposure of their work across the outreach sites will also help to raise the positive profile of these young people helping to counter their negative reputation. It is also providing an opportunity for these young people to give back to the community.

Thirdly, the interactions around this project over almost twelve months have strengthened the relationship with young people leaving Ashley or about to leave. It has also provided young people access to YC programs that can assist them to develop a positive pathway as they transition from detention into education, training or employment.

This innovation has not been without challenges. There has been staff turnover and absence, and safety concerns about detainees having access to building tools. Nevertheless, the ongoing persistence of YC and support of PB is working through these issues; every interaction builds the understanding of all parties about what is needed to work effectively with young people in, and leaving detention.

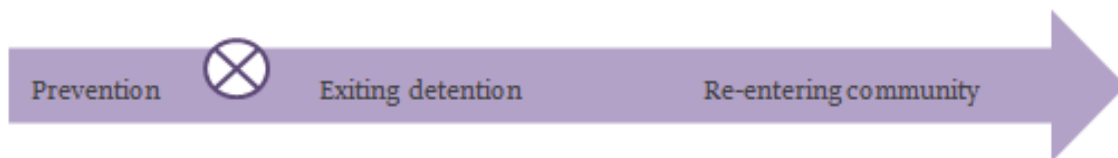
What's working?

Partnership: This is a good example of YC and PB working collaboratively to help attract the partners needed to support innovation. In addition to the formal partners, donations in-kind have been provided by a range of community organisations.

Innovation: While this project has faced barriers, it has provided an opportunity to strengthen the opportunities available for detainees within the detention centre and to positively impact on the mentoring

Case Study 6 Regional NSW Connecting cautioned offenders

COPS (Cautioned Offenders Pathway Strategy) outreach: a partnership with the police and other key services to improve access by cautioned offenders to case management



Context

This service is based in the large coastal NSW regional city of Newcastle. The partnership with the police started in response to the high number of young people in Newcastle receiving cautions by police. There was a shortage of community resources to engage these young people who were typically severely disengaged from school. Most offences included damage to property, stealing, alcohol related antisocial behaviour and graffiti.

The story so far

In a turbulent environment with a changed school leaving age and police reports of increased juvenile crime, the YC contract Service Manager trialled a new way of working, focussing much more on collaborative relationship building. He already had a good relationship with the local Police Youth Liaison Officer and Police and Community Youth Club (PCYC). He began to build on these relationships to meet the needs of the increasing number of cautioned young offenders.

The Service Manager encouraged his staff to work differently and empowered them to be a “single point of contact”, the consistent face of YC, for not only the young people but also other key service providers and stakeholders. He could then focus on building the framework of the partnerships and driving new opportunities.

A network of very close relationships between YC, the police, the Youth Justice Convenors and the school Student Welfare Consultant and Home School Liaison Officers (HSLOs) is now in place. As the police say “the relationship between the police and Jobquest (YC provider) has grown considerably since the formative days”. This partnership now drives better life opportunities for cautioned young offenders such as “Alex”.

Alex was referred to the program by the PCYC police officer but YC workers had also been working closely with the police officer from PCYC to help engage him. Alex has an extensive history with police and has not been attending school for over twelve months. YC referred this young person to alternative education for Year 10 and he was successful in gaining entry. Unfortunately he was asked to leave after eight weeks due to lack of attendance and commitment to his studies. The PCYC police officer and YC called another meeting and spoke to him about his goals. YC spoke about a Certificate II in Flooring Technology at TAFE. The young person was really keen and was successful in gaining entry into the course. He has maintained his attendance and motivation. YC keeps in regular contact with his TAFE teacher who is happy with his progress. The PCYC police officer helped source money for his TAFE clothing requirements.

YC took a practical approach to finding ways that deliver outcomes for young people. As the YC Coordinator says, “We didn’t want to reinvent the wheel. Our service has a culture of trial and error. We focus on getting results for young people and the services we work with...”. The approach could be described as a kind of Action Research, planning small steps, implementing and observing and reflecting on results before the next actions are taken.

From this approach, a set of principles for other outreach work has been developed:

- Encourage support from local community who will identify at risk young people and encourage them to participate.
- An outreach service which is run consistently at the same time each week.
- The same case managers attend each week to develop a rapport with young people attending the service.
- Linking young people with pathways and other activities that are consistent with their goals.
- Case managers are proactive in seeking and liaising with community stakeholders to generate referrals and continue ongoing support for the service.
- Partnerships with other services are vital.

What’s working?

The YC manager began with action, taking a trial and error approach: He didn’t wait for a perfect plan. He started working with the Youth Liaison Officer from the Newcastle City Local Area Command, responding to a need.

The YC manager empowered his case managers to not only deliver a service to identified young people but also to be the face of YC to all services: This single point of contact for the participant and the relevant service personnel

allowed trust to build much more quickly. As relationships developed with the police and other services, the processes for referral were streamlined so that police can contact the case manager directly. They also drop in occasionally for an informal chat allowing the YC staff to deepen their understanding of the young people's concerns.

The YC manager knew the landscape and built on the passion of his staff and those in all the different organisations: “The people we are linking with have a passion. If that passion isn't there or barriers are put up it is very difficult”

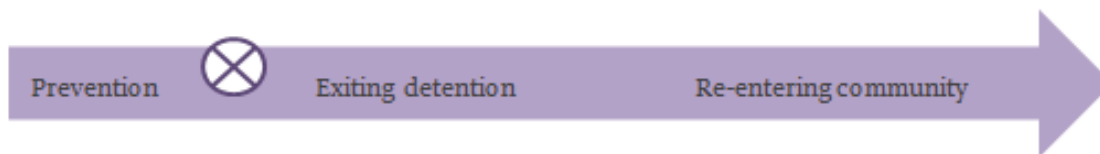
Building a network of support: Allocating time to actively promote and explain the services that YC could now provide to other potential partners was crucial to the development of the partnership. Initially for instance, the HSLOs at the local high schools were unsure if getting involved with yet more layers of bureaucracy would be successful. YC took time to explain to the HSLOs what the service was and how it could help them with their role. He has secured their enthusiastic involvement in a network of referral and support that meets to discuss issues and referral twice per school term over a lunch.

The YC also built a relationship with the Juvenile Justice convenors so that the YC's practical understanding of what a particular young person may be capable of is brought to the drafting of outcome plans. Outcome plans now set the young person up for success based on individual capabilities and interests.

Co-locating YC with the PCYC: The YC manager identified that young cautioned offenders were reluctant to attend case management at the YC office and so negotiated to work out of PCYC with this cohort. This has enhanced police relationships with young people and has increased the police commitment to case management outcomes. For instance, a police officer who works with a young person at the PCYC will monitor if they turn up for case management and transport the young person to case management appointments if needed.

Case Study 7: Metropolitan Victoria Training to aid prevention

New Pathways Melbourne: a School Business Community Partnership Brokers Program partnership delivering a 16 week accredited training course for young people at risk of entering detention.



The Context

While this program is conducted in Melbourne, young people from a range of locations are able to participate.

The Capital City Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN) was established as part of a network of services established by the Victorian State Government. Under the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions, LLENs are utilised by the Commonwealth to deliver the School Business Community Partnership Brokers Program in Victoria.

The story so far

This project began when police alerted the LLEN to funding available under state government youth crime prevention strategies. The LLEN approached the Centre for Adult Education (CAE) and a partnership was forged to design a program for young people at risk of offending or reoffending. Key to this partnership, and an element that has been maintained since the partnership first began in 2007, is the close collaboration and involvement of the police.

The purpose of police involvement was twofold. Firstly, it aimed to facilitate relationship building with young people and break down negative perceptions on both sides: young people of police and police of young people. Secondly, it aimed to model positive behaviours, including responses to stress and anger management, using a range of activities and opportunities. As well as police mentors, participants receive accredited training. Originally this training was a Retail Operations Certificate II, but in 2011 this was changed so that participants could have a broader choice of training options.

The LLEN wrote a successful submission for funding to the police to help pay for extra resources required to deliver the program as well as a submission to ANZ Trustees, who also provided seed money to get the program up and going. The

program is now sustainable and all costs are absorbed by the CAE. LLEN chairs the steering committee now with supporting partners providing advice and other assistance.

The partnership and the program have been through a number of phases over the five years of operation. Members of the partnership have changed with some organisations such as the Crown Casino showing early interest but not seeing a strategic alignment after a while. Others, such as the Salvation Army, played an important early role of referral and hosting the training. This is now provided directly by the CAE. The City of Melbourne representation was also important in the early phase as key individuals helped to drive the involvement of the police which has proved to be a key element. The role of the LLEN as a neutral player has also been important in ensuring that partners each have what they need to stay involved.

The CAE welcomed the opportunity to refine their training program for this disadvantaged group. Following a state government funding cut, the CAE designed an innovative way to utilise the Certificate II in General Education funding to design a program for young people. The Certificate helped them to explore career options to fit their interests and employment opportunities beyond the original retail offering. This has achieved improved attendance from 60 to 80%. Students are referred from a number of agencies including the police. Some attend the course as a bail condition.

The close involvement of the police is a key element. Police work closely to design the program with CAE. Over the five years they have volunteered time to be mentors and speakers at the program. They cover topics such as crime prevention at work, driver education, drug and alcohol misuse and family violence. They work with the young people on team building exercises. The Police Youth Resource Officer says “the young people and the police break down barriers between one another and gain a better understanding of roles and responsibilities. Young people approach the police with problems and alert to issues in their local area”.

An important event in the 16 week program is a police station barbecue. Often young people tell the CAE that they will do the course but say “I’m not going to the barbecue. I can’t stand police”. After they attend, their attitude has changed. The young people see that behind the uniform the police are still people. Some participants have even inquired about a police career. The police are also impacted. They say they now understand the fear the young people have because of the negative stereotypes of the police. The police see the young people in a more positive light.

What's working?

Deliberate partnership facilitation: To develop and maintain this kind of productive partnership over five years takes sensitive facilitation. The accountability needs of diverse players need to be understood and catered for. The changes in the environment need to be responded to. Partner representatives are not always empowered to make the necessary resource commitments so negotiation at a number of levels of partnership organisations can be important. In addition, the partnership can have phases. The importance of some members early on can diminish. Monitoring and allowing change without characterising it as a problem is an important part of facilitation over the long term. The LLEN chairs these partnership meetings and this allows them to manage this process.

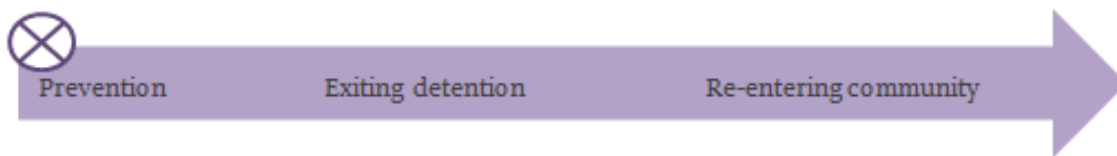
Innovation: The innovation of utilising the Certificate II in General Education funding when other funding was cut has been an improvement in the program even though arising from necessity. The partnership has built the CAE's capacity to meet the needs of this at risk cohort.

Close collaboration with the police as an integral part of the program: The integration of the relationship building between the young people and the police is an outstanding element of this partnership. The police are not external visitors who come from outside to the program. It is in many senses a joint program.

Case Study 8:

Regional NSW

Restorative Conferencing Project



Context

The Restorative Conferencing Project is set in the NSW regional centre of Albury, home to around 7000 young people aged 10-19 years who make up around 9% of the population. Reflecting trends in other regional settings there is a comparatively high rate of teenage pregnancy (6.4% of all births in 2005), some two to three times higher than in many urban settings. In a survey conducted to develop the 2012-2016 Albury Social Plan, 5% of students indicated they did not anticipate returning to school in 2010 to complete year 11. Service providers surveyed for the Plan noted the need for alternative education programs.

Restorative Practices steps used in this project

Restorative Conversation

The Restorative Conversation is a formal scripted process to be used with one or more students. As defined in the handbook; examples and policy steps, it is to be used when an incident has been unresolved or deemed to need further action and includes the completion of a student reflective agreement.

Mini-Chat

The Mini-Chat is an abbreviated version of the Restorative Conversation also known as a Corridor-Conversation, to be used for lesser incidents in immediate situations such as the classroom or at the conclusion of a class.

The Mini-Chat does not require a student reflective agreement and is designed as a quick student reflection and a way of being able to 'apologise, commit and get on with it'

Restorative Conference

The Restorative Conference is convened by a trained Conference Facilitator and is also known as a Community or Family Conference and could include as many participants who would be relevant to be in attendance. This may be school staff, family members, health and social workers and the police. It is a scripted process and comes to a formal agreement of what needs to be done to repair the harm. This could involve agreeing on several follow up measures and supports by those in attendance.

The Mini conference

The Mini Conference is an abridged version of a Restorative Conference and is convened by a trained Conference facilitator. The purpose is to bring those who caused harm and those that were harmed with one or two supporting people, such as staff or family members to then come to a formal agreement of what needs to be done to repair the harm.

The story so far

This case study demonstrates an early intervention on the Juvenile Justice continuum. It is significantly building capacity of two local institutions, the local high school and the community centre with a high proportion of Aboriginal people.

The Albury based YES Youth & Family Services took the opportunity of a Commonwealth Government Attorney General's short term funding offer, to

introduce Restorative Practice in collaboration with the local high school and the local community centre Westside, developed through YC. School and community staff and volunteers have been trained, coached and mentored as they adopt a new way of preventing young people at risk of offending as a result of developing habits of behaviour that may lead to crime.

The impact of this program is already beginning to show. The Westside community leaders are adopting Restorative Practice processes throughout their community and making it a standard for other service providers working in their community, such as the Care Van workers and the Albury City Council workers. Some of Albury High's most vulnerable young people, many Indigenous, are engaged through this work at Westside centre.

What's working?

Widespread community support: The idea of introducing Restorative Practice into the school had been considered and funding sought by YES over the previous four years. An Indigenous staff member at Albury City Council was particularly supportive, seeing the potential of this method. In adjacent Wodonga, the school principal had seen that the method had promise.

Building a shared understanding and approach: Vulnerable students now have a continuity of approach across the community and school sectors. The Restorative Practice approaches were adapted in a collaborative process with the school to enable teachers, with some initial support and ongoing coaching, to have workable tools to use within the classroom and to enable the Westside community workers and volunteers to adopt the approach and to train others. The practice can now be used as simple conversation between teacher and student as well as more formal processes involving other stakeholders. (see steps below)

Building on strong relationships: The Restorative Practice project worker says "it would have been impossible to introduce Restorative Practice if the relationships with Albury High School and Westside were not already in place through Youth Connections". YC sees that these relationships have deepened and the take up of YC services broadened by the experience of joint training in Restorative Practice with Westside Centre and Albury High staff.

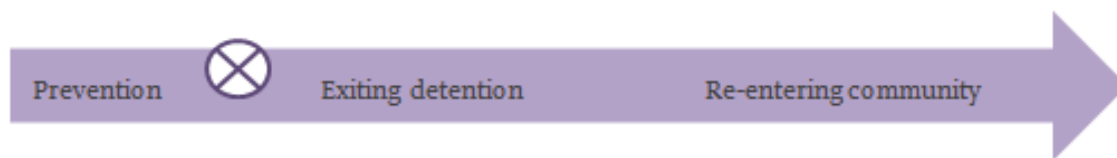
Plan for sustainability: The short term nature of funding for this initiative can be seen as a challenge to sustainability. Using Restorative Practice is considered a long term cultural change rather than a short term corrective intervention. Embedding changes is not instant and with personnel turnover, retraining is always necessary. YC and the Restorative Practice worker are developing a plan to ensure that the positive changes can be maintained. Policy changes at Albury

High are helping to embed the practice, including an MOU between Albury High and the police which is being negotiated.

A key element will be the continuity of YC presence, and in particular a single worker operating across the Westside community and Albury High. As the YC manager commented “the same person following through is very important..... she knows the families and the students....community members like one face to deal with.” A single worker is able to get to know the young people’s community networks and can create links to the school. Even though the individual in this role may change the span of the role is the key success factor.

Case Study 9: Metropolitan NSW Re-entering the community

Wilmot Community Program: assisting mainly Indigenous young people by driving the synergy of Commonwealth Government, State Government and community efforts through co-location and collaborative practice



The Context

This project is set in the Blacktown region, a place where 50% of the population is under thirty years and 4.44% of young people 12-17 identify as Indigenous compared to the national rate of 3.2%⁸. The Blacktown Social Plan (2007) notes that the Indigenous Blacktown community is characterised by high rates of child abuse, teenage pregnancy, low school and employment participation and housing stress. As is the case nationally, Indigenous young people are overrepresented in the juvenile offender cohort. This group is the focus of this case study.

The story so far

⁸ *Blacktown Social Plan 2007*

This case study demonstrates how YC workers can utilise the context of working in a large umbrella organisation to create a “safety net”. This is based on a range of partnerships and relationships that work collaboratively to ensure that young, in this instance, mostly Indigenous people get the support they need to prevent involvement, or further involvement, with juvenile crime.

Working in the Western Sydney Mt Druitt community, the Youth Connections provider, Marist Youth Care (MYC), took the opportunity of an underutilised local church venue, The Wilmot Church, to enable them to establish a physical presence in this highly disadvantaged community.

They began introducing their presence to key stakeholders slowly and carefully. They involved themselves with a number of formal and informal governance groups including the Wilmot Estate Advisory Board made up of local residents, Mount Druitt Community Ministry, the Department of Housing and the local government council.

MYC also utilised the DEEWR-funded Aboriginal Trainee Support Worker Program to establish a YC service that young Indigenous people and their families would feel confident to use. This program aims to engage with local Indigenous people and trainees from the Wilmot area to be part of the Wilmot project.

While the target group is defined as young people from age eleven, MYC workers are often confronted with seven and eight year olds disengaged from school. Connection with families is especially important in this setting as parents can be fearful of engaging with help as they associate this with the NSW Department of Community Services (DOCS), or police contact, which may have been negative for them or family members in the past.

While the focus of the YC workers is to “get kids back to school”, the Indigenous staff and the relationship with the Daramu program funded by the Attorney General’s Department means that investment in an at-risk young person can be richer and continue over a longer timeframe. This is critically important in a setting where many of the social norms work against positive change and that change for a young person can be very slow. The relationship with other services now co-located at the Wilmot centre means that the net of support around these young people is stronger.

Spreading out from the collaborative work at the Wilmot Centre, YC identified the need to involve the local community to develop positive relationships with these young people. For example, the local shopping centre owner wasn’t initially identified as a key stakeholder and was opposed to a centre that would attract at risk young people. The YC service realised not engaging earlier was a mistake and developed the relationship with the shopping centre owner through holding

barbecues, positive graffiti workshops and hip hop dancing displays at the shopping centre.

MYC is also co-located with the NSW CEO of PCYC in the Mt Druitt region and this is having a state wide impact. PCYC is now much more aware and willing to work collaboratively with YC across this region. YC in Mt Druitt has utilised this relationship to deepen their understanding of the trends in NSW juvenile crime to identify opportunities for additional funding.

One relationship that has been harder to develop but is progressing, is with Cobham Juvenile Remand Centre and its Putland School. The NSW state government system for post release refers a young person initially to a Juvenile Justice office who will then refer the young person to support agencies such as MYC. However, not all young people are referred to specific post release programs. This can mean that some young people fall through the net and pathways begun while on remand, such as education, are abruptly stopped because the Juvenile Justice Officer's mandate is to focus on crime prevention. This can mean that young people post release, are sometimes literally "just left at the train station" allowing them to unnecessarily miss out on support from community agencies. However, some collaborative efforts are beginning.

The collaborative practice now operating at Wilmot has built the capacity of the other services so that YC is now able to begin to replicate the service in the adjacent centre of Treagear. YC has begun a relationship with the state government housing department which is expected to develop into a formal partnership for the Mt Druitt area. Unlike at Wilmot, it is adults and mostly parents who are approaching the service and YC sees this as a way to begin forming relationships with the young people in that community.

What's working?

Each YC or PB program is in a different service environment. YC in MYC is **making the most of being in a large organisation to drive** collaboration and thus create synergy (the sum of the parts are bigger than the whole) across a range of programs.

Developing and consciously utilising a network of strategic relationships: MYC makes connections at a number of levels including Indigenous leaders and families, business, government departments at local, state and Commonwealth levels. They utilise these relationships to strengthen these other services and stakeholders and thereby strengthen their own suite of services. This includes being aware of complementary funding opportunities.

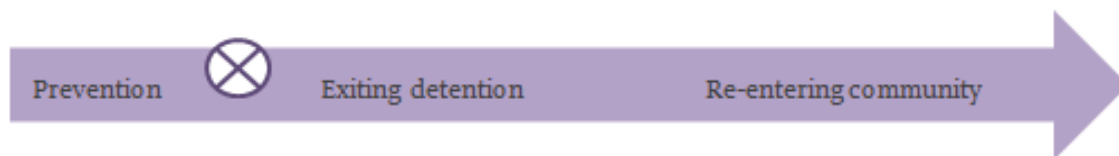
They are community focussed not program focused: MYC believes the success of this initiative is the time and care taken to meet with and understand

this particular community. MYC attended key stakeholders' meetings to demonstrate they were dedicated to the community and understanding their priorities. They were sensitive to the issue of trust building and engaged local people to assist this. Establishing trust within the community means that young people are more confident in the case management services.

MYC understands that community capacity building is not a linear process: They learned from their mistakes and were willing to redefine their stakeholders and develop meaningful ways to engage with different stakeholder groups.

Case Study 10: Remote WA prevention

The SHINE Program in Broome: A collaboration between Youth Connections and Youth Justice Services WA that is shining the spotlight on a group of girls who were previously going “under the radar” of the community.



The Context

The program is set in Broome in a remote town of approximately 17,000 people that is a service centre for surrounding remote Indigenous communities and a tourist town especially in the dry season, from May to October.

Despite the presence of two high schools in Broome, there is still a very low engagement level amongst young people with extreme barriers such as domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, homelessness and mental health issues. Early pregnancy is common. Marijuana use and alcohol abuse help to fuel juvenile crime which, while much more common among boys, also involves girls. Suicide, including youth suicide is worryingly common.

A strength of the community is the large range of services keen to help.

The story so far

YC workers became increasingly concerned about the multiple barriers that young girls, particularly Indigenous girls, face in the town and the lack of support available to them. While there seemed to be alternative education programs for boys out of the school environment, there were limited options for girls. In early 2011 the WA Government recognised that Youth Justice Services should broaden and began to fund prevention and diversion positions. Youth Justice purchased the SHINE program, an international program providing personal development for women and girls. Together YC and Youth Justice are delivering the program to a group of eight Indigenous girls aged 14 to 17 years who had withdrawn from education and were at risk of becoming involved in juvenile crime. The program does not exclude non-Indigenous girls but to date all participants have been Indigenous.

In consultation with the community, Youth Justice Services and YC made significant adaptations to the SHINE program to ensure female Indigenous role models were made available to the girls and that an education focus was introduced.

The program runs for one day per week. It provides the girls with personal development, health information, personal presentation, relationship development, suicide prevention, education certificate courses and career information and opportunities. While participating in the program the girls receive individual case-managed support and through the program they will complete modules within the Certificate II in General Education.

A wide range of services and community representatives contribute to the program. This can be through hosting the program at their premises, visiting the program or presenting information and training to the participants. Outside of the program some of these community representatives and service providers also give informal advice to link the girls to other opportunities. Others provide funding for resources and opportunities to enrich the program: Kimberley Employment Services for instance offers regular use of their bus.

Youth Justice Services says that working so closely with YC has allowed them to deliver this program to a higher standard and to identify participants for the program earlier. YC has also been enabled to broaden their service delivery footprint.

The police officer interviewed reported that the relationship building through the program has helped the girls to see that the police are not “robots in uniform” and the police now recognise the importance of developing relationships with other agencies. He noted that lately there had been a significant drop in property crime (which has a high incidence of youth offenders). Since the session with the police, a couple of the girls have enquired how they could join the police force.

What's working?

The right people: Workers in the program are either trained teachers with a passion for youth work or people with wide experience working with young people. The presence of an Indigenous woman on the staff helps to build quick and trusting relationships in the community and allows difficult conversations with families and young people to go more smoothly. “I can say something and it’s OK where a white person may sound condescending”.

The level of passion among the workers is clear. One worker is now also working in a prevention program called HYPE (Helping Young People Engage) which operates three nights a week from 6pm to 2am running events such as film nights and importantly providing transport and sometimes a way to escape from difficult situations at home or with friends. This program works closely with other agencies allowing a more effective safety net for young people.

Engaging with the community: The SHINE program is designed to actively engage the community. The community has assisted with providing financial donations, support staff, ongoing mentoring, knowledge of their programs and services, facilities to run the program, guest speakers, excursion opportunities and clothing donations. The program has allowed the girls to develop skills to engage within their community in a positive and encouraging manner. Through the program, the girls have been introduced to local women as role models including Indigenous women. These relationships have not been limited to the sessions and girls are now relating to these women in the community, seeking guidance and support. There have also been opportunities to keep families informed through informal personal contact and events.

Adaption and flexibility: This quality has been key to facilitating the collaboration between YC and Youth Justice which has led to engagement with other services. Implementing a program such as YC to benefit this group of girls is a challenge. Achieving outcomes in set timeframes sometimes doesn’t take account of the multiple challenges and the turbulent environment these young women face. Leveraging the resources of case management and through the collaboration with the Youth Justice worker, who operates under a needs-based rather than time-based system, the program is able to be delivered over a much longer period. This has led to training and work readiness outcomes that are beyond a “quick fix”. As one community member said “I can’t believe the change in attitude of these girls”.

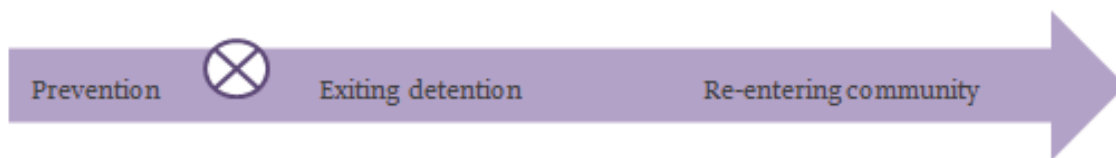
Flexibility will continue to be needed. With the next group of girls due to enter the program, it will have a greater focus on re-entering school. Some of the new cohort will be as young as 13. YC and Youth Justice already have strong relationships with the school that they developed through regular attendance at

meetings and building a referral relationship. Even with the current cohort on SHINE they have been able to work collaboratively with school staff to design a modified program to allow one or two girls on SHINE to begin re-entry to school.

Harnessing community resources: The issue of available transport can be a big barrier for participation and staff regularly provide transport to participants. This Youth Justice and YC collaboration has harnessed a wide range of community resources to enhance the program. This has included the time commitment of a wide range of services including training, financial support and resources in kind such as the bus.

Case Study 11: Remote NT Services working together in the Barkly region

Youth Connections creating links with a range of services to better assist vulnerable young people in very remote areas of the NT



The Context

The Barkly Region covers more than 300,000 square kilometres making it larger than Victoria. It has a sparse population of just over 8000, of whom almost half live in the remote town of Tennant Creek. About 60% of the population identify themselves as Indigenous.

The region has two different service environments. The first is Tennant Creek where there are a number of community and government service providers. The second is very remote communities, particularly the two NT growth towns Ali Currung and Elliot where the service sector is sparse and the reliance on community members is key.

The young people, slightly more boys than girls, accessing the YC service are at high risk of juvenile crime. Sixty per cent have a history of being detained, on remand or under community orders. Substance misuse is widely prevalent.

The story so far

A key strategy that YC has used to build community capacity is to revive, grow and focus the Barkly Youth Services Provider Network (BYSPN). Two years ago this network existed in name but met irregularly and infrequently and had only four or

five organisations involved. Through the leadership of YC this network now has 32 individuals attending representing 62 community and government organisations. The network meets monthly and has an agreed terms of reference that fosters collaboration. The outcomes being achieved by the network include avoiding duplication, identifying service gaps, applying for funding collaboratively and allocating funding to need and the best positioned provider. Competition for funding can be a destructive force against collaboration especially in a remote community.

The Network has also been able to impact beyond the community at a whole of NT strategic level. After the Northern Territory Government's review of the youth justice system in 2011, Steps YC and BYSPN have been providing input into the implementation and establishment of the Youth Justice Unit's program and services, and the Northern Territory Government youth strategy, from a remote perspective. The Youth Justice Unit has put in place a whole of government integrated case management approach to youth. This is ensuring that young people exiting detention have case management available to make a positive transition and is increasing the number of young people on diversion programs being assisted with issues such as alcohol and substance abuse.

In the very remote communities YC has taken an approach tailored to both practical and cultural realities. They have built on the cultural roles of Indigenous men and women elders in the community to establish a system of early notification of young people at risk, especially in the area of juvenile crime and substance abuse. This has made services such as family conferencing available to these communities. Other services outreaching to these remote communities have seen how this culturally sensitive approach achieves results and now are working collaboratively with YC.

YC also has a strong relationship with the police evidenced by a recent invitation from the police to be the only community service on an interagency committee addressing early intervention in juvenile crime.

While a number of young people in YC are enrolled at the high school, the focus on tightly defined measureable learning outcomes has left little room for a strong relationship with YC, but this is gradually being developed.

What's working?

Harnessing effort: Strengthening community capacity through building on an already established network that fosters broad membership and ownership.

Identifying and addressing issues that impact effective collaboration (such as competition for funding).

Cultural sensitivity: Steps YC in the Barkly region is demonstrating that working in a culturally sensitive way is a practical approach. In essence this has attracted to the service the volunteer support of a range of key community leaders.

Note that unlike other services the YC do not have local Indigenous employees. The staff believe they are effective because of their individual characteristics, the culture of their organisation, their work practices and long experience working with people in remote communities.

4. WHAT CAN WE LEARN?

Readers will take many different things from reading these case studies. For some it may be confirmation that their service is doing well. For others, it may be one new idea that seems adaptable for their setting.

The messages in this report have three main audiences. Below are the key messages for these readers to consider.

Commonwealth and State Governments

Three clear messages for governments emerge from these case studies. The first concerns funding strategies. The second issue focusses on creating an environment of collaboration in the challenging area of juvenile justice. The third relates to the capacity for local adaption.

1. **Funding strategies:** considerable resources are committed by service providers to bid for program funds. They seek funds to plug the gap in services they identify as necessary to assist a young person to make the transition to an independent, non-offending life. It is optimal for social and economic reasons that this will be a sustainable transition to a life which is not welfare dependent.
 - Governments could consider cross-departmental Commonwealth funding models which build in the capacity for local providers to be more responsive to local needs. For example, the Attorney General's Department, DEEWR and FaHCSIA could join up their funding streams and develop a joint program initiative for juvenile justice.
 - The strategic funding approach of the FaHCSIA Communities for Children program could be considered as a model. This has the potential for efficiencies for government and for service providers. Service providers could spend less time "grant mining" and more time planning and delivering a tailored suite of services.

2. **Creating an environment of collaboration in the challenging area of juvenile justice:** local service providers in the case studies have negotiated their way into relationships with services such as police and detention centres, often through perseverance, and it was regularly mentioned by the service providers how time consuming and personality dependent this can be.
 - The strategic positioning of the whole of the SA YC Specialist Services has helped to overcome this. Much of what has been achieved in SA is because all the parts of the juvenile justice system were able to map their service process, and identify and resolve issues in one part of the system that impact "down the line".

- Commonwealth protocols with each of the states and territories could help create an environment of easier collaboration. If well communicated, including to front line staff, they could help create an expectation of relationship between the relevant Commonwealth and state programs assisting young people in the juvenile justice continuum. As one service provider said, “We’ve done it for our regional detention centre. Why not have national protocols for all detention centres?”
3. **Capacity for local adaption:** Workers commented that they found it difficult to express through the Youth Attainment & Transition Management Information System (YATMIS) the extent and power of the work they are doing on a daily basis.
- DEEWR could consider the extent to which the program could be made more responsive to local circumstances and also how the guidelines could be more clearly communicated.
 - The concept of “joined up funding” mentioned above also has the potential to increase the responsiveness to local conditions.

Service Managers

Two messages emerge for the service managers. The first concerns human resources. The second concerns taking a strategic approach.

1. **Human resource issues:** The demand, both physical and emotional, on front line staff cannot be underestimated. Neither can the need for service managers to carefully deploy scarce resources.
- Those interviewed for the case studies often commented with pride on the supportive culture of their organisation. This was experienced in many ways such as having a diversity of team members with whom to debrief; having a culture of action and trial and error where failure was seen as learning; or having embedded in their organisation mechanisms such as an action research approach to develop new programs.
 - Strategic use of human resources, as in Case Study 6, where front line workers are empowered to manage all relevant stakeholders as well as service young people, frees up the managers time to focus on developing strategic relationships.
 - Many services commented that they managed the YC and PB programs in an integrated way, not allocating specific staff to separate programs but using the resources, and other programs too, to deliver a holistic service. While this can complicate the reporting to multiple providers of single lines of funding, the services operate in this way because their focus is on delivering a service that makes a positive difference to a young person, not just ticking boxes.

- Staff selection was also seen as important. A comment regularly repeated was the importance of passion: caring about getting real outcomes for young people. It was not thought that this could be mandated or taught to staff.
2. ***Taking a strategic approach*** covers a range of clever practices demonstrated in the case studies.
- Taking a strategic approach is sometimes understood as taking a big picture view and avoiding detail. Case Study 3 shows that strategy is as much about detail as a big picture view point. SA YC Specialist Services has worked at a whole of SA system level to identify and working with a range of agencies, change practices across the system that have previously worked against good outcomes. This has been done by mapping the detail of processes across the system to identify areas for improvement.
 - A strategic approach is also about building relationships that facilitate collaboration across the system. This is demonstrated clearly in Case Study 3 and in the network created in the Tennant Creek example in Case Study 11. This regional network is now able to speak with a more powerful voice and is influencing NT wide policy. The strategic importance of relationships is also demonstrated in comments from other service leaders, such as in Far North Queensland (Case Study 4), where their network of relationships is cultivated as an important resource.
 - A strategic approach requires an awareness of the bigger environment and a proactive approach to understand the significance of the organisation's work and achievements.
 - Some service managers commented on the leadership development that they had undertaken to develop their strategic approach. Service managers may consider seeking mentoring to assist them to develop a strategic awareness. Mentoring could help them identify how to take a strategic approach within the constraints of their setting.

Frontline workers

Frontline workers interviewed for the case studies were almost uniformly passionate about helping disadvantaged young people in the juvenile justice continuum get better life outcomes. Many were also frustrated with parts of the system of juvenile justice and broader social supports that led to what they saw as unproductive outcomes for young people. Frontline workers see daily how the multiple social program elements fit, or fail to fit together to help clients. They understand for instance that a lack of transport or a lack of accommodation can impact on juvenile offending. Some of the promising practices they are employing are noted as messages below.

- **Look up Look out!** Being aware of what is going on in your community alerts you to opportunities that may arise from unlikely sources and new issues arising.
- **Working well with others:** to make the most of the opportunities you identify, it is also important to have the skills to work collaboratively with others sharing achievements and failures. Equally important is the need to understand how your organisation works and work well within your team.
- **Being willing to try new approaches:** this is a key message from the case studies. “It seems like common sense now but...”said one worker after they had brokered their way into a relationship with a detention centre. “We tried that before and it didn’t work” is replaced by, “Maybe if we try it this way this time, it might work”.
- **Perseverance!** Many of the case studies exemplify perseverance. In one example, all the application work to enter a detention centre was lost when staff changed over and YC had to re do it.
- **Managing up:** some service providers noted the importance of having issues from the community brought to them so that they could assess whether they could be strategically addressed. It is not just the service manager’s role to think strategically.

5. CONCLUSION

The eleven case studies featured in the report illustrate that even in the challenging area of juvenile justice, perseverance, collaboration, vision and innovation make a positive difference. Discussion of these case studies and the application of their messages to governments, service providers and frontline workers will assist these DEEWR funded programs to deepen their impact.

To promote these discussions, key points from the report are available in a PowerPoint presentation and a list of contact emails for all case study nominations is attached below.

6. APPENDIX 1

Title and brief description	Location	Point on Continuum	Contact
Youth Program/Services Social Media Application. Partnership of Community organisations and Local Government	Metro Vic	Pre Prevention	Natalie Wells nwells@imvc.com.au
National Partnership Agreement Homelessness Corrective Services. Juvenile Implementation of Life Wise Program: staff go into Detention Centre to deliver Life Skills	Metro WA	In detention preparing for exit	Melissa Porteus melissa@youthfutureswa.org.au
YOUTHLAW Outreach Skype Service utilised and facilitated by YC service	Metro with some regional contact Vic	Mid to Late prevention	Sophie Corbett sophiecorbett@uych.org.au
HYPALimestone Coast. This is describing the whole service and the “as needs” connection with stakeholders	Regional SA	Across the continuum but mostly late prevention	Jodie Nicholls jnicholls@hypa.net.au
Bridging the Gap Reentering community support	Regional and Metro WA	Reentering community	Caroline Marshall caroline.marshall@bridgingthegap.org.au
Youth Connections Meadowbank This is describing the whole service	Metro NSW	Across the continuum	Julie. Fitzhardinge Julie.fitzhardinge@det.nsw.edu.au
Bundarra Central School: link to Learning. This is an alternative learning program already	Regional and Remote NSW	Across the continuum	Dan Roberts droberts@each.com.au

Title and brief description	Location	Point on Continuum	Contact
documented in a video			
Youth Connections Specialist Services A whole of State approach	State wide SA	Across the continuum	Gerri Walker Gerri.walker@yec.sa.edu.au
Youth connections service delivery: collaborative approach working with other services including families	Regional NSW	Across the continuum	Richelle Roberts rroberts@each.com.au
Young Offenders and at risk of offending	Regional NSW	Prevention and re entering	Lynda Evans evansly@missionaustralia.com.au
Youth Offenders Opportunities Project: includes trialing models of coordinated intensive support for re-entry and a collaboration between YC and PB programs	Remote and regional Qld	Re entering	Sarah Maloney Carter sarahmc@vpginc.com.au
Nomadic Education Support trailer and Partnership between YC, Ashley School and Dept Education: collaboration between YC and PB programs	Regional TAS	In detention	Mel Blake and Giovanna Simpson mel.blake@tl3.com.au gsimpson@njl.org.au
Hard Yakka: a military style camp	Regional Qld	Late prevention	Sue Tasker stasker@impact.org.au
Right Step program: intensive case management to deter further reoffending and a Care team approach with others	Metro Vic	Very late prevention	Mari Cuzzilla m.cuzzilla@youthconnect.com.au
COPS outreach: getting cautioned offenders with long term disengagement into case management	Regional NSW	Late prevention	Andrew Tipping andrew@jobquest.org.au

Title and brief description	Location	Point on Continuum	Contact
Children's Court Support: provided to young people in contact with court	Metro NSW	Very late prevention	Nicole Diab ndiab@mtcwork.com.au
Reiby Juvenile Detention Centre Engagement	Metro NSW	In detention	Nicole Diab ndiab@mtcwork.com.au
Balga detached Youth Work Project- Mobile Youth and Family Education Support Service	Metro WA	Across the continuum	Bonita Nepia bonita.bdywp@iimetro.com.au
Youthways /Workways YC service	Regional /Remote Vic	Prevention	Denise Rothwell drothwell@workways.com.au
New Pathways Melbourne: 16 week accredited training program for at risk school leavers with volunteer mentoring by police	Metro Vic	Prevention	Louise Smith louisesmith@ccllen.org.au
Restorative Conferencing Project: includes training of school personnel and MOU with police.	Regional NSW	Early intervention	Craig White youthconnections@yes.asn.au
Informal Counseling on Drug and Alcohol misuse: providing a more accessible environment for young people to receive counseling	Regional WA	Across the continuum	Donna Truman donnat@skillhire.com.au
Wilmot Community Program: integrating State Commonwealth and Community through a shared venue & cooperative practice	Metro NSW	Reentering community	Lisa Graham lisag@maristyc.com.au
Building capacity and strengthening services in the Youth Justice Continuum	Regional NSW	Across the continuum	Rob Pringle rob@acg.com.au
Shine Program : engagement program for at	Remote WA	Prevention	Bella Fleming

Title and brief description	Location	Point on Continuum	Contact
risk Indigenous girls			Isobelf@skillhire.com.au
Youth Connections Program NTo4	Remote NT	Prevention and across continuum	Stewart Willey stewartw@stepsgroup.com.au

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Northern Territory Government

Juvenile Justice in Australia 2009-10 21 Oct 2011
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Trends in Juvenile Detention in Australia
Trends & Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice no. 416
Kelly Richards Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology, May 2011

Doing Time - Time For Doing Indigenous Youth in the Criminal Justice System
Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs 23 June 2011
Government response to above from Ministers Jenny Macklin & Robert McClelland (then Attorney General)

DEEWR Youth Attainment and Transitions web pages and YATMIS data.

Review of Effective Practice in Juvenile Justice Report
for the NSW Minister for Juvenile Justice Noetic Solutions Pty Limited January 2010
(summarises elements of systems internationally)

The Blacktown Social Plan (2007) [The Blacktown Social Plan: www.blacktown.nsw.gov.au](http://www.blacktown.nsw.gov.au)