

# Working Together Changing the Story: second tranche of major Youth Justice reforms – Summary of initiatives

In April 2019, the [Working Together Changing the Story: Youth Justice Strategy 2019-2023](#) second tranche of major youth justice reforms was announced. The changes focus on keeping communities safe by tackling youth offending, preventing offending, reducing re-offending and remand, and in particular, reducing the number of young people held on remand in police watch houses.

For more information about the reform visit [www.csyw.qld.gov.au/youth-justice/youth-justice-reform](http://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/youth-justice/youth-justice-reform)

## **New Youth Detention Centre at Wacol**

A new 32 bed youth detention centre is planned for delivery in two operational stages. Beds, educational, health, recreational, and visits facilities are planned for Stage 1, allowing removal of 32 young people from police watch houses. All remaining support facilities including visitors centre, laundry, kitchen, multi-purpose hall, yarning circle and more are planned for Stage 2, until which time young people in custody will be serviced in respect of those facilities from the existing Brisbane Youth Detention Centre.

Funding: total estimated cost \$150 million


## **Additional Capacity at Brisbane Youth Detention Centre (BYDC)**

A 16 bed accommodation block with associated modular ancillary services will be constructed within the current campus of the BYDC, allowing removal of 16 young people from police watch houses.

Funding: \$18.3 million over four years

## **Transition 2 Success (T2S) Plus**

The successful T2S program will be continued and expanded. This is a 'home-grown' and now proven program for young people who are involved in, or at risk of contact with, the justice system; they are helped to re-engage with education and training and transition away from the justice system. T2S is currently running in eleven sites around Queensland and has formed over 90 local partnerships with community agencies, training organisations and private businesses to create a network of support and pathways young people can access. Participants complete nationally-recognised certificates while receiving therapeutic support from trained staff to develop the behaviour, social and life skills needed to find and keep a job. Evaluation showed 67 per cent of T2S participants did not offend within 12 months of completing the program. In addition, they spent only 1.1 nights in custody per month, while a matched cohort spent on average 3.6 nights in custody per month – a significant improvement.



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Funding: \$28.688 million over four years

### **Restorative Justice**

Government has committed to continuing the well-established and effective Restorative Justice Conferencing program in Queensland. Restorative Justice is an inclusive process that brings young people who have committed an offence, their family, their community and people affected by crime together to work out how the young person can make amends for their behaviour. All parties can have input into the outcome with the focus being on accountability, reassurance and repairing the harm that crime can cause. Internal evaluation found that 77 per cent of young people who completed a Restorative Justice Conference between 1 July 2016 and 31 December 2016 either did not reoffend or showed a decrease in the magnitude of their re-offending, within six months of their conference, and over 98 per cent of victims are satisfied with the outcomes reached at the conference.

Funding: \$27.469 million over four years

### **Townsville Community Youth Response**

To build on the success of the current Townsville Community Youth Response (TCYR), Townsville will benefit from enhanced services from 2019-20. The specialist High Risk Youth Court will continue, along with afterhours diversion services that provide police an alternative to remanding children in watchhouses, a cultural mentoring program, alternative education, and intensive case management for families and young people. Young offenders in Townsville will also have access to bail support services and restorative justice approaches to help young people turn their negative trajectory around and reduce offending, re-offending and the number of young people in police watchhouses. The continuation and enhancement of this suite of programs in Townsville will support the recommendations of Major-General Stuart Smith's report: *Townsville's Voice: Local Solutions to Address Youth Crime*. Evaluation of TCYR has shown rates of re-offending reduced by 6 percent, , and high-risk young people showed a 25 per cent decrease in rates of re-offending compared with a 6 per cent increase in offending for a matched high-risk comparison group.

Funding: \$18.452 million over four years

### **Townsville Youth Development Board**

Giving effect to one of the recommendations of Major-General Stuart Smith's report, a board will be established to deliver a community-driven Townsville Youth Development Strategy. The Major-General reported that the Townsville community wants a holistic youth development strategy, while supporting local youth through prevention, intervention and rehabilitation stages, and the board will be tasked with leading the development of a plan which delivers this.

Funding: \$100,000

### **Community Youth Response and Diversion Services**

Three Queensland locations with high rates of youth offending — Brisbane, Ipswich and Cairns — will benefit from new Community Youth Response (CYR) services. The CYR applies the lessons from other community-based responses which have reduced youth offending and re-offending, and reduced the number of young people remanded in police watch houses and youth detention centres.

The CYR combines after-hours diversion services providing police with alternatives to remanding children in watch houses, including mentoring, alternative education and intensive case management for families and young people. Diversion services ensure young people are assessed, and causes of their offending and anti-social behaviour are addressed in culturally appropriate and effective ways.

Funding: \$15 million over four years

### **Indigenous Youth and Family Wellbeing**

Intensive support will be provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families who have children at risk of entering, or already in contact with, the youth justice system. New case workers will be employed by existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing Services in ten locations across Queensland from where large numbers of young people are remanded in custody.

Intensive and culturally appropriate assistance is provided to families struggling with their children's behaviour, including advice to families on ways to manage child behaviour and connecting them with more specialised services when appropriate. Services assist families develop their own family plans which address risk factors and re-engage young people with positive support within their kin network, schools and communities.

Funding: \$6.38 million over two years

### **Brisbane City Watch house Response Team**

The Brisbane City Watch house Response Team has been continued until 30 June 2020. The Team works to ensure the health, education and justice needs of children and young people are met while temporarily in watch houses. They help ensure young people can make bail applications, and where necessary facilitate their admission to youth detention centres. The Government's extension of the Team's mandate will allow continued care, support and access to justice for a highly vulnerable group of children and young people.

Funding: \$1.3 million to June 2020

### **Conditional Bail Program**

Additional Conditional Bail Program (CBP) resources will provide ongoing support for at risk young people to increase their ability to remain in the community while awaiting sentencing by the courts. CBPs are often an option sought by the court as a last resort, to avoid remanding a child in custody, as they can give the court confidence children will receive individualised and intensive supervision while they are on bail, reducing the risk they will re-offend. CBPs focus on addressing young people's educational or vocational needs, mental health issues, family intervention and accommodation and work in partnership with bail support and other community programs.

Funding: \$1.221 million to December 2020

### **Specialised Multi-Agency Response Teams**

In eight locations, Specialised Multi-Agency Response Teams (SMART) will support the Children's Court to assess young people's needs and factors that may contribute to their offending, using the Risk and Dynamic Assessment Register (RADAR) tool and others. Young people in court, identified as having needs related to education, mental health or substance use, can be referred by Magistrates to SMART for assessment and advice. SMART teams comprise Education Justice Initiative staff, a mental health worker, drug and alcohol worker, speech and language therapist and case worker, each of whom will be able to refer young people to appropriate support services. The SMART team will then provide advice to the court on the best integrated approach to preventing that young person from further offending.

Funding: \$5.6 million over four years

### **Mt Isa Transitional Hub**

The Mt Isa Transitional Hub is a new service, initially funded for one year, which will provide a safe place where police and support services can connect with and assist young people at risk of offending, particularly young people on the streets at night. The Hub will supplement existing services and be operated by a local non-government organisation; staff will provide culturally appropriate support to young people as well as their families. Services will be available at night and



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on weekends, the times when young people are often most at risk of getting into trouble and coming to harm. Staff will work closely with other support organisations in the Mt Isa community to ensure young people and their families receive necessary ongoing assistance.

Funding: \$800,000

### Queensland Youth Partnership Initiative

The Queensland Youth Partnership Initiative (QYPI) provides a framework for engaging with organisations who can play a positive role in creating opportunities for youth development. It will facilitate projects across youth leadership, training and employment and youth engagement. A signature project will be a crime prevention program targeting young people engaging in anti-social behaviour in busy Queensland shopping centres. It aims to prevent nuisance behaviour and crime and divert young people to constructive and sustainable activities. The program includes alternative activities for young people designed by young people, training for security staff, and connecting young people to retail and employment opportunities. Involving a partnership between retailers, the National Retail Association and government, it will initially operate in the Greater Brisbane area and is expected to expand to other locations in subsequent years.

Funding: \$2.26 million

### Navigate your Health

The Navigate Your Health (NYH) pilot initiative for Children in Out of Home Care in Brisbane will be extended to young people in the youth justice system to improve their health and address underlying problems contributing to offending, including poor mental health, and undiagnosed disabilities and impairments. Health and Nurse Navigators will provide health and developmental assessments and connect young people with relevant health and support services. Services will be offered in three locations, and identification of those locations is under way.

Funding: \$3.48 million over two years

### Risk and Dynamic Assessment Register

Risk and Dynamic Assessment Register (RADAR) is a new approach to risk and need assessment of young offenders, to be trialled as a pilot from January 2020 until December 2021. It is focussed on ensuring young people are detained or remanded in custody only where absolutely necessary. RADAR is an evidence-based tool providing a more effective assessment of the risks a child will re-offend, and identifying areas of their lives requiring further attention, so the risk of re-offending is reduced. Using this tool will help courts make decisions on issues such as bail and sentencing and enable effort to be focused on children and young people who pose the greatest risk of re-offending. Details of assessments will be provided to Magistrates to improve decisions regarding remand and bail and will be informed by information on services available in the local community to support a



young person to remain in the community while on bail.

Funding: \$1.89 million over three years

### **Police-led Intensive Community Supervision**

A 12-month pilot program will commence, for intensive supervision in the community of young people on bail. Police Officers will undertake random surveillance and bail checks, to improve compliance. To ensure young people get necessary support so they can comply with bail conditions, dedicated Police Liaison Officer teams will be established in six locations. This support acknowledges the trauma, lack of structure and supervision in the lives of many young people in the youth justice system. Where extra assistance is needed, young people can also be connected with specialist organisations outside the police service.

Funding: \$9.4 million

### **Framing the Future**

Framing the Future (FTF) is a mentoring program delivered by the Queensland Police Service in partnership with Police-Citizens Youth Clubs. FTF provides mentoring and support to Project Booyah graduates for a period of six months to connect them with education, training and prosocial activity and reduce future offending. Additional resourcing means FTF will now continue in eight Queensland locations, providing a necessary and ongoing safety net to young Project Booyah graduates.

(Project Booyah is a successful police-run leadership and mentor program that uses adventure-based learning, decision making/problem solving exercises, resilience training and family inclusion to help young people aged 15-16 years make better life choices – results are excellent, with 83 per cent graduating, 81 per cent obtaining a Certificate 1 or 2 in Hospitality, and 69 per cent re-engaged with education.)

Funding: \$410,000, until December 2020

### **Children's Court Magistrate**

Funding for an additional Children's Court Magistrate has been extended to 30 June 2020, allowing gains made during a current trial to continue. The additional magistrate allows greater capacity to provide a specialised approach to dealing with children and young people accused of offences, speeds up bail applications and other court processes, and ensures more young people can be assessed by the Court, more quickly. This position has had an immediate and positive impact on the timeliness of bail applications being heard, contributing to reducing the number of young people in watchhouses awaiting a court appearance, and reducing the duration of their watch house stay.

Funding: \$2.56 million over 14 months