



MEDIA RELEASE

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WACOSS and SRWA respond to funding commitment for early intervention

The peak body for the Community Services sector and the leading justice reform coalition in Western Australia have welcomed today's announcement of investment in new justice initiatives for young people across regional parts of the state.

Social Reinvestment WA (SRWA) Manager Sophie Stewart said:

“The only way to create safe communities is to invest in the cultural, social, and emotional wellbeing of families. Today's announcements by the McGowan government are a step towards smarter interventions.

“The most effective responses to justice issues focus resources on the social and economic causes of offending, so we are pleased to see funding for keeping kids in school, and the expansion of early intervention programs like Target 120.

“SRWA particularly welcome the response to long term calls from the community for an on country residential centre as an alternative to incarceration for the Kimberley.

"Following reports of human rights abuses and alarming conditions for the young people in Banksia Hill Detention Centre, we are glad to see the State Government prioritising initiatives that keep children out of prison.

"Children need help not harm, and keeping young people close to country, community, and culture is crucial to providing the right support.

"For these initiatives to be successful, the State Government must work in partnership with local communities and lived experience people in design and delivery.

"Meaningful relationships that see outcomes need to be based on genuine partnership and truth telling in relation to the historical impacts of the justice system in WA.

"We hope to see Aboriginal people, and local organisations employed as first responders, leading solutions, and co-creating these youth justice initiatives."

WA Council Of Social Service CEO Louise Giolitto said:

"It's fantastic to see the McGowan Government investing in the expansion of early intervention and prevention programs that we know are working already in places like Halls Creek.

"The expansion of the Target 120 program across Regional WA shows that this Government is committed to funding evidence-based early intervention and prevention programs to keep young people out of our justice system.

"We know that by working with young people, their families and their community that we can start to address some of the really complex issues that are driving youth crime in some parts of regional WA.

"WACOSS also welcomes the announcement of a purpose-built on-country residential centre for young offenders in the Kimberley as an alternative to incarceration.

"We know that sending young people all the way down to Banksia Hill and separating them from their families, their culture and their country can have a

devastating impact on their mental health.

“Having a purpose-built, culturally appropriate facility on country will make a massive difference for young people who get caught up in the justice system and hopefully help to break that cycle for many.”

Media Contacts:

Sophie Stewart, SRWA - 0434 968 276

Tim Oliver, WACOSS - 0431 9696 25