



Programs That Work

Existing alternatives to the justice system for young people
10 Case Studies





PROGRAM TYPE

Youth Justice Early Intervention Program

TARGET COHORT

Children aged 8-12 at high risk of entering the juvenile justice system

AREA OF OPERATION

South East Corridor of Perth

 www.youthpartnershipproject.org.au/

Key Outcomes

36 young people and their families engaged in the initiative.

No offending behaviours recorded by participants during time of engagement.

Increased capacity of the service system to respond to young people with complex needs in a coordinated way.

Youth Partnership Project

The Youth Partnership Project (YPP) is a place based early intervention initiative. Using a collective impact approach, the YPP's collaboration of key government and community service agencies work proactively to identify young people at high risk of future contact with the criminal justice system and support them to address the complex challenges they face in order to improve life outcomes.

CHALLENGE

Young people engaging in youth crime and anti-social behaviour

The South East Corridor of Perth (SEC) experiences high rates of youth crime and anti social behaviour, with 1 in 4 young people entering Banksia Hill Detention Centre coming from the SEC. Many of these young people have complex needs such as childhood trauma, family challenges or developmental delay.

OUTCOME

Coordinated and holistic support and transition to other support services

YPP focuses on building trusting relationships with children and families to deeply understand individual needs. Coordinated and holistic support is provided for both the young person and their family, with a focus on building protective factors and enabling transition to independent access of community support services.

“ The YPP taught me about learning and caring for others... I listen in class, study more, concentrate on work, and make new friends. ”

Matt
11 Year Old YPP Participant

SOLUTION

Proactive, targeted & holistic support for young people & their families.

The primary focus of YPP is to prevent young people's engagement with the criminal justice system - especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The YPP works with government agencies and community services to proactively identify at-risk children aged 8-12 years and coordinate support to enable better outcomes.

Key Program Characteristics

YPP focuses on early intervention methods founded in extensive community consultation to prevent and reduce engagement with the justice system.



Proactive identification and support for children at-risk



Increased school engagement and other protective factors



Evidence based interventions founded in community consultation



PROGRAM TYPE

Employment, Training and Education

TARGET COHORT

Young offenders aged 15 – 18

AREA OF OPERATION

Banksia Hill Detention Centre



<https://www.wf.org.au/bunuru/outcare.com.au/program/bunuru-youth-services/>

Key Outcomes

67 individual participants supported by Bunuru in 2021.

355 attendances have been recorded at group training sessions, where attendees are taught life skills such as personal hygiene and grooming, education around healthy lifestyle choices and coaching to engage in pro-social choices and engage with relevant agencies.

Participants assisted with education in recidivism and successful completion of Supervised Release Orders.

Bunuru (Youth Services)

Bunuru (Youth Services) is a 10-week program run by Outcare and the Wirrpanda Foundation. The program provides young offenders (aged 15 – 18) with employment and training support, and is recognised as a condition of a Youth Supervised Release Order (YSRO). Participants complete the program either attaining a Cert 1 in Building and Construction or for those unable to do so recognised skills inclusive of machinery operations and maintenance procedures.

CHALLENGE

Young people in the criminal justice system facing barriers to employment

Many young people who have already come into contact with the criminal justice system find it difficult to transition to full time employment or education, often as a result of other underlying factors that contributed to the initial contact, thereby increasing the likelihood of further contact in later life.

OUTCOME

Improved employment prospects and increased community engagement

Approximately 40% of participants in the program successfully complete their Youth Supervised Release Order, and 10% of participants go on to find further employment after completion. Case studies also indicate that individuals experience improvements in areas such as substance abuse and recidivism.

“ *If it wasn't for this program I would of went straight back inside.* ”

DB

Bunuru (Youth Services) Client

SOLUTION

Vocation oriented training in conjunction with mentoring and support services

Bunuru provides individuals completing a YSRO with an opportunity to learn construction skills in a supportive environment. Young people are also provided with cultural activities, such as trips to country and yarning with Elders, health and wellbeing education and individual mentoring by staff.

Key Elements of Bunuru (Youth Services) Program

Bunuru (Youth Services) provides flexible support to assist transition from custody to full time schooling or work.



Construction experience and introductory exposure to trades



Health, wellbeing and positive self care education



Individual mentoring, positive role modelling and cultural engagement activities



PROGRAM TYPE

Community outreach, case management, justice diversion

TARGET COHORT

Vulnerable and at risk young people aged 12-18

AREA OF OPERATION

Mirrabooka Policing District

 <http://www.whitelion.asn.au/>

Key outcomes

Reduction in crime and antisocial behaviour in communities as young people were engaged with a relevant support service which met their needs.

Individuals assisted in reconnection to education, training and employment.

Development of participants' parenting and tenancy management skills.

Whitelion: Deadly Diversions Youth Support Service

Whitelion's purpose is to provide opportunities for positive connections and pathways to work for young people at risk, and it achieves this purpose by helping young people at risk with their immediate needs to ensure they are safe and stable while maintaining a focus on their future. While Whitelion operate a number of programs in WA, this case study focuses on the Deadly Diversions program.

CHALLENGE

Prolific and priority offenders with significant Police contact

Young people who have a high risk of consistent and ongoing contact with the justice system are often highly vulnerable and experiencing complex and chronic disadvantage.

OUTCOME

Improved outcomes and opportunities for at risk young people

Case studies indicate that individuals have significantly improved opportunities and outcomes, including reconnection to education, training and employment, developing literacy skills and effective parenting and tenancy management.

“ Programs such as Deadly Diversions help to address the underlying causes of offending, and in turn reduce the likelihood of further criminal acts. ”

Hon Michelle Roberts
Former WA Minister for Police

SOLUTION

Intensive case management to address underlying causes

The Deadly Diversions program improves long-term outcomes through ongoing, sustained case management, and diversionary activities which aim to address the causes of high-volume offending by targeting underlying social factors such as connection to culture, education, literacy, counselling, housing and parenting support.

Impact and Outcomes

Whitelion has a strong evidence base to support its services and approach.



73% of participants feel they have become more independent



71% of participants feel better about the future



Reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour



Vinnies

PROGRAM TYPE

Youth Engagement Hub (Day Service)

TARGET COHORT

Young people at risk of and / or experiencing homelessness

AREA OF OPERATION

Perth CBD and Mandurah / Peel



<https://www.passages.org.au/>

Key Outcomes

Case studies such as 'Alex' who was assisted to secure a source of income, obtained stable accommodation and connected with an education, employment and training service.

Provision of weekly in-reach specialist services to the Hub such as legal services, health care and mental health providers.

Cross-referral and service partnerships which assist clients to make informed choices to access special support services.

Passages Youth Engagement Hub

Passages is a youth engagement hub committed to providing a holistic, non-judgemental and individualised service that supports and meets the needs of young people (12-25 years old) who are most at risk. The purpose is to create a safe, supportive and person-centred environment for young people experiencing a range of complex issues to address their needs.

CHALLENGE

Encouraging disadvantaged young people to engage with services

A number of young people experiencing persistent disadvantage as a result of complex trauma, health issues, substance abuse, domestic and family violence, social exclusion and/or service exclusion are often reluctant to engage with services.

OUTCOME

Low-threshold, trauma informed care and therapeutic crisis intervention

Passages recognises that the young people who are most difficult to work with are often the most in need of help, and it therefore imposes as few restrictions to its services as possible. Its staff are therefore also trained to deliver its services according to principles of trauma informed care and practice.

I was nervous to go to a new service and what people would think about me, but the Youth Workers were welcoming, they don't judge me on my drug use and didn't put pressure on me."

Alex
Passages Client

SOLUTION

A service delivery model specifically tailored to the most vulnerable

Passages assesses a client's past circumstances or trauma that has impacted them, their ability to engage with the service and the way that they respond to and handle crisis, and then develops individualised support plans in partnership with the client.

Key features of Passages Youth Engagement Hub

Passages takes a stepped approach to help homeless youth gradually address their complex needs.



Address basic needs (food, showers, medical, laundry)



Targeted, individualised support



Engagements and referrals with allied agencies.



PROGRAM TYPE

Youth diversion and support services

ORGANISATION SIZE

40 staff, over 400 clients per year

AREA OF OPERATION

Port and South Hedland

 <https://www.yic.com.au/>

Key Outcomes

YIC's programs have had many successes since YIC was first incorporated over 30 years ago. One of these success stories is Marie, who found the Youth Centre to be a refuge where she could eat and sleep safely in her early years, taking time out to refocus. The program gave her an opportunity to talk to people outside her family without judgment and helped her navigate her teenage years. Marie was then able to move into paid employment with YIC for a period of time, in a role that involved assisting teenagers to transition out of YIC's care and become more independent.

Youth Involvement Council: Hedland

The Youth Involvement Council (YIC): Hedland offers a variety programs for young people in Port and South Hedland. YIC's various initiatives offer support for young people between the ages of 5 and 25 and aims to empower them to make positive choices about their lives and feel good about the future.

CHALLENGE

Antisocial and criminal behaviour and the underlying causes

Young people engaging in behaviour which brings them into contact with the criminal justice system, usually as a result of underlying causes such as significant trauma, home environment, health issues, financial instability and substance abuse.

OUTCOME

Engagement with vulnerable young people and wrap around support

YIC works with over 400 young people aged 5-25 every year, teaching them coping mechanisms and emotional regulation techniques in order to improve their decision making skills. Many of these individuals are among the most vulnerable members of the community and are at extreme risk of ongoing contact with the criminal justice system.

“ It's unbearable to think where I would have gone or what I would have gotten up to if the Youth Centre wasn't available to me ”

Marie
YIC client and former employee

SOLUTION

Provide recreational activities, diversionary services and support

YIC runs several programs aimed at reducing contact with the justice system, including youth centres, night patrols, outreach support, case management and a Police / Child Protection referral program. All of YIC's programs follow a Trauma Informed Approach, which is critical to the success and safety of its staff and clients.

Key Services Delivered by YIC

YIC delivers a number of important services to young people in Port and South Hedland.



Youth centres provide diversionary activities



Accommodation program for homeless young people



Night patrols / outreach support service reduces contact with justice system



PROGRAM TYPE

Place Based Justice Reinvestment

TARGET COHORT

Young people

AREA OF OPERATION

Shire of Halls Creek

 www.olabuddoogethu.org.au/

Key Features

Youth Engagement Night Officers provide monitoring and safety for Halls Creek young people.

90% local Indigenous employment for all Olabud Doogethu service programs.

Mibala Alternative Education program provides a culturally led educational pathway provided by Aboriginal Elders.

Olabud Doogethu Halls Creek

Olabud Doogethu is an Aboriginal community designed place based solution to reduce incarceration, and provide better outcomes for the young people of Halls Creek and surrounding communities. It was created by the Shire of Halls Creek, together with local communities and support from Social Reinvestment WA, a coalition of NGO's state-wide.

CHALLENGE

A large youth population experiencing disproportionate rates of disadvantage

Halls Creek has one of the largest youth populations per capita in Australia. These young people face a number of prevalent issues, including high rates of youth offending, youth suicide, Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, significant poverty and instances of complex trauma.

OUTCOME

Reduced offending rates, increased Indigenous employment rates

Through initiatives such as the Youth Engagement Night Officers, Olabud has been able to achieve a significant reduction in offending rates in the community. Anecdotal evidence suggests that residents feel safer at night and feel an increased sense of optimism for their community as a result.

"The best part is that our crime rate dropped, you know? Earlier last year, it was like 20 kids going through the court system. It was real sad, because nobody showed them that it was wrong doing all this stuff. Most kids have started going to school because we're out there at night telling them to go home for school."

DEAN MOSQUITO
DIRECTOR and YENO, OLABUD DOOGETHU

SOLUTION

A place based justice reinvestment initiative

Olabud Doogethu is a community co-designed justice reinvestment site which aims to address complex social issues through organised collaboration. The initiative uses data mapping to identify at risk communities, assess their socio-economic needs and then utilise community assets and opportunities.

Impact and outcomes

Since the introduction of the Olabud Doogethu project, Halls Creek has enjoyed a significant reduction in criminal activity.



63% reduction in burglaries



59% reduction in stolen motor vehicles



69% reduction in arrests (aged 10 – 17)



PROGRAM TYPE

Rehabilitation program

TARGET COHORT

Young people who are in contact with the justice system

AREA OF OPERATION

Banksia Hill Detention Centre

 <https://www.wungening.com.au/beyond-youth-justice-services>

Key Outcomes

1,337 young people supported in the 2018-19 period, with 918 of them identifying as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

In 2020, 11 programs were delivered for Beyond YJS which supported around 80 young people aged 15 - 17.

Love BiTES program provides education to equip young people with skills needed for respectful relationships and effective communication.

Beyond Youth Justice Services

Beyond Youth Justice Services (Beyond YJS) is a consortium program between Wungening, Centrecare and Uniting WA that provides support in the areas of rehabilitation and emotional wellbeing. Beyond YJS provides a providing a “through care service model”, which is a co-ordinated and integrated approach to case managing young people who intersect with the Department of Justice.

CHALLENGE

Inadequate rehabilitation services and support

Many young people coming into contact with the youth justice system do not have access to the rehabilitation and support services needed to help them avoid ongoing future contact with the justice system in adulthood, and the services that are available are sometimes not culturally appropriate.

OUTCOME

End to end rehabilitation support for young people in the justice system

The model provides individual rehabilitation support, assisting clients to meet the requirements of court orders, obtain employment and education and develop behavioural and psycho-social skills. In the long term, YJS delivers holistic support to minimise reoffending through culturally sensitive rehabilitation and emotional support.

“ At conclusion of his support from Beyond YJS, client had applied for a number of apprenticeships and registered with a number of job network providers.”

Wungening Aboriginal Corporation
2018 - 2019 Annual report

SOLUTION

Holistic support for young people who come into contact with the justice system

Beyond YJS provides young people with individual rehabilitation support, from their first point of contact with the Department of Justice to the completion of their order and/or their transition back into the community. This includes on-site youth workers, behavioural and social skills workshops and service referrals.

Elements of Beyond YJS Holistic Service Model

Beyond YJS is focused on coordinated service delivery at various stages of the justice system.



Supervise and rehabilitate young people in custody



Support young people on orders in the community



Divert young people away from criminal justice system



DISMANTLE

PROGRAM TYPE

Upskilling and employment assistance

TARGET COHORT

At-risk young people

AREA OF OPERATION

Perth



<https://www.dismantle.org.au/>

Key Outcomes

Upskilling and improving employability of vulnerable young people in a safe environment.

Building a relationship of trust in order to providing mentoring and emotional and social training.

Building self esteem and encouraging self reliance to assist young people in reaching their potential.

Dismantle in Perth Metro and Regional WA

Dismantle is a not-for-profit social enterprise that aims to support at-risk youth in overcoming socio-inherited hurdles. The overarching purpose is to minimise the risk of long-term unemployment of provide youth with the foundational skills for personal growth, independence and long term success.

CHALLENGE

Vulnerable young people at risk of long-term unemployment

Disadvantaged or vulnerable young people, such as those who have experienced trauma, are suffering from developmental deficiencies, have underlying health issues or are experiencing family or domestic violence, will often struggle to secure or maintain stable employment.

OUTCOME

Increased opportunities and improved community engagement

Case studies indicate that program participants experience improvements in a number of areas, including emotional regulation skills, employment opportunities and accessing community services. Interest has steadily grown, with the program increasing from 80 participants in 2012 to 410 in 2018.

“ In Mullewa, the police reported it was the first time in seven years there was no incidence of youth crime for a week during the school holidays and attributed it to the program. ”

Pat Ryan
Dismantle CEO

SOLUTION

Skills training and mentoring through work based programs

Dismantle runs a number of programs that engage and upskill young people in a safe space, while also allowing for crisis management, early intervention measures and emotional and social training. The programs include 'Bike Rescue', whereby young people work with a bike mechanic to restore two bikes.

Key Features of Dismantle Program

Dismantle supports at risk young people to achieve sustained personal and financial independence.



Training and skills to increase employability



Mentoring and development of emotional and social skills



Crisis management and referral to intervention and support services

Communities For Children

PROGRAM TYPE

Early intervention, parenting support

TARGET COHORT

Children (0-12)

AREA OF OPERATION

52 communities across Australia



<https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/families-and-children/programs-services/family-support-program/family-and-children-services>

Key Outcomes

Parents in CfC sites have significantly less harsh parenting practices and higher levels of parenting self-efficacy.

Children have better receptive vocabulary achievement and verbal ability.

Children living in CfC sites are significantly more likely to be living in a household where at least one parent was employed.

Communities for Children (CfC) Initiative

Communities for Children involves Facilitating Partners (CfC FPs) who work to support children and families in 52 disadvantaged communities across Australia. CfC FPs take an early intervention approach that supports families to improve the way they relate to each other; improve parenting skills; and to ensure the health and wellbeing of children.

CHALLENGE

Children and their families who need support in early childhood development

CfC seeks to address the issue of children and their families not being adequately supported in early childhood development and education, leading to continued and compounding disadvantage.

OUTCOME

Reduced offending rates, increased Indigenous employment rates

Early intervention and strengthening communities leads to better outcomes for children and their families in the medium to long-term. Among other outcomes, families will feel supported and children will be provided with access to high quality early learning opportunities in the years before school.

“ Communities for Children brings together all levels of government and non-government organisations to deliver better outcomes for disadvantaged children and families, in a way that is sensitive to local needs. ”

Hon. Julie Collins
Former Parliamentary Secretary for Community Services

SOLUTION

Place-based, early intervention and whole of community approach

CfC FPs build on local strengths to meet the needs of individual communities, and to create capability within local service systems, using strong evidence of what works in early intervention and prevention.

Key Features

The purpose of CfC is to encourage healthy community environments for disadvantaged children and improve the communities in which children grow up.



Home visits by CfC FPs



Early learning and development programs



Life skills courses and parenting support



PROGRAM TYPE

Early intervention and prevention, risk management

TARGET COHORT

Vulnerable and at risk Indigenous young people (15-25 years)

AREA OF OPERATION

Fitzroy Crossing, WA



<https://kalacc.org/youth-projects/yirimman-project/>

Key Outcomes

Reduction in crime and antisocial behaviour in communities as positive identities are developed through connection to culture.

Young people develop a strong sense of connection to culture, Country and community.

Equipping young people with the skills to succeed.

Yirimman Project

Yirimman Project works with Indigenous young people (15 -25 years) from remote communities to connect them culturally and linguistically within Nyikina, Mangala, Walmajarri and Karajarri traditional lands and language groups, with a focus on mental health, AOD support and connection to culture. The project is currently based out of Fitzroy Crossing, Western Australia.

CHALLENGE

Young people facing serious issues as a result of loss of cultural identity

Indigenous young people are facing high risk of serious issues such as self-harm, substance abuse and the loss of cultural identity. This leads to the development of antisocial outlooks and behaviours, and increasing contact with the justice system.

OUTCOME

Stronger cultural identity for Indigenous youth and reduced risk

Connection to culture strengthens self-identity and self-esteem, community leadership, mental wellbeing, relationships with others and positive contribution to society. Outcomes also include reduced risk behaviours and reduced risk of contact with the justice system.

“ [There is] good evidence that Yirimman has had a very positive impact on the lives of a range of young people who are now taking on leadership and contributing positively in their communities. ”

Murdoch University
2016 Review of Yirimman Project

SOLUTION

Re-establishment of connection to culture, Country and community

Yirimman Project take young people on ‘back to country’ bush trips with cultural mentors and Elders. Beyond the transfer of knowledge and skills, Yirimman trips provide a safe and effective space for participants to cultivate relationships with culture, Country, and wider community.

Key Features of Yirimman Project

Yirimman Project takes Indigenous young people on safe and effective ‘back to country’ trips with Elders and mentors.



Positive relationships developed with mentors and community



Activities such as storytelling, ceremony and traditional crafts



Re-establishment of cultural identity