**Australasian Juvenile Justice Administrators Meeting**

**12 – 14 November 2014**

**Sydney, NSW**

**Queensland Report**

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# State and Territory Youth Justice Statistics

N/A

# Schedule of Achievements and Innovations

##  Youth Boot Camps

All of Queensland’s Youth Boot Camps have commenced and are successfully delivering programs to at risk young people.

Early Intervention Youth Boot Camps

The youth boot camp trial was implemented as part of the Government’s election commitment under the *Safer Streets Crime Action Plan*.  There are currently three Early Intervention Youth Boot Camps (EIYBC) successfully delivering programs to at risk young people operating on the Gold Coast, Fraser/Sunshine Coast and Rockhampton.

EIYBC is an innovative approach, and a first for Queensland. Unlike traditional military-style ‘boot camp’ programs, the EIYBC program focuses on addressing the underlying factors behind a young person’s display of behaviours that indicate a trajectory towards offending.

EIYBC are available for teenagers who are at risk of becoming involved in long-term criminal behaviour. These camps are for young people who have not had contact with the youth justice system, though they may have received a caution from police.

As of 2 October 2014, 109 young people have commenced an EIYBC. Forty three young people have commenced the Gold Coast EIYBC, run by the Kokoda Youth Foundation.  Forty one young people on Fraser/Sunshine Coast EIYBC, run by Oz Adventures and twenty five young people have commenced the Rockhampton EIYBC, run by the Queensland Police-Citizens Youth Club.

Early monitoring of EIYBC participant offending behaviour calculated to 30 June 2014 shows that for the Gold Coast EIYBC, 7 per cent of participants committed an offence during the program and no young people committed an offence in the three months following their completion of the program. For the Fraser/Sunshine Coast EIYBC, 95 per cent of participants did not offend during the program and 87 per cent did not offend in the three months following the program. For the Rockhampton EIYBC, no participants offended either during the program or in the three months following the program.

Administrative data available to 10 October 2014 for the Gold Coast EIYBC (which started in late 2012) revealed that of the 38 young people who successfully completed the program, 19 are currently engaged with community-based mentors. One hundred per cent of the group has re-engaged with education, training and/or employment and the majority have reported to have improved social skills; relationships at home and improved physical and emotional wellbeing.

EIYBC programs are producing positive outcomes changing the lives of young Queenslanders.  EIYBC participants are reporting changing attitudes and re-engaging in education and employment, leaving the program happier and healthier with more positive family and community networks and gaining an understanding of the impact of offending.

EIYBC success stories includes a young person who graduated from the Fraser/Sunshine Coast EIYBC in September 2014. This young person was always getting into fights. He has reported a significant improvement in his relationship with his mother and step-father and is now regularly attending school since completing the program. He has also applied to the Army Reserves.

Another young person, who had anger issues, received a school award for not getting involved in fights, stepping back, responding appropriately and reporting the situation to the school staff. The young person stated that, before the program, the situation would have escalated into a fight.

EIYBC programs are also improving networks and referral pathways across key stakeholders including Queensland Police Service, Child Safety, Schools, Youth Justice and community agencies.

Sentenced Youth Boot Camp

The Sentenced Youth Boot Camp (SYBC) program, commenced in December 2013 targets young people demonstrating entrenched criminal behaviour and is offered as an alternative to youth detention.

SYBC is an innovative approach, and a first for Queensland. Unlike traditional military-style ‘boot camp’ programs, the SYBC program focuses on addressing the underlying factors behind a young person’s offending.

A court can refer a young person to the SYBC program by sentencing them to a Boot Camp Order which can be between three and six months in length. The SYBC program provides service provision for the length of the order which includes a residential and community supervision phase. Ongoing mentoring is voluntary and can continue for 12 months after commencement of the order.

In March 2014, as a result of increasing youth crime in the Townsville area, the *Youth Justice Act* 1992 was amended to make it mandatory for young people, from Townsville, who are found guilty of a third unlawful use of a motor vehicle offence in a 12 month period to be sentenced to a Boot Camp (Motor Vehicle) Order.

As of 10 October 2014, twenty-five distinct young people (with thirty-two orders) from the Townsville and Cairns areas have been sentenced to a Boot Camp Order and have entered the residential boot camp centre since December 2013. Twenty-four have completed the intense residential boot camp component of the program at Lincoln Springs and one has been removed for unacceptable bad behaviour and breaching their court order.

Following the intense residential component at Lincoln Springs, young people spend the remainder of their Boot Camp Order, which is between two to five months, in their community continuing the program. This part of the program focusses on re-engaging participants in school or work, improving their relationships with their families and the ability of their parents to manage their child’s behaviour.

There are 12 distinct young people (with 15 orders) currently in this community phase of the boot camp program. Seven distinct young people (with eight orders) have successfully completed their boot camp orders and have chosen to continue working with Beyond Billabong in a mentoring program.

The SYBC is seeing encouraging signs of success. Young people are re-engaging in school, gaining new employment skills, improving relationships with their family and local communities and addressing their offending behaviour.

Success stories include a young male, who prior to participating in the program, was disengaged from school, misusing substances and was committing motor vehicle and break and entering offences.  This young person successfully completed the residential phase of the SYBC program and is currently actively engaged in the community phase of the program. He is now attending school every day and is achieving good grades. He has quit smoking and trains several times a week. This young person has undertaken a number of work placements in construction and horsemanship with local businesses and sees himself as a role model and is proud of what he has achieved.

##  Graffiti Removal Orders

A total of 188 graffiti removal programs were administered by Youth Justice between 27 September 2013 and 30 September 2014, with 171 young offenders ordered to spend a total of over 1850 hours removing graffiti from their communities.

Young offenders entered the program through one of three pathways, police diversionary referral (20), outcomes from youth justice conferences (12) or court order (156).

A total of 115 programs have been successfully completed while 63 are ongoing. A total of 10 programs were not completed successfully.

Referrals to the program have been received from the Gold Coast to Thursday Island, with the program being supported through active partnerships with many local councils, community groups and Queensland Rail.

The Department of Justice and Attorney-General (DJAG) has a grant of $50,000 provided by Department of Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience (DLGCRR) to support graffiti removal activities across eight youth justice service centres.

##  Legislative Reforms

The Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014 (the Bill) was passed by the Queensland Parliament and commenced on 28 March 2014. The amendments include:

* open the Childrens Court for repeat offenders
* allow information about repeat young offenders to be published more often
* make breach of bail an offence in circumstances where a young person commits a new offence whilst on bail for a prior offence
* allow childhood findings of guilt upon sentencing as an adult to be admissible
* allow for the automatic transfer of young offenders from youth detention into adult correctional facilities when they turn 17 if they have six or more months of their sentence remaining to be served
* allow children who have absconded from Sentenced Youth Boot Camps to be arrested and brought before a court for resentencing without first being given a warning, and
* remove the principle that detention is a sentencing option of last resort.

During consideration by Queensland Parliament’s Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee two additional legislative amendments were considered and included in the amendments.

* The first to give effect to the courts making of a mandatory boot camp order for young offenders who commit repeat unlawful use of motor vehicle (UUMV) offences. These amendments were to be considered with specific regard to Townsville, which is experiencing high youth offending rates and where UUMV offences comprise a disproportionate number of repeat offences.
* The second to remove the existing review provisions from the *Youth Justice Act* 1992 to rely solely on the appeal provisions.

##  Blueprint for the Future of Youth Justice

As previously reported, Queensland is planning to introduce a Youth Justice Services’ renewal plan (formerly reported as the Blueprint for the Future of Youth Justice) which sets out the strategic direction for renewing youth justice practice, systems and services over the next ten years. Consideration of this matter was due earlier in the year but due to unforseen delays is now expected to be progressed by the end of 2014.

The renewal plan sets out the strategic direction for major reform of the youth justice system and will align with work already undertaken in relation to recent amendments to *Youth Justice Act* 1992 and the introduction of youth boot camps. It will also consider the introduction of new and effective sentencing options, early intervention and diversion strategies, and increased focus on responding to the causes of crime, improving youth detention services and managing demand on the youth justice system.

##  Infrastructure

The first and major stage of the Queensland Government’s expansion of the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre (Townsville) was finalised in September 2013. This included new buildings, site infrastructure and secure perimeter and has increased bed capacity to 72. Refurbishment and upgrading of previously existing facilities is continuing with this to be progressively completed by April 2015. Once completed the bed capacity at the centre will increase to 96 male and female offenders.

Queensland’s only other youth detention centre is Brisbane Youth Detention Centre (BYDC) which has capacity of 130 beds for male and female young people. The BYDC is currently undergoing a security system upgrade which is due for completion in 2017.

## Renewing outsourced service delivery funding

A key strategy under the Blueprint is the recommissioning of outsourced service delivery funding. DJAG currently funds non-government organisations to deliver approximately $5.2M in services that target young offenders and their families. This excludes funding for the pilot early intervention and sentenced youth boot camp programs. This funding has been allocated based on historical priorities and demands and needs in particular locations. Changing patterns of demand for youth justice services, increasing complexity of client need and the desire to refocus investment on services and programs that achieve tangible outcomes have necessitated a reconsideration of how these funds are allocated.

A new analysis tool has been developed that allows Youth Justice to determine and forecast locations of high demand and need across different cohorts of offenders and at risk young people. Over the next two years DJAG (particularly Youth Justice) will work with service providers to refine services to better reflect current circumstances and implement improved outcomes based reporting using new systems and tools. The resulting data and evidence will position DJAG well to make informed decisions about the future funding of programs and organisations.

##  Single Family Action Plan

In February 2014, Youth Justice introduced a Single Family Action Plan initiative to provide increased coordination and intensive intervention to both young offenders and their families. This initiative is being trialled in Aurukun, Townsville, Mt Isa and the Gold Coast. The initiative involves lead coordination by Youth Justice with support from government and non-government partner agencies.

The main objectives of this initiative are to reduce reoffending, increase community safety, enable service delivery efficiencies and support parents to be more accountable. A single action plan is developed for the whole family and is reviewed regularly with input from the family, young person and key government/non-government partners. A plan may include assisting a parent/guardian, sibling and/or young offender to obtain employment, re-engage in education, address substance misuse, access health services, access safe housing, learn responsible parenting skills, address anti-social behaviour and improve positive community participation.

Early feedback on the initiative has identified that the co-ordination of service delivery is improving, the duplication of services is reducing and families are engaging more positively with Youth Justice. A developmental evaluation framework underpins the work to information program implementation and assists in addressing issues as they emerge

The initiative’s collaborative way of working acknowledges the need for a collective response to address the complex problems often present in young offenders and families’ lives and environment. It also aligns with the approach that Youth Justice will be taking in relation to the roll out of the renewal plan, where collaboration with local communities, government and non-government agencies will be critical to address offending and the casual factors of offending.

# Human Resource Achievements and Initiatives

N/A

# Research, Reviews and Publications

## Youth Justice evaluation

Youth Justice is evaluating its suite of new programs currently being trialled. This includes the procurement of an independent evaluation of the youth boot camp initiative and an internal review of the single Family Action Plan program. The impact of legislative changes will also be monitored to assess its impact on young offenders and business operations.

# Key Positions and Contact Numbers

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