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**Australasian Juvenile Justice Administrators Meeting**

**13th and 14th of November 2014**

**Sydney, NSW**

**Tasmania Report**

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# Schedule of Achievements and Innovations

## The Continuum of Care to Prevent Youth Offending and Re-Offending

The Continuum project is the Tasmanian Government’s response to the need to realign the youth justice system.

A cross-departmental Youth Justice Management Committee was established to provide Government with short, medium and long term strategies for nurturing and strengthening primary, secondary and tertiary youth justice intervention options across the entire continuum – thereby delivering on the vision for creating safer and more resilient communities, where young people are held accountable for their actions, and are provided with appropriate and timely services, that will assist them to reach their full potential.

Tasmania provided AJJA members with a presentation outlining the Continuum of Care at the April meeting.

In March 2014 a new Liberal Government was elected in Tasmania, this reform process remains on the new Governments agenda. The final recommendations paper is before Cabinet, it is anticipated that this will be endorsed during 2014, with development of the first of three, three year plans starting early in 2015.

## Pat the Pony – Southern Tasmania Trial

‘Pat the Pony’ is an innovative equine therapy program that is the result of collaboration between Community Youth Justice South and Gagebrook Primary School.

The program brings together young people under the supervision of Community Youth Justice with at risk students from Gagebrook area. Together they work with the ponies (Equine therapy) on the school grounds.

Andrew Gait, Assistant Principal at Gagebrook says the results have been overwhelmingly positive not just for those students directly involved but the wider school community.

The program, affectionately termed ‘Pat the Pony’ by the students, runs every 2nd Wednesday at Gagebrook Primary School. Wednesday’s were traditionally the worst day of the week for extreme, challenging behaviours and truancy as evidenced by the number of ‘red cards’ handed out.

Equine therapy can be successfully used for behaviour modification and anger management. The school has found that working with the ponies calms the students and teaches them how to self-regulate. This positive behaviour lasts beyond the immediate session and into the rest of the week.

For those young people sentenced to Community Service Orders, the program allows them to give something back to the community. They are tasked with grooming and floating the ponies, leading them and even picking up manure. They are placed in a position of leadership where they are required to model appropriate caring behaviour to the younger students. Many of the young people on Community Service Orders are high end intergenerational offenders who have not had the opportunity to develop pro-social relationships.

Andrew Gait says there have never been any issues with youth justice clients being on site. They even join the teachers in the staffroom for a coffee at the end of each session.

Community Youth Justice and Gagebrook Primary School are obviously very proud of this program. This is a great example of what can happen when we work together with our communities investing in early intervention and restorative justice practices.

More recently the program has expanded to include a second primary school at the request of the Early Intervention Police Unit (EIU). The EIU has been very successful in the past working with local disadvantaged children who are identified to be on the offending trajectory. Community Youth Justice South has very close working partnerships with EIU, demonstrating how well community partnerships can work towards responding to community needs.

Further, the success of this program has been recognised by a local philanthropist who into the future will be supporting the Department of Education and another school in replicating this program. Youth Justice is also excited to have professor Rob White from the University of Tasmania become part of the program into the future. Professor White has offered to assist wherever possible.

# Human Resource Achievements and Initiatives

## Community Youth Justice Quality Appraisal 2013/14

Community Youth Justice in Tasmania operates under a Quality Improvement Framework which was developed and conducted initially in 2012/13.  The most recent appraisal, *Community Youth Justice Quality Appraisal 2013/14*, has built on the significant achievements and the lessons learned from the previous year’s baseline data.  The quality appraisal team worked with local community youth justice staff to ascertain a rating across a number of pre-identified performance and quality indicators.

Other features of the appraisal included client and staff surveys (with statistical validity) and the development of stakeholder management plans for each community youth justice area. A quarterly reporting schedule was undertaken for standard performance indicators with a focus on quality outcomes during the appraisal period.  As part of continuous quality improvement, participants from each community youth justice area involved in the process meet regularly with a member of the quality appraisal team to progress matters relating to workforce development, policy as well as initiatives identified through the quality improvement process.

# Research, Reviews and Publications

## AJJA Juvenile Justice Standards

The AJJA juvenile justice standards were published in 2009, and consist of a set of 59 juvenile justice standards in 10 separate domains. These standards describe the agreed standard for practice to be delivered by juvenile justice administrators. They are the agreed set of standards juvenile justice services agencies aspire to meet. These standards have been assembled in accordance with the requirements if all jurisdictional legislation, including United Nations rules and standards.

Tasmania has recently completed a quality appraisal of Youth Justice Services based upon the AJJA juvenile justice standards.  Tasmania would be supportive of the development of national indicators which align with the AJJA standards. An incremental approach to this work has been adopted for Child Protection services with the AIHW and jurisdictions working together to report against the national standards for Out-of-Home Care. The new National Standards for Out-of-Home Care-a set is comprised of 13 standards endorsed by community services ministers that relate to the support of children and young people in out-of-home care. Perhaps the AIHW could take the lead in the development of these indicators.

## Redevelopment of the Online Practice Manual

Children and Youth Services have commenced a review process of the online practice manuals.

This review process will ultimately result in the decommissioning of the current Youth Justice and Child Protection online practice manuals, and the creation of one new online resource that will span all program areas.

Tasmania is currently investigating examples of online practice manuals across other jurisdictions, and how other jurisdictions manage program content, policies, procedures, practice advice, etc.

Tasmania would welcome and encourage feedback from other jurisdictions in relation to how program content is managed and communicated to staff.

# Key Positions and Contact Numbers

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