
'Kids shouldn't be separated from other kids who aren't in detention or they won't learn to be good'

Submission by Youth Empowered Towards Independence (YETI)

Independent Review of Youth Detention Queensland 2016

Introduction

Youth Empowered Towards Independence (YETI) welcomes the Independent Review of Youth Detention in Queensland. YETI is actively engaged in supporting young people in the Cairns region to improve social, emotional, health and wellbeing. YETI works with vulnerable young people 12-25 years old and we currently have very high demand for our services, particularly from young people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, many involved with the care and statutory justice systems. Young people who attend the centre are frequently disconnected from community and family with many young people attending the centre originally from Cape York communities, Torres Strait Islands or residing with extended family in the Cairns region.

Overview of YETI

YETI's mission is to provide a community-based, supportive and therapeutic environment for at-risk, young people through the provision of services that foster social, emotional, physical and psychological well-being. YETI employs approximately 20 staff and receives funding from four primary funding sources: Queensland Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, Queensland Health, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Federal Department of Health.

The service currently provides six key programs.

1. Drug and Alcohol Counselling (Department of Health Funded NGOTGP Drug Treatment Program)
2. Drug and Alcohol Case management (Queensland Health funded drug and alcohol supports)
3. Day program (Queensland Department of Communities funded youth centre)
4. Transition from care (Queensland Department of Communities)
5. Just North (youth sector capacity building and inhalant supply reduction in Cape York and Torres Strait as part of the Indigenous Advancement Strategy)
6. Intensive support for families with teenagers or young people in care (Queensland Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services CRC-PAS packages).

The service provided to young people is fluid around young people's needs and may change across time as support needs emerge and dissipate. An intake/assessment worker or counsellor assesses young people referred to YETI and then YETI practitioners work collaboratively with the young person to find a support model and style that works for them. These models include:

- Counselling;
- Case management;
- Outreach support (including assertive outreach);
- Supporting the linkages and connections young people have with other agencies (e.g., interagency case collaboration models, participating in planning with government etc.);

- Individual, peer and family interventions;
- Further formal assessment of substance use, bio-psycho-social factors and mental health issues using appropriate tools and methods (e.g., Psycheck; WASC-Y; DASS);
- Crisis intervention;
- Therapeutic groups, with a dialectical behaviour therapy skills training/emotional regulation focus; and
- Provision of emergency brokerage funding.

YETI facilitates a popular day program, open from 9am to 1pm weekdays. The day program at YETI is designed to be relaxed, youth friendly and is supported by workers who undertake opportunity driven interventions aimed at providing young people with information related to safety, self-care, living skills, housing needs and substance misuse. The day program has a critical role as an intake method for the more structured case management and counselling programs. YETI specifically focuses on attempting to engage young people that may fall through the gaps at mainstream services. At present, approximately 85 per cent of participants in the day program are from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds many young people are homeless, engaging in opportunistic sex work and have histories of extensive family violence and trauma.

For the 2015/2016 financial year 183 young people aged under 18 years old accessed our day program. 85 per cent of these young people were from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds. 224 individual young people accessed case management (80 per cent from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island backgrounds).

Our comments to the review

Due to the short timeframe of the review we worked quickly on this submission. Therefore our comments are brief and are a mix of observation and recommendation. YETI make ten key points in relation to the Independent review:

1. Keeping young people connected to family and community
2. Culturally responsive supports
3. Specialist in-reach services
4. Access to health and disability assessments
5. Integrating the service system
6. Access to education
7. Transitions
8. Detention settings
9. Understanding the youth justice system and making complaints
10. The interface between youth justice and child protection systems

These topics, whilst associated with key themes in the discussion paper (primarily points 6-9), were largely identified by the practitioner team at YETI and most of our observations rely on our 'grass roots' experiences. That is, what practitioners 'on the ground' in Far North Queensland are observing

in relation to young people's experiences in detention. Whilst some of our observations may be obvious and are confirmed in the current literature and research we have not had time to undertake a literature review to provide the evidence base for all key points. Fifteen young Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people (18-21 years old) were briefly surveyed regarding their experience of detention, this included their experiences in Cleveland Youth Detention Centre (CYDC), Brisbane Youth Detention Centre (BYDC), Townsville Correctional Centre Women's (TCCW) and/or Lotus Glen Correctional Centre (LGCC). Some of the young people's comments are included throughout the following report (quotes from young people are in coloured text boxes). All young people provided information confidentially and if they alleged issues of abuse we have provided information regarding their rights to make complaints. All young people interviewed are linked to support services.

This paper also includes a number of case studies in a confidential attachment. We are requesting that the review keeps this part of the submission confidential. It also should be noted that whilst the case studies are de-identified it is difficult to ensure that they are totally not identifiable for people that know the young people well. This is an issue in regional and remote communities.

It is important for us to qualify that any service gaps that we identify are not intended to blame services or government shortcomings rather highlight opportunities for interventions and change. Finally this submission does not purport to speak representatively of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people we work with, or the experiences of young people in the Cairns region. The comments are informed by a specific cohort of young people who attend our service and the workers who support this very vulnerable target group. We provide them to the Review with the hope of contributing to the development of better interventions for young people who attend our service and reducing the contact of these vulnerable young people with statutory justice systems.

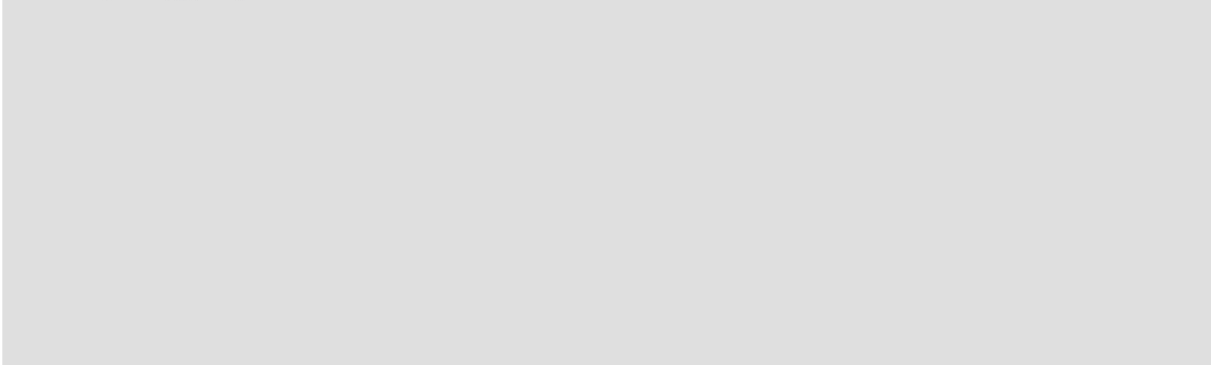
1. Keeping young people connected to family and community

YETI validates broader research and findings that implicate young people's involvement in the criminal justice system as associated with young people's experiences of trauma and ruptured attachments. The young people that YETI supports need to be viewed as part of a system of family and community with consideration to intergenerational trauma and historical failures in government policy. YETI believes that all efforts to address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people's disadvantage need to consider 'ecological' systems around young people as well as providing tailored individual interventions. In particular YETI believes that interventions with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people need to be acutely aware of the importance of family, including extended family as central to program/policy development.

For example, whilst youth services have a broad tendency to work primarily with the young person, YETI's approach ensures family are always included in support plans where practical. In YETI's drop in space grandmothers, aunties and mothers are welcome to visit and 'get to know' the service and workers. Young people in detention regularly call workers at YETI to speak with friends and family.

Young people who have been in detention reported feeling lonely and missed regular connection with parents and extended family.

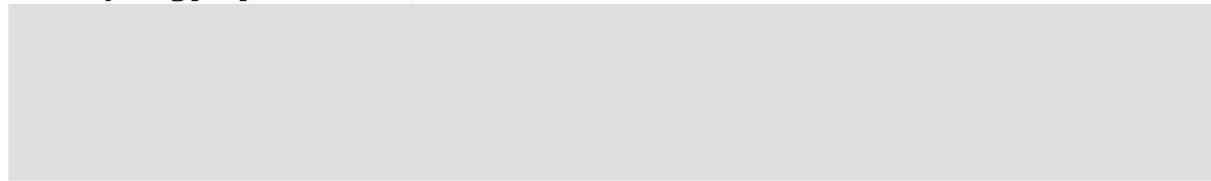
What young people said:



Some young people reported having infrequent, sporadic or no contact with their children whilst in detention. One very young person described having no face to face contact with her family for six months when in detention (aside from occasional video links). It appears that the level of contact young people have with their family largely relies on the motivation and capacity of Youth Justice workers to organise these visits within their busy competing case loads. YETI recognise that locating families and helping to organise visits is not always simple. Not all families whose young people are in detention have stability in their housing, electricity and telecommunications access. YETI has purchased mobile phones on many occasions to support young people to meet their reporting requirements and ensure they and their families are contactable, however mobile phone contact relies on some capacity to charge batteries and refill phone credit. One mother reported not knowing her 13 year old daughter was in detention for three days.

Dislocation from country and family impacts significantly on young people we work with. In YETI's experience it is these isolated and disconnected young people who are most likely to form their own 'family' of peers on the streets and in detention centres. The co-location of young people who offend together combined with disconnection from family supports can entrench the sense of belonging to a negative peer group and increase risk taking, substance misuse and opportunity driven offending. YETI work tirelessly to support young people to separate from their peer networks and are very careful with any group programming that we do not mix together young people at different 'stages' in their level of offending behaviour and/or substance misuse. This requires skilled staff and adequate resourcing levels.

What young people said:



YETI provides easy access to phone cards and telephones for young people to make contact with family and frequently family call the centre looking for young people. YETI also provides brokerage

for young people to return to country and facilitates the return of over 60 young people annually. We believe that supporting young people who have youth justice issues in the Cairns community to return to family and country in the Cape and Torres Strait Islands is a critical intervention strategy that must be supported and extended.

Solutions ?

- Specialised family supports for families with young people involved with the youth justice system (10-18 years old).
- Support models that build links between youth services and community controlled services.
- Families with young people in detention should be supported to have regular contact with their families. This includes face to face contact and supports to travel to visit young people.
- Young people in detention need to be provided with opportunities to have regular contact with their families by telephone.
- Resourcing youth work roles in communities.

2. Culturally responsive supports

Most of the young people who YETI support in the detention context are from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island backgrounds. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are more than 25 times more likely to be incarcerated than non-Indigenous young people.¹ It is critical that processes, supports, programming and transitions associated with youth detention aim to work towards greater cultural responsiveness.

YETI has worked tirelessly over the past eight years to improve our work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island young people and ensure our service provision is culturally competent and safe. Aspects of YETI's work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people includes: employing and supporting practitioners from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds; being accredited in ISO Culturally Secure Practice Standards; providing information relating to social and emotional wellbeing in culturally appropriate formats; weekly in-reach services provided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers; transport assistance for returning to community; supporting phone contact between young people and their families; advocating for young people's rights to return to country; purchasing culturally appropriate resources; supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural activities (e.g., participation in NAIDOC day events etc.); and developing a Reconciliation Action Plan.

We believe that the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practitioners in all aspects of the detention, justice, care and support systems to be of paramount importance to successfully supporting young people. In YETI's experience the targeted recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers enables more culturally appropriate service delivery, good role modelling, and access to specialist advice. Young people we work with have observed a lack of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island employees in detention centres.

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2013) Youth justice in Australia 2011-12: an overview. Bulletin no.115 Cat. No AUS 170 Canberra: AIHW p.10

What young people said:

Many of the comments young people made regarding their experience in detention (in particular at Brisbane Youth Detention Centre) were in relation to the lack of foods associated with their cultural background. One young woman also requested more fresh produce.

What young people said:

Young women also requested access to 'Afro combs' culturally appropriate grooming brushes that are necessary to brush very tight curly hair. Access to these types of items, whilst small gestures help demonstrate cultural responsiveness.

Solutions ?

- Immediate audit to consider all aspects of the cultural responsiveness of the detention environment
- Employment targets that include a focus on staffing levels of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island staff within detention centres (including equal gender representation and ideally a balance of practitioners from different communities including different Aboriginal communities and the Torres Strait Islands)
- Improving the menu in detention to ensure there are culturally responsive options
- Availability of 'afro combs'
- Availability of cultural movies, videos, literature, school materials etc.

3. Access to specialist in-reach services

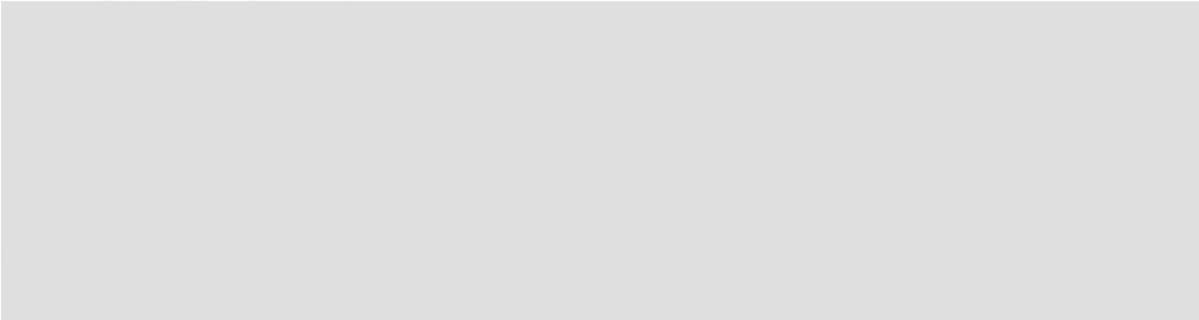
In recent research undertaken by the Cairns Safer Streets Taskforce the most prevalent factors contributing to young people's offending were: negative peer association, substance misuse and disengagement from education.² Misuse of drugs and alcohol is widespread in the cohort of young people that YETI support.

YETI assert that drug and alcohol treatment services that involve: rigid appointment based programs, abstinence approaches, and psycho social education focussed on fear may alienate vulnerable young people and not support their engagement in treatment. The use of ex-addicts and shock campaigns

² Cairns Safer Streets Taskforce 'Causal Factors that Contribute to Youth Offending in Cairns' February 2014 p.4

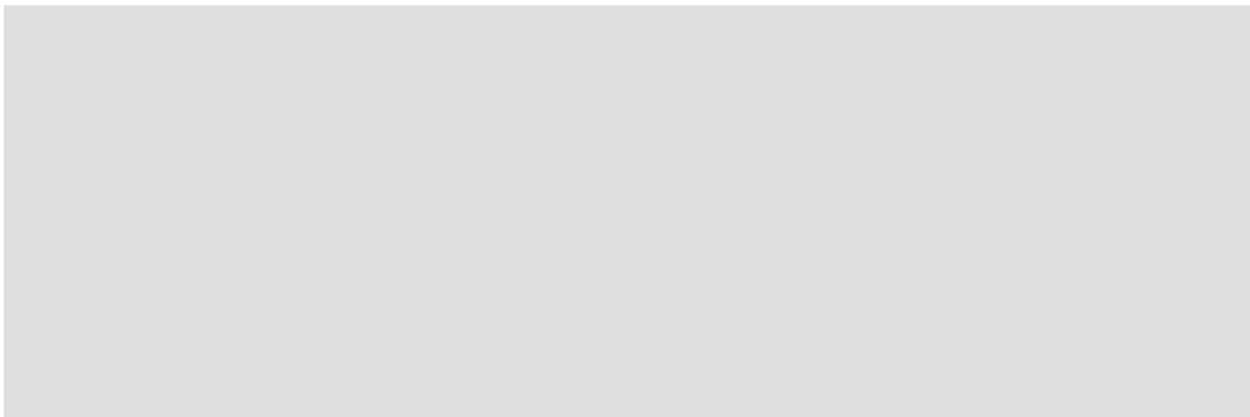
has equally been proved ineffectual or at worst detrimental to young people. Conversely, informal, voluntary settings with evidence based and responsive service delivery, cognizant of culture and identity can provide important interventions in the lives of young people. YETI believes that specialist youth drug and alcohol treatment services are essential components in the care system and can reduce young people's contact with statutory justice systems.

What young people said:



The youth sector in Cairns is small and 'has become even more stretched with \$1.3 million in funded services cut in September 2013'³. Specialist youth alcohol and drug treatment services are not widely available in Queensland. YETI are not aware of any drug and alcohol programming that is currently comprehensively targeting young people in the detention environment at Cleveland Detention Centre. This is despite the detention centre environment being a relatively 'useful' place to undertake counselling and support work, integrate harm minimisation information and 'plant seeds' in relation to reducing and ceasing substance misuse.

YETI have provided weekly in-reach drug and alcohol 'through care' to Lotus Glen Correctional Centre for the past eighteen months. The program has been very successful and ensures that the younger offenders are well linked to supports when they exit detention. Feedback from Corrective Services has been very positive and it seems likely that shortly we will extend this program to the young women at Townsville Correctional Centre.



³ Ibid p.iv

- In-reach programming ideally provided by practitioners from the home community of the young people (in order that links are fostered outside of the detention setting context rather than only provided within)

4. Access to disability assessments and development of shared support plans

YETI suspect that high numbers of young people we support have physical (in particular hearing, vision etc.) and intellectual disabilities that have not been formally diagnosed. YETI would like to see all young people undergo thorough physical, intellectual, mental health and alcohol and drug assessments when they are remanded or given detention sentences. For some young people these assessments are very difficult to undertake in the community. Primarily because: many young people are disengaged from school where some assessments occur; the waitlists for public appointments can be months or years; and there is a general paucity of services available in Cairns. On a number of occasions YETI has paid for clinical neuropsychology tests (at a cost of over 1500 dollars) due to waiting lists and a lack of public specialists. Many of the young people we work with who have been in youth detention have marked intellectual functioning issues, suspected fetal alcohol syndrome, ADHD, spectrum disorders etc. Whilst our service deplores the fact that assessments and supports are not available in the community (prior to incarceration) it seems critical that if young people enter detention they are properly assessed (with staff specifically experienced to undertake culturally safe assessments) and furthermore this information is shared with families and key support services. Ideally individual behaviour support plans could be developed in partnership with community stakeholders, young people and families and these plans provided to key support services, residential care services etc. in order that we 'join up' our approaches and are all aware of appropriate and effective communication and intervention strategies.

Solutions ?

- Comprehensive health and disability assessments on entry to detention settings
- Development of behaviour support plans for all young people in detention that can be developed and shared with key community stakeholders

5. Integrating the service system

YETI believes that whilst it is easy to label young people with 'challenging' behaviours or 'complex' needs, too frequently it is the service system itself that is complex and challenging, whilst young people's needs remain basic, generally revolving around love and care, safety, appropriate housing, access to culture and spirituality, primary health needs, food and education etc. YETI aims to work in coordination with other government and non-government agencies and is committed to supporting integrated treatment initiatives with a focus on interdisciplinary, concurrent treatment approaches to youth offending, substance use, mental health and improving young people's safety. In Cairns, YETI has been instrumental in the design, development and facilitation of the Coordinated Care for Vulnerable Young People initiative.

The Coordinated Care for Vulnerable Young People (CCYP) is a unique place based response by government and non-government agencies to support vulnerable young people in the community. The initiative is an integrated case management system that involves monthly 'Panel' meetings between managers from YETI, Child Safety Services, Youth Justice, Queensland Police, Anglicare, Act For Kids, WuChopperen Health Service, Housing and Public Works, Child and Youth Mental Health Queensland Health and Youth Link. Panel supports young people 8-17 years old who have had contact with the service system and experience little or no successful outcomes or have no services currently involved and be at risk and benefit from a multi agency team approach. Unlike other variants of case coordination mechanisms CCYP aims to address systems barriers and issues and supports the monthly facilitation of individual care teams that work with young people and families at the centre of our practice.

YETI believe that all young people from Cairns who spend time in detention should be considered for referral to the CCYP. Unfortunately this does not always occur despite CCYP being a very valuable community resource and referral point. YETI believe that all efforts should be made to keep young people out of detention facilities and that detention should be a 'last resort'. More use could be made of the CCYP mechanism to ensure that all statutory and non-government agencies have shared plans in relation to young people at high risk of entering detention facilities. (Refer to CCYP information sheet attachment).

Solutions ?

- Consideration of extending the function of CCYP
- DJAG to consider funding a senior practitioner role for the Cairns region
- Referral of young people exiting detention to CCYP

6. Access to education

Very high numbers of young people involved with the statutory justice system have inconsistent or scant involvement in formal education systems. Many young people in Cairns (we understand approximately 1500 are NOT enrolled in a school, despite being legally obliged). Many of the young people YETI works with have been disengaged from the school system for many years and this frequently follows years of sporadic school attendance. Formal education systems appear to struggle in successfully engaging some vulnerable young people and there are substantial barriers for young people attempting to access the education system. This includes: a lack of understanding by schools regarding the backgrounds and experiences of vulnerable young people; a lack of individual support within schools; a lack of education alternatives; and a general lack of coordination regarding young people who are disengaging from school in the critical period transitioning from primary to secondary school.

What young people said:

YETI believes that the Department of Education must engage with the statutory justice system and become more responsive to better supporting vulnerable young people within mainstream school settings. Whilst some alternative school spaces are provided YETI believe strongly that better accommodating young people within mainstream schools is more desirable than providing alternative arrangements. Schools must become accountable and see student enrolment and access to learning and supports as a right rather than a privilege. All young people in detention settings should be enrolled in school.

Solutions ?

- All young people of school aged in detention should be enrolled in schools prior to exit from detention.
- All young people should be involved in structured culturally responsive learning programs whilst in detention.
- Further work needs to be undertaken with the Department of Education and Training to ensure that vulnerable young people are better supported within the mainstream school context.

7. Transition from detention

As per substantial literature and evidence exiting detention facilities can be a time of increased vulnerability and risk for young people. Young people can struggle to adjust to life outside a structured environment and some young people (particularly those exiting the adult system) may exit into homelessness.

YETI believe that there is a distinct lack of services that supports young people as they exit detention. This applies to both the youth and adult systems. Over many years YETI have seen significant numbers of young people with multidimensional psycho social vulnerabilities exiting youth detention centres without 'joined up' thoughtful plans in relation to their exit and future plans.

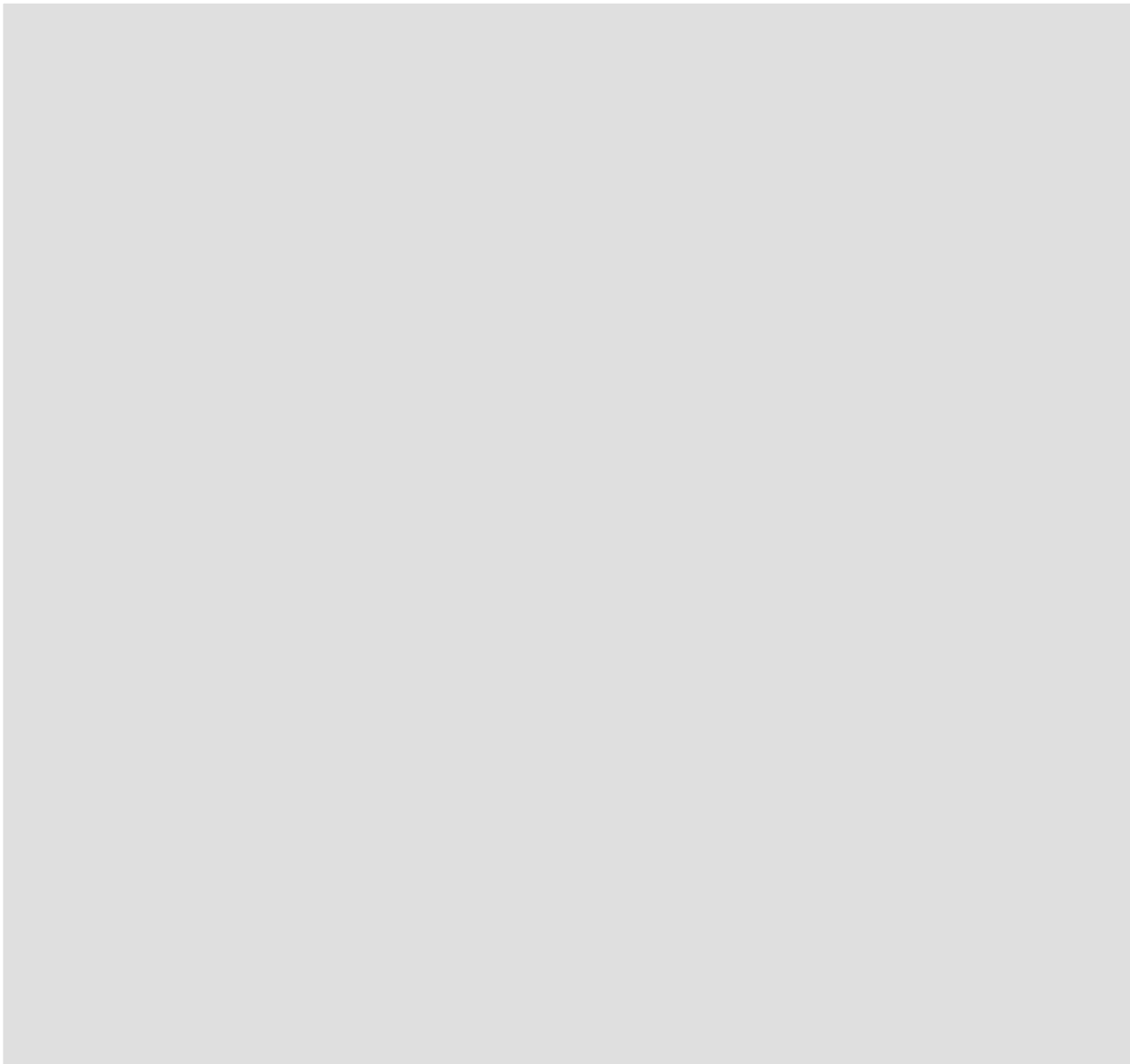
Solutions ?

- All young people to have transition from detention plans.
- Support services funded to provide transitional programming for young people exiting detention.

8. Detention centres.

Practitioners from YETI have visited both Lotus Glen Correctional Centre and Brisbane Youth Detention Centre. We are currently negotiating to undertake weekly or fortnightly visits to young people at Townsville Correctional Centre. We do not wish to comment on specific detention centres or the treatment of young people in detention. When we asked young people if they had any problems in detention some of their comments included:

What young people said:



The comments above were provided in response to a question asking if young people had any problems while they were in detention. Young people shared these comments confidentially with workers. Young people were offered the option of making formal complaints.

Young people attending YETI thought that good alternatives to detention were:

What young people said:



YETI shares broader sector concerns regarding the detention of 17 year olds in the adult prison system and is heartened by the government's decision to ensure this practice ceases in 2017. YETI remains very concerned in relation to the use of the adult watchhouse in Cairns for detaining young

people. YETI have supported young people 10-12 years old who have been detained in the adult watch house. Some young people in this age cohort are detained for a number of days. The adult watch house in Cairns is not suitable as a detention option for young people and an alternative arrangement needs to be quickly explored before there is a major incident.

Solutions ?

- Immediate transfer of all 17 year olds to youth detention centres.
- Provision of alternative secure options for young people 10-12 years old and cessation of the use of adult watch house facilities for small children.
- Ensuring young people have a way to meaningfully make complaints in relation to their treatment in youth detention centres.

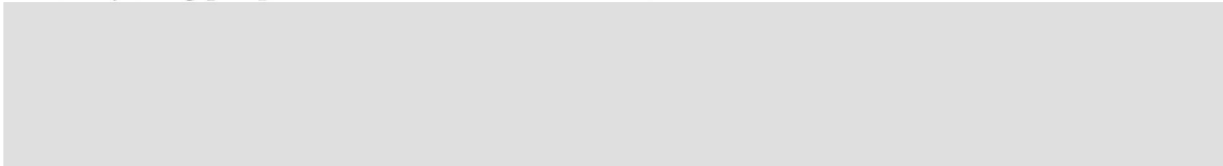
9. Understanding the youth justice system and making complaints

For some young people attending YETI, the youth justice system is very confusing. YETI acknowledges that local youth justice workers make good efforts to ensure young people understand orders and associated conditions. That said, some young people who attend our service do not seem to understand the processes associated with their youth justice orders. This issue particularly applies to those young people with disabilities and/or those young people attending our service with mental health/Fetal Alcohol Disorder (FAS) related issues. There is also an overwhelmingly low level of literacy and numeracy amongst young people attending YETI and this must factor into young peoples' ability to understand documentation associated with their engagement in the justice system.

In some cases, YETI sees parents/care givers of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people confused regarding the processes associated with their children/young people's involvement with the statutory justice system. There appears a need for additional culturally appropriate information on Children's court days targeted at parents and caregivers regarding the process and meaning for their families. YETI believes that if more culturally appropriate advice and information was provided to families there may be more consistency and support for enforcing orders and adhering to conditions.

Two young people raised concerns in relation to the process of making complaints about their treatment and conditions in Brisbane Youth Detention Centre.

What young people said:



Solutions ?

- Provision of culturally appropriate court support to families
- Development of complaints and grievance mechanisms in detention centres and post detention that are meaningful and provide a clear way for young people to be heard and see change as a result of their input

10. The interface between the youth justice and child protection systems

As much of the literature indicates YETI observe the strong intersection between the statutory justice system and care and protection system (current and/or historical). Many young people attending YETI are involved with the detention system, have experienced abuse and neglect in the family home and are frequently involved with the child protection system. Some young people involved in both child protection systems and youth justice systems may have multiple case plans with unclear coordination. Whilst the CCYP mechanism (refer attachment) has been very useful in addressing this issue there remain some concerns.

Despite all efforts by child protection workers, YETI have observed inconsistencies in the care system, whereby some young people in care have their needs somewhat subsumed by competing workload priorities whilst others face high levels of scrutiny (particularly in residential care contexts). Some young people may have infrequent contact with their case worker and other young people may be subject to monitoring, sometimes beyond the experiences of other young people who are not in care systems. Young people in care may be charged with minor drug possession charges when their residential units are searched, young people who have been violent to residential care workers may be charged with assault. Such cases may include minor assault charges such as throwing small objects at workers. Whilst YETI is not of the belief that residential care workers should endure physical assault and/or that there should be no consequence for violent behaviour; it is not frequently that a parent places charges against their children for such an act, or responds to substance use with police searches. Furthermore, young people who miss curfew times are reported to the police and may risk breaching bail. Young people in care who are not settled in placements may spend more time 'on the streets' and again are subject to higher levels of contact with the police and other statutory agencies.

YETI acknowledges that the current child protection system appears 'overstretched', workers case loads and capacity to respond to vulnerable young people is limited and there are a lack of specialist support services to refer to. YETI acknowledge some very good work undertaken locally by a number of Child Protection workers who have gone 'beyond' their duties in terms of providing consistency and care to very vulnerable clients. The ongoing changes associated with the Carmody reforms are largely welcomed, in particular investment in family support services and transition from care programs. That said, YETI believes that in Queensland the current youth detention system is sometimes being used as a very poor substitution for 'secure welfare'. There are young people incarcerated who require a strong, supported welfare approach not a juvenile justice approach. Our agency has undertaken visits to the secure welfare facility in Victoria and strongly support the model (provided it has clear statutory frameworks to govern its use, periods of use are limited and the model is adequately resourced and culturally appropriate).

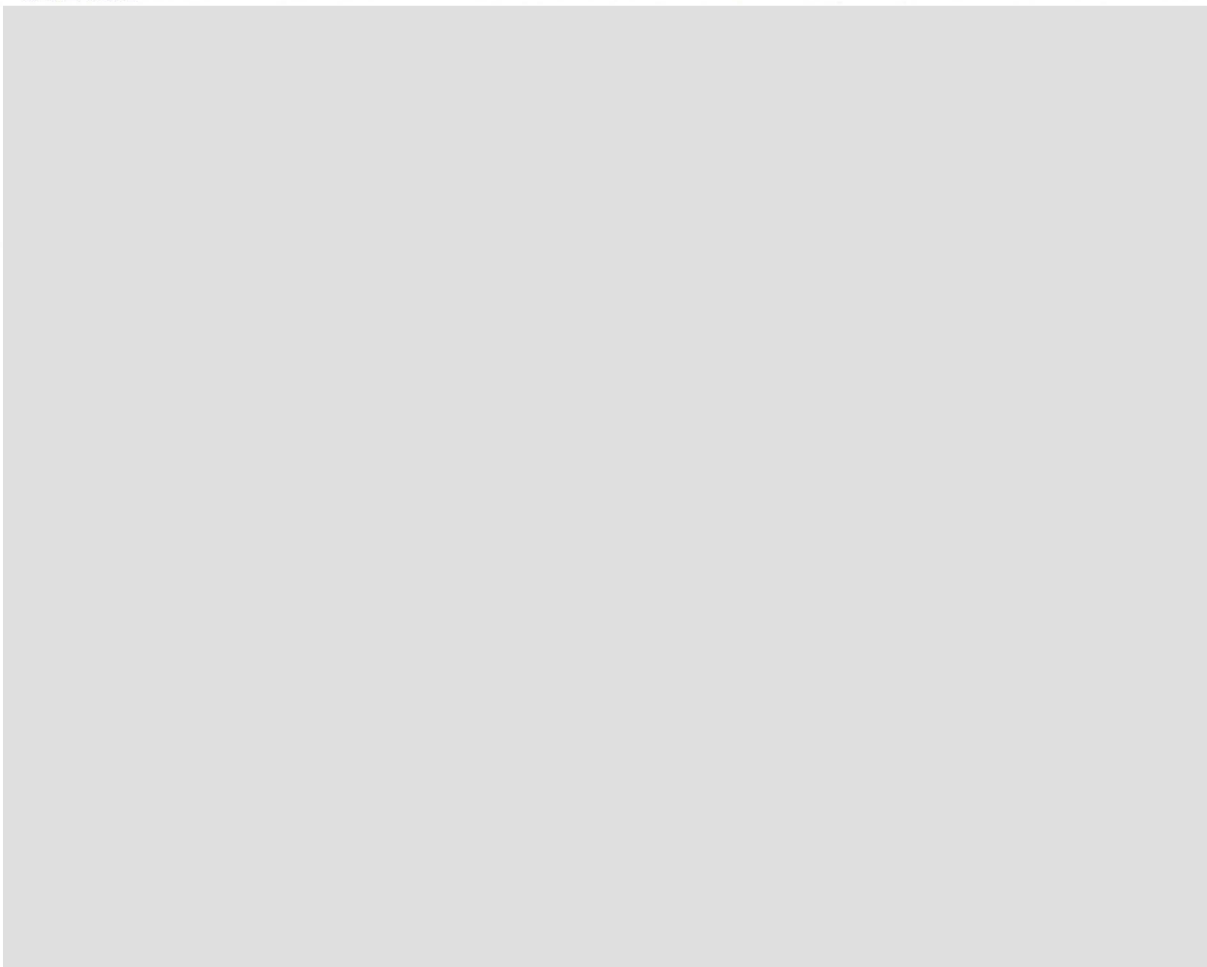
Solutions ?

- Further consideration given to secure welfare models
- Further role for Child Safety Services to provide supports to young people whereby parents are not at court/locatable when young people are in the watchhouse
- Funding of Bail Support programs
- Ongoing review and development of residential placement services to ensure young people are not unduly subject to police and youth justice interventions in place of support, boundaries and care

Confidential Case Studies

YETI are requesting this information is kept confidential as it relates to specific young people who whilst we have not identified may be identifiable to others in the Cairns region. YETI are aware of many more cases of very young people 11-13 years old being remanded to detention settings (sometimes on a number of occasions) when they required family care or improved residential placement supports.

CASE ONE





CASE TWO



CASE THREE



Conclusion

YETI believe that one of the most critical failings in relation to vulnerable young people in Queensland is the lack of coordination between government departments to address current issues. Factors such as: high rates of alcohol and drug use; lack of family support for families with teenagers; shortfalls in the child protection system (in particular the residential care system); over representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in detention settings; and high youth unemployment all intertwine to form a complex picture of the vulnerable young people in our state. YETI considers that it is timely to look more broadly than just the detention context and establish a cross departmental mechanism with genuine consultative links to services 'on the ground' who can assist and advise in policy and program direction.

YETI believes that the vulnerable young people in Queensland are worthy of further community investment. Firstly, in terms of delivering evidence based, locally informed programs targeting vulnerable young people; drug and alcohol support services; broader family support programs; poverty reduction measures; homelessness interventions; and domestic and family violence support. Secondly, YETI believes that investing our hope and care in these young people will assist in closing the gap on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage and help in creating real equality of opportunity for these young people to engage meaningfully in our community.



LOCAL PARTNERS

- Act For Kids
- Anglicare Far North Qld
- Dept of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (Child Safety)
- Dept of Education, Training and Employment (DETE)
- Dept of Justice and Attorney General (Youth Justice)
- Department of Housing and Public Works
- Queensland Health
- Queensland Police Service
- SupportLink
- Wuchopperen Health Service
- Youthlink
- Youth Empowered Towards Independence (YETI)

LOCAL PARTNERSHIP

The above agencies are all signatories to the Local Partnership Agreement (LPA). The LPA has a lifespan of three years – Jan 2014 to Dec 2017 – and endorses the CCYP Operational Framework.

GOVERNANCE

Panel is overseen by the CCYP Reference Group who in turn report activity to the Cairns Supporting Family Alliance (CSFA) and the Cairns Safer Streets Taskforce (CSSTF).

The CCYP Reference Group and the CSFA have the opportunity to report any systemic issues to the Regional Managers Coordination Network (RCMN) and the CSSTF.

WHAT IS CCYP?

- Coordinated Care for Vulnerable Young People (CCYP) is a mechanism that involves a number of government and non-government agencies. All partner agencies have executive sign off on a Local Partnership Agreement (LPA) committing to work together.
- The aim of formalising a commitment to work together is to foster and nurture a consistent coordinated service response to support vulnerable young people.
- The CCYP is not funded. The agencies involved bring a lot of goodwill to the table. Partner agencies manage the CCYP as part of their commitment to improving outcomes for young people and improving service in Far North Queensland.

HOW DOES CCYP OPERATE?

- The executive who have signed off on the LPA nominate managers to sit on the CCYP Panel. Panel sits monthly to plan and report on the progress of young people who have been referred to the CCYP Panel by staff within the partner agencies.
- The Panel discusses the best mix of services to meet the needs of the young person. This can include their family.
- Panel nominate a lead agency. The nominated lead agency coordinates a regular meeting of services that come together to work collaboratively to better meet the needs of the young person. The lead agency feeds back to the Panel through their nominated Panel member.
- When Panel sits, it aims to build on the identified supports for the young person, and address any systemic issues that are blocking change.

REFERRAL CRITERIA

Young people referred need to:

- Be 8 – 17 years of age, AND
- Reside in Cairns LGA or Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council area, AND
- Have had contact with the service system, and be experiencing little or no successful outcomes, OR
- Have no services currently involved, and be at risk, AND
- Benefit from a multi-agency team approach

Panel meets every third Thursday of the month.

Referrals need to be emailed to the secretariat four working days prior to Panel sitting.

The Panel member from your organisation will need a succinct summary of the young person's risk/s to enhance and inform collaboration.

HOW TO MAKE A REFERRAL

If the agency you work for is a signatory to the CCYP Local Partnership Agreement (LPA) and you are working with a young person that appears to meet the CCYP referral criteria, request a referral form from the CCYP secretariat at

michael.abbott@communities.qld.gov.au