



## **Working Together Changing the Story: second tranche of major Youth Justice reforms – Townsville Fact Sheet (April 2019)**

The Queensland Government is committed to changing the story for Townsville's young people in the youth justice system and has committed to extra funding and initiatives to help keep the Townsville community safe.

The Townsville initiatives will work to reduce offending, reduce re-offending and address the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the youth justice system.

These new and continued initiatives are the second major tranche of the Palaszczuk Government's youth justice investments, and begin to implement key elements of Queensland's first Youth Justice Strategy *Working Together Changing the Story: Youth Justice Strategy 2019-2023*, released in December 2018.

They also reflect recommendations from *Townsville's voice: local solutions to address youth crime*, an independent report by Major-General (Retd) Stuart Smith AO, commissioned by the Queensland Government.

### **Improving Outcomes for the Townsville Community**

A total additional \$20.172 million investment over four years will ensure the following initiatives help keep the community safer, including:

- \$18.45 million towards the Townsville Community Youth Response (TCYR) including:
  - the Specialist High Risk Youth Court
  - the Lighthouse after-hours diversion service
  - a cultural mentoring program
  - Integrated Case Management, and

- the Burregah bridging school to re-engage Townsville youth in education
- \$1 million over two years for a new after-hours safe place and diversion service in the Upper Ross area so children have a safe place to go at night
- Establish a new community-based board to shape community-led responses and support the recommendations of Major-General Stuart Smith's (Retd) report, including facilitating a Townsville Youth Development Strategy
- \$720,000 to boost Family Wellbeing Services in Townsville and Palm Island over the next two years, including through extra case workers to better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and young people
- A review of Community Service Orders to enhance the restoration to victims and community by involving victims and the community in the development of the program and activities.

### **Existing initiatives in Townsville will continue**

- Transition to Success (T2S), a program to provide young people at risk of continued contact with the youth justice system opportunities to develop the necessary personal and practical skills to successfully engage in education, training or employment.
- Bail support and legal advocacy services giving young people on remand or at risk of coming into contact with the youth justice system additional support to keep them out of detention

### **Community Youth Response paying off for the Townsville community**

Townsville's best response to youth crime is collaborative and community-led. Working intensively with at-risk youth, young offenders, families and the Townsville Stronger Communities Action Group, the Community Youth Response program aims to reduce youth offending and re-offending.

The Community Youth Response includes the Specialist High Risk Youth Court, the Lighthouse after-hours diversion service, Integrated Case Management, the Burregah bridging school program, an Indigenous Youth and Family Wellbeing Service and Transition to Success education, training and employment program.

A recent evaluation of the program found:

- Overall number of reported youth offences for 10 to 16 year olds in Townsville has reduced since the Community Youth Response started in February 2017
- A 25 per cent decrease in rates of re-offending among high risk young people accessing Intensive Case Management services
- A six per cent decrease in rates of young people re-offending amongst those who accessed Community Youth Response programs after a six-month period.

**More information:** For more information about Queensland's youth justice system visit <https://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/youth-justice>