

# Departmental performance

We worked with young people, families, victims of crime, other agencies and communities to change the story for the small minority of young people who come into contact with the youth justice system. Performance outlined in the scorecard below is from Service Delivery Statements and is reported annually for the financial year.

## Performance scorecard

	Notes	2019-20 Target/Est	2019-20 Actual
Percentage of orders supervised in the community that are successfully completed	1		
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young offenders		80%	84%
- Other young offenders		85%	86%
- All young offenders		80%	85%
Proportion of young offenders who have another charged offence within 12 months of an initial finalisation for a proven offence	2	70%	71%
Youth detention centre utilisation rate	3	100%	82%

### Notes:

1. This measure is based on the number of community-based orders that ended in the period and that were successful, regardless of when the order commenced.
2. This whole-of-government measure reflects the percentage of young people who reoffended within 12 months following their earliest finalised proven offence when aged 10-15 years in the previous 12-month period. Youth Justice contributed to this measure by providing community and custodial services for young people, by reconnecting young people with family and community and by promoting positive and prosocial behaviours. Other agencies contribute to the measure, including Queensland Police Service.
3. Centre utilisation rate is based on the Report on Government Services formula which is the average nightly population in youth detention centres during 2019-20 divided by the average number of permanently funded beds. Security upgrades and associated work during 2019-20 meant that at certain times there were up to 28 beds unavailable for occupancy. Centre utilisation excludes young people held in police watch houses.

# Departmental achievements

The *Youth Justice Strategy Action Plan 2019–2021* sets out the practical steps to implement the *Working Together Changing the Story: Youth Justice Strategy 2019–2023* (Youth Justice Strategy). The Action Plan was developed in consultation with Queensland Government agencies and the Youth Justice Strategy Reference Group, including community leaders, industry representatives and criminal justice experts.

There are positive signs that departmental and whole-of-government actions have made a difference and contributed to the Strategy's four pillars: Intervene early, Keep children out of court, Keep children out of custody, and Reduce re-offending. For the 12 months to the end of September 2020 there were decreases in the number of young people with a charged offence and the number of offences.

Major service highlights include:

- Continued construction of the new West Moreton Youth Detention Centre at Wacol. The new centre is being built in two stages and the first stage will be operational in December 2020. The centre will operate under its own operational model while sharing some administration and ancillary services with the nearby BYDC. The new 32-bed detention centre will contribute to a 33 per cent increase to detention centre capacity since 2015.
- Partnered with the Queensland Police Service in the co-responder model in five locations – Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton, Brisbane North, Logan/Gold Coast. Co-responders patrol hotspots with police 24/7 and work with young people who are at risk of entering or becoming further entrenched in the youth justice system. Between 18 May and 7 November 2020 the service engaged 4743 young people.
- Commenced a four-year trial of 'On Country' programs in Cairns, Townsville and Mt Isa. On Country programs are designed and delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and aims to give high risk repeat offenders the support they need to turn their lives around and return to work or education. Courts and the police have powers to refer high risk 10 to 17-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders to the program under the supervision and mentoring of Elders and Traditional Owners. To 12 November 2020 the program had received 73 referrals, and delivered eight camps with a total of 25 attendees.
- Continued work on all of the recommendations of Major General (Rtd) Stuart Smith's December 2018 report, *Townsville's voice: Local solutions to address youth crime*, focused on long term strategies that target preventing or breaking the cycle.
- Continued trials of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family-led decision making program in Toowoomba, South East Queensland, Moreton and Cairns. The program targets the small number of high risk, recidivist offenders responsible for a significant proportion of all offending by young people. It does this through the empowering process of developing strategies to address young people's behaviour through using the personal knowledge of their family members. The trials are being delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations and allow families to have a greater say in decisions made about their children.
- Delivered the Transition to Success program (T2S) in 16 locations. T2S is designed for young people who are involved in or at risk of contact with the youth justice system, helping to re-engage them with education and training. Participants complete nationally-recognised certificates to develop positive behaviours, life skills and confidence. This helps them find and keep employment, re-engage with the community, meet life's challenges, and work towards a positive future not defined by their past. 550 young people have graduated with certificates

from Transition to Success since 2015, with more than 125 gaining a job, an apprenticeship or traineeship. More young people were forecast to complete the T2S program in December 2020.

- Continued the successful Restorative Justice Conferencing program that allows a young person to take responsibility and ownership for their actions and work with victims to identify how the young person can make amends for their behaviour. Results show that 77 per cent of young people who completed a Restorative Justice Conference either did not reoffend or showed a decrease in the magnitude of their re-offending, within six months of their conference.
- Continued participation in the Navigate Your Health pilot in Brisbane, Logan and Cairns, partnering with the child safety and health professionals, and Aboriginal medical services and Community Controlled Organisations in each location. The pilot is about improving accessibility to health care for young people subject to community based youth justice orders by supporting them to access comprehensive health screening and assessment to prevent offending.
- Supported 11 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing Services with dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth and family workers to support young people and their families.
- Invested in the place-based Community Youth Response and Diversion program in Gold Coast, Ipswich, Cairns, Brisbane, Logan and Moreton. The program aims to keep young people out of court and custody and also helps young people overcome barriers to accessing education, mentoring and integrated case management in order to prevent re-offending.
- Collaborated with the Queensland Police Service to deliver the Conditional Bail Program to more than 100 at risk young people to increase their ability to remain in the community while before the courts. The program addresses young people's educational and vocational needs, mental health issues, family intervention and accommodation and provides individualised and intensive supervision while they are on bail.
- Provided cultural support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who were held temporarily in police watch houses and coordinated contact with their families. The response includes referring young people to services and supporting them after they leave the watch house.
- Funded the Mount Isa Youth Transitional Hub to provide a safe environment for police to refer young people who do not have appropriate accommodation or safe home environments. The hub delivered support services to 350 young people in 2019-20 including culturally appropriate assessments of risk and need, and engaged with other local service providers to deliver intensive and specialised support to the young people and their families.
- Continued support for the Townsville Community Youth Response, which includes: alternative education delivered by a flexible learning centre; cultural mentoring through the Townsville Aboriginal and Islander Health Service; a specialist High Risk Youth Court, in which high risk and repeat defendants appear before the same Magistrate over time; and Integrated Case Management, which provides individualised integrated support for young people who often have high and complex needs, and their families.
- Funded four Supervised Community Accommodation sites (SCAs) that provided safe accommodation and helped to re-connect young people with families, education and other support services. Further evaluation on costs and benefits was completed.

- Continued a trial of specialist multi-agency response teams (SMART) in Brisbane, Townsville, Mount Isa, Cairns, Ipswich, Logan, Moreton Bay and the Gold Coast. SMART teams work with local Childrens Courts to identify and support young people with complex needs. SMART brings together specialists from partner agencies, including health, education and child safety, and cultural representatives. These multi-agency specialists assess and respond to young people's needs and factors that may contribute to their offending.
- Funded community organisations to deliver Bail Support Services in nine locations to support young people meet their bail conditions and stop reoffending. Organisations provide basic needs and connect young people to housing, education, health and family support, to stop offending.
- Continued upgrading security systems at the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre to maximise the safety of young people, staff and visitors.
- Contributed to local partnerships to stop crime and assist young people including Community Connect in Mt Isa; Cairns Safer Streets; Townsville Stronger Communities Action Group; Project Street CRED on the Gold Coast; and Youth Connect on the Sunshine Coast.

## Support for First Nations Peoples

Addressing the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the youth justice system was a strategic objective of the department. Staff worked closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to develop and deliver culturally safe and responsive solutions including through the Youth Justice Framework for Practice and the implementation of the *Human Rights Act 2019*. The department aimed to build the cultural capability of staff, and respect, value and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, beliefs and perspectives.

The First Nations Council has been an important governance group providing strategic advice and a cultural lens on major decisions, programs, policy and projects across the department. The Council helped ensure culturally sensitive and respectful consultation and collaboration regarding decisions made in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, children, families and communities. For more information see the Boards and Committee section of this report.

## Corporate Services

The department's corporate services were a combination of independent functions for financial services, human resources, liaison services and communication and media services, plus shared service arrangements with the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women (DCSYW) for cabinet and parliamentary services, legal services, ICT operations, redress and internal audit.

The safety, health, and wellbeing of staff has been a core departmental priority. The department invested in the wellbeing and capability of staff, recognised their contributions, and assisted them to be drivers of innovation and change.

The department has maximised opportunities to improve technology to enable more secure management of records and information and improved data sharing with our partner agencies. A major component of this includes the ongoing implementation of the Unify program (led by DCSYW) to replace the department's Integrated Client Management System (ICMS). Unify will streamline processes and improve information sharing, including with courts, and better reporting mechanisms for therapeutic services and restorative justice processes.

## Legislative reforms

During the reporting period the department worked with stakeholders regarding a number of legislative changes including:

- bail decision-making processes
- responding to the impact of COVID-19 on restorative justice conferences
- reporting requirements in relation to child sexual offences
- establishment of the West Moreton Youth Detention Centre.

## Building a fairer, more inclusive and harmonious Queensland

Under the *Disability Services Act 2006*, each Queensland Government department is required to develop a Disability Service Plan. The department's *Disability Service Plan 2020* outlines the actions planned to progress the priorities of the *All Abilities Queensland: opportunities for all* State disability plan. The plan demonstrated how the department works with partners to build a fairer, more inclusive Queensland where people with disability, their families and carers are able to access the same opportunities, on the same basis as everyone else.

## Response to COVID-19

The COVID-19 epidemic presented a range of unique and exceptional challenges for the department as it sought to ensure the safety and health of staff, young people in detention centres and the community.

The department kept a safe and healthy workplace for our employees and young people by:

- standing up a crisis response team
- activating business continuity plans
- supporting staff to perform different work within the department to help respond to emerging need
- making Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) available to ensure everyone's safety
- helping funded organisations with business continuity planning
- maintaining essential services in detention and the community and ensuring young people who presented a high risk of reoffending continued to receive critical support
- introducing new ways to deliver services online in response to social distancing requirements, including T2S workshops and virtual home visits
- supporting staff to work from home, including through the provision of technology
- developing a range of videos with the Queensland Mental Health Commission to support both individuals and manager/supervisors mental health and wellbeing
- engaging with interstate jurisdictions about approaches to managing COVID-19, and
- developing COVID-19 safe plans to manage risks and enable a progressive return to normal operations as health advice allows.

In August 2020, BYDC was placed in quarantine after five staff members tested positive to COVID-19. BYDC staff were required to undergo COVID-19 tests and quarantine. 12 staff from CYDC were deployed to support the continued operations at BYDC and approximately 90 QPS officers were utilised to assist across three rotations. Plans were also well advanced for Queensland Corrective Service (QCS) staff to also be deployed to BYDC, however due to the risk of transmission following a positive case within QCS, this did not proceed.

While BYDC was quarantined, young people that would otherwise have been transferred from watch houses in south east Queensland to BYDC, were held at the Ipswich District Watch House over a two week period until Queensland Health approved the recommencement of admissions.

A total of 37 distinct young people were held at the watch house between 28 August and 10 September 2020.