

Improving educational connection for young people in custody

Final report

June 2019

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We respectfully acknowledge the traditional owners of country throughout Victoria and pay respect to the ongoing living cultures of First People. We acknowledge the elders, and their families and forbears who have been the traditional custodians of Victorian land for many centuries. We acknowledge that the land on which we work is the place of age-old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal and that the First Nation people's continuous living culture has played a significant and unique role in the life of this region.

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Abbreviations

- ACER:** Australian Council for Educational Research
- ACSF:** Australian Core Skills Framework
- AIHW:** The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
- ATSS:** Attitudes to School Survey
- CASES21:** Computerised Administrative System Environment for Schools
- CCYP:** Commission for Children and Young People
- CISM:** Critical Incident Stress Management
- CMY:** Centre for Multicultural Youth
- DET:** Department of Education and Training
- DHHS:** Department of Health and Human Services
- DJCS:** Department of Justice and Community Safety
- DJR:** Department of Justice and Regulation
- ETR:** Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- JSS:** Jesuit Social Services
- LMCF:** Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation
- MYJP:** Malmsbury Youth Justice Precinct
- NHMRC:** The National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research
- PC:** Parkville College
- PFLC:** Parkville Flexible Learning Centre
- PVLSIC:** Parliament of Victoria Legal and Social Issues Committee
- PYJP:** Parkville Youth Justice Precinct
- SERT:** Safety and Emergency Response Team
- UN:** United Nations
- VAGO:** Victorian Auditor-General's Office
- VCAL:** Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning
- VCE:** Victorian Certificate of Education
- VETiS:** Vocational Education and Training in Schools
- VO:** Victorian Ombudsman
- YHaRS:** Youth Health Rehabilitation Service

Executive Summary

We are producing, at the moment, with the rate of recidivism, the future prisoners of Victoria. Whereas, if we invest in education for those people now, that can actually engender change (Shaun, adult interview, 2018).

Young people in custody often have poor experiences of education. Many of them fall within the age of compulsory education (up to 17 years) but, even for those who are older, engaging in education is an important aspect of rehabilitation and promoting skills for the future (Commission for Children and Young People, 2017, p. 82).

The purpose of this study was to examine how education operates inside custody, for young people in Victoria who have been remanded into custody or who have received custodial sentences. The study aimed to identify how improvements could be made to further support education inside custody. It also investigated how education has the potential to assist young people to imagine positive futures for themselves and bring their plans to fruition.

This study was funded by Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation (2017–2019), and Parkville College partnered the research. This study is not an evaluation of Parkville College's program but an investigation into how education operates to benefit young people inside custody.

The study was guided by three research questions:

1. What enables and constrains participation in education in custody?
2. How could educational connection for the longer-term be strengthened for young people in custody?
3. How may education work as a protective factor for young people in the youth justice system?

The report discusses two interrelated sets of findings. Firstly, insight is offered into how Parkville College translates its philosophy into practices that foster learning. Secondly, the report outlines how education operates within the context of youth custodial settings in Victoria, including how the Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS) and Parkville College work together.

The research findings are grounded in the analysis of interviews with adults and young people, and data from Parkville College and from DJCS. The findings led to the identification of seven key issues that would further enhance education provision for young people in custody.

1. Recognising the key role of high-quality educational provision in custody

Parkville College has developed a sophisticated level of practice and a teaching philosophy that is responsive to its students and environment, which results in purposeful, thoughtful and highly effective teaching and learning. Broader recognition of the professional educational expertise of Parkville College staff would benefit professional learning for other staff working in youth justice and should inform the planning of new youth justice facilities.

2. Sharing a common purpose

Staff at all levels and across agencies need to work together to develop and ensure implementation of a shared purpose that is focused on wrapping support around young people during (and after) custody.

3. Strengthening partnership

The partnership between DJCS and Parkville College should further build on the existing foundation of mutual respect and understanding. This is likely to be strengthened if teachers and unit staff spend more time working together to develop a deeper shared understanding of each other's work.

4. Improving staff recruitment and professional learning

Responding to cultural diversity and appointing appropriately qualified staff has been recognised as important for Parkville College staffing. DJCS unit staff would be better equipped to implement their roles in relation to both security and education if appropriate qualifications were required and if more Further Education and training opportunities were provided.

5. Maximising the use of time

Time in youth custody should be seen as an opportunity to reboot futures and reassemble young lives. A significant amount of learning time has been wasted in youth custody because security concerns override those of education. Valuing time and maximising learning should also inform planning for the new youth justice facility.

6. Enhancing equitable access to high quality education

All young people in custody have a right and, for the majority who are of compulsory school age, an obligation to engage in education. However, not all young people in custody receive equal access to education at present. In particular, attention is needed to enhance access for young people on remand, girls and young women, students with health and disability needs, and young people from specific cultural backgrounds who are overrepresented in custody.

7. Making a smooth educational transition from custody

Young people are reported to be particularly vulnerable to reverting to criminal activity in the period immediately after release from custody. Therefore, robust plans need to be made and assistance provided for those plans to be realised. Attention is also needed for how the wider educational system in Victoria could assist educational transition after custody.

In conclusion, the reduction of recidivism requires a strengthened partnership between Parkville College and DJCS to offer structured support, hope and the confidence to learn and to plan for more learning. As one adult participant observed:

It's about learning to learn and understanding that maybe I can learn. And even if that's what they give to young people, that's enormous because it's about their self-esteem and self-belief and something positive that they can then aspire to (Kelly, adult interview, 2018).

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Education in youth detention is commonly identified as a significant part of the solution to the problem of how young people involved in the criminal youth justice system can successfully re-join society. Within the international literature as well as government and sector reports, there is a general assumption that education serves as a protective factor for young people in contact with youth justice systems. When exiting youth custody, education is consistently considered to be a key protective factor against future criminal activity and recidivism. However, identification of how education strengthens the connections of young people to education and training, and therefore serves as a protective factor, is less clear.

The overarching goal of young people re-joining society relies, to a significant extent, on successful reconnection with school or the establishment of new connections at new educational or training institutions. Young people who are unable to access these pathways are in danger of not achieving positive educational and employment outcomes (Blomberg, Bales, Mann Piquero and Berk, 2011; Nellis and Hooks Wayman, 2009; O’Neill, Strnadová and Cumming, 2016) leading to what could be considered as “wasted lives” (Bauman, 2004).

Moreover, all young Australians have both a right and (under age 17) an obligation to engage in schooling (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child,¹ Education and Training Reform Amendment (School Age) Bill 2009).² Legally, the Victorian government must ensure young people can participate in education, especially when under State supervision such as in custody. The conditions associated with youth custody generate particular challenges for enabling access to and engagement with education. Nevertheless, the Secretary of the Victorian Department of Education made clear in her submission to the *Inquiry into youth justice centres in Victoria* by the Parliament of Victoria Legal and Social Committee (PVLSIC, 2018, p. 96) that: “No matter how difficult the circumstances we must continue to provide school-age children with educational opportunities”. Going a step further, the Victorian Commissioner for Children and Young People (CCYP, 2017, p. 82) argued that:

Young people in custody often have poor experiences of education. Many of them fall within the age of compulsory education (up to 17 years) but, even for those who are older, engaging in education is an important aspect of rehabilitation and promoting skills for the future.

¹ UN (2019), *Convention on the Rights of the Child*
<<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>>

² *Education and Training Reform Amendment (School Age) Bill 2009* (2009)
<[http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/f932b66241ecf1b7ca256e92000e23be/0284AAD4423D6086CA2576710011600B/\\$FILE/09-062A.pdf](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/f932b66241ecf1b7ca256e92000e23be/0284AAD4423D6086CA2576710011600B/$FILE/09-062A.pdf)>

The Children’s Commissioners and Guardians across Australia have developed a model charter of rights for children and young people detained in youth justice facilities, which includes the right “to continue your education, or to do training to learn useful skills for work”.³

Parkville College is the school that operates within Victorian youth custodial settings. It is also a research partner of the project reported on here. This study was not an evaluation of Parkville College operations, but a rigorous investigation of the custodial context for educational practice. The study investigated education within custodial operations to identify what is required for successful engagement of young people.

Because of the tenuous link many young people have with education prior to entering custody, this report identifies key requirements for consistent and systematic educational practices for young people while they are in custody and how this prepares them for when they leave the youth justice system. Subsequently, it places particular importance on the development of connection and trust between incarcerated young people and their teachers.

It is not possible to examine the circumstance of education in custody in isolated ways. The socio-legal literature explains the complex intersection of systems at play in the lives of young people in detention (Davey, 2016) but does not tell the entire story. Youth crime and youth detention are also political issues, and too often these overshadow educational concerns. Intense media scrutiny, in response to incidents at the state’s youth justice centres in recent times, has fuelled negative perceptions of young people within youth justice and strengthened calls for a more punitive approach towards incarcerated youth (PVLSIC, 2018). This report considers the impact of such a highly-charged context on the educational connection for young people in custody. Importantly, this report identifies the conditions required for education to succeed within youth justice settings. By examining positive educational practices and systemic hindrances, the report focuses on educational connection inside youth custody with a view to re-connection with education after custody.

In addition to its use of the more generic term *students* to describe young people within an educational context, the report adopts the term *young people* to refer to minors in youth custody. This decision was based on the following rationale: most of those in custody in Victoria are aged over 14 years of age, hence the use of *child* did not seem accurate; but it was also important for the chosen term not to imply that the young people are *adult*.

1.2 Project Overview

This project was funded, in late 2016, by Lord Mayor’s Charitable Foundation, a Melbourne-based philanthropic organisation.

The purpose of this study was to investigate education within youth custodial settings, for young people charged with or convicted of criminal offences. The project focused on how education works for these young people.

³ Australian Human Rights Commission (2018), *A model charter of rights for children and young people detained in youth justice facilities* <<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/childrens-rights/projects/model-charter-rights-children-and-young-people-detained-youth>>

Three research questions guided all aspects of the study:

1. What enables and constrains participation in education in custody?
2. How could educational connection for the longer-term be strengthened for young people in custody?
3. How may education work as a protective factor for young people in the youth justice system?

This report addresses the enablers and constraints to educational connection and achievement for young people within the Victorian custodial youth justice context. It does not address all aspects of youth justice, nor does it emphasise national and international contexts and practice. Key Victorian government, community and statutory body reports on youth justice provided immediate context and conceptualisations. Ten key reports are summarised in Figure 2.3 (see section 2.2 of this report).

The team is also disseminating findings from the research through presentations and publications (see the Appendix). This will include another report and a journal article that will detail the recent Victorian context and the international scholarly literature:

White, J., Moylan, P., Te Riele, K., Corcoran, T. and Baker, A. (in preparation), *Educational connection: Recent reports about youth Justice in Victoria*.

Baker, A., Moylan, P., White, J., Te Riele, K., Corcoran, T., MacDonald, F. and Abdul Manan, R. (in preparation), *Education in youth Justice: A systematic literature review of the international literature*.

2. Context for this study

2.1 Youth justice in Victoria

The research reported here took place in the Australian state of Victoria. Each jurisdiction has somewhat different approaches to youth criminal justice, although the processes by which young people are charged and sentenced are similar (AIHW, 2019, p.1).

Young people and children belong within a separate justice system from adults. The Victorian Children's Court was established in 1906 because "the community recognised that children were in need of special treatment within both the justice and welfare systems of the State" rather than being dealt with in an identical way to adults.⁴ The Children's Court operates under the provisions of the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* and comprises Family Division, Criminal Division, Koori Court Criminal Division, and Neighbourhood Justice Centre (PVLSIC, 2017, p. 51). The focus for this report is the Criminal Division and Koori Court Criminal Division of the Children's Court.

Nationally, the age at which a young person can be charged with a criminal offence is between 10 and 18. Exceptions exist whereby the young person can be older than 17, as in the case where a young person was aged 17 at the time of committing an offence; where supervision continued when the young person turned 18, or where the young person beyond the age of 17 was considered to be vulnerable or immature (AIHW, 2019, p.1). In Victoria, if a young person is considered to be impressionable or immature, or subject to undesirable influences in an adult prison, or if the court believes there are reasonable prospects for rehabilitation, under the state's dual track sentencing system, young people between the ages of 18 and 21 can be sentenced to a youth justice facility.

All young people under the supervision of the youth justice system have been given a legal order. Their supervision may take place in the community or in secure youth justice facilities. In the study reported here, the young people in question are housed within youth justice facilities (AIHW, 2019, p. 1), also referred to as *in custody*.

The recent VAGO (Victorian Auditor General Office) report identifies as a key aim of youth detention the reduction of young people's offending:

Addressing the underlying causes of offending, ensuring good primary and mental health, and enabling education are all steps that can reduce reoffending. (VAGO, 2018, p. 7).

In April 2017, responsibility for youth justice shifted from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to the Department of Justice and Regulation (DJR),⁵ the government department responsible for overseeing adult prisons (VAGO, 2018, p. 7). The

⁴ Children's Court of Victoria (2019), *History* <<https://www.childrenscourt.vic.gov.au/about-us/history>>

⁵ In January 2019, that Department's name was changed to the Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS). We will mainly use DJCS in this report.

contract with Youth Health Rehabilitation Service (YHaRS) was transferred from DHHS to DJR at the time DJR took over the responsibility for youth justice (VAGO, 2018, p. 7). YHaRs provided primary and mental health, health care management and offending behaviour services.⁶

The close relationship between education and rehabilitation in youth justice is captured in the idea that “education is a protective factor that can reduce reoffending” and “[a]s such, it is a key component in a child or young person’s ability to rehabilitate” (VAGO, 2018, p. 32). VAGO makes the point that although Parkville College is not responsible for delivering rehabilitative services, “it delivers education in line with legislative requirements under the ETR [Education and Training Reform Act 2006] Act” (VAGO, 2018, p. 25).

DJCS manages Victoria’s two youth justice centres – the Parkville Youth Justice Precinct (Parkville) and the Malmsbury Youth Justice Precinct (Malmsbury).

- The majority of young people in custody at Parkville Youth Justice Precinct have been remanded into custody. The Parkville precinct has 125 beds (VAGO, 2018, p. 17) and accommodates boys and young men (10–18 years) and girls and young women (10–23 years).
- The majority of young people at the Malmsbury Youth Justice Precinct have been sentenced into custody, with the Malmsbury Senior Youth Justice Centre predominantly made up of dual track young people, all of whom are sentenced. The Malmsbury precinct has 135 beds (VAGO, 2018, p. 17) and accommodates boys and young men (15–23 years). Malmsbury comprises “a mixture of low and high security residential units”.⁷

Planning for a new youth justice centre at Cherry Creek⁸ – Melbourne’s outer suburb to the west of Werribee – is underway and is expected to be operational in 2021. That facility will include 224 beds for remanded and sentenced young people as well as a mental health unit with 12 beds and an intensive supervision unit with at least 8 beds. In the meantime, an additional 68 beds are being added to Parkville and Malmsbury to meet the increasing demand of young people in custody (VSG/JCS, Facility plan, p. 8). The Malmsbury Youth Justice Precinct is currently being expanded, including the addition of 32 extra bedrooms as well as additional recreational, educational and program facilities.⁹

In Australia, as in the international context, young people are dealt with in a separate system from the adult system, which “recognises their inexperience and immaturity”; consequently they are “treated less harshly than their adult counterparts” (Australian Institute of Criminology, 2011, p. 1).

Additionally, a focus on a younger cohort of children and young people in youth justice is at the heart of the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* – the bedrock of Victoria’s legislative

⁶ This changed again in 2019 when a new service was contracted.

⁷ VSG/JCS (2019), *Custody in the youth justice system* <<http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/justice-system/youth-justice/custody-in-the-youth-justice-system>>

⁸ VSG/JCS Engage Victoria (2019), *New youth justice centre* <<https://engage.vic.gov.au/youthjusticecentre>>

⁹ VSG:JCS (2019), *Youth Justice Centre redevelopment project* <https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/embridge_cache/emshare/original/public/2018/11/cf/508641ce3/DJR_Malmsbury_YJ_Redevelopment_Project_fact_sheet.pdf>

framework (Armytage and Ogloff, 2017b, p. 3). In contrast to Victoria's *Sentencing Act 1991*, which defines "a young offender" as someone aged under 21, the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* defines "a child" as someone between 10 and 17 (or under 19 if that was when court proceedings commenced) (Sentencing Advisory Council, 2019).¹⁰

In this context, the description of a young person as a child can be seen as an attempt to differentiate (and save) the inexperienced child from being defined in the manner of his or her more experienced adult counterpart, who is deemed capable of forming a criminal intention (Sentencing Advisory Council, 2019).

This distinction between the young person as inexperienced child and knowing adult evokes tensions between welfare and justice (also see section 5.1). Although supportive of young people's welfare needs within youth justice, in their major review of youth justice in Victoria, Armytage and Ogloff (2017a, p. 12) are critical of the welfare focus of Victoria's youth justice legislation. They argue that the legislation "inadequately deals with offending and the justice elements of youth justice". Their influential report recommends the establishment of "a contemporary legislative framework for youth justice" and the creation of "a standalone Act, separate to the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*" that will "better balance the consideration of offending behaviour and welfare needs" (Armytage and Ogloff, 2017a, p. 29). A new Youth Justice Act is being established and is in the early planning stages.

2.1.1 Demographic background

Table 2.1 provides an overview of data provided in the *Youth Parole Board Annual Report 2017–2018*, indicating common experiences and backgrounds of young people involved with youth justice in 2017. It is based on an annual survey of 226 young people: 209 males and 17 females detained on sentence or remand on 1 December 2017.

Table 2.1: Background experiences and characteristics of young people in custody

CHILD PROTECTION

- 63 per cent had never been subject to a child protection order
- 18 per cent had been subject to a previous child protection order and were subject to a current child protection order
- 18 per cent were previously subject to a child protection order but were not subject to a current child protection order
- 1 per cent were subject to a current child protection order with no previous history of a child protection order
- 70 per cent were victims of abuse, trauma or neglect

SCHOOLING AND LEARNING

- 65 per cent had previously been suspended or expelled from school
- 41 per cent presented with cognitive difficulties that affect their daily functioning

HEALTH

- 53 per cent presented with mental health issues
- 30 per cent had a history of self-harm or suicidal ideation
- 11 per cent were registered with Disability Services

¹⁰ Sentencing Advisory Council, *Sentencing young people*
<<https://www.sentencingcouncil.vic.gov.au/about-sentencing/sentencing-young-people>>

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

- 7 per cent had a history of alcohol misuse
- 22 per cent had a history of drug misuse
- 58 per cent had a history of both alcohol and drug misuse
- 11.5 per cent had offended while under the influence of alcohol but not drugs
- 25 per cent had offended while under the influence of drugs but not alcohol
- 45.5 per cent had offended while under the influence of alcohol, and also while under the influence of drugs

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

- 24 per cent spoke English as a second language
- 15 per cent identified as Aboriginal young people
- 15 per cent were from Māori or Pacific Islander backgrounds
- 19 per cent were from an African background

Source: *Youth Parole Board Annual Report 2017–2018* (p.15; 19–21)

Over represented groups

Table 2.1 highlights that Indigenous young people, young people from Māori and Pacific Islander backgrounds, and young people from African backgrounds are over-represented in youth justice.

In Victoria, only 1.6 per cent of 10-19 year olds are Indigenous (Armytage and Ogloff, 2017a, p. 9) but Table 2.1 shows that the proportion in youth custody is almost ten times higher. This reflects a general over-representation of First Nations people in custodial justice in Australia and internationally. Suggested reasons include “intergenerational trauma, broken connection to country and community, over-policing, undermining diversionary limits and exclusion from mainstream culture” (Armytage and Ogloff, 2017a, p. 9).

Across young people from Aboriginal, Māori and Pacific Islander, and African backgrounds “creating and maintaining cultural and community connections” and “culturally relevant and sensitive responses to address their offending that considers challenges experienced by these young people and their communities” are needed (Armytage and Ogloff, 2017a, p. 9).

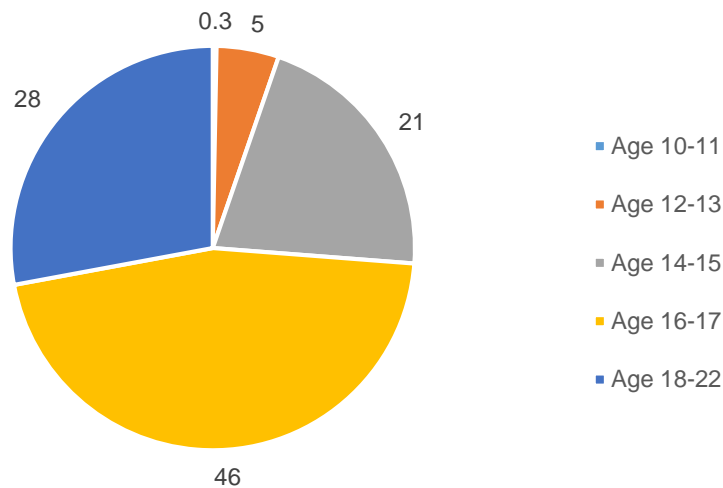
Age

Commenting on youth offending trends, Armytage and Ogloff (2017a, p. 8) note that “Offending peaks in mid-adolescence – between 16 and 17 years of age – before declining sharply in late adolescence and early adulthood”. The dual track system in Victoria “results in a comparatively older population, on average (30% aged 18 and over)” (AIHW, 2019, p.8) compared to other jurisdictions.

Both these comments are reflected in Figure 2.1 which shows the age breakdown of 839 Parkville College students in 2018, based on the CASES21 data.¹¹ Almost half of the students were aged 16-17, and almost 30 per cent were aged 18 and over.

¹¹ CASES21 is a student database used in Victorian DET schools. Parkville College provided the team with a spreadsheet with CASES21 data for 841 students enrolled between 1 January 2017 to 23 November 2018, at the Parkville and Malmsbury campuses.

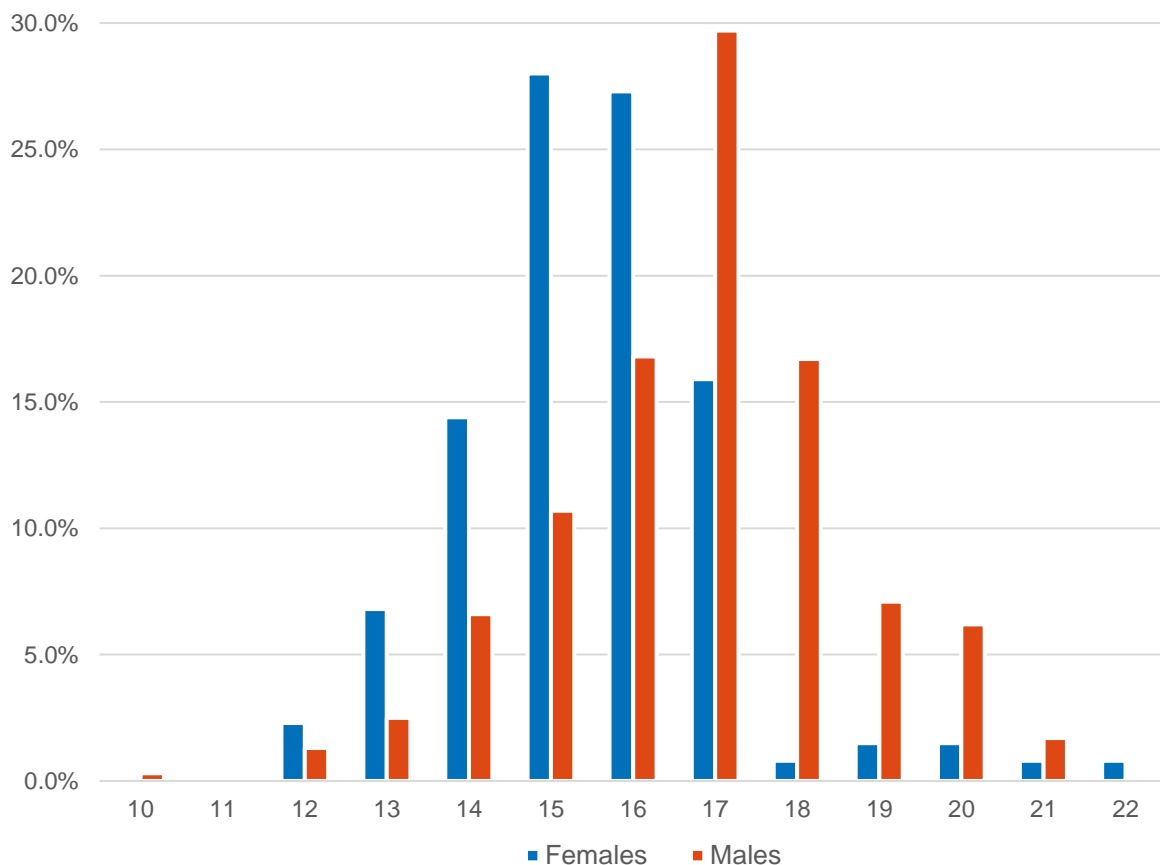
Figure 2:1 Parkville College student age groups (proportions, 2018)



Gender

Far more males (91 per cent) than females (9 per cent) are in youth justice detention across Australia (AIHW 2019, p. 8). CASES21 data indicates that in 2018 84 per cent of students at Parkville College were male and 16 per cent females. Figure 2.2 below shows that the age distribution is different for male and female students, according to CASES21, with fewer older (age 18 and over) female students and no 10 and 11 year old females compared to 3 males.

Figure 2.2: Parkville College students, age by gender (proportions, 2018)



2.2 Recent history

The current context of the youth justice precincts in Victoria has been shaped by events that occurred in late 2016 and 2017; by media portrayals of incarcerated young people and by several significant reports since 2010, and especially since 2017.

The events comprised a series of disturbances that occurred at the Parkville Youth Justice Precinct (PYJP) and the Malmsbury Youth Justice Precinct (MYJP) in late 2016 and into 2017. A number of buildings were damaged, affecting the use of residential units and program space (VAGO, 2018, p. 20). Factors cited as contributing to these events were, in the case of the PYJP, older buildings not considered fit for purpose (Victorian Ombudsman, p. 34, 2010) of housing and educating young people in custody and inadequate custodial staff training and a poor working environment across the youth justice precincts (Armytage and Ogloff 2017a, pp. 24–28), leading to staff shortages and the over-use of isolation, separation and lockdowns within the youth justice centres (CCYP, 2017).

The Victorian Government's decision to move young people to temporary youth justice accommodation at Barwon Prison was controversial and drew legal challenges (Davey 2017). The Supreme Court ruled that establishing a youth justice centre in a high security adult prison was unlawful. The Government then re-gazetted the facility as a youth justice centre named Grevillea. The Supreme Court found this, too, to be unlawful as it breached the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*, which stipulates that "Every child has the right, without discrimination, to such protection as is in his or her best interests and is needed by him or her by reason of being a child".¹²

These events and issues sparked media attention and a number of government and statutory body reports, including inquiries, reviews and audits (see Figure 2.3) as well as the current era of reform in the sector. All of these actions and reactions had implications for the education of young people.

2.2.1 Media impact

The report *Inquiry into youth justice centres in Victoria* by the Parliament of Victoria Legal and Social Issues Committee noted that:

Inaccurate media narratives perpetuate negative stereotypes that cast young people as something to be feared and youth offending as an overwhelming problem. This achieves nothing aside from damaging young people in contact with the youth justice system ... (PVLISIC 2018, p. 16).

Much of the media reporting of the youth justice centre disturbances was sensationalist and extensive ("Melbourne youth jail riots", 2016; White, 2017; "Parkville Riots", 2016), fanning community fear and negatively influencing community perceptions of the youth justice system and the young people themselves (PVLISIC 2018, p. 15).

Some newspaper articles argued that calls for a strong law and order approach were not warranted, given that the crime rate among young people during this time had dropped significantly in recent years ("Victorian government bungling", 2017; Percy, 2017). However, impacts of the damage incurred by the *moral panic* response to the disturbances (Moylan et

¹² Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission (n.d.), *Victoria's Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006* <<https://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/human-rights/the-charter>>

al., forthcoming 2019) were substantial. The education programs of young people sent to Barwon Prison's Grevillea Unit were severely disrupted (VAGO, 2018, p. 20).

2.2.2 10 key Victorian reports 2010–2018

The past decade has seen the publication of ten key reports on youth justice, and especially on youth custodial settings, in Victoria. Unsurprisingly, most of these appeared in response to the youth justice centre disturbances in 2016 and 2017. Figure 2.3 provides a timeline of the publication of these reports.

These reports are central to understanding the current context of youth criminal justice in Victoria. We therefore provide some brief insight in these ten reports here. Many of these reports will also be referred to throughout this report.

TEN KEY VICTORIAN REPORTS

2010 – 2018

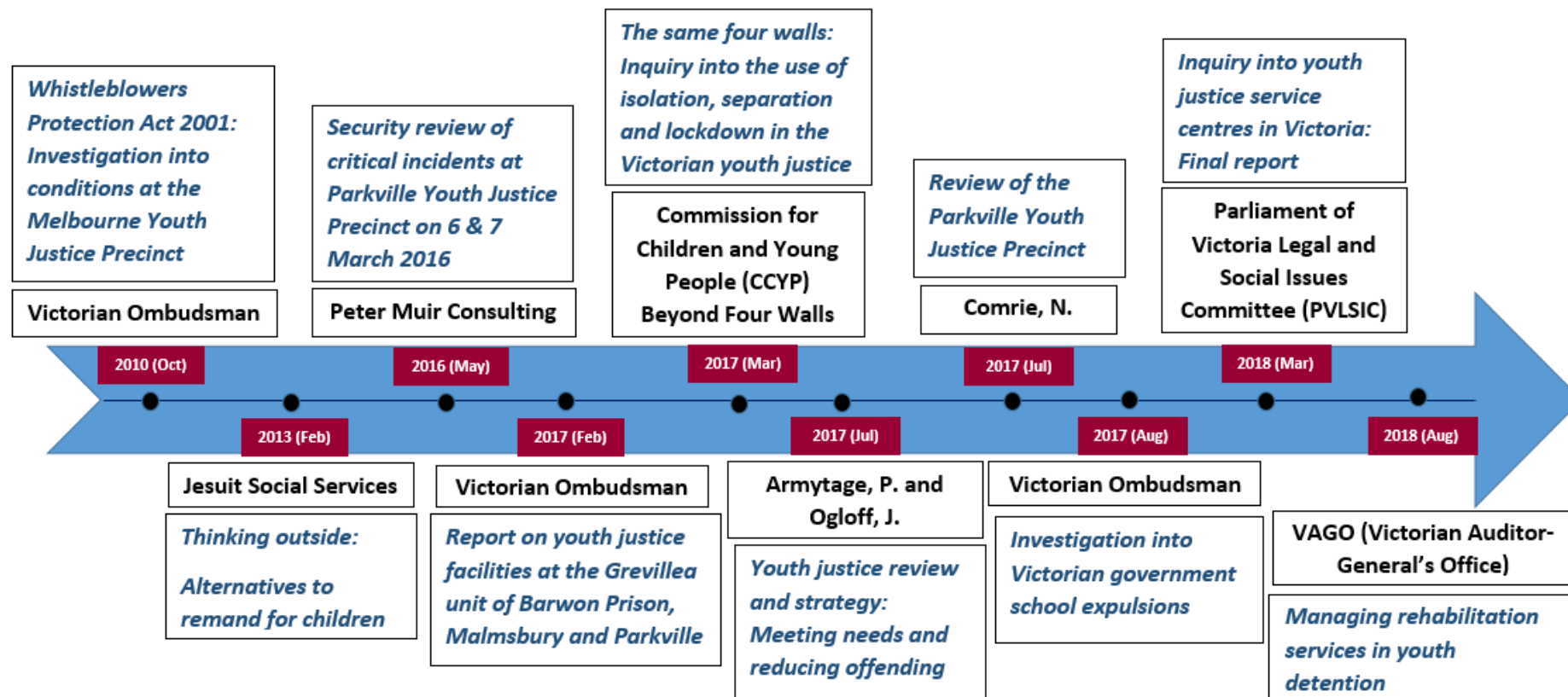


Figure 2.3: 10 key Victorian reports 2010–2018

i. 2010 (October): Victorian Ombudsman, *Whistleblowers Protection Act 2001: Investigation into conditions at the Melbourne Youth Justice Precinct*

Victorian Ombudsman George Brouwer's 2010 Victorian Ombudsman's report into the Parkville Youth Justice Precinct reinforced the right to education for children in custody. He recommended a review aimed at "ensuring that all detainees are engaged in programs during school hours on week days" and ensuring "that detainees who are on remand for extended periods are not omitted from programs" (pp. 70, 71). Following this report, Parkville College was formally established as a single provider of education at PYJP.¹³

This report has been acknowledged by stakeholders in the youth justice sector for pointing out that it was imperative (as well as legally binding) for systematic schooling to be provided to young people in custody and for drawing attention to the egregious oversights whereby young people lacked access to systematic schooling while in custody – and whereby those on remand lacked access to training and mental health support services (JSS, 2013, p. 28). At the same time, the Ombudsman's report has been associated with a punitive turn within the youth justice sector. For example, Julie Edwards from Jesuit Social Services noted in 2017 that:

A number of people in our sector tend to point to the 2010 Ombudsman's report and what followed then in terms of a stronger focus on security, we would say, to the detriment of a relationship, therapeutic-based approach.¹⁴

ii. 2013 (February): Jesuit Social Services, *Thinking outside: Alternatives to remand for children*

Jesuit Social Services was funded through the Legal Services Board Grants Program in Victoria to society's response to youth offending in Victoria, with a specific focus on young people on remand:

The impetus for this research came from concern about recent sharp increases in unsentenced detention among Victorian children and our awareness of the highly vulnerable personal and socio-economic backgrounds of many of the children subject to remand. This increase in unsentenced detention has occurred despite Victoria's low remand rates compared with other Australian jurisdictions (JSS, 2013, p. 12).

This discussion paper called for a reform to remand within the Victorian justice system and argued that this would reduce young people's contact with the justice system. The paper emphasised the need for prevention and early intervention by focusing reform more widely in the larger context of family, school, community and society within which children and young people develop.

iii. 2016 (May): Peter Muir Consulting, *Security Review of critical incidents at Parkville Youth Justice Precinct on 6 and 7 March 2016*

¹³ Minister for Education (31 July 2012). Ministerial decision re. Briefing No. BRI 121701 for the formal establishment of a school at Parkville Youth Justice Centre.

¹⁴ Julie Edwards, Chief Executive Officer, Jesuit Social Services, *Transcript of evidence*, 19 April 2017. pp. 6, cited in PVLSIC, 2018, p. 14.

This report to Secure Services, Department of Health and Human Service followed an earlier report made in October 2015.

The purpose of the review was to make a thorough examination of the “existing operating procedures, risk assessment practices and infrastructure and make recommendations for improvement” (Muir, 2016, p. 6), following two critical incidents that occurred at PYJP on 6 and 7 March, 2016. These incidents took place eight months prior to the disturbances in November of that year that attracted the intense media scrutiny.

Muir noted that the major issues that contributed to the March incidents were:

1. The failing of the infrastructure to contain the young people exhibiting behaviour that was likely to have occurred and will almost certainly occur again
2. The fact that they were able to get access to so many weapons from both the build environment and from program areas
3. Staffing and recruitment issues that has resulted in a higher than normal number of lock-downs
4. The high number of remand clients in the Precinct.

Muir called into question why four staff were needed to unlock doors for young people, which only “contributes to the level of tension on the Precinct” (Muir, 2016, p. 39). A strong message of this report was for the continuation of security measures to be implemented (following on from his first review of the Precinct), to remove “extremely dangerous tools” and to address building weaknesses. (Muir, 2016, p. 14).

iv. 2017 (February): Victorian Ombudsman, *Report on youth justice facilities at the Grevillea unit of Barwon Prison, Malmsbury and Parkville*

The purpose of Victorian Ombudsman Deborah Glass’s report was to inform Parliament (and the public) of the response of oversight agencies (such as the Commission for Children and young People, the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission) to “the riots at the Parkville Youth Justice Precinct and the Government’s subsequent establishment of a youth justice centre within Barwon Prison” (VO, 2017b, p. 2). It also aimed to “put facts into the public domain to help inform the debate” (VO, 2017b, p. 2).

The report identified the polarised public debate about youth crime that emerged from these events: either youth crime was out of control and required a strong response, or this was “an overreaction that arbitrarily infringed the human rights of the young people concerned” (p. 2). It also highlighted the changing trend in youth crime, referring to work within the Department of Health and Human Services that described a “more sophisticated, socially networked, calculated and callous offending, characterised by rapidly escalating levels of violence and disregard for authority and consequence” (VO, 2017b, p. 8).¹⁵

The report detailed the role of the over-use of lockdowns at the youth justice facilities that contributed to the disturbances. Although the Ombudsman expressed concern about the “ageing infrastructure” of the PYJP she noted also “the complex interplay of health and

¹⁵ The report cites Department of Health and Human Services Client Relationship Information System data provided to the Victorian Ombudsman, 18 January 2017.

human services, education and the justice system” at the heart of a troubled youth justice system (VO, 2017b, p. 2).

v. 2017 (March): Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP), *The same four walls: Inquiry into the use of isolation, separation and lockdowns in the Victorian youth justice system*

Under their mandate to initiate inquiries that aimed at improving policies and practices that affect young Victorians’ safety and wellbeing, the Commissioners for Children and Young People in Victoria examined laws and policies that regulate the practice of isolation in youth justice in Victoria.

The Inquiry found evidence of an over-use of the practices of isolation, separation and lockdown by that the state’s youth justice system (overseen at this time by the Department of Health and Human Services). It commented on the negative impacts of this on the children and young people and also on staff (indeed, staff shortages were found to be a reason for the over-use of the practices).

The Commission for Children and Young People’s report found that the practices were not made or recorded according to legislative requirements and that young people were denied, for extended periods, access to fresh air, exercise, education and support programs (CCYP, 2017, p. 14).

The Inquiry expressed concern about finding evidence of inappropriate use of the practices, particularly given that the children and young people affected have experienced violence, abuse or neglect (CCYP, 2017, p.6). Conceding that isolation should be seen as “a last resort to prevent immediate risk while a more suitable plan is developed and put in place” (CCYP, 2017, p. 6), the Inquiry recommended a less restrictive and less punitive approach be adopted. It recommended that a “thoroughly integrated trauma-informed approach” be adopted: “The introduction of a program to support children and young people” to “cope with lockdowns would enable them to learn self-care or self-regulation techniques” (p. 84).

vi. 2017 (July): Armytage, P. and Ogloff, J., *Youth justice review and strategy: Meeting needs and reducing offending*

In 2017 the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), which had oversight for youth justice at that time, commissioned Penny Armitage and James Ogloff AM to conduct an independent review of youth justice in Victoria. The primary objective was “to create an overarching policy framework for the development of a contemporary youth justice program and accompanying service delivery model” in Victoria (CCYP, 2017, p. 24). Armytage and Ogloff (2017, pp. 15–27) acknowledged a “a system in crisis”, which was in need of

- “significant structural and cultural reform”;
- “a clear operating philosophy with core principles or values” that would “serve to create a shared vision and integrated services delivery across all service providers”;
- consistency in approach
- better training and support for custodial staff
- greater connection between the various services provided to young people, and
- an adherence to the principle that detention should be an option of last resort.

This report has been adopted as a blueprint for reform within the Victorian youth justice sector). The Victorian Government has accepted, or accepted in principle, all 126 recommendations, and invested “an initial \$50 million” to respond to the key recommendations (such as new programs for young people in custody to address offending behaviour and improved Aboriginal support and investment) (VAGO, 2018, pp. 30–31) (see section 5.1). DJCS noted that “This review will help guide work to strengthen and modernise Victoria’s youth justice system”.¹⁶

vii. 2017 (July): Comrie, N., *Review of the Parkville Youth Justice Precinct*

Following the damage to buildings at the Parkville Youth Justice Precinct in November, 2016, the Department of Health and Human Services (which had responsibility for youth justice services at this time) commissioned former Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police Neil Comrie as an independent consultant to investigate and report to the Department about the incidents. The safety issues in relation to the construction and the design of the Precinct, and risks to staff and young people at the Precinct, were the key focus of Stage 1 of the report.

The conclusion of Stage 1 of the report was that in spite of funding having been committed to improve the security and use of the Precinct, and the attempts to strengthen and fortify the buildings following the late 2016 incidents, the Precinct was not adequate for “high security containment” (Comrie, 2017a, p. 1). Comrie recommended that a business plan for a new justice precinct be developed (2017a, p. 4).

In Stage 2 of this report, Comrie argued that an increased number of young people were committing serious criminal offences, had little respect for authority, and refused to comply with instructions from youth justice staff. He drew attention to the challenging and unsettled remand population, of which there were 80 per cent in relation to 20 per cent of sentenced young people at the PYJP (an inverse of previous figures) and to what he saw as the inability or unwillingness of the youth justice workers to intervene promptly before incidents escalated (Comrie, 2017b, pp. 1–2). He perceived the Victorian Government’s decision to transfer youth justice services to the Department of Justice and Regulation as an opportunity to strengthen the approach to the safety and security of the youth justice centres and to develop an intelligence system within the network. (p. 2). He also made the case that it be possible to have “high security, medium security and minimum security classifications and purpose built environments that reflect and complement these classifications” (Comrie, 2017b, p. 3).

viii. 2017 (August): Victorian Ombudsman, *Investigation into Victorian government school expulsions*

Victorian Ombudsman Deborah Glass investigated Victorian government school expulsions. She found that while Department of Education data showed 278 expulsions in 2016, this number was “likely to be only a fraction of the number of children informally expelled on whom no data [was] kept” (VO, 2017a, p. 2).

Among those who had been expelled, a disproportionate number had a disability, were in out of home care, or identified as Aboriginal. The Ombudsman noted that there were between

¹⁶ VSG/JCS (2019), *Youth justice review strategy meeting needs and reducing offending* <<https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/justice-system/youth-justice/youth-justice-review-and-strategy-meeting-needs-and-reducing-offending>>

hundreds and thousands of children who each year “disengage from formal education at least in part as a result of pressure from schools. We simply did not know where they end up” (VO, 2017a, p. 2).

Of particular relevance to this research is the observation by the Ombudsman that “some 60 percent of those in the youth justice system had previously been suspended or expelled from school” (VO, 2017a, p. 2). She drew a connection to the over 90 percent of incarcerated adults in prisons who did not complete secondary school to highlight the “link between educational disadvantage and incarceration” (VO, 2017a, p. 2).

Key recommendations were that a principal should be unable to expel a student aged eight years or less from any government school without special approval of the Secretary or her delegate, and that a student of compulsory school age was not to be excluded from the government school system even if the student had been expelled from an individual government school (VO, 2017a, pp. 91–92).

ix. 2018 (March): Parliament of Victoria Legal and Social Issues Committee [PVLSIC], *Inquiry into youth justice centres in Victoria: Final report*

The Victorian Parliament’s announcement that its Legal and Social Issues Committee would inquire into issues at Parkville and Malmsbury youth justice centres came just prior to the Parkville youth centre disturbances in November 2016 (VO, 2017, p. 14). The Committee’s terms of reference were focused on incidents and incident reporting; security and safety of staff, employees and young people in custody at the Parkville and Malmsbury youth justice centres; reasons for and effects of the increase in the numbers of young people on remand; the implications of incarcerating young people with mental health, trauma, alcohol and drug-related issues, or involvement with child protection; additional options for keeping young people out of youth justice centres in relation to the likelihood of reoffending and the implications of separating young people from their communities and cultures; the culture, policies, practices and reporting of management at the centres and the Department’s oversight role (PVLSIC, 2018, p. xi). The Inquiry sought a wide range of views from oversight and community sector organisations.

x. 2018 (August) VAGO [Victorian Auditor-General’s Office], *Managing rehabilitation services in youth detention*

VAGO (Victorian Auditor-General’s Office) examined a sample of 40 young people incarcerated between 1 January 2017 and 30 June 2017. The rehabilitation services provided by the Department of Justice and Regulation (now the Department of Justice and Community Safety), YHaRS (Youth Health and Rehabilitation Service) and the Department of Education and Training (DET) were the focus of the audit. The purpose of this examination was to see how well these rehabilitation services met the developmental needs of young people in the youth detention system, and how effective they were in reducing the risk of reoffending (VAGO, 2018, p.8).

Parkville College provides education in accordance with the legislative requirements of the ETR (Education and Training Reform) Act (2006). Although Parkville College does not provide rehabilitative services, as mentioned above, “education is a protective factor that can reduce reoffending. As such, it is a key component in a child or young person’s ability to rehabilitate” (VAGO, 2018, p. 32). The school was included in the audit, under the auspices of DET.

Parkville College was found to have inadequate resources and facilities, and security procedures were found to cause poor class attendance. The DET's budget to Parkville College was found to be insufficient to meet the operating costs of the school. Recommendations included DJR (now DJCS) reviewing and facilitating young women's access to education and recreation and adopting a performance measure for school attendance; DET completing its review of Parkville College's budget and improving Parkville College's record-keeping, and that DJCS and DET develop an MOU to coordinate education and health services, and to ensure access to educational facilities (internet, materials, classrooms). The report argued that, if implemented appropriately, DJCS's reforms (see section 5.1), including new service delivery models, would "better meet the needs of young people and contribute to reduced reoffending"¹⁷

2.3 The specific context of remand

The original proposal for this project was premised on the increasing numbers of young people remanded into custody who were not accessing education in the same ways as the young people who were sentenced. Remand remains a key issue as discussed below. Although remanded young people are differentiated in custody from those who are sentenced, unfortunately they are often misrepresented as *offenders* rather than *accused*. It is important to address the context of remand, because of the specific conditions and perceptions in relation to remand and their implications for educational connection.

2.3.1 Numbers of young people remanded into custody

There has been a significant increase in the number of young people on remand in recent years¹⁸. The 2017 Victorian Ombudsman's report into Victorian justice facilities noted:

In 10 years, the number of remand orders made has increased by almost two thirds, from 381 in 2006-07 to 979 in 2015-16. The Department of Health and Human Services (the Department) reports that the number of individual young people remanded has almost doubled in five years, from 115 in the first quarter of 2010 (July to September) to 210 in the first quarter of 2016, the highest it has been in five years. It also reports that on average, since 2012-13, only about 20 per cent of those remanded are sentenced to custody (VO, 2017b, p. 8).¹⁹

Referring only to Parkville Youth Justice Precinct, the Ombudsman's report states that about 80 per cent of young people were on remand at the end of 2016 and notes that the reversal from the traditional 80 / 20 per cent proportion of sentenced / remand young people is due to "changes to the Bail Act 1977 in December 2013" (VO, 2017b, p. 9).

¹⁷ VAGO (2018), *Youth detention presentation* <<https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-08/20180808-Youth-Detention-Presentation.pdf>>

¹⁸ Various sources provide different figures due to using data for different populations, such as Parkville Youth Justice Precinct only versus all custodial youth justice in Victoria. We therefore make explicit here which population we refer to.

¹⁹ The Victorian Ombudsman refers to the following sources for this information: Youth Parole Board, *Annual Report 2015-16*, page 42; Department of Health and Human Services, *Review of un-sentenced detention in the youth justice system – quarterly remand data 2009-2016*; and Department of Health and Human Services Client Relationship Information System data provided to the Victorian Ombudsman on 18 January 2017.

The new provisions introduced to the Bail Act made it an offence to contravene bail. Although aimed at adults, this amendment also applied to young people. As a result, when young people came before the Children’s Court for breaching their bail, they had to be placed on remand. In 2015, the Victorian Government acknowledged the increased numbers of remanded young people to be an unintended consequence of the Bail Act and introduced the *Bail Amendment Bill 2015*. However, the 2018 Parliament of Victoria *Inquiry into youth justice centres in Victoria* notes that the remand numbers for young people have not declined since then and suggests that there may be “wider factors influencing the use of remand in Victoria” (PVLSIC, 2018, pp. 75–76).

Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS) data provided to us shows that while exact numbers fluctuate, between 1 May 2018 and 1 May 2019:

- At PYJP the number of young people on remand was 89 per cent (or about 72 young people).
- At MYJP the average proportion on remand was only 8.6 per cent (or about 9 young people).

This difference highlights that the conditions of remand are more relevant for both staff and young people at Parkville than at Malmsbury Youth Justice Precinct.

2.3.2 Conditions of remand

Both Victorian legislation and international human rights require that remanded and sentenced young people be kept separate. To meet this requirement, the Parkville Youth Justice Precinct housed those on remand in separate buildings, but as the remanded figures increased, the cohort outgrew this accommodation. In response to the greater remand numbers, Parkville now accommodates mainly young people on remand, while the Malmsbury site consists mainly of those who have been sentenced. It is worth noting that the small number of girls and young women are housed together at PYJP, regardless of whether they are on remand or sentenced.

Remand is a disruptive experience for young people who face uncertainty about whether they will be bailed, sentenced or returned to the community, and they live in a “constant state of flux” (PVLSIC, p. 72). Being moved from one unit to another is common, and “every three weeks remandees return to court to look at whether they are going to be sentenced, whether they are going to be released, whether they are going to be sentenced and released for time served”.²⁰ The VAGO report notes that in the period 1 November 2017 to 31 January 2018 “young people on remand spent an average of 25 days ... in youth detention” (VAGO, 2018, p. 7).

These young people are also isolated from the protective factors that may be offered by family, social support and education (PVLSIC, p. 71).

As one of this study’s participants commented, education is a casualty of the uncertainty that remand brings:

²⁰ Kym Peake, Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, *Transcript of evidence*, 14 June 2017, p. 2, cited in PVLSIC, 2018, p. 72.

Obviously, [Parkville College is] ... the provider for education on site from DET. We have a fairly good relationship with the school and in this kind of environment it'd be very difficult especially in a remand centre where it's such a high churn to be able to deliver real, substantive, quality, consistent education over a period of time because you may have a kid here for one day. You start something and then they're gone. They're bailed or they're re-remanded. It might only be for a short period of time then they're sentenced and they're on their way up the road. Or they may get a community order ... I think it's probably difficult for the school to deliver education here substantively but they do a good job making a good effort at it (Kim, adult interview, 2018).

Participants also drew attention to how living with the experience of remand impacted upon young people's capacity to effectively engage with education:

And obviously there's less certainty, and that affects kids' mindsets (May, adult interview, 2018).

... because you're on remand you haven't been given an actual sentence. You don't know when you're leaving, and some kids can be in there for three days, some for months. You don't know. So, that as well plays into a child's ability to focus, see purpose in - have time to actually worry about education. So, that impacts it as well (Amy, adult interview, 2018).

... they're so unsettled. They're not knowing, they've got potential charges hanging over their head that they're not sure about, and then it's, hey, now come sit in class, and how about you do a reading assessment? Like, they're just not settled (Con, adult interview, 2018).

It was the Victorian Ombudsman's 2010 report into the Parkville Youth Justice Precinct that recommended a review of the youth justice centre to ensure that "all detainees are engaged in programs during school hours on week days" and to "ensure that detainees who are on remand for extended periods are not omitted from programs" (VO, 2010, pp. 70–71). Subsequently, in 2012, Parkville College was established.

Historically, young people on remand have emerged as a significantly overlooked cohort in the Victorian youth justice context when it comes to services and support programs, including education. The 2010 Ombudsman drew attention to how this cohort of young people were excluded from training and mental health supports. While attempts have been made to address this (JSS, 2013, p. 28), the *Inquiry into youth justice centres in Victoria* found that young people on remand still have fewer opportunities to receive the support services as those received by sentenced young people (PVLSIC, 2018, p. 71).

The description or definition of youth justice itself also seems to overlook those on remand. For example, the *Inquiry into youth justice centres in Victoria* states:

Accountability for crimes that attract a sentence of incarceration comes in the form of a loss of a young person's liberty. Rehabilitation begins once a young offender's sentence has been determined and they enter a youth justice facility (**that is, excluding remand**). Overall, the system aims to protect society and reduce reoffending (PVLSIC, 2018, p.87, our emphasis).

The concepts of accountability and rehabilitation set up by the *Inquiry into youth justice centres in Victoria* (PVLSIC, 2018, p.87) in what could be described as the two key pillars of the youth justice system appear to apply in this perspective only to those young people who have been sentenced. Young people on remand do not fit the criteria of either of these concepts – not having been convicted of a crime, so not in need of rehabilitation. Yet, across the literature as well as government and sector reports there is a slippage whereby young people in custody are referred to as offenders, even though those on remand are legally in a state of being innocent until proven guilty.

This report draws attention to the status of those on remand who may not receive benefits of access to education afforded to those who are sentenced yet receive the associated censure.

2.4 Parkville College

Parkville College was established in 2012 in the Parkville Youth Justice Precinct's Pauline Toner Remand centre. Initially providing education to 51 students, the school now caters for the education of around 300 students on any given day (albeit enrolment numbers fluctuate daily).

As a registered Victorian Government specialist school, Parkville College delivers education to students who are, or who have been, detained in the criminal justice system or who are in a Secure Welfare Service. The Secure Welfare Service offers care and protection services for child protection clients at substantial and immediate risk of harm. Like other government schools, Parkville College policy and practice is guided by its school council, the Department of Education and Training and relevant statutory authorities.

There are four registered campuses of Parkville College – Parkville, Malmsbury, Ascot Vale and Maribyrnong.

This project focuses on Parkville College's Parkville and Malmsbury campuses, which are located within the youth justice centres overseen by the Department of Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS). As a part of the Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET), Parkville College works closely with both DET and DJCS.

The Parkville Campus is located at the Parkville Youth Justice Precinct (PYJP). This campus also includes the Park Street Flexible Learning Centre (FLC). Located in a non-secure setting on the land of PYJP (but outside its secure walls), it provides up to 18 male and female students who have been recently released from custody with transition support to other educational or vocational settings.

The Malmsbury Campus is located at the Malmsbury Youth Justice Precinct (MYJP).

When Parkville College was formally established as a single provider of education, five educational objectives were established to support young people in State custodial settings:

1. Providing an educational framework that enables young people to build on existing skills or develop further skills for post-custodial employment or further education.
2. Establish pathways to support successful transition for the young person from custodial care into accredited learning programs or employment.

3. Create a learning environment and culture that supports the young person in developing their sense of belonging to community, resilience, wellbeing and relational responsibility for education.
4. Address any barriers affecting the young person's custodial and post-release educational, social and emotional needs.
5. Resourcing organisational development of staff to encourage high aspirations regarding young people in custodial care.²¹

The school:

- operates fifty-two weeks of the year (including weekends).

Other unique characteristics of this school include:

- the transient nature of its student cohort
- the varying lengths of time spent at the school
- small class sizes based on residential units and operational requirements
- the student cohort, which represents some of the most disadvantaged students in the state, with backgrounds of abuse, trauma or neglect

All levels of education are supported at Parkville College, from early primary years, through secondary school curriculum including senior secondary (Year 11 and 12) provision through VCAL, VCE and VETis. Given that the students present with a diverse array of educational achievements and abilities a flexible curriculum is offered, with the aim of meeting students' varying needs and interests. The majority of Parkville College students undertake work towards a VCAL certification. However some students undertake VCE, VET or tertiary studies (TAFE or university). Individual student learning plans are developed and overseen by key teaching teams organised around residential units.

Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL)

VCAL is a practical option for senior secondary school students in Victoria. It gives students practical, work-related experience as well as literacy, numeracy and personal skills that are important for life and work. Like the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), the VCAL is a recognised senior secondary qualification. The VCAL's flexibility enables students to undertake a study program that suits their interests and learning needs.

The VCAL gives Parkville College students applied and foundational knowledge and skills as well as access to a qualification that will be recognised by TAFE institutes and employers. Together these help students move from school into work, an apprenticeship or traineeship and/or further training at TAFE or another Registered Training Organisation. In VCAL these principles are shown through the development of knowledge and employability skills that help prepare students for work and for participation in a broader society – family, community

²¹ Victoria State Government (2013). *Integrated education model: Victorian Youth Justice System*. Retrieved on July 2016 from <www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/department/structure/western/integedumodeljusticesys.pdf>

and life-long learning – and assist students to make informed vocational choices and facilitate pathways to further learning and employment.

Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS)

Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS) provides an opportunity for schools, training institutes and industry to work together in preparing students for employment and further training. VET subjects and units offered at Parkville College are fully accredited through Melbourne Polytechnic and the Chisholm Institute. The VETiS curriculum at Parkville College is structured to give students the opportunity to try out a number of different vocational areas, while gaining credit for single Units of Competency toward their VCAL, before committing to a full certificate.

Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE)

Students have access to full VCE learning programs through the Distance Education Centre Victoria (DECV) and tertiary education through Open Universities. Only a small proportion of students choose these pathways and, as such, these programs are developed on a 1-1 basis, so individual programs are developed for these students. However, without internet access, the capacity for Parkville College to undertake external programs is challenged (see section 5.2).²²

²² Information in this section has been informed by communications with, and documentation from, Parkville College, 2019.

2.5 The significance of education

Education is often presented as a magic formula, particularly in relation to young people in detention. It is conjured up not only as a key protective factor against criminal activity but also as a means for young people in youth detention to re-join society. While these are worthy sentiments and what everyone wants for young people in custody, the word *education* is in danger of becoming an easy – even an empty – term. It can provide the appearance of gravitas to solving a challenging problem. But simply referring to education in this way fails to show **how** it can operate as a protective factor and what conditions are required for this to happen.

The complex backgrounds and disadvantage experienced by many young people in custody mean that if education is to be effective, understandings about *education* need to go beyond that of a frequently used word. One of the Parkville College staff members captures the sense of how for many, education is not a given but a right:

Well I think the whole thing is about keeping kids in school and trying to simplify what we're trying to do here. The idea that I come back to is you look at adult prisons, the percentage of people in adult prisons that have finished Year 12 or Year 10 even, it's something like .05% have finished high school. So that's a pretty damning fact (Sam, adult interview, 2018).

A complex professional system of shared values and practices is required to enable incarcerated young people to become connected with education. The task is challenging and multi-faceted and requires subtlety and consistency. The consequences of not connecting young people with education are potentially devastating for these young people and for their futures.

Not only is education highly valued in general, but the specific educational provision by Parkville College is also highly regarded within the youth justice sector. The Victorian Ombudsman referred to how Parkville College has “transformed the educational services available to young people” (VO, 2017a, p. 2) and the *Inquiry into youth justice centres in Victoria* noted the “overwhelmingly positive evidence” regarding Parkville College PVLISIC, 2018, p. 99). Without taking away from the positive impact of the school, we suggest that the following recommendation made by the *Inquiry* provides an example of how education is not always understood by those outside of the education system:

Recommendation 17: That the Department of Education and Training's Early Childhood and School Education Group consider whether the successful methods at Parkville College, including teacher training and lesson structures, can be adapted to provide further assistance to at-risk students in mainstream schools (PVLISIC, 2018, p.99).

Education within the custodial context of youth justice is a complex professional endeavour that tends not to be fully understood outside the education profession. In this report we will discuss our findings in relation to key themes, to better understand what enables and what constrains educational connection within the youth justice context.

3. Methodology

3.1 Project team and collaboration

The project team is led by researchers from Victoria University, and also involves researchers from the University of Tasmania and Deakin University, as well as staff from our project partner, Parkville College. The researchers were awarded funding by Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation (LMCF) to undertake this study in November 2016.

Support from the LMCF has ensured the independence of this study. Such autonomy has been particularly valuable and appreciated. At the same time, however, we have valued collaboration and welcomed input. Two specific aspects of collaboration have been through the partnership with Parkville College and through our Reference Group.

Parkville College has been central to this study, and staff members have provided strong support for this research from its inception onwards. Nevertheless, we reiterate that the study is independent, and its purpose was not to advocate for Parkville College nor to evaluate its work.

A Reference Group was established early in the project to inform the study and that became an important source of advice for the study. In addition to members of the research team, experts were invited from the organisations listed below:

- Children's Court of Victoria
- Commission for Children and Young People
- Department of Justice and Community Safety
- Department of Education and Training
- Victorian South Sudanese Community Association
- Centre for Multicultural Youth
- Youth Affairs Council of Victoria
- Jesuit Social Services

The sensitive context for this study was raised at the first meeting of this Reference Group, and it was agreed that members would not to speak publicly about the study, nor would they report any comments made during its meetings.

The Reference Group met twice per year for the duration of the project, with communications conducted out of session as required. The meetings were hosted by Victoria University and Parkville College.

3.2 Focus of the study and research questions

The project focused its investigation on how education works for young people in youth custodial settings, for young people charged with or convicted of criminal offences.

The research questions guiding the study were:

1. What enables and constrains participation in education in custody?
2. How could educational connection for the longer-term be strengthened for young people in custody?
3. How may education work as a protective factor for young people in the youth justice system?

3.3 Research ethics

At any time and in any place, a high level of sensitivity surrounds research focused on young people in the criminal justice system, and especially on those in custody. In the current Victorian context, such sensitivity was exacerbated by the extensive media coverage of the Victorian youth justice centre unrests (Moylan et al., forthcoming 2019; White et al., 2018) which occurred shortly after the LMCF awarded the grant for this project. This presented unanticipated challenges for ethics approvals. In total the approvals process took 17 months to complete. A summary is provided in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Ethics Approvals

Body or Committee	Application	Number of iterations	Total
Victoria University: Human Research Ethics Committee			5
	Part A	2	
	Part B	2	
	Amendment	1	
Department of Education and Training: Insights and Evidence Branch			3
	Part A	1	
	Part B	1	
	Amendment	1	
Department of Justice and Regulation: Justice Human Research Ethics Committee			3
	Part 1	1	
	Part 2	2	
All			11

3.3.1 An ethical ethos

Formal research ethics approval processes are useful both as independent oversight and as an opportunity for researchers to explicitly consider ethical implications of their research. However, ethical research is a situated process, of which completing ethics applications is only one part (Brooks, Te Riele and Maguire, 2015). The National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (NHMRC, 2007/2018, p. 3) explains this well:

...‘ethical conduct’ is more than simply doing the right thing. It involves acting in the right spirit, out of an abiding respect and concern for one’s fellow creatures. This National Statement on ‘ethical conduct in human research’ is therefore oriented to something more fundamental than ethical ‘do’s’ and ‘don’ts’ – namely, an ethos that should permeate the way those engaged in human research approach all that they do in their research.

In our research this ethos centred around respect for everyone involved. For our research participants, we demonstrated our respect not only through established processes of ensuring they were able to make informed decisions about whether to participate, but also through respectful listening and showing our appreciation for the time and insights they contributed.

Beyond the participants, our research involved collaboration with people in Parkville College, DJCS, DET, the reference group and Lord Mayor’s Charitable Foundation. Transparent communication (by email, phone or in person) about the progress of the research and opportunities to have input (this included a forum on 10 November 2017 and consultation meeting on 28 February 2019) have underpinned our respect for all stakeholders throughout the project.

An ethical ethos is also essential in the dissemination of research findings (Brooks, Te Riele and Maguire, 2015). In this report as well as other publications and presentations, we have endeavoured to respect everyone’s contributions and interest in this topic by ensuring we report our findings in ways that are truthful and considerate.

Most importantly, we intend that our actions as well as our publications contribute to upholding Article 3 in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:²³

In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

We intend that our findings may serve the best interests of young people in custody in Victoria by shedding light on how education in custodial settings may be strengthened.

²³ UN (2019), *Convention on the Rights of the Child*
<<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>>

3.3.2 Perspectives from young people

An important value from the *UN Convention for the Rights of the Child* is the child or young person's right to be heard and to have their voice included:

The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice (Article 13).²⁴

This also applies to research, particularly where the young people themselves are the focus of the investigation. As Wyn and White (1998) have observed:

... the voices of young people need to be heard if we are to appreciate fully the ways in which social constraints and institutional structures both impinge upon them, and provide possibilities for personal and collective development (1998, p. 35).

The intention of this project from the outset was to include the voices of young people in custody. Input from young people who were or had been in youth custody in Victoria was considered of high value by the team and by the Reference Group. Interviews were planned to enable young people to share their perspectives about what constrained and enabled their educational experience and connection while in custody. Despite the support of a wide range of people on our reference group and in Parkville College, DJCS and DET, and significant effort by the research team, we were unable to undertake many interviews with young people for this project.

- Interviews with young people at Parkville were originally scheduled for March 2018 but were delayed due to internal processes at DJCS. Subsequently, research team members returned to Parkville and Malmsbury in July and November 2018 to conduct the interviews. As discussed earlier, these were delayed. On both occasions this was due to internal processes at DJCS. However four interviews were conducted towards the end of the project.
- Insufficient numbers of young people attending the Flexible Learning Centre outside custody were aged 18 or over when participants were sought during 2017 and 2018.

Despite these obstacles to conducting the interviews with young people inside custody, as mentioned above, a small number of interviews were undertaken towards the end of the project. The significant delays were not deliberately obstructive, but reflect the sensitivity of the context, and access and availability to young people who are constantly changing routines and location. As noted above, respect for young people's voluntary and informed consent was vital to the ethical conduct of the research. As it turned out, several young people did change their minds at the last minute and withdrew from participating in an interview. In addition, and reflecting the fluidity affecting everyone who works in youth justice, others were released from custody just before the interviews were scheduled.

²⁴ UN (2019), *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>>

To complement hearing directly from young people ourselves, we have included what we were fortunate to be provided with: two other sources that enable youth voice to be present in this report. These two sources are *client exit interviews* from the Department of Justice and Regulation, which contain open answers, and scores on the *Attitudes to School Survey* from Parkville College.

3.4 Methods

3.4.1 Data sources

The study was designed to employ several complementary data collection tools in order to do justice to this complex topic. The methods that were approved as part of our ethics protocols (see section 3.3) included new data collection through interviews and a survey, as well as analysis of existing documentation and data.

Table 3.2: Data sources

NO.	DATA	DATE COMPLETED
1	Interviews with Parkville College (PC) Teachers and Leaders or Managers from PC, Department of Justice and Regulation (DJR, now DJCS) and the Department of Education and Training (DET)	June 2018
2	Interviews with Parkville College young people at Parkville and Malmsbury youth justice centres.	June 2019
3	Data from Parkville College: Attitude to School Survey, Fountas & Pinnell literacy scores, Compass literacy and numeracy scores, CASES21 data, and Monthly Education Reports	July 2018 and January 2019
4	Data from DJCS: 88 x Client Exit Interviews,	July 2018
5	Parkville College: Policy and internal documentation regarding education & youth justice	December 2018
6	Publicly available reports on youth justice in Victoria	February 2019

Some other data was provided but not used. The weekly youth justice bed capacity reports from DJCS proved to be of limited relevance to the research questions.

In addition, one intended method did not generate any data. The survey of Parkville College and DJCS staff did not attract any respondents despite a link being sent twice to all staff at Parkville and Malmsbury from the Department of Justice and Regulation and Parkville College.

While undoubtedly the findings would have been richer if this data had been available, and if more interviews could have been conducted with young people, we are confident that the data we were able to use is thorough and that the findings reported here are robust.

3.4.2 Analysis

Interviews (#1 and #2 in Table 3.2)

Interviews were conducted with 21 Parkville College members of staff and 15 Leaders or Managers from Parkville College, DJCS and DET.

All interviews were professionally transcribed and uploaded into NVivo, a qualitative data analysis computer software package produced by QSR International. NVivo supported thematic analysis following standard procedures described by Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014).

Five over-arching thematic categories emerged from the interview data. These comprised *education, security, culture, wellbeing* and *space*. Each of these categories incorporated a number of related topics among the 22 initial themes. For example, the over-arching category of *culture* included the initial themes *Culture/values/philosophy, unconditional positive regard, staff-welfare/wellbeing* and *relationships*.

Analysis was made of the NVivo references to these themes. The findings from these analyses and relevant quotes from the interviews are presented in Chapters 4 and 5, and interview quotes that illustrate other issues of discussion elsewhere in the report (for example, the topic of remand in this chapter) are represented accordingly.

The analysis of the adult interviews emerged primarily from the themes with the adults, which often led to referring back to the individual interview transcripts for more information and insights in relation to these themes.

The analysis of the interviews of the young people also developed out of the themes of the adult interviews (deductive). Other common themes were also generated by the interviews (such as the importance of internet access) that differed from themes that emerged in the adult interviews (inductive), which included distinct insights around the importance of cultural worker interactions, around transitions and the young people's experience of custody in relation to education (Braun and Clarke, 2006)

Parkville College data (#3 in Table 3.2)

Parkville College provided the following data:

- Attitudes to School Survey (ATSS) results: This survey is administered annually in all Victorian government schools with students from Years 4 to 12. The survey focuses on students' attitudes and experiences at school. At Parkville College the ATSS survey is completed one-to-one at least once a year with all students. Usually the survey is completed within a month of arrival. The timing of the subsequent survey, and the amount of time between time 1 and time 2, varies. The data was provided in spreadsheet format based on an export of results at the end of 2018. This contained results at one recent time point for 106 students, and results for two time points (recent and previous) for 43 students. The findings from this analysis are represented with diagrams and tables.

- Fountas & Pinnell literacy scores: The *Fountas & Pinnell test* is commonly used to assess students' reading levels in primary schools, across an A-Z gradient of text levels. These levels are aligned with indicative grades. For example, Levels S-W indicate Grade 5. At Parkville College the time interval between Fountas & Pinnell assessments is 3-4 months. The data was provided in spreadsheet format based on an export of results from 1 June 2018, for three time points: first test, second most recent test, most recent test. The gap between the first and most recent test can vary between 4 months to 7 years, since students can be at Parkville College a long time or may return several times over a period of many years. The gap between most recent and second most recent tests was 3-4 months for most students. Therefore the analysis focused on the first test on its own as an indication of reading levels at first entry (N=75) and on comparison between most recent and second most recent test for an indication of change over time (N=27). The findings from this analysis are represented with diagrams and tables.
- Compass literacy and numeracy scores: The Compass test of literacy and numeracy skills has been developed by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) specifically to be suitable for educationally marginalised young people and adults. It is aligned to the Australian Core Skills Framework (ACSF). The data was provided in spreadsheet format based on an export of scale score results from 1 June 2018. The analysis focused on the first test on its own as an indication of literacy and numeracy levels at first entry (N=75). Comparison between time points proved unreliable, due to the usually large gap between time points and to the variation in student experience during that time (for example moving in and out of custody). The findings from this analysis are represented with diagrams and tables.
- CASES21 data: CASES21 is a system used in Victorian DET schools to collate background information for each student and track their movement between government schools. Parkville College does not have access to existing CASES21. The school creates a new file for each student when they enter custody – rather than migrating their existing file. As a result, the information in CASES21 for Parkville College students is restricted both in breadth (there is no data on several variables) and in length (there is no information about previous and subsequent enrolments). Parkville College provided a spreadsheet with CASES21 data for 841 students enrolled between 1 January 2017 and 23 November 2018. The findings from this analysis are represented with diagrams, mainly in Chapter 2.
- Monthly Education Reports: These are reports prepared by Parkville College staff for each individual student. The reports include an indication of progress through units of study, formal assessment results, and commentary from the teacher. Deidentified reports provided useful background for understanding and interpreting the other data listed above. The reports are not explicitly quoted in this report, since even deidentified commentary may be recognised by people who know the student, and thus undermine confidentiality.

DJCS exit interviews (#4 in Table 3.2)

The exit survey interviews included 59 from the Malmsbury precinct and 29 from the Parkville precinct, conducted between February and July 2018. These were provided as deidentified scans of hard copy forms, with answers to questions handwritten by an interviewer or by the young people themselves. These exit interviews relate to the young person's experience across the precinct, not just with Parkville College. Analysis considered background information (such as youth justice precinct, gender, age) and focused on seven survey questions that were highly relevant to this report: five related to education at the precinct, one to positive events at the precinct, and one to future plans. These questions were as follows:

- a) What has happened here that might help you when you are back in the community? (Prompt: ask about programs, getting access to services, counselling, relationships with staff). [Question 7.3g]
- b) What classes have you been to in the school during your time here? [Question 7.4a]
- c) Have you enjoyed going to the school? Yes Sometimes No [Question 7.4b]
- d) Is there anything else you want to tell me about this? (Prompt: ask about what the young person liked or did not like about going to the school and what they have learned). [Question 7.4c]
- e) Do you think what you have learned will be helpful for you in the future? Yes Sometimes No [Question 7.4d]
- f) Can you tell me more about this? (Prompt: for example, will this help you get a job, will you use what you have learnt in your personal life, or has it motivated you to continue your education?) [Question 7.4e]
- g) Can you tell me about the plan for when you leave here? (Prompt: ask about where they will live, whether they will be going to school or training, who will support them, where would they go for help if things went wrong?) [Question 8.1c]

The findings from this analysis are represented through key themes illustrated with quotes, as well as through diagrams.

3.5 Signpost

So far, the report has provided important background both to the issue of young people in custody in Victoria and to the conduct of the research. We now move on to presenting findings from our research.

In Chapter 4 we discuss our research findings in relation to the educational provision through Parkville College, with a particular focus on values, culture and learning.

In Chapter 5 we lift our gaze to examine findings about education within the context of youth custodial settings in Victoria.

The report concludes in Chapter 6 with a discussion of key issues for consideration to enhance educational provision for incarcerated young people in Victoria.

4. Values, culture and learning

Central to understanding how education works within youth custody is an examination of the philosophies and work practices of Parkville College. Values, philosophy and practices have been analysed following interviews with a range of leaders, managers, teachers, social workers and youth justice workers from Parkville College, the Department of Education and Training, and the Department of Justice and Community Safety. Data from students adds vital insight into their learning as well as their views and experiences. The discussion presented here aims to enter into the complexity of policy and how this is enacted in everyday practices to identify what helps and what hinders education inside youth justice.

Parkville College is similar to other government schools in that it is a registered school operated by the Department of Education and Training (DET) (also see section 2.4). Unlike other schools, however, it operates within Victoria's two youth justice centres. Consequently the school sits within a custodial setting and alongside a culture underpinned by a philosophy that differs substantially from its own. The custodian of the youth justice centres is the Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS). This government department is responsible both for the overall duty of care of the young people who have been remanded or sentenced into custody and the maintenance of the school buildings and equipment. It is also charged with responsibility "for balancing educational needs in its operational decision-making" (VAGO, 2018, p.26).²⁵

4.1 Values underpinning practice

Parkville College bases its philosophy on Article 26 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states:

Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.²⁶

The school's philosophy is premised on the understanding that the impact of childhood trauma and related issues experienced by many of its students challenge their personal growth and development. Parkville College has developed its philosophy to respond to the particular needs of its educationally vulnerable student body to enable students to engage fully with their education. While being mindful of student histories, Parkville College does not focus solely on these often adverse experiences, but takes seriously its responsibility to be future focussed in educating their students. The *Parkville College Employee Handbook* (2018, p. 7) explains:

²⁵ This comment was made in reference to DJR (prior to the Department becoming DJCS).

²⁶ United Nations (n.d.), *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* <<https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>>

Our teachers don't allow stereotypes, learning disabilities, behavioural difficulties, lack of education, socioeconomic backgrounds, culture or race, bias their expectations of students.²⁷

Nevertheless, staff recognise that young people in custody are often:

... so deeply traumatised and [have] also had a lot of disrupted education in particular ... education's not something that's a good feeling for a lot of our young people (Jane, adult interview, 2018).

For Parkville College, and other schools within custody, the challenge is not only in providing an education that will enable young people to develop and grow; it also has the task of supporting many of its students **to want to engage in education** and to see learning as a positive part of their lives.

Parkville College's commitment extends to high expectations and excellence which demands that staff know and understand their students' backgrounds, life experiences and communities. The school is aware that many of its students

...have routinely been exposed to extremely traumatic circumstances, in formative years. These circumstances include a combination of neglect, physical, emotional or sexual abuse, homelessness, intergenerational unemployment and welfare mentality and physical and mental disabilities; resulting in self-harming behaviours, drug use and truancy.²⁸

The school's shared pedagogy and approach to teaching is informed by this knowledge, which involves using a range of caring and deliberate strategies to ensure that all students feel safe, accepted and supported as part of engaging them in learning. The school focuses on developing and sustaining positive relationships that have the expectation that the students can and will learn, while also taking into account the effect of their backgrounds and past experiences on their actions and learning behaviours.

The concept of unconditional positive regard is borrowed from humanistic psychology (Rogers, 1951) and underpins all Parkville College staff interactions with students. Teachers enact this concept by treating students genuinely, respectfully and kindly, at all times. This includes always speaking with the students in calm, slow and friendly ways, using clear language and body language that is safe and not threatening.

An important feature of Parkville College's professional practice is their commitment to the *outreach* part of the program. This refers to the time that teachers spend with individual students outside their classrooms. It is a process whereby the connections a teacher has made with the student continue, even if the student is moved to another unit. Outreach also involves contact with significant people in the student's life in relation to the student's progress and achievement at school. This concept is aimed to enable the student to see the care that the teacher has for them as a person. Outreach also extends to building relationships with unit staff who have day-to-day responsibility for the young people.

Parkville College deliberately and strategically creates the conditions for learning, and more importantly, for educational connection through the enactment of their philosophy and

²⁷ Parkville College, 2018, *Parkville College Employee Handbook*, p. 7.

²⁸ Parkville College, 2019, Parkville College Approach summary: "Teaching and learning"

values. This idea of **educational connection** is important and can be explained further in this way: Given that previous educational experiences of students at Parkville College have often been negative, educational connection encompasses the crucial but intangible idea of creating conditions that lead students to **want** to learn. By interacting deliberately with their students in respectful and caring ways, and by building these relationships, the teachers deliberately and strategically develop trust and confidence, over time, which means the students **choose** to engage in classroom activities.

4.2 Enacting values

An explicit and shared philosophy is enabling as long as it moves from words to actions. In this section we discuss how Parkville College embeds its philosophy and values into professional teacher practice.²⁹ These insights were offered from staff members across a range of roles that range from teaching to landscape gardening to social work.³⁰ Table 4.1 below provides a representation of how the Parkville College philosophy is translated into professional practice by staff. Further, it illustrates how staff work towards (a) the students connecting with education and wanting to learn, and (b) establishing expectations and providing tasks that lead their students to accepting increasing levels of responsibility for their own learning.

Table 4.1: Philosophy and values translated into professional teacher practice

A	B	C	D	E
Shared philosophy	Communication with students	Deliberate strategies	Motivational classroom strategies	Students take responsibility
Documented Discussed Examined Improved	Caring Positive regard Safety Trust Calm Consistent	How teachers use their professional judgement to link A with E	Designed to engage students into wanting to learn and participate	Teachers establish expectations and conditions so that students take increasing responsibility for their own learning and learning plans.

The table above shows how teachers use their professional judgement to select learning strategies that link A with E.

Before learning

Parkville College uses enrolment as “a pivotal part of the learning process”.³¹ Staff use the 1:1 enrolment meeting to explain who they are and welcome students, to invite students to

²⁹ For an overview of the ways in which teachers engage the students in learning, see the Parkville College webpage: <http://parkvillecollege.vic.edu.au/?page_id=65>

³⁰ Parkville College has key members of staff who are not teachers.

³¹ Parkville College 2018. This is from “Student enrolment process at Parkville College”, a document provided to teachers.

tell them a bit about themselves, and to outline how Parkville College works and to begin to develop a Student-Teacher Agreement.

The enrolment process is the student's chance to meet us on their terms. In redressing the power imbalance that exists for students in custody we need to use choice-based language, seek permission, express gratitude and negotiate what their learning environment will look like.³²

Once students are enrolled, Parkville College teachers use the strategy, prior to the beginning of each class, of *settling* the young people. This enables the students to make the transition between entering the classroom and beginning their work tasks:

We'll often start with what we call a *settler*, which is just something for them to come and sit at the table and do something that isn't going to challenge them but is going to calm them and focus them. It might be a colouring sheet, it might be a word search, it might be dot-to-dot, something so simple, and basically mindless but mindful. And so by getting them to slow down and focus – and often what the staff do, which is great, they'll have little competitions, like who can get all the words in the word search, and so they'll be racing each other. And that's really good, because it just gets them even to just sit in the right spot in the room [which] can sometimes be a challenge ... (Phoebe, adult interview, 2018).

Similar to the *settler* is a strategy that one teacher described, which makes particular use of the time between entering the classroom and engaging the students in learning activities. This allows the teacher to gauge the atmosphere of the room, then to adapt learning plans to effectively engage students. This is part of the teacher's professional judgment and professional educational practice:

I think it's something that's really hard to articulate because it's so much about feeling the space and observing the space. My main rule is always walk in and don't speak for a little bit of time because you have to read the situation. And making sure that the student knows you are not there to push any buttons at all. ... it's their space and you're respectful of that. But I also know that they have huge potential and that within 15 minutes of me giving them my time, they'll give me 45 minutes of theirs (Mara, adult interview, 2018).

... the reason why the timetable's six one hours instead of, say like a two hour block, a two hour block, a two hour block is I believe that theory says that especially kids with a history of trauma will learn best with like academic, non-academic, academic, non-academic, academic ... so they'll go from a literacy class to PE to a numeracy class to lunch and then have a woodwork and then back into a literacy class and then finish with music or art – that's how the timetable works – so they're always going let's focus, let's sit down in chairs to let's get up and move around – and that's how the timetable's been designed (Lee, adult interview, 2018).

³² Parkville College 2018, "Student enrolment process at Parkville College".

Young people interviewed also reflected on some of the strategies used for keeping students interested and focused. One young person, Cam, specifically noted that the use of “little competitions” like trivia quizzes and having prizes “drew us back into class....It’s enjoyable too” (Cam, student interview, 2019). Another student liked teachers making promises about activities to be done in class the next day.

Pedagogical practices

Teachers at Parkville College have high expectations of their students. They maintain consistent and positive relationships by creating stability and by proving themselves as reliable adults who demonstrate care, even when behaviour is challenging and complex. Teachers assist students to envision positive futures for themselves and support their motivation to achieve.

The consistent approach to teaching and learning, across all classrooms of Parkville College, provides stability, coherency and transferability, and it clearly spells out how its philosophical goals are seen in daily interactions.

Learning Intentions and Explicit Teaching

Teachers at Parkville College create explicit goals for their students in their classroom and clearly outline the exact steps students need to take in order to achieve those intentions. Whole-class daily learning intentions and success criteria are displayed on the board in all classes.

Learning of new skills is supported by teachers explicitly demonstrating *how* for students.

For example:

- English teachers show how texts are created and how they elicit certain responses from their readers;
- Carpentry teachers show their students how to hammer a nail in at 90 degrees;
- Hospitality teachers show students the safest and quickest method for chopping vegetables.

Lessons are designed and explained so that students can see the usefulness and applications of their learning for their future career and education pathways. And to ensure depth of learning, the whole class group may work on one skill and project together, or students may focus on their individualised learning plans.

Descriptive Feedback

Consistent with the positive and strategic interactions with students, teachers provide feedback that is positive and also specific and clear. This is directly aligned with established criteria for success, so students know exactly what they have achieved and what they still need to work on. The process for classwork proceeds along consistent lines:

- After teachers show their students how to achieve the learning intention, students practice the task. The teacher gives them descriptive feedback on their performance.
- As students practice the task independently, they self-evaluate how they are doing using the success criteria.
- When the teacher gives feedback, they use the specific success criteria so that students and teachers have a shared understanding of what excellence looks like.

Stamina and Persistence

Developing qualities of persistence and stamina for learning is also consistently employed in classrooms at Parkville College. Teachers design their lessons so that the capacity for independent work stamina is continually developed, so students become used to working hard for longer periods of time. While some students may be able to focus on a task for 30 minutes, others may only be able to focus for a few seconds when they first enrol in the school. The strategy involves beginning with student capability and building up from there. Together with high expectations, students incrementally build their independent work stamina to the point that they can focus on challenging tasks for long periods of time. Teachers explicitly teach their students these stamina and self-regulation strategies. These stamina strategies will be of use as students transition into their individual careers and education pathways.

Structure and Timetable

The structure of the school day and the way the learning timetable works is to alternate between different sorts of activities to maximise engagement and achievement. The program has key elements of reliability and predictability that provide the students with security and calm. Students know the pattern and timetables are posted in unit offices. When any changes will occur, students are provided with explanations and updated timetables.

One young person who was interviewed suggested that he would prefer the structure and timetable to enable students to be rewarded for doing “boring” work with “fun stuff” at the end of the day:

They should do that at the end of the day, you know, like music and stuff.
... Because people hear the music, they get pumped up and then they just walk around pumped up all day. And at the end of the day they don't want to do nothing. They've already done all the fun stuff in the morning and they're doing the boring things at the end of the day. So we should do the boring things at the start of the day and do the fun stuff at the end of the day (Cam, student interview, 2019).

Outreach

An important part of the professional teaching responsibility at Parkville College is the *outreach* work. As mentioned earlier, this practice involves teachers spending time with students outside the classroom and may also include the teacher making a connection with parents or guardians, cultural youth groups, sporting clubs or religious organisations.³³

Outreach is an established practice that works towards trust by demonstrating to the individual student that the teacher is interested in them as a person, as well as being a student. Outreach is a particularly valuable part of the Parkville College program because young people are often moved to a new living unit for security purposes. As education is structured around these units, these changes in living arrangements have the potential to impact negatively on educational connection because the relationships carefully developed could easily be lost. The outreach practice focuses on maintaining these relationships and retaining the focus of the individual teachers on individual students – even when they are moved to different classrooms, teachers and student groupings. It can also serve as a

³³ Parkville College, 2018, “2017 School Philosophy”, p. 2.

circuit-breaker when a young person experiences the significant change involved in being moved from unit to unit, where all new relationships need to be established. This outreach practice, therefore, is highly significant for educational connection:

... it's a bit of a rollercoaster in here and so sometimes you have heaps of momentum that's really teaching focused and learning focused and then all [of a sudden] something changes. And all of a sudden you're back to square one again and it's like you know what? We just need to play monopoly. We need to get out there and play basketball ... And they need to see us in a different light and need to see us not pushing work on them. And so that's what outreach is for us. But sometimes that might mean that you're down doing extra homework with a kid because it's what they want. But it also gives you a chance to see their strengths outside of [school] (May, adult interview, 2018).

Because the practice of outreach is a formal part of the staff timetable at Parkville College, the conditions are in place for the teachers, in the words of May above, to continue to be involved in the lives of their students and to be consistent and persistent in building relationships of trust with the young people. As many of the students at Parkville College have known instability and distrust of adults in their lives, this constancy and reliability has a particular significance in building educational connection for the future.

4.3 Positive relationship building for learning

A cornerstone of Parkville College's educational practice is to provide young people with positive and sustainable relationships. It is also focused on modelling how healthy relationships can support qualities such as trust, which – for the young people – may have been lost in past experiences with teachers. As professionals, the Parkville College staff convey to their students that they are reliable and trustworthy and that they will remain constant and focused on the wellbeing and learning of their students at all times:

Calm, consistent, persistent. Calm, consistent and persistent ... I say persistent because I've often found in my own experience, the key to building a strong relationship with a child is not getting on like a house on fire initially; it's showing up every day, smiling, wanting to be there, wanting to genuinely be empathic, genuinely showing unconditional and positive regard, wanting to get to know them, which eventually – like, I think just sort of breaks it down and I think shocks them, because they're like, why do you keep coming back to talk to me? (Amy, adult interview, 2018).

Terms like *calm*, *consistent* and *persistent* recurred across the interviews with Parkville College staff, as staff described how they chip away at building rapport with the young people. This means that teachers do not engage when there is violence or aggression but have a deliberate policy of withdrawal from conflict, especially when it occurs within the classroom. And this has a very high value across Parkville College, so that teachers retain and protect their positive relationships with students. This approach was acknowledged and reflected directly in the interviews with young people, who commented:

They're patient, to be honest. They don't get mad. They don't get frustrated or anything. They might piss you off just for talking about the school work and shit, but that's normal. But if it's in the community [on the outside], the teachers they yell and

give you a lecture and shit, but they don't do that in here. They try and do it in the most positive way to explain to you how things work, instead of being frustrated and aggressive, do you know what I mean? (Kenny, student interview, 2019).

...they're very supportive and they're kind, I like that. They are always happy and they are trying to keep us happy because they know the position we're in....they're always – they never change. They come to work, they're always the same and they're smiling all the time. Maybe not all of them but the majority of them (Jordan, student interview, 2019).

These comments directly reflect the ways in which remaining calm and positive affects students and the importance of doing this **everyday**. The predictability of interactions as supportive and empathetic provides a sense of stability that several young people identified as important to their learning.

However, this approach has sometimes appeared as teachers abrogating their disciplinary responsibility to youth justice workers, who are in attendance in all classes:

What I see is that the staff sit in the class with the teachers to manage the kid's behaviour. What I see is a disconnect. If my kids sit in a classroom, the teacher disciplines the young person. They don't do that here. Well they don't. Not all of them. I think some of them do and I think I've witnessed some footage where some of the teachers have attempted to challenge the behaviour, whether it's worked or not but you would do that in a normal environment. Young people that are in the community going to whatever school have that propensity to be as aggressive as what some of ours are, yet the teachers will challenge that. But they just don't do that here (Kim, adult interview, 2018).

I suppose I don't think there's ever been any sort of forum set up for both parties to have a say and mind you, if there hadn't been one when I was there, I would say to the teachers, 'You created some of these scenes'. Some of the behaviour they let them get away with, just in general like some of the name callings and sexualised comments to female staff. Now it's okay to say that the [youth justice worker] is responsible for that but if that was me and I was a female staff [member], I would turn around and say, 'That's inappropriate' and turn around to the [youth justice worker] and say 'I'm not accepting that sort of behaviour in my class. Please take them away'. You might do that once and there might be some questions about all that but that is – some of the language is atrocious. ... Yes. I get a little bit of sort of, 'Hang on, you can't expect us to intervene in something like that'. A different sort of behaviour like a threatening behaviour or something like that, I would expect the staff member to jump in (Ron, adult interview, 2018).

Parkville College staff, however, explain that once rapport has been established, it then becomes possible to build on the emerging relationship and for learning to occur:

So every time you have a positive interaction with the boy you get that rapport about the jug [that] gets filled up or the glass [that] gets filled up. And then at times you use that full glass in class to push them beyond their limits and you tip a little bit out because they will be able to get frustrated with you. But you are confident of [filling] that up again (Mike, adult interview, 2018).

A consequence of this sustained rapport-building means that a point is reached where the glass can be filled up a little further and the students can find themselves opening up to what learning can offer. Again, this relies on the teachers' professional judgement about when this can occur. Connecting with the individual student is the precursor to making educational connection possible:

Well, definitely getting to know them, building a working alliance with them, where they know they're cared for, supported, and they know you care about them, and that you're going to – essentially, it's like we build social capital and defend it. So, you build a relationship with a child to make them feel safe and then you can motivate them and help them with the course of that relationship to then pursue greater things in education or to try things that are really hard for them, and that sort of thing. So, that works, and I guess knowing them really well and catering to their interests, needs, identity. Making work and classrooms relevant to them. So, if you've got an entire unit of [children from non-Australian backgrounds], why would you teach them about the Gold Rush? (Amy, adult interview, 2018).

In a similar vein, this focus on building positive relationships to assist a young person with negative past experiences of education to make the required shift in their **disposition** towards learning:

So I'd say that the way that we were able to focus on relationships first works really well. It's everything. That's what makes any of this work. And it means that we're able to start replacing kids' [negative] narratives of school. ... I think that we're able to start rewriting that narrative for them by building a relationship first ... (May, adult interview, 2018).

4.4 Student views about relationships and culture

The client exit interviews and Attitude to School Survey (ATSS) offer insights into young people's views about interpersonal and cultural aspects of their experience at Parkville College. We discuss their views first focused on relations with teachers and then on relations with peers and broader aspects of school culture.

4.4.1 Relations with teachers

In the client exit interviews, relationships with teachers emerge as highly important to the educational experience of young people. There were overwhelmingly more positive than negative comments regarding teachers. Many comments referred to teachers being helpful:

They're pretty good. They're determined, they try hard to help us kids, even when kids aren't being very nice to them.

Outside the teachers just talk. Here they help you.

Teachers actually ask if you need help. More 1:1, even if you say "no" they will still help.

Other comments describe teachers as "good" and "good people" who "show like they care more" and "make it enjoyable".

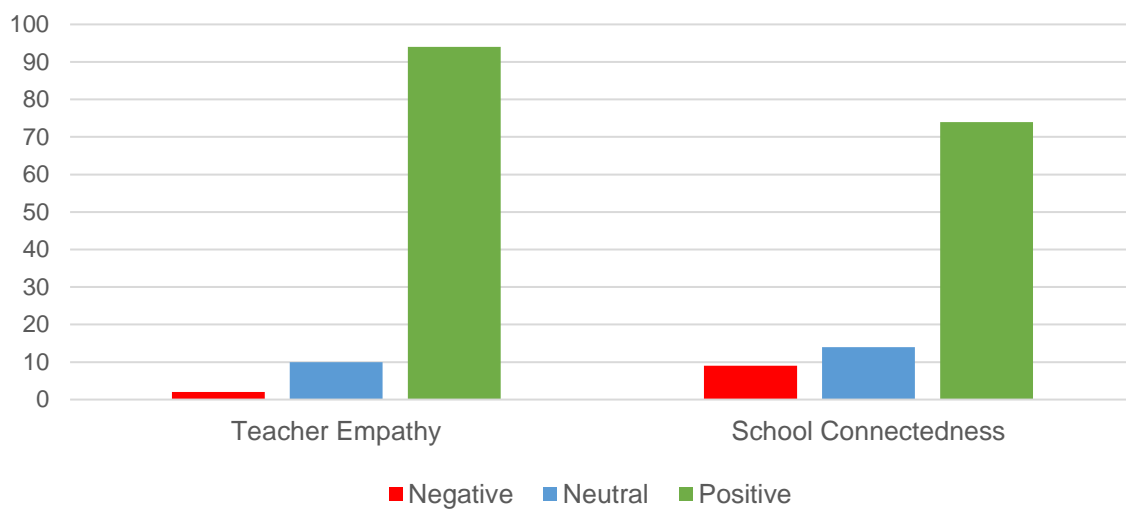
There were only two comments which mentioned teachers in any negative sense. One young man wrote that “They treat you like a kid in reading”. He indicated that he enjoyed school “sometimes” and felt that what he had learned would be important in the future “sometimes” but made no other comments. Another student wrote that it “Would be good if teachers would listen to us and take notice of what we would like to do”. He did not elaborate but indicated that although he did not enjoy school, he expected that what he had learned would be important.

Two factors from the ATSS provide further insight in students’ views about relations with teachers and school:

- Teacher Empathy: The extent to which teachers listen and understand student needs, and assist with student learning
- School Connectedness: The extent to which students feel they belong and enjoy attending school

Both factors are made up of several items, each item with a 5-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The analysis has grouped responses into three bands: positive (green), neutral (blue) and negative (red). The results show strong positive results for the overall cohort of 106 students on the most recent time point (see Figure 4.1), especially for Teacher Empathy. There was no difference between the recent and previous survey for Teacher Empathy, and a shift towards more positive responses for School Connectedness.

Figure 4.1: Teacher Empathy and School Connectedness (ATSS) (N=106)



These positive responses are particularly noteworthy given that many students at Parkville College have previously had negative experiences with teachers and have felt (or even formally been) excluded from school.

4.4.2 Peers and school culture

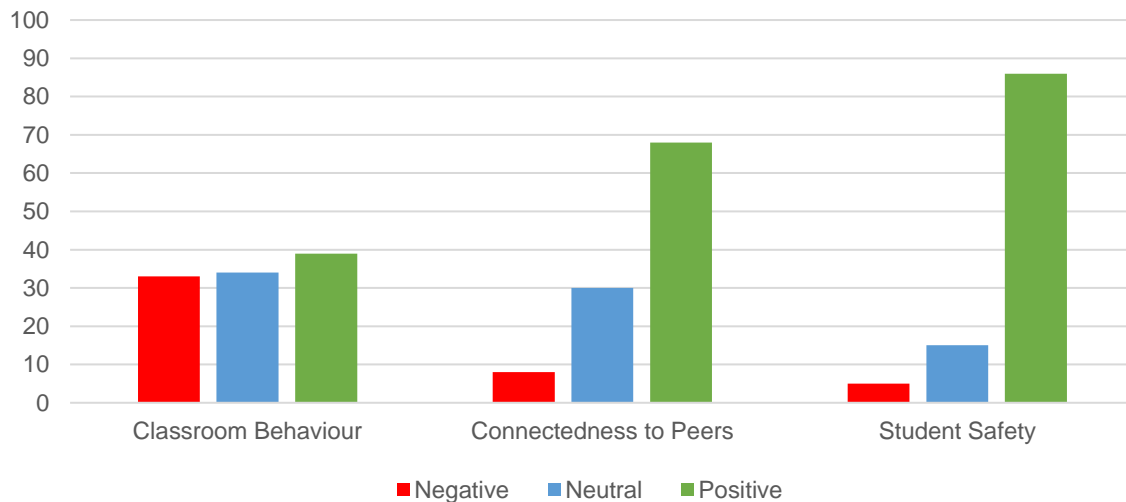
One person stated that the things which had helped most were “getting to go to school and anger management classes”.³⁴ Other young people wrote comments about planning to be “nice to people” or to “respect everyone”. One person stated that communication skills were what had helped him most, another that “I’ve learnt patience and [that] the things I had were gone”.

In the ATSS the following three factors are directly relevant to the social environment of school in relation to their peers:

- Classroom Behaviour: The extent to which other students are not disruptive in class
- Connectedness to Peers: The extent to which students feel socially connected and get along with their peers
- Student Safety: The extent to which students feel they are safe from bullying and harassment

These factors are made up of several items, each item with a 5-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). In our analysis we have grouped responses into three bands: positive, neutral and negative. The results in Figure 4.2 show that students (N=106) are far less positive about their peers than they were about teachers (see above).

Figure 4.2: Classroom Behaviour, Connectedness to Peers, and Student Safety (ATSS) (N=106)



Student views about the Classroom Behaviour of their peers are concerning, especially since the proportion of students who are positive about this factor drops from 45% to 25% between the previous and recent survey, among students who had completed both (N=44). For Connectedness to Peers there was very little difference between the recent and previous survey, and there was a shift towards more positive responses for Student Safety.

The ATSS includes two other factors that are not about extent of agreement but instead ask about frequency, i.e.: “How often over the past month have you felt the following emotions while at school?” The two factors are:

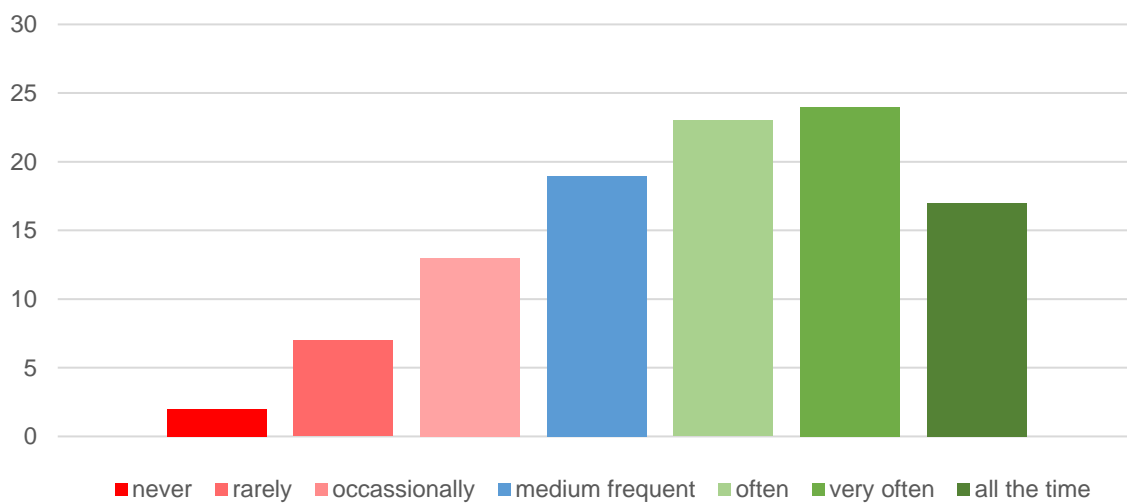
³⁴ Workshops on anger management, and drug and alcohol misuse, are not offered by Parkville College but by other providers.

- Student Morale: The extent to which students feel positive at school
- Student Distress: The extent to which students feel uncomfortable at school

Both of these factors are relevant to students' experience of the culture at Parkville College. Each factor is made up of several items, and each item has a 7-point scale from 1 (not at all) to 7 (all the time). For the analysis we have created seven bands: never (scores between 1-1.4); rarely (1.5-2.4); occasionally (2.5-3.4); medium frequent (3.5-4.4); often (4.5-5.4); very often (5.5-6.4) and all the time (6.5-7).

For Student Morale a higher frequency is more positive (green), with darker shading in the diagram used to indicate the most negative and most positive bands. This factor includes items such as "I feel cheerful at this school" and "I feel relaxed at this school".

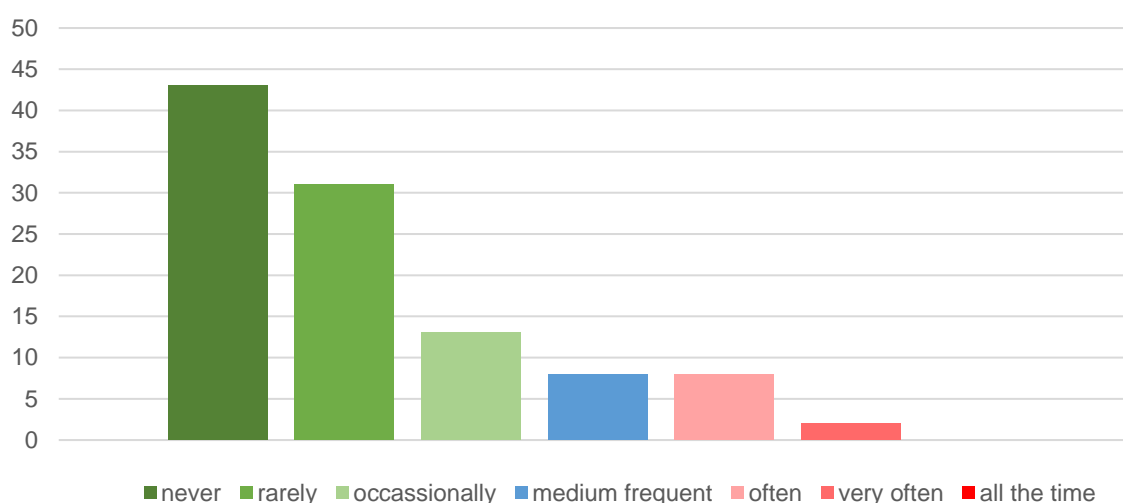
Figure 4.3: Student Morale (ATSS) (N=105)



For Student Morale, the results in Figure 4.3 show that most students (N=64) experience positive feelings at school most of the time. Nevertheless, for 22 students their emotional experience at school is more negative. Data from both the current and a previous survey are available for 43 students, showing Student Morale worsened somewhat over time: down from 29 to 26 who felt positive most of the time, and up from 4 to 9 who felt positive infrequently.

For Student Distress a higher frequency is more negative (red), with darker shading in the diagram used to indicate the most negative and positive band. This factor includes items such as "I feel on edge at this school" and "I feel uncomfortable at this school".

Figure 4.4: Student Distress (ATSS) (N=105)



For Student Distress, Figure 4.4 shows that a strong majority of students (N=87) only infrequently feel uncomfortable at school. Ten students indicate they have distressing feelings at school more often. No students indicated they felt distressed all the time. Data from both the current and a previous survey are available for 43 students, showing Student Distress worsened somewhat over time: up from 1 to 4 who felt distressed most of the time, and down from 42 to 36 who infrequently felt distressed.

4.5 Symbolic signifiers of Parkville College’s culture

The culture of Parkville College and its educational practice can be understood further by examining three symbolic aspects of the teachers’ practice: the orange lanyard, the handshake and the certificate.

The orange lanyard

Parkville College staff members are issued an ID card and an orange lanyard at the conclusion of their induction. It is a requirement that the ID card be worn on the lanyard at all times that the staff member is on site.³⁵

The lanyard is the closest thing that Parkville College teachers have to a uniform and is a strong visual that identifies the adults at the youth justice centre who are teachers:

The orange lanyard is just something that is unique to the school, that stand[s] out (Mike, adult interview, 2018).

By the way the adult interview participants spoke of the lanyard, it became clear that this was more than simply a cord and attachment to hold a security card. What it had really attached to itself were characteristics of Parkville College’s culture. These included a commitment to providing a calm, relaxed, welcoming environment and encouraging young people to engage in learning

It takes a certain element of anxiety away from our students when they are new. Or there is a new teacher in their room. They don’t have to ask the question, ‘What are

³⁵ Parkville College, 2018, *Parkville College Employee Handbook*, 2018, p. 24.

you doing here?” They see that on you. ‘Oh, yeah, you are a teacher.’ So it’s automatically to the second phase of the question, ‘What are you teaching me? or, ‘Which unit are you teaching?’, not ‘Are you are a teacher?’ (Mike, adult interview, 2018).

Other characteristics that adult interviewees described as being associated with the lanyard were:

positivity:

... it is often the first positive experience they have is when they meet the school and it’s someone who is not coming in to be like, ‘Oh, what happened? What are you here for?’ It’s like, ‘What can we do while we are here? What can you achieve?’ (Mike, adult interview, 2018).

educational achievement:

.. they see this orange lanyard and it’s like ... it’s just like ‘so what do you teach and what are you able to do for me’, in a way ‘like I want to know these things’, so they start the conversation whereas they probably wouldn’t in other services seeing someone ... like a teacher, of authority and that sort of thing. ... You naturally assume it’s like ‘oh what are you going to make me do’ or ‘I don’t want to do what you want to do’, sort of thing. It’s like they can reach out to you as well because there’s that culture (Ben, adult interview, 2018).

trust and relationship, symbolised by reputational value:

.. [what] the school has created behind the lanyards is a massive achievement. And it’s just like every time someone does something well, like a teacher does something well, or if a student that has been in here, it just adds a little bit more to it. A little bit more trust and that is going to be there every time (Mike, adult interview, 2018).

For teachers, the lanyard provides entrée into Parkville College’s classrooms and brings with it assumptions of trustworthiness and respect. This is of particular value for new teachers who are accorded a certain level of trust and positive behaviour on the part of the students, just because they are wearing the orange lanyard.

The handshake

The handshake is a formalised cultural practice by all staff at Parkville College, which is very unusual practice in general education. School documentation advises staff to: “Greet students at the door and shake hands with them when they come into class”.³⁶ As a symbol of trust and respect the handshake embodies Parkville College’s attention to fostering unconditional positive regard, respect and the high value placed on positive relationships. Greeting students in this positive and very personal way is deliberate and strategic:

³⁶ Parkville College, 2018.

... on the way in they'll get a shake of the hand, always have, and always will, and on the way out you'll shake every student's hand (Charles, adult interview, 2018).

A handshake can quickly establish a connection that is deeper than that of a verbal greeting. It symbolises a genuine effort to get to know and engage the individual student:

So handshakes is a big one in Parkville for sure. Making sure you know all of the students in your class, which is not an easy thing ... it changes constantly. So making sure that you dedicate time to go after that student and introduce yourself and read their vibe, so if they're giving you a *please stay away from me*, hearing that and giving them space. Yeah just reading the situation (Mara, adult interview, 2018).

The certificate

Parkville College's focus on cultivating growth and development is epitomised by the certificate:

We go out of our way to ... make big deals of achievements, so get everyone down and go, hey he's achieved this, here's a certificate. The certificate is ugly, right, but it's the point of achieving something and getting a certificate ... And that makes them so proud. We have students of the week. I think once upon a time, it used to be about the, you might get a Powerade or a chocolate, but now it's all about the certificate, there's a real sense of pride. ... Yeah ... one thing we've noticed is they don't really care about the chocolate, so yeah, the chocolate's nice, but they read the positive comment and they see this and you go in to their rooms and they've got them all pinned up in their rooms, it's really nice (Liam, adult interview, 2018).

As recognised here, a sense of personal pride in achievement is an important motivator for learning. In addition to the unit and teachers acknowledging this achievement, Parkville College staff regularly report achievements to family members. This is often the first time any positive feedback from school has ever reached home. This serves to reinforce positive connection with education and the students' engagement in learning:

... and you really get taught to focus on all student achievements as well, like no matter how small they are which is really motivating 'cause at the end of the day that's what we're here for (Jack, adult interview, 2018).

While academic achievement is important, the school is focused on a wider definition of achievement. Teachers value and notice how students interact with learning. Many of the students arrived at Parkville College completely disengaged from education, but over time they may demonstrate their renewed re-engagement with learning. Or engagement with learning may occur for the first time. Teachers talk with their students about these issues and acknowledge these achievements as part of their professional practice.

4.6 Student learning

Building on the comments above about students' pride in achievement, here we provide some further evidence about student learning. Data about students' achievement on standardised tests is useful for two reasons.

Firstly, it offers insight into students' educational disadvantage and the work staff at Parkville College need to do to support their learning. This is relevant to our first research question, in relation to enablers and constraints for participation in education. In particular, literacy and numeracy skills form the foundations for much of the learning across the Australian Curriculum, VET in School, and senior secondary curriculum.

Secondly, this data offers insights for our third research question. Both changes in literacy capacity over time as well as students' own views about their learning are relevant to understanding how education may work as a protective factor.

4.6.1 Literacy and Numeracy achievement

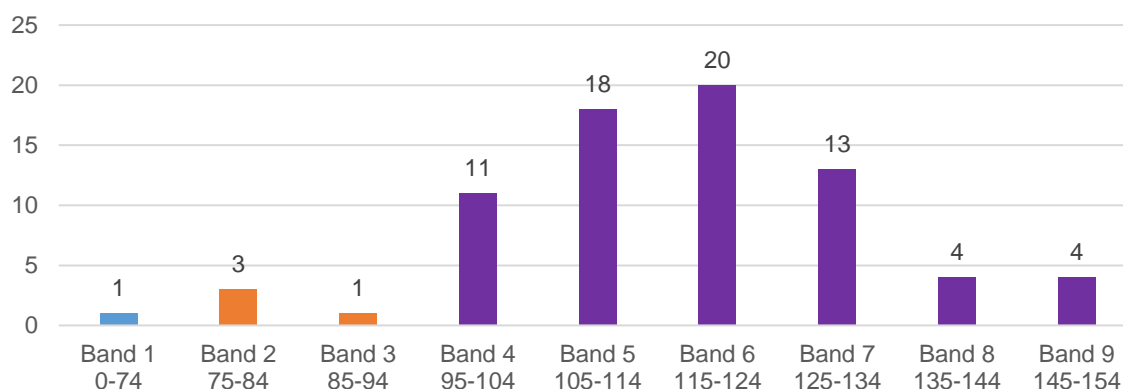
Parkville College provided us with results from the Fountas & Pinnell reading test and Compass literacy and numeracy tests.

Literacy and numeracy soon after enrolling at Parkville College

Here we first show the level of achievement students bring to Parkville College when they arrive. Figure 4.5 shows the literacy results from the Compass tests (the results on the Fountas & Pinnell test are somewhat lower). The colours indicate:

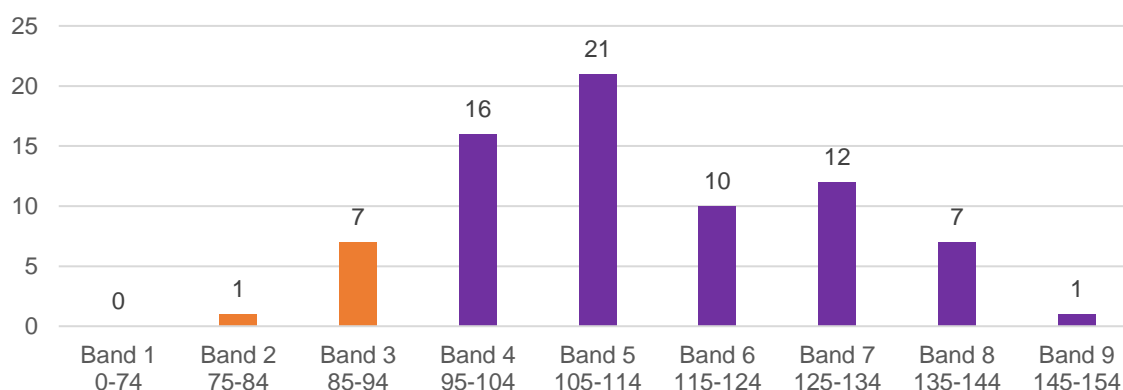
- Blue: Lower Primary (6-7 years) ACSF level 1-2
- Orange: Middle Primary (8-9 years) ACSF level 2-3
- Purple: Upper Primary/Lower Secondary (10-12 years) ACSF level 3 or above

Figure 4.5: Compass Reading first test results (soon after enrolment) (N=75)



For students' numeracy skills soon after they enrol at Parkville College the Compass assessment also provides data, see Figure 4.6. . There are fewer extreme outliers (Band 1-2 and Band 9) for numeracy than for literacy.

Figure 4.6: Compass Numeracy first test results (soon after enrolment) (N=75)



The Fountas & Pinnell and Compass assessments are not ideally suited to young people in custody. Nevertheless, their systematic use is an enabler, in the sense that these tests provide staff at Parkville College with some basic knowledge to help develop an appropriate education plan for each young person in order to facilitate their participation in education.

The spreadsheet for these results does not include the exact age of the students, but we know from the CASES21 data that 95% of students in Parkville College in 2018 were aged 14–22 (see section 2.1). Therefore, the key message across both literacy and numeracy is that many students have skills well below the level that would be expected based on their age. These results are not entirely surprising given data from the Youth Parole Board (2018) based on its annual survey of young people detained on sentence and remand, which shows that 65% had previously been suspended or expelled from school and 41% presented with cognitive difficulties that affect their daily functioning. The results indicate a potential barrier to educational participation and highlight the important work to be done in Parkville College to support their students' learning.

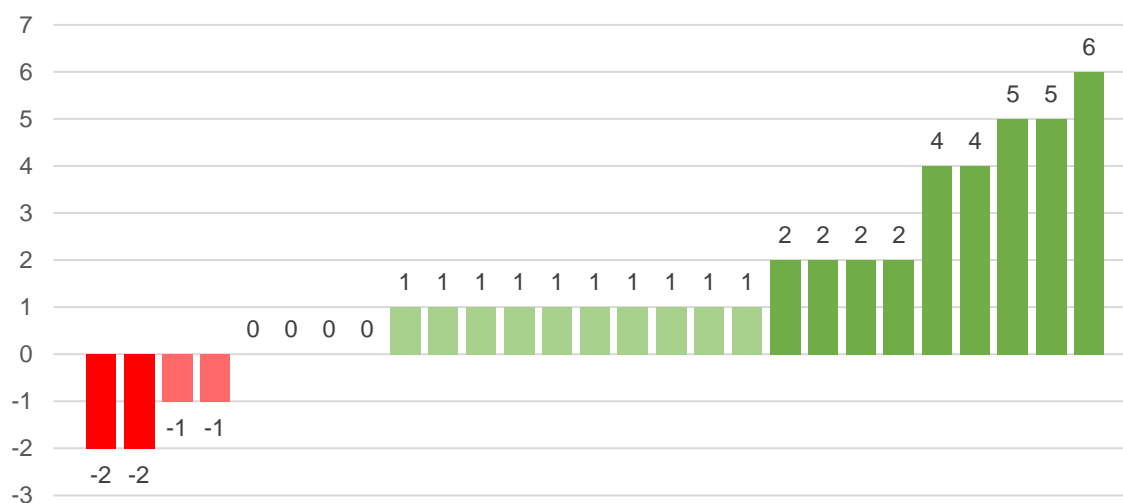
Supporting literacy achievement while at Parkville College

Engagement in education while at Parkville College operates as a protective factor in many different ways. One element is to support students to develop better literacy skills. Literacy in general, and reading in particular, is a significant capability because it enables people to engage fully in society and civic life. Literacy matters not only in school “but also for students' psychosocial wellbeing, further education and training, occupational success, as well as productive and fulfilling participation in social and economic activity” (Rowe, 2005, pp.4–5). For young people in youth custody, many of whom have experienced significant social and educational disadvantage, being able to read well opens possibilities for taking more control of their own life.

The time gap between the first and most recent test results can vary significantly, since students may be at Parkville College a long time or may return several times over a period of many years. Therefore the best indication of change in literacy achievement is provided by examining the difference between the most recent and second most recent tests. The 12 months gap for Compass makes these results unreliable. Therefore we present here only the data for the Fountas & Pinnell test, where the gap between most recent and second most recent tests is usually 3–4 months.

To gain insight in the impact of Parkville College on students' reading levels, we compared the actual change in Fountas & Pinnell's A-Z levels for each of the 27 individual students for whom data about their most recent and second most recent test was available. Figure 4.7 demonstrates clearly that for the majority of students (N=19, 70%) their reading level improved, and for some of these students the improvement over only 3-4 months was substantial. On the other hand, for some students their literacy level did not change on the Fountas & Pinnell test, and for four students (15%) it went backwards. Light shading is used to indicate a relatively small degree of change (i.e. 1 level).

Figure 4.7: Fountas & Pinnell: individual students' level change between second most recent and most recent test results (N=27)



Overall these results indicate that for most young people, education at Parkville College works as a protective factor by supporting an improvement in their reading skills. This data does not offer any insight into the specific experiences of these 27 students. The next section therefore turns to the views of students themselves in relation to achievement, through the 88 client exit interviews and the Attitudes to School Survey (ATSS).

4.6.2 Students' own views about their learning

Findings from the analysis of the exit interviews with young people point to overall positive views about education. There were many indications of a sense of achievement among these young people, including comments about having achieved certificates such as a white card³⁷ (N=6), Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA, N=4), or food handling certificate (N=1), and working towards completing VCAL (N=7). Some young people were clearly proud of their accomplishments, such as an 18-year-old man who wrote that "I came in only finishing my Year 9 now I have completed Year 10". Other young people commented that they "went to school first time in custody" or had discovered "Maths skill I didn't know I had". A 17-year old who listed his intention to continue at TAFE wrote:

³⁷ White Card is the common name for the certificate achieved through the 'Prepare to Work Safely in the Construction Industry' course. Completing this course is mandatory for working in the construction industry across Australia.

For someone who hasn't [been] to school in 4 years, I've been to nearly everything. I think that's pretty good.

Music was mentioned more than once as being personally significant, reflected in comments such as a satisfied "I taught myself" or simply referring to it as "my music".

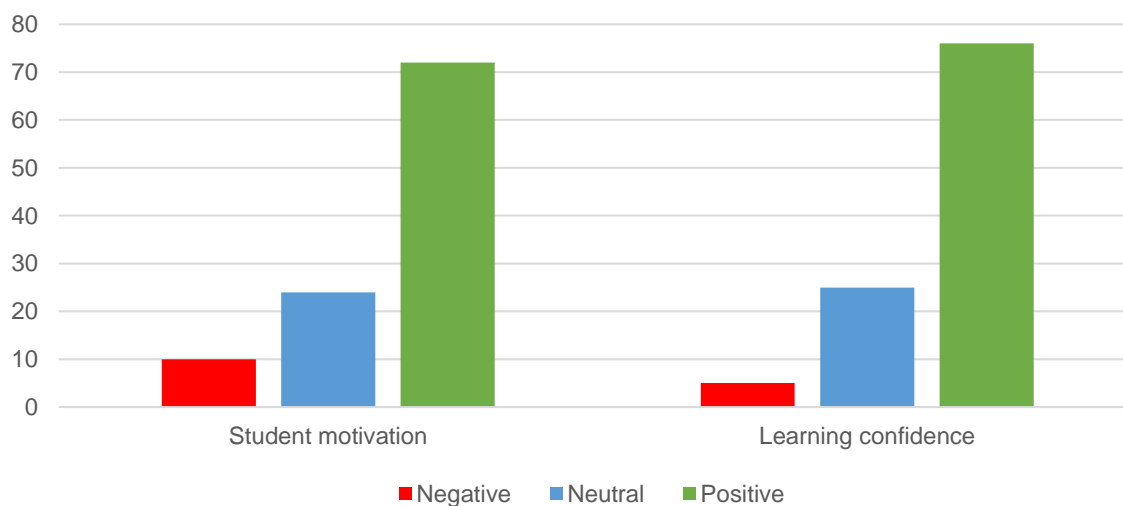
Two factors from the ATSS are of relevance in relation to students views about achievement:

- Student Motivation: The extent to which students are motivated to achieve and learn,
- Learning confidence: The extent to which students have a positive perception of their ability as a student.

Findings for these factors are based on an export of data at the end of 2018, with results at one recent time point for 106 students, and results for two time points (recent and previous) for 44 students. Both factors are made up of several items, each item with a 5-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). For the analysis three bands have been created: negative (red, scores between 1-2.4); neutral (blue, 2.5-3.4) and positive (green, 3.5-5).

The results show strong positive results for the overall cohort of 106 students on the most recent time point (see Figure 4.8). There was very little difference between the recent and previous survey.

Figure 4.8: Student Motivation and Learning Confidence (ATSS) (N=106)



The strong motivation and confidence of many students is likely to contribute to their learning achievement at and beyond Parkville College.

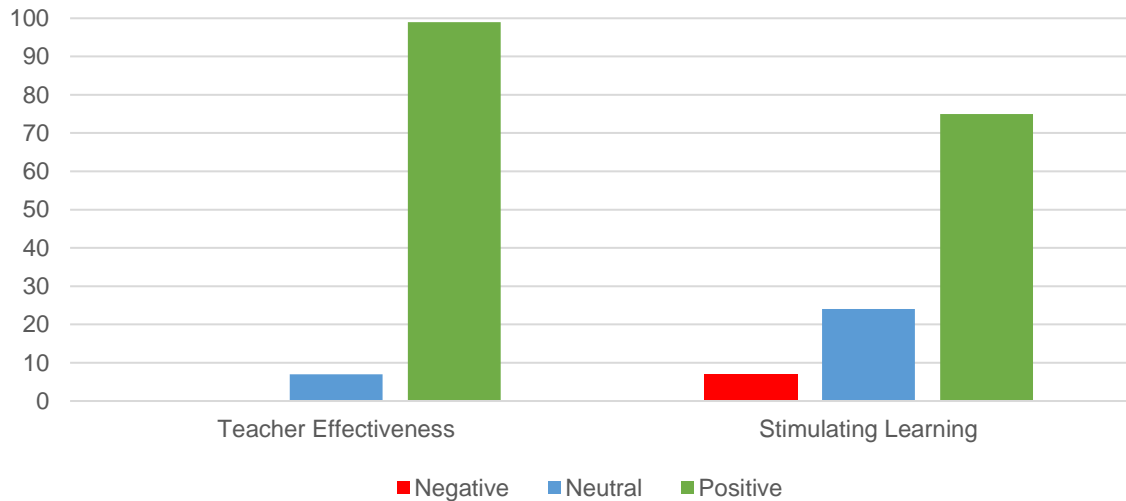
In addition, two factors from the ATSS highlight the important role of Parkville College teachers for supporting students' learning:

- Teacher Effectiveness: The extent to which teachers deliver their teaching in a planned and energetic manner.

- **Stimulating Learning:** The extent to which teachers make learning interesting, enjoyable and inspiring

The same analysis process was used to group responses into three bands. The results show strong positive results for the overall cohort of 106 students on the most recent time point (see Figure 4.9), especially for Teacher Effectiveness.

Figure 4.9: Teacher Effectiveness and Stimulating Learning (ATSS) (N=106)



These results highlight that students are overwhelmingly positive about the pedagogical work of teachers.

4.7 Parkville College staff

We now shift our lens from students to staff. The preceding sections have already highlighted the importance of Parkville College staff across the domains of values, culture and learning. Staff development and wellbeing are key areas of focus for the College, second only to the focus on relationships and wellbeing for students.

4.7.1 Development and wellbeing

Teachers and other staff work in a very challenging environment, and an exemplary program of regular and structured support and professional learning is a routine part of the school's program. This is consistent with the thoughtful philosophy about teaching practice described in section 4.1.

The different kinds of development and support comprise:

1. Teachers' professional learning
2. Team
 - philosophy and values
 - psychological support (wellbeing)
 - support around teaching and learning

3. Individual support
 - leaders
 - wellbeing (following up on critical incidents)
4. Outsiders – where external experts are brought in.

All of these forms of development and support are premised on the idea that Parkville College is a challenging environment for teachers. The school has a demanding curriculum underpinned by a clear philosophy and set of values; professional practice is at a very high level, matching high need; and there is constant supervision for accountability.

The school invests in the idea that if the teachers are looked after, they will be better equipped to look after the students in their care. Enabling teachers to attend development meetings with other teachers, to have individual fortnightly meetings with their lead teachers and to also benefit from expertise offered by outside experts provides an intricate structure of support:

We're often physically located together. You've got a teaching partner and you've got a composite team unit, so you've got these structures built around you (May, adult interview, 2018).

Yes, it's great for like your wellbeing too because ... you debrief straight away, so you're not like 'oh jeez I had a crappy class you know I'll just go into the next one and push on and feel crappy and then that will get worse' (Ben, adult interview, 2018).

Parkville College teachers were unanimously enthusiastic about the level of professional and wellbeing support they received. The school's 16-person, campus wide critical incident stress management (CISM) approach was regarded as displaying a similar kind of structure and immediacy as the professional development support:

... when there's an incident ... I can step out of the classroom which makes a huge difference. Immediately there's a real culture that any teacher around is going to come and check up on me. There's just the culture of that ... there's a culture of care. Then there's a process behind it which is that someone who's around, who's the person that's trained in debriefing, will come down and we'll go for a walk or we'll go get a coffee or we'll go sit somewhere else, and basically it's a debriefing ... Then there's also my team leader who's probably going to jump in and take my next class if I need them to. And there's a real culture of, depending on how bad this is, and then there's often a follow up. That person will usually follow up the next day or later that night and they're checking how you are. You get a sheet that's things to do. ... But you also get here's your signs of after an incident, here are the do's and don'ts. This is structured into how the school responds. The next day my team leader's probably going to ask if she can cover my class or she might be in my class (May, adult interview, 2018).

The systematic, logical, regular and clear processes of these supports mirror the safety provided for the students via routine, explicit processes, and expected behaviour, creating an environment of trust and reliability. There is a clear logic in its design. By taking care of the teachers, the school provides a structure whereby everyone knows how to behave, who

to call upon and when to do so. This is based on sound structures with professionalism and expertise leading discussion and providing individual counselling following incidents.

Consequently, even though the environment is challenging and in constant flux, the structure works to protect teachers from becoming brutalised (and in turn brutalising). It does this by systematically providing appropriate care and safety and embodying these values in their conduct with the students. Teachers gain rights with the lanyard (see section 4.5), but this also brings significant responsibility and a high level of appropriate teaching professionalism.

4.7.2 Recruitment strategies

There is a strong alignment in values between Parkville College and the staff that the school attracts. This can be largely accounted for by the recruitment strategies employed by the school. Parkville College carefully chooses staff who they see as “as fitting in with the ethos of the school” (Mark, adult interview, 2018):

We target staff, we target background and experience, we internally develop into specialist areas that we need, we draw on research and ideas from multiple different fields ... We understand how important relationships are as the vehicle for teaching and learning and that there’s a modelling and demonstration role that teachers and in fact in this place that’s everyone who’s here really needs to do with each other. That that’s an important role you do as a school (Saul, adult interview, 2018).

Clearly there are benefits of bringing together people committed to the same vision, who “share a set of values and approaches together” (Saul, adult interview, 2018). However, reliance on a like-minded, loosely connected pool of people can create its own challenges. One interviewee spoke about this in relation to a diversity consultant whom Parkville College invited to examine the school’s culture:

He was saying, have a look at your staff. Have a look at the fact that every single member of your staff is white, and between the ages of 25 and 35. Consider the fact that you don’t really know the history or understand how colonisation in all these different countries around the world is impacting on these kids right now (Annie, adult interview, 2018).

4.7.3 Responding to diversity

Education that respects and acknowledges the backgrounds, interests and culture of students is known to have higher levels of success. Gender was recognised as an issue. Many of the adults interviewed had no contact with girls and young women and acknowledged, when asked, that they knew little about this group. Some adult interview comments indicated a harsher attitude towards the girls. It also appeared to be the case that these young people had very limited choice of physical activity, and the available choices were male-oriented.

Responding to cultural diversity has been recognised as especially important for Parkville College staff. While the focus of this report is clearly on education inside custody, the over-representation of three particular cultural groups is also significant for education. As recent reports have already drawn attention to this concerning issue, we have not emphasised this in our work, but acknowledge its importance for the young people and their communities –

and for the purposes of this report – for educational connection. The importance of having teachers and unit staff who are representative and recognisable to the young people is of particular importance. Parkville College has undertaken measures to create a more culturally diverse teaching workforce.

The DJR Annual Report 2017–18 refers to the following initiative:

... as part of the \$50 million provided in the 2017-18 State Budget Update to address the priority recommendations of the Youth Justice Review, the department employed additional Aboriginal Liaison Officers who provide cultural support and advocacy to young Aboriginal people in custody, assist them in staying connected to their families and communities and assist in their transition back to community. The 2018–19 Budget provides for another Aboriginal Liaison Officer, which contributes to the highest ever number of Aboriginal workers in the Victorian Youth Justice custodial centres.” (DJR Annual Report, 2017–18, p.44).

One major argument for greater cultural diversity as it affects education is the recognition that, for some students, shame exists about low levels of achievement and can overwhelm students when teachers are present. In a general sense, it is well known that students who are underachieving tend to draw attention away from their lack of achievement or skill, often by inappropriate behaviour.

One of the interviewees drew our attention to the importance of cultural diversity and great sensitivity required to teach and learn in custody. In relation to Aboriginal young people, one adult participant commented:

... so for some of the young people, I know there's shame around the literacy and numeracy skills. They don't want to be a part of that, especially the girls because ... [they] go, 'No, I don't want to be part of that [school] because they [the teachers] would know' (Penelope, adult interview, 2018).

Parkville College policy states that it is:

...committed to creating a *culturally safe school* that has the capacity to hold the diverse cultures of our students in a responsive and respectful way. Our school recognises the importance of validating the identity of all children. By offering our students a Curriculum that is *responsive* to their cultural identity we aim to improve their engagement with learning and encourage high expectations in the classroom...³⁸

Further, Parkville College has a stated commitment to:

...high expectations and excellence demands that we know and understand our students' backgrounds, life experiences and communities. The degree of insight we are able to achieve is far greater when supported by a staffing group who understand some of the many barriers our students have faced in their lives.

³⁸ Parkville College, 2019, Parkville College Approach summary: “Cultural safety and culturally responsive practice”.

We acknowledge that people's life circumstances and backgrounds can create barriers to them achieving full workplace participation and pursuing meaningful careers.³⁹

This policy is enacted by the respectful demeanour of teachers towards each student and by the establishment of a weekly African and Aboriginal Education program. This is conducted at both Malmsbury and Parkville sites during school terms. In addition, a new Pasifika program is being developed in 2019 to engage young people from Māori and Pacific Island backgrounds.

To illustrate how these programs work and why they are important, the following excerpt from the African Program Overview is provided below:

African history is a massive and intricate subject... from the early men and women who left their footsteps in volcanic ash to the liberation of Nelson Mandela, and a whole lot of wars, conquests, civilisations and revolutions in between.

Thus, the African program is a comprehensive curriculum designed to educate young people about Africa in a true, objective way.

The program aims to positively build students' stamina to hold a safe conversation about their cultural origin whilst in custody through mentoring, cultural education, sporting activities and co-facilitated sessions from community members.

The units are designed with an intention to objectively build student's own cultural knowledge and gain confidence in their identity.

The program aims to provide participants with a certain degree of connectivity that they themselves can comprehend through the knowledge gained about their culture.

Furthermore, the sessions will aim to bring awareness and discussions that will improve the overall chance of positively influencing and reintegrating these young people back into their communities, and therefore reducing recidivism rates of African young people within the criminal justice system.⁴⁰

Indigenous Students

A recent systematic literature review conferred that:

The effects of racism on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students are well described, significant and stable in the empirical research. These effects include school withdrawal, deidentifying as Indigenous, emotional distress and internalisation of negative beliefs about Indigenous intelligence and academic performance (Moodie, Maxwell and Rudolph, 2019, online first).

Indigenous students are over-represented inside Victorian youth justice. While the percentage of young people in custody is clearly lower than that of other Australian States and Territories, taking into account Victoria's history of Aboriginal massacres (Rogers and

³⁹ Parkville College, 2019, Parkville College Approach summary: "Cultural safety and culturally responsive practice".

⁴⁰ Parkville College, 2019, *African Program Guide*, p. 2.

Bain, 2016; McCalman and Smith, 2016), the significant overrepresentation of this group of young people becomes pronounced.

The importance of culturally appropriate curriculum and workers cannot be underestimated. As Victorian government education policy notes:

Access to high-quality education provides significant short-term and lifelong benefits, not just in terms of academic outcomes, but also in terms of resilience, creativity, health and wellbeing, and economic participation.

Education is the cornerstone of economic development and self-determination. Education increases a person's opportunity and choice in life, equipping them with personal and practical skills to get the jobs they want and live healthier and more prosperous lives.

Marrung [the policy] promotes lifelong learning for Koorie Victorians by making services inclusive, responsive and respectful, and through supporting culturally safe environments and celebrating the cultural identity of Koorie learners (Department of Education and Training, 2016, p. 7)

One interviewee observed:

Well, I think having culturally relevant programs, so the kids who may be disengaging from other programs are happy to be part of the Aboriginal programs ... (Penelope, adult interview, 2018).

She continued to explain why this is so important in education:

The young person is more likely to open up to an Aboriginal person than to their teacher. Then they can say, "I don't want them to know where I'm at", and even about helping writing letters to their family and stuff like that ... It would be really good, I see, as having an Aboriginal person who is able to do that proper support teacher's aide type of work with them (Penelope, adult interview, 2018).

The interview participant identified the trust that is accorded and why this matters:

... If they had someone dedicated [with] teacher qualifications, who can actually provide that to ... go, 'Okay, this is the level they're at and this is how we can work with them'. Because I know ... Aboriginal liaison officers have done that one-on-one with them (Penelope, adult interview, 2018).

Parkville College teachers routinely and systematically take the same approach, but having an Aboriginal teacher has potential to quickly cut through issues of distrust and shame, leading to greater levels of connection to learning and achievement.

Students from African Backgrounds

The high numbers of young people inside custody from different African backgrounds is not as widely reported upon. With different challenges to other groups, educational achievement levels are not always a primary concern. Educational connection and planning, however, is crucial, and cultural workers have an important place to play in combatting recidivism, helping young people to envisage positive futures for themselves and to recognise how educational planning is part of those goals. In the following interview excerpt, one young person from an African background commented on the importance of cultural workers:

- Q: Is there good support in here at the moment – do you think – for different things...not just education?
- A: Yeah. I reckon there's a lot of support.
- Q: Do you access any support that you think is helpful?
- A: Yeah. We've got cultural workers here.
- Q: What is that?
- A: Cultural workers and [African background] teachers will try to come down and talk to you and ask what you're interested in.
- Q: What's important about having cultural workers in here?
- A: They tend to help you out more...for cultural needs ...

Students from Pasifika and Māori backgrounds

Young people from Pacific Island and New Zealand Māori heritage are significantly over-represented inside youth custody. For these young people having the support of adults from similar cultural backgrounds adds gravity and authenticity to what they have to say. One young person in custody commented on the value of cultural workers for him:

I like the cultural worker. Our cultural worker...comes to see us. It's good. [She] gives us a *heads-up* [talk] (student interview, 2019).

As the researcher who interviewed that young person explained, a *heads-up* talk is a conversation with the young people about how they can “do better for themselves” and how they could begin to develop strategies that would assist them to keep out of trouble and avoid coming back into custody.

Greater attention needs to be paid to the groups of students who are overrepresented in youth custody. Specifically, more culturally diverse staff need to be visible as unit staff and as teachers.

4.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, Parkville College's core values and well-developed philosophy have been outlined. Also explained in some detail is the overarching framework that guides teacher practice at this school. How that framework is enacted on a daily basis in relationships and interactions with students as well as planned learning experiences, expectations and communication about learning has also been detailed in order to depict the complex and principled professional practice that is consistently undertaken at both the Parkville and the Malmsbury campuses of Parkville College. The role that staff development and wellbeing play in enabling teachers to support students in their care was addressed. Throughout, we have intertwined findings from young people's perspectives which highlight how, for most students, Parkville College successfully acts on its values to develop a positive culture and support student learning.

5. Connecting to education within youth custodial settings

This chapter moves on from looking at Parkville College, more or less on its own, to examining the provision of education within the context of the Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS) and the Parkville and Malmsbury Youth Justice Precincts in Victoria. We begin by examining how the custodial section of DJCS's youth justice system supports and constrains education. This section has been included in the report because of the substantial impact this environment is expected to have on education – both positive and negative – which is of direct relevance to the research questions.

Next, we turn to security and transition practices within youth justice's particular framework of *space* and *time*. As outlined in Chapter 2, the physical space of Victoria's youth justice centres cast a towering presence over the narratives of the disturbances that took place there, particularly at the Parkville precinct: there were descriptions of buildings deemed not fit for purpose and the subsequent fortification work that took place following the disturbances to reinforce the buildings.

The second section of this chapter considers the design, conditions and fortification of the buildings, as well as the related security approaches and processes aimed to provide order, safety and the management of incarcerated young people. The ways in which these elements work to constrain or enable young people's connection to education within this custodial youth justice space is of particular concern. As the VAGO report found:

... a focus on security ... impairs access to education ... Failure to fully assess and provide for the needs of young people in detention misses a critical opportunity to positively intervene in the life of a young person who, given his or her situation, clearly needs support (VAGO, 2018, p. 8).

VAGO traces the particular relationship of security to education within the youth justice custodial space, which also takes into account the factor of *time*. Space and time are inextricably linked in this setting. At the same time that young people find their movements limited to the boundaries of the youth justice precinct, they find themselves spending time waiting. This can take the form of waiting to be escorted to class or waiting to find out if they have been sentenced into custody.

The final section of this chapter examines a specific aspect of space and time, namely the transition out of custody, and therefore out of Parkville College.

5.1 Education within DJCS

Parkville College's focus on growth, learning and development and a sense of moving forward into the future may seem incongruent with a custodial setting of detention, with associations of arrest, restraint and containment. Moreover, these cultures of education and detention do not merely sit side-by-side but are inextricably entwined and affect each other. This is demonstrated not only by the school's physical location within the youth justice precincts. It is captured also in the image of the custodial youth justice workers who escort the young people to each class and remain with them for the duration.

5.1.1 Detention and education

Quite apart from how the characteristics of education may differ from those of detention, a fundamental tension exists about the **purpose** of youth justice itself. *The Inquiry into Youth Justice Centres in Victoria* described how the concept of a youth justice system combines elements of accountability and rehabilitation. Accountability is achieved when a young person lives with a sentence of incarceration as a consequence for a crime they committed. Rehabilitation is achieved through the therapeutic services the young person receives (PVLISIC, 2017, p. 87).

Education has an ambivalent position within that conception, as highlighted by two observations by the Victorian Auditor General's Office:

- that Parkville College “does not deliver rehabilitative services – it delivers education in line with legislative requirements under the ETR [Education and Training Reform Act 2006] Act” (VAGO, 2018, p. 25)
- and
- that “education is a protective factor that can reduce offending. As such, it is a key component in a child or young person's ability to rehabilitate” (p. 32).

While terminology varies, we have employed the terms **Detention** (to indicate accountability, punishment, loss of liberty, and security) and **Education** (as a short-hand way of referring to Parkville College's philosophy and professional practice). We have also chosen to leave Education standing some distance away from Rehabilitation, as rehabilitation has a clear connotation of being broken and in need of fixing, which does not sit well with the values and philosophy of Parkville College.

Following the extensive scrutiny on youth justice, and particularly after the publication of Armytage and Ogloff's review of Victoria's youth justice system (2017), an era of significant change has commenced within the youth justice system. As mentioned above, the Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS) has initiated a substantial program of reform. The Victorian Government accepted, or accepted in principle, all 126 recommendations of Armytage and Ogloff's commissioned report and invested “an initial investment of \$50 million” to respond to the key recommendations (VAGO, 2018, pp. 30–31).

The DJCS reform program – which is well underway – includes

- taking a range of actions to strengthen the custodial centres supporting their effective operation and rehabilitation of young offenders

- strengthening the infrastructure of the centres and informing the modern design of the highly secure new Cherry Creek facility
- establishing a new Custodial Classification and Placement Service, consistent with other custodial systems
- implementing a targeted recruitment strategy and boosting training and skills for staff to stabilise the custodial workforce and ensure the safety of the centres
- employing new Safety and Emergency Response Team (SERT) staff and training all SERT staff in tactical options to strengthen incident response in the facilities
- preparing for the effective implementation of the Youth Control Order (YCO) and the introduction of the Intensive Bail Monitoring and Supervision Scheme
- increasing the delivery of offending behaviour programs for young offenders, including programs targeting violence, to reduce their risk of reoffending
- strengthening the response to the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children and young people, increasing the number of Aboriginal Liaison Officers and providing additional culturally responsive programs for Aboriginal young people in custody
- introducing new assessment tools to assess all young offenders for their risk of reoffending, violent behaviour, and identify acquired brain injuries, intellectual disabilities, and other mental health concerns; including using validated assessment tools to identify appropriate interventions for each young person to reduce their risk of reoffending
- developing a new evidence based approach to case management informed by the Youth Justice Review with all staff progressively receiving this training.

Department of Justice and Regulation (DJR) Annual Report 2017–18, pp. 39–40.

The DJR *Annual Report 2017–18* notes the 2018–19 budget provision of \$145 million “to strengthen the youth justice system and continue the reform agenda”: (p. 49).

The reform program initiatives outlined above encompass more than simply the security concerns of “ensur[ing] the safety of the centres” and “strengthening the infrastructure of the centres”. Given the substantial period of reform in the Victorian youth justice system, though, expecting the security focused staff of DJCS to support the educational aims and practices of Parkville College is ambitious.

Some of the most positive comments about Parkville College, however, have come from DJCS staff, both in relation to students and in relation to staff:

It’s about learning to learn and understanding that maybe I can learn. And even if that’s what they give to young people, that’s enormous because it’s about their self-esteem and self-belief and something positive that they can then aspire to (Kelly, adult interview, 2018).

I would say that Parkville College probably do staff welfare better than anyone I’ve seen and they don’t disregard staff welfare (Maria, adult interview, 2018).

Nevertheless, the significant tension between detention and education remains.

We didn’t help our staff to understand what their role was now ... So there was a bit of a tension that our staff were just guards and their staff were doing all the good work (Kelly, adult interview, 2018).

Youth Justice is one of eight divisions that sits within the DJCS. The two areas within Youth Justice that are of most relevance to this project are *Youth Justice Operations* and *Youth Justice Custodial Services*:

The department's *Youth Justice Service* provides programs and resources to assist these young offenders to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to manage their lives effectively without further offending.⁴¹

Through supervision, offending related programs and linkages to appropriate support services, the youth justice service promotes opportunities for rehabilitation and contributes to the reduction of crime in the community.

Youth Justice Custodial Services aims to engage young people in change by addressing their behaviour and "equipping them with the skills required for positive community participation, within a safe and secure environment".⁴²

There are signs that the reform process is benefitting the young people and their educational connection. Some DJCS staff spoke enthusiastically about the structural, whole-of-system changes that have heralded an approach that, for some, evoke an earlier era in youth justice that was less forensically risk-management and security focused:

... with the young person, you did all the groundwork, you built that relationship with them and you did that stuff. Yes, you kept security in mind - yes, the security was there but you picked-up on those behavioural traits. So if a kid was angry, instead of going and telling them [off,] we'll go and have a chat down the side, whereas if you're going security you go bang, 'Why are you doing that?' [in] that authority tone but then it escalates. So we're changing that. The leader is changing the whole philosophy ... So it's going to go back to ... more relationship building and you understand your kids and they pick-up on that stuff. That's [the new] philosophy and that's the model we need to work from (Lenny, adult interview, 2018).

Instead of a punitive, top-down approach, the concept of relationship building and the importance of making the effort to get to know the young people in custody that Lenny describes evoke certain cultural values of Parkville College. Youth justice workers who adopt this approach are likely to be well disposed to supporting the educational purpose of youth justice, when they accompany young people to class.

5.1.2 Custodial staff recruitment and development

Just as Parkville College staff are central to the work of the College, the custodial staff are central to the work of the Youth Justice section of DJCS.

... so when it does work well, it works really, really well and the young people are the absolute beneficiaries, I think when the youth justice workers or youth officers are

⁴¹ VSG/JCS (2019), *Youth justice* <<https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/justice-system/youth-justice>> As discussed in Chapter 2, use of the term *offender* is questionable. A high proportion of young people have been remanded into youth custody awaiting trial. This means they have been charged but not found guilty of committing a crime, and therefore they are in a position of having been 'accused' rather than being an 'offender'.

⁴² VSG/JCS (2019), *Custody in the youth justice system* <<https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/justice-system/youth-justice/custody-in-the-youth-justice-system>>

very engaged in learning processes for young people, it extends beyond the classroom. So the whole positive messaging and role modelling about education and being engaged and going to school, and then actually supporting them whilst they're at the classrooms, but then what they do after that is really important, so I think everything that we can do to create that positive environment and that relationship (Jane, adult interview, 2018).

Many of the adult interviewees commented on the role of custodial youth justice workers. The DJCS employees who work in units appear to be in roles that are a blend of youth worker, parent and guard. Perspectives about this role and how individual staff members undertake this work were mixed. Examples were cited of those who demonstrated positive and supportive attitudes towards the young people. Accounts were also given in the interviews about some youth justice workers who were not considered suited to the role. But these comments were tempered by concern about the work conditions and training programs for these DJCS employees. They were perceived to have poor working conditions and inadequate support. The significant responsibility involved in this work which was not considered to be commensurate with the required levels of education, hiring strategies and the calibre of training:

.. that job is I would argue, one of the most important, not the security part of it, but the youth work part of it, is one of the most important and most challenging jobs there is. And they provide no training. You need highly skilled people who are well trained and well supported. And that doesn't happen (Annie, adult interview, 2018).

Con pointed to the inadequate induction and training for this role:

Yeah, and not a lot of talking to the kids, you know. They do a shadow shift series over four or five weeks or whatever it might be, then they're on the floor and watching people, but ... they don't get that support. They turn up, they have a shit day, they might get someone talk to them and say how their day was, but ultimately, they leave, and they take all their baggage home with them (Con, adult interview, 2018).

Parkville College staff were very aware of the gap between the level of support they received and that received by custodial staff. The concern was repeatedly raised that youth justice workers spend the most time with the young people in custody, yet they are the least adequately equipped for this role. Requiring these employees to assist young people to develop positive relationships so that they leave custody equipped to join society seems an unreasonable burden of responsibility. No educational qualification or training is required for the youth justice worker position, although general "professional experience in any field is highly valued".⁴³ The idea was put forward in interviews that the youth justice workers felt uncomfortable in the role because they did not understand what it entailed (anonymous by request, adult interview, 2018). The reform initiatives at DJCS are focused on improving the recruitment, training and development of staff, which may address these concerns.

A significant aspect of the reform process focuses on making improvements in this area – at

⁴³ State Government of Victoria / Careers.Vic, *Youth justice worker (Custodial) – Parkville and Malmsbury (YJW1)* position description, retrieved from <<https://careers.vic.gov.au/>>

the unit level. Changes to prioritise relationship building in custodial roles were reported:

... it's about building that relationship and rapport with the young people to get better outcomes for them. And without that, you don't have that (Lenny, adult interview, 2018).

What is required each day in each unit is:

... a structure and a good sense of routine and obligation from the young people. And the staff being a workforce that supports it and motivates and coaches, gets them up. First thing you do when you unlock the door is talk to the young person [address them by name] and say 'G'day. How's your night? What's on for today? ... We've got maths, whatever ... whatever ... We've got to make sure you're ready.' In order to get ready I do this and that. And then that staff member follows the young person into class, sits down with them, learns with them or shares with their learning (Shane, adult interview, 2018).

When it works well, it invokes morning home routines with an emphasis on structure, stability and meeting responsibilities. Successfully meeting these important aspects of the young people's lives – and preparation for their lives after custody – will depend on the youth justice worker's disposition and understanding of these responsibilities. Factors that affect their capacity to undertake this role well are their life experience, knowledge and understanding about their role as well as support from the broader culture and processes in DJCS. The significance of induction processes, ongoing development via training and support could be easily underestimated. Learning *how we do things* from experienced staff inevitably affect and influences new employees, either positively or negatively.

Youth justice workers spend a significant amount of time with the young people and play a significant role in the lives of these young people. As a somewhat uneasy mix of guard, 'parent' and youth worker, how then do they interact with and support the education program of Parkville College? The importance of parents in supporting education is well researched, and youth justice workers can similarly have a significant influence on young people and their attitudes towards school. The position description for youth justice workers states that they are "responsible for providing care, supervision and support to children and young people in custodial centres by acting as role models building positive working relationships and supporting young people to address the issues that contributed to them receiving a custodial sentence";⁴⁴ however their central role is to be "primarily responsible for maintaining the safety and security of the Youth Justice custodial centres. This involves the supervision of young people, recording their movements, conducting searches and security checks".⁴⁵ This responsibility for "the safety of the centres" seems to emphasise the guard aspect of this role. Security is considered paramount and this emphasis limits the possibilities for youth justice workers to focus on rehabilitation and education, regardless of their own disposition and professional development.

⁴⁴ Again, we note that many of the young people, especially in PYJP, are not sentenced but on remand.

⁴⁵ State Government of Victoria / Careers.Vic (2018), *Youth justice worker (Custodial) – Parkville and Malmsbury (YJW1)* position description retrieved May 2019 from <<https://careers.vic.gov.au/>>

5.1.3 Custodial staff wellbeing

Parkville College staff were unanimous in their concern for the wellbeing of youth justice workers. Many Parkville College staff members who were interviewed commented on the very tough job that custodial staff did, with a long day and short breaks. One interview participant commented that he had heard that a DJCS staff member who experienced a critical incident could wait up to a week, even two weeks for debriefing.

The issue of youth justice workers being exposed to danger was also brought up in the interviews, and one participant questioned why she, as a Parkville College staff member, was protected from this, when her youth justice peers were not:

... they're put in really dangerous situations because of the operational - but no kid ever punches one of us. Why is that? We know why. Because of the way it's set up (Annie, adult interview, 2018).

Annie's parting shot summed up what she saw as the consequences of a youth justice worker not appropriately supported:

So what I'm saying is that they're so worn out, and the good ones who come to do youth work, which is a lot, don't end up good. So I guess what I'm saying is they see the kids almost as a – it gets to the point where they're almost in competition because they're so deprived (Annie, adult interview, 2018).

Support for youth justice workers is not always visible, and Parkville College staff have expressed a clear need for better support for the custodial workforce. Indeed, providing unit staff with a higher level of support is not a new idea. The following interview excerpt indicates this has been on the custodial agenda for many years:

I'd probably get some sort of professional supervision structure assigned ... resources assigned to each accommodation unit. And their role was specifically to work with those staff, to work through complex behavioural issues but also manage the impact that their job has on them and support them in doing that ... [in an earlier model] I think it was eight practice leader positions we called them ... They were really to provide – not to work with young people but to provide that group supervision for staff. So, spend a bit of time on the unit, get a sense for what's going on but then be largely remote from that environment and work with the staff (Shane, adult interview, 2018).

However, others perceived the current available support to be appropriate and adequate:

We've got a fairly well resourced wellbeing team, so when there is an incident or an issue, we have peer support and our wellbeing team who do go and spend time debriefing and will follow up with people at home and also we run some programs for families of staff to be able to understand. So there is probably a bit more than what people may have been aware of, but they are tough environments, they're very tough and when you're on shift in twelve hours and you're often responsible for managing behaviour that is at times difficult, and you can be on the end of some pretty hard stuff. So I think it is important that we value the staff and support them, but part of

that is also when kids are engaged and feeling good about themselves and being really active, they're much less likely to get themselves into trouble (Jane, adult interview, 2018).

Also, during the period between 2017 and 2018 – over which time the adult interviews were undertaken – the Youth Justice Safety and Emergency Response Team (SERT) was given training to prevent the escalation of incidents (*DJR Annual Report, 2017–18*, p. 44). One of the adult interviews commented in relation to youth justice workers:

... in particular, I encourage our SERT members to constantly give the youth justice workers feedback, in particular after an incident because they often think, 'I didn't do a good job'. When you're on the floor, you always go ... your mind goes there after an incident ... so we try as much as we can to feed them positive feedback... after a significant incident, there'll be an emotional debrief and ... if it's a large scale incident, an operational debrief ... (Maria, adult interview, 2018).

The comments above points to differing perceptions about wellbeing support for youth justice workers, and therefore this would be one area that would benefit from further examination. Also, the value of focusing jointly on the outcomes sought for the young people in custody and how these could be achieved is important. If Parkville College teachers and Unit staff are provided with the time and structure to build shared understandings, it is likely that more constructive and successful outcomes for the young people would be achieved. Without support for this shared undertaking, having two systems and two cultures (with different purposes, goals and work practices working side by side) is likely to undermine and limit positive gains for the students.

5.1.4 The relationship between youth justice officers and teachers

Because I think that's always been a bit of a battle around trying to run a custodial environment whilst running a school in a custodial environment and trying to get that balance. And brokering the conversation between the two arms (Mandy, adult interview, 2018).

Positive relationships have developed between these two *arms*, and strong positive regard exists on both sides. This was suggested earlier by Kelly and Maria's positive comments about Parkville College's approach to learning and to staff welfare. And similarly, from the other arm:

... we've built strong relationships [on the unit] and it's nice to be able to have constructive discussions with them ... (Liam, adult interview, 2018).

Equally, though, confusion and a lack of communication between *detention* and *education* exist:

I think generally on the surface it's all lovely and smiling, but I think often ... we've seen the other as the obstacle. Whereas I feel like it's misplaced emotion and it's just a difficult environment and sometimes it's easy to blame someone (Mara, adult interview, 2018).

Well I guess our approach sometimes isn't in line with theirs and the language [in

which] they might speak to a student in a classroom. Our role gets blurred in the classroom a lot and even in the unit when we go down there, we're like we can't believe that stuff like ... they're meant to be in class and ... they don't have the same vision that we do in terms of ... they're in school, let's keep it structured and consistent and let's try and get them up there and encourage this while we have them here ... And also, [I] just don't know if they're on the same page. So some staff are really excellent and they value the school, and other staff ... don't want to go, so that's the end of it really. And it's a bit of a burden. It feels like that with some of them (Jim, adult interview, 2018).

The concerns repeatedly articulated by Parkville College staff members about the challenging work conditions faced by the unit staff is important. These concerns draw attention to the fact that although both Parkville College and DJCS are working in an often difficult environment, what makes the unit staff role more difficult is its responsibility for security. Even if the reforms are attempting to change the culture and practices of youth justice, the cultural symbols do not relinquish their hold so easily. Unlike Parkville College's lanyard which is a powerful and positive symbol of the school and associated trust and positive regard, the symbols of the unit staff (keys, swipe cards, the blue uniform) evoke imprisonment, power and authority.

It is also a concern that unit staff spend 12 hour days in constant contact with the young people. One participant said that he was "passionate about ... getting rid of the 12-hour roster". He explained further:

When I started doing direct care in '99 with the girls and young women I did an eight hour roster, it was typically either a 7:00am to 3:00pm or a 2:00 to 10:00 or 3:00 to 11:00 ... it enables handover, it enables a slow start to the day, you can talk as a team and say this is how we're going to approach the day. Whereas at the moment staff come in, the majority start at 8:30, they're expected to really have unlocked the doors within the next 10, 15 minutes of that – in order to get young people to school by 9:30. So you've got less than an hour for chores. What we would ideally do is start each day with a community meeting whereby everyone sits around as a group for 30 minutes, the staff and young people talk about whatever is going on, what the plan is for the day. We can do that and we can also add in group supervision for staff, whether that be an overtime arrangement but if you knock off at 3:00pm, that's really business hours we can have someone do supervision from 3:00 to 4:00pm. (Shane, adult interview, 2018).

This same participant also noted however that there is "pressure from external stakeholders ... to reduce the amount of time young people have to spend in their bedrooms" and "in order to get staff off the floor for debriefing it means that the young people have to be locked down" (Shane, adult interview, 2018).

The security emphasis is further reinforced by the fact that DJCS is in charge of the youth justice centres and owns the physical infrastructure (Sean and Jan, adult interview, 2018). Teachers, on the other hand, come into the site to teach, but they leave it again when they finish. This also evokes the concept of the visiting employee, which was commented upon by some interviewees who felt as if they were "contractors coming in to deliver this service" (anonymous by request, adult interview, 2018).

The sense of territorial ownership of the site is reinforced in the compulsory tours conducted for all new staff. Of course the safety of staff and visitors matters, but the point being conveyed here is the way the place (and site for learning) is perceived to be the property and purview of DJCS.

Collaboration and partnership

At its best, however, the partnership between unit staff and teachers serves the young people very well. The youth officers are required to remain inside each classroom for the duration of each lesson, and can actively participate in the teaching if they are motivated and confident to do so:

... you can see if the kid is not focusing ... 'Let's focus on this'; 'I can help you with that'. And then it takes the pressure off the teacher and they can do what they need to do with the other kids and you can actually do that. And that's where that dual role needs to really work well. The hard part is when it escalates so quickly and that's when it becomes a response where the teacher [is] hands-off and our responsibility then kicks in and we have to manage that from there (Lenny, adult interview, 2018).

This quote draws attention to the fundamental security role of the unit staff inside the classroom and elsewhere. But it also points to the possibility of making excellent use of the extra pair of hands in classrooms. Teacher aides and parent helpers are present every day in many primary schools and they can be harnessed to allow a greater level of teacher attention for individual young people. However, parent helpers usually undertake training to make their assistance as effective as possible. One useful strategy would involve the unit staff undertaking a training program, jointly conducted by Parkville College and DJCS, for a higher level of focused and effective assistance in the education program both inside the classroom and back on the unit.

Goodwill and mutual interest clearly exist in the DJCS and Parkville College workforce, and if this was to become a priority, positive outcomes for the young people in custody would likely be strengthened:

Well, we're doing it together, not doing us and them, we think, hang on, let's work together on this. So it's about working together and working with the young people, so that's what we do, we catch up and go, right, let's sit down, let's work on that together, what do you think? (Penelope, adult interview, 2018).

An interest in developing collaborative partnerships regardless of their different cultural ideas came out strongly from the interviews:

I'd hesitate to say it's been sorted, but I think Justice and Education are aligned in intent and effort now more than they have been (Sean, adult interview, 2018).

It's all got to work together as one. We can't just say, 'Yep, they're education, do that part' and 'We're custody and we do that part'. It's not going to work ... So we need to have a collective overall approach together, how do we work together ... And that's the key – working around, working collaboratively with everyone (Lenny, adult interview, 2018).

I think the continuing relationship between us and justice, so making that as formidable and as strong as possible, having education valued by all and not by just a few (Shaun, adult interview, 2018).

Work needs to also be done to develop greater understanding of the educational practices developed and implemented by Parkville College, and how they differ from teaching practices in other schools. This is illustrated by the concern raised about how poor behaviour should be managed – and by whom – in the classrooms.

Bearing in mind the school's well developed philosophy (outlined in Chapter 4), the required practice expected of teachers is to withdraw from any conflict in order to maintain the positive relationship that allows connection to learning.

I get it a little bit. If it was up to the staff, the teaching staff, to do all of the discipline, that's all they'd do. They wouldn't actually have the chance to do the teaching (Dani, adult interview, 2018).

But others do not see it this way, as commented upon by Kim and Ron in the previous chapter.

Communication between both Parkville College and DJCS is clearly required to address this relatively straightforward issue that could provide a sound beginning to ongoing discussions.

Relationships

The significance of relationships with young people and between DJCS and Parkville College staff is also widely recognised. By developing relationships, more can be achieved:

[We are] hanging our models on what we're doing ... But a lot of it tends to be built on relationships and how you build relationships with young people to effectively do your work. Because we all know, yes you have to have that security ... that risk assessment and you've got to have that ... But the fundamentals of the role is yes to have the security mindset, yes you manage the behaviour and yes you deal with it, but it's about building that relationship and rapport with the young people to get better outcomes for them. And without that, you don't have that (Lenny, adult interview, 2018).

I think as relationships develop - and a lot of the work in custody is about relationships. And it's also about trust and having a common understanding of what each is trying to achieve and what their limitations are, as well. And being respectful of those limitations (Mandy, adult interview, 2018).

While everyone agrees that the primary goal is to support young people in custody so they do not reoffend after their release, reminders of what is at stake need to occur and structures to assist need to be developed.

A metaphor of the two arms of detention and education coming together as an **us** rather than as **us and them** is captured in the following comment. Although a representative of the arm of detention, this interview participant imagines a custodial facility as a school, where a

young person is considered, primarily, as a person:

Running it like a school where you teach them and see them as young people first and then their offending as sort of something that needs to be considered, but it's not what you see or what you deal with in the first premise of the young people (Jane, adult interview, 2018).

The importance of developing a shared purpose and practices is not lost on leaders at Parkville College or DJCS. The outreach program even extends to building relationship with the unit staff:

I'm continually getting our guys to do outreach with staff at DJR (Con, adult interview, 2018)

The significance of relationships between the teachers, their students and the unit staff is seen as a partnership, requiring the commitment of all three for it to work well:

Building that relationship with the kid so the kid and the youth [justice] worker can come and speak to the teacher and say, hey, listen, the work that you've given me is too hard, or it's too easy, you know. Once again, the only reason that becomes effective is if the relationship between us and them is positive (Con, adult interview, 2018).

Building this kind of relationship is a team effort, one that requires an *us* approach. Inconsistent, or even contradictory, practice may inadvertently undermine this work by not understanding it sufficiently:

Parkville College, by nature, they're guided by unconditional positive regard for everybody, not just young people. So they have no choice but to accept what we dish out and I think that sometimes we're not governed by that, which is, in a way, it's detrimental because if we were, maybe we would treat them with a little bit more compassion and maybe try and help them a little bit more. Whereas we can just sort of ... do whatever they want, basically, and the teacher still has to meet them with unconditional positive regard and compassion (Maria, adult interview, 2018).

A shared vision and shared practice can mitigate these kinds of effects when everyone is on the same page. It is not enough to only have managers and leaders meet and agree to changes and improvements to be made. It is the staff on the ground who will really make the difference and who are allocated to work together. This would enable teachers and youth justice workers to work together but with leaders and managers watching on to make sure that it is informed by goodwill and effort.

... making sure that we've got good relationships with them so that we can, a) problem solve but also get new initiatives and things off the ground with them ... Like you can have as many MOUs and as many policies and staff, but if there's a good relationship between me and the general manager or me and the office managers, then we can – and also the two people, so myself and whoever I'm trying to deal with are either coming at it from the same perspective or like – diplomatic – Like I've

thought about this quite a bit because I think we do get very obsessed with the relationship and I do think the relationship is critical, there's no way that any learning can happen without that relationship (Gina, adult interview, 2018).

That comes back to the understanding the philosophy of what Parkville College is about and understanding your teacher... It's about building trust and working on a respectful relationship. That's what we do in school. And for us it's about how we foster that but it's also about the young people understanding and about they're a teacher, yes, but their role is to support you in education and offer you education. So not be resentful of how they work together and what they do and how we all work together as a group (Lenny, adult interview, 2018).

5.2 Space and time

The previous section investigated education and detention working in a sometimes uneasy alliance in the youth justice custodial space. There were signs, though, that the good will on both sides could be harnessed to enable a partnership between Parkville College and DJCS to enable young people's connection to education.

This section turns from the predominantly cultural practices of the custodial space shared by Parkville College and DJCS to focus on security and transition practices within youth justice's particular framework of *space* and *time*. Just as young people are incarcerated within the space of the youth justice precinct, their relationship to time is also subject to structures outside of their control. That is, their time is no longer their own, but reliant on the operations of the youth justice centres and its related processes. But whereas the young people's containment in a physical space is ordered and managed, their relationship to time is not. This study has focused on the concept of time to further investigate Armytage and Ogloff's critical observation that wasted time affects educational connection.

And then there's also the kids who get separated due to split units, staffing, and all those sorts of things, which create physical as well as logistical barriers for a child accessing education. ... I guess when we're talking about barriers to education in this very literal sense of being in prison, some of the barriers are literally physical and depending on what unit you're on, and what facilities are close to or accessible by, because we've had so much construction going on at the minute ... (Amy, adult interview, 2018).

Time is significant in the life of a child. The youth justice system does not effectively prioritise timely advice, assessment, resolution of sentence or delivery of rehabilitation programs. This is harmful for young people and disrupts their engagement in school, family and social connection – all factors that are important as part of their rehabilitation. The current legislation does not require appropriately swift resolution and consequences for young people, and this reduces the effectiveness of holding young people accountable through timely and well-understood consequences for their crime. (Armytage and Ogloff, 2017a, p. 15).

5.2.1 Young people's perceptions on space, time and learning

Young people interviewed for this research discussed in detail the ways in which the spaces of the youth justice centre have impacted on their experiences of learning. When asked what environments make it hard to learn, Kenny said:

This place just blocks us in, blocks our mind. ... These walls and shit. It's basically, our minds are blocked. But we can still learn, but then – it's like an environment that you can't think too clear. Do you know what I mean? (Kenny, student interview, 2019).

Kenny elaborated on this, saying that psychologically being in custody, and in particular being on remand where there is no certainty about the length of time you will be in custody, creates a mindset that makes learning extremely difficult. The interaction of being in a highly controlled space and having no knowledge of when you will be released, Kenny said, "affects us mentally":

Because like you said, we don't know when we're getting out, or when our matters will be dealt with. But that day when you're sentenced, you're already in that headspace, you know, you're really comfortable with things, but when you're on remand it's like your mind's not up for it. Your mindset's different. It's like you're always worried about what to do and when to get up (Kenny, student interview, 2019).

Kenny commented that for young people who are not "comfortable" in the environment and perhaps because they are homesick, these conditions can lead them to "isolate their minds" rather than "get stimulated" (i.e., through the programs and classes or being social).

It is clear from students' reflections that the psychological conditions necessary for learning are profoundly influenced by being within "these walls", and not knowing what was going to happen to them or how long they would stay only made it harder. Acting up and self-isolating were two ways in which students inside responded to these conditions. However, importantly, a number of students also said that education was central to getting through their time in custody, saying that classes like art, carpentry, music, physical training, maths and literacy were important to them. Two young people below articulated how they used education to focus, pass time and achieve something:

Most of the days go quicker so I just want to pass time doing some work like trying to do something productive (Terrance, student interview, 2019).

I was just, I focused on my education heaps and I completed heaps, rest of my VCAL...I'd like to complete something whilst I'm in here, both with my body [working out] and I can do my VCAL at the same time (Jordan, student interview, 2019).

The way in which the custodial space affects students' ability to think clearly and focus is captured by Jordan's comment about it being difficult to learn in an enclosed classroom space. Some students "don't listen" and then "it gets all rowdy in this place and the place isn't the best" (Jordan, student interview, 2019). Jordan, Kenny and Cam commented that being able to listen to music was helpful for focusing on their work or for blocking out disruptive students:

...I'll listen to music and do work at the same time. I'm concentrating, you know? There's no one annoying me or something like that, you know? (Cam, student interview, 2019).

... they're (students) always having conversations among themselves and shit. It just pisses me off because everyone is talking, like they've always got some conversations going on and shit and the teacher is trying to talk. Me, I want to work with them... Always struggle with that (Jordan, student interview, 2019).

5.2.2 Building challenges and their consequences for learning

During the first half of 2018, when the interviews for this study were conducted, buildings at the Parkville and Malmsbury Youth Justice Precincts were still in the process of refurbishments, following the incidents at the youth justice precincts during 2016 and 2017. Work to reinforce the strength of the buildings was underway, based on recommendations from Comrie's independent reviews (2017) following the incidents (see Section 2.2). As discussed in Chapter Two, the incidents resulted in damaged residential units, program and accommodation spaces (VAGO, 2018, p. 20). Also, adding to the mix, was the particular condition of the PYJP with its "ageing infrastructure" (VO, 2017b, p, 2) and buildings that had previously been deemed not fit for purpose (VO, 2010b).

Fortification measures to make the custodial space more secure included, according to the adult interviews, additional fencing and anti-climb wire. Some of these measures evoke more the image of a high security prison than a youth justice centre:

I would say the hardened infrastructure is a massive contributor, massive. ... So it means young people now can't kick open a door and get out of a unit. ... physically, the walls now are cement walls that they can't kick, the doors, they're not made of framing like that door out there anymore, they're made of solid steel that cannot be kicked open under any circumstances, you cannot kick those doors open (Maria, adult interview, 2018).

You have things like stronger ceiling material, putting cages over switch systems, putting steel bars in the vents (Ron, adult interview, 2018).

Parkville College staff were concerned about the effect of these repairs and fortification work on the learning environment. Their comments also suggested that the design of the buildings, in combination with the effects of the maintenance work, contributed to an environment unfavourable to learning:

... [the] environment is horrific. Take away the fact there is barbed wire everywhere and big walls and fences and all the rest of the prison stuff, the classrooms echo like anything, they're really hot. They've all got trauma backgrounds. So the last thing you want is a hot, echo-ey room (Mark, adult interview, 2018).

... the facility, it does not allow for the situation that if a kid is stressed out in class or they want to use a good strategy like just giving themselves some space, they can't do it. They have to stay locked in the room. And obviously locking kids in a room triggers a whole number of things for traumatised kids (Sam, adult interview, 2018).

Fluoro lights and I'm sure subliminal, they're blinking so much, if you're talking therapeutic, that's not ideal (Charles, adult interview, 2018).

A common issue mentioned by staff who were interviewed was the classroom acoustics:

Even if you have a class that is listening, I think the teacher's voice actually booms and echoes to make it hard to listen. So it's a difficult space for the boys to think and learn (Mike, adult interview, 2018).

The acoustics issue appears to have been exacerbated by the insertion of the ceiling material, as part of the fortification process.

As discussed earlier in the previous chapter, the creation of a therapeutic environment is key to Parkville College's philosophy. A calm environment, supported by appropriate lighting and design features is what Parkville College sees as the ideal environment for students to feel less "heightened" and to be able to self-regulate. The current environment is more akin to producing jangling nerves as a result of being locked into a space with harsh lighting, noise and hard surfaces, a state that is not conducive to being relaxed enough to learn.

While the fortifications have been undertaken to mitigate the risk of escape and further incidents, these have not contributed to enabling connection to education.

5.2.3 Specific challenges for young women in custody

One concern noted in other reports (VAGO, 2018; Armytage and Ogloff, 2017) is the lack of equity in youth custody for girls and young women. Because of relatively small numbers, girls and young women are housed together. Similarly, those who have been remanded into custody are housed in the same unit as those who have been sentenced. While resourcing considerations point to the logic of this arrangement, it is nevertheless a major concern raised by many of the study participants.

Participants also raised concern about the conditions for girls being worse than those for boys. This group experienced serious challenges in their access to fresh air and exercise, appropriate living spaces and education. At the time the interviews were held, there was an average of only 15 girls and young women in youth justice custody (Kim, adult interview, 2018). Girls and women are housed in the one unit on the Parkville site. Younger girls are placed alongside older young women, and those who have been sentenced are placed alongside those who are on remand.

Particular deprivations experienced by this group in regards to spatial constraints were raised by the adults who were interviewed:

... often at any given time within the girls' unit there's at least one, maybe two, girls who are quite unwell and have real difficulty functioning in the shared room space (Shane, adult interview, 2018).

... the girls don't have access to an enclosed outdoor area at all, so the only time they see sunlight is if they're walking to and from class (Con, adult interview, 2018).

Because young women and girls are housed in units that have “no outdoor area that they [can] call their own” (Shaun, adult interview, 2018), excursions are organised to move the young women and girls in one group to garden or open space elsewhere on the precinct. However this access is intermittent and can be affected by additional concerns:

... if there's other movements happening in the area they've got to be locked away (Con, adult interview, 2018).

The VAGO report points to a significant gender-related discrepancy at Parkville. Although the model subscribes to equal access to programs and facilities,

DJR's [now DJCS] operational requirements for Parkville specify that young women are not to move past boys' units, citing that doing this 'causes distractions and creates security issues'. This means girls and young women are prevented from accessing hospitality, engineering and woodworking facilities, and they are not getting the same educational opportunities as boys and young men (VAGO, 2018, p, 13).

The VAGO report states that this issue is expected to be solved by the youth justice facility that is to be built at Cherry Creek. The young women and girls' unit will be located close to central classrooms. Therefore, they will not need to pass the facilities where boys and young men are present. The logistics of keeping girls and young women separated from boys and young men and at the same time delivering education is difficult (VAGO, 2018, p. 82).⁴⁶ The VAGO report comments, with some reservations, on how proposed plans for improving conditions for girls and women might be achieved:

DJR [now DJCS] advised that the new operational model, which is not yet complete, should ensure equal access for girls and young women. DJR will provide education, health and rehabilitative programs for girls in their residential unit—including orientation, intensive supervision and healthcare. Two classrooms will be fitted out for vocational classes. Compared to the current Parkville girls' unit, this is a substantial improvement—however, effectively implementing equal access to centralised education and recreation facilities may be difficult.

DJR's planned Cherry Creek facility includes improved facilities for girls and young women, including expanded programs space, the ability to transition to lower-security units, and a mother-and-baby unit.

It will be important for DJR to monitor access to shared facilities within the central unit to ensure that girls and young women are not disadvantaged (VAGO, 2018, pp. 82–83).

One adult participant who was interviewed spoke of future plans to address the issues of the girls and young women being forced to share the same living space amid behavioural issues:

⁴⁶ This point is attributed to Armytage and Ogloff's *Youth justice review and strategy: Meeting needs and reducing offending*, 2017.

... one of the options, it hasn't been endorsed yet, but it will create a much more humane quiet living environment where young girls and young women can be placed in a way that doesn't mean that they're at a detrimental ... Our proposed option, which are yet to be endorsed, will enable other girls who are either impacted by their behaviour or sort of jump on board to be separated from those whereas at the moment they're all under the same roof (Shane, adult interview, 2018).

Considerable hope was expressed by the adults who were interviewed that the new youth justice facility – scheduled to open in 2021 – will address the challenges in regard to the building and design outlined above, and particularly, in relation to girls and women.

These concerns appear to focus on the future, when the new facility opens. In the meantime, the arrangements for girls and young women are inadequate (VAGO, 2018).

5.2.4 The new facility at Cherry Creek

The new high security youth justice facility to open in 2021 will be located in Cherry Creek, an outer western suburb of Melbourne. The decision to establish this \$288 million dollar youth justice facility emerged as a solution to the accommodation and overcrowding issues as a result of the 2016 and 2017 events at the youth justice centres (VAGO, 2018, p. 13). 224 beds will be made available for young people, both those who have been remanded and those who have been sentenced into custody. The facility will also include a 12-bed mental health unit and an intensive supervision unit with 8 beds. The Malmsbury precinct will remain in operation, and a decision is yet to be made about whether Parkville will remain operational (VAGO, 2018, p. 19).

According to international research, facilities that are smaller and more home-like enable young people in custody to maintain connection to their families and communities (JSS, 2017, 2019). The Jesuit Social Services, who investigated best practice in youth justice facilities, toured European, UK and US youth justice centres. They cite the Missouri Model as an example of a smaller-scale facility that prioritises rehabilitation over containment and security. During the 1980s in Missouri, mass youth justice institutions were replaced by small facilities:

The state's youth detention facilities typically house 20 to 30 young people, are home-like and based in local communities. There are no fences and if doors are locked it is to keep people out rather than the young people in. The young people are supervised at all times and ... there is a strong emphasis on relationship. The approach is therapeutic and developmental rather than correctional (JSS, 2017, p. 21).

This model is also associated with low recidivism rates (JSS 2017, p. 20).

The approach to Victoria's Cherry Creek facility is not built around the model of the smaller, home-like facility in a location close to family and community services. Even though extensive consultation occurred about the design of the Cherry Creek facility, it was premised on the decision already made that it would be a large institution. The decision about the new facility seems to have been largely political, rather than being based on research evidence.

DJCS has taken into account young people's rehabilitative needs in its plans for the new facility, and each unit will have dedicated classrooms (VAGO, 2018, p. 13). Interviews with participants for this study also uncovered initiatives and processes for addressing the issues within Victoria's custodial space that were mentioned above. These will be discussed within the following subsections.

Some adults interviewed for this study were positive about meetings with the architects commissioned to design the Cherry Creek facility.

It sounds like they've got a good idea of – with their research and their knowledge of what is going to make a good environment (Jim, adult interview, 2018).

Others were vague, unsure why they had been asked to meet with the architects.

Those who were engaged in the consultative process offered suggestions on how the space might work in a way that was conducive to learning, for example:

... ideally, it was what would be the best world for these kids. That came out, rooms in a therapeutic nature. So we certainly do need natural light and windows at a level higher that wasn't distracting, as we see lots of kids moving between class (Charles, adult interview, 2018).

... I went to one session which was a handful of teachers and just people from this sort of site and we sat down with the architects – [they] just wanted to hear about things that [we] thought would be really good to have in a school, in our setting (Jim, adult interview, 2018).

5.2.5 The *movements* and proposed alternative practices

... how do we somehow make school like school? So we take kids to class, we bring them back from class, we take kids to class, we bring them back from class. We don't allow kids to move from classroom to classroom (Mandy, adult interview, 2018).

The movements

What is referred to as the *movements* is oversight of centre operations whereby DJCS staff monitor movement around each precinct. This activity is closely monitored via CCTV, and one senior DJCS operations officer manages the entire process of each group moving in turn. For a range of security reasons, these processes keep unit groups separated from young people in other unit groups. Importantly, in practice this means that when time finishes for one classroom lesson and it is time for the group to move to another location, the entire precinct is affected. Only one group (half of one custodial unit) can be in transit at a time with the remaining classrooms all being locked.

At first glance, it might appear more sensible for the teacher to move between classrooms. However, there is a logic to the students making the first move:

Because the boys in my experience can't be in a space for three hours ... they'll be tense, they'll want to leave, they'll need to go and do something else. Even though the activity's different, you need to break up the session with a bit of change - change of scenery, change of space ... (Lee, adult interview, 2018).

Regardless of how the movements operate, however, the process has a significant impact on learning time for students. Firstly, there are the logistical issues:

The problem is Parkville College have to provide I think it's six hours of education a day, I think by legislation, they have to provide X amount of hours. So we've spoken about staggering classes so that we can half the precinct to move at this time, but if we do that, we're going to be outside the nine to four timeframe and we can only deliver classes between nine and four, as four o'clock is afternoon lockdown. So from four to four thirty, the whole precinct is in lockdown (Maria, adult interview, 2018).

Secondly, there is the issue of how a teacher can successfully engage students and create a conducive learning environment when there is the necessity to:

... move kids from their units to the classroom spaces and then into the next classroom. If the kids are in a classroom and are consistently in a classroom they will be productive and happy. But our problem is the times they get to the classroom are really inconsistent, the amount of times they go in a week is really inconsistent and so the teacher is then faced with like what I would call a starting lesson multiple times, over and over again (Lee, adult interview, 2018).

Thirdly, there is the issue of how students can remain motivated when an inordinate amount of time can pass while students wait to attend their next class. Several participants who were interviewed spoke of the sheer frustration of students who are left:

... stuck in classrooms after a class has ended for 10, 20, 30, 40 minutes waiting to move to the next classroom are usually really angry and upset by the time they get to that next classroom, or they'll head back to the unit to avoid that log jam (Lee, adult interview, 2018).

Young people's responses to the impact of the movements vary. One young person acknowledged he found the movements "frustrating", but also "reasonable":

But that's just normal, because you can't just mix with another unit, because if you do, some people have an issue with another person from there. Things could happen (Kenny, student interview, 2019).

When asked if he saw the reasoning for the movements, he responded "Yes, they don't want to risk it" (Kenny, student interview, 2019). In contrast, Jordan expressed frustration with the movements:

... if someone calls a code, you have to stay wherever we are. It's annoying, bro, because we're probably waiting on standby for like half an hour and it's just annoying because everyone is rowdy, walking around the classroom, throwing shit and stuff [and in the following class] everyone is kind of still hyped up (Jordan, student interview, 2019).

Not surprisingly, the movements have a disruptive effect on school attendance. One participant commented:

And our attendance is less than 50%. To go less than 100 metres within a walled facility, why? ...

The hard part of my job is asking them to plan and improve to stand up in front of an empty classroom when there's 10 enrolled kids that they're supposed to be working with 100 metres away not in the space for operational reasons, logistical reasons (Lee, adult interview, 2018).

Adding to the impediments to educational engagement discussed above, the movements create ad hoc classrooms out of spaces that are not designed to be learning spaces:

They [the students] just moved and so even though there was only one space that you could call a classroom, and the other space was just in a big open unit or you're working on a table tennis table, but it meant that they'd come in and that as a teacher you had access to that group of kids for that full hour (May, adult interview, 2018).

Practice improvements

One of the participants who was interviewed spoke about the possibility of opening up the movement process to incorporate self-regulation. This runs counter to the enforced passivity of the current practice that insists that the young people always be escorted to and from class:

We want to move to an environment where we at least have some of our units being able to self-regulate, absolutely, and the new youth centre that's being built at Cherry [Creek], the philosophy and the design is around open movement but we have to get ourselves – we're not there but we're working to that. ...

... the philosophy around Cherry Creek is to build a facility that is an open style campus that has the ability to scale, up, scale down, open up, close down with a view that we want to get back to the system ... 10 years ago, where it was very open and that kids did self-regulate, get themselves to school with minimal fuss and minimal stuff like that. That it was that kind of university, normal school type environment, self-regulated, attendance. We would hope that we get to that. That's what it's going to be like and where Victoria was leading the way in youth justice (Kim, adult interview, 2018).

I think having a really clear operating model, classification model and a structured day where everyone is aware and understands what that looks like. So ideally, the young people who are posing or are at the greatest risk have probably more of a restricted or less control over their movement or where they go, but hopefully as time goes on or in the not too distant future, they can work towards being able to progress their way through the system. ... So whenever we can, young people should be able to access programs and education and really it should be the most restrictive with only those who need it. And I think if you gear your education and all your other programs and services around that, then you can have a much greater freedom ... (Jane, adult interview, 2018).

Jane and Kim's comments reflect DJCS's current work in improving front end assessment and planning for young people when they are admitted to custody. DJCS confirmed that "significant work is underway" regarding many operational practices. We discussed concerns raised in many interviews with staff.

A security rating tool is also being developed but was not reported as implemented. Evidently, each young person would be assigned a rating that will then inform decisions about their entitlement to take themselves to class:

So aligning our units based on the community rating to make that more incentive based. So currently, our units are our units. They're all run the same, they all have

the same philosophy. Whereas what we're trying to do is, based on behaviour within custody, you will have that incentive of going into a low risk unit or a high risk unit (Mandy, adult interview, 2018).

Similar to the Malmsbury model of open and restricted access, this approach works on a basis of trust. Those who have demonstrated they can be trusted are given more autonomy:

... the more restriction you put on someone, the angrier and more heightened and violent that behaviour is going to be. So it's a fine line ... around trying to release the restrictions. But we go back to – you actually give somebody something to strive to. And ordinarily, they step up to the plate and show you they can do it (Mandy, adult interview, 2018).

... young people who can move more freely and can do things without having to be so heavily escorted or freed up of staff, they should be allowed to do that. So try and normalise their environments as much as possible and the young people who really are not at a level where we can allow that to happen, we need to have a different approach. So that at any given time, at least half of our young people should be able to go freely to educational programs and do things that we would want them to do, and it might be that we radio them or do different things, but not have to have such a reliance on staff. I would like to get to a place where there are classrooms where DJR [now DJCS] staff just don't need to be in them (Jane, adult interview, 2018).

This approach reflects something of the philosophy of the esteemed Norwegian justice system:

The aim is to reduce the harmful effects of loss of liberty as far as possible, with security being no stricter than necessary. For example, for those with a sentence of two years or less, they will be sent to a low security prison – they could walk out of such a facility, the doors to their rooms (not 'cells') aren't locked, they have unsupervised visits, take responsibility for various aspects of their lives (e.g. getting themselves up on time), and have varying degrees of opportunity to move outside the prison for particular purposes (sometimes with staff, sometimes without) (JSS, 2017, p. 19).

DJCS's planned reforms do indicate a shift away from a culture where security has a stranglehold on rehabilitation and education – a legacy of the youth justice system that DJCS inherited from the Department of Health and Human Services.

I think we've almost overcompensated for the things that were going wrong and it created quite a locked down model that's not good for anyone (Jane, adult interview, 2018).

The language that Jane uses to describe this approach reaches across the traditional divide of *detention* and *education* (discussed in section 5.1), and evokes a youth justice system in which the scales of rehabilitation and correction are more in balance. Such an approach is about creating

... an environment that is much more akin to a learning environment, and there's tension in custodial systems being able to achieve that, but what I do know is if you create a space in a place for young people to be safe and feel safe and then encourage and nurture learning, good things will come from that ... (Jane, adult interview, 2018).

A number of participants interviewed were positive about these initiatives along with accompanying changes that are part of the DJCS youth justice reforms. These plans for freeing up young people's movements sound conducive for educational connection and learning.

There does not seem to be a quick-fix solution for improving the current movements system. As discussed above, Cherry Creek is being designed to facilitate a more self-regulated model, as discussed by Kim above. Both Mandy and Jane's comments indicate future change in this area and a process that is slowly unfolding:

... the system has been so unsettled and in such a state of flux that that hasn't been able to be realised, but with our new builds and our new beds and also with the fixing up of Parkville and Malmsbury, our custodial operating model and our risk assessment really should be the least restrictive (Jane, adult interview, 2018).

While not detracting from these planned positive changes, it is the immediate and unaddressed concern about the girls and young women's unit that presents a significant challenge right now. While the current movements remain, valuable educational time continues to be wasted. The issue of movements remains highly problematic for students currently in youth justice education. The role it plays in disrupting classes – and young people's disposition to engage with learning – limits teachers' ability to provide effective education.

5.2.6 Class groups

Students in youth custody are not currently taught within groups that are optimal to support learning. Those with high levels of previous educational attainment are taught alongside those with significant literacy challenges. Security considerations are placed before educational purposes in the identification of student groups. Students attend classes in their unit groups, with each unit divided to become two separate classes. DJCS senior officers arrange unit groupings employing criteria of age, gender, cultural identity, past and potential conflict, among other security factors.

Parkville College teachers work in teaching teams that have responsibility for unit groups of students. The high levels of trust required for many of these young people to learn is developed between these small close-knit teams of teachers and the young people in their classes.

The practice of students being moved frequently from one unit to another for security reasons works against the capacity of trust being formed. Educational engagement is

jeopardised each time a student is moved to a new unit, given that all teachers (for every subject) change as well.⁴⁷

An issue in relation to security and education is the constraining role that security plays in relation to a young person's academic achievement. The ways in which students are grouped for learning at Parkville College work against their capacity to learn and engage, since they attend classes based on their unit (home) groupings rather than for educational purposes. As one adult interviewed commented:

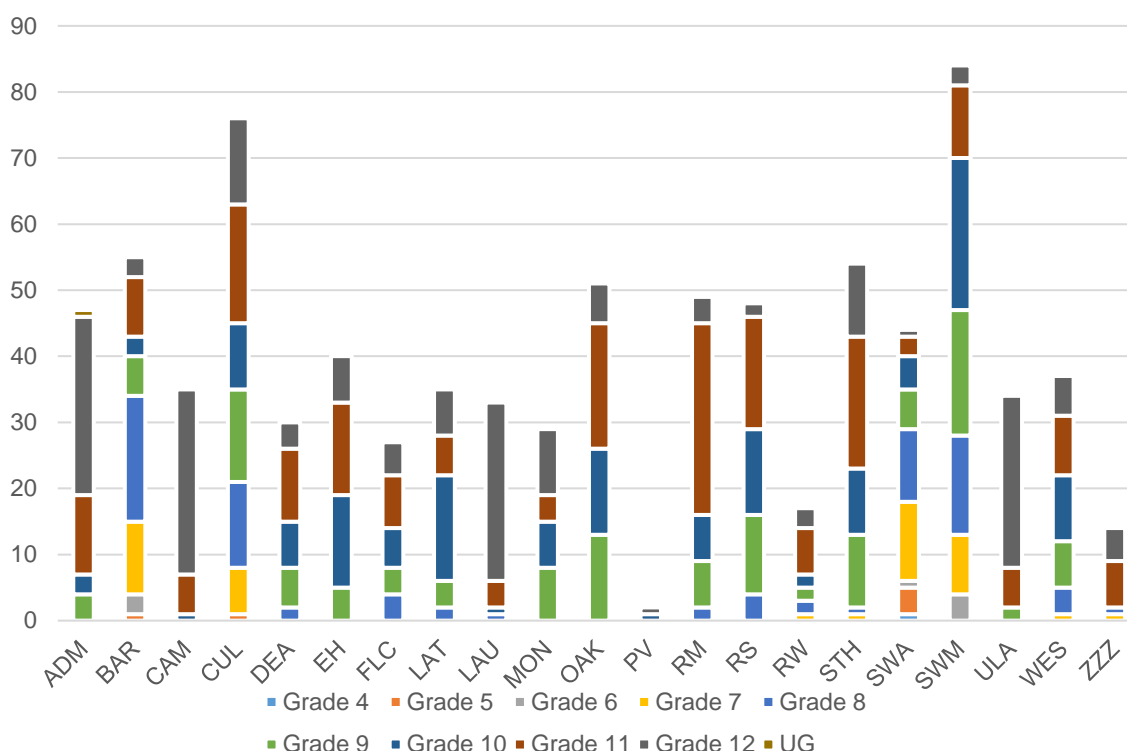
...we don't base kids on their academic level. We base kids on the way that we're going to achieve the least amount of incidents the least amount of conflict. So you may have someone who hasn't had any primary school education and you may have other kids where we've got their schools coming in to visit and providing them work. So very different levels [are taught together in the same class] (Mandy, adult interview, 2018).

We need to look at what level the kids are at and, therefore, if we've got kids that are sitting ... at Year 11 or 12 level, why aren't we then grabbing those kids that we've identified and assessed as being at that level and seeing if we can't mix them together ... It also doesn't matter if it's boys and girls ... As long as there's no compatibility issues, if they're sitting at the same level they should be able to do vocational training together (Kim, adult interview, 2018).

Figure 5.1 shows the school year levels that students are studying at within each home group, based on CASES21 data for 2018. This highlights the great diversity of learning level within each group.

⁴⁷ Parkville College circumvents the negative outcomes of this for young people's education by their practice of outreach: See Chapter 4.

Figure 5.1: School year levels within each home group (CASES21, 2018)



Moreover, teaching practices, such as simultaneously having individuals or smaller groups undertake different tasks, require a suitable space:

And the space also provides flexibility. So have you got a range of spaces and can you break up into small groups. You know, all of that sort of thing helps, especially as we know because for these young people there's such an enormous range of their ability or level of functioning (Kelly, adult interview, 2018).

How students should be best grouped for optimal learning is open to discussion and debate, but a key starting point would be to consult and include Parkville College in the process.

5.2.7 Internet access

During their interviews, young people were asked what might be improved or what they would change if they were in charge at Parkville. All young people spoke about being able to access the internet for a range of different purposes. For example, one young person emphasised how important it would be to be able to search and apply for jobs while inside in order to have something to look forward to on the outside. Another young person said when in custody they had access to iPads and were able to engage in work online and that sites were blocked so that students remained on track.

Similarly, being able to access the internet for classes and learning was mentioned in every student interview in relation to “doing research for class” (especially biographical research), learning more about a skill they were developing (in relation to music and “making beats” and other artistic work) and working independently. Being able to be connected to “the outside” by reading news articles was something young people were also interested in using

the internet for. Having the internet could expand the educational goals young people set for themselves and be a pathway for independence in their learning, for example by completing training certificates or learning modules online about which they were very excited.

Underpinning young people's comments about the internet is the idea that it is something they need to learn how to engage with to survive once they leave. Being able to search for jobs, complete online learning/training modules and research information are imperative to any young person's success in education or training. These kinds of ICT skills are recognised as a fundamental general capability in the Australian Curriculum.

There is a small number of individual students, at both Parkville and Malmsbury Senior, who have learning plans that allow them to access individual supervised access to the internet. These plans have been supported by the General Managers and the Director of Custodial Youth Justice

Parkville College offers the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) to the majority of students at Parkville College. The school has adapted the delivery of VCAL so that it does not require access to the internet, but it would be enhanced by this access. Additionally, there is a smaller group of students in custody whose educational needs cannot be met by the VCAL. These students who are studying the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) or tertiary studies (Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees) cannot successfully engage in study without some access to the internet.

Parkville College has proposed a pilot to offer supervised internet access to support identified students to undertake VCE or higher education. This is awaiting approval:

... there are some briefings and papers that have come into the system, to the department to give consideration around a pilot and a trial to allow a small group of more trusted young people to be able to access higher education through very heavily supervised restricted Internet access ... with supervision and just turning our minds to making sure that we can cover off all the risk around that and yeah, that's up for consideration (Jane, adult interview, 2018).

Such a pilot project will support the safe introduction of IT and the internet, and the school will put in place measures to meet community and legislative expectations around privacy, prohibited content and risk management.

The internet has become an increasingly integral part of our everyday lives, and this includes education. Open university distance education and many TAFE assessments and courses rely on internet access and connection. Having an opportunity to develop their IT skills while in custody places young people in a better position to connect with educational and employment possibilities when they return to the community.⁴⁸

5.3 Transition out of custody

As already established, education is commonly identified as a solution to the problem of how young people in youth detention can re-join society. However, the provision of appropriate education has been found to be a highly complex professional undertaking. One positive use

⁴⁸ This section was informed by communications with Parkville College, 2019.

of time during detention is that spent on planning for transition back into society. An important aspect of this is educational connection beyond custody:

The chorus of low expectation for these children is deafening. So ... a 15-year-old kid who would require an early exit from a school and they're arguing he should go to a six-week TAFE, because he's been here ... even though they're telling you they're interested in philosophy and they just come from a Catholic school or something. Like, once they're here, it's assumed this is 'it' for you (Amy, adult interview, 2018).

Historically, both low expectations and a low value on the likelihood of young people succeeding in education after a period in custody have been prevalent. A tendency to overlook schools in favour of TAFE placements was entrenched and transition plans have not always been implemented early enough:

What would be successful in my eyes is that transition planning is centred on the child and it's about what they want, and is it met at the first answer you get? Like, you work with a child and you actually get to know them, and then they'll properly tell you what they want and then you will open doors for them that they didn't know existed. (Amy, adult interview, 2018)

The widely shared goal of young people re-joining society after custody relies, to a significant extent, on successful reconnection with school or the establishment of new connections at new educational or training institutions. This usually involves the development of clear and achievable education plans while inside custody, as well as young people being willing to attend, engage and try to undertake educational activities. For most Parkville College students this requires high levels of trust in their teachers, because of previously negative schooling experiences.

Transition out of custody⁴⁹ was not intended to be a major part of this study because its focus is education inside custody. However the issue of transition was repeatedly raised in the research interviews, and it is worth attention especially in relation to our third research question about education as a protective factor.

5.3.1 Scholarly and policy literature

Little is known in the literature about **how** young people successfully transition back into the general community following a period of incarceration, and what factors protect against recidivism. While immediate reconnection to education is reported to be a protective factor for young people with relation to reoffending (Blomberg, Bales, Mann Piquero and Berk, 2011; Nellis and Hooks Wayman, 2009), this process of motivation and engagement in learning is not easily accomplished. Barriers to educational connection are many and varied factors (Amytage and Ogloff, 2017). This cohort of young people with entrenched and often overlapping difficulties are less likely to retain connection to education and employment, upon release from custody and are at significant risk of reoffending (O'Neill, Strnadová and Cumming, 2017).

⁴⁹ During 2019 the same team of researchers is undertaking the *Educational Transition from Custody* study in partnership with the Victorian Department of Education and Training.

Successful educational transition has the potential to function as a circuit breaker, with the power to connect young people with long-term employment opportunities and to the wider community. However, this is difficult, as the immediate period following release from custody is widely understood to be a high-risk period for young people that is linked to “an increased likelihood of ongoing and increased offending” (PVLSIC, 2018, p. 29). It is apparent that the time of release following custody is a critical juncture for young people, and that this time period needs to be carefully managed to reduce the likelihood of recidivism and further contact with the criminal justice system.

The processes involved in transition rely on many individuals involved in the care of young people in detention as well as governmental departments and education authorities. Although youth justice systems provide state care for young people while they are in custody, transition back to the community following a custodial sentence is not necessarily a priority. While reconnection to education is acknowledged to be important, the processes and structures to ensure that this occurs systematically are tenuous.

The Victorian Auditor-General’s Office reported that that Victoria lacked a “central point of responsibility for ensuring that young people get the health services they need, attend school regularly, and have a plan in place for rehabilitation” (VAGO, 2018, p. 9).

Investigations into Victoria’s youth justice system have reported a lack of clear communication lines across stakeholders and departments, instances of poor data collection and record keeping, and untimely processing of data (Armytage and Ogloff, 2017; VAGO, 2018; VO, 2017a). These issues have been found to have significantly impacted on educational transition for young people. Repeated recommendations have been made regarding the establishment of:

...system-wide transition and support approaches drawing on the multi-agency care model for young people exiting custody including

- family connection
- education and employment pathways
- supported accommodation (Armytage and Ogloff, 2017a, p. 37)

A common recommendation arising from studies around the policy and structures required to improve post-custody lives of these young people is for:

Wraparound services to provide more streamlined collaborative approach to transition and supervision, decreased recidivism, and better educational outcomes for students (O’Neill, Strnadová and Cumming, 2016, p. 23).

The idea of “thinking exit at entry” (Risler and O’Rourke, 2009) provides a useful framework to plan for the transition out of youth custody. Transition planning should ideally commence as soon as the student is in custody. The effectiveness of post-custody educational connection is contingent on robust transition planning. By identifying requirements early within a person’s period of custody, supports can be put in place to better effect, and young people can gain access to classes and services that are best suited to their individual needs.

The development of comprehensive education plans for young people for their eventual transition also has strong support within the literature (Mathur and Griller Clark, 2013; O’Neill, Strnadová and Cumming, 2016). Education plans established when young people

are in custody are more likely to have a greater effect if used to support the young person not only while in custody, but particularly upon release. The literature also points to the general value of young people working directly on their own future planning as a crucial factor to success (Walker, Thorne, Powers and Gaonkar, 2010).

An emphasis on the education system as well as the individual young people is required if educational transition is to be successful. Armytage and Ogloff noted that:

Consultations throughout the Review identified multiple barriers to young people accessing education through mainstream public schools, and often young offenders are sent to alternative education providers (Armytage and Ogloff, 2017a, p. 14).

Alternative schools may well offer a suitable environment for young people exiting custody and at times young people prefer moving on to an alternative setting because it offers flexibility and a focus on wellbeing as well as learning (Te Riele and Rosauer, 2015). Nevertheless, mainstream public schools have a responsibility for educating young Victorians, especially when they live in their neighbourhood.

The Victorian Ombudsman's 2017 *Investigation into Victorian government school expulsions* report concedes that more needs to be done to accommodate these students. However, it acknowledges that:

For principals and teachers working within this complex system, their job is a difficult one. They are required to balance the high needs and difficult behaviour of some students with the educational needs of all students, as well as the safety and welfare of both students and teachers (VO, 2017a, p. 4).

Educational transition out of custody is therefore known to be complicated and involve many different stakeholders.

Some of the adults interviewed in this study commented on how education serves as a protective factor. Amy, for example draws attention to the "insulating" power of education for the individual – and how once you have education, it cannot be withdrawn:

I've ... had a dual interest in education being an enormous insulating and protective factor and being the only thing you can't take away from somebody (Amy, adult interview, 2018).

Liam notes that education provides individuals with much more than accreditation and certification:

A lot of them missed a lot of school, so I guess that's another way education works for them, to just empower them and feel better about themselves (Liam, adult interview, 2018).

Nancy points to the central role education has and how education has the power to turn lives around:

It seemed like education was the key and that's such a protective factor. It's just something that every young person pretty much goes to school, so that's a really good time to have them [attend school in custody]... Our goal is that all the young

people that are in custody are leaving with an education plan or pathway that they can access (Nancy, adult interview, 2018).

However, what these comments also raise is the precarious nature of education within custody and this is juxtaposed with the potential of education to function in a protective way.

Unit staff at both Malmsbury and Parkville have always supported young people to transition out of custody. This was mentioned in several interviews including by Dani:

It's like case management, so I work with care teams, which includes education transition services and things like that...And sometimes [I work with] outside education officers as well, providers, to sort of come up with plans for when the kids leave us and go back to the community (Dani, adult interview, 2018).

The extent to which transition is systematically managed by DJCS staff is not clear, but it is likely to form part of the reform process. Working in partnership with Parkville College on transition out of custody makes sense.

5.3.2 Transition work at Parkville College

Recognising the importance of transition out of custody, Parkville College established a Transition Team that undertakes work with other sections of the Department of Education and Training. Among other things the transition team identifies:

... a school and starts the conversation about them coming back. Then [we] work with the child. ... And [we investigate] How can we model and mirror a plan effectively in the community? [And how can we use] supports that exist within DET and also the supports the school has (Amy, adult interview, 2018).

As one adult interviewee noted, staff at Parkville College:

... have the opportunity to build the relationships, we engage them in school, and then we ... transition them back into a school or reconnect them with some kind of education focus, which might be training or ... part time jobs or whatever it might be (Con, adult interview, 2018).

In the research interviews young people highlighted the strong relationships they build with teachers and other staff while in Parkville or Malmsbury. These relationships provide them with support, encouragement and belief in themselves, not only as learners but as members of the community. In discussions about transition, young people brought up the idea of being able to occasionally touch base with those staff they had formed relationships with. As one young person comments below, having a familiar person from their time in custody would remind them of the opportunities that lie ahead. There also is a need for reminders that coming back into custody is not the path they want. This sentiment strongly reflects the work that teachers and other staff members do with young people to rebuild the narratives they have about themselves, their lives and what they are capable of doing:

I reckon this is a good one. We get out of here, we need something to keep reminding that person, like remind us – I know this is stupid, I wish we could remind ourselves but, I don't know. We need someone to keep telling us, 'Do you want to go back to where you were?' We need someone to be there, like actually verbally tell us, 'Just because you're out, why aren't you taking advantage of all this freedom?'

Just like thinking just ...Take advantage of all that ... and don't come back in here.
(Jordan, student interview, 2019)

As noted, it is the cultural connections forged while in custody that have the potential for significant influence:

Yeah something like that. I'm not sure whether that's our culture workers or more like cultural workers, us linking up with the cultural when we are on the outside and they're giving us the heads up real quick telling us, 'You don't want to come back here, don't come back'. Remember one time when you were feeling bad that day, don't feel like that again, something like that. I think we need that too. (Jordan, student interview, 2019)

This discussion highlights a number of really important considerations for transitions for young people leaving custody. First is the importance of relationships and the sense of security and confidence it provides for young people.

Another challenge facing those students leaving custody is the reaction of schools to students being in custody without any expectation of them returning. Sam explains:

You then run into problems around transition team members calling schools and saying,

“Joe wants to come back to school.”

“What do you mean come back? They're unenrolled.”

“Why did you unenrol them?”

“They're in custody.”

“What are you supposed to do?”

And so it's about our [Transitions] team... probably in the last six months, have been spending a lot of their time reminding schools what they're legally obliged to do and all that sort of stuff (Sam, adult interview, 2018).

Another participant described a new system-wide initiative by the Department of Education and Training intended to support transition out of custody that will address this problem:

So what we're doing is, instead of their enrolment at Parkville College and that's their enrolment. And then they go out [of custody]. [Now] the kids retain an enrolment at school or whatever that they were in and retain that as a dual enrolment through Parkville. Which – that's just a system thing, but what we're putting around that is that teachers from the school that they're enrolled in will meet with them before, during, and after so there's the connection (Sean, adult interview, 2018).

This is also expected to ameliorate the widespread practice of informal expulsions criticised by the Victorian Ombudsman (2017a) report. As Gina explained:

I remember being in a mainstream [school] and being told by the principal that were forced to have a kid back and one false move and one indiscretion and you let me know straightaway so we can get rid of them, and I know that that happens. But the worst part about it – and I'm really honest with kids, I was talking to a kid the other

day and he said, 'I've been expelled from this school or I can't go back to that school' and I said, 'Have you been formally expelled' and he's like, 'Nah I've just been told'. And I said, "You know that that's what they do ... I explained to him, I said as soon as they expel you properly, they have to find you a new school. And if they don't do that, then they're in breach and that's why they don't formally expel you because they can't be bothered doing that. And I just said like that's bullshit and this is what's happening (Gina, adult interview, 2018).

The relationships young people interviewed have with their teachers has a profound effect on their motivation and willingness to learn. And as one young person reported in an interview, what's daunting about beginning at a new school is the lack of established relationships:

Already attached to the teachers, you're so close with them you know, and then when you get out into community and you just go to a new school, then you have to restart that relationship. It's just that difference. (Kenny, student interview, 2019)

5.3.3 Parkville Flexible Learning Centre

Parkville College has also responded to the important issue of transition out of custody by establishing the Parkville Flexible Learning Centre (PFLC) outside the secure section of its Parkville campus. Students attend the PFLC during the day and it offers support for individual students to more fully develop their educational plans and to provide young people with a stepping stone between the school inside custody and other external education providers. Enrolling at a new school, TAFE course or other provider is potentially a daunting prospect. By offering the *half-way* program at the PFLC, the young people are provided with a high level of support and assistance, for as long as it is required. As Jack notes, students are allowed to *try on* a pathway to see if it is a good fit for them:

They've left custody and it's kind of like a transitional option from them leaving custody and then going out into the community. So ideally we'd like to try and pathway the kids... so ...we get them settled in, build their stamina and then move them on to something else that's going to be more achievable for them. [We focus on examining] the long-term options (Jack, adult interview, 2018).

He describes how staff from the PFLC manage referrals and interest:

So our process... we'll get a referral from the [DJCS staff] or the teacher inside saying 'This kid is interested in coming to Parkville Flexible Learning Centre when he gets out'. So we'll go into the centre, hang out with him in the classroom ... meet with him one-on-one, chat to him about the school, get to know him, build that relationship so when he does come out ... he or she, when they do come out, then ... we've got that attachment. Even talking to the teachers in there that have taught him a lot ... getting a good handover from them [is important] (Jack, adult interview, 2018).

All the young people interviewed emphasised the need to make plans for release while still in custody. And the reason having firm plans in place is clearly explained by the students themselves:

In here, it's hard, but being out there is harder because you know why? You're tempted by anything around you, positive or negative, so you need a schedule that occupies you. Something that can stop you from coming back in (Kenny, student interview, 2019).

Do you know what I recommend to you, is that we get on – so we start looking at jobs, having a job inside. So that's one thing we should have ... so that we can just try to focus on trying to get a job in here, whilst we're in custody ... it doesn't matter if we're getting paid a little less as long as we're getting paid something. Because that's why we all do crime, is because it's either we're not able to go to Centrelink or anything like that or they want that extra little bit of money. Some people are just really impatient, so they do things the quick way. Yeah. But I reckon that that is a good one. I really do want to have – I wish we could focus on more good, like things when we do get out. So focus on getting a job straightaway or applying for jobs, and then we do get out of here, maybe not the next few days or next week, we have a job interview that we can go to (Jordan, student interview, 2019).

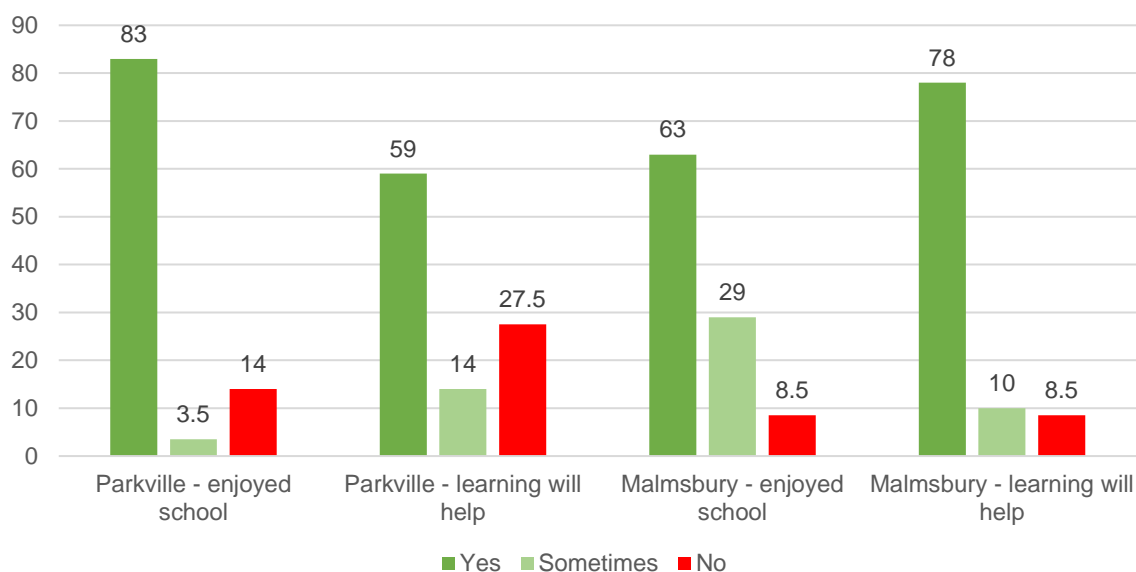
5.3.4 Young people's perspectives

Above we have already quoted comments made by students in our interviews with them. In addition, the exit interviews provided to us by DJCS give insight into young people's perspectives on transition. These client exit interviews were conducted between February and July 2018 and included two questions about school with the option to answer *yes*, *sometimes* or *no*, that offer overall insight in young people's views about their enjoyment of school and about its utility. The results are strongly positive:

- Have you enjoyed going to the school?
 - Yes: 67% (N=59)
 - Sometimes: 21% (N=18)
 - No: 10% (N=9)
- Do you think what you have learned will be helpful for you in the future?
 - Yes: 71% (N=63)
 - Sometimes: 11% (N=10)
 - No: 15% (N=13)

The results for these questions played out somewhat differently in each precinct, as Figure 5.2 shows. Young people from Parkville Youth Justice Precinct (N=29) were more emphatically positive about their enjoyment of school than those from Malmsbury Youth Justice Precinct (N=59); while young people from MYJP were more enthusiastic about the utility of what they had learnt than those from PYJP. This may be due to variations within the surveyed groups (such as the proportions of remand versus sentenced, see section 2.3; but noting that the number of responses from PYJC in the exit interviews is quite small) or to actual differences between the precincts.

Figure 5.2: Enjoyment and utility of school, by precinct as percentage (Client exit interviews)



Across the whole cohort of 86 young people who responded to both questions, 44 both enjoyed school and saw what they had learned as useful for their futures, and a further 19 said either that they did not enjoy it or only sometimes enjoyed it but that they believed what they had learned was important to their futures. This means that a large proportion of the respondents saw the value in the schooling they had received, even when they did not enjoy it. As one young man wrote:

Have fun at school while you're there, help you learn, meet more people. Get a better job, what's your goals. Read books, get knowledge, think wisely.

Others were more pragmatic, observing a direct link between school and work. Comments included that school would:

Definitely help get a job, the more you put the effort in the more you get.

Help me get a job - everyday things - maths, English.

Help me get a job and personal life.

In identifying what would help when returning to the wider community, one person commented simply "School - literacy, maths".

One young person commented that going to school "looks good for court", but another one was concerned that: "I want to go back to school – no-one here can help me organise this and it worries me I won't get out when I go to court."

A few of the students who gave a negative response in terms of enjoyment, utility or both also provided their views about the benefit of their learning at Parkville College for their post-custody transition:

Didn't like that they didn't teach very useful stuff - budgeting, taxes, renting etc - life skills.

I don't like it when the work is not relevant to our future.

Childish, not challenging. I want to benefit and learn.

Importantly, as this last comment shows, even when they critiqued the learning at Parkville College, these young people valued education more generally. One student wrote that for his future plans he wanted to go "back to school - medicine. Have to finish year 12 first".

Comments from participants who enjoyed school "sometimes" and believed that the things they had learned would be useful in the future shed further light. One student, whose future plans included "Go to school" wrote "I don't enjoy it but I do it", showing a belief that schooling is unpleasant but necessary (a feeling not uncommon among students in mainstream schools). One student wrote that, in addition to the benefit of a routine, school would help his future because he had learned to "concentrate and listen in class". He also wrote that "sometimes I don't enjoy numeracy. Teachers have been good", which may illustrate the way that teachers facilitate pathways towards valued but difficult-to-achieve school outcomes. Other comments also reflected school as a pathway to a desired future, such as that school "will help me be more independent" or "my white card will help me get a job".

There were significant indications that the respondents' learning experiences led to positive future plans which acknowledged the value of education. Many young people commented about going back to school and building on the qualifications they had accomplished while in custody. When responding to the question about what would help them when they are out in the wider community, students made comments such as:

Programs, most of them. I want to go to TAFE when I get out.

The qualifications I have completed.

Get RSA - can get it next year because I'm too young now. Food handling cert. More certificates when I'm looking for a job.

In terms of future plans, a young person responded:

Construction has been good and I will keep doing it as part of my parole plan.

In total, 17 young people referred to a specific career goal: 9 in the construction industry (construction, carpentry, building); 6 in other trades (mechanic, forklift driver, *Electro Techno*, ground maintenance, commercial cookery, and personal trainer); and 2 in the professions (engineering, medicine). Finally, one of the young people interviewed also commented on his plans for the future:

Once I complete my VCAL and leave this place, I reckon – I don't know, if I did finish VCAL and it was more towards doing a course or something, a TAFE course, going to TAFE and try to be a carpenter or something like that. Even a barber. I want to be a barber (Jordon, student interview, 2019).

6. Key issues for attention

We are producing, at the moment, with the rate of recidivism, the future prisoners of Victoria. Whereas, if we invest in education for those people now, that can actually engender change (Shaun, adult interview, 2018).

Young people in custody often have poor experiences of education. Many of them fall within the age of compulsory education (up to 17 years) but, even for those who are older, engaging in education is an important aspect of rehabilitation and promoting skills for the future (CCYP, 2017, p.82).

This study set out to examine enablers and constraints for participation in education in custody, ways of strengthening educational connection for young people in custody, and ways in which education may form a protective factor for these young people. After interviewing many stakeholders, reading key reports and articles, analysing the data and arguing among ourselves about it all means for young people and their educational connection, the *So what?* question presented itself. This question is widely used in research to focus attention on what can be concluded.

Rather than offering a list of fixed recommendations, this report concludes with seven important issues for consideration. The main justification for this is that the issues involve complexity and perspectives from different systems and stakeholders that need to be accommodated and balanced. Instead of trying to reduce this complexity, framing these as key issues invites everybody to consider what is at stake and how this could be remedied.

Within the youth justice sector, there is a common faith in education *somehow* working as a panacea. This belief has become wedded to the idea that education is both a key protective factor against criminal activity and a means by which young people can re-join society. This study has identified the complexities involved in achieving these aims. It has also identified that what is required for successful and effective educational practice is easily underestimated and sometimes misunderstood.

Attending to the issues identified will enhance the possibilities for educational practice to fully support incarcerated young people and better equip them for positive futures.

6.1 Recognising the key role of high quality educational provision in custody

Parkville College has developed a sophisticated level of practice and a teaching philosophy that is responsive to its students and environment. Education at Parkville College involves far greater complexity than local schools, and additional challenges exist because of the security focus of the custodial environment.

In response, Parkville College has developed a specific approach involving a professional system of shared values and practices that is designed to connect incarcerated young

people to education. The philosophy, curriculum and pedagogy of Parkville College result in purposeful, thoughtful and highly effective teaching and learning. Broader recognition of the professional educational expertise of Parkville College staff would benefit professional learning for other staff working in youth justice and should inform the planning of new youth justice facilities.

6.2 Sharing a common purpose

All adults involved in youth justice need to work together to develop and ensure implementation of a shared purpose that is focused on wrapping support around young people during (and after) custody. In particular, a shared purpose between Parkville College teachers and DJCS unit staff is required to better assist young people to prepare for their futures.

Greater understanding about Parkville College's educational practice should be shared more explicitly with unit staff, who have the potential to become significant partners in the education of young people in their care. This would contribute to DJCS unit staff becoming aware of the aims and justification of strategies employed by teachers so that they can share a higher level of responsibility for contributing to the learning, confidence and achievements of the young people.

Understandably, given the differences between the two purposes and cultures of education and detention, Parkville College and DJCS do not always share the same perspective on how a shared purpose should be achieved. However, as our analysis has made clear, both organisations show a very high level of goodwill in their commitment towards each other. This should be harnessed so that both organisations work together to *wrap around* the young people by developing shared aims and sustained commitment to actively achieving them. Parkville College and DJCS could work more closely together to develop a common approach to working with young people in custody – not as two separate organisations but as one community working collaboratively and strategically together for the same purpose.

6.3 Strengthening partnership

The partnership between DJCS and Parkville College should further build on the existing foundation of mutual respect and understanding. This is likely to be strengthened if teachers and unit staff spend more time working together to develop deeper shared understanding of each other's work. Different working conditions, purposes, work cultures and structures present substantial challenges but are not insurmountable.

Strong partnership requires clear communication as well as *give and take* at the various levels of the organisations. While managers and leaders already meet and agree on strategies and practices, this needs to be replicated for staff in direct contact with the young people. For example, teachers and youth justice workers need time together to develop shared understandings of each other's roles and perspectives to be able to better work alongside each other to support young people's connection to education and positive re-entry into the wider community.

The idea of *outreach* holds promise for how Parkville College and DJCS could work to strengthen their understanding of each other and also holds clear benefits for young people

in custody. The more that Parkville College and DJCS work in partnership, the more their work becomes a joint effort defined by the relationship of *us*, rather than *us and them*.

6.4 Improving staff recruitment and professional learning

At both Parkville College and in the DJCS custodial service there is scope for improvement in the recruitment and professional learning of staff. Staff at Parkville College enjoy a high level of professional support. While Parkville College has few older teachers, it has responded to the need for stronger diversity. Responding to cultural diversity is important for all staff working in youth custodial settings but has been recognised as needing attention particularly at Parkville College.

Reform initiatives at DJCS have focused on improving the recruitment, training and development of staff, but at present no formal qualification is required as a prerequisite for custodial youth services staff. It would be desirable that youth justice workers with relevant qualifications are employed and that those already employed should be supported with further education and training. This would better prepare them for the challenging environment in which they work and better enable them to implement their roles in relation to both security and rehabilitation.

6.5 Maximising the use of time

Time in youth custody should be seen as an opportunity to reboot futures and reassemble young lives. At present, however, a significant amount of learning time is wasted in youth custody because security concerns override those of education. Valuing the prospect of time in custody as a circuit breaker will require a shift in thinking. Making the most of this time to connect young people with education, to assist make plans for the future and to design pathways to achieve those plans makes good sense.

There are signs that DJCS's reform process is making inroads into the future improvement of security issues of concern here. This includes the freeing up the *movements* between classes and planning a new system that will afford selected students a higher level of trust and self-regulation, such as walking independently to classes. These plans also include access to all learning spaces for girls and young women whose current access to open outdoor spaces and certain educational spaces is limited due to security measures.

The impact of security protocols on educational aims and practices should be reviewed jointly by the DJCS and Parkville College so that changes to support young people in custody at the Parkville and Malmsbury Youth Justice Precincts are effective in the years leading to Cherry Creek becoming operational.

6.6 Enhancing equitable access to high quality education

All young people in custody have a right and, for the majority who are of compulsory school age, an obligation to engage in education. However, not all young people in custody receive equal access to education at present. The disruption to education because of security considerations is particularly severe for young people in remand, and the high proportion of remanded young people in Parkville Youth Justice Precinct means this continues to be a major concern. While relatively few young women and girls are in custody, the layout of Parkville Youth Justice Precinct creates barriers to their access to education. Greater attention is also needed for groups of students who are overrepresented in youth custody:

those from Indigenous, African, and Pasifika and Māori backgrounds. Some programs are already in place, and these are highly valued by the young people. Providing ongoing support for these programs as well as continuing to develop a more culturally diverse workforce as unit staff and as teachers would be beneficial.

6.7 Making a smooth educational transition from custody

The widely shared goal of young people re-joining society after custody relies, to a significant extent, on successful reconnection with school or the establishment of new connections at new educational or training institutions. Successful educational transition has the potential to function as a circuit breaker with the power for young people to be included in the wider community.

Young people are reported to be particularly vulnerable to reverting to criminal activity in the period immediately following release from custody. The time of release post-custody is a critical juncture for young people. Therefore, this time period needs to be carefully managed to reduce the likelihood of recidivism and further contact with the criminal justice system.

Robust plans need to be made, and assistance should be provided so that those plans can be realised. The Transition Team at Parkville College and the provision of the Parkville Flexible Learning Centre as a *halfway* program are promising strategies. Attention also needs to be focused on how the wider educational system in Victoria could assist educational transition after custody.

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Appendix

Project dissemination to date

Presentations

- Baker, A., White, J., Te Riele, K., Corcoran, T. & Moylan, P. (2018, October). *Critical reflection, diversity and young people*. Keynote address presented at the Cultural Diversity Development Day for the Victorian Police: North West Metropolitan Region, Kensington, Melbourne.
- Corcoran, T., White, J., Te Riele, K., Baker, A. & Moylan, P. (2018, December). *Psycho-educational prospects for students in custody*. Paper presented at the 31st Annual Australia and New Zealand Society of Criminology Conference, Melbourne.
- Corcoran, T., White, J., Te Riele, K., Baker, A. & Moylan, P. (2019, February). *Psychosocial justice for students in custody*. Public lecture, Victoria University, Melbourne.
- Moylan, P., White, J., Corcoran, T., Te Riele, K. & Baker, A. (2018, October). *Youth justice, educational inclusion and moral panic*. Paper presented at the TIES (The Inclusive Education Conference), Geelong.
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