



## Trauma-Informed, Rights-Respecting Support for At-Risk Young People

54 reasons exists to make child rights real by championing children's rights to development, safety and justice. We do this by advocating and demonstrating the value of a rights-respecting justice system in every state and the Northern Territory, including:

- Designing and delivering alternatives to criminalisation and detention
- Partnering to demonstrate the social and economic benefits of prevention and early intervention
- Pursuing systems-level advocacy underpinned by a children's voices and a rights perspective
- Educating children and adults about children's rights and responsibilities.

## Our Approach is Based on Evidence that Works

Evidence shows that the younger a child is when they commit their first offence, the more likely they are to reoffend and the more likely that the seriousness of offences will escalate.

That's why 54 reasons uses an early intervention approach to engage at-risk young people early and divert their trajectory away from the youth justice system, in addition to our intensive outreach and specialist services and programs that support those already within the system.

Through our national youth support model, our experienced Youth Specialists:

- **Deliver rights-based, trauma informed and culturally-responsive services** for children and young people at-risk of entering the youth justice system
- **Use evidence-informed assertive outreach techniques** to meet young people where they are, build trust and rapport, and tailor activities to build protective factors and reduce risk factors
- **Deliver skill-building activities** to ensure we provide intentional and therapeutic support based on the strengths and needs of young people
- **Partner with the young person's family and strong community members wherever possible** to connect the young person to education, culture and community, based on their needs and goals
- **Use the Outcomes Star assessment tool** to facilitate conversations with young people to ensure their voice is heard and embedded into goal setting and case plans.



## Assertive Outreach for At-Risk Young People

We provide soft entry early intervention for at-risk children and young people aged 8-18. In regional NSW, for example, this includes the Hunter, Snowy Valley, Murrumbidgee and South Coast regions. Our Mobile Youth Vans help meet young people where they are in community spaces such as schools, skate parks, libraries and community hubs.

Our 'Mobile Youth Outreach' model uses a strengths-based and community led approach to create safe spaces for young people, engaging them through digital media, art, sport, and cultural activities. Our Youth Specialists and Family Support Specialists help connect the young person to family, community and culture as protective factors, ensuring that no young person falls through the cracks.

## Data-Led Early Intervention for At-Risk Young People

From 2014-2021, we provided backbone support for a community-led collective impact initiative in south east Perth, WA. This included partnering with the Paul Ramsay Foundation to deliver a Youth Early Intervention trial to support children aged 8-12 and their families who were experiencing complex disadvantage, aimed at reducing risk factors for engagement with justice system while increasing protective factors. The model was co-designed with young people, community leaders and Elders.

Evaluations from the Centre for Evidence and Implementation and Social Outcomes showed improvements across the four key domains - building relationships; supporting education; family support; youth support. This resulted in 77% of participants above the age of criminal responsibility not committing any offence whilst in the program, and 67% continuing to avoid offending twelve months post program.

We are exploring additional suitable locations to deliver a similar data-led early intervention program in other communities where the need and conditions for successful implementation are in place.

## Teaching Children and Young People about Rights and Responsibilities

Designed in partnership with Multicultural NSW and evaluated by the University of Western Sydney, our 'Mobilise' program provides child rights education to young people who are at risk of being or are already involved in the youth justice system, including in youth justice settings and detention centres in NSW, Queensland and Victoria.

Structured workshops are delivered to teach young people about their rights and responsibilities, using creative arts-based activities to encourage self-expression and foster a greater sense of self-autonomy. Participants report that they feel better equipped to enjoy their rights, are more connected and active in the community, and feel empowered and responsible with their voices heard and acknowledged.

## Night Patrol and Youth Services and Youth Justice Services

We work in Kununurra, WA to support the wellbeing of young people and improve community safety by providing activities for at risk youth, providing them with a safe drop in space, healthy meals, and getting them home safely at night. In partnership with Hope Community Services, we also provide youth justice services including mentoring and case management for young people aged 12-18 who have offended or are at risk of re-offending in Kununurra and Armadale.

## Diversion and Alternative Sentencing Programs

We deliver the 'Back on Track' alternative sentencing program in the NT on behalf of Territory Families. The program works with young people between 8-17 years who are at high risk of ongoing criminal activity. It provides courts with an option as an alternative to detention which focuses on diverting young people from the justice system while also improving educational engagement and life trajectory through giving young people the skills to move forward, make positive life choices and become productive members of the community.

## Secondary Intervention Support

We deliver the 'Strong Culture, Strong Tomorrow' secondary intervention program on Doomadgee and Mornington Island, Qld to support high level offenders aged 10-15, reduce offending rates and anti-social and disorderly behaviour, and increase individual and community safety.

The program offers supported referrals to young people to external supports for individual development including increase life skills and cultural values and build a young person's ability to respond positively to risk. The program achieves an increase in educational attendance, a reduction in demand for police intervention and the completion of community-based orders. Participants report that the program helps them improve their relationship with their families and their community and learn about respect and be proud of their culture.





## Connecting Young People to Education, Culture and Community

We know that education, culture and community are powerful protective factors that are proven to reduce offending behaviours. That's why we help young people who are at risk of offending or reoffending to get back on track by providing flexible, culturally responsive 1-1 support, with a strong focus on re-engagement with education and vocation pathways.

In Victoria, our 'Out Teach' program, which focuses on educational and vocational engagement as protective factors, has achieved consistently strong outcomes since 2017 including:

- Reduction of young participants who offended from 100% to 38% while in the program
- 72% sustained their non-offending success for the 12 months after the program
- 81% of participants were supported to improve their engagement with education.

## Case Management for Young People on Bail or Returning to Community

We help reduce youth re-offending in Tasmania and Queensland by providing rights-based bail support services across a number of communities in both states, as well as throughcare and post-detention support to young people transitioning from youth detention.

Our Youth Specialists support young people to reduce their offending behaviour and re-engage with positive education, vocational and employment opportunities. For those transitioning from detention, we support the young person to safely reintegrate back into community, working with the young person's family to strengthen their ability to support their child and access supports from local services.

As an illustration of impact, only 17% of young people supported by our Mt Isa Bail Support team in the last year have returned to Cleveland Youth Detention Centre. In comparison, 95% of all those released from Cleveland were alleged to have committed another offence in the 12 months following release.