



# **The Blueprint for Youth Justice in the ACT**

## **Consultation Paper**

### **Youth Justice Implementation Taskforce**

For consultation between December 2011 and 30 March 2012

Copies of this paper can be obtained from:  
[www.dhcs.act.gov.au/ocyfs/youth\\_justice\\_implementation\\_taskforce](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/ocyfs/youth_justice_implementation_taskforce)



## **What is the Blueprint for Youth Justice in the ACT and why are we developing it?**

The Blueprint for Youth Justice in the ACT will be a strategic plan to reform the youth justice system over the next 5-10 years. It will have a long term aim to reduce the number of young people who come into contact with the youth justice system. We are seeking to develop the best possible youth justice system for the ACT that will benefit everyone and provide a safer community.

The Blueprint will contain the key elements of a quality youth justice system identified by the Human Rights Commission in its report *The ACT Youth Justice System 2011: A Report to the Legislative Assembly* (the HRC Report).<sup>1</sup>

## **Who will the Blueprint benefit?**

The Blueprint will benefit everyone in the ACT community. It will specifically benefit:

- children and young people;
- families;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people; and
- the workforce engaged in the youth justice system.

## **Who is developing the Blueprint?**

The Blueprint is being developed by the Youth Justice Implementation Taskforce (the Taskforce). The Taskforce was established by the ACT Government in 2011 and is made up of representatives from the government and community sectors. More information on the Taskforce is available on the website: [www.dhcs.act.gov.au/ocys/youth\\_justice\\_implementation\\_taskforce](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/ocys/youth_justice_implementation_taskforce).

## **What will the Blueprint focus on?**

The Blueprint will need to have a clear focus on early intervention, prevention, and diversion for young people at risk of becoming involved in the youth justice system. It will also need to enable young people who are already in contact with the youth justice system to achieve improved outcomes both for themselves and for the community.

## **What is this consultation about?**

The Blueprint will be a document that belongs to the community. This consultation is about hearing from the community about what the Blueprint should look like and what it should contain.

The Taskforce considers that the Blueprint should have a clear vision and a set of principles that guide what happens in the youth justice system. It should also identify the things that we want to see changed for children and young people involved in or at risk of involvement in the youth justice system, their families and the community. The Blueprint should tell us what we need to do to achieve the change.

The Taskforce has developed the diagram on the following page to identify the key components of the Blueprint. The Taskforce would like to hear from a range of people and agencies including children, young people, families, individuals, groups, community organisations, service providers, workers in the youth justice system, the business sector, oversight bodies and government on what should be covered in each of these components. Some examples are provided on the following pages to guide thinking and comment.

---

<sup>1</sup> The HRC Report was released on 29 July 2011 and made 224 recommendations to improve the youth justice system in the ACT. The HRC Report is available at: <http://www.hrc.act.gov.au/res/Volume%20One%20Low%20Res.pdf>. The ACT Government response to the HRC Report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 18 October 2011. The ACT Government response to the HRC Report is available at: [http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/249459/2011\\_ACT\\_Government\\_Response\\_to\\_the\\_HRC\\_Report.pdf](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/249459/2011_ACT_Government_Response_to_the_HRC_Report.pdf).

## Canberra Plan: Towards Our Second Century 2008

The *Canberra Plan* is an overarching document that sets out a vision and strategy that reflects the views and values of Canberrans and responds to the challenges before us.

## Canberra Social Plan 2011

The *Canberra Social Plan 2011* renews the ACT Government's commitment to building a strong, vibrant and inclusive community.

### Blueprint for Youth Justice in the ACT

The Blueprint will be a strategic plan to reform the youth justice system over the next 5 - 10 years.  
The key components of the Blueprint will be:

#### A. Vision

A vision for youth justice in the ACT

#### B. Principles

Principles to guide the outcomes, strategies and actions contained in the Blueprint

#### C. Outcomes

Outcomes to be achieved for children, young people and their families, the community and the youth justice system

#### D. Strategies

Broad strategies to achieve the outcomes

#### E. Actions

Actions to be prioritised under each strategy and based on three year implementation plans

#### F. Measures

Measures to demonstrate the achievement of outcomes for children, young people and their families and the youth justice system

## Questions to guide the consultation

### Questions and examples on the key components of the Blueprint

A. What should be included in the vision for youth justice in the ACT? The Taskforce has identified three broad themes to be reflected in the vision:

1. providing children and young people with the opportunity to live good lives;
2. supporting reintegration into the community; and
3. a safe community.

Examples from other Australian jurisdictions include:

- The New South Wales Department of Juvenile Justice has the following vision: 'A community in which young offenders participate without reoffending.'<sup>2</sup>
- In Western Australia, a philosophy underpins the provision of youth justice services: 'Youth Justice Services aims to address offending behaviour by young people to promote safer families and communities.'<sup>3</sup>
- In the Northern Territory, the following vision applies to the Department of Justice: 'An integrated organisation that shapes a safe and fair Northern Territory.'<sup>4</sup>

B. What principles should be reflected in the Blueprint? Example principles include:

- The best interests of children and young people always inform actions.
- The voices of children and young people will be heard.
- The families of children and young people involved in the youth justice system are important.
- Approaches are grounded in data, evidence and principles of adolescent development, to produce positive outcomes for children and young people.
- Custody is a measure of last resort.
- While in custody, children and young people who are detained will be provided with similar opportunities as those afforded to children and young people in the community.

C. What outcomes (or changes) should be achieved for children, young people and their families at risk/involved in the youth justice system? Example outcomes include:

- Children and young people live in safe and supportive families and communities.
- Children, young people and their families are resilient.
- Programs and services are integrated across systems and are available for children, young people and their families at the earliest intervention point.
- Children and young people in contact with the justice system receive appropriate support in response to their offending.

D. What broad strategies are needed to do to achieve the outcomes? Example strategies include:

- Strengthen the capacity of families and communities to support and protect vulnerable children and young people.
- Integrate services and programs and ensure their applicability for children, young people and families at the earliest intervention point.
- Divert children and young people from deeper immersion in the youth justice system.

E. What is needed to do to achieve change in the youth justice system? Example actions include:

- Develop an integrated Family Engagement Strategy.
- Develop a long-term Justice Reinvestment Strategy.
- Develop risk and assessment tools for vulnerable children, young people and their families.
- Develop a Single Case Management approach across the Community Services Directorate.
- Develop and implement a diversionary framework for young people.
- Develop and implement mechanisms for embedding the 'best interests' principle and human rights requirements in youth justice policy.
- Develop a Charter of Rights and Responsibilities for Young People in Detention.
- Develop a Workforce Development and Reform Strategy.
- Develop data collection tools and a Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy to inform reforms in youth justice.
- Develop a suite of appropriate custodial and community-based therapeutic programs.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Juvenile Justice, Juvenile Justice Corporate Plan 2010-2013 <[http://www.djj.nsw.gov.au/pdf\\_html/publications/general/CorporatePlan2010\\_2013\\_Brochure.pdf](http://www.djj.nsw.gov.au/pdf_html/publications/general/CorporatePlan2010_2013_Brochure.pdf)>

<sup>3</sup> Government of Western Australia Department of Corrective Services, 'Youth Justice Services' <[http://www.correctiveservices.wa.gov.au/\\_files/youth-justice/yjs-philosophy.pdf](http://www.correctiveservices.wa.gov.au/_files/youth-justice/yjs-philosophy.pdf)>.

<sup>4</sup> Northern Territory Government Department of Justice, 'Strategic Plan 2009-2012' <<http://www.nt.gov.au/justice/corpsrat/documents/Strategic%20Plan.pdf#search=%22vision%22>>.

*Other questions*

1. How can we best support families and communities to help young people at risk?
2. How should early intervention, prevention and diversion be prioritised in the Blueprint?
3. What measures would strengthen the government and community based workforce assisting young offenders?
4. How should the Taskforce further consult on the implementation of the Blueprint?

## How can I be involved in the consultation?

The consultation is open between December 2011 and 30 March 2012. A number of options are available to give everyone the opportunity to participate in the consultation.

1. The ACT Government's *Community Engagement* ([www.communityengagement.act.gov.au](http://www.communityengagement.act.gov.au)) and *Time to Talk* ([www.timetotalk.act.gov.au](http://www.timetotalk.act.gov.au)) websites are available for broad comment and feedback. This may involve posting a comment, entering into a discussion or filling out a survey.
2. The Taskforce will lead one community forum in each youth service network region:
  - Belconnen;
  - North Canberra and Gungahlin;
  - South Canberra and Weston; and
  - Tuggeranong.

The times for these forums will be advertised as widely as possible through local media and on the Taskforce website ([www.dhcs.act.gov.au/ocyfs/youth\\_justice\\_implementation\\_taskforce](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/ocyfs/youth_justice_implementation_taskforce)).

3. Consultation activities and events will be hosted by government and non-government agencies. These activities and events will be for:
  - children and young people and their families (Families ACT and the Youth Coalition of the ACT)
  - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and their families (the Taskforce Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Working Group)
  - the youth and community sectors (the Youth Coalition of the ACT)
  - government and oversight agencies (Office for Children, Youth and Family Support).

Information on these activities will be advertised by the host agencies and on the Taskforce website ([http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/ocyfs/youth\\_justice\\_implementation\\_taskforce](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/ocyfs/youth_justice_implementation_taskforce)).

## I have been involved in other consultations about youth justice. How will this be used in the Blueprint?

The Taskforce recognises that there has been a lot of consultation about youth justice in recent times. This includes consultation as part of the:

- ACT Youth Justice System 2011: A Report to the Legislative Assembly;
- ACT Government's 2011 Discussion Paper, Towards a Diversionary Framework for the ACT;
- ACT Young People's Plan 2009-2014;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Agreement; and the
- ACT Healthy Young People Feasibility Study.

The Taskforce will consider the outcomes of these consultations in developing the Blueprint.

## How will the comments from this consultation be used?

The Taskforce will use the comments from this consultation to help guide the development of the Blueprint.

## How will I know I have been heard?

Key outcomes and themes to emerge from the consultation will be collated and presented in a consultation report that will be released in April 2012.

## **Will there be opportunities to be involved in the implementation of the Blueprint?**

Yes, there will be opportunities for individuals and groups to be further involved in the implementation of the Blueprint. If you would like to be involved, please register your interest using the form on the last page of this document (Attachment A).

## **Who can I contact if I want to know more about the consultation?**

For further information about the consultation, please contact Jeremy Boland on 6207 1090 or Molly Peterson on 6205 8656. You can also visit the Taskforce website ([www.dhcs.act.gov.au/ocyfs/youth\\_justice\\_implementation\\_taskforce](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/ocyfs/youth_justice_implementation_taskforce)).

Information is also available through the ACT Government's *Community Engagement* website ([www.communityengagement.act.gov.au](http://www.communityengagement.act.gov.au)) and *Time to Talk* website ([www.timetotalk.act.gov.au](http://www.timetotalk.act.gov.au)).

***Thank you for your participation in the consultation.***

## **Accessibility**

The ACT Government is committed to making its information, services, events and venues accessible to as many people as possible.

If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document and would like to receive this publication in an alternative format –such as large print or audio- please telephone (02) 6205 0619.

If English is not your first language and you require the Translating and Interpreting Service please telephone 131 450.

If you are deaf or hearing impaired and require the TTY typewriter service please telephone (02) 6205 0888.

**The Blueprint for Youth Justice in the ACT**

**Yes, I am interested in opportunities to be involved in the implementation of the Blueprint.**

There will be opportunities for individuals and groups to be involved in the implementation of the Blueprint. If you would like to be involved, please register your interest using this form.

We will record your interest and be in touch once the Blueprint has been released.

Please register your interest using the form below or by contacting us. This form can also be downloaded from the Youth Justice Implementation Taskforce website ([www.dhcs.act.gov.au/ocyfs/youth\\_justice\\_implementation\\_taskforce](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/ocyfs/youth_justice_implementation_taskforce)).

Your name: .....

Email: .....

Phone: .....

Mail address: .....

Please indicate your main areas of interest: (for example, employment, education, housing and homelessness, legislation and courts, custodial issues)

.....

.....

.....

Completed forms can be emailed to Jeremy Boland or Molly Peterson at [csd@act.gov.au](mailto:csd@act.gov.au) (please write 'Blueprint' in the header), faxed to 02 6205 7187, or mailed to Strategic Projects Group, Office for Children, Youth and Family Support, GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601.