Blueprint for Youth Justice in the ACT 2012-22

Annual Progress Report 2014

Report from the Youth Justice Blueprint Implementation Group
Acknowledgment of Country
The ACT Government acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as the traditional custodians of the Canberra region. The region was also an important meeting place and is significant to other Aboriginal groups. The ACT Government acknowledges and respects their continuing culture and the unique contribution they make to the life of this city and region.

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Acknowledgements
The artwork incorporated in the design of the Blueprint for Youth Justice in the ACT 2012-22 was created by young people as part of their involvement in programs at the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre.

Data used in the report is primarily sourced from the AIHW 2014. Youth justice in Australia 2012-13: an overview. AIHW bulletin 120. Cat. no. AUS 179. Canberra: AIHW.

More information
For more information about the Blueprint for Youth Justice in the ACT 2012-22 is at: www.communityservices.act.gov.au/ocyfs/the_blueprint_for_youth_justice_in_the_act
Youth Justice Blueprint Implementation Group

The Youth Justice Blueprint Implementation Group has been established to oversee and monitor progress on the implementation of the actions in the *Blueprint for Youth Justice in the ACT 2012-22*. The group comprises senior representatives from ACT Government agencies and the community sector.

Dr Mark Collis  
Community Services Directorate (Chair)

Brendan Church  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body

Danny O’Neill  
Richmond Fellowship

Emma Robertson  
Youth Coalition of the ACT

Jacky Cook  
Canberra Police and Citizens Youth Club

Simon Rosenberg  
Northside Community Service

Dr John Boersig  
Legal Aid ACT

Priscilla Kennedy  
Legal Aid ACT

David Bromhead  
Education and Training Directorate

Julie Field  
Justice and Community Safety Directorate

Jill Hughes  
Health Directorate

Sergeants Harry Hains,  
ACT Policing

Sue Smith & Daryl Neit  
ACT Policing

Greg Corben  
Community Services Directorate

Ronia McDade  
Community Services Directorate

David Matthews  
Community Services Directorate

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Message from the Chair

On behalf of the Youth Justice Blueprint Implementation Group (BIG), I am pleased to present the second annual report for the Blueprint for Youth Justice in the ACT 2012-22.

As expected in the implementation phase, the focus of work over the past year has shifted from a strategic level towards activity that has brought the actions to life.

Significant work has been done around developing or refining initiatives and supports within the community that aim to prevent young people coming into contact with the youth justice system, or that can intervene early to reduce recidivism and ongoing involvement in the justice system. There are a number of ways this is can be achieved.

The After Hours Bail Support service is one example that continues to be effective in assisting young people to keep to their bail conditions, and the proposed new Youth Diversion Service is another. This is a mobile/outreach service for young people and their families who are in the early stages of contact with the youth justice system. The service will assist a young person and the family following a court appearance to link them with the information and supports to minimise their risk of further involvement with statutory services. Service design work has started and it is anticipated that it will begin operating next year.

The BIG’s two working groups are making good progress on the development of policy and operational responses across a range of areas. Their work includes a support and intervention framework in youth services, as well as cultural planning, family engagement and supporting young people when they attend court.

While there is evidence that the Blueprint is making a difference in the lives of young people, we must continue to be vigilant about responding to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

Real and lasting change for these young people can only be achieved if actions are informed through engagement with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. I mention here the work done by the ACT Human Rights Commission about services and supports for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people. We now know more about the kind of supports that are needed, and the issues around how these are accessed. This understanding will assist in making sure that services are developed and delivered in culturally respectful ways.

This year we have seen an important step towards building the skills of people who work with children and young people in the area of trauma. The ACT’s new Trauma Recovery Centre, Melaleuca Place, provides training and professional development opportunities that assist staff to develop trauma-informed practices to better support young people whose lives have been impacted by abuse and neglect or family violence.

Where to from here? There is still some way to go before all actions are fully implemented so this work will continue. Alongside this, we will be developing an evaluation framework that will help to measure what’s working well and what we need to do differently.

The Blueprint is a long term plan and progress will be gradual. However, I believe that our partnerships across government and the community are strong and continue to reflect a commitment to a shared goal in keeping young people, safe, strong and connected.

Dr Mark Collis
September 2014
Executive summary

This second report presents the progress in implementing the Blueprint and demonstrates how outcomes are being met through key indicators for youth justice.

The report has two sections—a picture of the data trends for youth justice with a focus on 2013-14 (where available) and a summary of progress against the Blueprint’s strategies. Case studies are included to illustrate how significant actions are working.

The focus of work in 2013-14 has been progressing initiatives and practices already underway and undertaking new policy and program development. Of the 45 initiatives in the three-year action plan, 14 are complete, 28 are substantially complete and three are yet to commence.

Two working groups have been established to support work on single case management and support for children and young people early in their involvement in the youth justice system.

Evidence continues to indicate reducing numbers of young people coming into contact with, or becoming further involved in the youth justice system:

- the number of young people apprehended by police decreased by four per cent
- the number of young people under supervision decreased by 11 per cent and by nine per cent for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people
- the number of young people under community-based supervision decreased by 10 per cent
- the number of young people in detention decreased by 24 per cent
- the number of days young people spent in detention reduced by seven per cent.

A number of actions have contributed to this progress including the:
- After-Hours Bail Support Service
- Youth Alcohol Diversion Program
- Improving Services with Families Project
- Restorative justice initiatives for eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and first time offenders
- Single Case Management approach in youth justice
- Turnaround program
- Bendora Transition Unit at the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre

A challenge continues to be to reduce the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the ACT youth justice system.

Progress on the Blueprint is being monitored annually. The proposed evaluation at the end of 2015 will measure the impact, outcomes and effectiveness of the Blueprint’s initiatives. Importantly, the evaluation will add to existing knowledge and inform the continued development and improvement of strategies that address offending by young people.

The focus for 2015 will be on strengthening progress achieved on prevention and diversion strategies and exploring early intervention initiatives.

Delivering long-term change in the youth justice system requires an ongoing commitment and shared responsibility from key ACT government agencies and community organisations that are involved with young people. This collaborative approach between government and community is integral to achieving the Blueprint’s vision for the ACT youth justice system that children and young people are safe, strong and connected.
The youth justice system deals with young people who have committed or allegedly committed offences. In the ACT, the youth justice system includes young people aged 10-17 at the time of an offence, as well as young people up to 21 years for an offence committed as a minor.

The ACT youth justice system includes the police, courts, the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre and the Community Services Directorate for the supervision of young people under court orders. Young people first enter the youth justice system when they are investigated by police. Charges made against them will be heard by a court. If a charge is proven, a court may hand down a number of supervised or unsupervised legal orders.

The Blueprint’s goals are:
1. Youth offending and re-offending is reduced.
2. The over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the youth justice system is reduced.
3. Children and young people are diverted from the formal youth justice system.
4. Detention rates are reduced.
5. Children, young people and their families are helped early and provided with the supports and services they need.
6. Children and young people are given every possible chance to be successfully reintegrated into the community upon leaving detention.

Data is available for three goals in the Blueprint (1, 2 and 4). The data presented on the following pages provides an analysis of youth justice in the ACT to establish a baseline for future reports to measure the success in achieving the Blueprint’s goals. The 2012-13 year is used as the baseline and 2013-14 data is provided, where available, to assess progress.

Note: Numbers of young people for all ages (i.e. 10-21 years) during the year are primarily used in the report. ‘During the year’ is a measure that provides a count of the number of unique individuals who are supervised in a year. Rates of young people aged 10-17 on an average day are used for national comparisons. Data used is primarily sourced from: AIHW 2014. Youth justice in Australia 2012-13: an overview AIHW bulletin 120. Cat. no. AUS 179. Canberra: AIHW.
Young people involved in the justice system

The number of young people entering the justice system through police apprehension continues to decrease (Figure 1). From 2009-10 to 2013-14, the total number of young people apprehended by ACT Policing decreased by 32 per cent. This reflects decreases in the number of apprehensions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people at 39 per cent and 31 per cent, respectively.

Figure 1: Total number of young people aged 10-21 apprehended by ACT Policing by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status

In 2013-14, a total of 4,201 charges resulted from police apprehensions of young people aged 10-21 years (Figure 2). This means that each police apprehension of a young person (10-21 years) in 2013-14 resulted, on average, in two charges being placed. In 2013-14, the largest number of charges for young people (10 to 21 years) related to traffic and vehicle offences (932), followed by justice procedure offences (823) and theft or theft related offences (535) (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Charges from apprehensions of young people aged 10-21 by ACT Policing in 2013-2014

Young people under supervision

Young people can be ordered by a court to undertake a period of supervision. Young people may be supervised in the community or in detention. In 2012-13, there was an estimated 56,934 young people in the ACT aged 10-21 years (Figure 3). Of these young people, 0.18 per cent were in detention and 0.34 per cent were under community-based supervision.
On an average day in 2012-13, there were 111 young people aged 10 and over under youth justice supervision in the ACT. Of these, about 5 in 6 (85%) were under community-based supervision and about 1 in 6 (16%) were in detention (Figure 4).

On an average day in 2012-13, 86 per cent (96 out of 111) of young people under supervision were aged 10-17 years (Figure 5). Of these young people, 79 per cent were male (76 out of 96) and 21 per cent were female (20 out of 96). The remaining young people were aged 18 years and over (14 male, 1 female).
Most young people (76 per cent, 166 out of 218) under supervision in 2012-13 were aged 14-17 years (Figure 6). Of these young people, 74 per cent (123 out of 166) were non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and 25 per cent (42 out of 166) were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. This is a significant over-representation as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders represent two per cent of the ACT youth population (10-17 years). During 2012-13, 59 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were under community-based supervision of which 71 per cent (42 out of 59) were aged between 14-17 years (Figure 6).

Trends in young people under supervision

The number of young people under supervision in the ACT decreased by 11 per cent from 2011-12 to 2012-13 (244 to 218) with an overall decrease of 22 per cent from 2009-10 to 2012-13 (281 to 218) (Figure 7).
The reduction in overall numbers of young people under supervision is largely due to a decline of 49 per cent (127 to 65) in the number of young people experiencing youth justice supervision for the first time from 2009-10 to 2012-13 (AIHW Youth Justice in Australia 2012-13, Table S16).

Similarly, the total number of young people under community-based supervision decreased by 19 per cent (240 to 195) from 2009-10 to 2012-13 and the total number of young people in detention decreased by 40 per cent (174 to 104) from 2009-10 to 2012-13. This may be due to substantial declines in the number of young people coming under community-based supervision and detention for the first time over the same period.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people under supervision

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people have a long history of over-representation in both the youth and adult justice systems in Australia. This is evident in the ACT where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people constitute 2 per cent of the population aged 10-17 years, but comprise one-quarter (26%) of young people aged 10-17 years under youth justice supervision on an average day in 2012-13 (AIHW Youth Justice Factsheet no 19; ACT: Youth Justice Supervision in 2012-13, p3).

Over the past four years (2009-10 to 2012-13), the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people under supervision in the ACT has increased by nine per cent. However, there has been a nine per cent decrease in the last year (2011-12 to 2012-13) (Figure 8).
During 2012-13, the ACT had the highest rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people aged 10-17 in youth justice supervision on an average day at 287.9 per 10,000 (excluding WA and NT). The national rate was 216.3 per 10,000 (excluding WA and NT). Importantly, the ACT rate has decreased by 33 per cent in the last 12 months (2011-12 to 2012-13) from 427.2 to 287.9 per 10,000 (Figure 9).

In recent years, the ACT also experienced a decrease in the average length of time Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people spend under supervision. In 2012-13, the average length of time was 179 days, the lowest since 2009-10 at 175 days (AIHW Youth Justice in Australia 2012-13, Table S30).

In 2012-13, the ACT had one of the lowest levels of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander over-representation among all states and territories, where data was available.

In the ACT, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young person was 13 times as likely to be under youth justice supervision during the year than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

This was lower than the national average of 17 times (AIHW Youth Justice factsheet no 19, ACT: Youth Justice Supervision in 2012-13, p3).
Young people under community-based supervision

The number of young people under community-based supervision decreased by 10 per cent from 2011-12 to 2012-13 (Figure 10). Over the past four years, the number of young people under community-based supervision declined by 19 per cent from 2009-10 to 2012-13 (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Number of young people under community-based supervision during the year in the ACT – all ages

[Graph showing the number of young people under community-based supervision from 2009-10 to 2012-13]

Source: AIHW Youth Justice in Australia 2012-2013: An overview, Table S46b

In 2012-13 there were 195 young people under community-based supervision in the ACT. Of these, 149 were male, 46 were female and 54 identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Figure 11).

Nationally, on an average day in 2012-13, the ACT had the third highest rate of young people aged 10-17 under community-based supervision, at 23 per 10,000 compared to the national rate of 20 per 10,000 (including WA and NT) (AIHW Youth Justice in Australia 2012-13, p 5).

The total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people under community-based supervision increased by 17 per cent from 2009-10 to 2012-13 (46 to 54) but decreased by 8 per cent from 2011-12 to 2012-13 (59 to 54) (Figure 11).

The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males under community-based supervision decreased by 16 per cent (45 to 38) from 2011-12 to 2012-13 (Figure 11). The number of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males under community-based supervision also decreased by 8 per cent (120 to 110) from 2011-12 to 2012-13.

Figure 11: Number of young people under community-based supervision during the year in the ACT by sex and Indigenous status

[Graph showing the number of young people under community-based supervision by sex and Indigenous status from 2009-10 to 2012-13]

Source: AIHW Youth Justice in Australia 2012-2013, Table S52b.
The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females under community-based supervision increased by 14 per cent from 2011-12 to 2012-13 (14 to 16). In comparison, there was a 12 per cent decrease in the number of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females under community-based supervision from 2011-12 to 2012-13 (34 to 30). Fluctuations in this data should be interpreted with caution due to the small numbers represented.

**Young people in detention**

Overall, the number of young people in detention in the ACT has decreased by 40 per cent from 2009-10 to 2012-13 (Figure 12). During this period, there were significant declines in the number of both males (39 per cent) and females (46 per cent) who were in detention during the year (AIHW Youth Justice in Australia 2012-13, Table S73b).

In the last year, from 2011-12 to 2012-13, there has been a 24 per cent (136 to 104) decrease in the number of young people in detention in the ACT. In 2012-13, 104 young people (male 83, female 21) were in detention (Figure 12). Of these, 24 per cent (25) were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people averaged similar lengths of time in detention as non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in 2012-13 at 64 and 63 days, respectively (AIHW Youth Justice in Australia 2012-13, Table S102).

Nationally, on an average day in 2012-13, the ACT had the highest rate of young people aged 10-17 in detention at 4.4 per 10,000 compared to the national rate of 3.4 per 10,000 (AIHW Youth Justice in Australia 2012-13, p11). The detention rate on an average day for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander was not published for 2012-13, due to the small number of individuals involved.

In the ACT, a young person aged 10-17 years was five times as likely to be under community-based supervision as in detention on an average day (rates of 23.0 and 4.4 per 10,000 respectively). This was slightly lower than the national rate of six times as likely to be under community-based supervision as in detention on an average day (including WA and NT) (AIHW Youth Justice factsheet no 19; ACT: Youth Justice Supervision in 2012-13, p 2).

![Figure 12: Number of young people under detention during the year in the ACT by sex and Indigenous status – all ages](source: AIHW Youth Justice in Australia 2012-13, Table S88b)

The total number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in detention decreased overall by 36 per cent (39 to 25) from 2009-10 to 2012-13 and decreased by 44 per cent (45 to 25) from 2011-12 to 2012-13 (Figure 12). The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males in detention decreased by 40 per cent (35 to 21) from 2011-12 to 2012-13 (Figure 12). Similarly, the number of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males decreased by 14 per cent (72 to 62) from 2011-12 to 2012-13.
The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females in detention decreased by 60 per cent (10 to 4) from 2011-12 to 2012-13 (Figure 12). The number of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females in detention decreased by six per cent (17 to 16) between 2011-12 and 2012-13 and decreased by 43 per cent (28 to 16) from 2009-10 to 2012-13 (Figure 12).

Young people in types of detention

Young people may be in unsentenced detention (when they have been charged with an offence, held in custody and are awaiting the outcome of their court matter, or when they plead or have been found guilty and are awaiting sentence), or sentenced detention (when they are sentenced to a period of detention when proven guilty in a court).

Young people in unsentenced detention

The number of young people in unsentenced detention has declined steadily by 42 per cent from 2009-10 to 2012-13 (172 to 100) (Figure 13). Most young people in detention are on unsentenced detention. This is the case every year from 2009-10 onwards including 2012-13. Of those young people in unsentenced detention in 2012-13, 25 per cent were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (Figure 14).

Young people in sentenced detention

The number of young people in sentenced detention decreased by 19 per cent (26 to 21) from 2011-12 to 2012-13 following an increase (from 13 to 27) between 2009-10 and 2010-11 (Figure 13). In 2012-13, of the total number of young people in detention, 20 per cent (21 out of 104) were sentenced (Figure 13).
In 2012-13, 29 per cent (6 out of 21) of young people in sentenced detention were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (Figure 14). This is a significant over-representation as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders represent two per cent of the ACT youth population (10-17 years).

**Time young people spend in detention**

Overall, the length of time young people spend in detention has decreased (Figure 15). At its highest, there has been a 30 per cent decrease in the number of days young people spent in custody from 8676 in 2010-11 to 6041 days in 2013-14.

**Figure 15: Number of days served in custody by young people in the ACT**

![Graph showing the number of days served in custody by young people in the ACT]

Source: Community Services Directorate Quarterly Reports, Output 4.1
Unpublished data: 2013-14 CSD Quarterly Report, 4th Quarter YTD result

Over the past year, the number of days Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people spent in detention increased by 25 per cent from 1622 in 2012-13 to 2023 days in 2013-14. However, this represents a 34 per cent reduction in the number of days spent in detention from 3071 in 2011-12.

Young people in group conferencing (restorative justice)

The total number of young people referred to group conferences (restorative justice) declined from 2009-10 to 2013-14 by 41 per cent (217 to 130) (Figure 16).

The decline was most substantial from 2012-13 to 2013-14 when the total number of young people referred to group conferences decreased by 43 per cent (227 to 130) (Figure 16). The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people referred to group conferences also declined from 2012-13 to 2013-14 by 13 per cent (61 to 53) and 52 per cent (158 to 76), respectively.

**Figure 16: Total number of young people referred to restorative justice by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status**

![Graph showing the total number of young people referred to restorative justice by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status]

Source: Justice and Community Safety Directorate, Criminal Justice Statistical Profile, June 2014
The decline in the number of young people referred to group conferences may be due to:

- progression of the Restorative Justice trial initiative (for all eligible first time offenders and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people) to ‘business-as-usual’ at the conclusion of its trial period
- an improved awareness of referral criteria following the trial
- a decline in the number of young people encountering the justice system following police apprehension (Figure 1).

**Figure 17: Total number group conferences that resulted in an agreement**

![Graph showing number of group conferences involving young people resulting in agreements from 2009-10 to 2012-13](image)

**Source:** Report on Government Services (RoGS) 2014, Chapter 16 Youth Justice Services, Table 16A.13

The number of group conferences involving young people that resulted in an agreement decreased by 16 per cent (146 to 122) from 2011-12 to 2012-13 (Figure 17). The number of group conferences involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people that resulted in an agreement decreased by 40 per cent (25 to 15) from 2011-12 to 2012-13 (Figure 17).

From 2009-10 to 2012-13, the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who participated in group conferencing increased (12 to 15) by 25 per cent (Figure 17). This is in contrast to a 30 per cent decrease (151 to 105) in the number of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who participated in group conferencing for the same period (Figure 17).

**Re-offending by young people**

Re-offending, otherwise known as recidivism, by young people on community-based orders is measured by the number of young people who have been subject to more than one final supervised community-based order during the current and previous financial reporting year. Recidivism by young people in detention is measured by the number of young people who have been subject to more than one sentence of imprisonment in the current and previous financial reporting years.

Recidivism of young people on community-based orders in the ACT remained unchanged from 2012-13 to 2013-14, at a rate of 26 per cent. This follows a decrease of five percentage points from 2011-12 to 2012-13. Recidivism rates of young people in detention increased by 23 percentage points from 2012-13 to 2013-14 (Figure 18).
These rates fluctuate significantly due to the small number of young people in detention as compared to the number in community-based supervision. The significant increase in rates may also indicate that detention is targeting young people with a more serious offending history.
Section 2

Progress on strategies

Strategy One: Early Intervention

Early intervention and prevention of a child or young person’s contact with the youth justice system is the most effective way of reducing young people’s offending behaviour in the long term. This approach is about helping children and young people who are at risk of contact with the youth justice system to become strong and to connect with the services and supports they need.

For young people who are at risk of coming into contact with the youth justice system, intervening at the right time can transform their lives and set them on the path to a positive and fulfilling adult life. For intervention to work effectively it means tackling a problem in the early stages rather than waiting until the problem is established.

Outcome
Children and young people receive supports that are responsive early in the life of a problem/s that may place them at risk of contact with the youth justice system.

Focus of work in 2013-14
The focus of work under this strategy has been about progressing policy initiatives and practice underway and undertaking new program development associated with identified actions.
Case study

Melaleuca Place Trauma Recovery Centre

Children who experience trauma at a young age are more likely to have long-term physical, emotional and social problems. If a child doesn’t receive early and specialised support to address damaging patterns of behaviour, they are at greater risk of becoming involved in the child protection and youth justice systems.

The opening of the ACT Government’s $3 million Trauma Recover Centre earlier this year recognises the critical role that trauma-informed therapeutic practice has in assisting Canberra’s most vulnerable children. It’s here that specialist staff work together to provide therapeutic supports that will help children to heal and recover from their trauma.

*Melaleuca Place* is for babies and children up to 12 years who have experienced abuse and neglect, and for their parents or carers and support networks. The centre also provides a program of training and education for carers and professionals working with children affected by trauma of some kind.

“Children who’ve experienced trauma often have difficulty managing their emotions and a whole range of behaviours,” said Kate Gimson, psychologist and project manager at Melaleuca Place. “When they’re upset they might react very violently or aggressively but can’t calm down. There are other children who actually tune out or dissociate, and pretend it’s not happening.”

Melaleuca Place has been designed to be a child-friendly and cosy space, and this is evident in the home-like environment that has been created.

Careful consideration was given to choosing the name of the centre. The decision was made in consultation with young people in out of home care who wanted the name to reflect a welcoming service that would be free from stigma. Significantly, the Melaleuca plant is known for its robust qualities. It readily adapts to harsh and difficult conditions and is highly fire tolerant. The leaves of the Melaleuca have natural healing and soothing properties.
**Initiatives** | **Focus of work/outcomes** | **Next steps 2014-15**
--- | --- | ---
**Early intervention workshops for government agencies**<br>(Actions 1.1, 6.2, 7.5) | Activity has focused on examining ways to increase early intervention across government services. Early Intervention and Prevention Services have commenced scoping a project that will develop an early intervention and prevention platform for the ACT Government. This work will be reviewed and progressed by the ACT Children and Young People’s Taskforce. | Developing the Early Intervention and Prevention Platform. |
**Improving services with families project – “Strengthening Families”**<br>(Actions 1.1, 3.2, 4.3, 6.2, 7.5) | The Strengthening Families pilot program was designed to support families who have complex and multiple needs. Ten families were involved and assisted through an approach involving a trained Lead Worker who worked with the family to implement an agreed family plan, supported by a tailored support package. The pilot was independently evaluated by the University of Canberra as reflecting international best practice. | Strengthening Families has been identified as a flagship initiative to be progressed under the Human Services Blueprint - Better Services Initiatives. The 2014-15 ACT Budget allocated $445,000 to the expansion of Strengthening Families to support up to 50 families. |
**Case Management and Support (MPower) Working and Operational Groups**<br>(Actions 1.1, 1.3, 6.2, 7.5) | The Case Management and Support (MPower) working group was established in 2014 to support better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other young people in, or exiting, the justice system, and their families. The working group focuses on the development of systems, policy, pathways and principles to facilitate the provision of appropriate, evidence-based interventions to young people in contact with the justice system and their families, by government and community organisations.<br>The Case Management and Support (MPower) operational group complements the working group by providing intensive, flexible support for individual young people through interagency collaboration and through a case management approach where appropriate. The operational group focuses on providing better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres and Strait Islander and other high risk young people with involvement in the justice system, and their families. | The Case Management and Support (MPower) working group and operational group will continue to play a key role in the strategic and operational direction of Youth Services in 2014-15. |
**The Child, Youth and Family Services Program (CYFSP) - the Child, Youth and Family Gateway**<br>(Actions 1.1, 1.3, 4.3, 6.2, 7.2, 7.5) | The Child, Youth and Family Gateway (Gateway) has been established providing an initial assessment and referral service under the CYFSP. The Gateway provides a single point of contact for the ACT community. Children, young people and families can access information, receive initial support, complete an initial needs assessment and engage with a service. Reportable outcome measures have been implemented to provide improved referral mechanisms for children, young people and families. | An evaluation of the CYFSP is underway. Key stakeholders of the Gateway are operating as part of the Human Services Blueprint Better Services initiatives. |
### Initiatives

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<tr>
<th>Out of Home Care strategy (2015-20) (Actions 1.1, 1.5, 6.2, 7.5, 7.7)</th>
<th>The Out of Home Care Strategy 2015–20 is a plan to guide the delivery of services for children and young people who cannot safely live with their parents. The Strategy proposes a therapeutically oriented service system that provides a trauma related response to vulnerable children and young people. Extensive consultations to support development of the strategy were held in three rounds during 2013–14. These consultations occurred following the release of an Issues Paper in August 2013, the release of a Discussion Paper in November 2013 and the release of an Information Paper and other targeted consultation material in May 2014. A range of other research projects were also delivered including a literature review, a survey of kinship carers and a survey of foster carers, a co-design project, which engaged service users to identify areas for improvement in service delivery and a child profiling report.</th>
<th>Implementation of the Out of Home Care Strategy 2015-2020 will be a key focus. • work will be undertaken to progress the implementation of the strategy including: training in trauma informed practice for carers, government and non-government • development and trial of a service model to provide comprehensive therapeutic assessments and plans for children and young people entering care.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Literature review on early intervention strategies, analysis of existing programs and strategic service planning (Actions 1.1, 6.2)</td>
<td>An across government literature review on effective early intervention and prevention strategies is near completion. The review focuses on best-practice models of early intervention and prevention initiatives in youth justice. The research paper <em>Youth Engagement in the ACT: Exploring integrated service delivery for young people through structure youth centres and youth participation</em> was released in June 2013 by the Youth Coalition ACT and Families ACT.</td>
<td>The literature review will inform the ongoing development of collaborative early intervention and prevention strategies across government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Diversion Service (Action 1.1)</td>
<td>ACT Government is working to establish a Youth Diversion Service as part of the suite of services under the Child, Youth and Family Services Program (CYFSP). The Youth Diversion Service will provide early intervention and preventative responses for young people and their families who are in the early stages of contact with the youth justice system. The service will connect young people and their families with the services and supports that they need, when they need them, to minimise their risk of ongoing statutory service involvement.</td>
<td>Undertake a procurement activity for provision of the service and implement the service.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trauma recovery centre – Melaleuca Place (Actions 1.1, 7.3, 7.5)</td>
<td>The ACT Government has provided $3.05 million over four years for a Trauma Recovery Centre to support children recovering from abuse and neglect. The Centre will provide intensive trauma-informed therapeutic services to children and young people aged birth to 12 years who have experienced abuse and neglect who are current clients of statutory services. Trauma specific training and education for carers and those working with children who have experienced abuse and neglect will also be provided. Targeted trauma focused training opportunities to further the skills of carers and professionals began in February 2014 and are continuing.</td>
<td>Melaleuca Place opened in July 2014 and will continue to provide healing, recovery and positive life outcomes for children and young people. Trauma specific training opportunities will continue to be provided throughout the year.</td>
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<td>Engaging Schools Framework (Actions 1.2, 4.4, 5.1, 5.3, 5.5)</td>
<td>Seven schools are participating in an action enquiry project process to develop innovative engaging schools strategies. These schools are being supported with seed grants for their projects. Network Student Engagement Team (NSET) Deputy Principals are working with School Network Leaders and schools to support the implementation of the Engaging Schools Framework.</td>
<td>Action Enquiry Projects are to be used to promote engagement strategies and outcomes for students with other schools. NSET Deputy Principals will continue to work with School Network Leaders and schools to support the implementation of the Engaging Schools Framework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Alcohol Diversion Program (formerly known as the Early Intervention Pilot Program) (Actions 1.6, 2.8)</td>
<td>This program was an Australian Government initiative under the National Binge Drinking Strategy. The pilot has ended and ACT Health and ACT Policing have provided funding to continue this program beyond the pilot and it is now called <em>Youth Alcohol Diversion Program</em>. The program provides diversion to education for people under 18 years intoxicated or in possession of or consuming alcohol in a public place. During 2013-14 ACT Policing referred 72 young people to the Youth Alcohol Diversion Program. ACT Health contracted a consultant to undertake development of an alcohol screening and assessment tool for young people, as well as development and implementation of an outcome measure tool that can be used by the Alcohol &amp; Drug Service for clients, such as clients of the Youth Alcohol Diversion program who require assessment for problematic alcohol use. The ACT Policing Crime Reduction Education and Diversion (CRED) Team offers education and awareness presentations in relation to Drugs and Alcohol to ACT secondary schools. During the 2013-14, the CRED team has delivered drug and alcohol presentations to over 1,970 school students in 10 secondary schools. The CRED Team maintain Youth Reception Centres at major regional events which processes young people under the age of 18 years who have been in possession of alcohol and/or intoxicated.</td>
<td>A review of the assessment tool with recommendations and analysis of outcome data will be undertaken. The ACT Policing Crime Reduction Unit will continue to offer alcohol and drug education to ACT secondary schools. This education is now part of the recently launched Schools Liaison program, coordinated by the CRED team and marketed through the ACT Education Directorate. ACT Policing will continue to maintain a presence with Youth Reception Centres at major regional events and youth events.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SupportLink (Actions 1.1, 2.5, 6.2)</td>
<td>ACT Policing made a total of 6470 referrals to Supportlink, of which 228 were referrals to drug and alcohol diversion programs.</td>
<td>ACT Policing will continue to encourage referrals by members to Supportlink, selecting appropriate drug and alcohol diversion programs.</td>
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Strategy Two: Diversion

Diversion involves any process that prevents young people from entering or continuing in the formal criminal justice system. Experience shows that once a young person enters the youth justice system and receives a criminal record, they are more likely to develop a pattern of offending and their offences may get more serious. Diversion aims to avoid this as much as possible taking into consideration the safety of the community.

In contrast to prevention strategies, diversion occurs once a young person’s behaviour has come to the attention of the police. Police warnings, cautioning, supervised bail and restorative justice conferencing are all examples of diversionary processes. Diversionary initiatives in the ACT range from universal services such as public health and education to more specialised and targeted services, such as community-based sentencing and referral to the Youth Drug and Alcohol Court.

Outcome

Children, young people and their families receive targeted support early in the offending cycle to address their immediate and long term needs and reduce their likelihood of offending.

Focus of work in 2013-14

The focus of work under this strategy has been about consolidating changes to policy initiatives and practice already underway.
Case study

Youth Justice Case Management and Barnardos Intensive Support Services

Sophie’s* story...

Sophie is a 12 year old girl whose experience is proof that the right kind of support can work to divert young people away from the youth justice system.

Sophie’s history of exposure to family conflict and violence has made her transition from childhood to adolescence very difficult. She was having trouble at school and the fighting at home was getting serious. On one occasion, things got out of control and Sophie ended up being charged with assault and property damage offences.

The Children’s Court placed Sophie on bail with conditions that she stay with extended family for a time and attend Youth Justice. With the support of Youth Justice case workers and her family, Sophie worked hard to improve her relationships with her family and at school and she was then able to return home.

Youth Justice also arranged assistance for Sophie at her school so she could get back into her lessons. As well, a special assessment service worked with Sophie to find therapeutic programs to help her deal with some of her childhood trauma.

The willingness of Sophie and her family to engage with services in a positive way meant that Youth Justice could refer Sophie to Barnardos for ongoing support in the community. When Sophie returned to court for sentencing, the willingness of Sophie and her family to address issues was acknowledged and her charges were dismissed. Barnardos are continuing to provide support to her and her family. Sophie has not come into contact with youth justice again.

(*not her real name)
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<td>After-Hours Bail Support Service (Actions 2.4, 2.5, 6.4)</td>
<td>In 2013-14, the service undertook 989 client-related matters in relation to 139 young people. Thirty-nine young people in police custody were diverted from custody at Bimberi as a result of an intervention at the Watch House. In November 2013, AHBSS won the Youth Coalition’s YOGIE Award for Excellence in Organisational Practice. The service also received a commendation for Innovation in Practice.</td>
<td>Continue to deliver a high quality service to divert young people from custody and maintain relationships with stakeholders.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Narrabundah House Indigenous Supported Residential Facility Redevelopment (Action 2.7, 5.2)</td>
<td>Narrabundah House (NHISRF) supports high-risk Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males aged 15 to 18 years who are on community based justice orders by providing intensive case management. NHISRF reopened following redevelopment in August 2013. Since this time, it has successfully provided supported accommodation to 14 young men on a short to medium term basis, prioritising those young people who are exiting a custodial environment, to better support their transition and reintegration into their local communities. Key partnerships, including the formation of a Governance Group with membership from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community have been formed to guide and advise on the continued development of the program and to assess referrals.</td>
<td>An evaluation of the service model will be undertaken. Work to strengthen relationships with the community will continue.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACT Policing Watch House (Actions 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 6.4)</td>
<td>The ACT Watch House provides a charging and custodial facility operating 24 hours a day. Watch House staff notify After-Hours Bail Support Service (AHBSS) when a young person on bail arrives at the ACT Watch House after hours, who attend and make arrangements for accommodation and other support services as needed. AHBSS staff continued to deliver training to new recruits within ACT Policing about the service.</td>
<td>ACT Watch House staff will continue to work closely with the AHBSS to divert young people from custody wherever possible.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACT Policing “Front Up” Program (Actions 2.2, 2.4, 6.4)</td>
<td>The program works with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people to assist them to attend Court voluntarily as an alternative to being held in police custody. The program aims to reduce the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in police custody. ACT Policing maintained it support of this program during the reporting period, including providing information to the Aboriginal Justice Centre (AJC) weekly until 21 July 2014. The AJC ceased operation at the end of July 2014.</td>
<td>ACT Policing will be unable to support the Front Up program until either the AJC recommences operation or an alternative organisation can be identified to take over the program.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restorative justice trial initiative:</td>
<td>Restorative justice provides offenders with an opportunity to accept responsibility, help them understand the impact their behaviour has had on others and to be accountable for their actions by finding ways to make amends.</td>
<td>The Restorative Justice Unit is considering extending these initiatives to include the referral of more serious offences for young people and adult offences. This is in line with the Campbell Collaboration’s Review into Face-to-Face Restorative Justice Conferences, which showed best</td>
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<td>• Referral of all eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people to restorative justice</td>
<td>Young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Initiative 52 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were referred to the program in relation to 91 offences containing 70 victims. 25 conferences were held resulting in 10 completed agreements; one failed agreement and the remainder are ongoing. The</td>
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## Initiatives

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<td><strong>Referral of every first time young offender to restorative justice (Actions 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 6.4)</strong></td>
<td>results for restorative justice are achieved for offences of a personal and violent nature. In the interim, the Unit is encouraging referrals of violent crime (e.g. assault, assault occasioning actual bodily harm) to support the possible extension.</td>
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<td>Indigenous Guidance Partner continues to work with and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people to facilitate meaningful participation and positive outcomes. A new target of 95% reflects this need for flexibility. <strong>Young first-time offender initiative</strong> 50 first time young offenders were referred in relation to 73 offences with 52 victims. 38 conferences were held and 21 agreements were completed; one was unsuccessful and the remainder are ongoing.</td>
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<td><strong>Galambany Court (circle sentencing) processes (Action 2.3)</strong></td>
<td>The Galambany Court Advisory Group will be reconvening for 2014-15. The Group will focus on strengthening the Galambany Court and its panel member base. Further training for panel members and staff about family violence and grief and loss will be a priority.</td>
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<tr>
<td>This Court works to provide a culturally relevant sentencing option in the ACT Magistrates Court for eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders. The Circle Sentencing process gives the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community an opportunity to work with the ACT criminal justice system to address over-representation and offending behaviour. The Galambany Court dedicated Hearing Room was opened on 9 August 2014. Agreed recommendations from a community review have been implemented including development of new information pamphlets, panel member recruitment and training, and a dedicated Indigenous Domestic Violence awareness training day occurred in June 2014.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ACT Drug Diversion Programs evaluation (Actions 1.6, 2.8)</strong></td>
<td>A Reference Group will be established to oversee the implementation of the ACT Policing and Court Drug Diversion Strategy. ACT Policing has agreed to Chair the Reference Group with representation from government and community groups. A launch of the Evaluation of Australian Capital Territory Drug Diversion Programs is scheduled for October 2014.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACT Health has developed an implementation plan in response to the evaluation of the ACT Drug Diversion programs and led the development of an ACT Policing and Court Drug Diversion Strategy that focuses on key reforms to the ACT police and court diversion system. The strategy has been informed by the outcomes of the Evaluation of Australian Capital Territory Drug Diversion Programs. A Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for youth diversion programs has been drafted as part of the ACT Policing and Court Drug Diversion Strategy.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Youth Drug and Alcohol Court (Actions 1.6, 2.9)</strong></td>
<td>The program will continue to operate as required.</td>
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<tr>
<td>This is a program that provides an intensive and holistic diversionary option for young people with a drug or alcohol problem who are at high risk of being sentenced to a period of imprisonment. The Community Services and Health Directorates have established the practice model which may be activated when a referral is made and the Magistrate accepts a young person into the program. In 2013-14 one young person was referred for assessment of their suitability for the program. A monitoring and evaluation framework for the program has been drafted as part of the ACT Policing and Court Drug Diversion Strategy.</td>
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Strategy Three: Participation

Ensuring the participation of children, young people and their families in decisions that affect them will encourage the development and ownership of solutions. This means ensuring case plans are culturally appropriate and a young person’s family and natural supports are strengthened to support them. It also means providing young people and their families with information that clearly sets outs their rights, responsibilities and the processes of the youth justice system.

By giving young people and their families the opportunity to identify problems and find solutions, services can also be tailored to best meet their needs. This strategy aspires to a system that works with children, young people and their families to develop and design programs and services that affect them.

Outcome

Children, young people and their families are valued and encouraged to have a voice in matters that affect them as well as the ongoing development of the youth justice system.

Focus of work in 2013-14

The focus of work under this strategy has been about strengthening changes to policy initiatives and practice underway and undertaking new project development associated with the identified actions.
Case study

Family Engagement Officer

Mark’s* story...

Mark is a 17 year old young Aboriginal man who came into Bimberi Youth Justice Centre after being charged and placed in custody until his next court appearance. He is the eldest child in a large, close family who live interstate. This was Mark’s first experience of custody and it was a challenging time, particularly because his family was unable to visit regularly and to attend court.

Mark’s situation was eased through the support of the Family Engagement Officer at Bimberi. Their role is to help young people to keep in touch with their family while they are in custody. They also work with families in supporting the young person during this time.

The Family Engagement Officer stayed in regular contact with Mark and his family, helping them to understand the day-to-day routines at Bimberi, and the various programs that could assist him. Mark’s family was encouraged to be involved with his care and in what was happening for him. This included talking about future court dates and other activities that interested Mark to support his health and wellbeing. Mark was a keen touch-footy player and he continued this throughout his time at Bimberi.

One of the key activities for Mark and his family was to work with the Family Engagement Officer to identify friends and extended family in Canberra who could visit Mark. This meant that Mark continued to have visitors in the time between visits from his family. The Family Engagement Officer was also able to work with Bimberi staff to arrange flexible visiting times for when Mark’s family visited to maximise the time they could spend together. Maintaining connections to family were an important part of Mark’s eventual transition back into the community and his successful return to his home and family.

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<td>Cultural planning in case management processes (Actions 3.1, 1.3, 4.2, 5.6)</td>
<td>Cultural planning in case management processes aims to provide staff with strategies and tools to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and their families to ensure culturally competent practice. Significant progress to strengthen cultural planning for young people on justice orders has occurred. An approach to cultural planning has been developed through broad consultation with government and community organisations with particular consideration of the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, and focuses on young people on justice orders developing or retaining and strengthening their connections to family, community and culture.</td>
<td>The case plan template has been revised to strengthen recognition and support of cultural considerations and will be implemented in the case management process in late 2014.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth Justice Programs and Services Forum (Actions 3.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.6, 7.5)</td>
<td>The aim of the forum was to facilitate co-design strategies for improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who are in contact with the youth justice system. The establishment of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth Justice Programs and Services Coordination Committee was a key outcome from the 2012 forum. A focus for the Committee has been on informing the community about their contribution to improving services and ongoing work.</td>
<td>Ongoing work to inform the local community about progress and implementation of the Committee’s communication strategy.</td>
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<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth Justice Programs and Services Coordination Committee (Actions 3.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.6)</td>
<td>The Committee has continued to provide oversight of programs and services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in Bimberi Youth Justice Centre, including identifying service gaps and providing cultural guidance. This included providing an oversight role to the redevelopment of Narrabundah House (see Strategy Two: Diversion p.26). The terms of reference and membership of the Committee have been reviewed and a communication strategy has been developed. The Committee and relevant stakeholders have continued to identify needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and the community and ways of addressing those needs.</td>
<td>The Committee will continue to engage with the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to reduce the over representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the youth justice system.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Engagement Officer at Bimberi Youth Justice Centre (Actions 3.2, 4.3)</td>
<td>The Family Engagement Officer has continued to assist families of young people, promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the day-to-day functions of Bimberi Youth Justice Centre and provide a point of contact and communication for services seeking to engage and support young people in custody. The role is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identified position that was co-designed with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit and members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.</td>
<td>Continue to assist families, promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and provide a point of contact for services seeking to engage and support young people in custody.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Engagement Strategy (Actions 3.2, 4.3)</td>
<td>The Strategy sets out an approach to engaging families and natural supports of young people who have come into contact with the justice system. The Strategy aims to reduce risk factors and strengthen protective factors associated with youth offending through a framework that embeds family engagement into case management practice.</td>
<td>Implementation is planned for late 2014.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positively engaging children, young people and their families at Court (Actions 3.3, 1.1, 4.3)</td>
<td>A range of information brochures for young people and their families is being finalised. Topics include bail; Good Behaviour Orders; going to Court; Court Reports; and case management (by Youth Services). In addition, the ACT Government is working to establish a Youth Diversion Service as part of the suite of services under the Child, Youth and Family Services Program (CYFSP). The Youth Diversion Service will provide early intervention and preventative responses for young people and their families who are in the early stages of contact with the youth justice system (See Strategy One: Early Intervention p.22).</td>
<td>Brochures will be made available to staff, young people and their families.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restorative justice trial initiative: • Referral of all eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people to restorative justice • Referral of every first time young offender to restorative justice (Actions 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 6.4)</td>
<td>While restorative justice is a diversionary initiative, participation is also a fundamental objective of restorative justice. Restorative justice processes encourage the participation of young people and their families in decisions that affect them. Restorative justice also supports participation from victims by empowering them to have a voice in how an offence has affected them (See Strategy Two: Diversion p.26).</td>
<td>(See Strategy Two: Diversion p.26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Supreme and Magistrates Courts’ building design (Action 3.5)</td>
<td>The ACT Court Facilities Project has been established to provide the judiciary, the legal profession and the community with new court facilities. It is expected the facilities will include courtrooms, jury deliberation rooms, secure jury reception and orientation area, expanded single custodial facility, single secure public entry point and counter, best practice child and vulnerable witness facilities, public cafeteria, capacity to construct additional courtrooms, if needed, and best practice environmental measures. Stakeholder consultation has been the continued focus throughout the year to ensure stakeholders are considered when developing key design requirements. Early stages of procurement for the first Public Private Partnership (PPP) has commenced.</td>
<td>The next stages of procurement will be progressed including finalising the design of the building to commence construction by 2016.</td>
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Strategy Four: Support

Each child and young person’s circumstances are particular to them and responses need to be tailored to those circumstances if the response is to be successful. There is significant evidence that intensive, individualised support at times of crisis can significantly improve the outcomes for children and young people and their families.

Providing intensive, individualised support includes practical measures to help young people and their families to meet their obligations or specific interventions that build the capacity of young people and their families to make sure the changes necessary help to prevent future offending. The focus is to provide a service delivery approach where children, young people and their families are given the right type and intensity of support at the right time.

Outcome
Children, young people and their families are strengthened and services meet their individual needs.

Focus of work in 2013-14
The focus of work under this strategy has been about strengthening changes to policy and practice already in progress.
Case study

Turnaround Program

Tom’s* story...

Tom is a 17 year old Aboriginal young man who has succeeded in getting his life back on track with the support of the Turnaround program.

This voluntary program is for young people who have complex needs that require support from multiple support services. Turnaround staff work with young people to identify and bring together the right mix of services and programs to address their needs.

Last year, a series of events saw Tom drifting towards a downward spiral. His foster care placement broke down, and without family support to rely on, Tom ended up “couch surfing” at friends’ places. Gradually he lost his motivation to continue going to school. He began using marijuana and spending time with friends who were involved with crime.

Tom reached a turning point at the end of 2013 when he was charged with minor property offences. He was able to remain in the community until he was due to return to court for sentencing. During this time, Tom agreed to work with the team at Turnaround. The first step was to link Tom into stable accommodation. This service also assisted him to build skills and find supports to help him to maintain his tenancy. He was willing to re-engage in school and was supported to do this. Tom soon found part-time work that led to an opportunity for an apprenticeship.

The Children’s Court Magistrate acknowledged Tom’s hard work, good behaviour and progress when considering his sentence. The outcome was positive for Tom, with no conviction recorded and no further involvement with youth justice. Tom has not re-offended. He continues to maintain his rental property and is still working towards achieving his educational goals.

(*not his real name)
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<td>Single Case Management (Actions 3.1, 4.1, 5.1, 7.5)</td>
<td>A single case management model provides coordinated case management that focuses on the needs of young people with continuity of a case manager for young people in Bimberi or supervised in the community. The model has been embedded across Youth Services and will be central to the Youth Services Integrated Management System (see Strategy 7). Youth Justice Case Management collaborates with partner organisations through activities such as the Case Management and Support (MPower) initiative and in practice involving individual young people. Key activities delivered through the work of this initiative this year include: • development of the cultural planning approach • finalising the Youth Justice Support and Intervention Framework.</td>
<td>The Youth Services Integrated Management System will be finalised and implemented with single case management being the case management model. A single case management approach will be extended across Care and Protection and Youth Services (see Strategy 6), as part of the Integrated Statutory Services Project. Linkages with community services continue to be a priority for 2014-15, including identifying and mapping service gaps in the single case management process to strengthen case management processes with community services.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turnaround program (Actions 4.1, 5.1, 5.2)</td>
<td>Young people in the Turnaround Program are provided with an intensive and coordinated case plan that assists them to gain education and/or work readiness skills, living skills and community connections. Thirty-five young people were supported by the Turnaround Program in 2013–14.</td>
<td>Ongoing work to provide intensive and coordinated support for young people with complex needs. Operational policy for the Turnaround program will be included in the Youth Services Integrated Management System in 2014-15 (see Strategy 7).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education and skills development at Bimberi (Actions 4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 5.5, 7.5)</td>
<td>Young people participated in a range of training and vocational programs delivered in partnership with the Education and Training Directorate. Programs aim to develop skills to support young people to gain employment on their reintegration into the community. Key activities/outcomes included: • six young people participated in skills and resilience-based programs, including construction industry skills, hospitality industry skills and an Indigenous Cultural Identity Program. • thirty-three young people received training certificates, including Certificate II and III in Hospitality, Certificate II in Business and Certificate II and III in Sport and Recreation.</td>
<td>Ongoing work to provide education and skills development at Bimberi. There will be a focus on young people who are 17 years and older having training and vocational opportunities to learn new skills and knowledge to help reintegrate into the community. This work will be delivered in partnership with the Murrumbidgee Education and Training Centre and the Education and Training Directorate.</td>
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- Alan Tongue, former captain of the Canberra Raiders, completed two *Dream, Believe, Achieve* mentoring programs that help young people with setting personal goals and responsibilities and developing team skills.
- The Murrumbidgee Education and Training Centre (METC) employed two part-time tutors to work individually with young people in the school’s literacy program.
- The METC delivered a program to support young people who are exiting Bimberi with their transition into education, training and/or employment and employed a transition teacher and transition officer. A weekly cultural program was also provided.
- A comprehensive Living Skills Program was delivered to young people transitioning from the Bendora Transition Unit that provided skills in healthy cooking within a modest budget and general hygiene.

**Youth Justice Support and Intervention Framework (Actions 4.1, 4.3, 7.5)**

The Youth Justice Support and Intervention Framework is an evidence-based approach to providing support and intervention to young people who are involved with the youth justice system. The Framework provides agencies and staff with a guide for the design and delivery of support, interventions and programs based on an assessment of a young person’s risk of re-offending—low, medium or high and their areas of criminogenic need. The Framework guides case plan development and addresses risk, needs and responsivity factors for young people.

The Framework will be embedded in practice across Youth Services.

**ACT Youth Commitment (Actions 1.2, 4.4, 5.1, 5.3, 5.5)**

The Careers and Transitions (CaT) website is now known as the Pathways website [https://pathways.act.edu.au](https://pathways.act.edu.au) and was launched in May 2014. Pathways is a secure online application for Pathways Planning for young people aged 10 to 17 years in the ACT. The website provides young people with structured and sequential online career development and transition learning activities. This initiative meets a goal of the Youth Commitment to ensure that the transition between educational settings and post-school options are smooth and supported.

Promotion of the Pathways website is ongoing. Training workshops for staff will continue and a User Guide and comprehensive teaching resources will be made available.
Strategy Five: Reintegration

High-quality services that work to address the causes of offending while in detention and follow the young person into the community on release are vital to prevent re-offending. Assisting young people from the time they enter Bimberi Youth Justice Centre until they are successfully re-established in the community after their period of detention is the key objective of this strategy.

Detention is a last resort. In some cases, detention provides an opportunity to identify and address the circumstances that led to offending. Rehabilitation in detention will only be successful if it is complemented by a planned program of supports in the community upon a young person’s release. This includes the provision of mentoring services, accommodation options and flexible learning options to improve a young person’s reconnection with the community and to establish a better life.

Outcome
Children and young people have access to supports and services to successfully reconnect with the community and the likelihood of re-offending is reduced.

Focus of work for 2013-14
The focus of work under this strategy has been about strengthening changes to policy and practice already in progress and undertaking new policy planning and project development focussed on the identified actions.
Case study

Narrabundah House Indigenous Supported Residential Facility (Narrabundah House)

Moving back into the community after time in custody is often a difficult transition for a young person. This is a period of significant readjustment as they rebuild family and other connections, return to school, study or work and generally find their way in the community.

It is also a time when a young person is most at risk of re-offending if they lack the right supports to help them to re-establish their life. Narrabundah House is an option for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who are at risk of entering the justice system, or who have left custody and are experiencing challenges with education, training and stable accommodation.

Narrabundah House offers culturally appropriate supported accommodation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young men from 15 to 18 years, including providing young people on bail with a temporary place to stay while they are looking at other housing options.

Young men are assisted to develop independent living skills, engage with their community and services they need and are encouraged to connect with their culture. They are also expected to participate in employment, education and training programs that will help to secure their future.

“We take a respectful and goal-orientated approach in responding to what a young person may need” said the Narrabundah House Manager.

“As well, we work with our community partners... to give young people opportunities to engage in activities [in the house], and within the broader community. Our goal is to build the capacity of young people and to enhance their life skills and capabilities. Essentially, we want to get the best outcomes we can for these young people”.

In the last financial year, Narrabundah House assisted 14 young men to re-establish their lives in the community.
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<td>Bendora Transition Unit at Bimberi Youth Justice Centre (Actions 5.1, 5.4)</td>
<td>Young people are supported to prepare for a successful transition into the community through the provision of skills training and access to planned leave from Bimberi, including for work experience. Bendora provides an environment for independent living that prepares young people for life in the community with a comprehensive Living Skills Program. Six young people transitioned from the Bendora Transition Unit in 2013-14.</td>
<td>Continue to provide intensive and targeted programs to young people to assist with reintegration to the community.</td>
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| Youth Housing and Homelessness Services (Action 5.2)                      | Youth Housing and Homelessness Services continue to support young people across early intervention, crisis, and stabilisation. Services providing support include: Housing Support Service, Crisis Mediation Service, Youth Emergency Accommodation Network, Friendly Landlord Service, Youth Identified Accommodation and Support Program, Mentoring, Life Skills and Social Enterprise Service and Parent Accommodation Support Program. In 2013-14, a total 142 young people who were at risk of homelessness because of family conflict were diverted from entering crisis accommodation.  
Other services specifically for young people delivered through Housing ACT included:  
- Youth Emergency Accommodation Network - 106 young people were provided with crisis accommodation and 75 were supported to access longer-term accommodation  
- Our Place – Youth Integrated Education Accommodation Service - 40 young people were supported to remain in education, employment or training through supported accommodation. Of these, 15 were supported to re-engage with their families, and 13 were assisted to move to their own homes or shared accommodation  
- Youth Housing Program - 118 youth tenancies were managed under this program. | Housing ACT will be conducting an evaluation of the ACT homelessness service system to examine the current needs and gaps in the sector, and to inform future homelessness service delivery in the ACT. |
<p>| Flexible learning options (Actions 1.2, 4.4, 5.3)                        | Flexible learning options provide real-life work experience for year 9-12 students who may struggle in a classroom or traditional school setting and focuses their educational pursuits. Eleven flexible learning options were successfully delivered in semester 1, 2014, providing 178 at-risk students with a nationally recognised qualification or skill set, | Planning for piloting flexible learning options for at risk primary school students. This early intervention program aims to address disengagement issues with primary |</p>
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<td>together with work experience. In semester 2, 2014, ten flexible learning options will provide more than 200 students with vocational learning opportunities in areas such as construction, automotive, community services, business, hairdressing/hospitality/retail and fitness.</td>
<td>school students and assist their transition from primary school to high school.</td>
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<td>Conditional release options (Actions 5.4, 5.1)</td>
<td>Community Services Directorate and Justice and Community Safety Directorate undertook initial policy work to explore options to support the successful transition of young people from custody to the community.</td>
<td>Consider the preferred option and progress appropriately.</td>
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<td>Formal partnerships with the community sector (Action 5.6)</td>
<td>Policy work has commenced to identify how current partnerships with the community sector, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers, can be strengthened to ensure services in the youth justice system are flexible, coordinated and needs focused. This includes mapping a range of community services that target young people in the youth justice system.</td>
<td>Progress policy work regarding formal partnership with the community sector.</td>
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<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Job Readiness Support Program (Actions 1.1, 5.3, 5.5)</td>
<td>The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Job Ready Program will fund nationally recognised training in work preparation and community services. The program has broad application in a range of areas including Human Services and administration. The program is designed to prepare Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for employment or further training opportunities. Two training programs are offered a year including ongoing wrap around support for participants. Participants can access assistance with job applications, interview techniques and career counselling. The program is for young people who are at risk of an unsuccessful transition to adulthood, need assistance to reconnect with the community as part their transition from custody and who have low levels of educational engagement.</td>
<td>The program began on 1 July 2014. Consolidation of the program will occur throughout the year.</td>
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<td>Youth Transitioning from Care Program (Actions 1.1, 1.5, 5.1, 5.6)</td>
<td>The Youth Transitioning from Care Program commenced 1 July 2014 and is funded through the Child, Youth and Family Services Program (CYFSP). The Program will support young people from 16–18 years of age to consolidate living skills and promote independence. The program is for young people in out of home care (and may also be involved with Youth Justice, including residing at Bimberi) who are at risk of an unsuccessful transition to independence.</td>
<td>Consolidation of the program and partnership building with other services.</td>
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Strategy Six: Collaboration

A comprehensive and effective youth justice strategy that delivers the best outcomes for children, young people and their families relies on coordinated action by government and authentic participation of the community. The ACT Government has placed significant priority on agencies working collaboratively to achieve better outcomes for children, young people and their families.

A whole of government and community approach to youth justice focuses on the need to break down barriers to communication and to get people within agencies to work as part of one inclusive sector. By collaborating effectively, government agencies must work together and with community organisations, regardless of organisational boundaries. Working effectively across government and community will support continuous improvement and seek better ways of doing things.

Outcome
A shared responsibility across government and community for reducing offending and re-offending by young people.

Focus of work in 2013-14
The focus of work under this strategy has been about review and confirmation of across government priorities and undertaking associated policy and project development.
Case study

Case Management and Support (MPower) Operational Group

David’s* story...

David is 16 years old and has a history of involvement with the youth justice system. He is currently on bail for theft-related offences. He is struggling to keep to the conditions of his bail, which include attending school.

There are long standing issues with school for David. He has had difficulty adapting to secondary school life and his learning disability has meant that he has slipped behind his peers. He is now questioning why it’s important for him to go to school at all, and this means he is at risk of breaching his bail conditions.

To better support David as part of his case management under Youth Justice (YJ), he was referred to MPower. This is a group with multi-agency involvement and a strong local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander membership. MPower’s strength is in assisting young people who are involved in the youth justice system by providing support that is culturally responsive and tailored to their needs.

For David, this support involved MPower arranging his transfer to an intensive educational program for young people experiencing difficulties with the traditional school environment. The program provided David with one-on-one support with lessons as well as support to build wellbeing and living skills. David responded well to this approach and has achieved a near-perfect attendance during his participation in the program.

David is still on bail and his youth justice history means that he may be involved with the justice system for some time. Looking to the future, David is less likely to breach a key condition of his bail and be placed at risk of custody for failing to follow his court order. His reading, writing and living skills also continue to improve.

(*not his real name)
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<td>Multi-agency cross-sector statutory mechanism (Actions 1.1, 6.1, 6.2, 6.6)</td>
<td>Preliminary policy work undertaken to prepare report on options for a multi-agency cross-sector statutory mechanism.</td>
<td>Determine the preferred option and the most appropriate governance structure.</td>
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<td>Human Services Blueprint (Actions 1.1, 5.1, 6.1, 6.2)</td>
<td>The Human Services Blueprint (the Blueprint) is long-term plan that will change the way human services are delivered to Canberrans. The Blueprint will make it easier for services and supports across the community, health, education and justice systems to work together to ensure that people can get the service they need, when it’s needed and for the time it’s needed. The Blueprint has been developed by representatives from the community sector and ACT Government and its implementation will be guided by the Better Services Taskforce. A launch and community celebration of the Human Services Blueprint was held on 29 May 2014 at the West Belconnen Child and Family Centre.</td>
<td>The 2014-15 Budget provided funding for the implementation of Blueprint flagship initiatives under the banner of ‘Better Services’. These initiatives are: • a Local Service Network Launch • a single Human Services Gateway • expansion of the Strengthening Families project.</td>
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<td>ACT Children and Young People Commitment (Action 6.2)</td>
<td>With the conclusion of the ACT Children’s Plan and the ACT Young People’s Plan, the ACT Government has begun work on the development of the ACT Children and Young People Commitment. The Commitment will set a vision for a whole of government and whole of community approach to promote the rights of children and young people. A working group has been established to progress the development of the Commitment.</td>
<td>Finalise and promote the Commitment.</td>
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<td>Integrated Statutory Services Project (Actions 1.5, 4.1, 5.1, 6.2, 7.7)</td>
<td>The Integrated Statutory Services (ISS) project proposed to combine some, or all, activities performed in the Youth Justice and Care and Protection Services areas, including: • reviewing processes and systems to remove duplication and unnecessary steps • reviewing how to work with children or young people to reduce the number of people involved in working with a child or young person • implementing an integrated single case management approach for children under the care of the Director-General • implementing an organisational structure that encourages collaboration and information sharing. The focus has been on establishing the project, developing the project plan, gap analysis and developing high-level design options.</td>
<td>Work to develop: • a single case management approach across Care and Protection and Youth Services, building on the Youth Services single case management model. • a detailed organisation design that includes processes, roles and structures to deliver better outcomes for children and young people. • implementation plans and transitioning to new structures • procurement for a new ISS client information system.</td>
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<td>Improvements to the ACT Criminal Justice Statistical Profile (Action 6.6)</td>
<td>The ACT Criminal Justice Statistical Profile provides quarterly updates of trends in recorded criminal offences in the ACT. Improvements to the profile were implemented to the collection of youth justice data including expanded age and gender breakdowns across all data sets and enhanced offence comparability. These improvements relate to community-based supervision, victim profiles and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander/non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander apprehensions by police.</td>
<td>The Profile will be improved by including data on alcohol and other drug use and family violence.</td>
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<td>Youth Justice and ACT Corrective Services Coordination Committee (Action 6.3)</td>
<td>Youth Justice and ACT Corrective Services meet to better coordinate youth justice and adult corrections services. The focus of work has been to share information regarding programs that identify good practice in managing offenders with high and complex needs, particularly for 18-21 year olds. The Committee has also focused on strengthening linkages between Youth Justice Case Management and Community Corrections, including procedures and protocols for transferring young people on community-based supervision.</td>
<td>The Committee will continue its focus to better coordinate youth justice and adult corrections services.</td>
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<td>Performance and evaluation framework (Action 6.5)</td>
<td>The performance and evaluation framework will ensure that a common evaluation process is used across the 10 year lifespan of the Blueprint. An external evaluation consultant has been engaged and work to develop the framework has commenced.</td>
<td>The Youth Justice Advisory Panel will be engaged to provide advice on the proposed framework. The framework will guide the first evaluation of the Blueprint, scheduled to occur at the end of year three – August 2015.</td>
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<td>Information sharing protocol (Actions 1.7, 6.1, 6.6)</td>
<td>Information sharing protocol with Forensic Mental Health Services and Justice Health enables the timely and appropriate sharing of information between key service providers to deliver coordinated and continuous service provision to all young people entering and exiting Bimberi Youth Justice Centre. The protocol has continued to be implemented during 2013-14.</td>
<td>The protocol is expected to remain in place throughout 2014-15.</td>
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Strategy Seven: Workforce

A skilled youth justice workforce is critical to the delivery of effective youth justice outcomes. Building a strong and capable workforce is about more than just training staff—a long-term workforce plan is required to build and sustain workforce capacity and capability. It is also acknowledged that the workforce needs to have the capability to respond to needs of culturally and linguistically diverse children and young people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and to adapt to changes in context and practice over the life of the Blueprint.

Outcome
People who work in the youth justice system have the skills and capabilities to meet the needs of young people and their families.

Focus of work in 2013-14
The focus of work under this strategy has been about strengthening policy initiative in place and progressing the implementation of practice and program initiatives.
Case study

Building a trauma-informed workforce

It is now widely acknowledged that a history of trauma is a contributing factor in shaping a child or young person’s emotional and behavioural wellbeing, placing them at increased risk of becoming involved in the youth justice system.

For a child or young person, trauma can be experienced in various ways: being bullied, living with disadvantage, experiencing disconnection from culture, exposure to violence or abuse, or the death of a loved one. For practitioners, awareness about the impact that trauma can have has meant learning how to build their skills and knowledge to enhance the way they work with children and young people.

The launch of the ACT Government’s Melaleuca Place Trauma Recovery Centre in July this year has been a significant step forward in improving the outcomes of children and young people. The centre provides a therapeutic intervention for children 0-12 years who have experienced abuse and neglect and who are involved with Care and Protection Services. An ongoing training and education program for practitioners and carers who work with children and young people is a key part of the Centre’s operations.

As part of the Trauma Recovery Centre project, throughout the year, more than 400 professionals across the ACT have participated in specialist training and development opportunities. This has included seminars, forums and specialist training days delivered by educational providers and trauma specialists from the Australian National University, Australian Childhood Trauma Group, Australian Childhood Foundation, the Lighthouse Foundation and Cara House.

The Centre’s training program is complemented by a new Graduate Certificate in Developmental Trauma offered through the Australian Childhood Foundation, with the first intake attracting 19 professionals.
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<td>Integrated Management System at Bimberi Youth Justice Centre</td>
<td>Implementation of the Integrated Management System (IMS) at Bimberi has supported youth justice staff in their work with young people by connecting every aspect of the operations at Bimberi. Staff training on the IMS has continued over the year. Audit and review of the IMS to identify gaps and key areas for improvement has occurred.</td>
<td>Regular review of the IMS and staff training will be ongoing. This work will include alignment with the Integrated Statutory Services Project. Focus will also include the redesign and implementation of the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre Behaviour Management and Classification System. The implementation of this system will be a critical part in developing trauma-informed practice within youth detention facilities.</td>
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<td>Youth Services Integrated Management System</td>
<td>Work commenced on the development of the Youth Services Integrated Management System (Youth Services IMS). The Youth Service IMS is a quality assurance system that embeds all policies, procedures and practice guidelines in a compliance and risk management framework. The IMS will provide day-to-day practical guidance to Youth Services staff when they are undertaking decision making processes in the best interests of the child or young that may limit the human rights of an individual.</td>
<td>The Youth Services IMS is to be completed and implemented in 2014–15. System improvements will be undertaken, including the implementation of the Youth Justice Support and Intervention Framework and enhanced cultural support practices into case management. Enhanced cultural support practices into case management will focus on reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the youth justice system through better connection to culture and community.</td>
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| Workforce Development Strategy                                            | This ongoing work supports the Community Services Directorate’s (CSD) strategic goal to develop a leading organisation. A Workforce Management team was established to progress the Directorate’s recruitment and retention of staff. Training in Respect, Equity and Diversity (RED), Lifeline Accidental Counselling and Work Safety has occurred. A new Performance Management Program has been introduced. | In 2014-15 CSD People Management Branch will:  
• streamline recruitment processes  
• strengthen reward and recognition initiatives  
• implement strategic human resource planning  
• monitor and review the new online IPA system. |
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<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement Service</td>
<td>Work has occurred with community service providers under the Child, Youth and Family Services Program to improve systemic responses and to support the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers.</td>
<td>The program will promote the development of tools and resources to assist services to adapt their organisation to better respond to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Direct consultancy support, delivery of training and cultural awareness workshops are available to services funded by the Child, Youth and Family Services Program and National Affordable Housing Agreement.</td>
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<td>Bimberi Annual Training Plan</td>
<td>Action is complete. Bimberi Annual Training Plan ensures workforce capability requirements for staff are met and to identifies current and future training needs. The Annual Training Plan continues to be updated as required.</td>
<td>Trauma-informed training will be a focus for staff.</td>
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<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the youth justice workforce</td>
<td>Work to attract and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the youth justice workforce has been ongoing, including advertising positions available in Youth Justice in the Koori Mail and the ACT Indigenous Network. The number of staff identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in the Community Services Directorate remains at 39 or 2.9%.</td>
<td>Ongoing work to attract and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the youth justice workforce including: designated positions through the ACT Government Graduate Program, refresh of the ACT Government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traineeship program, continued training in Cultural Awareness to staff.</td>
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<td>Australian Institute of Criminology and Australasian Juvenile Justice Administrators Conference 2013</td>
<td>Action is complete. The inaugural Australasian Youth Justice Conference was held in Canberra, in May 2013, with approximately 250 delegates in attendance. Planning has commenced for the 2nd Australasian Youth Justice Conference, which is scheduled to be held in Brisbane in November 2015.</td>
<td>As a member of the Australasian Juvenile Justice Administrators (AJJA), the ACT will play a role in planning for the conference throughout the year. It is anticipated the ACT will send delegates to attend the conference.</td>
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Summary of progress on actions

A summary of progress implementing the 45 actions under the Blueprint is as follows:

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- **Complete**
- **Substantially complete**
- **To commence**
Linking data trends and the Blueprint’s strategies

The second annual report demonstrates the focus on strengthening early intervention, prevention and diversion strategies is continuing to have positive outcomes for young people and their families.

Our data picture shows sustained reductions in the number of young people coming into contact with, or becoming further involved in, the youth justice system. The Improving Services with Families Project and After Hours Bail Support Service are two key initiatives making a difference to young people in the areas of early intervention, prevention and diversion. The Turnaround Program continues to make a difference in the lives of young people with complex who are involved, or at risk of involvement, in the youth justice system.

With a focus on early intervention and prevention, the Improving Services with Families Project has achieved positive outcomes for 10 families with multiple service needs across the ACT. The project offers support to families to negotiate the service system and co-design service responses that are tailored to meet their unique needs. In recognition of its early success, the ACT Government committed to an expansion of the project and in 2014-15, up to 50 families will receive support under this initiative.

In 2013-14, the After Hours Bail Support Service continued to provide support to young people in contact with the youth justice system. During this period, the service received 989 requests for support, relating to 139 young people. Importantly, the work undertaken by the service resulted in the successful diversion of 39 young people from custody at the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre. The achievements of the service were acknowledged in November 2013, when it received the Youth Coalition’s YOGIE Award for Excellence in Organisational Practice.

In 2013-14, the Turnaround Program is an intensive support and coordination service, working to improve outcomes for young people with complex and high risk needs, who are already involved in (or at high risk of involvement in) the youth justice system. In 2013-14, the program provided support to 35 young people by assisting them to address some of the underlying factors known to be associated with youth justice involvement. The program provides a ‘wraparound approach’ to ensure that young people are adequately assisted to achieve long-term and sustainable positive life changes.
Next steps in 2014-15

The success of prevention and diversion initiatives means that fewer young people are becoming involved with the youth justice system. The focus of future work will be on the young people who enter or remain in the youth justice system - high-risk, repeat young offenders with complex needs and who require wrap-around, intensive services.

This follows a similar pattern to youth offending across Australia, in that a very small proportion of young offenders are often responsible for most of the offending. This group usually:

- begin offending early
- offend at high rates and often very seriously
- are likely to continue offending into adulthood.

The focus for the Blueprint over the next year will be on providing targeted responses to these high-risk young people, as well as continuing to establish early intervention and prevention initiatives. Research indicates that young people assessed as higher-risk offenders benefit most from intensive rehabilitative interventions and that the intensity of services should be proportional to the offender’s level of risk.

The Blueprint Implementation Group has identified the following areas of focus:

- providing targeted responses to young people who remain in the youth justice system, in particular high-risk, repeat young offenders with complex needs who need wrap-around services
- developing strong links between child protection services and youth justice services to support early intervention for children and young people who have experienced trauma, abuse and neglect and those who are repeat offenders
- continuing workforce initiatives including building cultural awareness, engagement and capacity within the youth justice workforce to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the youth justice system.
Further work will also be undertaken on the three actions that have yet to commence. These actions are:

- 1.4 - Establish a shared understanding and co-ordinated actions across the government and the community to implement evidence-based programs to address behavioural disorders in children aged 5-12 years.
- 2.6 - Strengthen therapeutic programs for young people on community and detention orders.
- 3.4 - Develop collaborative service approaches to support young people and families with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Work will also progress in 2015 to determine the next steps forward beyond the three-year action plan, which is due to end in December 2015.