

# BLUEPRINT FOR YOUTH JUSTICE IN THE ACT 2012–2022



## Annual Progress Report 2014 – summary

The second Annual Progress Report for the *Blueprint for Youth Justice in the ACT 2012-22* was released in December 2014. This summary provides an outline of key findings and trends.

### About the Blueprint

The *Blueprint for Youth Justice 2012-22* is a ten-year plan to guide the way government and community responds to children and young people who come into contact with the youth justice system in the ACT.

The seven strategies focus on:

- early intervention
- prevention
- diversion.

A three-year action plan of 45 activities support the Blueprint to achieve a vision of keeping young people 'safe, strong and connected'.

### Progress: where are we?

Year two of the three year action plan is complete. Of the 45 actions identified in the action plan:

- 14 are complete
- 28 are substantially complete
- 3 are yet to commence.

### Priorities: areas of work

Focus of work for 2013-14 has been on:

- strengthening prevention and diversion strategies
- embedding initiatives and practices underway
- developing new policy and program work.

To read the full report go to [www.communityservices.act.gov.au](http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au)

### Major achievements

Work under the Blueprint continues to demonstrate reducing numbers of young people coming into contact with, or becoming further involved in the youth justice system (see table below).

This includes young people being apprehended, under youth justice supervision and in detention.

Number of young people apprehended by ACT Policing	2012-13 2,031	2013-14 1,948	↓ 4%
Time young people spent in custody (days)	2012-13 6,525	2013-14 6,041	↓ 7%
Number of young people under supervision	2011-12 244	2012-13 218	↓ 11%
Number of young people in detention	2011-12 136	2012-13 104	↓ 24%

### What is making the difference?

The data for the year two annual report shows sustained reductions in the number of young people coming into contact with, or becoming further involved in the youth justice system. This means that crime is being prevented, the impact of crime is reduced and public safety is improved. Initiatives that are contributing to the downward trend include:

- fewer young people being apprehended by ACT Policing
- prevention and diversion initiatives (*the After Hours Bail Support Service that supports young people to keep to conditions of their court orders*)
- evidence-based practice in youth services (*implementation of the Youth Justice Support and Intervention Framework*)
- restorative justice (*all first time offenders and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders are referred*)
- transition support through the Bendora Transition Unit at the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre (*young people are supported to develop skills and networks to move back into the community and to reduce the likelihood of reoffending*).

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## Tracking the trends

While it is relatively early days in the life of the Blueprint and change will take time, we are already seeing the effect of initiatives.

From 2010-11 to 2012-13 there have been reductions in the number of young people apprehended by ACT Policing (29%) and under youth justice supervision (22%).

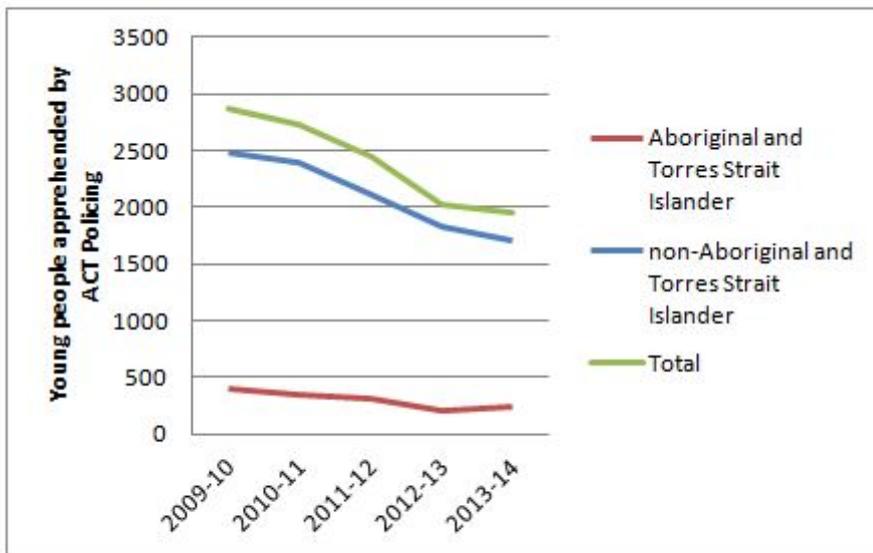


Table 1: Young people apprehended by ACT Policing

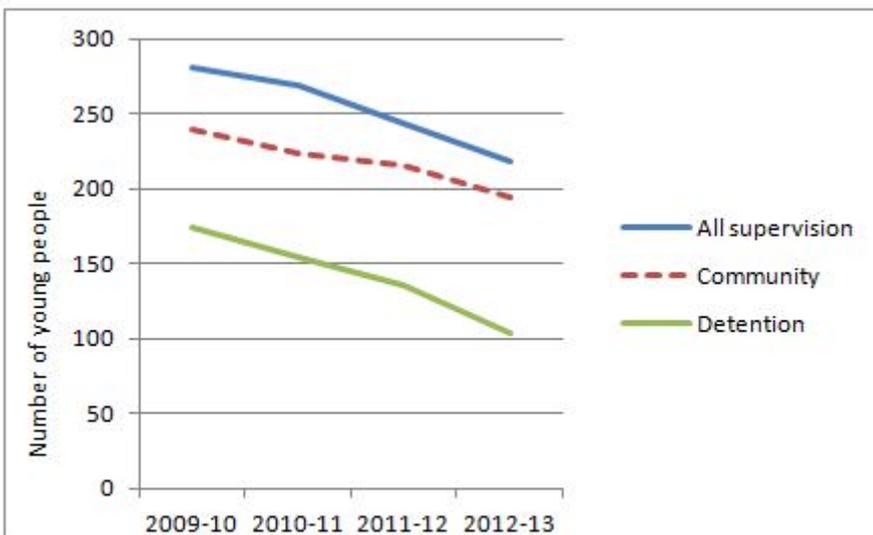


Table 2: Young people under youth justice supervision

## How many young people are in the ACT?

- As at 30 June 2013 the total number of young people in the ACT was 56,934.
- Just over 3% of the total number of children and young people in the ACT were in contact with the youth justice system.

On an average day\* in 2012-13, there were:

- 111 young people under youth justice supervision

Of these:

- 94 were under community-based supervision
- 18 were in detention
- 28 identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- 83 were non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

## Type of offences

Most offences where children and young people were apprehended by ACT Policing related to:

- traffic and/or vehicles (932)
- justice procedure offences such as a breach of court ordered conditions (823)
- theft or theft related offences (535).

\*see page 3 for explanation

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## Where to from here?

The third year of the implementation of the Blueprint will see the focus shift from consolidating changes to policy and practice in the areas of prevention and diversion to:

- supporting high-risk young offenders with complex needs who enter and remain in the youth justice system
- reducing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the justice system
- strengthening early intervention for vulnerable children and young people, including strengthening initiatives to respond to known factors that lead to offending, such as young people involved in the child protection system
- embedding and making operational policy and practice change-initiatives through the Case Management and Support (MPOWER) working and operational groups
- monitoring potential risks associated with youth unemployment (11.3% in the ACT at Jan 2014) — particularly for disadvantaged groups who may be impacted by the projected slow growth in low skilled casual work.

## An ongoing challenge

The over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the youth justice system remains a challenge.

Although Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people aged 10-17 years make up 2% of the total ACT population, they represent 26% of all young people under youth justice supervision on an average day.

In 2012-13, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young person was 13 times as likely to be under supervision during the year as compared with other young people. Nationally this figure is 17 times.

The Blueprint is making a difference. A one-year data snapshot for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the ACT shows reductions in:

	2011-12	2012-13	% change
Number of young people under supervision	65	59	 9%
Rate of young people under supervision on an average day (per 10,000)	427.2	287.9	 33%
Average length of time spent under supervision	221	179	 19%

## \*A note about the data

'average day' is calculated by summing the number of days each young person spends under supervision during the year and dividing this total by the total number of days in the financial year. The number of young people on an 'average day' are rounded and some young people may have moved between community-based supervision and detention on the same day, leading to discrepancies in totals.

## Sources

- ACT Criminal Justice Statistical Profile (Sept 2013 to June 2014 Quarter)
- Australian Institute of Health & Welfare *Youth Justice in Australia 2012-13*
- ABS *Population by Age and Sex Tables*, 30 June 2013.