



22 October, 2021

The Chair and Members,
Community Support and Services Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

Submission: Criminal Law (Raising the Age of Responsibility) Amendment Bill 2021

Dear Committee,

In September 2021, the Queensland African Communities Council (QACC) and its youth agency – the African Youth Support Council (AYSC), became aware of the call for public to make a submission to the Parliamentary Committee's inquiry into the proposed Amendment Bill 2021 to raise the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 14 years old, and to transfer any children under the age of 14 years old out of custody.

QACC is making a submission with the focus on:

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1. Support for the proposed Amendment Bill 2021
2. Support for Bob Atkinson's Report
3. Relevant QACC's work in youth justice – early intervention and rehabilitation measures
4. The African youth in the criminal justice system
5. The role of trauma, age and other factors in children's offending

My submission reflects the widespread views of my community and other relevant key stakeholders with profound interests in the criminal justice system, or whose work involves young people.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Beny Aterdit Bol OAM
President, QACC

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Current Bill – Criminal Law (Raising the Age of Responsibility) Amendment Bill 2021

QACC supports the Amendment Bill 2021 – Criminal Law (Raising the Age of Responsibility), which was introduced by Mr Michael Berkman MP Member for Maiwar, on 14 September, 2021, with the objective of ensuring that “children 14 years of age are not incarcerated or otherwise punished under the criminal legal system.”

Bob Atkinson AO, APM Report

QACC also supports the recommendations presented by Mr Bob Atkinson AO, APM, in his report on Youth Justice, particularly, 68(C) and 70 which recommend:

“establishment of needs based programs and diversions for 8 – 11 year old children engaged in offending behaviour”;

“that the Government consider legislating so that 10 – 11 year olds should not be remanded in custody or sentenced to detention except for a very serious offence.”



Relevant QACC's work in the youth justice system

African Communities Council (QACC) is a not-for-profit umbrella organization that represents more than 70,000 people of African descent and organisations across Queensland. QACC has committedly served the African community since 2003 and has been able to do so through the generous support from a strong membership base and strategic partnerships.

One of the QACC's strategic objectives is to deliver services which are specifically targeted and community-led right from planning, development and through to implementation stages. This approach helps in response to the growing complex issues and recognition that most of the community members were not either confident, or well-equipped enough to effectively engage with the system and mainstream services, or may have developed a high degree of distrust in some agencies.

We established the AYSC in 2020 and since then, we have developed a 3-year youth strategic plan and a model that focuses on early intervention and rehabilitation strategies. Our Youth Mentors now run programs in school across all the LGAs in Greater Brisbane as part of early intervention approach, and weekly individual goal-setting and therapeutic activities inside the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre and West Moreton Youth Detention Centre as part of the rehabilitation measures to assist those in the criminal justice system transition back into the community and try to prevent them from re-engaging in



offending. I have attached an appendix that spells out our strategy and driving principles that underpin our approach.

For more information about QACC and its services, please visit <https://anchor.fm/qacc-radio> or www.qacc.com.au, and our social media platforms.

African youth in the criminal justice system

The recent data clearly demonstrates an alarming, but not surprising increase in the number of the African youth in the criminal justice system. The young offenders from African background in the criminal justice system in Queensland make up to 2% of all the offenders. When I made a comparative analysis on the basis of cultural representation, and given the relatively smaller size of the African community, I quickly came to the conclusion that African youth were being over represented in the criminal justice system and the trend continues to increase significantly. We recently even saw a 12 years old young person being involved in a very serious offending and later got locked up at BYDC. I have also observed and received reports of various incidents involving young people from African backgrounds engaging in anti-social behaviour in some schools and in the neighborhoods across the Greater Brisbane LGAs.

The role of trauma, age and other factors in children's offending



It would be a huge mistake by our public and private institutions to only look at children's offences from the angle of individual crime and responsibility or accountability. When children as young as 10, 11, 12 or 13 years old are engaging in anti-social behaviour or criminal offending, our collective and individual's reaction should immediately look beyond those children involved in the crime. We should look at the children's surrounding circumstances including family's environment, social networks, school they are going to and how all of those factors contributed to the child's behaviour and what should be done to address each of those. Locking up the children under the age of 14 doesn't address any of the above and it will not prevent or deter not only the young person involved, but other young people in the same circumstances because there is more than the crime committed.

Issues such as intergenerational disadvantaged, poverty, trauma, lack of role models and so forth are critical to put into consideration when a young person is found to be involved in crime.

Expert's analysis

According to Dr Tracey Westerman, some of the responses in dealing with youth crime, particularly the black kids, should include:

- *Geo-mapping of the youth crime data to identify hotspots to mobilise and test prevention efforts*
- *Establish causal data-driven links between racism and juvenile justice outcomes*
- *Improve cultural competence in the justice system in a way that is measurable and trackable against youth crime rates*
- *Develop unique criminogenic assessments to determine early risks and casual pathways to crime*



Dr Tracey Westerman also made some interesting observations around intergenerational issues and trauma. She stated that “compromised attachment” takes place when “there is disconnection from primary attachments” such as important figures in the child’s life like parents, teachers, extended family, guardians and other role models. The consequence of this is that similar compromised attachment is passed on by the child to the next “generations and future relationships” hence producing intergenerational disadvantage. The children need to know that the “love and support of their primary carers is there in a predictable and consistent way.” Dr Westerman believes that children disconnected from those key figures tend to develop “self-loathing alongside the feeling that they have nothing to lose” and that means they “no longer fear anything” including committing crime and going to prison.

Various studies indicate that between “80 and 93 per cent of kids in prison have trauma.” Dr Westerman stated that “untreated childhood trauma has strong links with substance abuse and violence” and that those children have limited capacity to “calm themselves.” She pointed out that placing “traumatised children with other traumatised children can create an environment that ensure heightened reactivity to others becomes normalised” and this increases the chances of future criminal offending by those children. Therefore, treating the trauma is also a critical part of crime prevention strategy.



Case study

Young Person Name: BB

Young Person Age: 14

Issues

BB was attending High school and currently in grade 8. He was moved around to a few different schools around South Brisbane area. He didn't disclose those schools to us. He has been known to the police prior to being remanded in BYDC aged 14. He has never been in custody before this is his first time being arrested and in custody. BB was locked up due to his involvement in the recent serious incident with a number of other teenagers where a family home was broken into, and residents of the home invaded sustained seriously injuries.

Family's circumstances

In August 2021, BB's case worker at the BYDC enquired if we could go and visit his home as they were having difficulty reaching out to his mother as BB requested to speak to her. YJ went to the home several times and nobody was either home or the mother did not want to open the door. We suggested we could go there and see if the mother would open her home to us and give an opportunity for BB to have a chat with his mum. YJ's case worker was happy with that, and we made it our priority the next day. When we arrived there the mother was hesitant to open the door to us until we explained to her who we were,

When we were finally allowed in the mother was very quiet and didn't talk much. We observed the house to be unclean, no couches. It was just King Sofa bed in the living room and alcohol bottles laying around. There was no place to really sit. The mother



was home with her sister. We explained to her that her son wanted to speak to her, and we could call him so they could talk. She was so relieved. As they were on the phone, we didn't understand what they were saying as they were speaking in their native language. They spoke for about 30min on the phone. You could see the hurt and pain from the mother.

Once they got done on the phone we spoke to the mother, and she mentioned she was not married and no longer in a relationship with BB's father. BB was her only child. She raised BB by herself. She indicated that she was currently working in a distribution warehouse and does night shift which mean most of the time leaving BB home alone. When we first spoke with BB, he did disclose to us that he does not have a support group in the community or in the family hence why he is free to do whatever he wanted. The mother wouldn't disclose much to us while we were there, so it went quite for a bit, and we just encouraged her to be strong and give us a call anytime she needed help.

Custody as a deterrence or not

Speaking to BB and observing him over the first few weeks, we believed it is not helping to improve his situation that he was locked up at that young age. He has refused bail multiple times because he may not mention it, but we believed he is fearful of retaliation in the community. Based on his environment at home and in the community, he feels much safer locked up as he got fed and looked after. He has seemed to be showing this character of being comfortable locked up.

What would have worked better than getting locked up under the age of 14

For [REDACTED] what would have worked better than getting locked up at 14 years old would be him having a support group around him and more positive family influence. He



really enjoys athletics and running at school. Encouraging him to participate and be involved in community sports would have prevented him from being around negative influence. He seems to follow a lot of his friends without realising or understanding the consequences. All his associates in that particular had been locked up before, so they know how it is in there but for BB, it is a new environment. BB needs a lot of support, education and more positive influences in his life rather than the life in custody.

Appendix 1: An African Village Model

An African Village Model

of

Youth early intervention and rehabilitation strategy

Most people are very familiar with the concept of “it takes a village to raise a child.” But probably not many people know what this actually means in real practical terms when it comes to raising a child within the context of the African community.

Culturally and traditionally, majority of African people believe that a child belongs to everyone in the community. If a child does something great, everyone takes a pride, celebrate that and use it to encourage and motivate others to do the same. Equally, everybody in the community or village has a moral obligation to contribute to the upbringing of a child regardless of whether they relate to them or not.

In an African village, if you do something wrong and someone spot you, they would punish you and then inform your parents or family about what you did and the action they took to discipline you. As a child, you would grow up knowing that this is the norm and one of the key customary principles of raising children in the village. This is not typically applicable within the Australian context or legal framework.



Current challenges

- Communication breakdown/language barriers between agencies and parents and between children and parents
- Most parents feel judged, misrepresented and their concerns not either better understood or unfairly dismissed altogether in terms of their love, caring and parenting knowledge for their children and that the system encourages conflict in families
- Unrealistic high expectations of parents for their children in terms of education/careers
- Families' relationship breakdowns affecting/victimising some children
- Community's lack of trust in the system and feeling of disempowerment
- Lack of knowledge of, and limited engagement with the system by parents
- Inability of service to reach out to the struggling grassroots communities
- African American gang's lifestyle adopted by some young people
- Organised crime/sophisticated criminal networks using vulnerable youth and trapping them in the cycle of criminal activities
- Teenagers booking accommodation through Air BnB for parties – causing major violent incidents

Way forward

We believe some of our parents residing in the Western world still value the concept of “it takes a village to raise a child” approach. The question is how you would apply this concept in our current situation in Queensland or Australia. Most parents and community's members complain a lot privately about the system disempowering them as they allegedly believe children are misusing the system against their parents. Some children normally threaten their parents to call the police on them if they did not stop talking to them about their parental responsibilities.

A collective approach involving transparent, genuine and intensive engagement, underpins by trust and positive relationship-building between the system and the community is paramount.

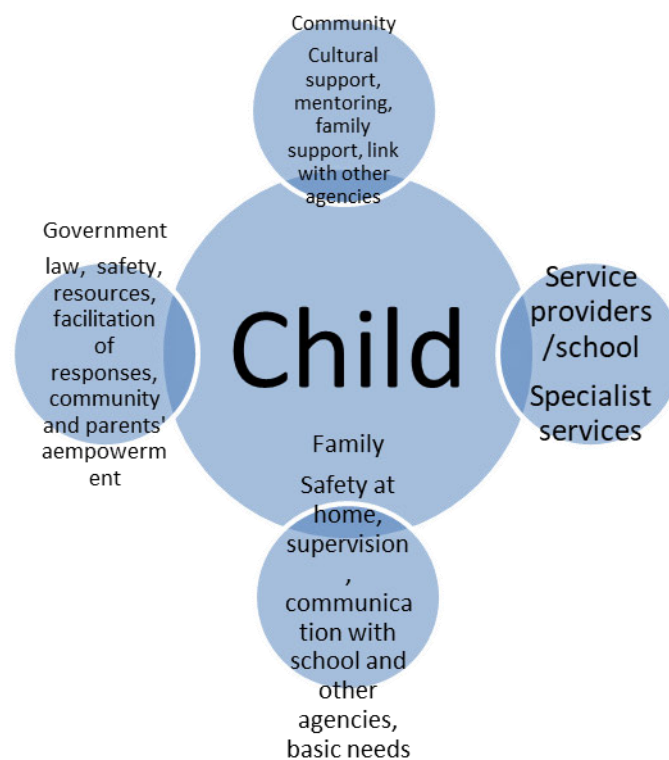
First of all, community need to be well-educated in terms of adjusting their parenting style to fit within the Australian system. This needs the parents themselves to know



that they live in a totally new system and that they have to engage with and understand how the new system works so that they can adjust accordingly.

The Venn diagram below represents what we believe an African Village's Model/Approach could look like in Queensland or Australia for that matter.

Venn diagram of an African Village's Model in Australia



Rehabilitation Strategy

1. Intensive therapeutic, cultural and mentoring programs inside and outside the juvenile centres
 - Case management
 - Proper coordination of the release of a young person/transitional management from juvenile centres back into the community and engagement outside
 - Transition of young adults from corrections to the community, and from juvenile centres to corrections



- Court support and referral pathways to housing, transport, employment, AOD and counselling services – with some trusted specialist services such as QPASTT to be invited to deliver specific services at AYSC’s centre at Redbank Plains and other centres like YOTS’ centre at Logan Central, where kids feel comfortable
 - AYSC’s mentors involvement in Co-responder’s program across various LGAs
2. Mandatory restorative and reconciliation conferences
 - Reconciliation conferences between the rival groups before their release and making that a key condition of their bail application if possible and to include the requirement to renouncing their membership of the rival gangs
 - Reconciliation sessions to be co-facilitated by AYSC’s Mentors, other support agencies like QPS and JY
 - Group’s activities to follow
 - Families of the rival groups to be invited to some sessions inside
 3. Outreach Program
 - Resources to run after-hours community’s outreach activities and patrolling at various hotspots across Greater Brisbane LGAs, especially on Friday, Saturday and Sunday evening
 - Detection and disruption of anti-social behaviour
 4. BYDC and WMYDC’s programs
 - More intensive engagements (3 - 4) days a week inside the juvenile centres
 - Individual goal-setting, recreational, therapeutic programs, cultural support, life-skill workshops
 5. Government’s intervention around the booking of accommodation by teenagers through Air BnB
 6. Intelligence sharing between the community and law enforcement agencies including federal agencies around organised crime and other criminal activities – looking at jurisdictional gaps between state and federal agencies and opportunities for cooperation and partnerships

Early intervention strategy



Our youth early intervention strategy is designed holistically to produce a strong, optimistic, ambitious, competitive, resilient and relatively integrated future generation of the African community in Queensland and Australia as a whole.

For several years now, we've observed our children struggling to find their place within their families, communities and schools. Communications between parents and their children, parents and schools or local authorities and with their communities are profoundly inconsistent, inadequate, uncoordinated and ineffective altogether. Such breakdowns in effective and positive communication strategies have consequently led to widespread high levels of distrust, conflicting expectations, frustrations and finally leaving most young people highly disconnected, disengaged and subsequently involved in anti-social behaviour.

Most parents also struggle to engage and understand the new system and institutions they live in due to communication barriers. This leaves most of them in social-isolation from the mainstream community. They feel disempowered by the system and as such, they're unable to exercise their proper authority as parents to raise their children responsibly. Their limited knowledge of, and interactions with the system also make it extremely difficult for them to adjust their parenting styles and communications with children at home. All of these frustrations and pessimisms unsurprisingly cause a lot of mental health illnesses and family's relationship-breakdowns and many other associated ramifications and negative spillovers.

The youth and family's early intervention strategy will employ a variety of specifically, culturally appropriate and strategically targeted mechanisms to support families and children at home and in identified schools. The carefully selected competent African youth mentors at various locations across Queensland will organise their locally designed and structured activities to support individual young people and families and schools in order to ensure those who are at risk of falling into wrong crowds or becoming disengaged from learning at schools, are identified and supported at early stage before things escalate and get out of control.

The mentors will also work very closely with students' career experts, parents and teachers to ensure communication is consistent and expectations are managed and aligned to the student's needs and interests.

There will be activities similarly co-designed by mentors with parents to help them improve their styles and means of communication and parenting techniques at home with their children and with schools and other child welfare institutions.

1. School-based Program

- School's outreach's activities and leadership camping
- Homework club at AYSC's centre after-school and in schools



- Career & employment expos and motivational speaking's sessions by selected role models in the community
- Career mentoring, homework club, resume building, job search and interview's techniques, short-term courses
- Family's support and empowerment through liaising and facilitating positive and regular communications and forums/seminars organised by youth mentors at various local youth hubs to involve schools, Child Safety, police, families and young people
- Joint trust and relationship-building activities with youth involving activities such as BBQs, sporting competitions and law and order presentations by police and Child Safety's officers, African parents and elders' presentation on culture and parenting
- Social/cultural and recreational activities

Employment and cultural intelligence

African community is a very socially and culturally complex and one of the newly emerging communities that only very few, even within the African community itself, understand. There are so many layers of leaderships and associations even within some relatively larger tribal groups. There are a lot of myths and assumptions about the African community and their challenges. There are a lot of confusions and contradictions, sometimes and partly caused by even some members of the African community attempting to pursue their individual's interests in the name of the community. There are also some organisations that mislead agencies and people about their knowledge and high level of engagement with the African community, and attempt to position themselves for the purpose of securing grants. Briefly for these reasons, QACC's leadership has equally been engaging and lobbying agencies and organisations to help change some misleading perceptions, and strongly advocate for the employment of suitable African people across various organisations including in government, and particularly in positions of influence so that they can shape and help design culturally appropriate and effective programs and policies. We have also been facilitating some cultural intelligence training for some key agencies.

Employment of right, socially connected, passionate, trusted and culturally knowledgeable and community-oriented people by various key agencies that work with our young people and families is critical and paramount. Most people sometime maybe qualified, experienced and impressive to employers, but they unfortunately don't have the same practical connections, relationships and passion locally in the grassroots communities.



Overrepresentation of the African people in the system

We have recently observed an alarmingly increase in the number of African people entering the criminal justice system both in juvenile centres and correctional facilities across South East QLD. In other words, the trends in the number of African coming into the contact with the criminal justice system or committing criminal offending, has increased significantly. The data from the juvenile centres and correctional centres suggest the same. When we look at those numbers and analyse them in terms of per a race or cultural background, it's apparently clear that our people are overrepresented in the criminal justice system. Our analysis of the data also suggest to us that some of our people, especially the adults, are probably committing criminal offences not knowing they are committing crimes because they don't engage with or understand the system altogether. This cannot continue.

Family in the African traditional context

A family for a typical African cultural and social conservative person include not only members of the extended family, but all aunties, uncles, cousins, clan members, friends of the family's members and their associates well-known to the family. You would only distinguish, observe and follow strict cultural protocols that exclusively and clearly identify and allocate specific roles and responsibilities during social formalities and ceremonies such as marriages. All immediate, or nuclear and extended family's members and carefully selected clan's members and friends would be allocated specific responsibilities when it comes to formalities. But in terms of guidance for children, anybody who would see something wrong would assume the responsibility to either take action or report the matter to the concerned family.

Trauma, shame and distrust of people

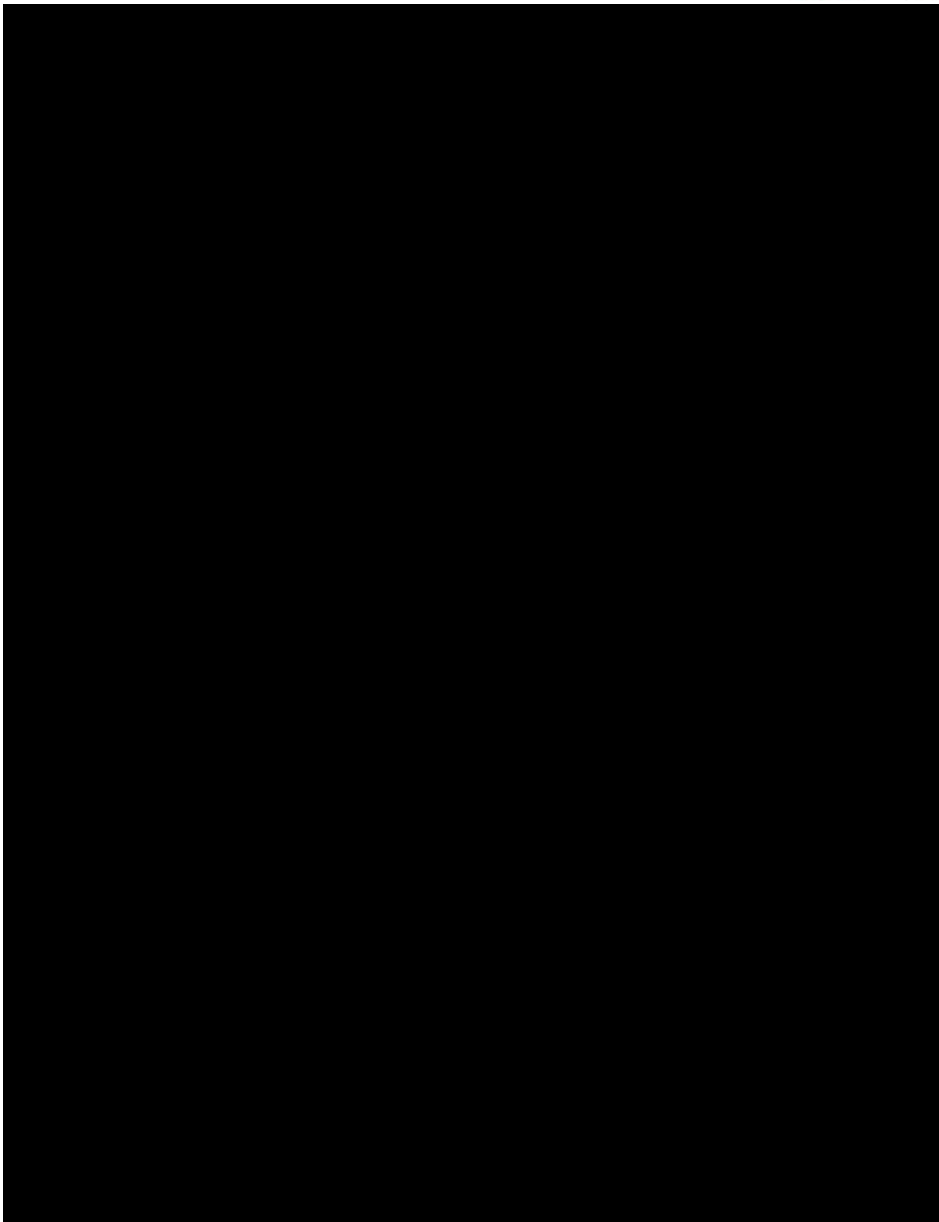
Most of the parents and people who settled in Australia on humanitarian visas have gone through numerous phases of traumatic journeys across different countries before they settled in Australia. While travelling and finding safe place for their families, their lives were shaped by different traumatic, cultural, social and political events. Their families comprise of children who probably were all born in different countries including Australia. A parent would typically be born in their home of origin, and maybe some of their children were born in the second country (refugee camps) and others finally in Australia. The family may have some members who are still in the refugee camps in different countries, some may have gone to other Western countries like U.S.A, Canada, U.K and others and majority of them may still be in their original home country. Some families may have lost a number of family's members during these journeys and are caring for others somewhere else. The children while born in Australia or in the refugee camps and settled in Australia at a very young age, may not fully comprehend

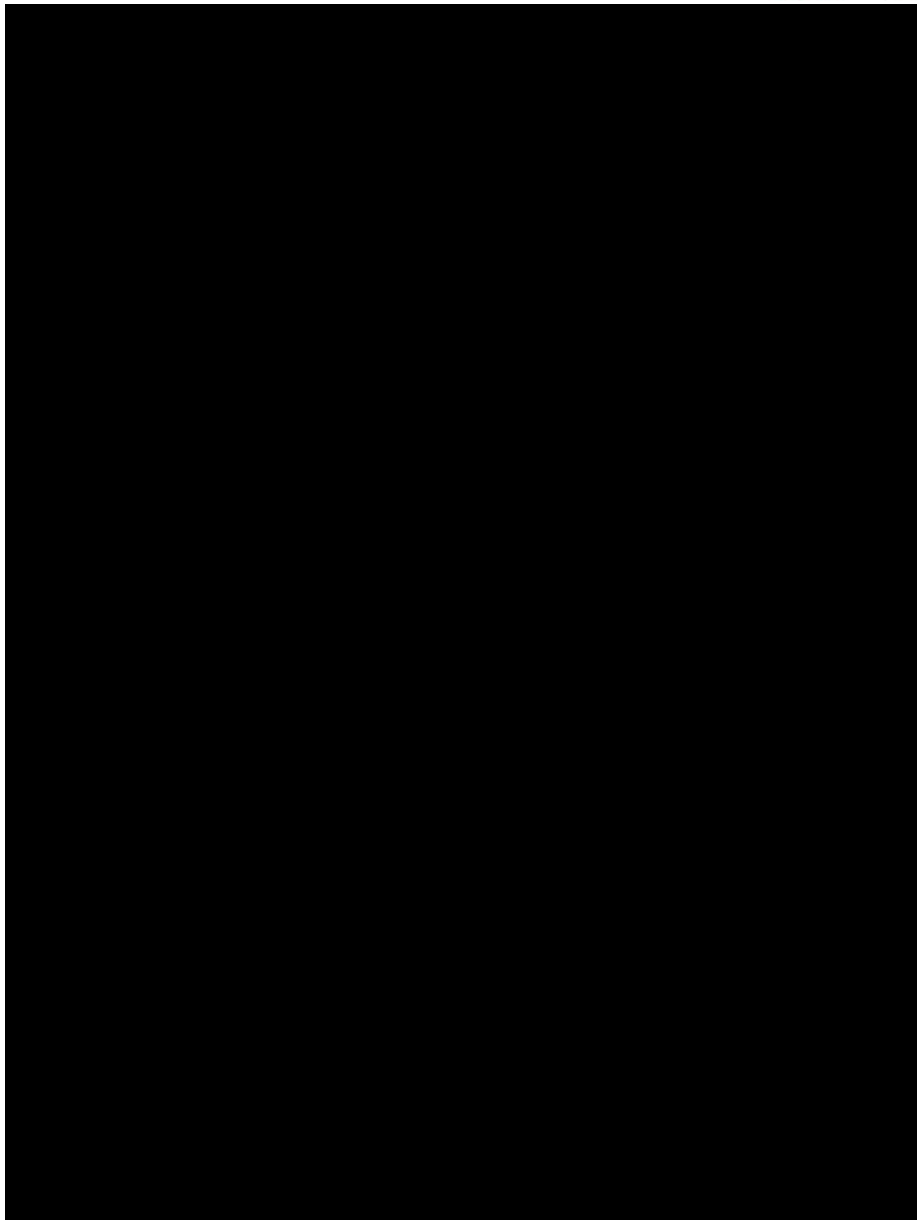


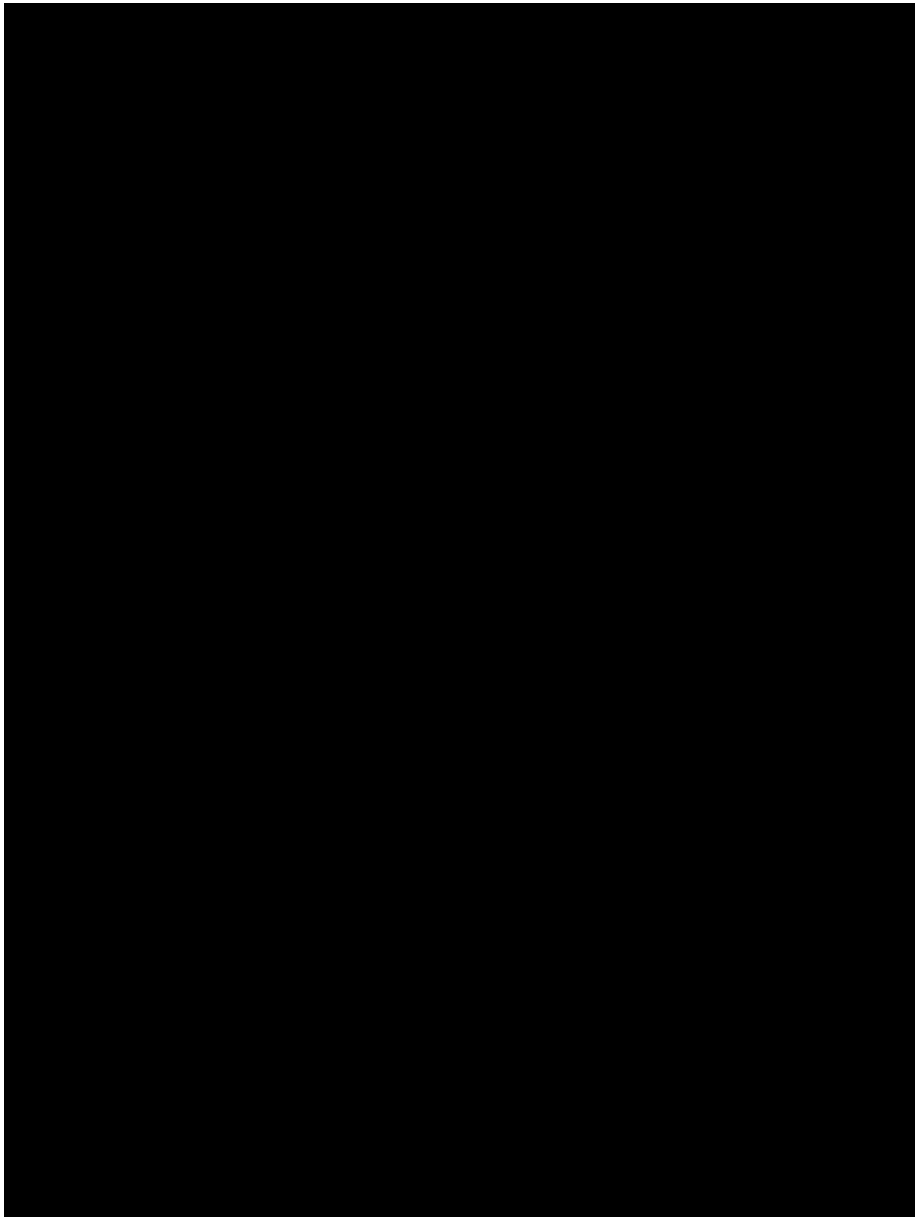
or understand this and what their parents may be going through. These family dynamics and even cultural diversity within our families including communication barriers and limited knowledge of the new system in Australia and external influence are mainly the cause of most of the relationship's issues across our community. The complex social environment and the system also cause trust issues. Many people feel like they can't trust anyone because they would assume that those approaching them for assistance would not do so in line with their cultural norms, values and principles.

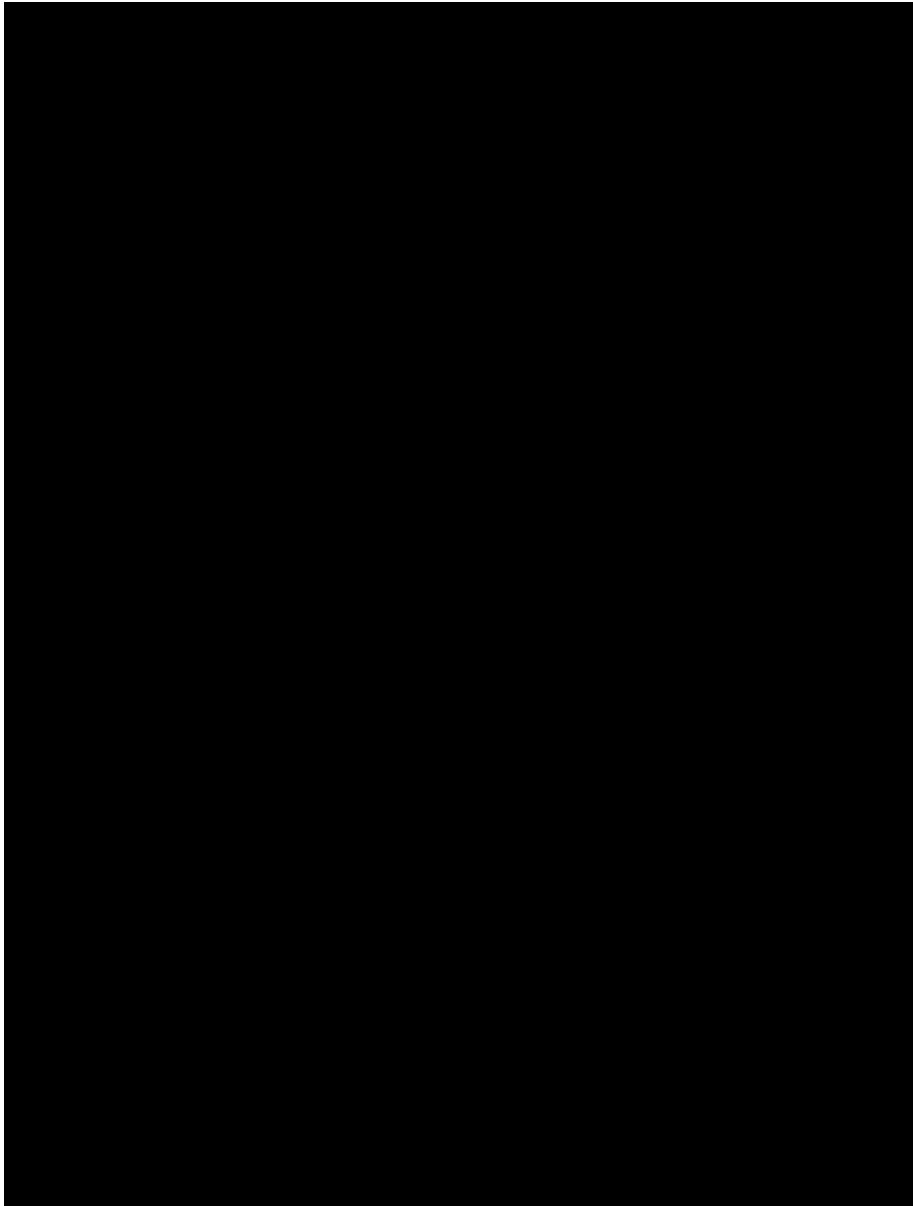
An effective approach will initially require trust and relationship-building, appropriate community engagement, streamlining of services, specifically targeted culturally appropriate programs, well-coordination between agencies working with young people and families, genuine and transparent partnerships and collaboration, understanding and knowledge of family's cultural values and expectations of service.

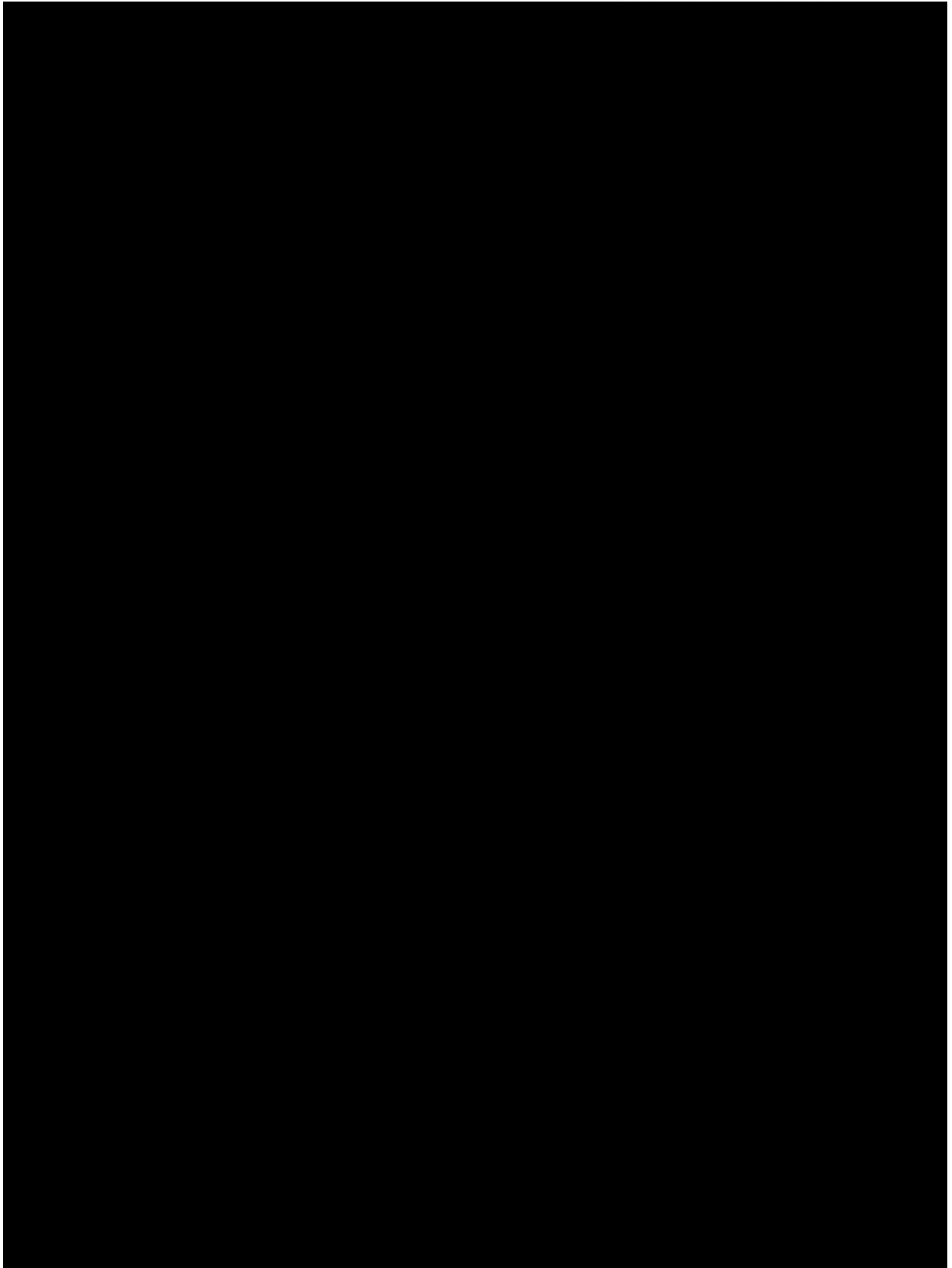
Below are some pictures we took previously from our youth forums and at the African Youth Centre at Redbank Plains and QACC-organised soccer tournaments recently.



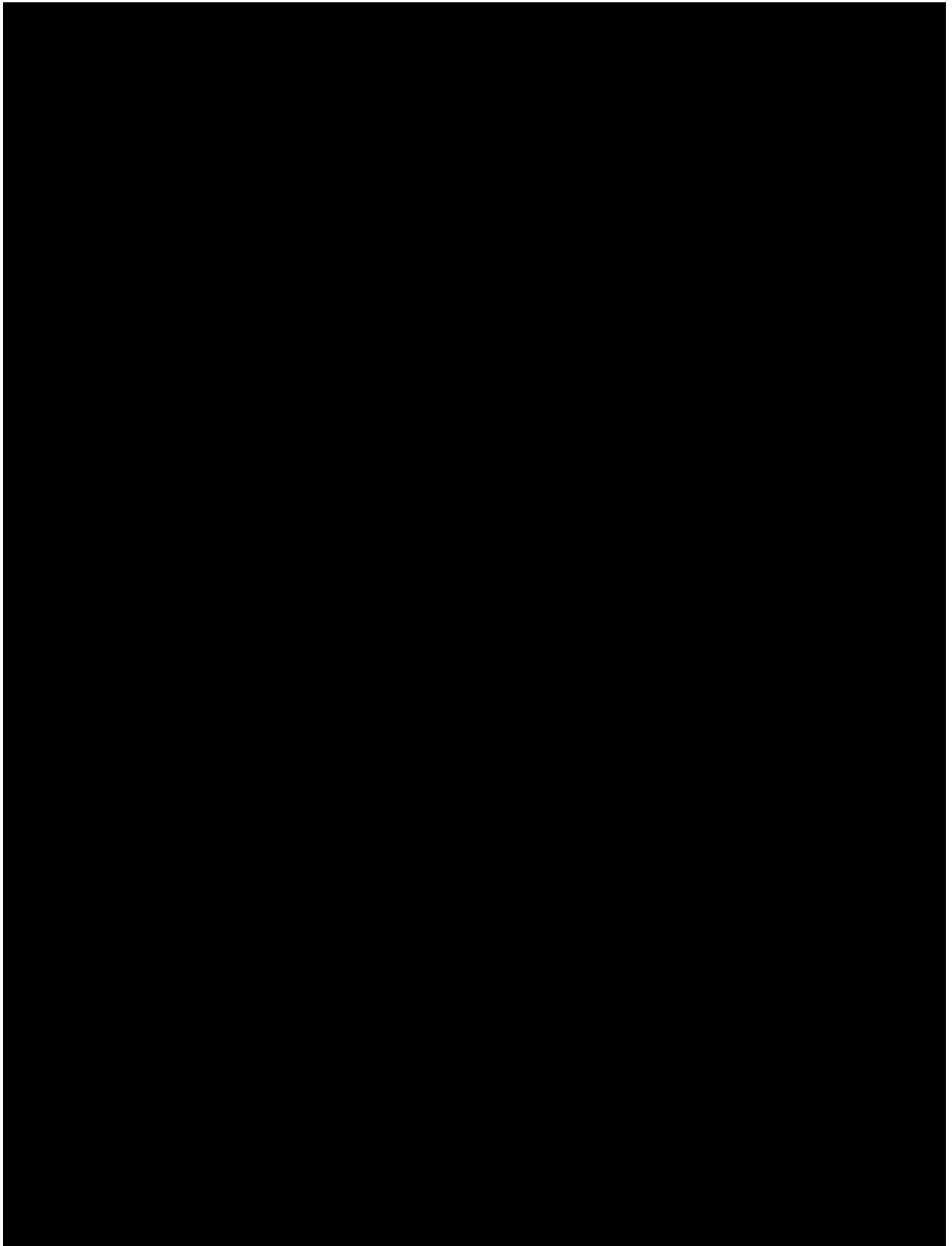


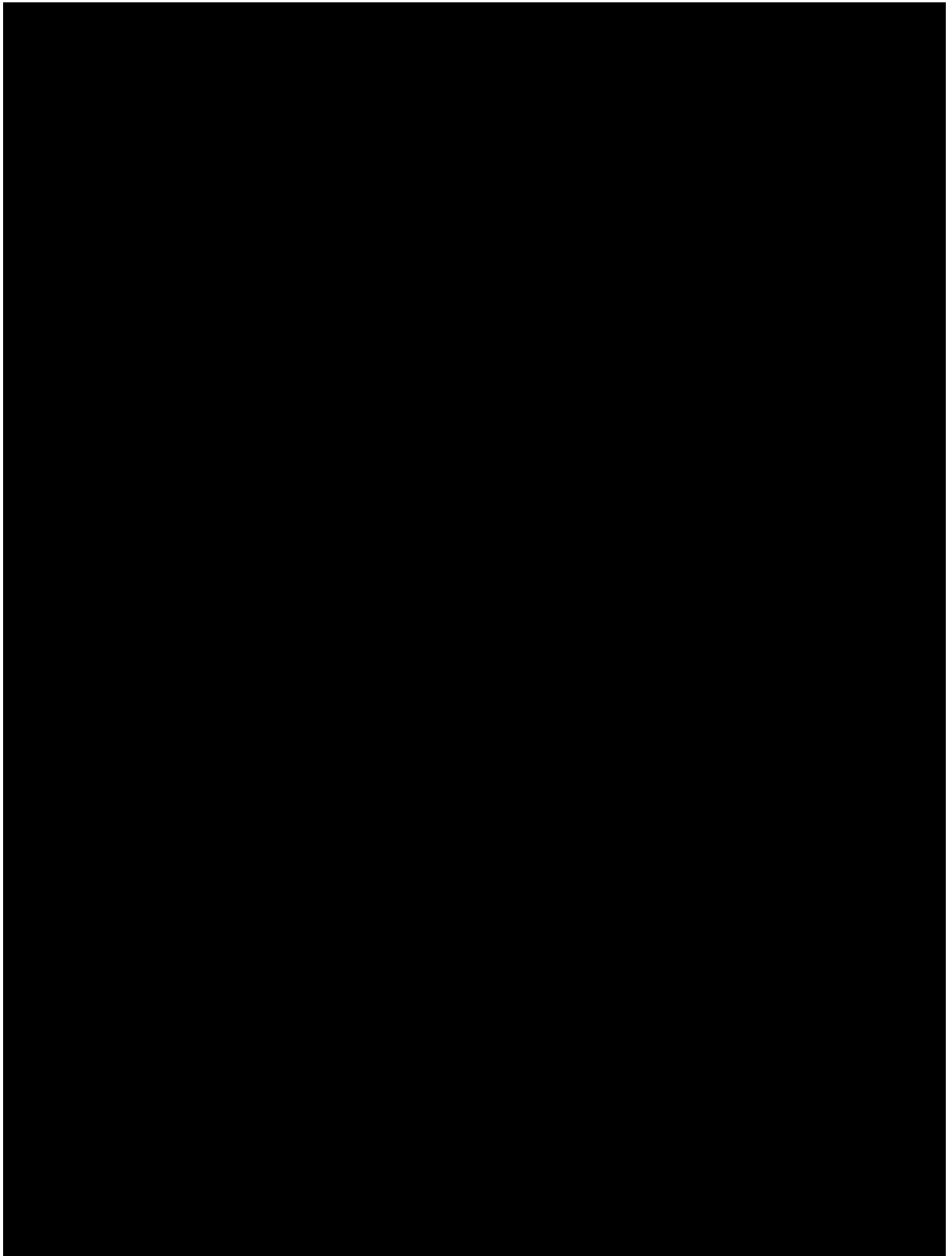


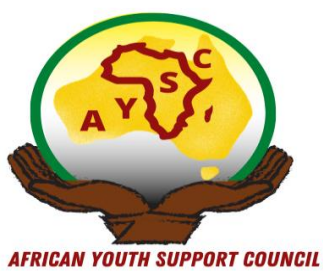
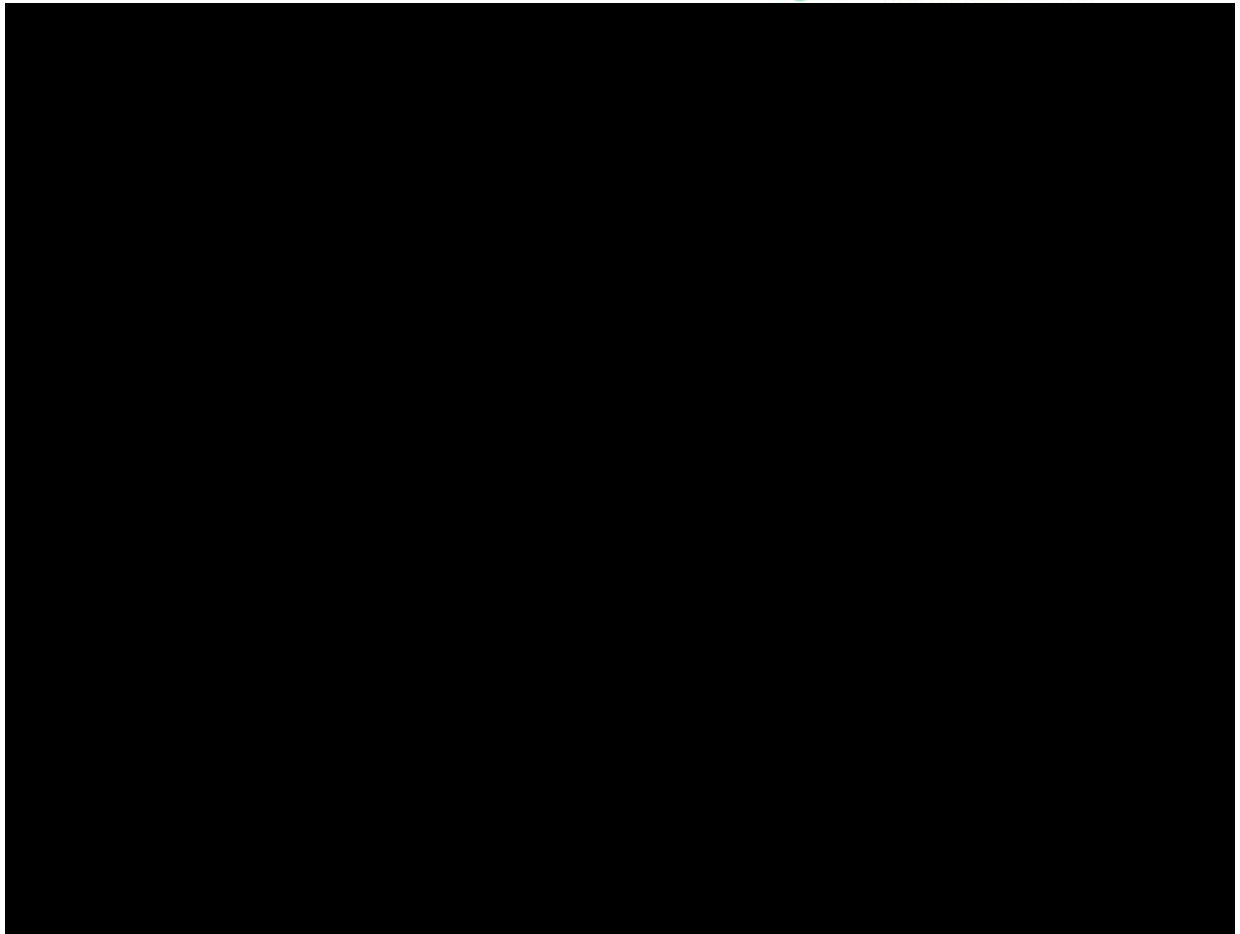












Appendix 2: African Youth Support Council Strategic Action Plan



African Youth Affairs Strategic Action Plan 2020 - 2025

Vision

Every African Australian child in Queensland grow up feeling adequately supported, belonged, ambitious and optimistic about their future

Mission

Our children and young people can see themselves as fully embraced, valued, included at various levels of decision-making processes, with unquestionable equal access to professional opportunities in private, community and public sectors

Values

Respect

Responsibility

Integrity

Accountability

Hard-work

Non-judgmental



Key Strategic priority Goals

Goal Number One: Early Intervention Strategy

Our youth early intervention strategy is designed holistically to produce a strong, optimistic, ambitious, competitive, resilient and relatively integrated future generation of the African community in Queensland and Australia as a whole.

For several years now, we've observed our children struggling to find their place within their families, communities and schools. Communications between parents and their children, parents and schools or local authorities and with their communities are profoundly inconsistent, inadequate, uncoordinated and ineffective altogether. Such breakdowns in effective and positive communication strategies have consequently led to widespread high levels of distrust, conflicting expectations, frustrations and finally leaving most young people highly disconnected, disengaged and subsequently involved in anti-social behaviour.

Most parents also struggle to engage and understand the new system and institutions they live in due to communication barriers. This leaves most of them in social-isolation from the mainstream community. They feel disempowered by the system and as such, they're unable to exercise their authority as parents to raise their children responsibly. Their limited knowledge of, and interactions with the system also make it extremely difficult for them to adjust their parenting styles and communications with children at home. All of these frustrations and pessimisms unsurprisingly cause a lot of mental health illnesses and family's relationship-breakdowns and many other associated ramifications and spillovers.

The youth and family's early intervention strategy will employ a variety of specifically, culturally appropriate and strategically targeted mechanisms to support families and children at home and in identified schools. The carefully selected competent African youth mentors at various locations across Queensland will organise their locally designed and structured activities to support individual young people and families and schools in order to ensure those who are at risk of falling into wrong crowds or becoming disengaged from learning at schools, are identified and supported at early stage before things escalate and get out of control.

The mentors will also work very closely with students' career experts, parents and teachers to ensure communication is consistent and expectations are managed and aligned to the student's needs and interests.



There will be activities similarly co-designed by mentors with parents to help them improve their styles and means of communication and parenting techniques at home with their children and with schools and other child welfare institutions.

Goal Number Two: Rehabilitation Strategy

The African youth rehabilitation strategy will primarily focus on those young people who are already in criminal justice system. These include those who're in jail or have been released into the community and remain disengaged and disconnected from education, families and community. There will be a carefully selected professional, experienced and dedicated team of African young people to design and run structured and intensive individual's goal-setting programs to ensure our young offenders can smoothly and positively transition back into the community and still re-discover greatness within themselves and potentially realise their future dreams. The key objectives for this particular strategy are to:

- To break the cycle of African youth criminal offending
- To engage and support African youth who visit from interstate and find themselves in criminal justice system and do not have local connections and professional support networks
- To equip African young offenders with critical life-skills while they're still inside the juvenile detention facility to ensure their transition back into the community is smooth, positive and constructive
- To provide and build consistent, engaging and positive line of communications between families, community, service providers and those young people
- To provide a sense of belonging, connection, dignity and identity for African disengaged and disconnected youth
- To empower families and build the capacity of local ethnic and cultural groups to take more responsibility in identifying and managing their problems in partnerships and collaboration with the systems
- To prevent young offenders from locally mobilising and negatively influencing the younger children
- Build trust and relationships with our disengaged youth to identify any potential underground or sophisticated and well-organised criminal networks that might be using them, and work very closely with law enforcement agencies to detect and disrupt those networks without putting the lives of those children and their families at risk of potential retaliation

Activities



- Weekly personal goal-setting programs inside Brisbane Youth Detention Centre and outside at various locations following their release
- Structured sport and recreational activities at various hotspots
- Leadership camps and workshops
- Career mentoring, school assignment help, resume building, job search and interview's techniques
- Court support and referral pathways to housing, transport, employment, AOD and counselling services
- Cultural and music workshops
- Preparation and participation in restorative justice conferencing with involvement of cultural representatives, YJ and QPS
- Family parenting support and empowerment through liaising and facilitating positive and regular communications and forums between schools, Child safety, police, families and young people
- Joint trust and relationship-building activities with youth involving activities such as BBQs, sporting competitions and law and order presentations by police and Child safety's officers, African parents and elders' presentation on culture and parenting
- Case management
- Motivational speakers

Desired outcomes

- Significant decrease in the number of African young offenders in and entering into the justice system.
- Increased accessibility of African youth to mainstream services and other support networks.
- Positive, easy and regular engagement with African parents, families and community to ensure there is clear understanding of issues and gaps and awareness of available local resources.
- Strong and ongoing strategic collaboration and regular communications between African families/parents and key institutions such as local schools, sport clubs, Child Safety, police and other service providers.
- To ensure targeted, adequate and effective programs are delivered to the most vulnerable and disengaged groups in a culturally sensitive and appropriate manner.
- Increased stronger ties and positive relationships underpinned by trust between young people and their community and parents of African background.

Goal Number Three: Leadership and Representation



The African Youth Management Committee will embark on relentless and enormous investment in future African youth leaders in Queensland, and strongly advocate for representation and active participation of African youth and young people in leaderships across various levels in public, private and community sectors.

The leadership of youth, QACC and the African community as a whole will actively advocating for youth voices to be represented at key reference groups, and encourage employers to diversify their work force, especially on senior leadership's roles where key decisions around resources allocations are made.

The committee will invest resources in career and leadership's mentoring in schools, at families and within the community. This process will involve identifying potential leaders at a young age and working consistently to motivate, mentor and working with their families to support them through their education and career journeys.

QACC's Afroshine Awards will dedicate most of its to recognition of young Africans who're excelling well in schools, universities, sport, business, art/music and other professional fields in order to motivate younger ones to follow similar footsteps and instil positive values in children to remain optimistic and focused.

Goal Number Four: Managing conflict of interest, maintaining integrity, and trust of the community and remaining dedicated to the service of the African youth and community

For a number of years, the fellow African members – young or old, who're working with community service providers, and equally want to advocate for their community, are very viewed with an unprecedented high degree of suspicious by the community. Most community members suspect them as sellers of their own community for their personal benefits as opposed to the interests and real needs of the community. Such sentiments are growing as more complex issues emerge from the community and no effective solutions are being developed. Service providers are mainly seen as serving their own interests by treating community as something that generate income for them and to be tactically kept vulnerable and dependent. This widespread mind-set in the community has created a big gap of disengagement and completely diminished the trust of the community in service providers,



and usually place bi-cultural workers in an extremely difficult dilemma to perform their job effectively.

The intention for the strategy number four is to ensure there are safeguards in place to help those active and passionate young people who work for local community service providers, and want to help their community, still serve on the African Youth Management Committee without being viewed as sellers. In order to gain and maintain trust of our community, every person who is nominated to serve as a member of the African Youth Management Committee is required to thoroughly read, sign and return to the Secretary the follow documents before accepting a position on the management:

1. QACC Code of Conduct
2. QACC Conflict of Interest Management and Register
3. Non-Disclosure Agreement

The members should also advise all the organisations they work for to ensure they are not directly or indirectly making any reference to the work of members in the community and their involvement in their organisations, or seen to be claiming any credits about the work of the members on the African Youth Management Committee.

Goal Number Five: Countering Negative Media Narrative

Given the years of sustained and what appears to be a calculated and coordinated mainstream conservative media outlets negative campaign against African community and youth in particular, the African Youth Management Committee will tirelessly mobilise the community media talents to immediately embark on countering activities that will feature the members of the African community who're doing well in various professional fields. The committee will work closely with grassroots communities and QACC's Public Relations Department in order to identify the success stories from every African community and publicly promote their great contributions to the Australian community and Queensland in particular.

The committee will also encourage their friends, supporters and members of the African community in Queensland to nominate their members for any community, business and government's awards which would help build public profile of a large number of African community members who are doing well across different sectors.