

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY SAFETY BILL 2023

Submission No: 86
Submitted by: Qld Victim of Crime,
Publication: Mackay

Attachments:

Submitter Comments:

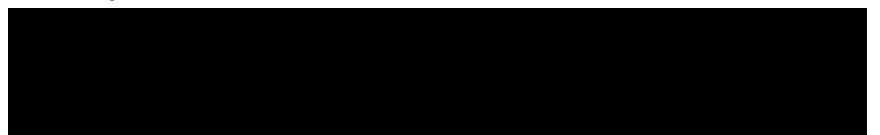
2/27/2023

Qld Victim of Crime

Submission for Consideration



Carolyn Quabba



Suggestion for Consideration

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2. Proposal
3. Funding
4. Programmes
5. Benefits & Outcomes
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1. SUBMISSION

The petition of citizens of Queensland draws to the attention of the House regarding the increasing crime rate throughout Queensland. Your petitioners therefore request the House to review and amend legislation to ensure perpetrators of serious crime and those who are recidivist offenders receive more severe penalties than are currently being handed down. We request a stronger response to Juvenile crime including mandatory detention for those found guilty of the same offence three times.

We also want to present a solution in conjunction with the sentencing of these juvenile offenders an implementation of a Camp Justice/ Veteran's Mentoring Programmes for Youths who commit criminal offences of any description. There are other solutions and funding opportunities to support these petitions.

We have a Facebook page Victim of Crime Mackay and Supporters who are fed up with not only the increased criminal activities in our area and surrounds but throughout Queensland and the light punishment being handed out for them to re-offend again and again. We request your assistance and support in changing these existing laws to protect ourselves and our future generations of parents and children who deserve to live in a safe environment!

The above is a petition we started out with on August 31, 2021.

Since then, Qld crime has escalated to an unprecedented level of more severe crimes by existing offenders and younger perpetrators.

We, Queensland citizens want it to stop and be controlled better than it is at present. Therefore, I am putting forward a submission for consideration to try and alleviate some of the existing crime problems within the State.

This is clearly not working: -

Youth crime is a community-wide problem that requires government departments and community groups to work together. Since 2017, the Palaszczuk Government has invested more than \$550 million in new youth detention centres, staffing and extra beds, and early intervention programs to reduce reoffending. In addition, a further \$98.4 million has been invested to deliver a balanced evidence-based youth justice system that holds young people accountable for their behaviour. This investment has helped divert young people from offending and reoffending and has provided young offenders with opportunities to turn their lives around and change their stories.

To further address youth crime in Queensland, this year the Government announced additional initiatives to focus on the 10% of serious repeat offenders who commit 47% of the crimes done by young offenders. This included legislative amendments to strengthen how young offenders are dealt with in the court system, such as:

- Young offenders already on bail who are arrested and charged with further serious offences whilst on bail now have to show cause when applying for bail (known as a presumption against bail). Showing cause is a high threshold to meet and means the Police and Courts must refuse bail unless the young person can persuade the decision-maker that they are not an unacceptable risk and their continued detention is not justified.
- Courts having the ability to consider whether parents, guardians and others can support the child to comply with bail conditions or provide assurances before their child is released on bail.
- A new principle in the *Youth Justice Act 1992* that stresses the community must be protected from repeat youth offenders.
- Providing clear advice that a young person who further offends while they are on bail can lead to them being given a tougher sentence.
- Enabling Courts to require the fitting of an electronic monitoring device on a high-risk young offender aged 16 and over as a condition of bail.

On Country

The Palaszczuk government is piloting the On Country program in Cairns, Mount Isa and Townsville. On Country offers an alternative approach to working with young people who have experienced trauma. The program is designed to reduce the number of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander young people reoffending while addressing individual cultural, educational, employment and wellbeing goals for young people who have committed an offence. On Country is a \$5.6 million commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations, employing an entirely First Nations peoples' workforce. Each service has a strong focus on healing through community and family participation in camps and case work. Each young person referred to On Country can expect a culturally safe camp experience while on Country over a number of days away from home. Additionally, each young person receives a case worker to ensure they are connected to school, training or employment and that their basic health and welfare needs are addressed.

2. PROPOSAL

If the state could stop at least 20 – 30% of youths from committing crime or reoffending again, isn't that an improvement? Everyone knows you won't change or improve all of these juveniles. However, if these programmes can change some of the younger ones (10 - 15 year olds) behaviour and attitudes, it can prevent them from re-offending.

You can change a young perpetrator's attitude towards crime into something that is beneficial to themselves and society. Sometimes children just get caught up with the wrong crowd and are led to do crimes they will regret.

1st Appearance: - When a juvenile gets apprehended and appears before a court and judge for the first offence.

The Judge gives him/her a warning that if he/she appears here again in the court room for the same or similar crime/s he/she will be sent off to a Justice Camp/Veterans Mentor style of camp for a period of time. (Keeping in mind sometimes children can do silly regretful things or get caught up in the wrong crowd at the wrong time.)

2nd Appearance: - The Judge delivers a punishment of being put into one of the Justice Camps/ Mentoring programmes available.

At this point these camps will try and get his/her attitude corrected, self - esteem restored, give them a chance of turning their life around before they get the opportunity of getting too far into the criminal system.

3rd Appearance: - Judge to have a report from his/her time at the Justice Camp/ Boot Camp to decide if he/she should be returned to the camp for a longer period of time or deliver the offender straight into the Juvenile Detention system.

3.FUNDING

According to Leanne Linard MP Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs, she states:

“As reported in ROGS 2021 – In 2019-20, the cost per day, per young person subject to detention-based supervision on an average day was \$1,640.51.”

Setting up and paying these established programmes to accept these juveniles for mentoring and behaviour changes would not exceed \$1640.51 per day.

The juveniles would not be learning about how they can do their crime better or more violently and would not learn how to keep out of the system.

They would be learning about their self-worth, social skills, attitude, courage, teamwork, resilience, honesty and respect.

Also the ability to gain skills for employment in some areas outside of these programmes.

These programmes would have to be run independently to the government however, work with the government in achieving a successful outcome and funding.

4. PROGRAMMES

There are already a variety of programmes in existence that work well with successful outcomes and many more could be set up in rural/outback areas which could offer work experience in fencing, cattle, crops, machinery maintenance along with the mentoring programme for personal improvement.

Programmes like....

Veteran Mentors – see attachment – <https://www.veteranmentors.com.au>.

Project Booyah – see attachment - <https://projectbooyah.com.au/>.

These and other courses could be easily set up in existing premises like the Wellcamp in Toowoomba or at the Rowallan Scout Campsite facility in Mackay.

These organisations already have the programme manuals set up which could be duplicated throughout the state and funded by scrapping the unnecessary task forces and commissions set up to investigate youth crime in Queensland.

At present, Project Booyah locations include (and surrounding areas): Logan, Gold Coast, Ipswich, South Brisbane, Moreton Bay, Sunshine Coast, Cairns, Townsville, Mackay and Rockhampton. Please click on the location for local information and other relative material.

- ✓ Cairns
- ✓ Townsville
- ✓ Rockhampton
- ✓ Sunshine Coast
- ✓ Moreton Bay
- ✓ South Brisbane
- ✓ Logan
- ✓ Ipswich
- ✓ Gold Coast
- ✓ Mackay



On these 2 websites you will find testimonials of successful attendees and more information on how they currently run their programmes.

5. BENEFITS & OUTCOMES

DECLINE in the number of Juveniles on the street committing crimes.

ENHANCING offender's self-esteem, respect, remorse, their ability to turn their life around before heading into the system of no return.

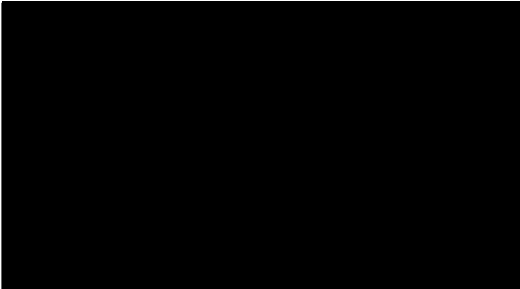
EDUCATION in demonstrating how great life is outside of their current life.

EMPLOYMENT for ex Veterans, ex Police Officers & community focused citizens including seniors.

BETTER USE of Government funding and grants.

ACCURATE reporting back to the Judges re their successes and failures and an indication as to these programmes being a benefit to the offenders and the victims.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!!



21/04/2022

Member of Parliament Steve Andrew and Ms Carolyn Quabba

Congratulations on the initiative you have shown to address some of our laws which so many of our elected officials in their ivory towers are unable to see are archaic.

Over a period of some two decades, my family and I suffered scores of incidents of arson, vandalism, thefts, assaults, and intimidation stemming from our ownership of a commercial property in [REDACTED] and another at [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The file on the reported incidents and the comments by some police officials who proved to be masterful in hiding their inefficiency, compresses to more than 7 cm thick

In only one of these incidents was there a satisfactory resolution. A young female officer stationed at [REDACTED] was able to force an offender who had caused damage and then refused to make amends, to rethink his position. The reason for his aggressive attitude "You can do nothing to me-my uncle is in the police"

This disturbing comment with experience gleaned from our available record of complaints, coupled with an extremely time-wasting procedure which had been introduced to report crime confirmed a growing suspicion. Many incidents of crime were being watered down to cover the inability of police to contain growing events.

Realising the absolute futility of reporting crime by unknown offenders, we took to reporting only the isolated incidents where the offenders could be identified.

However even this did not bear fruit. In a recent offence of vandalism committed by three young offenders, we were able to identify them and left

the task of prosecution to the police. However, it soon became clear that the offence was not being investigated and I then asked the O.I.C. at the [REDACTED] precinct at the time, why not. His excuses and those of the officer to whom the case had been assigned were vague, indirect, and included a suggestion that we should pursue the matter civilly. This was further proof that in some precincts, complaints went straight into file 13.

This resulted in me writing a 4-page letter to police commissioner Carrol in late [REDACTED] 2020 setting out my concerns. [REDACTED] - a copy of this letter along with many others to senior police officials make up a thick file about the staggering number of unresolved offenses we suffered are available for perusal). Commissioner Carrol did not respond to my letter but within a short time I learnt that the officer involved had been transferred to an unspecified location "up north" and shortly thereafter the O.I.C was replaced making it impossible to pursue my enquiries about their inefficiency with them.

[REDACTED] who took command and visited me on 11/3/20, was a beam of light in a precinct in which the tenants seemed to be living in semi-retirement. He arranged for a restorative justice meeting which brought the offenders, and their parents face to face with the victims in the presence of the police. The positive psychological effect this had on the offenders and other likeminded persons who would have heard about it, resulted in a noticeable decrease in deviant behaviour and incidents of vandalism.

Regrettably this encouraging trend did not last long. Over a period of five months and ignoring the offences which occurred at our [REDACTED] complex, the following occurred at our [REDACTED] complex.

30/8/21 Arson [REDACTED]

28/10/21 Vandalism [REDACTED]

5/11/21 Theft of bolted down bench [REDACTED]

31/1/22 Theft of building frames and glass (Not reported) Vehicle registration and security footage of offender available.

2/3/22 Vandalism in the service lane (Not reported)

The four young offenders who were involved in the incident of 28/10/21 had been clearly identified from security footage which made it easy for police to

identify them. I awaited a date on which a restorative justice meeting would be held and confirmed my wish to be present.

A period of silence followed before my request for information on progress was responded to with a terse message to the effect that "the offenders have been warned- the matter is closed"

Some resolution - the victims were left with the cost of repairing the damage caused by a group of young thugs whose actions did not benefit them in any way but merely served to enhance their own warped perception of self-esteem whilst the offenders received police protection without any accountability for the consequences of their crimes. It did however raise further speculation and concern as to whether our system of "justice" is in competent hands.

To discourage further vandalism, I decided to institute a civil action against the offenders as had been suggested by the police for the cost of damage they had caused which amount I would double and donate to a worthy charity. I wrote to the police commissioner for their names and contact details but again my message was met with deathly silence.

I then applied for this information under the freedom of information act and some weeks later (25/3/22) received two replies- one from the right to information officer and the other which seemed to be a police solicitor's report. I did not need to read these documents as, having been sent under the letterhead of the Queensland police service, I knew what their answers would be.

In his five-page reply, the senior information officer showed his extensive knowledge of the relative act by quoting from obscure and irrelevant paragraphs, titles, and subtitles before coming to the astonishing conclusion that the offenders had the right to privacy and that identifying them would be contrary to public interest.

It was never my intention to infringe on anyone's right to privacy unless I was forced to do so to curb assaults on our property. I was prepared to resolve this matter quietly at a restorative justice meeting where the parents of the offenders would have to face the consequences of their failure to teach their offspring the most basic and necessary requirements, they will need to make a success of their lives- a civic responsibility and respect for others. I do not believe that it is contrary to public interest to make the public aware of the ridiculous concept that the way to fight crime is for the police to hide the identity of the offenders, absolve them from the cost and consequences of

their crimes and then make the victims bear the costs of and responsibility for their offences.

The police solicitor's report was equally comprehensive. In four pages in which the names of the offenders and paragraphs had been deleted which impaired clarity, he advised that the charge of enter with intent - instead of the correct criminal charge of wilful damage to property (damaging taps, breaking a large mirror in the men's toilet, and climbing onto the roof to inflict damage to solar panels and wiring, and overturning a waste bin) - had been reduced to trespass. It seems as if the offender's explanation to investigating officers that they had - at after 10 pm - entered the tenant's toilet merely to charge their phones, was believable and had merit. To anyone not as glib, it would be clear that an unquestionable offence which had been caught on security camera, was once again being swept under the carpet.

Possible reasons for this are that: -

- Precincts in many areas are understaffed.
- In some instances, the offenders are family members or other persons who have privileged or family links to the police who are protecting rather than prosecuting them.

Was it Edmund Burke who came up with the incontestable words "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for the good to do nothing"?

As the 93-year-old patriarch of a large close knit and loving family whose members have all achieved notable success in their careers because of a strict upbringing, I am acutely aware that an attitude of "not my problem", laziness and irresponsible decisions taken or not taken today about our growing crime rate will have serious and growing consequences that my children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren will need to face and deal with.

I possibly no longer have the mental acuity to understand police commissioner Carrol's support for a concept which can only be described as weird.

Consequently, I am sending a copy of this letter to persons who I trust share my apparently outdated views on justice in the hope of gaining a wave of support for a meaningful change in what I consider to be a ridiculous concept of 'justice' which if not addressed, will have dire consequences in the future.

I am now left with the only alternative left to me to protect our properties. I will shortly begin progressively circulating photos of the offenders with a

reward for their identities whereupon I will institute a civil action for damages and costs against them.

I have refused an offer to be considered for compensation through a police fund (public money) and as mentioned previously, will double any amount I recover from the offenders and donate this to a worthy charity.

Perhaps Commissioner Carrol- to whom a copy of this letter is being sent- should check facts with the Crimes and Corruption Commission, spend time to find out what is going on around her and then reflect on the immortal words of Abraham Lincoln

“You can fool all of the people some of the time and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time”

Sincerely

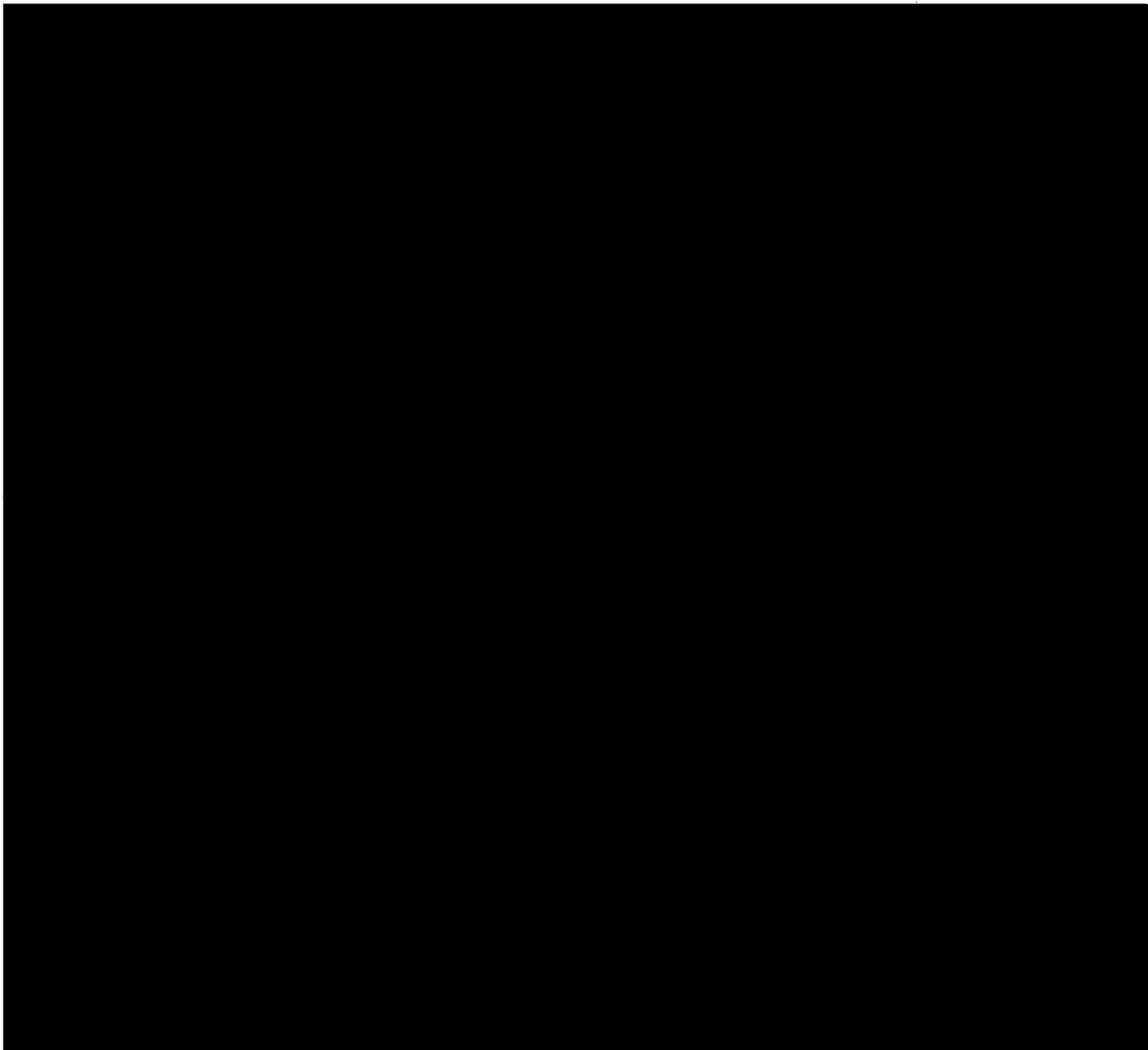
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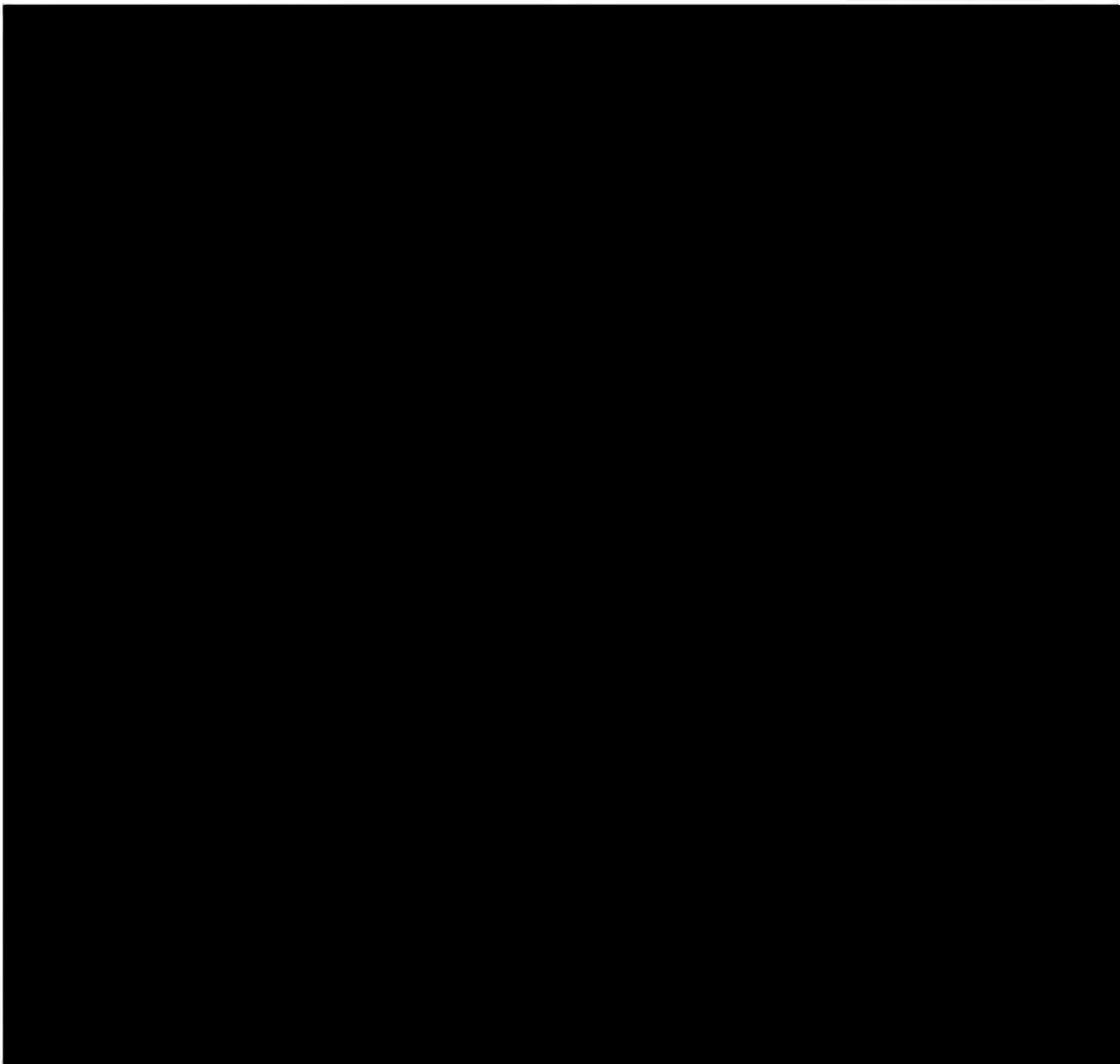


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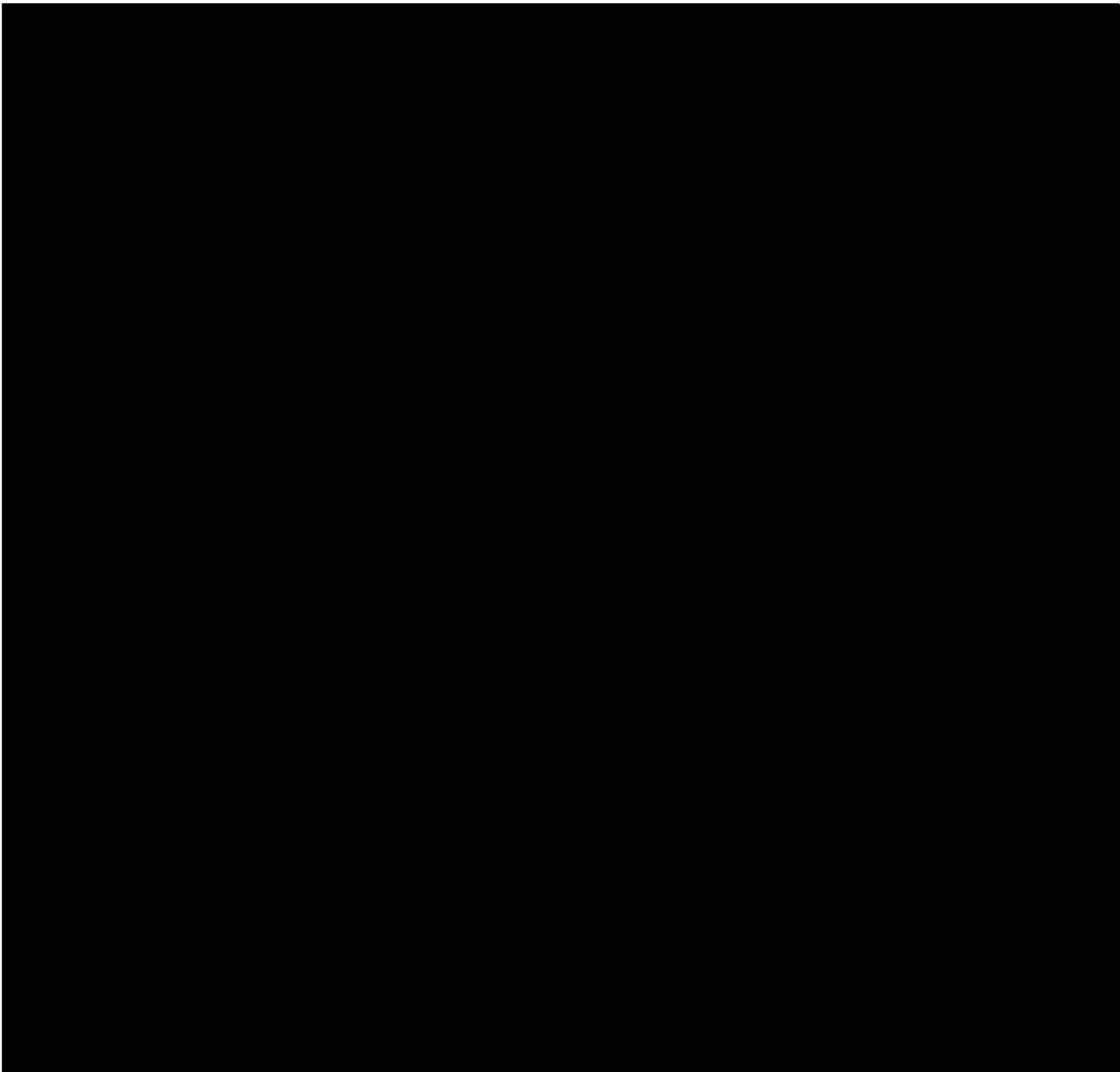


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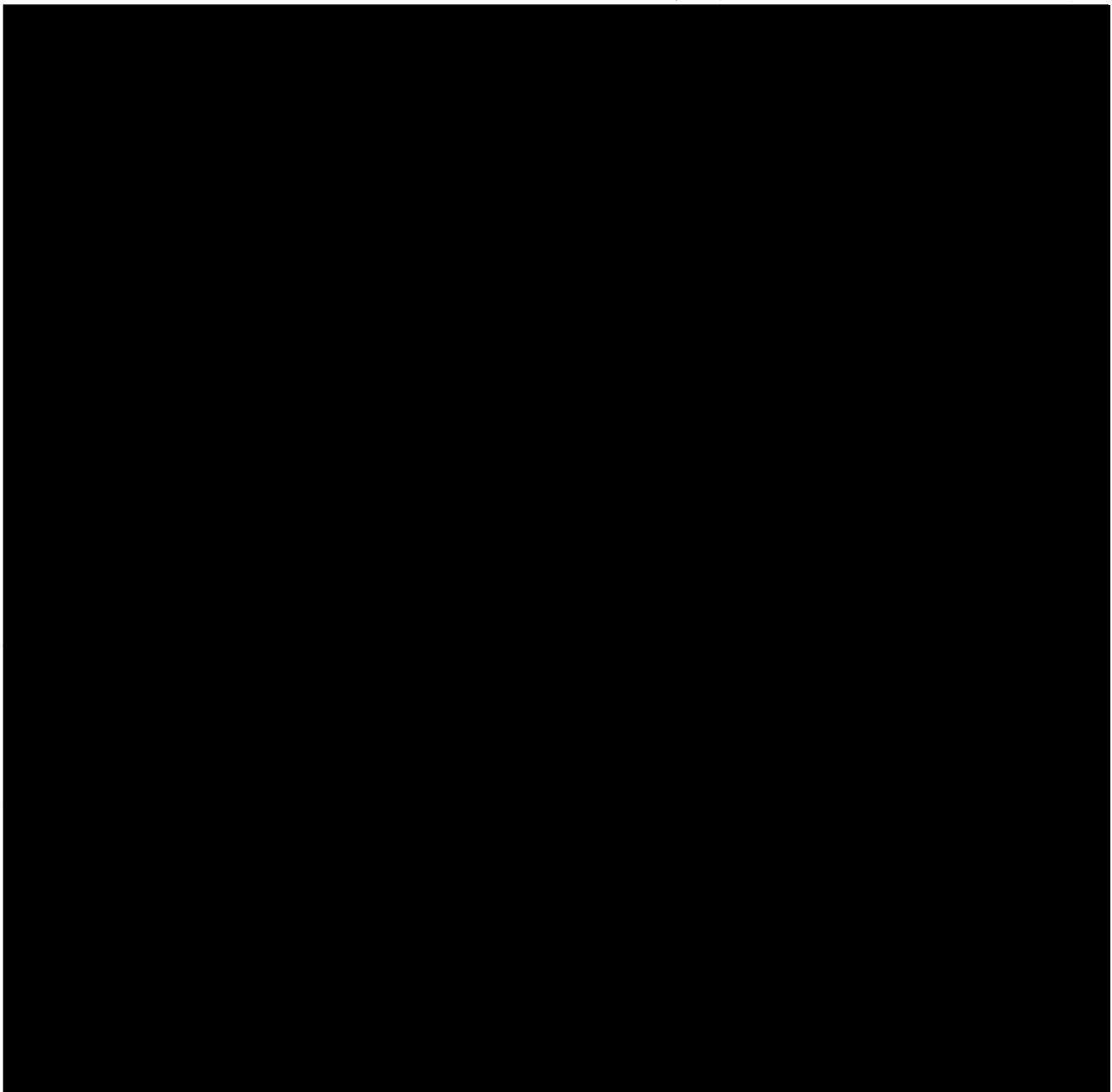


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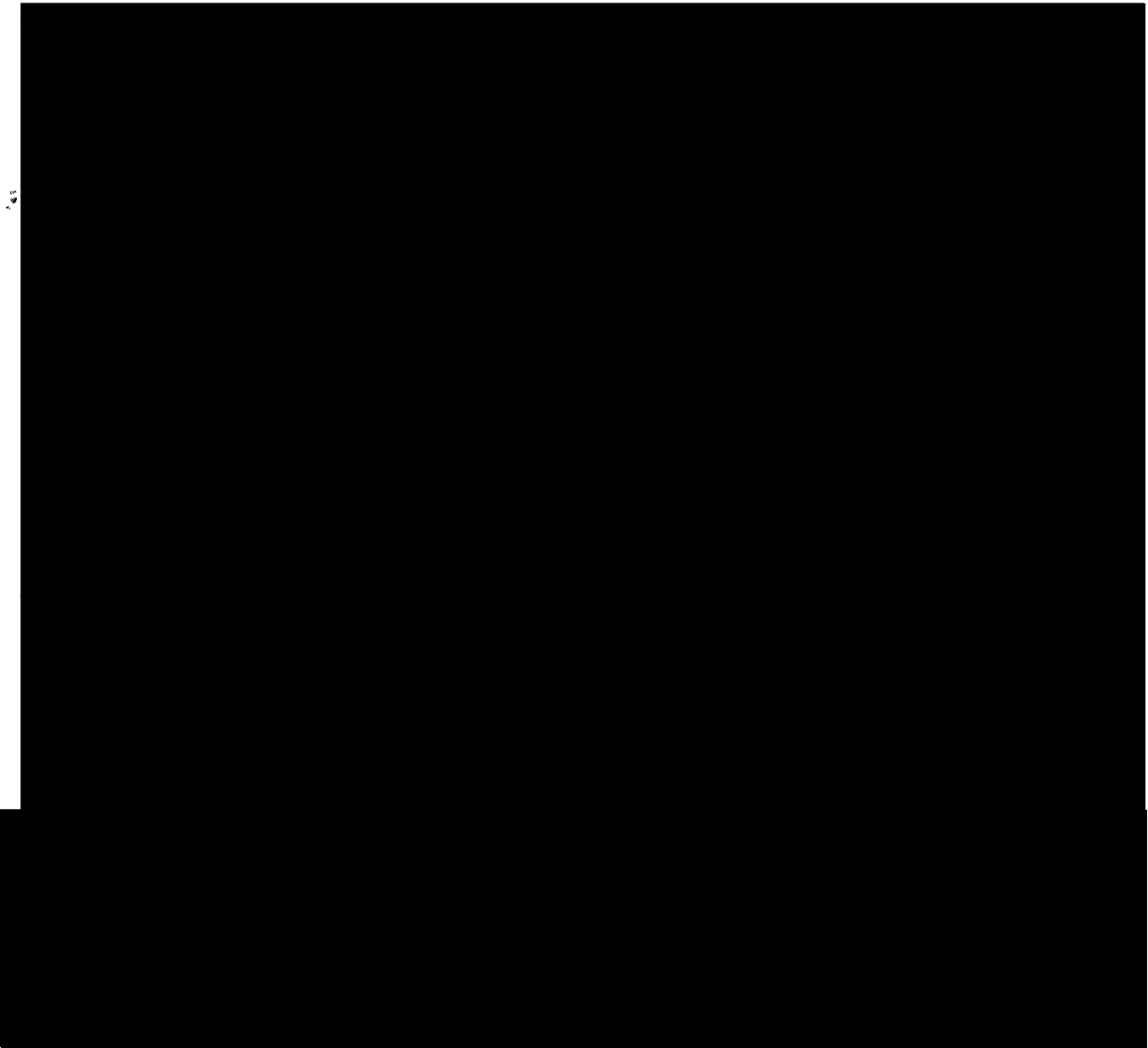
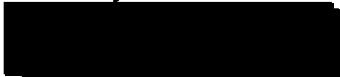


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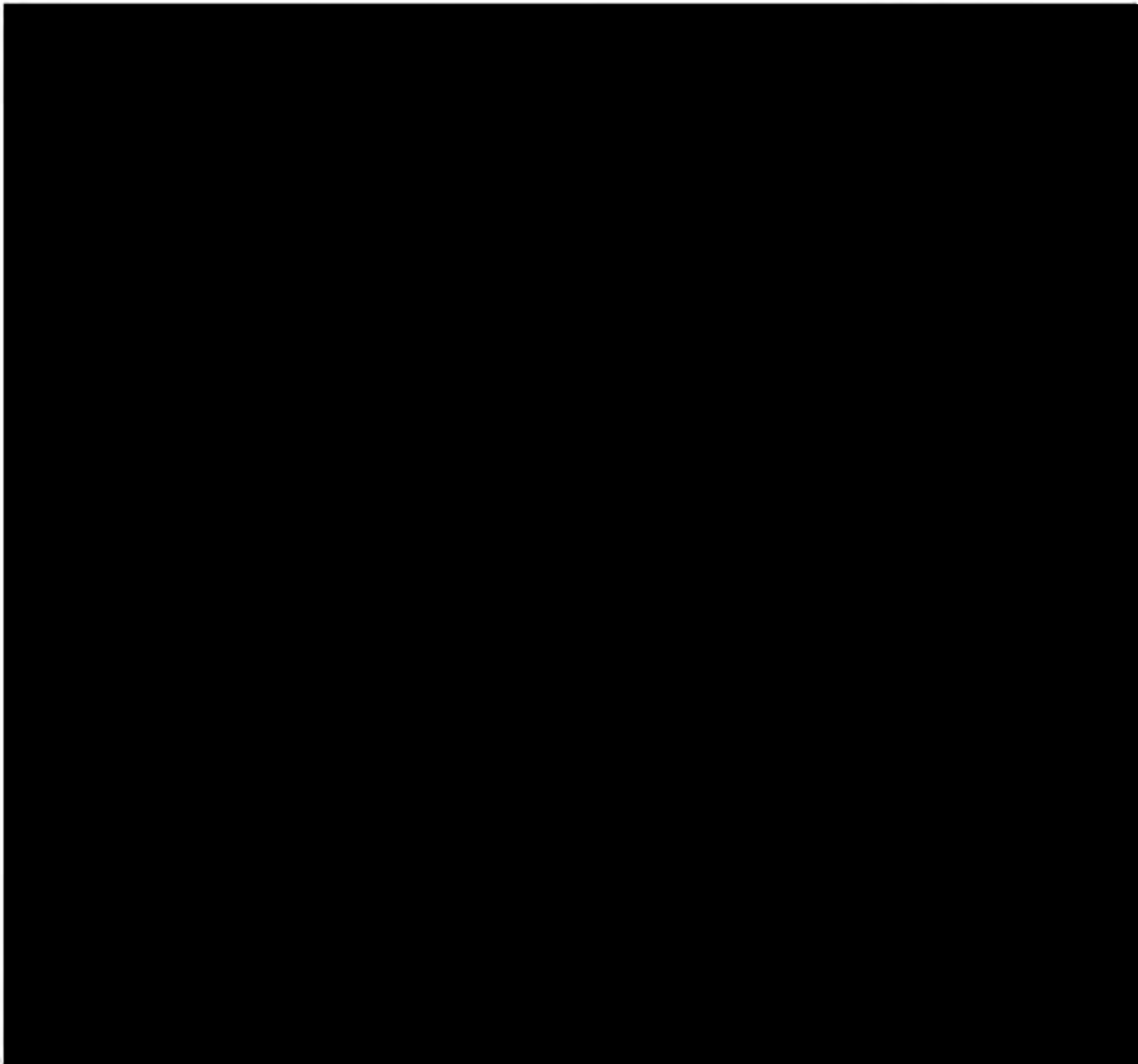


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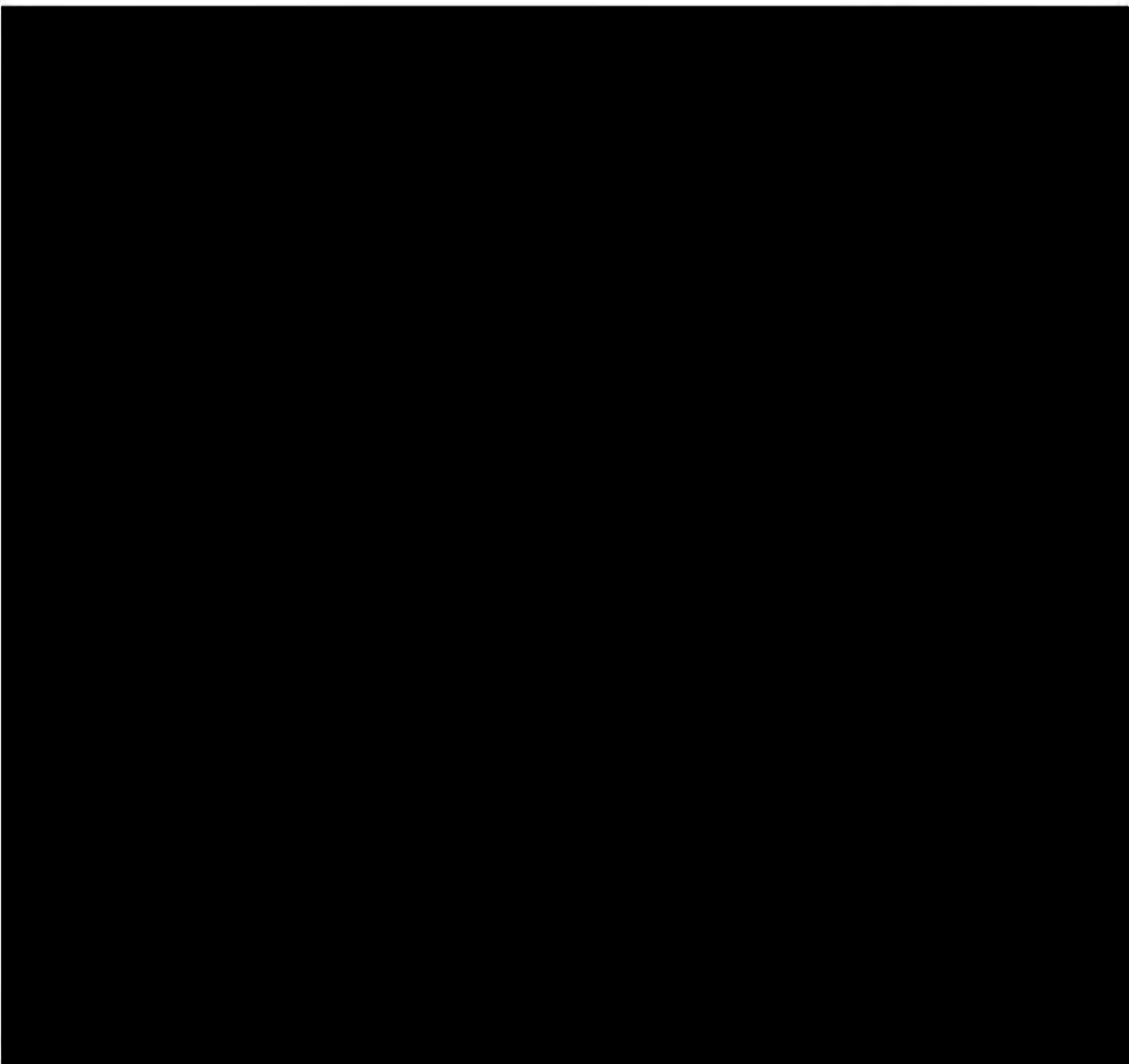
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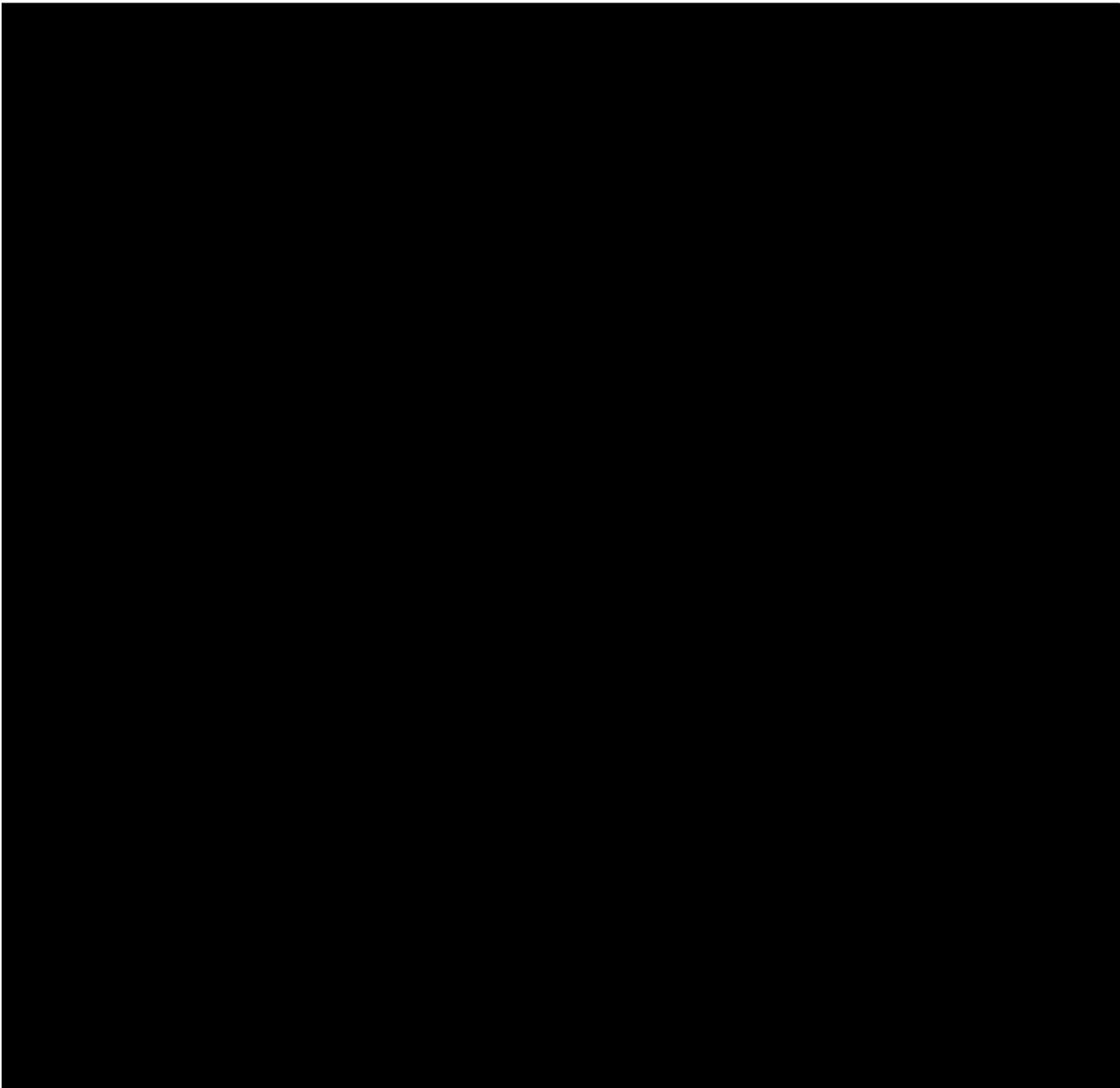


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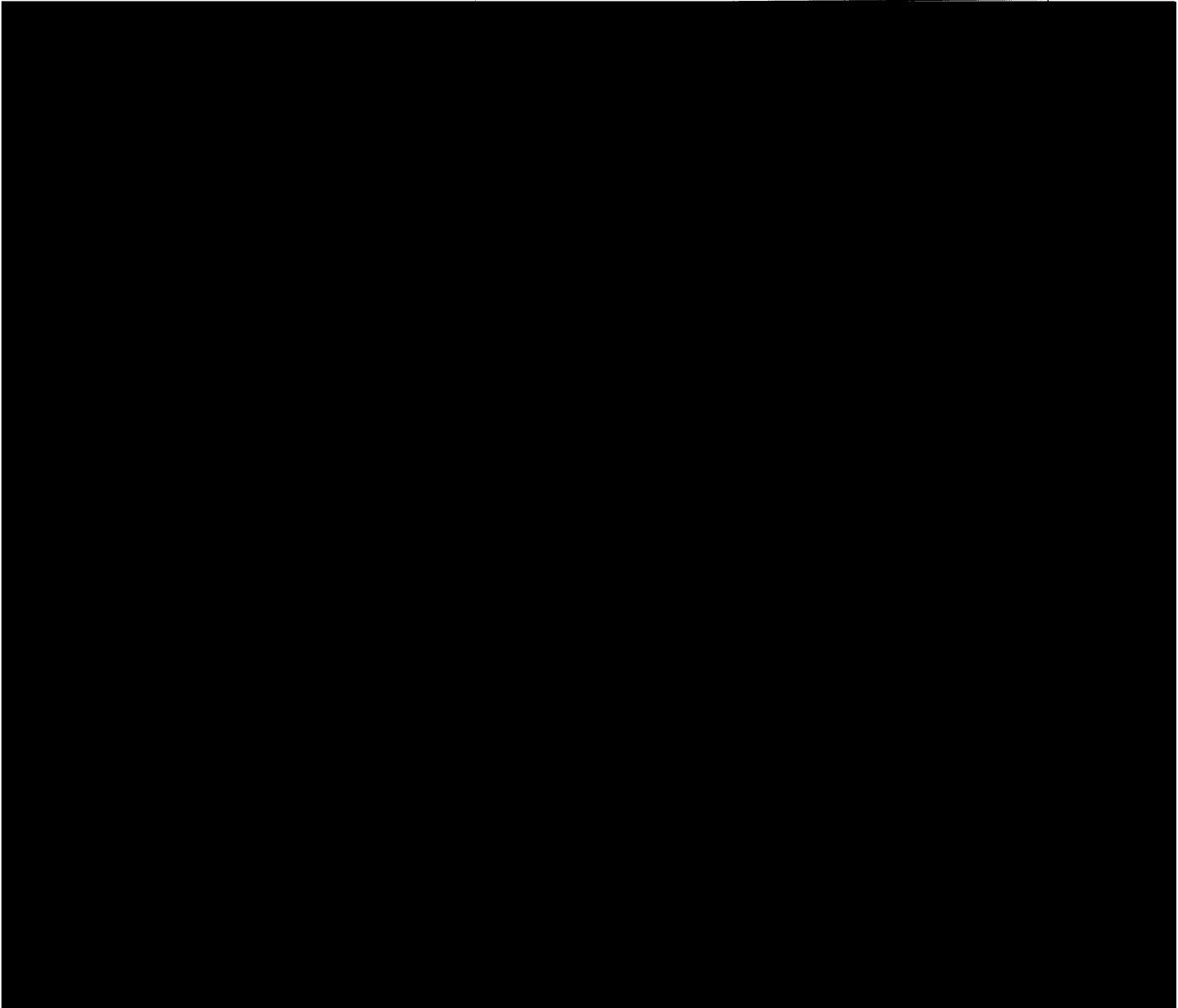
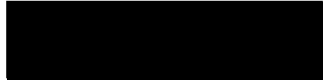


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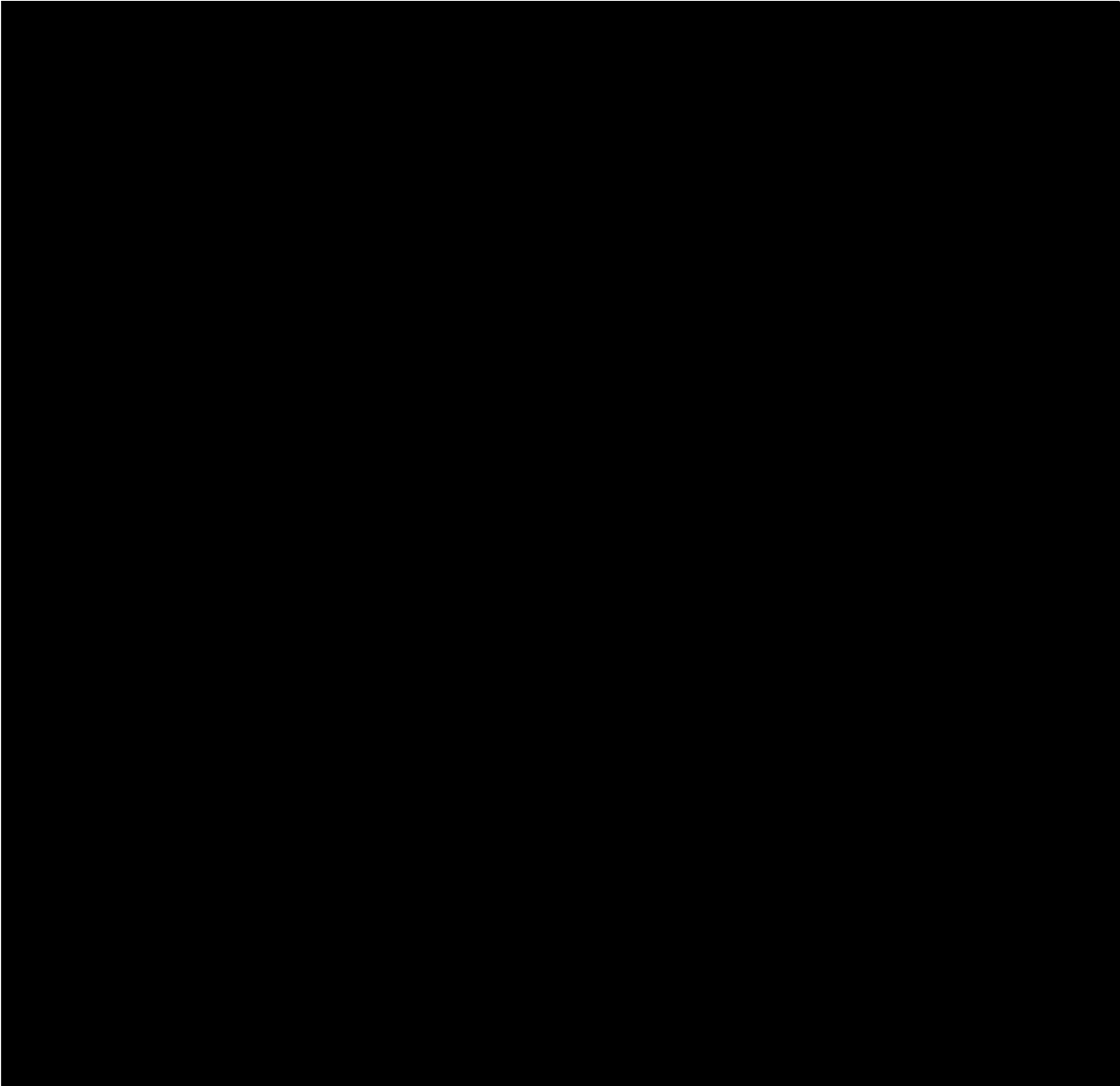
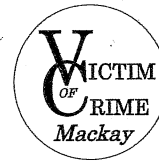


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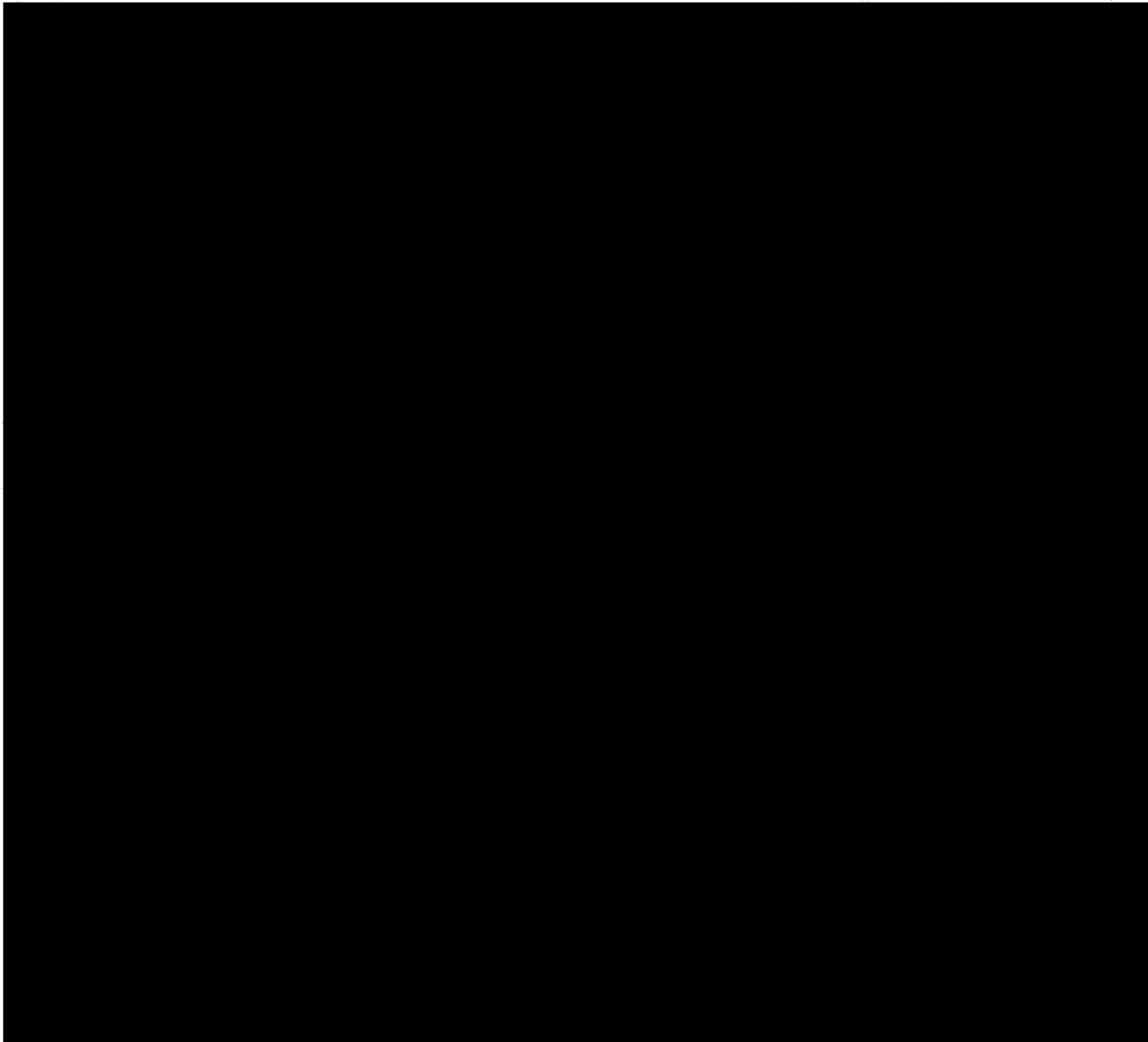


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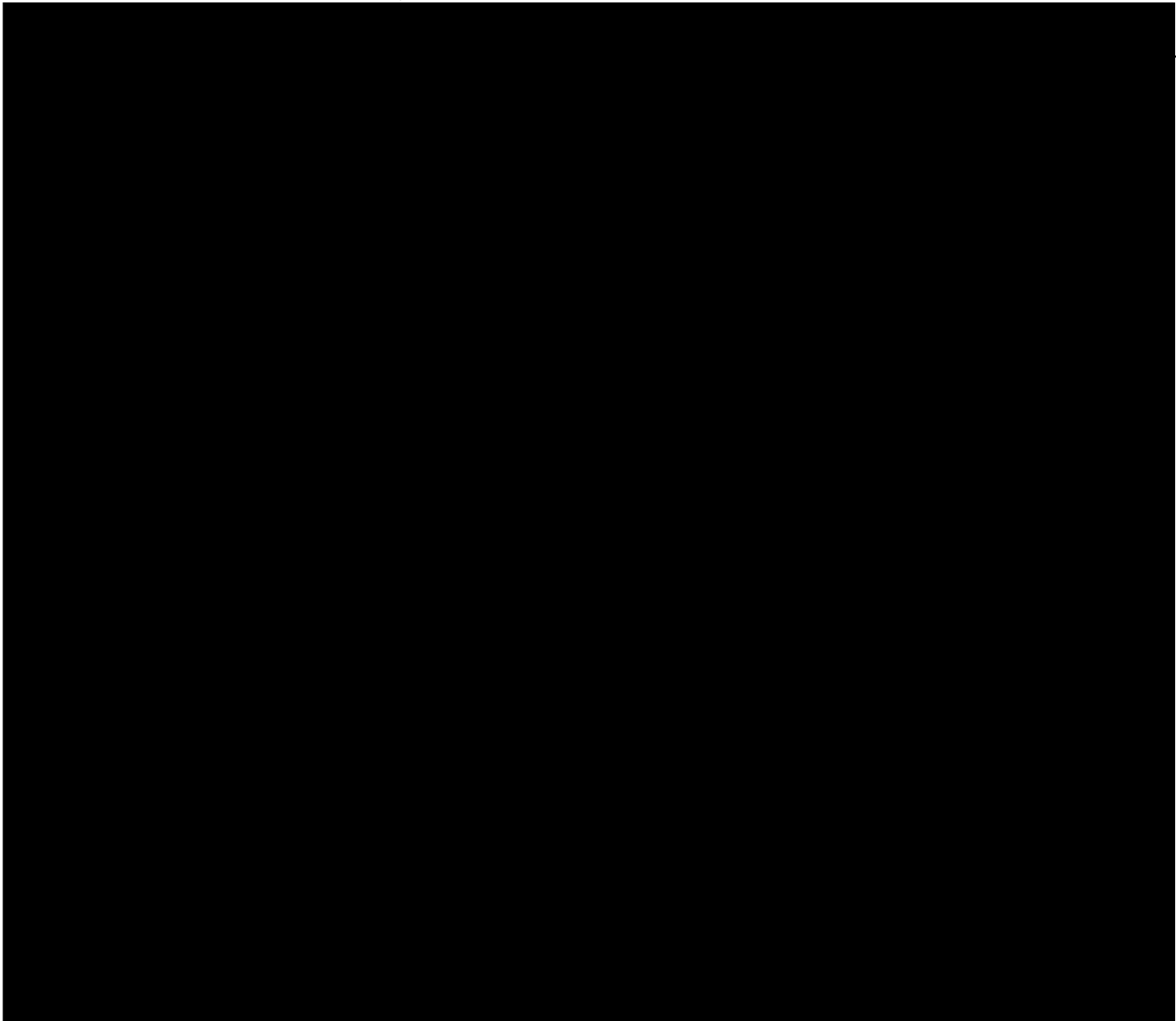


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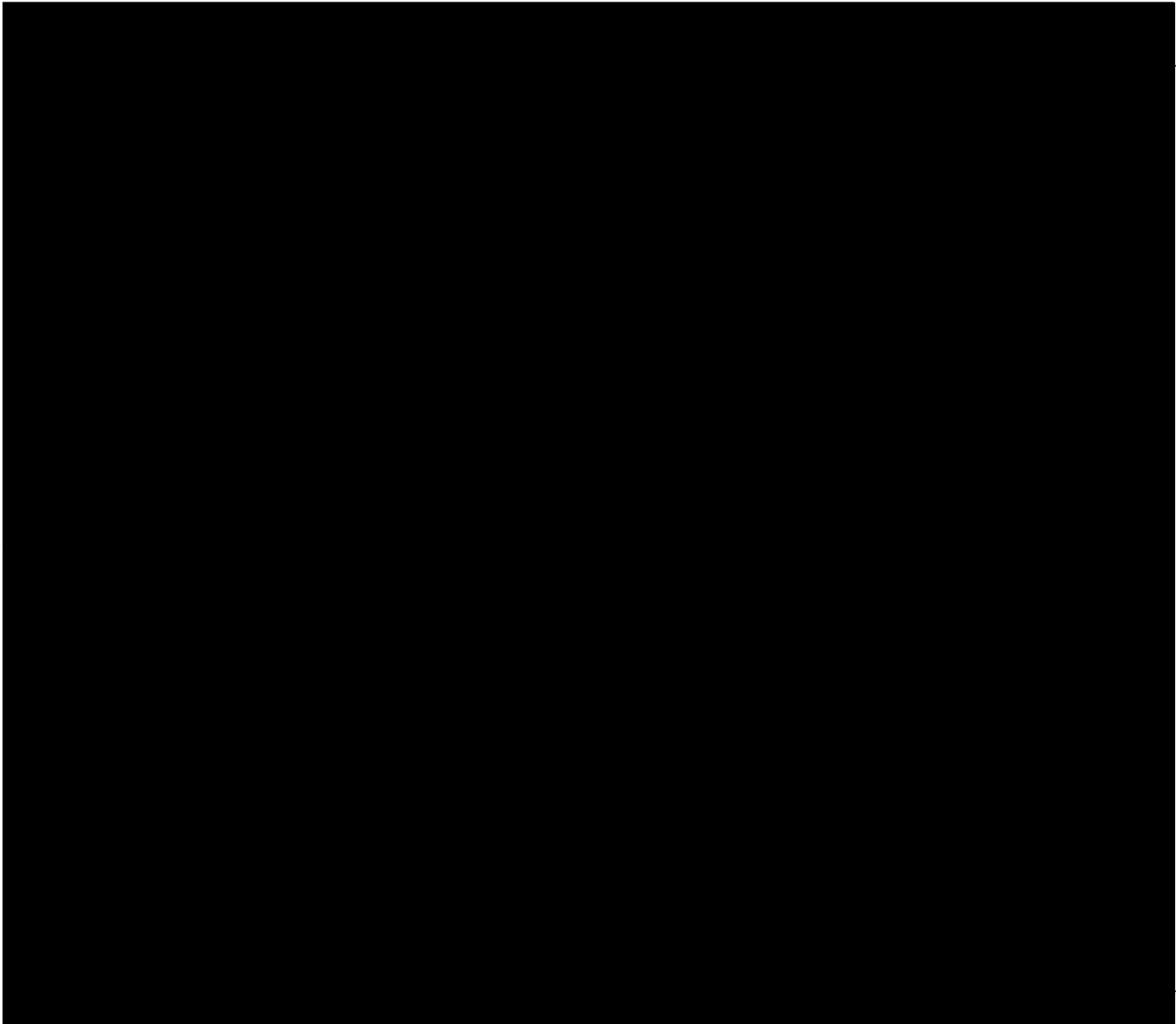


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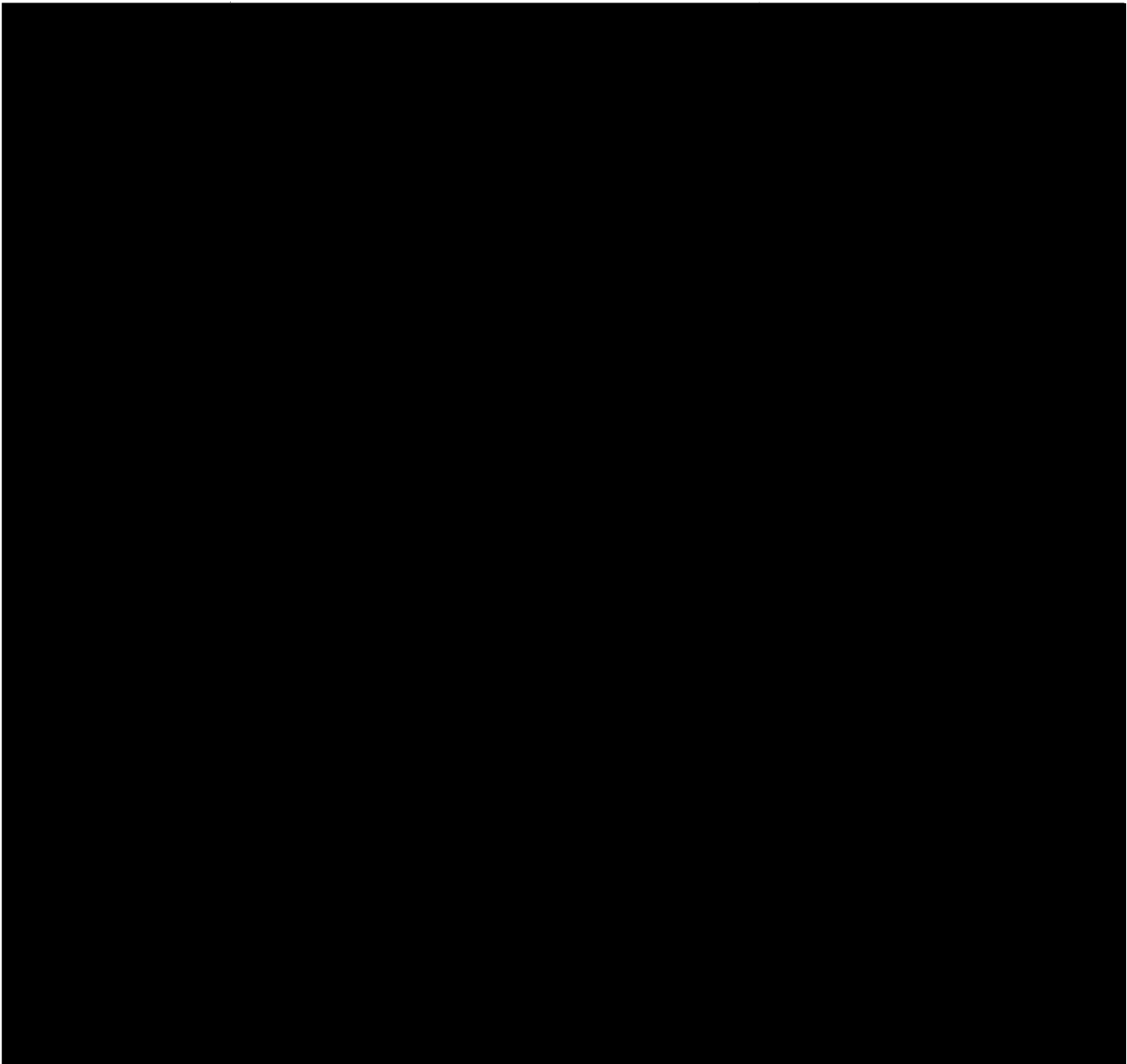
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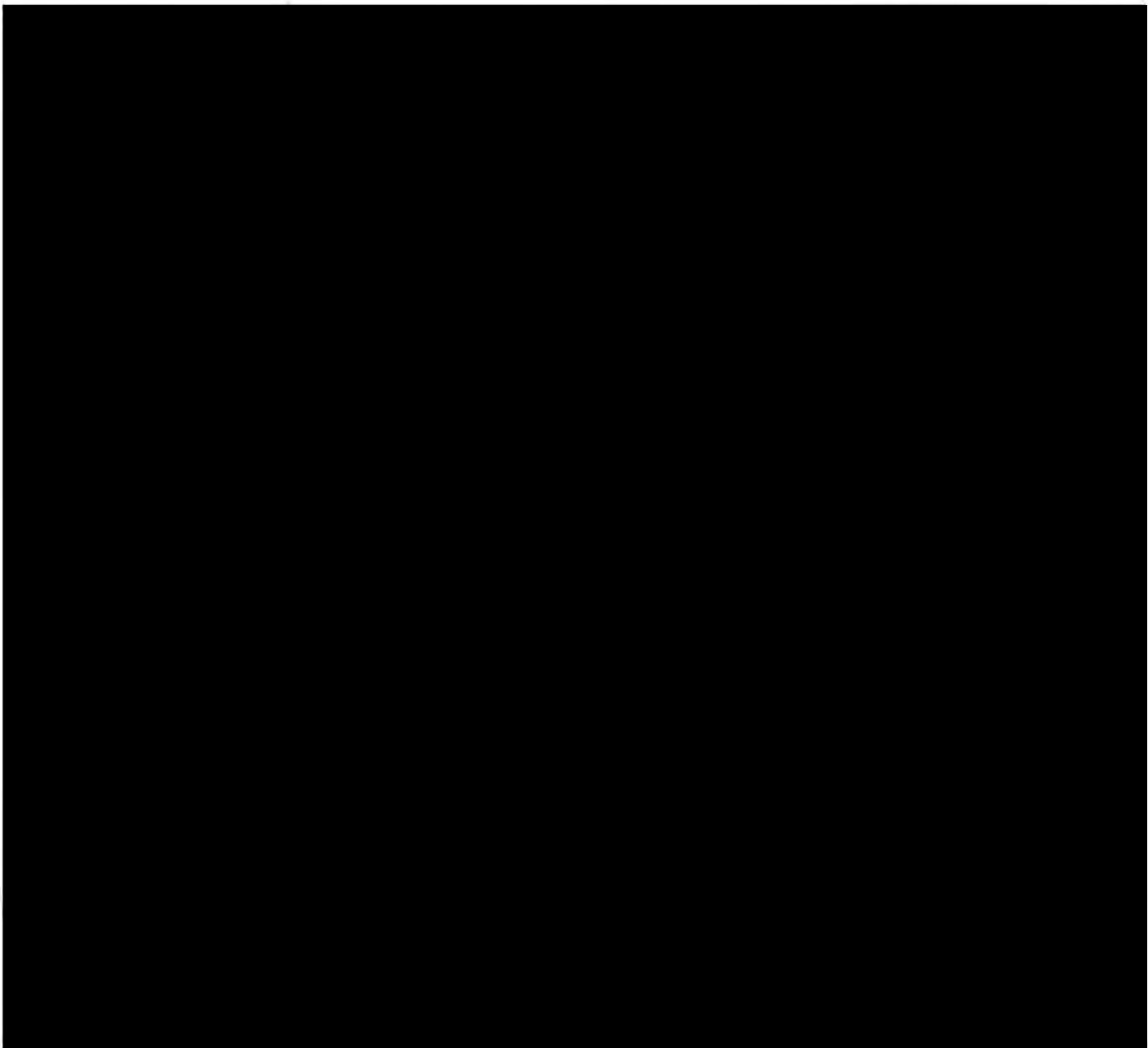


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**Empowering
Australia's Youth
Seeking Support**

Contents



Who We Are



What We Do



The Situation



**Protective Factors &
Early Intervention/
Prevention**



**What we're trying
to achieve**



Outcomes



Letters of Support



Case Studies



Who We Are

Veteran Mentors are a group of ex-servicemen and women who share a common goal in helping the families and communities of Australia.

Throughout our respective military careers, the Veteran Mentors have learned and implemented many effective strategies in achieving success in the most challenging environments. These strategies and skills include mental and physical resilience, effective communication, conflict resolution and fear/stress management.

Since leaving the defence force, the Veteran Mentors are dedicated to teaching these skills and providing help for troubled teens. We're also mindful of doing so in a way that participants can successfully implement them after the program has finished.

Our Aim

Our aim is to improve family relationships, contribute to safer communities and enrich the lives of our participants. Participants are therefore accountable for their behaviours and handed the skills required to get past them.

This allows them the opportunity to start fresh with leadership qualities, higher self-esteem and greater resilience.



What We Do

Junior Leader Program

The Junior Leader Program is designed to assist children to become accountable for both their behaviours and decisions, as well as overcoming issues with self-esteem, lack of respect and technology addiction. With key lessons in values and work ethic, our programs are also great for kids looking to challenge themselves – all while accomplishing something they might have never thought possible.

Using skills acquired in the Australian Defence Force, our veterans instil essential values that help participants forge successful life paths, including respect and the importance of courage for achieving personal goals.

They'll also learn other valuable lessons, including:

- Why initiative is vital to overcoming challenges before they become insurmountable
- How working as a team is more effective than going solo
- That integrity should underpin everything that they do

Key Learning Outcomes

Respect

Courage

Teamwork

Resilience

Honesty

Initiative



The Situation

In Australia, around 83% of young people in detention are between the ages of 10 and 17 years old¹ and approximately 74% of young people released from youth detention will return within 12 months. In addition, 59% of the youth detention population is Indigenous, with this percentage seeing a continual increase since 2012.²

Beyond offending, there is also a large population of youth exhibiting risk factors that suggest they may head down this path in the future. Some of these factors include:

- Anti-social attitudes
- Anti-social peers
- Anti-social personality patterns
- History of anti-social behaviour
- Problematic home environment
- Problems and lack of achievement at school/work
- Problematic leisure and recreational activities

Across youth offenders and those at risk of offending, we see some of the country's most disadvantaged and vulnerable kids, often from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and experiencing a range of challenges both in school and at home. We also know that many of these kids will go on to become adult offenders.

To curb the number of children entering the youth justice system and subsequently graduating into adult offending, there is a desperate need for greater focus on early intervention and prevention initiatives such as the Junior Leader Program.

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2020.

² Noetic Group, 2017.

Protective Factors & Early Intervention/Prevention

Research has uncovered a range of protective factors that can reduce the risk of young people engaging in antisocial and subsequently, criminal behaviours. Key protective factors that reduce the risk of delinquency in Australian youth include engagement with community activities and development of effective social and problem-solving skills.

As key components of our Junior Leader Program, we believe we can help guide troubled youth back on to positive pathways through delivering structured programs, education and mentoring services specifically designed to support their needs.

As an early intervention and prevention program, we aim to engage youth at risk of delinquent behaviour in the early stages and provide both skills and knowledge to mitigate the underlying risk factors that lead to offending.

Prevention of extremism on home soil

In addition, the Australian Federal Police recently conducted a trial using the Veteran Mentors Junior Leader Program to intervene with youths who have been identified as high-risk for grooming by extremist groups. The student demonstrated and continues to demonstrate positive changes since attending the program.

Having attended the program to supervise and witness the success of this trial, the AFP have agreed to provide a letter of endorsement of this program once terms of a funding agreement have been finalised.



³ NSW Government Communities & Justice, 2014.

What we're trying to achieve

While we've worked hard to make our programs as accessible as possible, the single most common piece of feedback we receive is that it is too expensive for the kids who need it most.

We're always looking for ways to bring costs down, however, the program has a number of essential expenses that are required to ensure a meaningful experience for our participants. Some of these expenses include:

- Low staff to child ratios
- Meals
- Accommodation
- 24-hour supervision
- Access to counsellors
- On-site medics
- Speakers
- Activities
- Personal training
- Other equipment
- Uniforms
- Cleaning
- Administration

How we can work together to make it happen

We see numerous opportunities for prevention and early intervention for kids at risk of entering the youth justice system, but we can't do it alone. Veteran Mentors are continuously aspiring to improve our programs and are looking for community support to help us do so.

With this support, the Veteran Mentors can expand on and improve our programs and ensure more troubled teens are given the opportunity to get their lives back on track like so many others who have already completed our programs.



What we're seeking

The Veteran Mentors are looking to partner with brands and businesses who are aligned with our values and mission. This partnership will be built on a mutual desire to support Australian communities and the next generation. Some examples of how you may wish to support us in our mission are:

- Intake Scholarships
- Sporting Equipment
- Technology (phone/ internet)
- Health Services/ presentations
- Uniforms and clothing
- Photo/Video
- Electronics (Cameras Etc)
- Vehicles
- Nutrition
- Youth Up-skilling
- Employment Services
- Health and Fitness (gyms)
- Camping Equipment

What we can offer in return

While the specificities of each sponsorship package will be negotiated individually, the Veteran Mentors are open to many lines of returned support using our various marketing channels, extensive database and library of collateral. Our aim is to make any sponsorship deal, a successful one for both parties. Some areas you may want to explore are:

- Program Presentation Rights
- Achievement Awards
- Uniform branding
- Newsletter Database
- Vehicle Branding
- Social Media Support
- Website promotion of brand
- Collateral promotion of brand
- Graduation Ceremony signage
- Public Relations
- Promotions to participant families
- Promotion within on-boarding communications
- Camping Equipment



What we're seeking

The Veteran Mentors are looking to partner with RSL's around Australia who recognise and align with our values and mission. This partnership will be built on a mutual desire to support our communities and to help us continue the work of servicemen and women back home on Australian soil.

What we are aiming to achieve is to create opportunities for disadvantaged families to apply for RSL-sponsored scholarship placements into our life-changing Junior Leader Program.

What we can offer in return

While the specificities of each sponsorship package will be negotiated individually, the Veteran Mentors are open to many lines of returned support using our various marketing channels, extensive database and library of collateral. Our aim is to make any sponsorship deal, a successful one for both parties. Some areas you may want to explore are:

- Program Presentation Rights
- Achievement Awards
- Newsletter Database
- Social Media Support
- Website promotion of Venue
- Graduation Ceremony signage
- Public Relations
- Promotions to participant families
- Promotion within on-boarding communications



Outcomes

Over three years of delivering programs to Australian families, we have witnessed countless incredible transformations that have seen participants become more productive and involved members of society. In general, they become more engaged with school, more in tune with their emotions, more receptive to authority and more involved with their families.

Participant Survey Data

60 students were surveyed prior to commencing the Junior Leadership Program to gain a benchmark of how they plan to participate and how they currently view themselves in the key outcome areas that are addressed on the program. These students were surveyed a second time on the final day of the program to gain an insight into their progress.

	Pre-Camp	Post-Camp	Shift	% Shift
Plans to participate vs actual participation	7.31	9.35	2.04	28%
Cooperation before vs during or after the program	7.43	8.20	0.77	10%
Self perception of leadership	5.52	7.83	2.31	42%
Open to learning new things	6.97	8.62	1.65	24%
Confidence levels	6.94	8.60	1.66	24%
Temper and conflict management	6.21	7.70	1.49	24%
Stress and emotional management	5.43	7.88	2.45	45%
Control of life	5.87	7.88	2.01	34%
Ability to manage time	5.15	8.23	3.08	60%

Case Study – Child

Meet Wyle, one of the most promising young men to come out of the Junior Leader Program. Find out more about Wyle, his journey and how the Veteran Mentors boot camps for kids transformed his life for the better.

“My name’s Wyle Hill, I’m 17 years old and live in the Sunny Coast, Australia. Today, I’m here to tell you a bit about myself and what the Veteran Mentors Junior Leadership Program did for me and how it completely changed my life.



Around 3 years ago I was having a rough time not only home and school but just figuring out who I was. I was lacking self-confidence and respect for my friends’, peers and especially myself. When my parents made the decision to enrol me in the Veteran Mentors program I had no idea what I was in for. My first day in the program was definitely a shock. Being somewhere completely new, surrounded by strangers and being told I would be here for the next nine days with no contact home was scary and hard to take in at first. The hard personal training and limited time are given to wtasks made home life seem easy and by day three I started to realise I’m not going anywhere and I might as well enjoy and learn from this experience.

Day by day, I started to enjoy the experience more and began to bond with the boys in my section. The harder we worked the better we felt because we were working for each other as a team and that’s when I realised that my current mindset before the camp was so wrong. The Veteran Mentors not only made me feel a million bucks but made me appreciate what I already have and helped me to see how much potential I had to do good things in life!

It’s now been three years since my experience and I’ve been invited back to work as a Junior Mentor in their program. It’s an absolute honour to work with a bunch of amazing and positive humans that are always motivating me every time I go back, even on the staff side.

Currently, I play in a band with my mates, perform at venues around Brisbane and I just bought my first car! When I think about everything I have achieved in the past three years, I don’t think I could have done any of it without the Veteran Mentors. They changed my life and continue to help me improve every time I go back.” So, thank you to all of the Veteran Mentors leaders. I strongly recommend this program for any kid no matter what! It’s a game-changer.”

Case Study – Parent

A parent's experience with Veteran Mentors

The case manager from Restorative Justice (this is a mediation service that they use for kids facing Juvenile detention) said to us:

“I've been doing this a long time and I have never seen a young adult who has genuinely owned up and faced what they have done and be truly remorseful. I have also never seen a person who has participated in Restorative Justice who I will walk away from knowing that I will never see again. James has been brave in participating in the program, learning from it and turning his life around and for that I fully commend him.”

James had to demonstrate to his case manager he was committed to showing both Restorative Justice and the sentencing Judge why he should not be incarcerated into Juvenile Detention.

Towards a better future

“James continues to grow and grow every day. He really wanted to face his past and return to his old school to finish what he started and prove to himself how much he had changed. This was probably one of the most courageous things he has done to date. He had to face the ex-headmaster along with a number of senior members at the school and prove to them as to why they should take him back.

James talked about Veteran Mentors and what you had taught him and believed in him and if it wasn't for you guys he wouldn't be standing there in front of them all today. I'm pleased to say they accepted him back and offered him a place for his final year in 2020.

From a home perspective, we cannot believe how much he continues to grow and better himself. He's cooking, doing chores, not arguing, being unbelievably pleasant and respectful. James is for the first time in his life comfortable in his own skin.

My husband and I never knew if we'd ever get our son back but we have. The best part of all of this is that James has driven all of this change, none of its come from us, it's 100 per cent from him and the Veteran Mentors program.”



Thank you for taking the time to review our proposal and what we're trying to achieve. We would welcome any opportunity to discuss our mission with you further and any potential support avenues we could explore to improve our programs and subsequently help to promote your product or service.

If this is something you believe we could achieve together, as we do,



Glenn Filtress



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VETERAN MENTORS PTY LTD

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YOUTH CRIME IN AUSTRALIA

VETERAN MENTORS



The Veteran Mentors are a group of ex-servicemen and women who have come together to help Australian youth, their families and their communities to overcome common personal challenges.

Utilising skills and lessons acquired through military training and deployment, the Veteran Mentors are equipped to provide critical lessons in respect, resilience, teamwork and courage.

We also help kids to understand the importance of developing self-esteem and meaningful relationships with friends and family.

Through conducting programs like the Junior Leader Program, our Veteran Mentors have assisted Aussie kids to conquer a range of challenges, encompassing everything from self-confidence issues to early intervention of risky behaviours like substance abuse, and everything in between. This e-Book has been designed to help deal with youth crime in Australia.



Youth crime in Australia

46,949

Youth offenders proceeded against by police between 2019 - 2020

20%

Were proceeded against by police for acts intended to cause injury

14%

Were proceeded against by police for theft

70%

Of youth offenders proceeded against by police were male

Australian Bureau of Statistics. Recorded Crime - Offenders (2019-2020).

Reference: Offenders aged 10 - 17 years

Youth crime: Where are we now?

While criminal activity continues to be a predominant issue in Australia, there is evidence to suggest that youth crime numbers are improving over time. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) recorded 46,949 young people (aged 10 - 17 years old) as proceeded against by police between 2019 - 2020. While this does sound like a relatively high number, the rate of offenders has followed a steady downward trend over the past decade.

Although this steady decline in youth crime is promising, the age-crime graph published by the Queensland Government Statistician's Office (2016 - 2017), shows a sharp spike in criminal offences at age 13 before peaking at age 18 and steadily declining as age increases. This raises the question, why are children more likely to commit crimes? To determine this, we will explore the factors that increase the likelihood of youth becoming involved in crime and look at ways we can help combat youth crime rates to help young Australians live more positive, healthy and productive futures.





Issues contributing to youth crime

So, we know that youth crime as a whole is generally improving, but how can we explain a sudden spike in crime before age 18? Well, when you consider this stage of life, up until age 25, children and teens experience an unprecedented surge in physical, social, biological and psychological growth. During this development stage, kids and teenagers are confronted with and responding to new life challenges like forming relationships, performing academically, and navigating changes in their minds and bodies, among many other challenges, which can play a major impact on their character.

According to the Queensland Government Statistician's Office (2016 - 2017), there are various internal and external factors that have been linked to an increase in the likelihood of youth crime. These factors are categorised for the individual as well as their peers, family and the community they live in.



The individual

A child's personal characteristics can affect their own risk of engaging in crime. Research suggests that when a child demonstrates social incompetence, an irritable and impulsive nature and disengagement with school and/or employment, they have a higher likelihood of engaging in unlawful activities.

The likelihood is even greater when a child is a victim of crime or has witnessed crime within the family home. This is because victims of crime who have suffered psychological and emotional strain often look to cope with unfavourable strategies, like drug or substance use.



Their peers

While individual characteristics can play a significant role in the likelihood of offending, so too can social experiences. As a child develops, forms friendships and relationships and begins school and/or work, they spend more time away from their parents and therefore their influences on behaviour become more heavily weighted toward peers than family.

In fact, a study by Gardner and Steinberg (2005) found that children aged 13 to 16 were more likely to engage in risky behaviours when surrounded by children of the same age, rather than when they were alone. This pattern was not observed in adults aged 24 years and older (Gardner and Steinberg, 2005).

Gardner, M and Steinberg, L 2005, 'Peer influence on risk taking, risk preference, and risky decision making in adolescence and adulthood: An Experimental Study', Developmental Psychology, vol. 41, no. 4, pp. 625–35.



Their family

Another contributing factor to youth crime is an individual's family setting. A child that is exposed to family abuse such as emotional, physical or sexual abuse, emotional or physical neglect, violence, parental separation, substance abuse or mental illness within the home or criminal history can have a major effect on a child's involvement in crime.

In fact, According to a study by Currie & Tekin (2006), the likelihood of a youth committing crime is **almost doubled** if they are victims of abuse or neglect.

Currie J & Tekin E 2006. Does child abuse cause crime? National Bureau of Economic Research working paper no. 12171. Cambridge, MA: NBER.



The community

Among other factors, developing youth can be influenced by their surroundings. When children are raised in communities with high violence rates, high crime rates, low employment rates and poor infrastructure, anti-social and criminal behaviour can become normalised. Poorer communities can also influence parenting practices, an individual's peers and hence, individual characteristics and the forming of their character.

As well as this, children often lack the ability to remove themselves from negative environments making them more vulnerable to experiencing multiple risk factors, significantly increasing the likelihood of youth crime. Because we are a product of our environment, more needs to be done to address poorer communities and the upbringing of children within them.



How we can help combat youth crime rates

Whilst evidence suggests youth offenders tend to grow out of crime, there are steps we can take to facilitate better environments for children and teenagers to grow, and reduce the likelihood of youth becoming involved in crime.

+ Early intervention

Because younger brains are more receptive to positive influences, it's far more effective to intervene early during a child's development than it is later in life.

+ Address risky behaviours

Addressing risky behaviours helps developing youth understand the kinds of behaviour that have legal consequences and instil fear to divert them away from continuing down a path of unlawful behaviour.

+ Help identify strengths and set goals

By identifying a child's goals and guiding them on a path toward achieving them, helps to gain skills in a prosocial way, that ultimately establishes meaning and personal fulfilment.

Tips for parents

As adults, it's up to us to guide the youth of Australia to make healthy life choices and avoid risky behaviour that can have an everlasting effect.

Be a positive role model

Children absorb their surroundings. Make it your mission to be a positive role model and become more involved in encouraging and supporting positive social, emotional and cognitive skills that will benefit your child.

Establish harmony at home

Ensure a stable and harmonious home environment where your children feel safe and supported during their development, free from physical punishment.

Support skill building

Support your child's development with skill training that focuses on building social, emotional, and cognitive competence to help them problem solve, manage anger and attitudinal problems, and improve their communication skills.



Tackling youth crime with Veteran Mentors

Our 9-day leadership programs for teens are designed to instil lessons of respect, resilience, teamwork and courage. As one of the most serious issues currently facing our youth, we're also highly dedicated to helping kids identify and overcome risk factors that can increase the likelihood of committing crime.

Utilising skills and lessons acquired through military training and deployment, our Junior Leader Program is designed to take participants out of their typical environment and instil essential values that help forge successful life paths.

By intervening early, we help to make participants aware of the true consequences of their actions, whilst also helping to direct their mindset to more positive and productive thoughts, by helping to set achievable goals and put plans in place to build a brighter future. In doing so, we help to improve family relationships, contribute to safer communities and enrich the lives of our participants.

If you're concerned about the path your child or the child of someone you know is on, and you're interested in learning more about the Junior Leadership Program, download our information pack below.

[Download Info Pack](#)





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Second chance at life

Mackay Project Booyah graduation honours Jack Evans with memorial award

MACKAY

ZOE DEVENPORT

MACKAY lad Darius Ramsamy used to think "every cop was a bad person".

Now the 16 year old counts police officers among his family and has nine new "brothers" he calls his "second family".

"I just thought every cop was just a bad person because some cops out there have just given police a bad example," he said.

"(Project Booyah co-ordinator) Keiran (Horsfall's) not even a cop, he's like my brother or something."

Project Booyah is a new mentor program working with wayward Mackay youth to help them gain confidence and life skills to apply for work and transition out of school.

Darius is one of 10 "Booyah boys" to graduate from the 16-week program which he described as a "once in a lifetime opportunity".

"When I first got accepted into this program, I didn't even know what it was," Darius said.

"I feel fantastic to be here, but kind of sad because it's the end of the program."

"We felt like we were just a family."

"I love this group so much. All of us boys, we just became best friends and then we just became brothers."

Fellow Booyah participant Jack Evans was "rough around the edges" but his parents believe he was turning his life around in the weeks before he took his own life.

He had been involved with drugs since age 13, mainly marijuana before going into "harder stuff".

Jack, 17, had applied for a job as a diesel fitter. The phone call for an interview came the day he died on November 16.

It was just days before he was expected to graduate from Project Booyah in the first intake of teens.

But his legacy has been honoured through the inaug-

ural Jack Evans Booyah Memorial Award, which his parents Karina and Duane presented at the most recent graduation.

"You could see a lot of changes in him - a lot more respect, a lot more grown up ... becoming a man", Mr Evans said about his son.

"Just simple things like if he said he was going to do something, he did it."

"This program actually really changed his life around."

In her speech, Jack's mother Karina said her late son was a "Project Booyah brother" who would have been humbled and embarrassed to have an award named after him.

"This award symbolises the respect, dedication, personal growth and commitment (that) you've all done", Ms Evans told the 10 teens.

"We have the choice to be present in this moment."

"Which celebrates the work each of you have done to overcome some really tough stuff."

The parents said they had been in contact with Senior Constable Keiran Horsfall and support officer Danica Crebbin "since it all happened".

Constable Horsfall said Jack's passing "hit us real hard" and the memorial award came out of a desire to "pay tribute to the family and to Jack's honour".

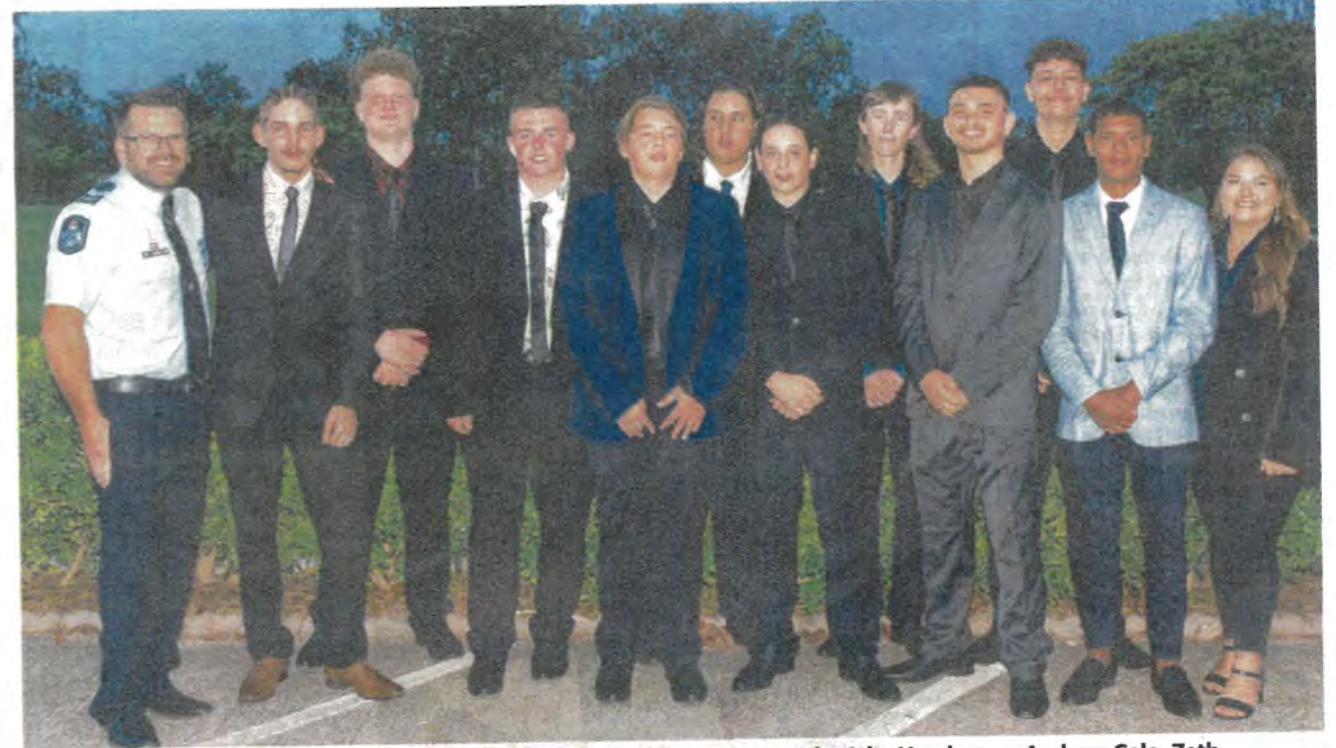
"It's the best thing I've done - mentoring these young fellas to make them better their lives," he said.

"Danica and myself have seen the group go from shy, apprehensive and angry human beings to confident, supportive and respectful young men."

"We honestly do have some future leaders among our cohort."

Queensland Police Service runs Project Booyah throughout the state alongside PCYC and other agencies to re-engage young people with the community and support them to see a brighter future.

Police officers and youth support workers take 10 teenagers aged between 14 and 17



Senior Constable Keiran Horsfall, Javaya Doyle, Cooper Linning, Lucas Temple, Jake Henderson, Andrew Cole, Zeth Southgate, Dylan Blaik, Darius Ramsamy, Lockie Turner, Zebby Boah, youth support officer Danica Crebbin at the Project Booyah Mackay graduation 2022. Picture: Michaela Harlow

through a 16-week intensive program and then support the teens until they turn 18.

Not all teens are engaged in crime but some arrive to the program on a miserable path if their behaviour does not change.

There is also a program in Mackay called Transition to Success program, which aims to reduce re-offending within communities.

Their involvement means they had been through the youth justice system because of prior brushes with police.

Youths fronted Mackay Magistrates Court 198 times in 2020-21, following a seemingly consistent trend in the region.

In 2019-20, youths made up 4.5 per cent of Mackay's defendants and faced a magistrate 222 times.

Ms Crebbin said the Jack Evans memorial award celebrated someone who had "put in the effort and actively chosen to do better for themselves".



Jacey Ramsamy, Darius Ramsamy and Shannan Ramsamy. Picture: Michaela Harlow

The first ever award recipient was 16-year-old graduate Javaya Doyle, who accepted the award from Whitsunday MP Amanda Camm and stood for a photo with Jack's parents.

Mackay MP Julieanne Gilbert and Mackay Mayor Greg

Williamson were also present to speak, with jokes made about the boys' applying to fill the council's numerous job vacancies.

Lockie Turner got his RSA permit through Booyah and said he was instead going to

"apply at a few bars" for a job. As the program came to an end, the 17-year-old said what he would really miss was the mateship on the Booyah bus.

"I'll probably grow up with these people for my whole life now", Lockie said.