Youth Justice Reform Select Committee inquiry into youth justice reform in Queensland

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Submitted by:	Geoff Higgins
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ROCKHAMPTON SUBMISSION Youth Justice Reform Select Committee Geoff Higgins

I work and volunteer in community in Rockhampton, and am doing a PhD in community development based on our work here.

Although there will be pressure to implement 'quick fix' solutions to address youth crime, I want to encourage the committee to 'step back' and seek to address the antecedents of youth crime, including:

- Poverty, including that imposed through wait times and almost impossible hoops in our supposed social safety net
- Lack of housing affordability and availability
- Domestic violence
- Regimentation in schools
- Lack of safety in schools
- Limited employment opportunities
- Lack of capacity to raise children in a loving, caring environment
- Removal of Aboriginal people from their lands and suppression of their culture
- Removal of South Sea Islanders from their lands and suppression of their culture

The above contribute to intergenerational violence and trauma, and to a lack of hope for the future, and connection with, and sense of belonging in, community.

This submission addresses:

- 1. Rockhampton Regional Council Youth Services Coordinator
- 2. Sustainability of the Our Space service
- 3. The summary termination of the CQ Youth Connect service
- 4. The need for a 24/7 Drop-in Centre in Rockhampton
- 5. Concerns about On-Country Programs
- 6. Findings from the Uniting Effort MindHive project
- 7. Findings from the Uniting Effort Yeah-Nah project
- 8. A Multi-government Agency Task Force Led by Community

Rockhampton Regional Council Youth Services Coordinator

Rockhampton Regional Council cannot put its head in the sand and pretend that it does not have a role in community. We need leadership from Council. There are signs of hope in the development of the housing strategy, but this is not nearly enough. We need a Youth Services team to be involved in a range of local and regional activities, including the Rockhampton Community Based Crime Action Committee (CBCAC); Rockhampton Stronger Places Stronger People project; the various community sector interagencies addressing youth housing, health, domestic violence, etc.

Sustainability of the Our Space Service

The wonderful Our Space service at Stocklands Rockhampton cannot just keep on desperately seeking short-term funding after short-term funding. We need a commitment to this service that allows it to incorporate and employ staff on a permanent basis. The issues they are dealing with are not short-term, so the funding should also not be short-term.

Hopefully others will provide submissions with more detail on this.

The Summary Termination of the CQ Youth Connect Service

I and other community members in Central Queensland are concerned that CQ Youth Connect, a valuable service in our community for 10 years, was closed down by Queensland Health in November 2023 with no formal public announcement and no obvious successor to address the very real issues that it was addressing – issues that are the clear antecedents of youth crime in our community.

This program provided clinical and educational services addressing mental health, alcohol and other drug use and sexual and reproductive health for young people in the community. CQ Youth Connect had strong connections with community organisations, volunteer organisations, health practitioners and providers inside and outside Queensland Health, including an extensive referral network.

The CBCAC was told that there had been consultation, but a large number of community partners of CQ Youth Connect were not consulted, and it is unlikely that consumers of the service were consulted. In making this decision, not only was Queensland Health closing a service, they were also abandoning a vibrant engaged network of youth health and social services providers in the community.

No replacement/improvement/expansion/extension of this program has been announced. As far as the community is aware, a valued service has been taken away and there are no plans to replace it. This is being done at a time when there is a shortage of community-facing public health activity, health promotion and education.

In the lead up to closing down CQ Youth Connect, Queensland Health also:

- 1. Closed down the Central Queensland Youth Health Reference Group which was a group of engaged young people providing regular input and advice to the hospital and health service as consumers (a key role in creating efficient, effective and relevant health services).
- 2. Showed reluctance to be involved in the annual CQ Youth Interagency Health Forum is its 10th year – which had been launched by CQ Youth Connect and hosted by Queensland Health for 9 years. More than 150 people attend this event annually, including people involved in health, education, disability, youth justice, emergency services and other community services.

3. Left unfilled two identified Indigenous Youth Engagement Officer positions – important stepping stones for young people into career employment in the health service, while providing culturally relevant and safe health services.

Some of CQ Youth Connect's activities included:

- Regular clinics across CQ mostly at high schools such as Carinity Special Assistance School in Rockhampton and Wadja Wadja High School at Woorabinda.
- Out of hours intervention to support young people through suicidality, homelessness, drug dependency and other personal crises, followed by appropriate referral and follow-up.
- Participation at community events, including NAIDOC and Mental Health Week, often on weekends.
- Co-founding the CQ FASD Alliance and tireless advocacy for awareness, education and clinical services for Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders.
- Conducting Youth Opportunity Days in Rockhampton, Gladstone and Mt Morgan.
- Establishing the CQ Youth Interagency Health Forum which brings together youth service providers. This year in its 10th year!
- Creating and maintaining a comprehensive directory of youth, health and social services until it was handed over to My Community Directory (an online platform available for public access in ways that tracks all access and highlights use and need), and continuing to partner to ensure this can be sustainably produced without using CQHHS resources.
- Providing a great grounding in community health for a succession of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers in the Indigenous Youth Engagement Officer role.
- Participating in the Rockhampton Community Based Crime Action Committee (CBCAC) a Qld Government supported effort to develop collaborative approaches to addressing youth crime.
- Supporting and working in OurSpace at Stocklands Shopping Centre which provides a supported 'drop-in' centre on site for disengaged youth.

Queensland Health and the CQ Hospital and Health Service do not seem to appreciate the significant role of CQ Youth Connect in our community in educating young people about health and wellbeing; responding to health issues for vulnerable young people; providing advice and referral; in helping young people lead healthier lives, reducing future pressure on health services; and providing forums in which youth services providers can inform young people and peer services about their valuable services. This effort has developed wide respect in the community, in health services and across schools.

CQ Youth Connect was mainly funded by Making Tracks – a fund for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health outcomes. CQ Youth Connect provided an integrated service – it provided services without prejudice and with a great deal of respect to young people in need, both those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people and to those who do not. Like other community-controlled service providers, the service also worked with non-Indigenous clients/patients.

In discussions in the community it had been suggested that matching the Making Tracks funds with non-Indigenous funding would be more appropriate than closing down CQ Youth Connect. Not closing things down, but supplementing the funds and expanding the capacity for all young people in Central Queensland. In fact, these suggestion was made years before the service was closed.

Apparently PWC did a report on the Central Queensland Making Tracks-funded programs, including CQ Youth Connect. However, they did not consult widely with stakeholders, and the report has been kept secret, so it is not possible to see whether it adequately represented the work of the CQ Youth Connect, and whether it reflected the impact of terminating CQ Youth Connect.

Solution: A 24/7 Drop-in Centre in Rockhampton

A small group of people are in the early stages of working towards creating a Drop-in Centre in Rockhampton to give young people a place to go, a feed, safety and belonging, activities to keep them occupied, an opportunity to contribute learn leadership and self-determination, and access to social and employment services.

It has been noted that overall, Drop-in Centres play a crucial role in reducing youth crime by providing a range of support services, fostering positive relationships, empowering young people, and addressing the underlying factors that contribute to criminal behaviour. By engaging with youth in a holistic and proactive manner, Drop-in Centres can help create safer communities and support the positive development of young people.

Services are expected to include:

- Crisis Intervention
- Education and Employment Support
- Mentorship and Role Modelling
- Recreation and Skill-building Activities
- Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment
- Restorative Justice Programs

Concerns About On-Country Programs

There is a lot of talk about on-country programs. Some concerns discussed in the community include:

- Uncertainty about how culturally-safe and culturally-relevant these services are.
- We are already concerned about young people taken from Rockhampton to Brisbane or Townsville for juvenile detention. These locations are 8 hours drive away from families, friends and the place they live. There is also talk about 'the next wave of stolen children'. There is a long and traumatic and continuing multigenerational history of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people living in poverty being removed from their families and their homes as children and teenagers. And now we are talking about taking young people somewhere remote and forcing them to conform.
- The romanticising of the pastoral life is something many of us in regional Queensland repeatedly see represented as some sort of solution to 'city problems'. We need to find solutions in our urban context, not be thinking a bit of early rising and shovelling will make people better.
- There is also a strong sense of 'pull yourself up by your bootstraps' in all of this. Victim blaming just lets government and the rest of the community off the hook in terms of the failure to address poverty, the lack of housing, the education system, access to safe employment, etc.

Findings From the Uniting Effort MindHive Project

Using the MindHive community discussion platform (mindhive.org), 33 people in 10 countries worldwide contributed 171 comments on fourteen topics relevant to youth crime in Rockhampton. The synthesised findings resulted in four insights:

- 1. Redefine Education: Education is not a 'one size fits all' for all young people. Education needs to prepare young people with the skills for life, learning and work.
- 2. Funding for a Backbone Agency: Backbone agencies come in varying structures and systems. A backbone agency should be independent, have strong community relationships, build collective effort, and distribute and manage funding locally.
- 3. Localised decision making for funding expenditure: Empower local communities to manage and distribute funding that supports effective and efficient programs that provide positive outcomes for young people.
- 4. Collaborative effort: Strengthening, educating, inspiring and empowering communities to work together, set goals and solve problems.

Supplementary Attachment: Uniting Effort Project Report (Mindhive)

Findings From the Uniting Effort Yeah-Nah Project

Following the Uniting Effort Mindhive Project, the Uniting Effort YeahNah project was initiated to follow-up the four insights and to address concerns regarding the resourcing of community change activities that are recognised as important to address the social factors that lead to youth crime. The project involved surveying three groups of people to seek confirmation (or otherwise) that those active in community change should continue to progress the work, and that there is agreement to the ideas regarding how the work should progress the work being circulated in the community.

The project concluded with the following recommendations:

- 1. A continued commitment to involving grassroots community, local leaders, First Nations people and all levels of government in community change activities; including expanding to more directly involve leaders in Government, people in community and stakeholder organisations.
- 2. Leaders in Government and beyond be better informed of, and engaged in, community change activities in our community.
- 3. A more formal invitation be extended to the Senior Officers Network, exploring opportunities for resource sharing of frontline staff and local Government leaders to participate in community change activities.
- 4. The work to involve local initiatives in education and health, which will require a more tangible involvement of leaders in education and health.
- 5. The more formal approach to evaluation and reporting, following the Connecting the Dots Community Change Model.
- 6. A local, accessible repository of documentation relevant to the work should be established.
- 7. A community-run organisation to organise the work. Of note, project partner Every Child CQ was established with this purpose.
- 8. The people involved in community change work be encouraged to continue the work.

Supplementary Attachment: Uniting Effort YeahNah Report

A Multi-government Agency Task Force Led by Community

There is a huge amount of government resourcing addressing children, young people and families in the Rockhampton region. However, we are going backwards on many measures of success for young people and the community. A new approach is warranted, and also a recognition that no one solution will work.

The Rockhampton Community Based Crime Action Committee (CBCAC) and members of the community would like to establish a task force of people working across government agencies with a responsibility to children, young people and families. The work would be guided by an advisory committee of senior retired public servants. This multi-agency task force would take a coordinated, partnership approach, identifying and establishing new practices in supporting young people across education, health, policing, corrections, out of home care, sport and recreation and others.

Potential government agencies include: Queensland Police Service, Youth Justice, Child Safety, Communities, Heath, Education, Corrective Services, Housing, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Sport and Recreation, and Premier and Cabinet.



Community Based Crime Action Committees

Uniting Effort Project Report

Report by:





Tittle

Summary Introduction Engagement overview Discussion questions Comments Highlights Ideation Votes Top Insights Thank you



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Uniting Effort Project Summary



Mindhive CBCAC Report

- Mindhive



Community Based Crime Action Committees

The Rockhampton CBCAC is working to address complex and intertwined youth issues including but not limited to crime, disengagement from education and employment, family breakdown and domestic violence, lack of family role models, social and emotional well-being, and undiagnosed health issues such as FASD. Indigenous youth are overrepresented in all these areas. Across government, service providers, and the community there are thousands of dedicated, motivated, and committed people working towards better outcomes for youth. However, government and service provider workers are confined to working towards the limited and specific objectives of their own organisation and their responses are often confined to their organisational 'silos'. The CBCAC has identified that there are currently 35 agencies running 99 youth programs in the Rockhampton area. The CBCAC has identified significant process blockages that limit the achievement of successful long-term outcomes for young people in this area. These include getting government, service providers, and the community too, work across their individual 'silos', pool resources, work towards a common goal, be proactive rather than reactive, and overcome competition for funds and turf protection.







Introduction



In a Mindhive discussion, ideation is the process by which a discussion's most valuable ideas, thoughts and insights are given special attention by discussion administrators and consolidated into a ideation card inside a discussion ideation page. From there participants can vote on what they feel are the most valuable of these insights and even provide further comments to these ideation cards. Ideations are a way of visually condensing a highly active discussions greatest contributions in a way that is easy to engage with for both users and discussion administrators.

- Mindhive

The Mindhive platform engagement and activity was beyond the industry standard.

The CBCAC review enabled multiple and diverse voices around the world to engage in the review. The platform enabled all participants to discuss and surface the critical insights — a collaborative approach in an open environment. Everyone's voice and insights were equal, transparent and influential.

> The core philosophy of Mindhive is that these habits are broken, and the wisdom, insights and intelligence of all permitted participants is made available and laid bare for others to absorb and evaluate in a way that leads to further understanding of key issues which in turn drives forward greater solutions.







Overview of engagement across all platforms

Engagement with the discussion greatly exceeded typical engagement values for similar public discussions which illustrates the importance of this discussion and the issues presented within it for all known participants.



45.5% Passive 54.5% Participated





Engagement overview



- Mindhive

The table above details the total number of participants over the course of the discussion and what number of those participants contributed to the discussion and in what ways. For example, what number have commented and what number have liked others comments.





Discussion questions

The numbers shown are the amount of comments under each question







Comments for the Uniting Effort Project

Below are the total number of comments made in response to a given topic

Number of Comments per Topic

How do we break down 'Silos' How do we reduce service duplication How do we build community pride How do we improve outcomes for familes and young people How do we maximise current resource effectivness How does the CBCAC identify and implement best practice preventative strategies How do we overcome the limitations created by short term funding cycles How do we create synergy between government, service providers and community How do you get government departments to work together How do we build trust between government and community agencies How do we amplify CBCAC collaborative approach How can we overcome government resistance to change Welcome What others have tried (made by a participant)









Highlights for the Uniting Effort Project

Below are the highlights sourced from the discussion



Funding for a back bone agency Redefine education **Developing for Communities** Reduce competition for funding Positive media strategy Build links to research and ad... Driving government change Trans-disiplinary approach. Localized Decision making for ... Vulnerable persons unit Reducing rather then eliminat... Participation in education. Identify gaps in service My community directory.com Figuring out the problem Service Provision After Hours Collaborative Advocacy



Number of Highlights per Ideation



Ideation







Votes for the Uniting Effort Project

Below are the votes for the ideation

Number of Votes per Ideation

Funding for a back bone agency Redefine education Localized Decision making for funding expenditure Collaborative effort Accountability Positive media strategy Build links to research and advocacy bodies Figuring out the problem **Collaborative Advocacy** Identify gaps in service **Building trust Developing for Communities** Reduce competition for funding Driving government change Reducing rather then eliminating crime as a more realistic goal Participation in education. Trans-disiplinary approach. Learning for Life My community directory.com Vulnerable persons unit Service Provision After Hours Youth Garuntees

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Mindhive CBCAC Report

--- Mindhive

Insights

Overall Top Insights

The discussion generated a wide range of ideas and suggestions but the top four insights were:

Redefine Education:

Education is not a 'one size fits all' for all young people. Education needs to prepare young people with the skills for life, learning and work.

Localised decision making for funding expenditure:

Empower local communities to manage and distribute funding that supports effective and efficient programs that provide positive outcomes for young people.

Funding for a Back Bone Agency:

Back bone agencies come in varying structures and systems. A back bone agency should be independent, have strong community relationships, build collective effort, an distribute and manage funding locally.

Collaborative effort:

Strengthening, educating, inspiring and empowering communities, to work together, set goals and solve problems.





Highlights for Redefine Education:

In Glasgow, we have experienced success in reducing youth crime. My focus, as Director of Education, was, as you would expect, focused on nurseries and schools. However, they could not work in isolation and we actively promoted schools and nurseries to work with their communities - parents, housing associations, police and community organisations. Essentially, we took a rights-based approach where the views of young people are central. Schools have moved from discipline policies to more relationship-based approaches. Restorative approaches feature strongly.

by Maureen McKenna

Rather than starting a food bank or meal delivery service which might make them feel inadegute or called out for their lack of skills, they started free cooking lessons with a Menshed-style 'come and socialise and if you happen to learn something, great' atmosphere

by Jodie van de Wetering

Find ways for young people to feel valued and successful, this may not be through 'formal' education

by Linda Lorenza

families are the key to changing the outcomes for the child.

by Brendan Shannon

Changing the way support is described or communicated can make a big difference to how the offer is received

by Jodie van de Wetering

I believe that education is the key that is related to the possibility of using technology to enable families and young people to earn income no matter where they are located provided that they have internet access.

by John Cosstick

I agree but I think you need your schools and nurseries to be actively engaged in this work. They need to be inclusive and focused on the wider purpose of education. Schools should be meeting the learning needs of all their children and young people. They may need to partner with community organisations to ensure that children come to school and that parents are well-supported to be able to help their children (family learning programmes).

by Maureen McKenna

The issues and plans for solutions must go beyond the service sector. Schools must be involved as they, behind family, as the most influential for young people, have to be part of the change journey. Potential employers, local businesses, sporting and cultural groups, all have important roles to play in young people's lives. The wider the net, the greater the opportunity is to influence someone's life outcomes.

by Maxine Brushe

For example, develop employability skills of young people aged 14 to 25; provide family support to those families who are 'just coping' through family learning programmes, etc. The use of the term 'just coping' comes from thinking about families in a four point scale - thriving, coping, just coping and chaotic. Much funding goes towards 'chaotic' families at the expense of those families who are 'just coping' - this is where preventative funding should be directed. Much of this work should/could be done in partnership with schools and nurseries.

by Maureen McKenna

by Brendan Shannon

many people learn and work best outside. However, technology can be a bridge to open up opportunities to marketing/development of ideas and outside initiatives that bring outside activities to the world. Here is an example:

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-03-2 1/yolngu-artists-yirrkala-nfts/100916188.

by John Cosstick

How do we build greater knowledge (of the things that impact a young person's life/set their direction) and empathy, and ideally support from the broader community who often disregard those youth who aren't engaged/engage in less than ideal behaviours?

by Melissa Findlay

schools are absolutely central to the work - they link with the families and nurseries and primary schools do a lot of family learning work - building the capacity of families to be better able to help themselves

by Maureen McKenna

Celebrate the success of the individuals involved. Often times these young offenders are trying to gain peer or adult attention, maladaptively mind you. Having these individuals gaining positive recognition and publicising this is the main thing.

by Brendan Shannon

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If we want to have a true long term impact then I would recommend looking at a younger clientele around 8 years old. As this is the age where intervention has greater potential of long term impact. Once they are teenagers their behaviour patterns are much harder to influence.

Do this from within our community well and embed it in child care, schools, community groups,

mothers/fathers/carers groups, health clinics, GP etc. Funding can establish and it can continue if/whe

by Nyree Johnson

Young people in Australian public schools are kicked out at an alarming rate into the too hard basket, they learn that they have no value and the schools get to maintain good stats by evicting the ones they don't have 'time' or 'capacity' for.

by Danielle Gillespie

We tried Parenting Programmes a number of years ago but they were costly and not very effective because it was a deficit model. Families were referred there because professionals perceived them as failing as parents - the families knew that's why they were referred. In our schools and nurseries, we moved towards

by Maureen McKenna

As educators, our role is to prepare young people with the skills for life, learning and work. This is regardless of their cognitive ability and cultural background.

by Maureen McKenna

Also from the the student's point of view our schools are racist and they feel unheard when they raise concerns about student's commenting and making racist comments. The schools tell them to be the bigger person and ignore it but do nothing to stop the other person from their behaviours then the bully escalates their behaviours and before you know it the whole situation is out of control and the Indigenous student is being charged for assault and suspended for days on end impacting their safety at the school and education. Maybe we should start with anti racism programs in the schools with teachers and students, unconscious bias training, anti-discrimination training and the Human Rights act training, when you talk to the high offenders their disconnection from community starts with the education system.

by Danielle Gillespie

we need to give young people the hope, aspiration and then the reality of a positive future. This can only come with positive employment opportunities and employers willing to take a punt on some young people who don't fit into the standard model that they perceive of their employees

by Maureen McKenna

Will your community understand that Learning for Life (rather than skills for learning and work) has a hard edge to it which will have key performance indicators which include young people getting into further/higher education, employment or training? These positive destinations need to be sustained - do we support the young people for the first six months to make sure they are coping?

by Maureen McKenna

a school may be focused on regulation strategies for a student that contradict those that other support agencies are trying to embed. Often we assume the student should be articulating this when often they are not

by Brendan Shannon

In education, our aims were to improve outcomes for children and young people through education. We couldn't achieve this unless our families were more engaged and more positive about education.

by Maureen McKenna











Highlights for Funding for a Back Bone Agency:

I think it is really important that there is a 'backbone' agency that has the purpose of bringing together all agencies and services that work in the youth and family space in Rockhampton. It would be preferable if that 'backbone' agency was fully funded and supported by government to perform that role. The agency would need to be respected and accepted across the community.

by Ashley Hull

Just the initial steps: Create a compact that commits us to keep coming together. And fund a backbone organisation so that we have leadership to coordinate this activity and administrative support to make it happen.

by Geoff Higgins

Establish a local framework (Backbone). McKinsey Report 'Delivering for Citizens' 2018

by Uniting Effort

Comprehensive and thorough capacity planning. Ensuring the right people are in the right place at the right time and with the right skills.

by Nyree Johnson

Build a local backbone that can be the repository for all existing and potential funding to define timing overlaps.

by Uniting Effort

You might want to consider who would be your key partners if you were to establish a VRP. They hold the funding and ensure then that the funding goes to projects which align with their aims and values.

by Maureen McKenna

Lobby government to stop splitting funding across too many organisations.

by Susie Cameror

Possibly an independent non government body whose role is to ensure collaboration by all those government agencies. Funding to be distributed by the non government body based on outcomes and sustainability of the programs implemented by the government departments.

by David Grenfell OAM

Could we benefit from providing a wider banner for our collective efforts e,g, Learning for Life and establish a community driven back-bone organisation which is truly independent from all service providers and can provide the mechanism to allocate some funds to community determined collaborative priorities around helping children/youth reach their full potential and lead productive lives.

by Wallace Taylor OAM

There are existing structures and systems that facilitate this already in other domains (not just the youth space)that include senior management levels of gov/ local gov and non gov agencies. Rather than reinvent or duplicate- join/ leverage/ expand on these.

by Megan Humphris

Continue increasing relationship / partnerships building across-sector, simultaneously together lobby for government to have funds distributed and managed locally by a local backbone organisation

by Friederike Mccartney

Mindhive CBCAC Report

- Mindhive

A one-stop-shop solution / knowledge bank

by Nyree Johnson

CBCAC is to be seen as neutral intervention party, it should be incorporated to apply for intervention funding and individual partners can apply for restitution of services.

by Sandra Truscott

Enhance the collation of 99 programs managed by 35 organisations by creating a user friendly system/tool to identify the best program/service provider per circumstance.

by Nyree Johnson

If there was a way to identify the companies who are eligible at the time of the funding applications, it may be possible to link them up to collaborate that may help

by David Grenfell OAM

There is definitely a need to have a steering organisation - a small team that brings the key players together and co-produces with them the key priorities and importantly how you are going to measure success for the next five years (say)

by Maureen McKenna

t can provide the independent base (i.e. outside of government, business, education and civil society) to build collaborations that work to gain the trust of all current & potential service providers to be comfortable in sharing resources to work together to establish communty supported pathways for youth development

by Uniting Effort

Engaging with those who have lived experiences who spend countless hours discussing what could be done better .

by Donna Kirkland

The whole system needs to change.

by Geoff Higgins











Highlights for Funding for a Back Bone Agency:

deliberately look for the gaps; appreciating and valuing contributions from all sectors of the community.

by Donna Kirkland

I believe a strength of the Rockhampton CBCAC is that it has been given a \$200,000.00 annual budget to allocate to projects that reduce youth offending. The CBCAC model in Rockhampton demonstrates that localised decision making for funding expenditure can work well.

by Ashley Hull

Utilising a mediator platform such as CBCAC to gather from the community evidence of what's not working and why ALONG with the Solutions - what is needed. Then CBCAC as a message advocate/filter, take that information back to all levels of Government including suggested revised POLICY wording that will facilitate a space where there Solutions can be realised, negating the policy blocks that often insulate Govt from taking responsibility, or even engaging.

by Donna Kirkland

How do you see such a "compact" and "backbone organisation" work in practice - over time? Should an organisation have to apply for a permit to provide charitable services in Rockhampto

by Edward Irvine

Share ideas broadly to work collaboratively. Trends will be similar across communities so different departments can draw on other areas.

by sarah Mitchell-anvon

Outlining the benefits of having a designated organisation such as ECCQ in our Community (back bone organisation). Showcase current pathways to connect consumers with required services and support systems. Build on strengths with solutions focus and community development.

by Friederike Mccartney

support and strengthen an already existing local designed back bone organisation, create synergies e.g., ECCQ (Every Child CQ) collective collaborative place-based approach, shared vision building strong communities and building capacity (simutainously increasing community spirit, strengths and can-do approach), complement existing youth services in developing local strategies addressing youth gaps.

by Friederike Mccartney

support and strengthen an already existing local designed back bone organisation, create synergies e.g., ECCQ (Every Child CQ) collective collaborative place-based approach, shared vision building strong communities and building capacity (simutainously increasing community spirit, strengths and can-do approach), complement existing youth services in developing local strategies addressing youth gaps.

From Thread #1999 started by Friederike Mccartney

Have a back-bone organisation e.g., ECCQ (Every Child CQ) lobby together for Government to have funds distributed and managed locally by the local back-bone organisation which already has built out standing relationships, insight of own community concerns and understands Community strengths and weakness. Show case and celebrate success.

by Friederike Mccartney

by Jodie van de Wetering

By providing the space to grow collaboration

by Susie Cameron

Have a back-bone organisation e.g., ECCQ (Every Child CQ) lobby together for Government to have funds distributed and managed locally by the local back-bone organisation which already has built out standing relationships, insight of own community concerns and understands Community strengths and weakness. Show case and celebrate success.

From Thread #1998 started by Friederike Mccartney

- Mindhive

There's a lot of capacity and goodwill in the community that I don't think is being harnessed as effectively as it could be because it's just so hard to reach people and get a message across. And that includes other orgs with a stake as well - sports groups, arts groups, hobby groups, religious groups - because there are pockets of excellence there that may not be recognised because they don't compete for the same funding, don't use the same language, or again because we just don't know about them because the word isn't out.

Coming together as an entity of great strength to build a resilient and resolute idea for the benefit of those who have no voice.

by Menessia Nagie

Can we easily identify the waste of effort and resources to better understand the size of the problem in the first instance. If known then which areas should be the focus areas for change and building a more collaborative model.

by David Grenfell OAM

Each Services commit in allocating specific amount of resources towards cohort of Youth, and Increase education/life skills, camps and workshops tailored specifically for Youth concerned, teaching life skill classes/sessions in school times and outside school schedules. (Learning for Life, growth, and development, breaking the cycle)

by Friederike Mccartney





Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the Uniting Effort discussion.

Thank you for taking the time to share your knowledge and personal experiences with us. Youth crime issues are certainly not unique to Rockhampton, and it has been a tremendously rewarding experience for the community of Rockhampton, to have people from across the world reach out to us and share their insights.















by David Grenfell OAM with 10 likes

"My observation is that there are many organisations all trying to help the community and obviously to do so they all need money. Many receive funding notifications and then tailor their effort to meet the funding criteria, rather than collaborating with other similar organisations to tailor programs to the community need. If there was a way to identify the companies who are eligible at the time of the funding applications, it may be possible to link them up to collaborate that may help."









- Mindhive

About Mindhive

Mindhive is a Brisbane innovation and the world's first collective ideation platform enabling users to engage and understand their audience at scale in real-time. Recently recognised as the World's Boldest Crowdsourced Online Platform by Global Crowdsourcing Awards in Venice, Italy, Mindhive facilitates discussion by connecting users to an online community to gain rapid insight and innovation from a diverse audience

About CBCAC

Rockhampton is a regional city with a population of about 86,000 people located in Central Queensland, Australia. It faces issues similar to other regional towns in Queensland. The Queensland Government established Community Based Crime Action Committees (CBCAC) in 12 cities across the state to address youth crime issues. Rockhampton is one of the 12 locations. The Rockhampton CBCAC has approximately 100 members from across, government, service providers, and community.

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Uniting Effort YeahNah Report

Report by:

Uniting Effort Working Group of the Rockhampton Community Based Crime Action Committee Using tools from:

UNITING EFFORT YEAHNAH REPORT

UNITING EFFORT WORKING GROUP, 2023

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Context & Background

The Rockhampton Community Based Crime Action Committee (CBCAC) was formed to address youth crime in the Capricorn region (consisting of the Rockhampton Region and Livingstone Shire). The CBCAC includes members from government at all three levels and community sector, health and education organisations, and interested community members.

The committee seeks to address the social factors proven to lead to youth crime, as well as providing advice to the Queensland Police Service in directly addressing criminal activity. The committee has been assigned funds by the Queensland Government to support projects involving on-ground and strategic activities that seek to improve the circumstances which lead to crime, including redirecting young people towards prosocial activities, and addressing social factors that lead to crime, including domestic violence; breakdown of relationships, multigenerational trauma, poverty and disconnection from education and employment.

For more information, please contact the Uniting Effort Working Group Chair, Geoff Higgins.

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About YeahNah

YeahNah is a simple yet powerful binary polling and survey system where participants can effortlessly express themselves with a simple "yes" or "no" response to questions that explore perspectives, preferences, practices and propositions – the building blocks of decision making and collaboration. YeahNah is a low-commitment method of securing collective confirmation or condemnation.





The Uniting Effort YeahNah Project

The Uniting Effort YeahNah project was initiated to follow-up recommendations from an earlier project (the Uniting Effort Mindhive Project) and to address concerns regarding the resourcing of community change activities that are recognised as important to address the social factors that lead to youth crime. The project involved surveying three groups of people to seek confirmation (or otherwise) that those active in community change should continue to progress the work, and that there is agreement to the ideas regarding how the work should progress the work being circulated in the community.



The three groups of people are, will be, or should be, involved in the community change work in the community. They are: people in leadership roles in government; people working in government; and people already involved in the community change work.

Project Partners

One of the **Rockhampton Community Based Crime Action Committee**'s (CBCAC) working groups is the **Uniting Effort Working Group** (the authors of this report). This group's purpose is to work to build opportunities for greater cooperation and collaboration between members of the Rockhampton CBCAC and other stakeholders. Their initial goals, from the Uniting Effort Mindhive project outcomes, are to secure funding for a backbone agency, and redefine education, with the former being the first step on the journey.

Every Child Central Queensland Inc (Every Child CCQ) auspiced this work. Every Child CQ was established more than 5 years ago to be a backbone for place-based community development activities in Central Queensland. It is local, independent of government and corporate interests, and does not do service delivery. It is committed to organising the community change / community development work — finding out what the community wants and needs, and pursuing that with community, government and other stakeholders.

The YeahNah Audiences

People Already Involved in the Work — Members of the CBCAC and people on the Every Child CQ mailing list.

People in Government Working With Community — Members of the CBCAC and people on the Every Child CQ mailing list with a ".gov.au" email address. They were encouraged to share the invitation with "other people in Government working to support communities in Capricorn".

Local Decision Makers in Government — Members of the Senior Officers Network (SON). The Chair of the SON described their members as, "people able to make decisions on behalf of their agency without leaving the room".

On the three surveys most of the questions were the same. The remaining questions were for specific audiences.

The YeahNah Response Rate

The response rate from each audience was a surprising 25%, apparently a good outcome when you are 'cold calling'. The response rates was calculated as follows:

- People Already Involved in the Work
 - 59 people responded. The survey was sent to 236 people. The response rate was 25%.
- People in Government Working With Community

— 20 people responded. The original mailout was sent to 79 people. They were encouraged to send it on to other relevant people, so the total number of people who received the invitation is not known. As the original mailout is the only number available, this allows an 'upper limit' to be calculated for the response rate. The response rate was less than or equal to 25%.

- Local Decision Makers in Government
 - 13 people responded. The survey was sent to the 51 people on the SON mailing list. This gives a response rate of 25%.

The YeahNah Questions By Audience

Ten questions were put to all audiences; four questions were only provided to 'people already involved in the work' and 'people in Government working with community'; and three questions were solely put to 'local decision makers in Government', as follows:

- Put to all three audiences:
 - Are you optimistic about reducing youth crime in the Capricorn region?
 - Are you optimistic about solving other issues relating to poverty and disadvantage in Capricorn?
 - o Should we be leaving it to Government to solve social issues in our community?
 - o Are you familiar with community development or collective impact?
 - o Are you familiar with the work of CBCAC and Every Child CQ initiating community-led change?
 - Are you familiar with the Rockhampton Stronger Places Stronger People collective impact initiative?
 - o Have you read the CBCAC Uniting Effort Mindhive Report and Uniting Effort Prospectus?
 - Would you expect grassroots community, local leaders, First Nations people and all levels of government to be involved?
 - Do you think that having a community-run organisation organising the work would be appropriate?
 - We are calling this community change. Should the people doing this work be encouraged to continue?
- Put to 'people already involved in the work' and 'people in Government working with community':
 - Do you think this work should involve local initiatives in education and health?
 - Should this work involve evaluating and reporting on community change initiatives?
 - Should this work involve maintaining a register of services for young people and families?
 - Given an opportunity, would you be willing to step up and get involved in this work?
- Put to 'local decision makers in Government':
 - o Given your role, would you be prepared to allocate a percentage of resources, assigning operational staff to this work?
 - Would you consider dedicating 1 to 2 percent of operational staff to this work?
 - Would this involvement provide an unacceptable level of risk for your department?

The email sent to each audience and the questions put to each audience are included in Appendix 1.

The YeahNah Questions by Topic

These are the topics explored in the three YeahNah surveys, and the associated questions:

- 1. Exploring people's optimism (or otherwise) for addressing youth crime and other social issues.
 - \circ Are you optimistic about reducing youth crime in the Capricorn region?
 - Are you optimistic about solving other issues relating to poverty and disadvantage in Capricorn?
- 2. The role of government and community/community organisations in doing community development.
 - Should we be leaving it to Government to solve social issues in our community?
 - Would you expect grassroots community, local leaders, First Nations people and all levels of government to be involved?
 - Do you think that having a community-run organisation organising the work would be appropriate?
- 3. Familiarity with community development, including local initiatives.
 - \circ $\;$ Are you familiar with community development or collective impact?
 - Are you familiar with the work of CBCAC and Every Child CQ initiating community-led change?
 - o Are you familiar with the Rockhampton Stronger Places Stronger People collective impact initiative?
 - Have you read the CBCAC Uniting Effort Mindhive Report and Uniting Effort Prospectus?
- 4. People's willingness to get involved in the work.
 - Given an opportunity, would you be willing to step up and get involved in this work?
- 5. What are appropriate community development activities.
 - o Do you think this work should involve local initiatives in education and health?
 - Should this work involve evaluating and reporting on community change initiatives?
 - o Should this work involve maintaining a register of services for young people and families?
- 6. Questions about allocating Government resources to the work, including one about level of risk in becoming involved.
 - (These were the three questions put only to members of the SON).
 - o Given your role, would you be prepared to allocate a percentage of resources, assigning operational staff to this work?
 - \circ $\;$ Would you consider dedicating 1 to 2 percent of operational staff to this work?
 - \circ $\;$ Would this involvement provide an unacceptable level of risk for your department?
- 7. Whether the people doing the work should be encouraged to continue. (The final question for everyone.)
 - o Given an opportunity, would you be willing to step up and get involved in this work?

Themes in the YeahNah Responses

The following themes emerged in the responses:

- 1. Given that they are 'wicked problems' being experienced globally, it is heartening to see that people are optimistic that we can reduce youth crime and other issues relating to poverty and disadvantage.
- 2. Overall there was a high level of consistency in responses across three reasonably diverse audiences.
- 3. The strongest support for government <u>not</u> being left to address social issues came from government division makers, with strong support from all audiences.
- 4. Government decision makers were the least informed about the community change work going on locally. This may be due to community change being outside the portfolio of some of them, and the busy-ness of people in those roles.
- 5. People involved in the work and people working in government who participated expressed willingness to be involved in the ongoing community change work in this community. The latter audience may have mainly been people already involved in, or at least aware of, this work.
- 6. Responses to questions about allocating Government resources to the work resulted in a near 50:50 response indicating a level of interest in being involved in this novel approach. This was supported by the view that the work would not provide an undue level of risk to their Department.
- 7. There was an interesting dichotomy between the responses of people involved in the work and working in government and government leaders in terms of optimism for addressing youth crime and other social issues, with leaders less optimistic about addressing youth crime than the others, while being more optimistic about addressing other social issues.
- 8. There was resounding agreement across all audiences that the people doing the work should be encouraged to continue.

Detailed results are provided in Appendix 2.

Implications of the YeahNah

The four strongest endorsements in the YeahNah are:

- We should not be leaving this work to Government. (With members of the SON the strongest advocates for this.)
- Grassroots community, local leaders, First Nations people and all levels of government need to be involved.
- The work should involve local initiatives in education and health and include evaluation and reporting.
- The people doing this work should be encouraged to continue.

Other implications of the responses include:

- The conflicted (close to 50:50) responses by decision makers to questions about dedicating staff to the work locally may look problematic, but a 46% interest in providing resources is probably a good start from leaders of teams and departments which have experienced decades of staff and budget cuts labelled 'productivity dividends', with limited knowledge of the work.
- Low level of engagement with (and in some cases, access to) documents written to inform community and decision makers about the work. There has not been a locally-maintained online home for documentation informing people about the community change activity happening in our community.
- There is a commitment to continue the work underway securing advances made through targeted funding disbursements by the CBCAC; development of the *Youth Pathways Wallchart*; the co-designed *Connecting the Dots Community Change Model*; the Uniting Effort Mindhive Project; and potentially the Rockhampton Stronger Places, Stronger People project.

Implications of the responses for the four 'insights' from the former Uniting Effort (Mindhive) Project Report (2022):

- 1. Redefine education This recommendation stands, and should expand to include health initiatives.
- 2. Localised decision making for funding expenditure This recommendation stands.
- 3. Funding for the backbone agency Strong support for having a community-run organisation organising the work.
- 4. Collaborative effort This recommendation stands. As always, a range of stakeholders need to be involved.

Recommendations

Based on the above analysis, and the current context.

- 1. A continued commitment to involving grassroots community, local leaders, First Nations people and all levels of government in community change activities; including expanding to more directly involve leaders in Government, people in community and stakeholder organisations.
- 2. Leaders in Government and beyond be better informed of, and engaged in, community change activities in our community.
- 3. A more formal invitation be extended to the Senior Officers Network, exploring opportunities for resource sharing of frontline staff and local Government leaders to participate in community change activities.
- 4. The work to involve local initiatives in education and health, which will require a more tangible involvement of leaders in education and health.
- 5. The more formal approach to evaluation and reporting, following the *Connecting the Dots Community Change Model*.
- 6. A local, accessible repository of documentation relevant to the work should be established.
- 7. A community-run organisation to organise the work. Of note, project partner Every Child CQ was established with this purpose.
- 8. The people involved in community change work be encouraged to continue the work.

Appendix 1. The YeahNah Email & Questions

People Already Involved in the Work (on CBCAC & ECCQ mailing lists)	People in Government Working With Community	Decision Makers on the SON (District Directors of State Gov Departments)
 Hi, This is a short anonymous survey of people involved in the community change work happening in the Capricorn region (the Rockhampton and Livingstone LGAs). It will close on 30 September 2023. As you are probably aware, a group of people in the Capricorn region are working to create community-initiated change to address poverty and disadvantage (you might even be one of us). Two organisations involved in this work are the Rockhampton Community Based Crime Action Committee and Every Child CQ. As a person involved or interested in this work, we would appreciate you clicking on the link below and entering the password (select 'guest' if offered); then respond YES (swipe right) or NO (swipe left) to about a dozen questions. Your responses are anonymous. LINK & QR CODE Finally, if you would like to know more or get involved, you can email me, Geoff, see below. Thanks,Geoff Higgins (on behalf of members of the Rockhampton Community Based Crime Action Committee & Every Child CQ) 	 Hi, This is a short anonymous survey of people in government supporting community in Capricorn (in the Rockhampton and Livingstone LGAs). It will close on 30 September 2023. A group of people in the Capricorn region are working to initiate change in our community to address poverty and disadvantage. These people are part of the Rockhampton Community Based Crime Action Committee (formed by QPS) and Every Child CQ, a small, member-run community organisation supporting community-led change. As a person working in Government supporting our community, we would appreciate you clicking on the link below and entering the password (select 'guest' if offered); then respond YES (swipe right) or NO (swipe left) to about a dozen questions. Your responses are anonymous. LINK & QR CODE You are welcome to pass this email on to other people in Government working with to support communities in Capricorn. Finally, if you would like to know more or get involved, you can email me, Geoff, see below. Thanks,Geoff Higgins (on behalf of members of the Rockhampton Community Based Crime Action Committee & Every Child CQ) 	 Hi, This is a short anonymous survey of decision makers in the Senior Officers Network (in the Rockhampton and Livingstone LGAs). It will close on 30 September 2023. A group of people in the Capricorn region are working to initiate change in our community to address poverty and disadvantage. These people are part of the Rockhampton Community Based Crime Action Committee (formed by QPS) and Every Child CQ, a small, member-run community organisation supporting community-led change. As a senior Government officer with responsibilities in our region, we would appreciate you clicking on the link below and entering the password (select 'guest' if offered); then respond yes (swipe right) or no (swipe left) to about a dozen questions. Your responses are anonymous. LINK & QR CODE & PASSWORD Finally, if you would like to know more about this work, you can email me, Geoff, see below. Thank-you,Geoff Higgins (on behalf of members of the Rockhampton Community Based Crime Action Committee & Every Child CQ) Brief Explanation: The reference to 'allocating resources' is about a percentage of Departmental resources (skills & time; not admin., finance or HR) joining a working group that is initiating change in our community to address the causes of disadvantage. They will be informed by international practices and work across agencies, NFPs, health, education and community.

People Already Involved in the Work (on CBCAC & ECCQ mailing lists)	People in Government Working With Community	Decision Makers on the SON (District Directors of State Gov Departments)
(14 questions)	(14 questions)	(13 questions)
Are you optimistic about addressing youth crime in the Capricorn region?	Are you optimistic about reducing youth crime in the Capricorn region?	Are you optimistic about reducing youth crime in the Capricorn region?
Are you optimistic about solving other issues relating to poverty and disadvantage in Capricorn?	Are you optimistic about solving other issues relating to poverty and disadvantage in Capricorn?	Are you optimistic about solving other issues relating to poverty and disadvantage in Capricorn?
Should we be leaving it to Government to solve social issues in our community?	Should we be leaving it to Government to solve social issues in our community?	Should we be leaving it to Government to solve social issues in our community?
Are you familiar with community development or collective impact?	Are you familiar with community development or collective impact?	Are you familiar with community development or collective impact?
Are you familiar with the work of CBCAC and Every Child CQ initiating community-led change?	Are you familiar with the work of CBCAC and Every Child CQ initiating community-led change?	Are you familiar with the work of CBCAC and Every Child CQ initiating community-led change?
Are you familiar with the Rockhampton Stronger Places Stronger People collective impact initiative?	Are you familiar with the Rockhampton Stronger Places Stronger People collective impact initiative?	Are you familiar with the Rockhampton Stronger Places Stronger People collective impact initiative?
Have you read the CBCAC Uniting Effort Mindhive Report and Uniting Effort Prospectus?	Have you read the CBCAC Uniting Effort Mindhive Report and Uniting Effort Prospectus?	Have you read the CBCAC Uniting Effort Mindhive Report and Uniting Effort Prospectus?
Would you expect grassroots community, local leaders, First Nations people and all levels of government to be involved?	Would you expect grassroots community, local leaders, First Nations people and all levels of government to be involved?	Would you expect grassroots community, local leaders, First Nations people and all levels of government to be involved?
Do you think that having a community-run organisation organising the work would be appropriate?	Do you think that having a community-run organisation organising the work would be appropriate?	Do you think that having a community-run organisation organising the work would be appropriate?
Do you think this work should involve local initiatives in education and health?	Do you think this work should involve local initiatives in education and health?	Given your role, would you be prepared to allocate a percentage of resources, assigning operational staff
Should this work involve evaluating and reporting on community change initiatives?	Should this work involve evaluating and reporting on community change initiatives?	to this work? Would you consider dedicating 1 to 2 percent of
Should this work involve maintaining a register of services for young people and families?	Should this work involve maintaining a register of services for young people and families?	operational staff to this work? Would this involvement provide an unacceptable
Given an opportunity, would you be willing to step up and get involved in this work?	Given an opportunity, would you be willing to step up and get involved in this work?	level of risk for your department? We are calling this community change. Should the
We are calling this community change. Should the people doing this work be encouraged to continue?	We are calling this community change. Should the people doing this work be encouraged to continue?	people doing this work be encouraged to continue?

Appendix 2. The YeahNah Results



Contact

For more information or to discuss in further detail, please contact the Uniting Effort Working Group Chair, Geoff Higgins.

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