

Question on Notice
Number: 535
Asked on Thursday 19 May 2004

MR J FOURAS asked the Minister for Communities, Disability Services and Seniors (**MR PITT**)-

QUESTION:

- (1) How many Brisbane youth have participated in Youth Justice Conferencing at the Brisbane service?
- (2) Were victims and perpetrators of crimes satisfied with the outcomes of the conferences?

ANSWER:

(1)

The Brisbane and Gold Coast Youth Justice Conferencing Service commenced operations in 2001 and provides coverage to the greater Brisbane area. The service is located in Albert Street, Brisbane.

Since operations commenced in 2001, the Brisbane and Gold Coast service has conferenced 558 young people, including 437 from referral points (police and courts) within the greater Brisbane area.

(2)

Participant satisfaction ratings for the service have been consistently high, with victims and offenders reporting in 96% of instances that they were satisfied with the process and the outcomes achieved. Satisfaction ratings are determined on the basis of evaluative surveys completed by conference participants at the end of each conference.

Youth Justice Conferencing is a restorative justice approach to juvenile offending which has the advantage of bringing together the people most affected by a crime – the victim, the young offender and their family, police and community members. The police and the courts make referrals to Youth Justice Conferencing.

Youth Justice Conferencing forms part of the government's diversion and early intervention strategy to effectively target and reduce youth crime. Research, both within Australia and internationally, indicates that the most effective interventions for youth offending are those, such as conferencing, which are targeted at the earliest points of a young person's contact with the criminal justice system.

Youth Justice Conferencing offers an opportunity for a young person to admit their offence and accept responsibility for their offending in a real and tangible way. It also provides a mechanism for victim involvement in the justice process. Victims are provided with an opportunity to tell their story and participate in the process of determining how the young person should make amends for the harm caused by the crime.

The purpose of a Youth Justice Conference is to reach an agreement about how a young person can repair the harm caused by the crime. An agreement may include an apology, restitution, voluntary work or involvement in support programs to help prevent further offending. The agreement is determined by those attending the conference and is therefore specific to the crime and meaningful to all involved in the process.