

Question on Notice

No. 1282

Asked on 26 October 2021

MR D PURDIE asked the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (HON L LINARD)—

QUESTION

With reference to youth crime issues reported to be escalating in Townsville—

Will the Minister provide (a) a list of organisations engaged in addressing youth crime and assisting young people in Townsville and (b) the amount of funding provided to each organisation for the last four years including the first quarter 2021-22 (reported separately)?

ANSWER

Young people who offend must be held to account for their offending behaviour.

Reducing the number of young people offending involves a whole of government approach involving all government agencies, the non-government sector and the broader community.

Youth Justice is just one part of this much bigger system. The Queensland Police Service and Queensland Courts also play a significant role in addressing youth crime and assisting young people in Townsville and across Queensland.

The Palaszczuk Government is addressing the root causes of crime by investing more than \$332 million in a range of targeted programs and services.

The Palaszczuk Government is engaging young people in education and training, supporting families and parents to address issues contributing to their children's offending, and delivering programs and services that respond to health, disability and mental health issues.

Initiatives targeting the unique circumstances that lead to First Nations families and children being over-represented in the system are also being delivered.

The Palaszczuk Government's *Youth Justice Strategy* sets out the steps the Palaszczuk Government is taking, across Government, to:

- a) reduce youth offending;
- b) target the 10% of young people responsible for almost half of youth offending; and
- c) provide support to First Nations young people in a culturally appropriate way.

The Government's *Youth Justice Strategy* can be located at: <https://www.cyjma.qld.gov.au/youth-justice>.

Whilst the Queensland Government Statistician's Office recent report *Crime Report Queensland 2019-20* found in 2019-20, there was a 27.3% drop in the number of young offenders compared to 2010-11, the Government understands there is always more to be done to reduce youth offending.

That is why, the Palaszczuk Government has already implemented additional initiatives to focus on the 10 per cent of serious repeat offenders who are responsible for almost half of all youth offending.

The reforms included amending the *Youth Justice Act 1992* to provide for:

- a presumption against bail for young offenders who are already on bail for an indictable offence and who are arrested and charged with further serious offences. These offenders must show cause when applying for bail. The requirement to show cause is a high threshold to meet and means 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.
- the Courts 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 youth justice principle in the Act that mandates that the community must be protected from repeat youth offenders.
- the establishment of the common law principle that a young person who further offends while they are on bail can lead to them being given a tougher sentence in the Act.
- the Courts to be able to make an order that an electronic monitoring device be fitted on a high-risk young offender aged 16 and over as a condition of bail.

As an example, youth detention centres have seen an increase of young people in custody, a result of these measures, an extra 100 young people, have been held in detention, compared with this time last year. These measures are currently being evaluated by well-respected former Commissioner of the Queensland Police Service, Bob Atkinson AO.

I also refer the Member to an announcement made on 20 October 2021 by the Palaszczuk Government's Youth Justice Taskforce in relation to a new strategy to case manage every serious repeat youth offender in Queensland. This will involve rigorous intensive multi-agency case management of each child in the serious repeat offender cohort. A copy of the announcement can be located at: <https://mypolice.qld.gov.au/news/2021/10/20/youth-justice-taskforce/>.

(a) The following organisations delivered services to young people and families in Townsville during the period 2017-18 to 2020-21:

- Act for Kids;
- Churches of Christ Care Queensland;
- Mission Australia;
- Townsville Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Service;
- Gr8Motive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation;
- Trustees of Edmund Rice Education Australia; and
- Yinda.

In addition to funded services, Youth Justice Service Centres in Townsville have provided or continue to provide the following programs during the period of 2017-2018 to 2021-22:

- Townsville Stronger Communities Action Group
- Restorative Justice Conferencing
- Project Booyah
- Townsville Community Youth response
- Townsville Youth Offender Accountability Board
- Proud Warrior
- Transition to Success

- Conditional Bail Program;
- Specialist Multi-Agency Response Team
- Integrated Case Management;
- Changing Habits and Reaching Targets (CHART)
- Aggression Replacement Training (ART)
- Rethinking Our Attitude to Driving (ROAD), and
- Emotional regulation and Impulse Control (ERIC).

The Cleveland Youth Detention Centre (CYDC) delivers a number of evidence-based therapeutic programs and services to assist young people to make better choices and address the risk factors that may contribute to offending behaviour, programs currently being delivered to young people within CYDC include CHART, ART, ROAD and ERIC.

Education, including TAFE accredited training (preparation for employment), is delivered by our partner agency, Education Queensland during school terms. There is a range of multi-disciplinary teams that work intensively with young people in CYDC, including Caseworkers, Cultural Unit staff, Transition Officers, Psychologists, Speech and Language Pathologists, Mental Health services, and Child Safety.

- (b) The above programs, outlined in part (a), delivered by Youth Justice Services Centres in Townsville, as part of funding of \$29,525 million over the four years 2017-18 to 2020-21.

In addition to the \$29,525 million in funding for programs delivered by Youth Justice Service Centres, 12 service outlets in the Townsville local government area also received outsourced service delivery funds totalling \$23,496 million over the four years 2017-18 to 2020-21.

Following the conclusion of the Supervised Community Accommodation (SCA) trial in early 2021, an additional \$1.8 million initially allocated for SCA services was repurposed to further enhance bail support in Townsville and Logan and to increase emergency housing in Townsville.

The Quarter 1 commitment in 2021-22 for programs in Townsville, including funding for programs delivered by Youth Justice Service Centres and outsourced service delivery is \$2.722 million.

In conclusion, the Palaszczuk Government is taking an evidence-based approach to reducing youth crime, in Townsville and across Queensland, by toughening bail laws to include a presumption against bail and also funding programs to intervene early.