

Part 3: How government agencies can better assist in the continuum of services to reduce offending and re-offending

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Introduction

In addition to evaluating the impact of existing legislation, policy and practice on the operations of individual departments that provide services and responses to the youth justice system, the Review has considered how government departments can work *together* – the ‘whole of government’ – to better assist in the coordination of services to reduce offending and re-offending. These include:

- the establishment of a comprehensive youth justice strategy
- improved interagency collaboration
- improved information sharing
- streamlined Administrative Arrangements
- continued focus on workforce development.

A youth justice strategy

A number of agencies and representatives from the non government (NGO) sector commented on the need to develop a new youth justice strategy. The Department of Children and Families (DCF), in its submission commented that:

The concern is that the Government’s Youth Justice Strategy is not well developed and not delivering the outcomes needed to reduce the level of contact with the youth justice system by young people.¹

The Review agrees. A new, comprehensive, aspirational and deliverable youth justice strategy, with performance measures, should be developed, underpinned by a sound policy framework, and build on government’s youth policy framework.

The strategy should include a statement of principles and objectives. Ideally, the strategy should involve consultation with young people who are in, or have been involved in, the youth justice system. The Review notes the existence of the Youth Minister’s Round Table of Young Territorians, which aims to ‘facilitate positive social change, raise awareness of youth issues, and undertake youth research in areas that affect them and their peers’.² This may be a suitable body to assist with the youth engagement process in the consultation phase.

Given the interconnectedness of health and education, it is appropriate that the strategy include establishing benchmarks and targets to improve access to, and the delivery of, youth specific health and education services.

¹ DCF, *submission 5*, 6.

² Youth Minister’s Round Table of Young Territorians, *Annual Report 2010* (2010) Northern Territory Government, Darwin.

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The strategy should also specifically address how each part of the youth justice system can meet the needs of young offenders and those at risk of offending.

The strategy should include *targets* to reduce youth crime and the number of young people in detention, particularly in remand:

Having clear statistical targets demonstrates a tangible commitment to change. Introducing targets to reduce youth incarceration rates, including remand rates, would provide an incentive to develop new and creative ways of lowering the current figures.³

No targets or benchmarks appear to be set for any part of the youth justice system. There is an absence of a youth crime reduction strategy: there are no targets to reduce youth offending, no targets to increase the number of young people entering and completing diversion programs or expanding education and training opportunities in the prison system, and no targets to reduce the particularly high number of Indigenous offenders.

There are, however, targets set across departments for a number of matters, ranging from energy reduction targets to targets for reporting and meeting timelines. While these are important, it highlights that youth offending is a low priority for a number of departments.

Territory 2030 lists as one of its objectives in public safety: 'reduce the rate of assault, including domestic violence and property crime incrementally to 2030'.⁴ Other targets and benchmarks for numerous issues appear throughout the strategy. However, there are no specific targets and benchmarks aimed at youth offending.

While the Review recommends that targets be set, caution should be exercised and a long term view must be taken. The Review does not believe government can expect to see meaningful results for three to five years due to the nature of the interventions required.

A thorough evaluation process must be developed to measure the effectiveness of delivery of services in the youth justice system and, ultimately, the strategy itself. For this to occur, adequate resources must be allocated to improve data collection, maintenance and analysis. A rigorous evaluation mechanism, based on sound data, will assist in monitoring the effective use of public monies, and assist government to make informed, sensible and strategic decisions about future funding allocations and support.

The strategy should complement the goals and outcomes of *Territory 2030* and *Working Future*.

³ NTCOSS, *submission 19*, 5.

⁴ Northern Territory Government, *Territory 2030: Strategic Plan (2009)* 27.

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Interagency collaboration

Interagency cooperation and collaboration is a vital element in achieving reductions in young offending and re-offending. Collaboration can take many forms, including agency staff collocated and working towards common goals.

Existing examples include the NT Early Intervention Pilot Program (NTEIPP) and the Child Abuse Taskforce, both comprising DCF and Northern Territory Police (NTP) staff; and Family Support Centres, comprising DCF and the Department of Education and Training (DET). The Community Child Safety and Wellbeing Teams (CCST) and the Alice Springs Youth Hub are other examples.

Collaboration will be easier if all agencies work within the same framework, namely a youth justice strategy.

The outcomes of this strategy will alleviate the present fragmentation of youth services and funding, thereby enhancing the opportunities for young people at risk of offending to become more connected and successful in education, training and employment by equipping them with the skills and personal networks they need to be active and productive citizens in their communities.

Improved information sharing

During the consultation period a number of public servants commented on difficulties relating to information sharing. There was a widespread view that the *Information Act* was not well-understood, and the 'sharing' of information often depended on individuals making uninformed decisions.

The division of the former Department of Health and Families, NT Families and Children (now DCF), referred, in its submission to the Board of Inquiry into the Child Protection System in the Northern Territory (BOI)⁵, to poor information sharing—some of which was personality driven—and a reluctance to share information among organisations due to doubts about the lawfulness of doing so.

This Review has been advised by staff in several government agencies that these problems still exist, and even the Police Commissioner expressed a level of frustration that staff in his organisation failed to share information with other agencies.

Sharing of information between departments has been an issue for some years and was commented on at length in the BOI, which recommended that the *Care and Protection of Children Act* be amended to:

⁵ M Bamblett, H Bath and R Roseby, *Growing them Strong, Together: Promoting the Safety and Wellbeing of the Northern Territory's Children: Report of the Board of Inquiry into the Child Protection System in the Northern Territory 2010* (2010) Northern Territory Government, Darwin.

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provide a workable and accessible framework for the exchange of information between public sector organisations and between these organisations and the NGOs that is relatively simple in its interpretation and application according to objectives listed in this report.⁶

The BOI made a number of recommendations to improve information sharing between agencies to protect and promote the safety and wellbeing of children.

Consultation with government and non government organisations, foster carers and magistrates has taken place across the Northern Territory on these recommendations and the changes required to create better information sharing arrangements.

The consultations have revealed:

- a general lack of understanding of what information can be shared and who it can be shared with
- a poor understanding of the roles and responsibilities of individuals and organisations with a heavy reliance on personal relationships
- a requirement for some means of achieving better information sharing including legislative changes, memoranda of understanding, policies, training and improved recording systems.

Legislative amendments to progress new information sharing arrangements are being developed for introduction in the November 2011 sittings of the Legislative Assembly. Work is also underway on the development of training and other resources to support better information sharing.

Until all necessary measures have been implemented and relevant training completed, this Review makes the following practical suggestions:

- Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) must carry the responsibility for making change happen. They are responsible for the staff who work in their agencies, and they are all part of government. It is extraordinary that, given well-known problems that have been the subject of reviews and inquiries in the past, information is still not regularly or completely shared between agencies.
- Clear guidelines and protocols, including a complaint mechanism for when information is unreasonably withheld, should be introduced and championed by CEOs to ensure appropriate and critical information sharing across government and non government agencies. This is almost an absurdly simplistic suggestion; however, it is obviously required.

⁶ Ibid, 445.

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Streamlined Administrative Arrangements

Administrative Arrangements Orders set out the principal responsibilities of government ministers and their portfolios, and specify the matters dealt with by each department. A number of individuals, organisations and government departments commented on the fragmentation of departmental responsibilities caused by different components of the youth justice system reporting to four different ministers.⁷ The issue is not new and has been the subject of comment in an earlier evaluation conducted for DCF.⁸

The submission from the magistrates is one example of the comments received:

It is essential that there be available a range of services to address the criminogenic factors and that these services be well-coordinated. At present, what is seen is a youth justice system is fragmented across a number of government departments with different Ministers, each having responsibility for different parts of the Act and delivery of services attached to those individual functions.⁹

The fragmentation of responsibilities and confusion about the delineation of roles of departments must be remedied.

Streamlining the Administrative Arrangements and reducing the number of Ministers responsible will directly and indirectly assist young people in the youth justice system, who rely on a system that works well, and the people working in that system having a better understanding of their responsibilities.

Continued focus on workforce development

A strong and capable workforce within government and the non government organisations (NGO) sector is an integral part of achieving the aim of this Review.

Workforce development issues exist across the Territory in areas such as child protection, community and welfare services, education and health. The Review supports efforts currently being made to develop a strategy by the Department of the Chief Minister.

At present, a range of professionals work across youth services in the government and the NGO sectors, ranging from generalists to specialist youth workers. They have diverse subject matter expertise including mental health, alcohol and other drugs, education, counselling and statutory knowledge.

The workforce required to deliver end to end services for young people within and on either side of the youth justice system needs to be flexible, responsive and hold the young

7 DoJ to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice; NTCS to the Minister for Correctional Services; DCF to the Minister for Children and Families; NTP to the Minister for Police.

8 Ivan Raymond and Sean Lappin, *Northern Territory Youth Camp Intervention Strategy* (2011) Connected Self, Darwin, 4.

9 The magistrates, *submission 16*, 7.

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person as the priority. To achieve this, a competent and confident workforce that is well resourced and work within a transparent and efficient framework is critical to ensure that high quality and measurable outcomes are achieved.

In addition to work that is already underway, consideration must be given to whether the Territory can train its own youth workers, some of whom could work in the area of court support. The level of qualification varies, as does the scope for practice. Government is encouraged to look to other jurisdictions to obtain details on the type of training that could be delivered in the Territory.

Workforce and resource capacity

Within both the Northern Territory Public Sector (NTPS) and NGO workforce, significant challenges exist when comparing the relatively small workforce size servicing a population that is so widely dispersed geographically.

These challenges impact on the capacity of small organisations or teams to deliver services within limited human resources. Often the challenges are coupled with a high and intense workload level beyond what would be achievable for the existing workforce, leading to burnout. These pressures are magnified by managing significant overhead costs and duplication of administration tasks.

Human resource levels are restricted in part by insufficient financial resources, often heavily reliant on government funds. The need for securing diverse and non traditional sources of income to supplement government support, including partnering with the private sector, is critical for the long term sustainability of the workforce and its capacity.

Qualifications and skill currency

Within the NTPS, there is no consistent approach across agencies as to the accepted qualifications required for entry into the professional streams. Determination 9/1999 from the Commissioner for Public Employment outlines the qualifications required to hold specific positions; however, the document is over 10 years old, outdated in many areas and is not always complied with operationally. Case managers, caseworkers and youth workers need to work within a common knowledge framework, for young people to obtain a consistent and effective service from government. A potential way to achieve this is to ensure practitioners have a shared knowledge base from which to work.

There are many challenges associated with recruiting qualified staff in rural and remote locations, including a limited resource base. This may lead to staff being recruited to administrative streams rather than professional streams, which represents a risk when dealing within the statutory service area. This is complicated further by Administrative Officers performing human service work without minimum education standards (as articulated by the Determination). An example of this is Aboriginal Community Workers covered by the Determination, who are required to have their level linked with specific qualifications that are not currently offered in the Territory. Youth workers, family support workers and similar positions are not always covered by the Determination and therefore may not have educational requirements attached to their role.

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There is also a gap in the accessibility and availability of relevant Territory based industry education and training. This disadvantages those working in the sector who are unable to receive standardised qualifications and accreditation for positions that are already dealt with inconsistently under the Determination.

In addition to the challenges in skill and qualification equity, there is a clear inconsistency and in many cases an absence of adequate cross cultural training and support within the NTPS and NGO workforce in urban and remote communities.

Within the NGO sector similar challenges exist in relation to inequity in qualifications, the modernisation of the award and a transient workforce that often leads to a loss of corporate knowledge, continuity of relationships and experience with young people.

The Review encourages government to assess the approach to recruiting to these professional streams in partnership with the NGO sector to ensure the workforce across both sectors is capable of responding.

Coordinated systems for partnerships and service delivery

Workforce development is not simply a human resource issue centred on professional development and up-skilling of the workforce. Strengthened capacity across the workforce involves streamlining systems, structures and processes within and between government and NGOs to ensure effective and sustainable outcomes are achieved through efficient collaboration and partnerships.

Attracting and retaining suitable staff, particularly in remote areas, is additionally difficult due to insufficient levels of housing and services to support their relocation.

The aim should be to improve the functioning of the entire workforce with a focus on the systems and structural factors including legislation, policy funding, recruitment and retention, resources, support mechanisms and incentives.¹⁰

These can be achieved by: streamlined funding agreements at a whole of government level, coordinated service plans with common performance indicators across agencies, centralised system for data collection and reporting across agencies and stakeholders, and an adequately resourced workforce development plan that includes training and ongoing professional development.

¹⁰ Anne Roche, *Workforce Development: Our National Dilemma* (2002), The National Research Centre on Alcohol and Other Drugs Workforce Development, 10.



Chapter 10: Cost benefit analysis

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Justice reinvestment

CHAPTER 10: COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS

Introduction

It is difficult to define, collect and analyse the data needed to fully and accurately describe and evaluate a range of issues across the youth justice system, as outlined in chapter 2. The Review has found this aspect of the project challenging.

The Review's terms of reference (number 5) required a cost benefit analysis—a technical and specialised approach to measuring the impact and effectiveness of crime prevention programs—to be undertaken in relation to proposed strategies and options. Such an analysis requires examining savings generated from one program in relation to an investment to be made, calculating the range of costs involved in resolving matters in different settings, and comparing them against the savings made in each setting for participants, the community and the organisations involved. It also involves quantifying outcomes, for example, for the purposes of this Review, the reduction in offending and re-offending. It is particularly difficult to identify and quantify longer term benefits and social welfare outcomes, and translate them into financial terms.

Very few cost benefit analyses have been undertaken in Australia in relation to crime prevention.¹ Given the limitations of data and reliable methodology in this area, it has not been possible to undertake a formal cost benefit analysis during the review. However, as part of government's analysis of this report, Northern Territory Treasury has advised that an assessment of the costs of implementation compared with the likely benefits of the various recommendations would be undertaken after this Review.

Evidence from other jurisdictions

While the availability of cost effectiveness studies in relation to youth justice is limited, there is some evidence available from other jurisdictions that can be drawn on to support decision making in the Territory.

The Western Australian Auditor-General conducted a cost benefit analysis of pre sentence redirection measures implemented for young offenders in Western Australia in 2008. The findings are significant:

- There was a total cost reduction of using pre sentence redirection measures of 10.5% of total juvenile justice system costs, not including potential community benefit through behavioural changes as a result of diversion.²
- It was estimated that incorporation of benefits of behavioural change (reduction of offending behaviour) would add up to 6.3% to estimated savings.

1 Kym Dossetor, *Cost-Benefit Analysis and its Application to Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Research*, Technical and Background Paper No 41 (2011) Australian Institute of Criminology.

2 Paul Flatau and Kaylene Zaretsky, *A Cost Benefit Analysis of Proactive Redirection Measures in the Juvenile Justice System (Supporting Paper for: Auditor General's Report, the Juvenile Justice System: Dealing with Young People under the Young Offenders Act) (Vol 2, 2008)* 9.

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- More frequent use of redirection measures (diversion) results in cost savings to the system of 19.1% compared to lower use of these.
- Although use of redirection measures had reduced, total estimated savings to the system from the combined effect of diversion from court and increased use of redirection measures would be 27.6% if implemented.³
- There were gender and Indigenous offender cost differences, reflecting different patterns of contact with the system and regional and remote cost differences. Costs for Indigenous young offenders were greatest in areas of arrest, bail, remand and community orders and custodial sentences and were lowest in terms of pre sentencing redirection measures, cautions and use of juvenile justice teams.⁴

The cost benefit analysis suggests that the reduction in offending achieved from implementing redirection measures lowers the cost of the juvenile justice system – even without taking into account the savings for welfare, health and community safety.

Prevention and early intervention

There are few comprehensive cost effectiveness or cost benefit studies that examine whether prevention or early intervention programs are useful in reducing offending behaviours or reducing the risk factors for offending behaviours for young people.⁵

However, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) notes in its submission:

In March 2010, in the Northern Territory it was estimated that the cost of keeping a young person in custody was \$555 per day. Investment in community-based services aimed at reducing recidivism and the specialist treatment of young people could improve outcomes for young people and reduce the cost to the community.

It is also of note that the most intensively supported young people in DCF care are costed in the vicinity of \$83,000 per annum, compared to about \$200,000 per annum to hold a young person in detention. This demonstrates the cost of detention compared to a more therapeutically based approach and the potential; for efficiencies in service delivery as much as improve outcomes.⁶

There is evidence that suggests that savings can be made by diverting resources into targeted interventions such as assisting young people leaving statutory care. The savings are made in direct costs to police, health and welfare agencies and the youth justice system and it has been shown that there is a high financial cost for inadequate support to these young people.⁷

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid, 10.

5 Peter Greenwood, Karyn Model, Peter Rydell and James Chiesa, *Diverting Children from a Life of Crime: Measuring Costs and Benefits* (1998) 22.

6 DCF, *submission 5*, 12.

7 S Raman, B Inder and C Forbes, *Investing for Success: The Economics of Supporting Young People Leaving Care* (2005) Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare and Monash University, Melbourne, cited in Leah Bromfield, Prue Holzer and Alister Lamont, *The Economic Costs of Child Abuse and Neglect*, National Child Protection Clearing House Resource Sheet April 2011 (2011) 5.

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The Review considers that access to accurate financial and statistical data is crucial in ensuring the efficient and effective use of the scarce resources available for the welfare of young people at risk of offending, their families and the community. The Review also acknowledges the inherent difficulties in accessing data and conducting studies of costs and benefits which are resource intensive and technically challenging. Justice reinvestment, suggested in several submissions to the Review as an alternative rigorous approach to crime prevention,⁸ is discussed below.

Justice reinvestment

Justice reinvestment involves:

diverting funds that would otherwise have been used for imprisonment, to crime prevention, reduction and rehabilitation programs and services in local communities with high concentrations of offenders.⁹

Justice reinvestment is a 'data driven approach'¹⁰ and is based on evidence that a large proportion of offenders come from a relatively small number of disadvantaged communities.¹¹ It is achieved through increased support for offenders in prison and in the community, community capacity and development programs, and targeted interventions for criminogenic risk factors (for example, alcohol and substance abuse and mental ill health) that are often highly prevalent in disadvantaged communities.

Several commentators have suggested that justice reinvestment may present a way to address the over-representation of Indigenous people in the criminal justice system.¹² This has, therefore, particular application in the Territory.

The Review believes that a justice reinvestment approach fits with the principles of prevention and early intervention for young people in the criminal justice system and that the conditions in the Territory are such that the potential benefits of a justice reinvestment approach are significant.

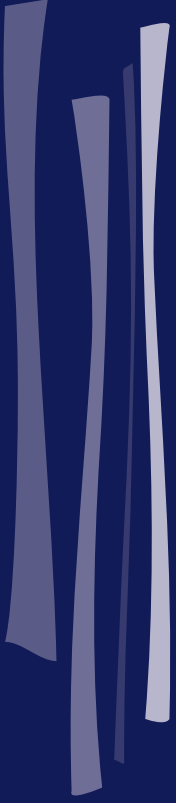
8 See, for example, Noetic Solutions, *submission 12*.

9 Tom Calma, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, *Social Justice Report 2009* (2009) Australian Human Rights Commission, cited in Matthew Willis, *Indicators Used Internationally to Measure Indigenous Justice Outcomes*, Brief No 8 (2010) Indigenous Justice Clearing House 5.

10 Adam Bode, 'What is Justice Reinvestment' (2011) 9 *Of Substance* 14, 14.

11 Calma, above n 9, 12.

12 *Ibid*, 9; Noetic Solutions, *submission 12*.



Chapter 11: Recommendations and Models

Recommendations

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CHAPTER 11: RECOMMENDATIONS AND MODELS

Recommendations

There are a number of ways the Northern Territory Government can better assist the continuum of services and responses to reduce offending and re-offending, and strategies that deal effectively with young offenders.

The Review makes nine key recommendations that will, if accepted, will make a significant difference. The Review could have made many more recommendations; however, the Chair believes the nine key recommendations provide a framework within which detailed improvements to the youth justice system can be made.

There is one difficulty with the nine recommendations: they will take time to implement, and it will therefore be some time before results can be measured. However, it is hoped that government will look to the long term and accept all nine recommendations as the basis of a framework that will reduce recidivism and effectively deal with young people in the youth justice system.

Recommendations appear below in summary and are followed by an overview and explanation.

The Chair recommends that the Northern Territory Government:

1. establish a new unit within an existing department with responsibility for administering all services and responses to the youth justice system
2. develop a new youth justice strategy
3. streamline administrative arrangements and ministerial responsibilities
4. improve data collection and distribution to ensure appropriate and critical information sharing across both government and non government agencies and that programs delivered contain built in evaluations
5. increase investment in police diversion, including increased eligibility for diversion, and expand diversion programs
6. increase the number of youth rehabilitation camps
7. expand the Family Support Program and increase capacity of Family Support Centres
8. develop workforce capacity
9. establish an external monitoring and evaluation process.

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Recommendation 1

That a youth justice unit, with statutory authority, be established within a government department and that it have responsibility for administering and coordinating services and responses to young people in, or at risk of entering, the youth justice system.

A new, stand-alone youth justice unit within a government department should be established that would be responsible for administering all aspects of the youth justice system, and that would ensure the delivery of a continuum of services and responses.

It would build on existing strengths of the youth justice system from government departments and ensure that service and response delivery are coordinated. If implemented correctly, and managed well, it would meet the needs of young people and the community.

It would comprise personnel from the key government agencies, including the departments of Children and Families, Justice, Education and Training, Health and the Police. Additionally a non government organisation representative should be seconded to the unit to further enhance service delivery. Staff would represent the role and efforts of each department and would work collaboratively in order to provide a continuum of service and response delivery. A youth justice team, comprised of professional case managers and youth workers, could be based in the unit or alternatively at the Family Support Centres that would implement a through-care model for young offenders.

In addition to its coordinating role, the youth justice unit would be responsible for developing a through-care model of service delivery, which would include, but not be limited to, providing intensive case management plans for young offenders. It would also be responsible for policy development.

This multi-agency and multi-disciplinary approach would overcome many of the difficulties identified that arise from failures to share information and fragmented service delivery.

The unit should have its own statutory powers and have a legislative base, similar in nature to the Work Health Authority and to Consumer Affairs.

The youth justice unit would have responsibility for coordinating the matters relating to all of the following Recommendations.

Recommendation 2

That a new, comprehensive youth justice strategy be developed and implemented.

The need for a new youth justice strategy has been illustrated throughout this report. The strategy should establish benchmarks and targets to improve access to services and the delivery of youth specific health services.

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The strategy should include targets to reduce youth crime, decrease the number of young people in detention (on remand and under sentence), reduce the number of Indigenous offenders in the youth justice system, and increase the number of young people entering and completing diversion programs.

Performance measures should be developed. To this end, the *Territory 2030* Sub-committee of Cabinet should endorse the youth strategy as a recognised priority for achieving a number of targets and actions and the youth justice unit should coordinate with relevant government agencies and other stakeholders to embed the youth strategy within those existing targets and actions for *Territory 2030*.

Recommendation 3

That the Administrative Arrangements order be reviewed and that the number of ministers responsible for parts of the youth justice system be reduced to mirror the existence of the youth justice unit and ministerial responsibility.

The youth justice system falls within the ministerial portfolios of four ministers. As noted throughout this report, the fragmentation of ministerial portfolio responsibility is confusing and difficult, and is partly responsible for the lack of continuum of service and response delivery. A single portfolio of youth justice with responsibilities vested in one (or at most two) ministers and his or her agencies is required.

Streamlining the administrative arrangements will clarify roles and responsibilities, and foster improved cooperation and coordination.

Recommendation 4

That resources be provided to the youth justice unit for the purposes of collecting, coordinating, interpreting, analysing and disseminating whole of government data and statistics on youth justice issues, and that a Territory-wide and nationally consistent set of systems and measurement indicators (including recidivism) be developed to provide information for decision makers on a range of youth justice issues.

The importance of accurate, relevant and easy-to-obtain data cannot be overstated—it forms the basis of government decisions and allocations of resources. Investment of financial and staff resources are required if there is to be improved data collection.

Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) must carry the responsibility for making change happen.

Clear guidelines and protocols, including a complaint mechanism for when information is unreasonably withheld, should be introduced and championed by CEOs to ensure appropriate and critical information sharing across government and non government agencies.

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Recommendation 5

That resources be increased for police diversion to include the establishment of Youth Diversion Units in Katherine and Tennant Creek, that eligibility for diversion be expanded and that additional community based programs be established that have a measurable rehabilitative value.

Diversion can assist young offenders and end or limit their offending, and options need to be expanded. As a result of issues identified in this Report a number of areas should be increased or expanded:

The Youth Diversion Units (YDUs) within NTP should be expanded so they have enough staff, with relevant skill and training to enable them to assess young people eligible for diversion more quickly, and to assist the YDUs to liaise with non government service providers for programs.

Additional staff would assist in reducing delays caused in arranging diversion programs for young offenders. YDUs should be established in Katherine and Tennant Creek so that assessments could be undertaken in conjunction with local service providers and local police.

Additional expertise, including a greater capacity to conduct youth justice conferences, needs to be developed.

Community-based diversion programs should be increased after the planned review of programs is undertaken by the Department of Children and Families (DCF), which should occur by June 2012. This will ensure that outcomes are assessed and that more targeted programs can be identified and developed. The programs must provide a level of rehabilitative value. Programs should be developed in consultation with people in remote communities, and in line with Local Implementation Plans in Territory Growth Towns.

Legislative amendments should be made to increase eligibility for diversion including for offences outlined in chapter 3.

Recommendation 6

That the number of youth rehabilitation camps be increased and include: the establishment of one short term therapeutic camp program in the greater Darwin area and one in Central Australia, as well as a longer term therapeutic residential program in the Top End and one in Central Australia, and that the youth rehabilitation camps be regulated by legislation.

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The Review does not propose changes to the existing youth camps.

As outlined in chapter 4, this Review does not propose to repeat all details that have already been provided to government regarding the costing, models and framework for the youth rehabilitation camps, but supports the models therein.

The youth justice unit, contained in recommendation 1, should be responsible for developing and implementing the youth rehabilitation camps. The Review notes that the Service Delivery Coordination Unit in the Department of the Chief Minister retains extensive details regarding infrastructure in remote areas. This information may assist in determining some locations. In Central Australia, there may be an opportunity to share some resources with the Barkly Work Camp, established under the New Era in Corrections initiative.

The Review recommends that the new facilities be subject to regulation.

The establishment of these facilities would represent a justice reinvestment, namely allocating resources now that will provide a return on investment by delivering benefits such as reductions in offending and re-offending and, ultimately, cost savings. They also provide the Youth Justice Court with an alternative placement for sentencing and remanding young offenders and alleged offenders.

The youth justice unit referred to in recommendation 1 should assess whether the facilities could also operate as post-release facilities, so that young offenders with high needs can be reintegrated into the community. Short term accommodation options also need to be developed.

Recommendation 7

That additional resources be allocated to the Family Support Program and existing Family Support Centres.

An increase of resources to the Family Support Program and Family Support Centres (FSCs) is recommended based on its capacity to work with the families and, indirectly, children, many of whom are offenders or at risk of offending and entering the youth justice system.

The Review notes, if government accepts all the recommendations in this report, the FSCs can build on their resources and complement therapeutic work that should occur at the therapeutic camp program and therapeutic residential programs.

The youth justice unit, proposed in recommendation 1, would have the responsibility of coordinating services, responses and resources to the facilities and the FSCs, and their capacity to provide, among other services, multi-disciplinary expertise and delivery of intensive supervision programs.

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Currently, FSCs exist in Darwin and Alice Springs. The Review makes no specific recommendation that FSCs should be established in Katherine and Tennant Creek, as suggested by DCF in its submission, although this should be assessed by the youth justice unit.

The youth justice unit should evaluate whether FSCs can be developed into a central referral facility along the lines of a form of triage centre so that assessments can be made for young people as soon as they come into contact with the youth justice system.

Recommendation 8

That the capacity of the Northern Territory workforce be strengthened to include training of workers across the youth justice system including, though not limited to, youth workers, court support workers and community youth justice workers.

A strong and capable workforce within government and the NGO sector is an integral part of achieving the aim of this Review, which is to ensure the Territory's youth justice system delivers best practice programs and services to meet the needs of young people and the public, including victims.

The youth justice unit, proposed in recommendation 1, would have the responsibility of driving workforce development issues and strategies for government and NGO sectors.

Recommendation 9

That all programs delivered for young people in, or at risk of entering, the youth justice system have built in evaluation processes, that an external monitoring committee oversee progress of the youth justice unit; that the youth justice unit's activities are included in the department's annual report, and that government report on the recommendations of this Review by 30 June 2012, again by the end of 2012 and annually thereafter.

Ongoing internal and external monitoring and evaluation are essential to ensure both the progress of delivery against these recommendations and progress of the youth justice unit in meeting the requirements of youth in, or at risk of entering, the youth justice system.

CHAPTER 11: RECOMMENDATIONS AND MODELS

Models for change

The recommendations made by this Review can be delivered in a number of ways. Initially, four models were identified that could give effect to the recommendations. They were the creation of a new unit in an existing department, the establishment of a new department, individual department improvements or a series of pilot programs.

However, ultimately, the Review determined that in fact there are two models best suited for government that will maximise its capacity to implement the recommendations. They are:

1. A new unit in an existing department

The creation of a new unit within an existing government department is the preferred option.

As outlined, the unit would be responsible for administering all aspects of the youth justice system and ensure the delivery of a continuum of services and responses to young people who are in, or at risk of entering, the system.

This model represents an opportunity to build on existing strengths and initiatives in a range of departments, provide the means by which identified gaps in the continuum of services and responses can be filled, and develop a greater working relationship with the NGO sector. There was widespread support for this model among stakeholders including officers from key government departments.

The advantages of this model include:

- uniting key elements of the justice system continuum, which currently exist in a number of departments, in one division
- coordinated service and response delivery
- a centre of youth experience and expertise
- streamlining administrative responsibility to one ministerial portfolio
- reassuring the public that government is providing a sustainable results driven response to youth offending and re-offending
- reassuring the public and the NGO sector that government is providing a sustainable holistic approach to youth justice
- information sharing.

Government would need to allow an appropriate timeframe for the unit to be created and resourced. It is also understood that resourcing the new unit could create service delivery challenges for existing agencies and programs. Contingencies to reduce the risk to the new and existing divisions must be established.

If accepted, government must consider which department the unit would sit. In many, but not all, Australian jurisdictions, youth justice is administered by human services departments. Given DCF's focus on implementing the Board of Inquiry into the Child

CHAPTER 11: RECOMMENDATIONS AND MODELS

Protection System in the Northern Territory 2010 recommendations, the Review considers that DCF is not in a position to absorb the additional responsibility of a new unit focused on youth. The Review considers that the Department of Justice is the best placed department at present for the new unit. Over time, government may wish to consider transferring the unit to DCF.

2. Individual departmental improvements

This model provides for specific changes to be made to individual departments; however, it would not guarantee the implementation of all of the Recommendations.

This is a reasonable option for the government to consider; however, there is a risk that, over time, service delivery would revert to being fractured and that the ability to provide a continuum of services and responses would be limited.

The report also identifies significant challenges agencies have in sharing information that is critical to supporting youth. This model could not succeed without a thorough overhaul of information guidelines and processes.

This model would receive general support as a number of suggestions were made to the Review regarding the need for improved policies, practices and processes within key departments.

The advantages of this model include:

- minimal structural change
- increased individual agency responsibility to assist young people who offend or who risk offending

The Chair's preferred model is to establish a new unit within an existing government department.

Cost benefit analysis

As discussed in chapter 10, the Review has been unable to provide a cost benefit analysis. However, as part of government's analysis of this report, the Northern Territory Treasury has advised that an assessment of the costs of implementation compared with the likely benefits of the various recommendations, including the proposed models, would be undertaken after the Review.