



Final Report

Supervised Community Accommodation

 **Griffith**
UNIVERSITY
Queensland, Australia

Acknowledgements

The Queensland Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women commissioned researchers from the Griffith Criminology Institute to undertake the evaluation of Supervised Community Accommodation (SCA) services. We thank the department for their assistance and support throughout the evaluation process. We would also like to thank the young people who participated in interviews for this evaluation. We would also like to thank key stakeholders who volunteered their time to contribute to the evaluation. Many thanks as well to Youth Justice and SCA staff at Townsville and Logan who helped to recruit young people for the interviews and assisted with the preparation of case studies.

This report was prepared by:

Dr William R Wood and Dr Hennessey Hayes and Griffith Criminology
Institute, Griffith University

With the assistance of the following from Griffith University

Debbie Woodbridge

Antoinette Smith

Masahiro Suzuki, and

the following from the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women

Leah Hodson

Dr Jill White

Dr Margarita Vorsina

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	1
Table of Contents	2
Table of Figures, Boxes, Charts and Tables	4
Acronyms	5
Executive Summary	6
1.0 Introduction	11
1.1 Program Description	11
1.1.1 Purpose of the Evaluation	14
1.1.2 Overview of Final Report.....	14
1.1.3 Key Research Questions	15
2.0 Review of Literature	16
2.1 The Growing Problem of Remand in Australia	16
2.2 Custodial Remand for Young People	16
2.2.1 The Effects of Detention and Custodial Placement on Young People	17
2.3 Alternatives to Remand for Young People	19
2.3.1 Northern Territory	19
2.3.2 Western Australia	19
2.3.3 New South Wales	19
2.3.4 South Australia	20
2.3.5 United Kingdom	20
2.3.6 Scotland.....	21
2.3.7 Other bail supports in Australia.....	21
3.0 Evaluation Focus and Methodology	23
3.1 Data Sources	23
3.2 Methods and Limitations	24
3.2.1 Methodology	24
3.2.2 Limitations	26
4.0 Results	28
4.1 Key Questions for Process Evaluation	28
4.1.1 Implementation	28
4.1.2 Operation of SCA model across the four sites.....	29
4.1.2.1 Key changes to the service model since establishment	29
4.1.2.2 Partnerships between SCAs, youth justice officers working out of the SCAs, local YJ service centres	31
4.1.2.3 Co-location of SCA staff and YJ staff	33
4.1.2.4 Transition planning and case management.....	34
4.1.2.5 Management of risks and incidents	35

4.1.2.6	Appropriateness of facilities for the target group	37
4.1.2.7	Referral pathways	38
4.1.3	Model appropriateness for young people in SCAs	40
4.1.3.1	Demographic characteristics of young people referred to the SCAs	40
4.1.3.2	Types of assistance/programs accessed by young people	41
4.1.3.3	Service delivery gaps	42
4.1.4	Model appropriateness for cultural needs of young people from Aboriginal and Torres Islander Strait backgrounds?	43
4.1.5	Appropriateness of eligibility and suitability criteria.....	45
4.2	Outcomes	47
4.2.1	Short to medium term outcomes achieved for young people in SCAs	47
4.2.1.1	Access to safe accommodation.....	47
4.2.1.2	Reengagement with families	48
4.2.1.3	Connections with Elders and the community	49
4.2.1.4	Reoffending of young people following the SCAs	50
5.0	<i>Discussion of Evaluation Conclusions.....</i>	52
5.1	What is working well with the SCAs.....	52
5.2	Existing Challenges in the SCAs.....	53
5.3	The Perspectives of Young People on the SCAs	54
5.3.1	Overview.....	54
5.3.2	Characteristics of Young People Interviewed	54
5.3.3	Key Themes	55
5.3.4	Outcomes Achieved.....	56
5.3.5	Challenges.....	57
6.0	<i>Identified Areas of Ongoing Improvement</i>	58
7.0	<i>Suggestions for Improvement</i>	59
8.0	<i>Case Studies.....</i>	62
	<i>References.....</i>	78

Table of Figures, Boxes, Charts and Tables

Box 1.1: Expanded SCA referral pathways	12
Box 1.2: Eligibility Criteria	13
Box 1.3: Suitability Criteria	13
Table 1: Stakeholder Interviews by Agency and Role	23
Box 4.1: Anticipated Utilisation Rates of SBAs	30
Table 2: Strengths in Partnership Between SCAs and DCSYW	31
Table 3: Issues in Partnership Between SCAs and DCSWY	32
Table 4: Strengths and Challenges of SCA and YJ Staff Co-location	34
Chart 4.1.2: Key Strengths and Key Challenges of Case Management	35
Table 5: Critical Incidents by SCA Locations	35
Figure 1: Pictures from some of the SCAs common areas	38
Table 6: Location by Referral Type	38
Table 7: Strengths and Challenges of Referral Pathways	40
Table 8: Age by Location	40
Table 9: Gender by Location	41
Table 10: Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	41
Table 11: Types of Assistance/Programs Accessed by Young People in the SCAs	42
Table 12: Needs, Risks, and Services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young People in the SCAs	44
Table 13: Young People Reports of Family Connections and/or Transition to Family Placement	49
Table 14: Average and Median Reoffending by SCA Location	51
Table 15: Key Themes from Interviews and Case Studies	55

Acronyms

ASQ	Anglicare Southern Queensland
ASYASS	Alice Springs Youth Accommodation and Support Services
ATSILS	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service
BAL	Bail Assistance Line
CBP	Conditional Bail Program
CPO	Child Protection Order
DCSYW	Queensland Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women
GCI	Griffith Criminology Institute
ICMS	Integrated Client Management System
QPS	Queensland Police Service
SBA	Supervised Bail Accommodation
SCA	Supervised Community Accommodation
SRO	Supervised Release Order
TAIHS	Townsville Aboriginal and Islander Health Service
YJ	Youth Justice
YJSC	Youth Justice Service Centre
YOT	Youth Offending Teams

Executive Summary

The Queensland Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women (DCSYW) commissioned researchers from the Griffith Criminology Institute (GCI) to evaluate the Supervised Community Accommodation (SCA) program. SCAs were established in 2017-18 to provide community-based accommodation and supervision for young people as an alternative to detention. They aim to provide a safe home-like environment in the community for young people, with wrap-around assessments and support, intensive case management and 24/7 supports.

By the nature of the population SCAs are intended to serve young people. Many of the young people who come into the SCAs do so with high needs, significant health or mental health problems, disadvantaged backgrounds, and very high levels of being victimized themselves. In this respect, given the average age of young people in the SCAs (15 years old), and the characteristics of the young people coming into SCAs, focus is given in this Final Report to understanding these young people as children in need of significant social, health and mental health, and other support services that existing research demonstrates has long term positive and cost-effective impacts across many aspects of the life course.

The purpose of this evaluation is thus first and foremost to assess how well the SCAs are meeting the needs of these young people and helping them to transition into safe and stable environments once they leave the SCAs. This Final Report is also intended to inform future investment decisions regarding the SCAs and identify strategies that will help the SCA model to achieve higher levels of utilisation and positive outcomes for young people residing in the SCAs. This Final Report follows the Interim report delivered in January 2019 and provides a comprehensive account of key stakeholders' views of the SCAs, along with some young people's experiences in the SCAs. The report also provides a range of stakeholder experiences and perspectives on the strengths and issues with SCAs, as well as information regarding the characteristics of young people in SCA homes, including age, gender, indigenous status, program location, and duration of stay.

Since commencement of the SCAs in December 2017 to 31 March 2019, a total of 95 distinct young people have resided in the SCAs. The majority of young people (62) resided in one of the Townsville sites, which opened earlier than the two Logan sites. Most of these young people residing in the SCAs are male (71%), and the average age of young people in the SCAs is approximately 15 years. For the two Townsville sites a large proportion of referrals were "emergency" referrals for short-term accommodation.

GCI staff, with assistance from DCSYW staff, interviewed over 40 key stakeholders from a wide range of agencies and organisations involved in the development, implementation, oversight, and delivery of SCAs in the Logan and Townsville areas. In addition, GCI staff interviewed several young people residing in the Townsville SCAs or in detention.

Key findings from the Final Report include the following:

A number of features of the SCAs are working well

1. SCAs are providing a high level of service to young people, including:
 - Long term safe and stable accommodation in a home-like environment,
 - Significant health, mental health, disability, and drug and alcohol services in a “wrap around” framework
 - Significant support for reengagement with families, when possible
 - Reengagement with educational programs
 - Engagement with employment and/or training
 - Development of independent living skills
 - Some access to transitional services
 - Involvement in prosocial activities.
2. Young people report largely positive and supportive experiences while in the SCAs.
3. SCA facilities are clean, well-maintained, and function well to provide a “home-like” setting to young people.
4. Overall reports suggest there is a relatively strong integration of case management between Youth Justice staff and SCA service providers.
5. The referral process of the SCA model appears to be working well.

A number of features of the SCAs indicate *ongoing challenges*

1. There has been a lack of clarity related to changing models or rationales for the SCAs, creating confusion with service providers.
2. While the referral process to the SCA appears to be working well, there are ongoing problems with the eligibility and suitability criteria that limit the placement of young people in the SCAs.
3. Screening and placement timeframes for the placement of young people continue to be a challenge.
4. Management of on-site critical incidents and/or breaches of bail remain a primary issue for regional youth justice staff and SCA staff.
5. The concerning level of drug use among SCA residents suggests this is a primary impediment to the success of young people, and a challenge to the environment of the houses on the whole.

Suggestions for Improvement of the SCAs include the following:

1. **Clarification and realignment of SCA goals and objectives:** Several parts of the SCAs are working well, in particular the provision of significant social and health/mental health services to young people. However, it is also clear that the initial goals of SCAs have changed over the course of the program. Intended in their inception as a primary remand reduction strategy for young people in Queensland, SCAs are today now being used for “transitional” placement where eligible and suitable young people are able to receive significant “wrap-around services” and successfully transition to safe and stable environments. These model changes have been ambiguous and in some cases, problematic for SCA service providers. Two suggestions follow from these findings:

- *SCA goals need to be clarified in terms of the primary ongoing objectives of the program.*
- *Identified primary goals must be realigned with Youth Justice screening practices, service provider delivery, and other key stakeholders in clear and concise language.*

2. **Improvement, standardization, and centralisation of performance and outcome data on the SCAs:** The collection and analysis of data for the SCA external evaluation highlights to a large degree the need for the development of a centralised SCA data collection process. One problem is that data collected and maintained by the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women's Integrated Client Management System (ICMS) was not designed, nor well-suited for evaluating the SCAs. A second problem is that data collected by youth justice staff and SCA service providers is not consistent across the SCAs. One suggestion follows from these findings:

- *Realignment of SCA goals and objectives must be done with provision of more reliable collection of program information and data for monitoring and evaluation purposes. Key performance indicators and data collection fields need to be reviewed and standardized.*

3. **Improvement of stakeholder support and involvement:** An important and significant challenge for the SCAs is gaining and maintaining confidence among partner agencies. Our evaluation finds the SCA program is not clear or misunderstood by police, magistrates, and other justice officials. As such, the risk is that the program will be underutilised due to low referral rates, and also not be able to perform optimally due to poor relationships with or perceptions by other agencies. The following two suggestions flow from these findings:

- *SCA and Youth Justice staff should enhance engagement with QPS, including outreach to clarify the purpose and goals of the SCAs, establishing protocols with QPS regarding use of their services for breaches of bail or young people missing from the SCAs, and setting inter-agency relationships in place to better maintain a good partnership.*
- *DCSYW should prepare a briefing summary to make available to magistrates and other legal referral or aid agencies to improve referral flows into the SCAs and clarify their use and purpose.*

4. **Eligibility and suitability criteria:** Stakeholders (across and within stakeholder groups) acknowledged a need to reconsider some of the screening criteria that allow a young person to be placed in an SCA. A common view was that these criteria have led to substantial underutilisation of SCAs, although placement rates may be improving. Many stakeholders suggested that suitability criteria were being applied from a 'risk management' perspective, thus screening out a large number of otherwise eligible young people. Some stakeholders also noted that the work of the SCAs might be effective and beneficial for younger offenders (12-13 years). Four suggestions follow from these findings:

- *Consult with Service Providers to explore the viability of expanding the catchment areas for SCAs.*

- *Consider lowering the eligibility of young people to age 12 for SCAs¹.*
- *Revise the suitability criteria and screening process in relation to clarification and realignment of program goals and objectives.*
- *Explore the possibility of including Service Providers in the development and use of revised suitability criteria.*

5. **Re-evaluation of Suitability and Placement of Young People with Drug Dependency Problems and/or Frequent Drug Use:** Drug use, and in particular methamphetamine use, is impacting on the overall effectiveness of the SCAs. Stakeholders (across and within stakeholder groups) reported that young people with serious drug issues have generally done poorly in the SCAs, and also negatively impacted other young people in the SCAs. A suggestion from this finding is:

- *Young people who are identified as having drug dependency issues should be referred to other appropriate services rather than to SCAs.*

6. **Management of on-site incidents and/or breaches of bail conditions:** Many stakeholders noted the problem of young people not following house rules and bail conditions.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] his is resulting in more problems and less successes in the SCAs. Stronger enforcement mechanisms need to be implemented. Two suggestions follow from these findings:

- *SCA workers need the statutory authority to breach young people who do not comply with their bail conditions.*
- *DCSYW, in conjunction with SCA managers, must develop stronger partnerships with and agreements on how to involve QPS for serious offences and/or repeated breaches of bail orders.*

7. **Improvement of availability and delivery of appropriate on country and cultural activities and programs.** Positive experiences were reported by young people with on country and cultural activities and programs in the SCAs. However, interviews with stakeholders also found inconsistent delivery or availability of such programs or activities, some confusion by stakeholders as to agreements between SCAs and DCSYW as to the delivery and funding for such programs, and poor involvement of appropriate Elders or cultural groups in the setting up of the SCAs. Recent work in the Logan area SCAs demonstrates a significant improvement to these problems. On-ground work by DCSYW staff has provided more consistent delivery of appropriate on country and cultural programs and activities to young people, and staff have also been able to locate and secure the involvement of appropriate Elders for the land, and bring Elders into relationship with the young people in the SCAs. Three suggestions follow from these findings:

- *Develop and implement a cultural capability framework for use by DCSYW in conjunction with SCAs.*

¹ The service model would need to be changed to accommodate young people aged 12-13 years.

- *Review existing agreements between DCSYW and SCAs regarding best-practice delivery of county and cultural activities and programs, and clarify roles and responsibilities (including funding when appropriate) of each organization.*
- *Continue with and expand on current program at Carbrook SCA in terms of developing a clearer “best-practice” framework and protocols for involvement of appropriate Elders and community organisations.*

8. **Improvement of Transition Services and/or transition case management:** Some young people from non-emergency referrals were reported to exit the SCAs abruptly, and with little information provided to the SCAs regarding transition services or decisions from DCSYW. Two suggestions follow from these findings:

- *In conjunction with revised of SCA goals and objectives, clarify existing transition service roles, responsibilities, and services between DCSYW and SCA service providers.*
- *DCSYW should review existing case-management transition protocols with existing SCAs to identify and address existing gaps in notification of transition (when possible) between Youth Justice and SCA service providers.*

1.0 Introduction

The Queensland Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women (DCSYW) engaged researchers from the Griffith Criminology Institute (GCI) in December 2018 to conduct an external evaluation of the Supervised Community Accommodation (SCA) program. SCAs were established in 2017-18 to provide community-based accommodation and supervision for young people as an alternative to detention. They aim to provide a safe home-like environment in the community for young people, with wrap around assessments, intensive case management and 24/7 support.

1.1 Program Description

In 2016 legislation was introduced to support the transition of 17-year-olds from the adult criminal justice system to the Youth Justice system. The *Youth Justice and other Legislation (Inclusion of 17-year-old Persons) Amendment Act 2016* commenced on 12 February 2018 bringing Queensland in line with all other jurisdictions in Australia. As a result of the legislative change, there was concern that the move of 17-year-old offenders into the Youth Justice system would put significant pressure on the Youth Detention Centres in Queensland. Currently, detention centres in Queensland predominantly house young offenders who are remanded (not sentenced) in custody for an average duration of one month.

Young people appearing in the Children's Court who receive a bail order but who are deemed as not having suitable accommodation in the community (e.g., unstable or unsafe accommodation) are at risk of being remanded in custody. In the 2017- 2018 reporting period, 82% of all young people in youth detention in Queensland were on remand and awaiting sentencing (Children's Court of Queensland Annual Report 2017 - 2018). This rate has remained relatively stable for the last five reporting periods resulting in Queensland having the highest remand rates for young offenders in Australia (Children's Court of Queensland Annual Report 2017-18).

The Supervised Bail Accommodation (SBA) program was initially established in late 2017 to provide community-based accommodation and supervision for young people as an alternative to being remanded in detention. The SBAs were developed and implemented with the key aim of reducing remand rates. The uptake to the SBAs was slower than anticipated. As a result, the department worked with service providers to develop a more flexible model with expanded referral pathways. In early 2018, the title of the initiative changed from Supervised Bail Accommodation (SBA) to Supervised Community Accommodation (SCA) to reflect the expanded referral pathways.

Box 1.1: Expanded SCA Referral Pathways

- **Court referrals:** (original referral pathway): Young people who are at risk of being remanded in custody. The court can make a condition of their bail undertaking that they reside at the SCA, either short or long-term.
- **Short-term/emergency referrals:** Young people who are being released from Cleveland or Brisbane Youth Detention Centres and require accommodation whilst awaiting transport to their usual place of residence. These referrals are made by the YJ service centres or Youth Detention Centres.
- **Community-based referrals:** Crisis or long-term referrals for young people subject to Youth Justice Orders. These referrals are mainly sourced from YJSCs.
- **Queensland Police Service:** Young people from police watch-houses who are assessed as suitable for short-term accommodation pending court appearances. The QPS referrals may include young people who are at risk of being remanded in custody as a result of continued offending or young people who continue to be non-compliant with bail curfew conditions (but no further offending).

What do the SCAs look like?

There are four SCA sites in Queensland; two sites that service each Youth Detention Centre. Young people on conditional bail orders who are remanded into custody at the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre in Townsville may be offered accommodation and support at Townsville [] or Townsville []. The [] SCA can accommodate a maximum of four young people and the [] SCA can also accommodate a maximum of four young people. The Townsville SCAs commenced service delivery in mid-December 2017 and early January 2018 respectively.

Young people on Conditional Bail Orders who are remanded into custody at the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre may be offered a place at Carbrook (accommodation for a maximum of four male offenders) or Logan Reserve (accommodation for a maximum of four female offenders). The Logan City SCAs commenced service delivery on 26 March, and 9 April 2018 respectively.

The SCAs are co-delivered through a partnership between government (Youth Justice) and non-government service providers. Three service providers manage the SCAs. The Townsville Aboriginal and Islander Health Service (TAIHS) manages the SCA in Townsville [], and Mission Australia manages the other SCA in Townsville []. The two SCAs in Logan City (Carbrook and Logan Reserve) are both managed by Anglicare.

The SCAs provide a home-like environment in the community for young people, with wrap around assessments, intensive case management, and 24/7 support. They provide a high level of supervision, but they are a voluntary service. Young people are supported to attend school or vocational training, complete rehabilitation programs, access health services, learn life skills, adhere to curfews, and meet bail or order conditions. In addition, the SCAs provide young people with an opportunity to engage in a range of structured, pro-social program activities designed to develop new skills and prepare them for transition back to their families or for independent living. The SCAs also aim to establish strong connections for young people with family and community to encourage lasting support structures, with the ultimate goal being to transition to sustainable accommodation and reduce offending.

What are the eligibility and suitability criteria?

A young person is considered for a SCA placement through one of four referral pathways: police; courts; Youth Justice staff; or community referrals. They are first screened by youth justice staff for **eligibility** using the following criteria (Box 1.2).

Box 1.2: Eligibility Criteria

- Aged between 14 and 17 years at time of referral.
- Young person is (or identifies as) the same gender as other residents accommodated in the service (for South-East Queensland only).
- Young person will otherwise be (or currently is) remanded in custody (for South-East Queensland only) or is subject to Youth Justice Intervention.
- The young person usually resides and is expecting to reside within the geographic catchment of the service.
- The young person is willing to be bailed to the SCA with a Conditional Bail Program or with conditions to comply with Youth Justice directions and has no disqualifying bail conditions (e.g. association with another resident).
- The young person is willing to abide by house rules.

Once a young person is deemed eligible, he/she is then screened by Youth Justice staff for **suitability** using the following criteria (Box 1.3).

Box 1.3: Suitability Criteria

- There must be a bedroom available for the young person within the SCA.
- The young person must be placed on a Conditional Bail Program OR bail that includes following directions of Youth Justice and have no disqualifying bail conditions (e.g. association with another resident).
- Young people who have acute mental health, suicide ideations or sexualised behaviours, or have committed very violent offences are not likely to receive appropriate supports and are unlikely to be suitable for the SCA, however assessments can still be completed.
- Young people on a Child Protection Order can be accommodated at the service as long as they are assessed as being eligible and suitable. An SCA is not to take the place of Child Safety sourcing more appropriate accommodation for the young person, and time constraints of the SCA still apply to dual order clients.
- The SCA service provider cannot refuse a young person who has been bailed to the service by the court. However, Youth Justice should undertake all measures to ensure as much information is provided to the SCA provider as quickly as possible and do their best to represent the united views of the SCA provider and Youth Justice to the Court.
- Youth Justice will not offer the possibility of a placement at SCA in court unless it can immediately and safely accommodate the young person (i.e. the young person is assessed as suitable and there is an available bed).

1.1.1 Purpose of the Evaluation

The evaluation of the SCAs conducted by GCI researchers for DCSYW focusses on the operation of the SCA model and early outcomes. The purpose of the overall evaluation is to:

- Inform future investment decisions regarding the SCAs and their potential roll-out to other locations
- Identify strategies that will help the model to achieve higher levels of utilisation and positive outcomes
- Inform enhancements or refinements to the service model.

Key deliverables include an Interim Report submitted in late January 2019 and this Final Report delivered in May, 2019. The purpose of this Final Report is to outline key findings of the overall evaluation of the SCAs, including existing strengths, challenges, and suggested policy and program improvements; to provide summary of a range of stakeholder views on the SCAs; and to present information on the experiences of young people in the SCAs.

1.1.2 Overview of Final Report

Data for the Final Report was collected from a variety of sources, including:

- interviews with young people [n=8]
- interviews [n=41] with a wide and diverse range of stakeholders [see Table 1, Section 4.1] for overview of stakeholder interviews]
- site visits conducted at all SCA locations and surrounding areas
- program data provided to GCI researchers by DCSYW.

A total of 41 stakeholders were interviewed on a variety of issues related to the SCAs. These issues included stakeholder perspectives on the efficacy and strengths of the SCAs, the design and implementation of the SCA program, current problems or challenges in the use of SCAs, suggested changes for better use and delivery of SCAs, and perspectives on the overall viability and continued use of the SCA program in Queensland. Key agencies interviewed include DCSYW (Youth Justice Services, Youth Detention Centres and Investment and Commissioning), SCA service providers, Queensland Police Service, Legal Aid Queensland, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service and a representative from the Childrens Court of Queensland.

GCI and DCSYW staff interviewed 8 young people regarding their experiences in the SCAs and what they liked, didn't like and how the SCAs can be improved (Section 4). In- depth case studies are also presented in Appendix 1 that provide an overview of the short to medium-term outcomes achieved by these young people.

Section 2 provides an overview of existing literature on the use and growing problem of remand in Queensland, the problems of custodial remand for young people, the effects of detention and custodial placement on young people, and existing literature on alternative remand programs in Australia and internationally. Section 3 describes the evaluation focus and methodology, including key data sources used in the final report, methodology, and limitations. Section 4 presents the results of findings from process evaluation and outcomes questions. Section 5 includes discussion of evaluation conclusions, including consideration of the strengths and challenges of the SCAs, as well as the perspective of young people regarding the SCAs. Section 6 addresses identified areas of ongoing improvement. Section 7 lists our specific suggestions for ongoing program improvements.

1.1.3 Key Research Questions

Key Research questions in this Final Report focus on evaluation of SCA processes and outcomes. These are listed below:

Key Criteria for Process Evaluation of SCAs

How well is the SCA model operating across the four sites? What are the key strengths and challenges of the model? Key evaluation criteria in this Report include:

- Evaluation of Model Implementation
- Operation of SCA model across the four sites
 - Key changes to the service model since establishment
 - Partnerships between SCAs, youth justice officers working out of the SCAs, local YJ service centres
 - Co-location of SCA staff and YJ staff
 - Transition planning and case management
 - Management of risks and incidents
 - Appropriateness of facilities for the target group
 - Referral pathways
- Model appropriateness for young people in SCAs
 - Demographic characteristics of young people referred to the SCAs
 - Types of assistance/programs accessed by young people
 - Service delivery gaps
- Model appropriateness for cultural needs of young people from Aboriginal and Torres Islander Strait backgrounds
- Appropriateness of eligibility and suitability criteria

Short and Medium-Term Outcome Evaluation Criteria for Young People in SCAs

What short to medium term outcomes have been achieved by young people in the SCAs?

- Access to safe accommodation
- Re-engagement with families
- Connections with Elders and the community
- Reoffending of Young People Following the SCAs

2.0 Review of Literature

2.1 The Growing Problem of Remand in Australia

In the last quarter century, there has been a significant increase in the use of remand for young people and adults charged with criminal offences in Australia (Richards, 2011; Sarre, 2018; Sarre King & Bamford, 2006). This mirrors trends in New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States where people on remand constitute an increasing percentage of growing prison and youth custody rates (Ericson & Vinson, 2011; Walmsley, 2014). Problematically, remand has now become one of the most decisive but ‘hidden’ factors in the growth of prison populations and youth in custody (Webster, Doob, & Myers, 2009; Willis, 2017; Wood, 2015). This problem is particularly egregious in Australia, where research suggests that remand rates for both adults and young people are some of the highest in the Western world (Sarre, 2018).

Research from Australia has sought to uncover some of the factors driving the increased use of remand. One study from New South Wales (NSW) has found this growth is tied to changing uses of remand away from a procedural mechanism used to secure attendance at court, towards its use for crime prevention or public safety concerns (Brown, 2013). Research from two Australian states – New South Wales and South Australia – suggests increased rates of remand are in part attributed to increases in the numbers of persons charged with offences that traditionally have high bail refusal rates (Fitzgerald, 2000; South Australian Office of Crime Statistics, 2002). Research has also highlighted the relevance of changes in defendant characteristics, in particular increasing numbers of charged persons with serious mental health problems and/or drug and alcohol abuse in effecting remand rates (Mazerolle & Sanderson, 2008; Sarre, King and Bamford, 2006).

2.2 Custodial Remand for Young People

As with adults, the use of remand for young people in Australia has grown significantly in the past twenty years (Richards and Renshaw, 2013). While rates vary between states and territories, research from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2017) demonstrates that Queensland currently has the highest level of remand for young people of any Australian jurisdiction. Specifically, 83% of all young people in detention on a given day in Queensland have not been convicted of an offence. This is almost twice the level of Western Australia (44%), and much higher than the national standard (57%) (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2017).

Research on the use of custodial remand suggest that while some factors effecting remand growth may be similar for adults and young people, other factors are more unique to young people charged with offences or may impact them differently. In the most comprehensive study to date on the use of custodial remand for young people in Australia, the authors of the study noted several drivers in the increase in custodial remand for young people over the last two decades (Richards and Renshaw, 2013). These include:

- increases in serious offending by young people or in the number of chronic youth offenders
- increases in breaches of bail conditions by young people (see also Jesuit Social Services, 2015)
- the increasingly complex needs of young people charged with offences for which they can be remanded (see also Mazerolle & Sanderson, 2008)
- young people not applying for bail

- lack of access to legal representation
- punitive attitudes towards the granting of bail to young people
- increases in court processing times (see also Stubbs, 2010)
- the growth of risk aversion and risk management strategies used to determine placement and bail applications from young people
- inappropriate and/or arbitrary use of bail conditions for young people
- homelessness or lack of suitable accommodation for young people (see also Boyle, 2009; NSWLRC, 2005).

Homelessness and/or lack of suitable accommodation for young people on remand has been particularly identified in several studies and reports as a primary problem for young people not being able to obtain bail in Australia (Australian Children's Commissioners and Guardians (ACCG), 2010; Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), 2012; Denning-Cotter, 2008; Mazerolle & Sanderson, 2008; Stubbs, 2010; Wong, Bailey & Kenny, 2010). As Richards and Renshaw (2013: 65) note, 'young people are often granted bail but, due to a lack of suitable accommodation, are unable to meet the bail conditions imposed, which typically require a young person to 'reside as directed' (i.e. reside at a specified address; Bailey 2009). In other cases, a lack of stable accommodation can mean that young people will be unable to comply with other bail conditions (Baldry et al., 2008 cited in Ericson & Vinson, 2011; NSW Law Reform Commission, 2012).

Shortages of suitable and stable housing have been associated with involvement in serious and/or repeat offending, abusive homes, and dangerous home environments (Carrington, 1993; Cashmore, 2011; Indig et al., 2011). Research from the Drug Use Careers of Offenders study in Australia found that of a sample of 371 young people on remand and/or sentenced to detention, 39% lived in homes other than those of their parents and 8% were living rough prior to placement in detention (Prichard & Payne, 2005). These studies speak to the highly traumatic and difficult experiences facing many young people charged with offences for which they may be remanded to custody. As Richard and Renshaw comment (2013: 104), there remains an urgent need for the 'implementation and evaluation of appropriately targeted bail support services for young people, particularly those with multiple, complex needs'.

2.2.1 The Effects of Detention and Custodial Placement on Young People

Deleterious effects for young people in custody, including those in custody on remand, are well documented. These include aggravated health and mental health problems; increased involvement in offending and/or exposure to criminogenic environments; increased stigmatisation of young people including the internalization of negative labels; and restriction of life-course opportunities such as education, job training, and possible involvement in prosocial activities.

Health and Mental Health Effects of Detention on Young People

The high prevalence of young people with serious health (Indig et al., 2011; Mazerolle & Sanderson, 2008) or mental health (Harrington & Bailey, 2005; Sawyer et al., 2010) problems in custodial facilities, when compared to young people in the community, is well-established. It is also well understood that mental health issues in particular may be both a predictor of increased likelihood of custodial placement for young people (Jesuit Social Services, 2015; Mazerolle & Sanderson, 2008; Richards & Renshaw, 2013), as well as exacerbated by placement in detention or custodial placement. Research conducted by Sawyer et al. (2010) in South Australia examined the difference in the prevalence of

mental health problems between adolescents aged 13-17 years old in remand and in the community. The finding indicated that about a half of adolescents in remand suffered mental illness compared to about 20% of those in the community. Using the 2009 New South Wales Young People in Custody Health Survey (see Indig et al. 2011), Moore, Gaskin, and Indig (2015) also showed that young offenders in custody (N = 313) had suicidal thoughts (16%, 10% for a suicide attempt) or thoughts of self-harm (21%, 16% for actual self-harm). In the United States, research conducted by Abram et al. (2003) demonstrated that out of 1829 juveniles who were randomly selected from a youth detention centre in Illinois, more than half of them had two or more psychiatric disorders, such as substance use and anxiety disorders.

Health and Mental Health Effects of Detention on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young People

As much as young people in general come into detention or custodial placement with relatively higher levels of health and mental health problems, this situation is even more pronounced for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island young people in Australia. Equally problematic is that the specific challenges faced by First Nations young people are frequently not recognized or ignored within youth custodial or detention facilities. These include histories of mental health and substance abuse, and a high likelihood of refusal of bail (Doolan, Najman & Cherney, 2012; Ericson & Vinson, 2011; Heffernan, Andersen & Kinner, 2009; Sawyer et al., 2010).

The Institutionalising and Stigmatising Effects of Detention on Young People

Research on the use of detention or custodial placement of young people has found several effects on the labelling of young people, including institutionalisation and the internalization of negative labels. Moore, McArthur and Saunders (2013) interviewed 11 young people in detention in Canberra about what they feel is necessary for their transition from detention to the community. In the interviews, young people reported that they often felt 'institutionalised and dependent on the system' because being detained in the long-term made them lose basic life skills, such as interpersonal skills (Moore, McArthur & Saunders, 2013: 337). Research conducted by Ashkar and Kenny (2008) examined how young offenders feel about their incarceration experiences. Interviewing 16 young offenders in a New South Wales' detention facility, their findings highlighted that young offenders coped with the prison culture through avoidance and social isolation because bullying and victimisation were prevalent in prison, which caused stress and fear among them.

The Effects of Detention on Life-Course Opportunities

Research on the incarceration of young people has found constraining or limiting effects of such incarceration over the life course on education and employment. In the United States, Hjalmarsson (2008) examined the impact of incarceration during adolescence on high school completion. Using the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97), they demonstrated that compared to those who had never been arrested, young people who had experienced incarceration were 26 percent less likely to graduate a high school. Apel and Sweeten (2010) also used the NLSY97 to explore the impact of incarceration on employment. To do so, using a propensity score matching method, they created two comparison groups: young offenders who were incarcerated and those who were not. Their finding indicated the negative impact of juvenile incarceration on future employment because those who were incarcerated were more likely to have lower incomes than those who were not incarcerated.

2.3 Alternatives to Remand for Young People

Acknowledging the seriousness and prevalence of young people on remand, Australia and several other Western countries have trialled and/or implemented a variety of alternative accommodation models to reduce youth justice remand. While there is an abundance of programs for young people within youth justice, there are far fewer programs aimed at targeting the dual focus of an integrated accommodation and service model for youth remand populations specifically. Such programs, discussed below, vary in size and scope. Most share goals of serving as an alternative to custody and also seek to provide social, health, and reintegrative services in the best interests of the child.

2.3.1 Northern Territory

The Northern Territory currently provides a supervised accommodation service in conjunction with Saltbush Social Enterprises. They support up to 12 young males each in Alice Springs and Darwin, with some capacity to also accept young females in Darwin where it is safe to do so. Saltbush provides youth bail support accommodation and supervision services. Saltbush Centres also provide case managers (a Senior Youth Outreach and Re-engagement Officer), supports educational efforts and encourages engagement in pro-social activities as a group and individually. A comprehensive evaluation is not currently available. However, a case study of one male youth indicates that positive results were seen in: community friendships, employment skills, cultural engagement, life skills, independent decision making, personal growth and improved educational outcomes. Report figures show as at 30 June 2018, the Saltbush service in Alice Springs had 22 young people bailed to their accommodation with 13 of those young people successfully adhering to their bail conditions. The Saltbush Centre Darwin has had 22 young people bailed to their accommodation with seven of those young people adhering to their bail conditions (Northern Territory Government, 2018).

The Northern Territory Government (Territory Families) also supports the Alice Springs Youth Accommodation and Support Services (ASYASS). This service is targeted towards young females and referred young males. The ASYASS is a youth bail support accommodation service. Territory Families recruited two Bail Support Clinicians to provide clinical oversight, guide case management and provide trauma-informed, therapeutic interventions while young people are engaged with the bail support accommodation services. Available information indicates that ASYASS had 22 young people bailed to their bail support accommodation with 18 of those people successfully adhering to their bail conditions (Northern Territory Government, 2018).

2.3.2 Western Australia

Western Australia provides emergency, short-term, residential accommodation for young people on supervised bail. The program aims to improve intra-and-inter personal skills, positive self-image and pro-social behaviour. It also aims to increase the person's sense of agency, improve life changes and reduce escalation into the youth justice system.

2.3.3 New South Wales

New South Wales assists young people through their Bail Assistance Line (BAL). BAL originated as a recommendation from the Wood Special Inquiry into Children Protection Services in NSW, 2008, and the NSW Government 'Keep Them Safe' Action Plan, 2009. The Bail Assistance Line originally commenced operations in Dubbo in June 2010, Western Sydney and South Western Sydney in August 2010, and the Hunter/Newcastle

area in late November 2010. As of 2013 the BAL has received 335 calls and provided 95 safe accommodation placements for children and young people at risk of entering the juvenile remand system due to issues related to lack of safe accommodation, transport and case support. The bail support services are provided by the non-government sector, and utilise a mixed model of service delivery – in metropolitan and South/Western Sydney a house in the community is used for accommodation purposes – staffed on a 24 hour basis (Richards and Renshaw, 2013).

2.3.4 South Australia

The South Australian government is currently investigating bail hostels as a potential option for transforming its approach to criminal justice (Willis, 2017). Other Australian jurisdictions also provide bail support services. However, these are typically concerned with responding to a young person's risks and needs, and supporting them to comply with bail conditions. These jurisdictions recognise that a lack of suitable stable accommodation is a barrier to young people complying with their bail conditions, and that young people face additional challenges in finding stable accommodation (Willis, 2017).

2.3.5 United Kingdom

Internationally, in the United Kingdom a case study of youth justice housing providers was undertaken. Thirty housing providers returned questionnaires of which the majority were hostels. In terms of other accommodation, two providers described themselves as temporary accommodation, one as move-on accommodation and the other as local authority residential accommodation. A total of 168 beds were available across the providers, averaging 21 per premises. The smallest had five beds (move-on accommodation), although a number of hostels were small, having six or seven beds. The largest provider had 63 beds (YMCA). The ages of young people primarily ranged from 12-25.

Key variables investigated nature of provision referrals, criteria, placement decisions, general assessment, criminal justice issues, license agreements, going out and being visited, facilities, staffing and support to young people, length of stay, steps taken to move on, leaving of own accord, reasons for placement breaking down, preventing placement breakdown, moving on and gaps in provision. Prior reporting on community accommodation often neglects to identify needs and gaps, this report however provided some key insights. The issue that was most commonly reported on, related to the lack of accommodation generally, including:

- a limited number of places available for young people requiring accommodation
- a poor range of options, not enough accommodation for young people with high support needs
- lack of follow-up support
- lack of landlords providing private rented accommodation
- lack of move on accommodation generally and affordable flats in particular – points supported by the findings from the area focus groups discussed previously (Arnull et al., 2007).

In 2010 the UK government also commissioned an audit of accommodation provision for young people who offend. The report included a Rapid Evidence Assessment and Online survey with Youth Offending Teams (YOT) Accommodation Officers and supplementary telephone interviews. Stage 2 analysis included a survey which yielded 84 respondents from 78 separate YOTs. It also included 5 case studies. Results indicated that referral rates seem uniformly high compared to the number of beds (Youth Justice Board, 2010). Furthermore, that despite the fact that traditionally young people are seen as a difficult

client group it was felt that by and large their needs were being recognised with the exception of those for whom the seriousness or nature of their offending behaviour and/or the presence of multiple needs means that they were considered too high risk for providers to accommodate their needs (Youth Justice Board, 2010). Also, that the YOT links well to other agencies and strategically into their relevant strategies including the City Homeless Strategy, Children's and Young People's Plan, the Drug and Alcohol Action Team's Substance Misuse Housing Action Plan and Supporting People Strategy (Youth Justice Board, 2010). Analysis of gaps and needs revealed that there is a gap in partnership working that relates to education and training providers who do not appear to be sufficiently tied in to accommodation providers. Similarly, it was felt by some that more could be done in relation to prevention through education and awareness raising early on.

2.3.6 Scotland

The Scottish government also provides secure accommodation as a form of residential care. It is for the small number of children who may be a significant risk to themselves, or others in the community. Their needs and risks can only be managed in secure care-controlled settings. Secure care aims to provide intensive support and safe boundaries to help these highly vulnerable children re-engage and move forward positively in their communities. In partnership with three Scottish Universities the Scottish Executive Education Department produced a review of Young People on Remand in Secure Accommodation (2005). Results indicated that young people are often characterised by a high level of parental need. Parental addiction or mental health problems were mentioned in over half the records. Mental health and emotional difficulties were also mentioned in relation to half of the young people, as well as poor educational backgrounds (Scottish Executive Education Department, 2005).

Later a follow up report on secure accommodation was conducted in partnership with Scotland's Secure Care National Project and Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice (Gough, 2019). The report explored perceptions and beliefs about the purpose, effectiveness, costs and value of secure care. The report concluded that there is no consensus among stakeholders, including young people, on whether the current integrated model delivered by the secure care centres (caring for young people whether they are on sentence or remand or secured for their own protection only) is the best model possible (Gough, 2019). In further illuminating issues encountered in the provision of accommodation to young people it was identified that for too many young people, the preparation and support they receive as they move on from the secure care setting is disproportionate to the secure care placement (i.e. inadequate). There is evidence that some young people (up to 37%) are experiencing repeated short-term secure care placements, or subsequent placement breakdowns, as a result (Gough, 2019).

2.3.7 Other bail supports in Australia

Other models have attempted to address the dual focus of accommodation and services but have yet to publish comprehensive evaluation reports, these are as follows (Willis, 2017):

- Australian Capital Territory: After Hours Bail Support Service
- Northern Territory: Alice Springs Youth Accommodation & Social Support Services (ASYASS) – Housing for Young People (see <https://www.asyass.org.au/>)
- Northern Territory: Saltbush Social Enterprises – Youth Bail Support (see <https://www.saltbushnt.org.au/youth-bail-support>)
- Northern Territory: Territory Families – Housing for Young People (see <https://territoryfamilies.nt.gov.au/>)

- Victoria: Youth Justice Intensive Bail Supervision Program (see also Parliament of Victoria, 2018)
- Victoria: Central After-Hours Assessment and Bail Placement Service (see also Parliament of Victoria, 2018)
- Victoria: Jesuit Social Services – Next Steps (see <https://jss.org.au/what-we-do/justice-and-crime-prevention/>)
- Western Australia: Metropolitan Youth Bail Service.

3.0 Evaluation Focus and Methodology

3.1 Data Sources

The Final Report was informed by a range of qualitative and quantitative sources. Qualitative data were gathered through interviews with a diverse range of stakeholders who were working across different organisational positions (e.g., from front line positions working directly with young people to senior positions such as Managers, Directors, Executive Directors, Regional Executive Directors and Youth Justice Directors). Site visits were also conducted at all SCA houses and surrounding community areas.

In total, 41 stakeholders were interviewed across the following stakeholder groups. These are listed by agency and participant role in table 1.

Table 1: Stakeholder Interviews by Agency and Role

--



Aside from formal interviews with participants, GCI staff conducted many informal interviews, Q & A sessions and follow-ups with DCSYW and SCA staff over the period of this evaluation.

GCI and/or DCSYW also staff interviewed [redacted] who had previously resided or were residing in the SCAs in Townsville and [redacted] residing in the SCA at Carbrook.

Site visits of all SCA sites were conducted by GCI researchers. Site visits included thorough inspections of SCA facilities, as well as further data collection by GCI researchers from on-site SCA and/or Youth Justice staff.

Administrative program data were obtained from three sources:

- Integrated Client Management System (ICMS-YJ)
- Regional spreadsheets maintained by Youth Justice SCA Managers
- SRS System (a client management system designed for joint use by the SCA service providers and YJ staff).

The administrative data were triangulated and used to assess operational flows and provide information on demographic characteristics of young people who resided in the SCAs and the number and type(s) of referrals to the SCAs.² Data is reported for the reference period from program commencement (December 2017/January 2018 for the Townsville SCAs and April/May 2018 for the Logan SCAs) to 31 March 2019. Results from an assessment of all of these data sources are presented below.

3.2 Methods and Limitations

3.2.1 Methodology

The external evaluation of the SCA Program was co-designed by researchers from the Griffith Criminology Institute and the Evaluation Team in the Queensland Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women (DCSYW). Evaluation criteria [see Table of Contents Section 4 in this Final Report] were supplied to GCI staff from the DCSYW, and methodological approaches for evaluation were then devised through a co-design process by GCI and DCSYW.

² Data issues were identified in relation to the regional spreadsheets and SRS data. Key issues included the lack of a centralised data repository (i.e. data had to be triangulated and verified across multiple sources) and inconsistencies in data collection across regions and service providers.

As the evaluation in this Final Report seeks to measure both process and outcome criteria, the evaluation methodology is “multi-method”. Our use of quantitative analysis is largely descriptive, for the reason that the overall numbers of young people in the SCAs is low to achieve statistical power, as well as lack of suitable data from which to analyse outcomes in relation to appropriate comparison groups. For data sources, we drew from quantitative data supplied by DCSYW, which included data from the Department’s ICMS (Integrated Client Management System), as well as data independently maintained by the SCAs.

For both process and outcome evaluation questions, we gathered a significant amount of qualitative data. This data included approximately 40 semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders involved in the SCAs (see Table 1), utilizing two different interview schedules. We were fortunate to be able to include in our interviews a broad range of stakeholders from virtually all of the key agencies involved in the SCAs. We were also able to achieve a fairly high level of vertical coverage of stakeholders within DCSYW (from Directors to SCA YJ case workers) and within the SCAs (from CEOs to line staff).

Our primary interview schedule for stakeholder interviews focused on experiences with and perspectives of the following items:

- stakeholder experience and role with SCA program
- the effectiveness of eligibility and suitability criteria
- the goals and objectives of the SCA program
- the strengths and efficacy of the SCA program
- challenges or problems of the SCA program
- the perceived effectiveness of SCAs in reducing remand
- suggestions for improvements in the SCA program
- assessments on the future of the SCA program.

We also interviewed a smaller number of stakeholders whom were able to speak more directly to the cultural needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the SCAs; and to the delivery of appropriate on country and cultural activities, mentoring, and involvement of external stakeholders towards these goals. For these interviews, we utilised a different interview schedule that asked stakeholders to discuss their experiences and perspectives on the following items:

- the specific needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the SCAs
- how well the SCAs are meeting these needs
- the delivery of on country and culturally appropriate services, relationships, and programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the SCAs
- the degree of involvement in First People’s community stakeholders such as youth service organisations, community advocacy organisations and Elders.

In terms of gaining a better understanding of stakeholder perspectives, GCI researchers also conducted visits of the SCAs, spoke to YJ and SCA staff at length during these visits, and observed some of the general day to day of the SCAs. Site visits were also used to assess the appropriateness of the SCA facilities for young people.

In terms of young people’s perspectives on the SCAs, a total of eight interviews were conducted with young people. [] of these were from the Townville area, and [] from the Logan area. These interviews sought to ascertain two general areas of knowledge, namely 1) their experiences in the SCAs, and 2) the impact of the SCAs following their departure (when appropriate as [] young people was still in an SCA). This interview schedule included:

- basic demographic information
- background information as to how the young people were referred to the SCA and why
- young people's experiences upon entering the SCA
- young people's perspectives on what was good, and bad, about the SCAs
- services afforded to young people while in the SCAs – including social services, health and mental health services, family support services, educational and job training services, and connection with external support services
- skills acquired while at the SCAs
- information about their transition out of the SCAs
- young people's perspectives on whether the SCAs had helped them to stay out of trouble or helped them to make better decisions
- current goals of young people
- how, if at all, the SCA helped them achieve some of these goals.

When possible, interviews were audio recorded. When not possible, notes were taken on the relevant interview schedule and written up following the interviews.

Consent and relevant risks were provided to all participants. Verbal consent for interviews with adult stakeholders was obtained prior to interview, including confirmation that participants had read and understood the consent and participation materials provided to them. In the case of young people, written consent was obtained in conjunction with and according to guidelines provided by DCSYW to GCI staff. This included clear instruction to young people that the content of their interviews would remain confidential, except in cases of admitting to an undetected criminal offence, or threats to harm themselves or others. No young people disclosed undetected criminal offences or threatened to harm themselves or others in interviews or otherwise. Also, a revised Gillick competence assessment was conducted following explanation of the purpose, risks and benefits, and right to not participate or withdraw from the study to young people. All young people who participated in this study were sufficiently able to meet the criteria in the Gillick assessment. All young people participating in this research were remunerated with a 50 dollar "Ultimate Teens Gift Card" to compensate them for their time and possible travel costs or other expenses.

Ethical clearance for all aspects of this research was obtained through the Townsville Hospital and Health Service Human Research Ethics Committee and Griffith University and will be provided upon request.

3.2.2 Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. These are as follows:

1. *Incomplete and or poor program data as related to several aspects of the SCA evaluation criteria.* Program data provided to the external evaluators was inconsistent, located across several sources, and in some cases was either not accurate or its accuracy could not be determined.
2. *Lack of sufficient data to determine significant effects on recidivism or reoffending for young people in SCAs.* The overall number (n=95) of young people in the SCAs makes reliable evaluation of the effects on recidivism or reoffending not possible at this time. Primarily, data on reoffending cannot adequately measure the impact of the SCAs as an alternative to custodial placement without a sufficient number of cases from each to achieve statistical power. Given the relatively low numbers of young people in the SCAs, and the need to match the demographic, offence type and number, and case history characteristics of these young people against similar cases in detention, at this

time it is not possible to achieve such matched comparisons with any reasonable level of statistical significance

3. *Small number of young people who were interviewed* – The initial program evaluation called for 15 to 20 interviews with young people across all four SCAs. Identification and recruitment of young people was more difficult than anticipated, however, and despite repeated attempts to contact and recruit young people, only a total 8 young people were available for interviews. Several young people declined to be interviewed. Many others did not respond to requests. Also problematic was that of these young people was from the Logan SCAs. As such, our ability to present experiences of perspectives of young people in the Logan SCAs is very low.
4. *Lack of Interviews or Focus Groups with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.* In our evaluation and including the assistance of an Aboriginal researcher with experience in evaluation research with First Nations communities, we were unable to locate many First Nations community groups, Elders, or service organisations for inclusion in the study. We note here our findings suggest involvement of First Nations stakeholders has occurred through the SCAs, and also appears to be recently growing in terms of the involvement of Elders at the Carbrook SCA. We have endeavoured to gather and present as much information about these recent developments as possible in this Final Report.

4.0 Results

4.1 Key Questions for Process Evaluation

4.1.1 Implementation

Data on the implementation of the SCAs comes from interviews with key stakeholders in DCSYW and the SCAs, as well as background materials on the development of the SBAs and SCAs.

Many stakeholders with knowledge of the initial development and/or implementation of the SCAs noted this was not a straightforward process. Stakeholders described the process as “rushed”, “chaotic”, and “people making decisions on the run”. Several stakeholders noted significant problems in SBA/SCA program design and implementation, including ambiguous program logic, and implementation within a very rushed timeline. One stakeholder with knowledge of the program design and implementation noted, [redacted]

[redacted]
Another noted, [redacted]
[redacted]

The accelerated timeframe for development and implementation led to uncertainty and confusion among many stakeholders about the primary goals and objectives of the SCAs. While reducing remand numbers seemed to be understood as a goal of the SCA project, there was a lack of understanding about how this could be achieved with only a few beds that initially were at the time being underutilised.

Poor program design and rapid implementation that resulted in underutilisation of the SBAs led in turn to a change in the model that increased the number of pathways to referral (see Section 4.1.2.7 of this report). The rapid deployment of the new model, however, was reported as having caused confusion in the lack of clear guidelines on eligibility, and particularly suitability criteria, as these were apparently also being changed either in principle or in application. Several DCSYW staff reported that in relation to some high-profile incidents regarding young people and the SBAs and SCAs, including negative media coverage of these incidents, the suitability criteria were increasingly being employed as a “risk assessment” tool. One DCSYW staff member explained that, in their experience, [redacted]

[redacted]
This left the SBA/SCA program with the problem that bail accommodation was, [redacted] It is apparent that up through the middle of 2018 there were high levels of uncertainty as to the overall goals, administration, and functioning of the SCAs.

Several interviewed stakeholders also noted the problem of the constantly changing model in terms of impacts on SCA service providers. Interviews with SCA managers and staff noted this created conflict with YJ staff over what exactly SCA staff were supposed to be doing. Some SCA staff, for example, were apparently told they could not let young people leave the house after curfew, even though SCA staff were legally unable to do so, and also not equipped to work with young people in any manner of restraint. Constant model changes also, according to interviews with SCA managers, resulted in some issues of staff turnover, costs associated with re-training staff, and other issues in the effective delivery of the service.

However, interviews with existing stakeholders – conducted up until the beginning of May, 2019 – also suggest that some of the problems above in terms of the implementation and administration of the SCAs are lessening. Several stakeholders noted that the model has remained consistent since the end of 2018, and this has allowed them to develop better working partnerships with other agencies, develop better practices to fit the existing model, and also to better see the existing gaps or limitations in the existing model.

4.1.2 Operation of SCA model across the four sites

In this section of the Final Report, we present several process evaluation criteria as set forth in the Table of Contents. Before moving to our assessment of these individual criterion, we make several points that apply across the board to the evaluation in this section regarding the operation of the SCA model across the four sites.

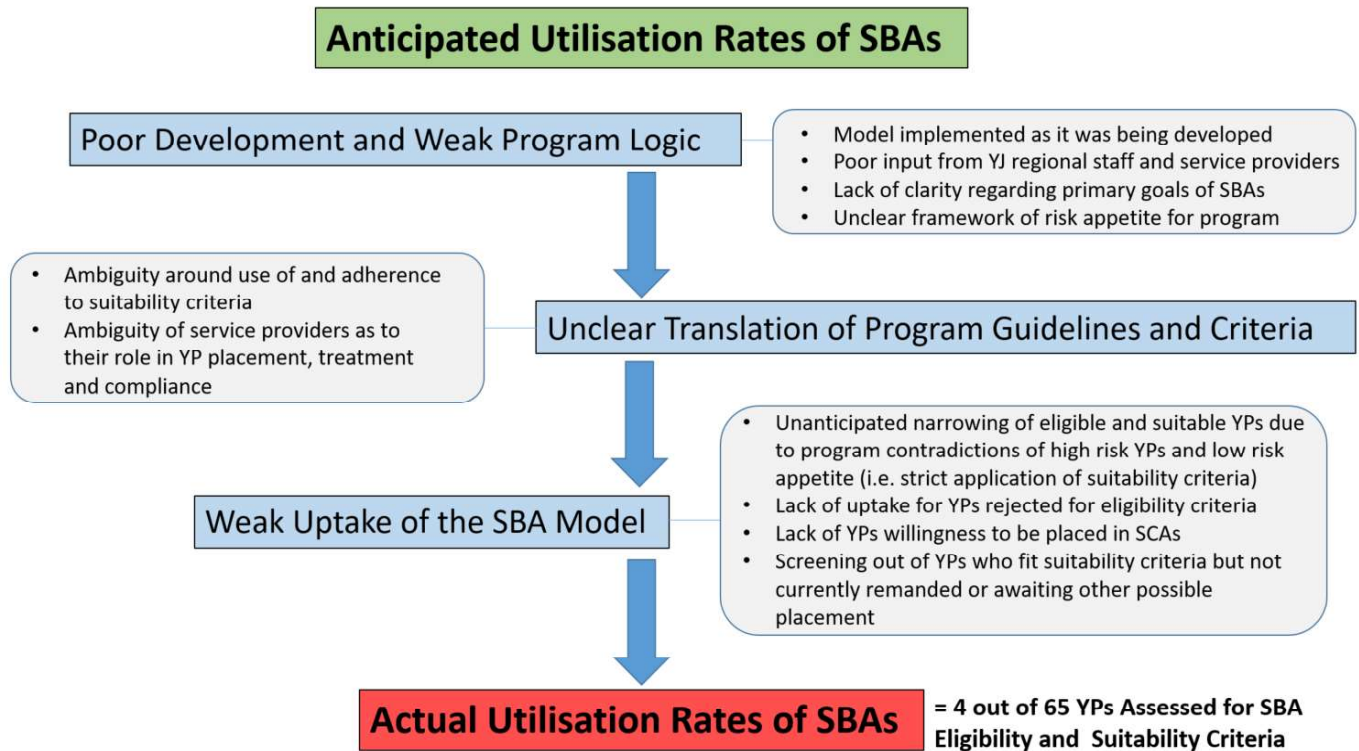
1. It is apparent that the Townsville SCAs operate with significant variation from the Logan area SCAs. Moreover, while there is more operational consistency between the two Logan area SCAs, there is also significant variation between the two Townsville SCAs.
2. This variation stems from a host of factors – different needs and cohorts of young people, different service providers, different set ups of the SCA houses, different utilisation of existing referral pathways – which are discussed in detail below. This variation has strengths and challenges, but on the whole the variation makes it difficult to evaluate the SCAs as a single consistent model across the four sites.
3. Following on the previous point, we have endeavoured as much as possible to evaluate process criteria taking into account these variations between SCA sites. As we discuss in the limitations section of this report, however, there is no standardized data collection tool or reporting instrument used by the SCAs and/or DCSYW. This lack of a standardized data collection bears more directly on analysis of outcome measures for young people in this Final Report (Section 4.2) than it does on this section. However, it also has bearing on several of the evaluation criterion in Section 4.1. We note these problems when relevant.

4.1.2.1 Key changes to the service model since establishment

In late 2017, the Queensland Government established the Supervised Bail Accommodation (SBA) program. The development of this program was driven in response to the 2016 *Youth Justice and other Legislation (Inclusion of 17-year-old-Persons) Amendment Act*, which moved 17-year-olds into the youth justice system in Queensland. As a result of the legislative change, there was concern that the move of 17-year-old offenders into the Youth Justice system would put significant pressure on the Youth Detention Centres in Queensland. Currently, detention centres in Queensland predominantly house young offenders who are remanded (not sentenced) in custody for an average duration of one month.

The SBA program in Townsville was initially established in late 2017 to provide community-based accommodation and supervision for young people as an alternative to being remanded in detention. Uptake to the SBAs in Townsville was slower than anticipated, however. Problems in uptake and utilization were related to three primary issues at different levels of the SBA program, namely 1) problems in implementation and program logic or design, leading to 2) ineffective translation of program guidelines and criteria from “the higher ups” to regional Youth Justice and SBA service providers, and 3) institutional contradictions “on the ground” as a result of the first two issues. In Box 4.1 below, we detail the downhill flow of these problems as they resulted in a lower rate of utilisation than anticipated.

Box 4.1



Source: DCSYW Rapid Field Appraisal, 2018

Interviews with Youth Justice staff were particularly fruitful in terms of elucidating the inherent problems in uptake and utilization of the SBAs. As one Youth Justice staff member explained,

This Final Report is an evaluation of the SCAs, not the SBAs. There are significant differences between the two in terms of referral processes and program design and delivery, discussed below. However, interviews with SCA stakeholders reported that many of the same problems regarding utilization, uptake, and lack of clarity and program logic remained when the program switched in mid-2018 to that of Supervised Community Accommodation.

A primary driver of this change in program model was the problem of underutilization. As a result of an internal review, the DCSWY worked with service providers to develop a more flexible model with expanded referral pathway. In early 2018, the title of the initiative changed from Supervised Bail Accommodation (SBA) to Supervised Community Accommodation (SCA) to reflect the expanded pathways into the service. These expanded pathways are listed in Box 1.1 (see Section 1 of this report).

The change in model from the SBAs to the SCAs had several impacts on the delivery of SCAs by DCSYW staff, in the types and cohorts of young people coming into the houses, and in the provision of services from the SCA service provider. Moreover, according to SCA managers, the model change from SBA to SCA was followed with smaller model “modifications” up through the end of 2018. We give attention to the impacts and effects of model changes as these relate to the specific criterion below.

4.1.2.2 Partnerships between SCAs, youth justice officers working out of the SCAs, local YJ service centres

Evaluation of the ongoing partnerships between SCAs, youth justice officers working out of the SCAs, and local YJ service centres suggests that – as of the delivery of this Final Report (May 2019) these partnerships are stabilizing and maturing. Interviews, discussions, and site visits of SCAs revealed several trends over time at all of the SCAs related to the ongoing growth and development of these partnerships, including:

- Unique factors in each SCA (cohorts, location, size, service provider) have in turn created variations in these ongoing partnerships. *No two SCAs work the same in terms of these partnerships.*
- Significant and widespread partnership issues or problems were reported by most stakeholders (i.e. DCSYW and SCA) as occurring from the beginning of the SCA model through to the end of 2018.
- Significant improvement and efficacy of partnerships has been reported by many stakeholders however, as the SCA model has stabilized.

Interviews with SCA staff, youth justice staff working out of the SCAs, and Youth Justice staff at local YJ service centres brought to light several key themes discussed by many stakeholders that seem to be working well in these partnerships. These are listed below and discussed in Table 2:

Table 2: Strengths in Partnership Between SCAs and DCSYW

Theme	Summary
Integrated case management between service providers and Youth Justice	Stakeholders who commented on case management noted relatively strong integration of case management between service providers and DCSYW. Some stakeholders noted this was strongest when YJ staff were on site regularly, noting that it not only allowed for seamless case management but proper division of program delivery roles between YJ program delivery for young people and SCA staff delivery of services for young people. However, some SCA stakeholders in Townsville noted problems of integrated case management with YJ regarding timeliness of receiving appropriate case data, and communication.
On-Site Partnerships between On-site YJ and SCAs	Stakeholders at the Logan area SCAs noted the daily presence of YJ staff on site was resulting in several benefits including clearer roles and responsibility between YJ and SCA staff, immediate consultation and community about cases and incidents, and more effective management and/or reduction of critical incidents.
Emerging Clarity in Partnership Roles and Responsibilities	DCSYW and SCA stakeholders noted ambiguity, confusion, and conflict about over clear roles and responsibilities in case management, management of incidents, and so on. SCA stakeholders also noted constant model changes or updates meant constantly changing roles and responsibilities. However, interviews also suggest that on the whole these roles and responsibilities have become clarified and stabilized to a greater degree since the end of 2018.

Interviews with SCA staff, youth justice staff working out of the SCAs, and Youth Justice staff at local YJ service centres also brought to light several key issues discussed by many stakeholders in terms of partnerships. These are listed below and discussed in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Issues in Partnership Between SCAs and DCSYW

Theme	Summary	Stakeholders Impacted	Problem Improving?
<p>Timeline of Program Implementation/ Goals and Objectives of SCAs</p>	<p>Stakeholders noted problems in SCA program design and implementation, including ambiguous program logic and implementation within rushed timeline. Many noted the problem of constantly changing model. SCA stakeholders noted problems understanding what they were supposed to be doing, staff training, etc. in relation to changing models. YJ staff stakeholders noted contradictory messages from higher ups regarding partnerships and role responsibilities in conjunction with SCA service providers.</p>	<p>All partners</p>	<p>Interviews with stakeholders suggest moderate improvement in Townsville SCAs and significant improvement in Logan area SCAs.</p>
<p>Eligibility, Suitability and Placement of Young People in the SCAs</p>	<p>Stakeholders noted problems with eligibility and suitability criteria, as well as placement decisions. SCA stakeholders noted being excluded from consultation regarding placements. YJ staff reported contradictory messages from higher ups to push for full utilisation while also getting pressure to moderate risk in determining suitability. Both SCA and YJ staff noted problems in effective screening and placement timeframes, resulting in beds not being filled, cases not being effectively shared between YJ and SCAs in a timely manner, and poor communication between partners.</p>	<p>Regional YJ, YJ on site at SCAs, SCA stakeholders</p>	<p>Interviews w/stakeholders suggest moderate improvement in Townsville SCAs and significant improvement in Logan area SCAs.</p>
<p>On-site Incidents and Behavioural Issues</p>	<p>SCA stakeholders identified three frequently reported problem areas: 1) SCA staff being asked to police or bring young people into compliance when they have no power or ability to do so; 2) SCA staff being asked to report incidents as they are happening while trying to manage incidents; and 3) lack of clear guidelines for SCA staff about critical incident reporting (i.e. "almost everything is a critical incident").</p>	<p>SCA stakeholders, in particular Townsville</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Transition Planning and/or Transition Case Management</p>	<p>Some young people from non-emergency referrals were reported to exit the SCAs abruptly, and with little information provided to the SCAs regarding transition services or decisions from DCSYW.</p>	<p>SCA stakeholders, in particular Townsville</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

4.1.2.3 Co-location of SCA staff and YJ staff

As of the writing of this Report, the two Logan area SCAs and the two Townsville SCAs evidence distinct co-locations between SCA and YJ staff. In the Logan area SCAs, YJ staff maintain a regular working-day presence at SCA facilities. In the two Townsville SCAs, YJ staff have an office but are not on site full-time during the working day.

The original SCA model called for YJ staff to maintain a regular working-day presence at all SCA sites. The changes in Townsville appear to have come as a result of several factors. Namely, the Townsville SCA facilities are relatively smaller than the Logan facilities, such that YJ staff in Townsville were occupying offices in or near the centre of the houses. This arrangement was deemed as less than suitable due to:

- the relatively high number of adults in the houses at any given time during the working day, which made the Townsville SCAs a less welcoming or therapeutic space for young people
- reported increased ambiguity or strain regarding the roles and functions of SCA and YJ staff working in close proximity to young people.

In contrast to the Townsville SCAs, the Logan area SCAs are larger houses, with sizable dedicated work-spaces away from the main living part of the houses for YJ staff. The SCA at Carbrook has a separate building for YJ staff, and the SCA at Logan has a bottom floor of the house not normally accessible to young people. As such, the YJ staff are able to be on site during normal hours without having to maintain a regular presence in the living spaces of the young people in the SCAs.

Interviews with SCA and YJ staff at all sites suggest that the overall current arrangements have evolved as the SCA models have been amended, and as the “growing pains” of a new program have matured. Nevertheless, it is apparent in our interviews and site-visits that each type of arrangement has its strengths and challenges. We list these below in Table 4.

Table 4: Strengths and Challenges of SCA and YJ Staff Co-location

	Strengths	Challenges
<p>YJ staff on site during working hours (Logan area)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong integrated case management between SCA and YJ staff • Strong sense of inclusion from SCA staff regarding young people placements and suitability • Good capacity of YJ staff to manage and/or assist with critical incidents • Clear division of roles and responsibility for program delivery from YJ and SCA staff groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some tension between YJ staff and SCA staff regarding the balance between justice program goals and therapeutic accommodation goals
<p>YJ staff on site intermittently (Townsville)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong sense of SCA staff to effectively deliver therapeutic components of SCA program • Necessary given layout of SCA houses for young people to feel “at home” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weaker sense of inclusion from SCA staff regarding young people placements and suitability assessments • Weaker integrated case management between SCA and YJ staff • Lessened capacity of YJ staff to manage and/or assist with critical incidents

4.1.2.4 Transition planning and case management

Data on transition planning and case management comes from interviews with SCA stakeholders (DCSYW and SCA management and staff), site visits to the SCAs, and DCSYW case manager case-write ups on the young people interviewed for this Final Report.

In the chart 4.1.2 below, we list key strengths and key challenges from our findings at every primary step of case management from referrals and screening, to intake and ongoing case management, to transition.

Chart 4.1.2: Key Strengths and Challenges of Case Management

Referrals, Screening, and Placement of Young People in SCAs	Intake of Young People in SCAs	Case Management of Young People in SCAs	Transition of Young People Out of the SCAs
<p>Key Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional/On-site YJ staff efficient at screening for eligible YPs Good referral mechanisms from court, short term, and community pathways Reported improvements in use of eligibility and suitability criteria Strong integration between regional and on-site YJ staff 	<p>Key Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication between YJ and SCAs regarding intake needs of YPs appears to be improving overall Smooth coordination of intake between YJ and SCA staff at Logan area SCAs Rapid needs assessment from SCAs able to be shared back to YJ case-workers 	<p>Key Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of health, mental health, and other YP needs by SCA providers to YJ case-workers Strong ongoing communication of case management in Logan area SCAs between YJ and SCA staff Reported improvement in case-management efficiency due to model stabilization 	<p>Key Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SCAs often able to coordinate transition support services to assist YJ with transition plans and follow-up provision of services In some cases, SCAs able to offer ongoing service provision in coordination with YJ post-transition
<p>Key Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often lengthy delays between referral, screening, and placement Lack of SCA input into determination of suitability Continued ambiguity about the suitability instrument Poor uptake of referral pathway from QPS 	<p>Key Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sometimes poor sharing of case intake information to SCAs from YJ in a timely manner (Townsville SCAs) – i.e. “managing risk after the fact” Placement of some YP not meeting eligibility criteria reported by SCAs 	<p>Key Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ambiguity and problems regarding SCA staff management and reporting of critical incidents and behavioural issues Low sharing of case information reported in some cases at the Townsville SCAs Unclear directives or role responsibilities of SCA staff from YJ 	<p>Key Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SCAs sometime not notified of transition until the day of Identification and utilization of post-transition support services (bail support, family support, drug and alcohol services, etc.) appears to be highly variable and may lack clear protocols or agency responsibility

4.1.2.5 Management of risks and incidents

Evaluation of management of risks and incidents comes from data provided to researchers from DCSYW on critical incidents, and interviews with DCSYW and SCA stakeholders. In this evaluation, much discussion and insight was given by stakeholders to perceived ongoing problems with the management of risks and incidents in the SCAs. This is due in part to the high level of media scrutiny that has occurred in the Townsville area regarding the SCAs. It is clear that both DCSYW and the SCA providers are impacted by this media scrutiny, and many of our stakeholder interviews reveal a profound organizational stress around balancing the goals of public safety and effective risk management with meeting the needs of young people who would otherwise be remanded to custody.

In this section, we present data from the Logan area SCAs on critical incidents. Following, we discuss several problems or challenges presented to us in our interviews with DCSYW and SCA stakeholders.

The data in Table 5 below comes from information maintained by the Logan SCAs. No critical incident data was available from the Townsville SCAs.

Table 5: Critical Incidents by SCA Locations

Location	Anglicare (Carbrook)	Anglicare (Logan Reserve)	Mission Australia	TAIHS	Total
Level 1 critical incident	50	69	n.a.	n.a.	119
Level 2 critical incident	3	0	n.a.	n.a.	3
Other critical incident	11	28	n.a.	n.a.	39
Total	64	97	n.a.	n.a.	161

Note: No incident data are available for the Townsville SCAs.

Table 5 illustrates a large majority of critical incidents that fall into the Level 1 (most serious) category, with only the remaining quarter of incidents falling into the Level 2 and “Other” categories. However, data also shows that a majority of these Level 1 critical incidents relate to absences of young people residing in the SCAs or young people leaving the SCAs without permission. Critical incidents that resulted in harms to other people, were a much smaller percentage of total critical incidents, with only one critical incident reported at Carbrook that involved violence (assault of a staff member), or total of less than one percent.

The following data from one of the SCAs is a typical description of a “Level 1 critical incident.”

Following on this, one of the most common themes expressed by a variety of DCSYW and SCA stakeholders was the problem of incident management. SCA staff explained they were under tremendous pressure at certain points to effectively police young people in the SCA, and to report critical incidents while they were occurring – in some cases being told they had to file a report while they were still trying to manage these incidents. DCSYW staff in turn explained to us that they were under tremendous pressure from higher up to receive reports of even very small incidents, and to manage or reduce incidents to the greatest degree possible. The overall sense we received from these situations was one of extreme stress. One stakeholder interviewed for this evaluation referred to the problems of “*ridiculous reporting requirements*” in relation to the management of critical incidents.

Without data from the Townsville SCAs on these incidents, it is not possible to compare their rates or types to Logan SCAs. This is important to assess these types of incidents in the Townsville SCAs. But it is also important because Townsville SCA stakeholders told researchers that not having YJ staff on site during normal business hours (see section 4.1.2.3 Co-location of SCA Staff and YJ Staff)

This was seen as less of a problem by Logan area SCA stakeholders, or rather these stakeholders were less focused on problems around managing critical incidents.

4.1.2.6 Appropriateness of facilities for the target group

All SCA facilities received comprehensive site visits from the researchers. Site visits included examination of SCA houses (including living areas, bedrooms, washrooms, and other areas), surrounding facilities, and outside areas. All SCA facilities were clean, well-maintained, and had well-furnished shared living spaces, individual bedrooms for young people, accessible and well-functioning kitchens, and clean bathrooms and washrooms. All SCAs had a variety of different artwork or other adornments – many of which were made by young people as part of their time at the SCAs. None of the SCAs felt institutional or lacking in a basic “homey” feel to the researchers. Compared to many other youth residential facilities reviewed by the researchers in their past experiences, the overall quality of accommodations towards providing a “home-like” setting for young people was exceptionally high.

During site visits, SCA staff were present in or around the facilities. Observed interactions between SCA staff and young people were comfortable and, in some cases, familiar between SCA staff and young people in terms of banter, jokes, or SCA staff reminding young people about things they needed to do. On several visits at the Townsville SCAs, SCA staff were coming or going from taking young people for family visits. On several of the site visits as well, outside service providers for health, mental health, or other services were present at the SCAs.

Interviews with young people found that all interviewees [n=8] agreed that the SCAs provided safe, secure and stable accommodation. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Interviews with SCA staff affirmed that all SCA are fully staffed 24/7.

Several interviews with young people also found mention of their use and enjoyment of on-site recreational facilities or activities. On-site visits affirmed a wide variety of recreational and/or therapeutic activities appropriate for the ages of the young people in the SCAs. These included various physical-fitness activities (basketball hoops, fitness equipment, etc.); fruit and vegetable gardens used by young people in conjunction with SCA staff; art, music, and other creative activities; and leisure activities such as table tennis. However, as we note elsewhere in this evaluation, only [REDACTED] of our interviews included a young person from the Logan area SCAs, so the majority of responses about safety, suitability, and appropriateness of SCAs came from young people who had been in the Townsville SCAs.

Figure 1: Pictures from some of the SCA common areas



4.1.2.7 Referral pathways

Below we provide data on the referral pathways for young people to the SCAs. A large proportion of referrals across the four SCA sites are community referrals (i.e., “Crisis or long-term referrals for young people subject to Youth Justice Orders. These referrals are mainly sourced from YJ Service Centres” (p.8 Interim Report). However, when looking at the SCAs separately, it is clear the two Townsville SCAs received a large proportion of emergency referrals compared to the Logan area SCAs. In fact, there were no emergency referrals to the two Logan SCAs. What is also evident is that, while the Queensland Police Service staff are able to make referrals to the SCAs, there has been only 1 QPS referral since commencement of the SCAs, and this was to the [redacted] SCA. These differences in referral pathways for the SCAs have implications for the overall strengths and challenges of the SCA model, which we discuss in more detail in below.

Table 6: Location by Referral Type¹

Location	Anglicare (Carbrook)	Anglicare (Logan Reserve)	Mission Australia	TAIHS	Total
Community					41 (44%)
Court					22 (24%)
Emergency					29 (31%)
QPS					1 (0.01%)
Total	17	15	29	32	93

¹ Row percentages are reported.

Source: Regional Spreadsheets supplied by Youth Justice staff

As we note above, there is marked variation in the length of stay for SCA residents across the four sites. This is largely due to the high proportion of “emergency” referrals at the two Townsville sites (31%). Both of the Townsville sites accepted a similar proportion of emergency referrals: 52% at [redacted] and 48% at [redacted].

The average duration of stay for young people across the four sites is 28 nights. There is much more variation in stay duration at the Townsville sites compared to the Logan sites. For example, the average duration of stay at the Townsville sites is 21 nights (median = 3.5 nights). The average duration for the Logan sites is about 21 nights longer: Carbrook mean = 43 nights (median=42); Logan Reserve mean = 39 nights (median = 31).

These differences are related to several factors in the variation between the Townsville and Logan area SCAs. The two most notable variations in relation to referral pathways appear to be related to 1) differing cohorts of young people who are referred to SCAs and, 2) differing rates of utilization by referral type, with the Logan area SCAs servicing a larger youth justice population and in turn able to draw more extensively from court or community referral pathways.

Both DCSYW data and our research find that the Townsville SCAs are currently assisting young people who have a wide variation in needs and limited placement opportunities. Placements range in these SCAs from one day to over ten months, for the reason that initial utilization of the SBAs in Townsville was low, and that expanded referral pathways have been judiciously utilized for emergency placements as well as for longer term placements of several months in cases where young people are unable to transition into safe housing.

Alternatively, interviews with Logan DCSYW staff indicate that referrals for the Carbrook facility are particularly high, allowing DCSYW staff to apply eligibility and suitability criteria more robustly in terms of program adherence to a “six-week” model of transition, resulting in almost no use of these SCAs for emergency placements, low use for longer term accommodation, and far less variance in length of stay.

The variation in referral pathways presents a complex situation where, on the one hand, individual SCAs are able to respond more flexibly and immediately to the placement and social service needs of eligible young people, but on the other hand results in a very low level of standardization of program design and delivery across the four SCA sites.

Table 7: Strengths and Challenges of Referral Pathways

	Strengths	Challenges
High Variation in Referral Pathways (i.e. Townsville SCAs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High flexibility to meet complex needs of eligible young people • Delivery of comprehensive services to young people unable to find suitable housing after six weeks • Increased utilization of SCAs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variation in SCA initial “six-week” program model • Increased casework for SCA/DCSWY staff • Limited time to work with many young people • Rapid turnover of placements may be disruptive to SCA environment
Low Variation in Referral Pathways (i.e. Logan SCAs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher adherence to SCA initial “six-week” program model • Increased ability of DCSYW/SCA staff to work within a clearer transition framework for young people • Increased demarcation of role and responsibilities for DCSYW and SCA staff • Less turnover of placements may be more conducive to stable SCA environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less flexibility in cases where young people might not have suitable transition placement

4.1.3 Model appropriateness for young people in SCAs

4.1.3.1 Demographic characteristics of young people referred to the SCAs

Age

There is similarity in the age distribution among offenders residing in the four SCAs. The average age is 15 years with very little variation in ages. This lack of variation very likely stems from the eligibility and suitability requirements for referrals into the SCAs.

Table 8: Age by Location

SCA Location	Average age of SCA resident
Carbrook	16
Logan Reserve	15
Mission Australia	15
TAIHS	15

Note: Distinct young people.
Sources: Sources: Data extracted from Integrated Client Management System (ICMS) and regional spreadsheets provided by YJ staff. Accurate as at 31 March 2019.

Gender

The majority of the SCA referrals are for males (excluding Logan Reserve, which only houses female young people). Over two thirds of referrals across the four SCA sites have been for males. This approximates the classic 80/20 split in male/female offending patterns known from the criminology literature on gender and crime.

Table 9: Gender by Location

	Male	Female
Carbrook (Anglicare – males only)	20	0
Logan Reserve (Anglicare – females only)	0	13
[] (Townsville – Mission Australia)	18	11
[] (Townsville – TAIHS)	29	4
Total (N=95)	67 (71%)	28 (29%)

Note: Distinct young people.
Sources: Data extracted from Integrated Client Management System (ICMS) and regional spreadsheets provided by YJ staff. Accurate as at 31 March 2019.

Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

A majority (75%) of young people in the SCA identify as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, or both. This number is higher for the Townsville area SCAs at 90.3%. In other sections of this Final Report, we discuss the implications in the high number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people in the SCAs, including specific needs of these young people, challenges faced by these young people in the SCAs, available services and programs in the SCAs, and what the SCAs are doing well and not doing well for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people.

Table 10: Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

Location	Anglicare (Carbrook)	Anglicare (Logan Reserve)	Mission Australia	TAIHS	All SCAs
Indigenous	9 (45%)	6 (46%)	26(90%)	30 (91%)	71 (75%)
Non-indigenous	11 (55%)	7 (54%)	3 (10%)	3 (9%)	24 (25%)
Total	20	13	29	33	95

Sources: Data extracted from Integrated Client Management System (ICMS) and regional spreadsheets provided by YJ staff. Accurate as at 31 March 2019.

4.1.3.2 Types of assistance/programs accessed by young people

Data on our evaluation of types of assistance/programs accessed by young people in the SCAs comes from interviews of SCA stakeholders, interviews with young people, and case notes provided by DCSYW. Table 11 below lists the types of assistance and/or programs received by the young people who were interviewed for this evaluation.

Table 11: Types of Assistance/Programs Accessed by Young People in the SCAs

	Allie	David	Jake	Mary	Michael	Ryan	Sam	Simon
Long-Term Accommodation								
Support With Family Engagement								
Health, Mental Health, Disability Services, and Drug and Alcohol Services								
Educational Engagement								
Support with Employment or Job Training								
Connecting to Country or Cultural Services								
Development of Independent Living Skills								
Transition Services								
Connection to Post-Transition Social Services								

Note: Pseudonyms were used for all young people interviewed

Interviews with SCA stakeholders suggests that other types of services or programs were also made available to young people in the SCAs. These services included many types of general assistance activities – helping young people fill out forms for Centrelink, helping with resumes and job interview preparation, and so on. Also, interviews with both SCA staff and young people suggest in some cases a fairly comprehensive level of focus on what might be called informal therapeutic practices – conversations about how to stay out of trouble and make better decisions, about family issues, about goals and how to focus to begin to achieve these. Several of the young people interviewed for this evaluation noted a positive environment created by staff at SCAs, with focus on engagement in prosocial activities and relationships.

4.1.3.3 Service delivery gaps

Evaluation of potential service delivery gaps come from interviews with DCSYW and SCA stakeholders, as well as data collected during site visits of the SCAs.

On the whole, it appears that the SCAs are delivering a high number of services to young people who are in the SCAs (see section 4.1.3.2 of the Final Report). However, we note two “gaps” or challenges that many stakeholders brought to our attention.

The first of these is a gap in transition services and/or notifications to service providers regarding young people leaving the SCAs. SCA stakeholders noted that in some cases they had not received notification of young people leaving the SCAs (from non-emergency referral pathways) in a timely manner – i.e. notified the day prior or day of leaving the SCA. This may or may not be a problem in the delivery of transition services from YJ, since these SCA stakeholders only noted in some cases they did not receive information in order to be able to assist young people with transition services provided by the SCAs. At minimum, however, it suggests that case management regarding transitions for non-emergency referral pathways might be reviewed in order to ensure timely notification of transition (to the

degree possible) from YJ to the SCAs.

The second “gap” that was evident was the ongoing and persistent problem discussed with researchers numerous times regarding the prevalence and negative impact that serious drug use, in particular methamphetamine use, is having on the young people in the SCAs. Several SCA staff reported that at some points in time young people in the SCA houses are using Ice on a daily basis, and this has been corroborated in interviews with YJ staff. While SCAs are able to offer access to drug and alcohol counselling services, they are not detox or residential drug treatment programs, and lack the necessary services to deal effectively with serious or chronic substance abuse issues. It appears that in some cases, however, due to the lack of suitable drug and alcohol treatment facilities for young people in Queensland, the SCAs in some cases are being used as de facto treatment facilities, even when YJ staff have requested that young people be returned to custody.

4.1.4 Model appropriateness for cultural needs of young people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strait backgrounds?

Data for our evaluation of the appropriateness of the model in meeting the cultural needs of young people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds comes from interviews with DCSYW and SCA stakeholders, interviews with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander SCA staff members, and interviews with young people. Model appropriateness for these young people is a vital question not only because of the well documented challenges facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in Australia (see Review of Literature in this Report), but also for the equally problematic continued overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in Australia’s and Queensland’s Youth Justice systems and custodial placement facilities. More prosaically, evaluation of the cultural appropriateness of the model is vital to this report given that 75% of young people who have been placed in the SCAs since their inception have identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

In our evaluation of model appropriateness, we sought to gain knowledge on several key issues, including:

- The needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the SCAs
- Challenges facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the SCAs
- The availability of culturally appropriate services, programs and community relationships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the SCAs
- What aspects of the SCAs may be working well for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the SCAs
- What aspects of the SCAs may need improvement or be lacking for the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the SCAs.

We summarise our findings in Table 12 below:

Table 12: Needs, Risks, and Services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young People in the SCAs

Themes	Summary of Findings
Needs of Young People in the SCAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop positive family and community relationships • Access to culturally appropriate programs and historic knowledge • SCA and YJ staff delivering on promises to young people
Challenges Facing Young People in the SCAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of governance and funding for appropriate cultural activities and programs • Overcoming young people's distrust of non-Indigenous authority figures and people • Helping young people and their families connect with their culture within communities • Lack of cultural awareness by some SCA workers; currently a culturally capability framework has not been made available • Culturally insensitive criminal justice system (CJS) responses to young people offences, particularly in relation to bail conditions • Limiting YPs access to negative peer influences
Services and Programs for Young People in the SCAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On country programs • Young Black and Proud • Independently run cultural programs operated and run by SCA staff
What is Working Best for Young People in the SCAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive relationships between SCA staff and young people • Helping young people engage with their families through strength-based approaches and achieve their goals • Building community relationships • Some Elder engagement with young people
What the SCAs Need to do Better for Young People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop more cultural programs to meet the needs of young people • Several stakeholders noted that the SCA locations in Townsville present particular problems for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in terms of accessibility to negative peer influences. Limiting access to these influences was set forth as one important mechanism to improve the success of these young people.
Other Important Issues Raised by Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural differences between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers and mainstream government agencies • Youth Justice needs to engage with community members and Elders prior to implementation of programs, and not expect that Elders will just support programs The SCAs had to overcome initial resistance from community members and Elders who were not consulted prior to SCAs being operationalised.

Stakeholders felt that the most important need of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people was to engage in positive interactions and relationships with their families and their communities. They explained that some young people were not aware of or connected to their own cultural backgrounds, and that young people and their communities needed a greater understanding of this cultural history as well as connection to and support from Elders and community members.

Interviews with stakeholders found inconsistent delivery or availability of such programs or activities. We also found some confusion by stakeholders as to agreements between SCAs and DCSYW as to the delivery and funding for such programs, and problems in the Logan area SCAs especially related to identifying and including appropriate Elders or relevant on country and cultural groups in the initial establishment of these houses. However, more recent work in the Logan area SCAs demonstrates a significant improvement to these problems. On-ground work by DCSYW staff has provided more consistent delivery of appropriate country and cultural programs and activities to young people, and staff have also been able to locate and secure the involvement of appropriate Elders for the land, and bring Elders into relationship with the young people in the SCAs.

Another challenge identified by stakeholders related to culturally inappropriate CJS responses to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander offending by young people. For instance, bail conditions which restrict young people from returning to their families can be traumatic, [REDACTED]

Alternative solutions, such as having young people “walk to Country”, were proposed by some stakeholders in lieu of holding young people in watch houses during weekends. Removing young people from watch houses in towns may also help to limit their engagement with negative peer influences. One participant expressed that the SCA locations are too close to the town already, which increases the ability of young people to access town and delinquent peers.

The cultural differences between Indigenous service providers and mainstream government agencies was identified as a barrier to work practices. Participants cautioned that SCAs need to operate differently from government agencies in order to meet the needs of young people. For instance, answering telephone calls is less important to SCAs who are engaging with young people, although this was viewed as a source of frustration for Youth Justice. Another cultural barrier to work practices related to the lack of cultural information obtained by Youth Justice when referring young people to SCAs. More information about the cultural background of young people would assist in the SCAs engagement with young people. Participants also noted that they have had to overcome resistance from Elders within communities who felt they were not adequately consulted prior to the development and implementation of the SCA services, and that some Elders who were consulted were not from the communities where SCAs are located.

In spite of these issues, the SCAs are having some positive outcomes in terms of building supportive relationships between young people and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff at the SCAs, as well as the involvement of some Elders. We discuss the experiences and perspectives of young people further on this issue in Section 4.2.1.3.

4.1.5 Appropriateness of eligibility and suitability criteria

Data on the evaluation of the eligibility and suitability criteria came from interviews with DCSYW and SCA stakeholders.

As noted earlier, young people who are referred to the SCA through one of the referral pathways (police, court, community or emergency) are screened first for eligibility. If it is determined that a young person is eligible for admission to an SCA, then the young person

is screened for suitability. The following eligibility and suitability criteria are used.

Eligibility Criteria

- Aged between 14 and 17 years at time of referral.
- Young person is (or identifies as) the same gender as other residents accommodated in the service (for South-East Queensland only).
- Young person will otherwise be (or currently is) remanded in custody (for South-East Queensland only) or is subject to Youth Justice Intervention.
- The young person usually resides and is expecting to reside within the geographic catchment of the service.
- The young person is willing to be bailed to the SCA with a Conditional Bail Program or with conditions to comply with Youth Justice directions and has no disqualifying bail conditions (e.g. association with another resident).
- The young person is willing to abide by house rules.

Suitability Criteria

- There must be a bedroom available for the young person within the SCA.
- The young person must be placed on a Conditional Bail Program OR bail that includes following directions of Youth Justice and have no disqualifying bail conditions (e.g. association with another resident).
- Young people who have acute mental health, suicide ideations or sexualised behaviours or have committed very violent offences are not likely to receive appropriate supports and unlikely to be suitable for the SCA, however assessments can still be completed.
- Young people on a Child Protection Order can be accommodated at the service as long as they are assessed as being eligible and suitable. An SCA is not to take the place of Child Safety sourcing more appropriate accommodation for the young person, and time constraints of the SCA still apply to dual order clients.
- The SCA service provider cannot refuse a young person who has been bailed to the service by the court. However, Youth Justice should undertake all measures to ensure as much information is provided to the SCA provider as quickly as possible and do their best to represent the united views of the SCA provider and Youth Justice to the Court.
- Youth Justice will not offer the possibility of a placement at SCA in court unless we can immediately and safely accommodate the young person (i.e. the young person is assessed as suitable and there is an available bed).

Several key stakeholders involved in the assessment of young people for placement in the SCAs and/or in SCA service delivery expressed concerns about these eligibility and suitability criteria. One key concern reported to us was that the suitability criteria in particular are perhaps being too strictly applied, such that a range of young people are being screened out who otherwise could have been offered a place in one of the SCAs. One stakeholder remarked:

Other stakeholders noted that in their estimation the suitability placement tool had taken on the form of a risk assessment tool.

Others stakeholders also noted pressures or changes in the use of the suitability assessment as a means to maintain a “*low risk appetite*” for placement of higher-risk young people, while relaxing criteria around issues such as alcohol or drug problems as a means of addressing the pressure from “*higher ups*” to fully utilize placement. This appears not to have been a deliberate strategy, but rather an outcome related to conflicting pressures and unclear training as to the purpose and goals of the suitability criteria. As illustrated, one stakeholder noted:

[REDACTED]

A few stakeholders observed that some of the eligibility criteria provide obstacles to otherwise suitable placements. One example is the requirement that a young person resides in the catchment area of the SCAs, which reduces the number of young people who are eligible for placements. SCA providers in both the Logan and Townsville catchment areas suggested they have capacity to service young people beyond these current areas. Another reported obstacle is the age criteria (young person must be 14-17 years at time of referral). In fact, we were made aware of at least one example where emergency placements or other placements resulted in young people below the age of 14 being placed in the SCAs.

In interviews with SCA providers, there also was observation they should be more closely involved in the assessments of young people referred to the SCAs. As we note elsewhere in this report, this was more of an issue in the Townsville SCAs than in the Logan area SCAs, likely for the reason that the Logan area SCAs have YJ staff on-site during regular hours. One SCA stakeholder noted that service providers must rely on YJ staff assessments, which may identify many young people as high risk when SCA staff may have a different view given their professional experience. [REDACTED]

Another stakeholder commented: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. It was also noted in interviews with the Mission Australia SCA in Townsville that a previous model of bail accommodation delivery in conjunction with YJ allowed for shared assessments of placement, and that in the experience of these staff the previous model had worked better in terms of placements and outcomes.

4.2 Outcomes

4.2.1 Short to medium term outcomes achieved for young people in SCAs

4.2.1.1 Access to safe accommodation

Assessment of safe accommodation for young people in the SCAs was assessed from interviews with young people [see Appendix 8], from interviews with YJ and SCA staff, and from case data provided to the researchers by DCSYW.

Interviews with young people (n=8) found that all young people reported feeling safe, at all times, in the SCAs. As noted elsewhere in this report, the majority of interviews [REDACTED] were conducted with young people who had been in one of the two Townsville SCAs. As such, our ability to report on young people's perceptions of safety for the Logan area SCAs is lower than in the Townsville SCAs.

Interviews with SCA and YJ staff reported few incidents that were problematic in terms of the safety to young people from other young people, from staff, or from outside persons. Researchers are aware that interviews may not effectively yield disclosure of such incidents. SCA and YJ staff did discuss with researchers some incidents where young people were self-harming while in the SCAs, although reported incidents were low and to our knowledge these incidents were effectively managed by on-site staff and/or in consultation with health professionals.

In this respect, as we have noted elsewhere in this Report, many young people in the SCAs face significant drug and alcohol, mental health (including histories of abuse and trauma), family, and social problems that effectively function as a clustering of needs and risks. Our

interviews with young people, with SCA and YJ staff, site visits, and data from DCSYW leads us to conclude that on the whole, most young people in the SCAs experience these as safe environments, and preferable to the environments in youth detention facilities (for young people who had spent time in custodial facilities).

4.2.1.2 Reengagement with families

One of the primary goals of the SCAs is to help young people reengage with family, education, work, and community as a means of helping them move into prosocial behaviours and activities, as well helping them to transition into suitable and stable accommodation following their involvement with the SCAs.

Evaluation of the reengagement of young people is based on data from interviews with YJ and SCA stakeholders, and from interviews with young people themselves.

Interview and site visits of the SCAs suggested that reconnection with family was a priority for these service providers. This was supported by data from interviews with young people, where six of eight young people interviewed reported positive engagement with their families during their time in the SCAs, and five reported going back to their families following the SCAs [redacted]. This was also supported in interviews with SCA staff that reported family connection and/or visits were regular for a majority of young people in the SCAs. On site visits to the Townsville SCAs, young people were regularly being dropped off or picked up from family visits. Also, it should be noted that in cases where there was no family re-engagement with the young people interviewed for this evaluation, this was due to existing reluctance from young people to see their families and/or ongoing family problems that made re-engagement not possible.

A final note about family reengagement is the question to which the SCAs have not only helped young people reconnect with their families, but also the degree to which they have involved families in the support necessary for successful transition out of the SCAs. Interviews with the Townsville SCAs suggest this has been difficult, with one SCA worker noting that they [i.e. the SCA] are good at getting young people to their families, but they need to be able to better engage *with* the families to involve them in transition support and goals, and also with post-SCA social services. Nevertheless, at the same time we were also made aware of a few cases which came up in conversations with SCA staff where young people were continued to be supported by the SCAs larger service provider (i.e. Anglicare, Mission, and Townsville Aboriginal and Islander Health) for counselling and support services following placement back with their families.

Interviews with the Logan area SCA on-site YJ staff, in particular Carbrook, suggest that YJ staff have been able to achieve some inroads into family engagement. One YJ case worker reported having extended conversations with the family members of some young people regarding transition plans and support, as well as involving bail support and/or family support services to help with this transition. YJ and SCA staff at Logan Reserve also gave examples of helping to coordinate young people transition back to family with bail support or family support services.

Perspectives of Young People

Interviews with young people found that seven of the eight young people reported positive connections with family during or following their time in the SCAs (see Appendix Case Studies). Several young people also reported successful transition back to their families after they exited the SCAs. Table 13 below lists the outcomes of young people interviewed in relation to their reconnection with family.

Table 13: Young People Reports of Family Connections and/or Transition to Family Placement

Name	Regular Family Connection or Visits while in SCA	SCA Helped with Family Connections?	Transition back to Family after SCA
Simon			
Mary			
Ryan			
Sam			
David			
Michael			
Jake			
Allie			

Note. The names of young people have been removed and replaced with pseudonyms.

4.2.1.3 Connections with Elders and the community

This section of our evaluation should be read closely in conjunction with section 4.1.4. In this section, we present the perspectives of young people in terms of their connections with Elders, and on country and cultural activities and programs in the SCAs.

Perspectives of Young People in the SCAs

4.2.1.4 Reoffending of young people following the SCAs

Data on reoffending were obtained from the DCSYW's ICMS system. These data included details for offences committed after a period of residence in one of the SCAs.

In our presentation of these data, we note that the overall use and usefulness of such data as an indicator of successful outcomes for young people in SCAs is limited, for several reasons. Primarily, data on reoffending cannot adequately measure the impact on reoffending as an alternative to custodial placement without a sufficient number of cases from each to achieve statistical power. Given the low numbers of young people in the SCAs, and the need to match the demographic, offence type and number, and case history characteristics of these young people against similar cases in detention, at this time it is not possible to achieve such matched comparisons with any reasonable level of statistical significance.

Also, while it is important to ascertain impacts on reoffending for young people after leaving the SCAs, particularly as these may impact public safety or the safety of the young person, the SCAs were not devised primarily as a crime reduction strategy. Rather, SCAs were designed as a comprehensive "wrap around" residential alternative for youth offenders who would otherwise be remanded to custody. By the nature of this population, many of these young people come into the SCAs with high needs, significant health or mental health problems, disadvantaged backgrounds, and very high levels of being victimized themselves. In this respect, given the average age of young people in the SCAs (15 years old), and the characteristics of the young people coming into SCAs, focus should be primarily given to viewing these young people as children in need of significant social, health and mental health, and other support services that existing research demonstrates has long term positive and cost-effective impacts across many aspects of the life course.

Finally, we note a primary function of the SCAs is not long-term residential placement for behavioural modification, but rather to serve as a type of "transitional" placement where eligible and suitable young people are able to transition to secure and stable environments. It is thus not realistic to expect that in the several weeks most young people spend in the SCAs that they fundamentally transform into pro-social behaviours. Rather, as we discuss elsewhere in this Final Report, one of the primary strengths of the SCAs for young people who appear to do well is to help these young people identify clear transition goals; align them with necessary health, social, and education or job placement services, and help follow through with these goals and services from external agencies upon their release from the SCA.

Of the 95 distinct young people residing in the SCAs since the commencement of operation to 31 March 2019, 80 have committed at least one offence post-SCA. While it is not possible to report on the level of desistance of young people who resided in the SCAs because data contained in separate files are not linked, we can report that the level of reoffending for at least half of the young people residing in the SCAs is 9 (median) offences per young person. Because offence distributions are typically positively skewed, it is more appropriate to report the median number of offences, which is not inflated by extremely high values.

The most common type of reoffending was property related with 69% of post-SCA offences falling into this category. Less than 10% of post-SCA offences were violent in nature.

Table 14: Average and Median Reoffending by SCA Location

Location	Anglicare (Carbrook)	Anglicare (Logan Reserve)	Mission Australia	TAIHS	All SCAs
Average number of re-offences	18	11	11	14	14
Median number of re-offences	7	7.5	9	14	9

Note: If a young person resided in the SCAs multiple times the number of re-offences after their first stay is used in the calculation.

5.0 Discussion of Evaluation Conclusions

5.1 What is working well with the SCAs

Summary	
<p>Quality of SCA Service Provider Delivery of Services to Young People</p>	<p>Overall the SCAs are providing a high level of service to young people in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term safe and stable accommodation in a home-like environment • Significant health, mental health, disability, and drug and alcohol services in a “wrap around” framework • Significant support for reengagement with families, when possible • Reengagement with educational programs • Engagement with employment and/or job training • Development of independent living skills • Some access to transitional services • Involvement in prosocial activities.
<p>Experiences of Young People in the SCAs</p>	<p>On the whole, young people found the SCAs to be supportive and useful in the delivery of services, in providing stable home-like setting, and in helping young people to transition back to their families or to independent living. Most young people reported several positive things about the SCA from their perspectives, and no young people that were interviewed noted significant problems or issues with staff or availability of services.</p>
<p>Quality and Appropriateness of SCA facilities</p>	<p>SCA facilities are clean, well-maintained, with shared living spaces, individual bedrooms for young people, accessible and well-functioning kitchens, and clean bathrooms and washrooms and function well to provide a “home- like” setting for young people.</p>
<p>Case Management</p>	<p>Evidence suggests relatively strong integration of case management between Youth Justice staff and SCA service providers. This was particularly evident at the Logan area SCAs, where YJ staff were on site during regular business hours, noting that it not only allowed for seamless case management but proper division of program delivery roles between YJ and service providers.</p>
<p>Referral Process</p>	<p>Identification of eligible young people for the SCAs seems to be working well. One exception to this is the low number of referrals from QPS.</p>
<p>Model Stability</p>	<p>Our evaluation finds that repeated changes in the administration and implementation of the SBA/SCA model was highly disruptive to the effective delivery of SCA programs. Our evaluation also concludes, however, that most stakeholders and especially the SCA providers have noted improvements in service delivery with stabilization of the SCA model.</p>

5.2 Existing Challenges in the SCAs

Summary	
Timeline of Program Implementation/Goals and Objectives of SCAs	Evaluation of the SCA program design and implementation found the program logic was ambitious in its scope and that program implementation occurred within a very rushed timeline. Many stakeholders noted the problem of the constantly changing model. SCA stakeholders noted problems in understanding what they were supposed to be doing in relation to changing models (e.g. staff training). However, as noted in the summary of strengths in this section of the Final Report, the SCA model appears to be stabilizing resulting in clearer program understanding and subsequent delivery of services by SCAs.
Eligibility/Suitability Criteria	Current eligibility criteria may be restricting full utilisation of the SCAs. Also, there is high stakeholder agreement that the suitability criteria have not been working well. There is a wide perception that decision-makers who determine suitability are “risk adverse” and many young people who are otherwise eligible are being screened out. There is also wide agreement that the strict application of these criteria is a primary factor in the underutilisation of SCA capacity.
On-site Incidents and Behavioural Issues	Incidents and behavioural issues around bail orders and/or SCA house rules are an ongoing issue in the SCAs. Four primary problems mentioned by stakeholders were: 1) breaches of bail not being dealt with seriously enough [redacted] 2) ambiguity about enforcement and management of SCA “house rules,”; 3) lack of clarity or protocol about how on-site YJ staff and/or SCA staff are supposed to manage incidents; and 4) lack of YJ staff ability to refer young people back to court for serious or repeated breaches of bail conditions.
Delivery of on County and Cultural Programs and Involvement of Community Stakeholders	Delivery and availability of culturally appropriate services and programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people has been positive for young people when delivered, but inconsistent in delivery and availability. Young people report some involvement with culturally appropriate activities and Elders, which is encouraging. However, securing Elder involvement and support for SCAs has been problematic, although recent efforts at the Carbrook SCA demonstrate better outcomes towards these goals. Also, DCSYW currently does not have a cultural capability framework in place for the SCAs.
Transition Support and/or Case Management for Young People Leaving the SCAs	SCA stakeholders noted that in some cases, they have not received notification of young people leaving the SCAs (from non-emergency referral pathways) in a timely manner. This may or may not be a problem in the delivery of transition services from YJ, since these SCA stakeholders only noted in some cases they did not receive timely information in order to assist young people with transition services provided by the SCAs. However, it does suggest ongoing room for improvement in integrated case management for transitions.

5.3 The Perspectives of Young People on the SCAs

5.3.1 Overview

Eight young people from the Townsville and Logan SCAs were interviewed by GCI researchers (n=5) and/or DCSYW staff (n=3). [REDACTED]

Ethics approval was obtained from the Townsville Hospital and Health Service (THHS) Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) to interview the young people, as well as from Griffith University HREC.

Interviews focused on several aspects of the young people's experiences in the SCAs, including:

- what services they engaged with
- whether they felt safe and supported
- whether the SCA helped them reconnect with family, when possible
- what they found most and least helpful about the SCAs
- whether the SCAs helped them connect or reconnect with helpful on country or cultural activities and relationships
- whether they felt the SCAs had helped them comply with bail conditions or supervision orders.

Interviews with young people not currently residing in SCAs at the time of interview (n=7) also asked questions about their experiences following the SCA, including:

- whether the SCAs had helped them transition into stable and suitable living situations
- whether the SCAs had helped them achieve other transition goals such as employment, education, or continued access to social services.

Case studies were prepared based on the young person's interview, administrative data from ICMS-YJ, and reflections from Youth Justice case workers. The case studies provided in-depth examples of the social, educational and criminogenic outcomes achieved by the young people while they were supported by the SCAs. All case studies have been anonymised and prepared with the consent of the young people.

5.3.2 Characteristics of Young People Interviewed

5.3.3 Key Themes

A summary of the key themes from the interviews and case studies is provided below.

Table 15: Key Themes from Interviews and Case Studies

Key Themes	Examples and Quotes
<p>Good relationships with staff were important to the young people.</p>	
<p>The young people appreciated being busy and participating in activities (i.e. structured environment).</p>	
<p>The provision of wrap around services was helpful and appreciated.</p>	
<p>Young people appreciated learning new skills.</p>	

<p>The SCAs helped the young people to identify and achieve some of their goals.</p>	
<p>The young people required transitional support when they exited the SCAs.</p>	
<p>The young people appreciated the assistance of the SCAs in reconnecting with their families.</p>	
<p>Young people valued having access to cultural programs or connections.</p>	

5.3.4 Outcomes Achieved

--

5.3.5 Challenges



6.0 Identified Areas of Ongoing Improvement

Issues	Summary
<p>Stronger Articulation of Primary SCA Purpose and Goals, followed with Appropriate Realignment of SCA Service Delivery</p>	<p>Ambiguous or conflicting goals of the SCAs remain a challenge. Specifically, the following issues should be addressed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At current numbers, SCAs have little impact on overall remand rates. SCAs must either be expanded to have impact on remand rates, or re-aligned with other primary goals such as their ability to deliver high-level “wrap around” services in a therapeutic environment for young people. • Noting the problems of constant model changes discussed throughout this evaluation, any new articulation or refinement of purpose and goals should be first examined and vetted in terms of program logic, institutional capacity, and medium- and long-term viability.
<p>Re-evaluation of Suitability Criteria and Placement</p>	<p>Criteria need to be re-evaluated regarding the high number of young people being screened out. Some stakeholders said SCAs should have more decision-making capacity in collaboration with YJ regarding screening. Young people need to be screened and placed as quickly as possible. The high level of risk aversion in the application of the criteria needs to be re-examined, as the risk factors are screening out some of the young people the SCA program was supposed to serve. Also, the problem of high levels of drug use (meth) in the SCAs should be examined in terms of suitability, as it is clearly impacting on the success of young people in the houses.</p>
<p>Expansion of Eligibility Criteria</p>	<p>The program model might be re-evaluated in light of eligibility, with focus on possible expanded catchment areas and also possibly lowering the age of eligibility to 12.</p>
<p>Referral and Placement Timing for Young People</p>	<p>Stakeholders who worked with young people in detention noted that SCAs placements are not being offered readily to young people in detention on remand, and when they are offered, they are frequently being declined by young people. There were some reports that SCA placement was initially supposed to happen within 5 days or less, and several stakeholders noted that this needs to happen for full program utilisation and to decrease the number of declines.</p>
<p>Enforcement of Breaches and Support for Management of Incidents</p>	<p>Stakeholders noted the problem of young people not following house rules and bail conditions. Most believe there needs to be stronger enforcement mechanisms for the structure of the SCAs to work effectively. A few stakeholders noted this is where the problem of program goals/objectives is ambiguous as there is a focus on keeping young people out of remand, but also an attempt to use SCAs for rehabilitative purposes but with no means to manage compliance issues.</p>
<p>More on-site Support or Presence from Youth Justice</p>	<p>Several SCA stakeholders explained being asked to report even very small incidents before they are able to manage them. This is creating problems where SCA staff are seen more and more by young people as part of YJ, which in turn compromises their effectiveness and trust with young people. Several SCA staff said it works best when YJ staff are on site 9-5 every day so that compliance or breach issues can be better dealt with and YJ and SP staff roles are clearly distinguished and clear to young people either by lengthening the duration of support and/or ensuring a more integrated approach to transition planning that involves families, school/training providers, job placement agencies, and social services agencies.</p>
<p>Improvement of availability and delivery of appropriate on country and cultural activities and programs</p>	<p>Delivery and availability of culturally appropriate services and programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people has been positive for young people when delivered, but inconsistent in delivery and availability. Young people report some involvement with culturally appropriate activities and Elders, which is encouraging. However, securing Elder involvement and support for SCAs has been problematic, although recent efforts at the Carbrook SCA demonstrate better outcomes towards these goals.</p>

7.0 Suggestions for Improvement

Suggestions for Improvement of the SCAs include the following:

1. **Clarification and realignment of SCA goals and objectives:** Several parts of the SCAs are working well, in particular the provision of significant social and health/mental health services to young people. However, it is also clear that the initial goals of SCAs have changed over the course of the program. Intended in their inception as a primary remand reduction strategy for young people in Queensland, SCAs are today now being used for “transitional” placement where eligible and suitable young people are able to receive significant “wrap-around services” and successfully transition to safe and stable environments. These model changes have been ambiguous and in some cases problematic for SCA service providers. Two suggestions follow from these findings:
 - *SCA goals need to be clarified in terms of the primary ongoing objectives of the program.*
 - *Identified primary goals must be realigned with Youth Justice screening practices, service provider delivery, and other key stakeholders in clear and concise language.*

2. **Improvement, standardization, and centralisation of performance and outcome data on the SCAs:** The collection and analysis of data for the SCA external evaluation highlights to a large degree the need for the development of a centralised SCA data collection process. One problem is that data collected and maintained by the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women’s Integrated Client Management System (ICMS) was not designed for, nor well-suited for evaluating the SCAs. A second problem is that data collected by youth justice staff and SCA service providers is not consistent across the SCAs. One suggestion follows from these findings:
 - *Realignment of SCA goals and objectives must be done with provision of more reliable collection of program information and data for monitoring and evaluation purposes. Key performance indicators and data collection fields need to be reviewed and standardized.*

3. **Improvement of stakeholder support and involvement:** An important and significant challenge for the SCAs is gaining and maintaining confidence among partner agencies. Our evaluation finds the SCA program is misunderstood by police, magistrates, and other justice officials. As such, the risk is that the program will be underutilised due to low referral rates, and also not be able to perform optimally due to poor relationships with or perceptions by other agencies. The following two suggestions flow from these findings:
 - *SCA and Youth Justice staff should enhance engagement with QPS, including outreach to clarify the purpose and goals of the SCAs, establishing protocols with QPS regarding use of their services for breaches of bail or young people missing from the SCAs, and setting inter-agency relationships in place to better maintain a good partnership.*
 - *DCSYW should prepare a briefing summary to make available to magistrates and other legal referral or aid agencies to improve referral flows into the SCAs and clarify their use and purpose.*

4. **Eligibility and suitability criteria:** Stakeholders (across and within stakeholder groups) acknowledged a need to reconsider some of the screening criteria that allow a young person to be placed in an SCA. A common view was that these criteria have led to substantial underutilisation of SCAs, although placement rates may be improving. Many stakeholders suggested that suitability criteria were being applied from a 'risk management' perspective, thus screening out a large number of otherwise eligible young people. Some stakeholders also noted that the work of the SCAs might be effective and beneficial for younger offenders (12-13 years). Four suggestions follow from these findings:

- *Consult with Service Providers to explore the viability of expanding the catchment areas for SCAs.*
- *Consider lowering the eligibility of young people to age 12 for SCAs³.*
- *Revise the suitability criteria and screening process in relation to clarification and realignment of program goals and objectives.*
- *Explore the possibility of including Service Providers in the development and use of revised suitability criteria.*

5. **Re-evaluation of Suitability and Placement of Young People with Drug Dependency Problems and/or Frequent Drug Use:** Drug use, and in particular methamphetamine use, is impacting on the overall effectiveness of the SCAs. Stakeholders (across and within stakeholder groups) reported that young people with serious drug issues have generally done poorly in the SCAs, and also negatively impacted other young people in the SCAs. A suggestion from this finding is:

- *Young people who are identified as having drug dependency issues should be referred to other appropriate services rather than to SCAs.*

6. **Management of on-site incidents and/or breaches of bail conditions:** Many stakeholders noted the problem of young people not following house rules and bail conditions.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] This is resulting in more problems and less successes in the SCAs. Stronger enforcement mechanisms need to be implemented. Two suggestions follow from these findings:

- *SCA workers need the statutory authority to breach young people who do not comply with their bail conditions.*
- *DCSYW, in conjunction with SCA managers, must develop stronger partnerships with and agreements on how to involve QPS for serious offences and/or repeated breaches of bail orders.*

³ The service model would need to be changed to accommodate young people aged 12-13 years.

7. **Improvement of availability and delivery of appropriate on country and cultural activities and programs.** Positive experiences were reported by young people with on country and cultural activities and programs in the SCAs. However, interviews with stakeholders also found inconsistent delivery or availability of such programs or activities, some confusion by stakeholders as to agreements between SCAs and DCSYW as to the delivery and funding for such programs, and poor involvement of appropriate Elders or cultural groups in the setting up of the SCAs. Recent work in the Logan area SCAs demonstrates a significant improvement to these problems. On-ground work by DCSYW staff has provided more consistent delivery of appropriate on country and cultural programs and activities to young people, and staff have also been able to locate and secure the involvement of appropriate Elders for the land, and bring Elders into relationship with the young people in the SCAs. Three suggestions follow from these findings:

- *Develop and implement a cultural capability framework for use by DCSYW in conjunction with SCAs.*
- *Review existing agreements between DCSYW and SCAs regarding best-practice delivery of county and cultural activities and programs, and clarify roles and responsibilities (including funding when appropriate) of each organization.*
- *Continue with and expand on current program at Carbrook SCA in terms of developing a clearer “best-practice” framework and protocols for involvement of appropriate Elders and community organisations.*

8. **Improvement of Transition Services and/or transition case management:** Some young people from non-emergency referrals were reported to exit the SCAs abruptly, and with little information provided to the SCAs regarding transition services or decisions from DCSYW. Two suggestions follow from these findings:

- *In conjunction with revised of SCA goals and objectives, clarify existing transition service roles, responsibilities, and services between DCSYW and SCA service providers.*
- *DCSYW should review existing case-management transition protocols with existing SCAs to identify and address existing gaps in notification of transition (when possible) between Youth Justice and SCA service providers.*

Pages 62 to 77 of this of this report have been intentionally removed to ensure confidential information provided by young people or information that identifies them has been removed prior to publication.

References

- Abram, K. M., Teplin, L. A., McClelland, G. M. & Dulcan, M. K. (2003). Comorbid psychiatric disorders in youth in juvenile detention. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 60(11): 1097-1108.
- Apel, R. & Sweeten, G. (2010). The impact of incarceration on employment during the transition to adulthood. *Social Problems*, 57(3): 448-479.
- Arnall, E., Eagle, S., Gammampila, A., Patel, S. L., Sadler, J., Thomas, S. (2007). *Housing needs and experiences*. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-needs-and-experiences-youth-justice-report>.
- Ashkar, P. J. & Kenny, D. T. (2008). Views from the inside: Young offenders' subjective experiences of incarceration. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 52(5): 584-597.
- Australian Children's Commissioners and Guardians (ACCG) (2010). *Submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs*. Brisbane: ACCG. Retrieved from <http://www.ccydpcg.qld.gov.au/pdf/submissions/Submission-Representatives-Standing-Committee-on-Aboriginal>
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2012). *Children and young people at risk of social exclusion: Links between homelessness, child protection and juvenile justice*. Retrieved from <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/children-youth/children-and-young-people-at-risk-of-social-exclus/contents/table-of-contents>
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2017). *Young people in unsentenced detention: 2015-16*. Retrieved from <https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/bb4a9b5c-bbe3-4b5d-87b2-cef4dd658fd5/juv108-YJFS-86-Unsentenced.pdf.aspx>
- Bailey B. (2009). Bail me out: Research report on detention and homelessness. *Parity* 22(8): 27-28
- Boyle, K. (2009). 'The more things change' ... Bail and the incarceration of homeless young people. *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, 21(1) 59-78.
- Brown, D. (2013). Looking behind the increase in custodial remand populations. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, 2(2): 80-99.
- Carrington, K. (1993). *Offending girls: Sex, youth and justice*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Cashmore, J. (2011). The link between child maltreatment and adolescent offending: Systems neglect of adolescents. *Family Matters*, 89: 31-41.
- Childrens Court of Queensland (2017). *Annual Report 2016-17*. Retrieved from https://www.courts.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/548135/cc-ar-2016-2017.pdf
- Childrens Court of Queensland (2017). *Annual Report 2017-18*. Retrieved from https://www.courts.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/610077/cc-ar-2017-2018.pdf
- Denning-Cotter G. (2008). *Bail support in Australia*. Retrieved from <https://www.indigenousjustice.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/mp/files/publications/files/brief002.v1.pdf>

- Doolan, I., Najman, J. M. & Cherney, A. (2012). Health needs of Australian Indigenous young people entering detention. *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health*, 48(10): 896-901.
- Ericson, M. & Vinson, T. (2011). *Young people on remand in Victoria: Balancing individual and community interests*. Retrieved from https://jss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Young_people_in_remand_in_Victoria_-_Balancing_individual_and_community_interests.pdf
- Fitzgerald, J. (2000). *Increases in the NSW remand population*. Retrieved from <https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Documents/BB/bb09.pdf>
- Harrington, R. & Bailey, S. (2005). *Mental health needs and effectiveness of provision for young offenders in custody and in the community*. Youth Justice Board for England and Wales.
- Heffernan, E., Andersen, K. & Kinner, S. (2009) The insidious problem inside: Mental health problems of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in custody, *Australian Psychiatry*, 17(1): 41-16.
- Hjalmarsson, R. (2008) Criminal justice involvement and high school completion. *Journal of Urban Economics*, 63(2): 613-630.
- Indig, D., Vecchiato, C., Haysom, L., Beilby, R., Carter, J., Champion, U. et al. (2011). *2009 NSW young People in custody health survey: Full report*. Retrieved from <https://www.justicehealth.nsw.gov.au/publications/ypichs-full.pdf>
- Jesuit Social Services (2015). *An escalating problem: Responding to the increased remand of children in Victoria*. Retrieved from https://jss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/An_escalating_problem_-_Responding_to_the_increased_remand_of_children_in_Victoria.pdf
- Mazerolle, P. & Sanderson, J. (2008). *Understanding remand in the juvenile justice system in Queensland*. Retrieved from <https://research-repository.griffith.edu.au/handle/10072/75664>
- Moore, E., Gaskin, C. & Indig, D. (2015). Attempted suicide, self-harm, and psychological disorder among young offenders in custody, *Journal of Correctional Health Care*, 21(3): 243-254.
- Moore, T., McArthur, M. & Saunders, V. (2013) Young people talk about transitioning from youth detention to the community: Making good. *Australian Social Work*, 66(3): 328-343.
- NSW Law Reform Commission (2012). *Bail*. Report. Retrieved from <https://www.lawreform.justice.nsw.gov.au/Documents/Publications/Reports/Report-133.pdf>
- New South Wales Law Reform Commission (2005). *Young offenders*. Retrieved from http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/lrc/11_lrc.nsf/pages/LRC_r104chp10
- Northern Territory Government. (2018). *Territory families: Annual report 2019-2018*. Retrieved from <https://territoryfamilies.nt.gov.au/about>
- Parliament of Victoria (2018). *Inquiry into youth justice centres in Victoria: Final report*. Retrieved from <https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/447-lsic/inquiry-into-youth-justice-centres-in-victoria>
- Prichard, J., & Payne, J. (2005). Key findings from the drug use careers of juvenile offenders study. *Trends & Issues in Crime & Criminal Justice*, 304: 1-6.

- Richards, K. (2011). Trends in juvenile detention in Australia. *Trends & Issues in Crime & Criminal Justice*, 416: 1-8.
- Richards, K. & Renshaw, L. (2013). *Bail and remand for young people in Australia: A national research project*. Retrieved from <https://aic.gov.au/publications/rpp/rpp125>
- Sarre, R. (2018). *How to reverse Australia's remand explosion*. [online] Inside Story Publishing Pty Ltd. Available at: <https://insidestory.org.au/how-to-reverse-australias-remand-explosion/> [Accessed 18 Jan. 2019].
- Sarre, R., King, S., & Bamford, D. (2006). Remand in custody: critical factors and key issues. *Trends & Issues in Crime & Criminal Justice*, 310: 1-6.
- Sawyer, M.G. Guidolin, M., Schulz, K. L., McGinnes, B., Zubrick, S. R. & Baghurst (2010). The mental health and wellbeing of adolescents on remand in Australia *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 44(6) 551-559.
- Scottish Executive Education Department (2005). *Review of young people on remand in secure accommodation*. Retrieved from <https://www2.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/930/0010389.pdf>
- South Australian Office of Crime Statistics (2002). *Increasing remand rates in South Australia: some explanatory factors*. Adelaide: South Australian Office of Crime Statistics.
- Stubbs, J. (2010). Re-examining bail and remand for young people in NSW. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 43(3): 485–505.
- Willis, M. (2017). *Bail support: A review of the literature*. Retrieved from <https://aic.gov.au/publications/rr/rr004>
- Wong, K., Bailey, B. & Kenny, D. T. (2009). *Bail me out: NSW young people and bail*. Retrieved from <http://www.yjc.org.au/resources/Bail-Me-Out-Report-2011.pdf>
- Wood, W. R. (2015). Why restorative justice will not reduce incarceration. *British Journal of Criminology*, 55(5), 883-900.
- Youth Justice Board (2010). *Audit of accommodation provision for young people who offend*. Leicester. Retrieved from <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/1321/1/Audit%20of%20accommodation%20provision%20for%20young%20people%20who%20offend%20-%20full%20report.pdf>
- Walmsley, R. (2014). *World pre-trial/remand imprisonment list*. Retrieved from http://www.prisonstudies.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/world_pre-trial_imprisonment_list_2nd_edition_1.pdf
- Webster, C. M., Doob, A. N. & Myers, N. M. (2009). The Parable of Ms Baker: Understanding Pre-Trial Detention in Canada. *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, 21(1): 79- 102.

CONTACT GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY

Please contact Griffith Enterprise on +61 7 3735 5489
for all Business Development enquiries.

NATHAN CAMPUS
170 Kessels Road
Nathan QLD 4111

GOLD COAST CAMPUS
Parklands Drive
Southport QLD 4222

For more information about the Griffith University please visit www.griffith.edu.au.

