

Department of Youth Justice

A SAFER QUEENSLAND

Queensland Youth Justice Strategy 2024–2028

PREVENTION | INTERVENTION | DETENTION

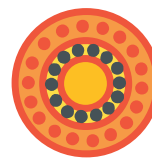


Queensland
Government

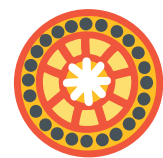
Acknowledgement of Country

The Queensland Government acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples and Traditional Owners and custodians of the land, wind and waters where we live. We acknowledge and pay respect to the important role of Elders past and present for they hold the memories and traditions, cultures and aspirations of First Nations peoples, and have taken responsibility to protect and promote their culture and leave a legacy for future Elders and leaders. We promise to be respectful, take lead from community and walk together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, community and organisations to address inequalities and improve justice outcomes.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander design elements used in this document are part of a series of storytelling artworks created by Gilimbaa artist, Jenna Lee (Larrakia). The element to the left symbolises ‘youth’ and the element to the right symbolises ‘justice’.



Youth



Justice

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Department of Youth Justice

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The State of Queensland (Department of Youth Justice)
A Safer Queensland – Queensland Youth Justice Strategy
2024–2028

Foreword

The nature of youth crime is complex and changing, so we need to be agile to stop it. We have listened to experts, victims, young people, and service providers to make sure we are doing what works. We will continue to respond with new programs and policy where new evidence arises or circumstances change, that is why this strategy will be a living document.

The Queensland Government is committed to keeping Queenslanders safe. About 85 per cent of young people diverted by police do not have further police contact as a young person. Over the past decade, in response to the first youth justice strategy, the collaborative approach of government, non-government organisations, communities, and other stakeholders is working. There has been an overall decline in the numbers of young people in the youth justice system by 30 per cent in the past 10 years. This progress is positive and provided a good foundation for us to develop *A Safer Queensland – Queensland Youth Justice Strategy 2024–2028 (the Strategy)*.

We are also doing more to support victims and minimise the devastating impact that crime can have. Every Queenslander has a right to feel safe and be safe.

When a young person becomes involved in criminal behaviour, it not only has a significant impact on their own life but also on the lives of their victims and community.

However, the nature of youth crime in Queensland is evolving. New challenges require innovative and different approaches and agile solutions to keep our communities safe, such as intensive and holistic responses to serious repeat offenders.

There are existing support services for victims of youth crime, and we made a commitment to enhance these services with an additional investment of \$45 million in funding under a targeted victims support package to help vulnerable Queenslanders through what can be a traumatising and distressing time.

Despite the reduction in the number of young people offending, there is a small number of young

people identified as serious repeat offenders who are responsible for a large proportion of all youth crime.

The number of serious repeat offenders increased between July 2018 and October 2023 by 235 on an average day. From October 2023, however, we have seen the largest continuous decrease in serious repeat offenders since measurement began—an 11 per cent decrease to April 2024 (a decrease of 55 serious repeat offenders on an average day).

These young people account for most nights spent by young people in youth detention centres. This trend is not unique to Queensland but needs a strong and localised response.

Our data also shows that First Nations young people are disproportionately represented in the youth justice system. Across government departments, we are working hard to implement the National Agreement on Closing the Gap—specifically, that young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not over-represented in the criminal justice system.

There is strong evidence to explain why young people offend, including clear connections between offending behaviour and childhood trauma caused by exposure to violence. Many young people who offend are often victims of crime themselves, have experienced domestic and family violence, abuse or neglect leading to contact with the child protection system, or have a parent who has been incarcerated.

The youth justice system is for 10 to 17-year-olds.

There are 572,738 young people aged 10 to 17-years-old in Queensland (2023).

Of these 3398 had an offence proven in 2022–2023.

Issues such as disengagement with schooling, problematic drug and alcohol use, untreated mental health issues, developmental disorders, and cognitive and intellectual disabilities can significantly affect a young person's ability to learn and make considered decisions, making them more willing to take risks and not think about the consequences of their actions. Together, these factors contribute to youth offending.

Enhanced by the *Community Safety Plan for Queensland*, and alongside *Putting Queensland Kids First, the Strategy* will focus on prevention and early intervention, detaining youth offenders where needed, and supporting victims—charting a path for a safer Queensland. This is further supported by the Department of Education's \$288 million Youth Engagement Reform Package and record investment of \$1.645 billion in Queensland Health's *Better Care Together plan for Queensland's state-funded mental health, alcohol and other drug services to 2027*.

The Queensland Government is committed to continue to co-design and use evaluations and evidence to refine what is working to meet the changing needs of the community and evolving nature of youth crime.

This important work will continue the downward trend in the number of young people engaging with the youth justice system, help to address serious repeat offending, and lead to improved life outcomes for all Queenslanders.

Through our engagement with numerous stakeholders, we recognise the community's strong commitment and passion for supporting young people and their families. Their efforts focus on connecting these individuals to the right support within their communities, all with the goal of fostering safe and thriving environments.



**The Honourable
Dianne Farmer**

Minister for Education and
Minister for Youth Justice

We know that young people can turn their lives around. Research shows that strong connection to culture, education, employment, and safe and stable housing helps to reduce reoffending, especially for serious repeat offenders.

There is not one solution to the reduction of youth crime in our state and no single stakeholder shoulders the responsibility alone—we all have a role to play. The Queensland Government is working with non-government sectors, First Nations communities, and victims of crime to deliver evidence-based and effective services for young people in contact with the youth justice system, their families, victims, and communities.

The Queensland Government has accepted, or accepted in principle, all recommendations from the 2024 Youth Justice Reform Select Committee draft *Interim Report: Inquiry into ongoing reforms to the youth justice system and support for victims of crime*, and will continue to be guided by findings by the Queensland Audit Office on the effectiveness of current Youth Justice programs to reduce youth offending by serious repeat offenders and improve community safety.

This strategy will be continuously updated as new responses to youth crime are trialled, programs and investments are expanded and extended, and our understanding and evidence base of effective intervention grow. We aim to continually identify what works, for whom, and under what circumstances and will modify as needed.

The Queensland Government's legislative reform includes changes made through the *Strengthening Community Safety Act 2023* and the Queensland Community Safety Bill, introduced to Parliament in 2024. These propose additional measures to increase efficiencies and improve outcomes in the youth justice system, support frontline workers, expand effective initiatives such as Jack's Law, increase penalties for certain offences, and enhance victims' access to Childrens Court proceedings.

We recognise the landscape continues to change and we are committed to a culture of best practice and continual improvement, guided by evidence. We will continue taking action to respond to Queenslanders, and expert evidence, make changes to legislation, policy practice and investment where required.

Introduction

While the number of youth offenders has fallen by 20 per cent over the past five years, the nature of youth crime is changing. An increase in property crime, particularly committed from a small number of serious repeat offenders, has left many in the community feeling unsafe. We know that approximately 20 per cent of all youth offenders are serious repeat offenders who are responsible for over half of youth crime and are presenting with greater complexities.

By putting all Queensland kids first, we are ensuring those young people with the most complex needs are being responded to in a timely and appropriate way through intense programs delivered by specialist staff. Encouragingly, the number of serious repeat offenders on an average day has decreased by 11 per cent between October 2023 and April 2024.

We have been listening. While we are making good progress at reducing youth crime overall, we agree much more needs to be done to stop offending by serious repeat offenders. We also agree that more needs to be done to co-design approaches, especially with First Nations organisations and communities.

The Queensland Government and our partners will continue to work together to keep all Queenslanders safe and deliver nation-leading services in the youth justice system. Initiatives and programs that began under the first strategy will continue. Over five years, we are investing \$446.4 million as part of a new, dedicated, multi-stage Youth Justice strategy. We are also delivering on a \$1.28 billion investment

for community safety in Queensland, as part of the *Community Safety Plan for Queensland*. This plan sets a clear approach for keeping Queensland safe across five key pillars:

- Supporting victims.
- Delivering for our frontline.
- Detaining offenders.
- Intervening when people offend.
- Preventing crime before it occurs.

We are also delivering positive and healthy pathways for young Queenslanders and their families in the early stages of life through the *Putting Queensland Kids First* plan. Research shows adverse childhood experiences such as poverty, family violence, disrupted access to healthcare or education, parental mental illness, or problematic substance use can result in a higher risk of contact with the youth justice system. *Putting Queensland Kids First* is designed to ensure all Queensland children are given the best start in life through more access to essential services.

The Department of Education's \$288 million Youth Engagement Reform package is also key in stopping young people from disengaging from school and providing alternative education pathways. This work dovetails into pathways to economic participation through *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* initiatives and TAFE programs. For example, the *Queensland Skills Strategy* includes a \$2.8 million fund for training and workforce projects for First Nations people.

Victims, experts, community and young people

A Safer Queensland – Queensland Youth Justice Strategy 2024–2028 is informed by evidence and evaluations that capture the voices of victims, experts, community and young people and those who support them.

Youth Justice ensures these voices are heard and considered when informing and evaluating changes to the youth justice system.

As one part of an overall whole-of-government approach to better coordinate efforts to improve the lives of all Queensland children, such as those in, or at risk of entering, the youth justice system, *the Strategy* will bolster our youth justice focus on core business, including:

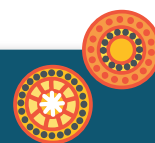
- prevention
- intervention
- detention.

The Strategy will continue to be guided by new evidence as it becomes available. This may include findings from inquiries into ongoing Youth Justice reforms, as they are undertaken by the entities such as the Queensland Audit Office and the 2023 Youth Justice Reform Select Committee. This also includes the department’s ongoing evaluation plan to understand what works. Where evaluations indicate programs and services are not working, the department will stop offering them.

We have published 12 evaluation reports for nine programs. Four evaluations will be delivered in 2024. Through early intervention and prevention, using detention where it is necessary to keep violent repeat offenders off the street, targeting serious repeat offenders and providing access to programs and services that work to help young people—from education, disability supports, employment, health and housing—we will continue to confront and address crime and keep Queenslanders safe.



First Nations partnerships



The Queensland Government is committed to developing ongoing community-based and First Nations-led justice solutions.

The most effective way to address youth crime is by working in partnership with stakeholders. Many current and planned programs adopt a community-driven, co-design approach with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and representatives involved in both inception and delivery. For example, the Family-led Decision Making program empowers families and communities to problem-solve, lead discussions and make decisions as the cultural authority for their young people who are involved in youth justice. Notably, 41 per cent of Youth Justice outsourced service delivery contracts are with First Nations-led organisations.

In May 2024, the government announced the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak (QATSICPP) as the inaugural coordinator of the youth justice peak body. Supported by the Queensland Council of Social Services (QCOSS), QATSICPP will work with justice representatives and the state government to inform policy aimed at improving community safety, driving evidence-based approaches, and developing strategies to deliver a capable and effective youth justice workforce.

Evidence-based approaches

The youth justice system does not operate in isolation, nor do the needs of young people or victims fit neatly within one system.

The Strategy is part of a comprehensive government initiative, alongside *Putting Queensland Kids First* and the *Community Safety Plan for Queensland*. Addressing the diverse needs young people and families, and recognising the many factors that can

put a young person at risk of offending, requires a holistic approach. This strategy centres on children, providing wraparound preventative and intervening services to stop their entrance into the criminal justice system. Where necessary, detention is an option. This holistic approach, building on past work such as the *2018 Report on Youth Justice* by Bob Atkinson AO, APM, contributes to community confidence and community safety.



Support for victims

A system that has greater focus on enhanced support for victims

When a young person becomes involved in criminal behaviour, it has a significant impact on victims. The Queensland Government has a crucial role to play in ensuring victims of crime are provided with necessary support and assistance to ensure their wellbeing, and recovery from trauma.

There are existing support services for victims of youth crime and the government has made a commitment to enhance these services with additional investment, changes to legislation, and the establishment of a Victim's Commissioner, Independent Ministerial Advisory Council, and stronger representation for victims on the Youth Justice Strategy Reference Group.

To deliver enhanced access to justice, the Queensland Government is changing the law to ensure that victims, their families and the media can access Childrens Court proceedings.

What we know is working

When victims are given a voice in the youth justice process, it not only provides them with a sense of validation and acknowledgement, but it also allows them to actively participate in decisions that impact their lives.

The Queensland Government will continue to strengthen opportunities for victims of youth crime to have a voice, acknowledging its importance on an individual level for the victim, ability to inform a youth justice response, and prove transformative for young offenders.

Victims have told us there is a need for a simpler and more accessible victim support system in Queensland, inclusion in the criminal justice process which can lead to positive outcomes, statewide services providing support to victims of crime must be trauma-informed, and improvements to restorative justice conferencing programs would benefit both offenders and victims.

KPMG was commissioned to undertake an outcome and economic evaluation of the Restorative Justice Conferencing (RJC) program. The evaluation covered the period 2015–2016 to 2017–2018 and examined the effectiveness of the program in achieving its intended outcomes, as well as identifying cost savings and benefits to the government and the community.

Overall, RJC had been successful in achieving its intended outcomes that included:

- a reduction in reoffending magnitude (reoffending frequency and seriousness)
- reparation of harm for victims
- young people taking responsibility for their offending behaviour
- improved wellbeing of victims
- healing relationships and promoting connections
- a reduction of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the youth justice system.

What is next?

The *Community Safety Plan for Queensland* prioritises the needs of victims of crime, their families, and communities. The Queensland is ensuring victims receive all the support they need by investing an additional \$52.3 million to provide more resources and support for the specific needs of victims and their families. Additional programs include:

- Victims of Crime Community Response
- enhancing the Victim Liaison Service
- Justice Reform
- continuing the Queensland Intermediary Scheme
- increasing capacity of Victim Assist Queensland
- implementing of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee recommendations from their *Inquiry into support provided to victims of crime*.

Despite the existing measures, there is still more that can be done to support victims of youth crime, including creating more awareness about the support services available.

Young people taking responsibility for their offending behaviour

“I got a massive understanding of how the victim felt. What he wrote about what he felt and what he’s going through, it really hit me.” – Young person interview

The facts on youth crime

Level of youth crime

Very few young Queenslanders face the youth justice system.

99.4%
of Queensland kids do not have a proven offence.



6/1000

This means only six of every 1000 young people commit an offence.

1/1000

This means only one of every 1000 young people are serious repeat offenders who commit over 50 per cent of all youth crime.

85% of young people diverted by police do not have a further police contact as a young person.

Overall the number of young offenders is decreasing.

20%

decrease

in the overall number of youth offenders since 2019.

20%

decrease

in young people appearing in court since 2019.

82%

of community based orders

were successfully completed in 2023.

Some categories of youth crime are increasing.

Source: Department of Youth Justice, 2024.
Additional youth justice data is available at desbt.qld.gov.au/youth-justice/data.

42%

increase

in property crimes, including illegal use of a motor vehicle since 2019.

1599

breach of bail offences

proven in the first six months since law changes.

474

serious repeat offenders

on an average day in the 12 months to May 2024*.

Not SRO declarations by a Court.



Complex characteristics of youth offending

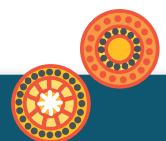
The majority of young offenders have complex characteristics and needs.

Of the young people in the youth justice system in 2022–2023:

- 81 per cent have used at least one substance
- 53 per cent are impacted by domestic and family violence
- 48 per cent are not enrolled in education, training or employment
- 30 per cent are in unstable and/or unsuitable accommodation
- 38 per cent of youth in custody have used ice/methamphetamine in the past
- 25 per cent have a parent who has been in custody
- 44 per cent have one or more mental health disorders and/or behavioural disorders (diagnosed or suspected)
- 44 per cent have one or more disabilities
- 16 per cent have one or more psychological behavioural issues.

First Nations young people

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are disproportionately represented with 55 per cent of young people under youth justice supervision and 70 per cent of young people in youth detention centres being Indigenous (as at March 2024).



Breaking the cycle

For many young people, their first crime is their last. Through addressing the contributing factors of crime with services, support, and early intervention, we can break the cycle of crime.

Many services can support young people and their families, including education, health, housing, community services, domestic violence services, disability services, and child protection. These services play a crucial role in fostering accountability and changing anti-social behaviours and attitudes. Our focus is on facilitating collaboration among multiple agencies to avoid working in silos. By doing so, we can provide the most important services, tailored to the needs of the young person, their family, and their community, at the appropriate time.

New and existing initiatives, including Multi-agency Collaborative Panels, Early Action Groups, Youth Co-Responder Teams, and Intensive Case Management, bring together different agencies to provide direct, one-on-one support for high-risk young people and their families. This typically includes getting young people back into education, helping families to improve parenting skills and home environments and connecting them to support services to tackle issues such as drug and substance abuse.

These activities are backed by evidence-based best practice aligned with the risk, needs and responsivity model (RNR). In RNR, reoffending risk level informs how much change-oriented service delivery is needed to reduce youth reoffending. When all three RNR principles are embedded, we can decrease reoffending by up to 35 per cent in community and 17 per cent in custodial settings.

0 to 9-year-old

Preventing youth crime starts with solving the complex contributing factors that put young people at greater risk of entering the youth justice system. Family violence, unstable housing, or a parent in custody increases a young person's risk profile, as do undiagnosed and poorly managed disabilities, mental health challenges, or psychological behavioural issues.

As part of *Putting Queensland Kids First*, there is opportunity to intervene early and work collaboratively when vulnerabilities are identified through the education system, because we know that disengaging from school at this age puts young people at greater risk of contact with the youth justice system.

Case study

This young person has been involved with Youth Justice for around four years, primarily for property and motor vehicle offences, as well as offences against persons. Recently, as part of this Service Response Plan, she re-engaged with Transition to Success (T2S). Although initially difficult to engage, her confidence and motivation grew as she experienced success during her involvement in the program.

She even took on a leadership role, encouraging other participants in T2S. She actively participated in various components of her program, including employment preparation, resume writing, and working with a Transition to Work provider about the types of jobs available in the local community and the requirements. At the completion of her T2S program, she was supported to participate in an interview and was offered a job. She has also started participating in local competitive sport.

After successfully finalising her supervised youth justice orders in early 2024, she has remained committed to changing her life and has not reoffended. Gaining employment and participating in local sport has given her a new positive connection to the community and helped her establish a new pathway to a brighter future.

10 to 13-year-old

At age 10, children who commit a crime enter the youth justice system. But less than 0.5 per cent of children at this age actually commit a crime. In 2022–2023, just 1.1 per cent of the total proven offences in the youth justice system were committed by 10 to 11-year-olds. This figure rises for 12 to 13-year-olds who committed 15 per cent of the total proven offences. These figures show the need to intervene as early as possible to stop the crime cycle.

Peer pressure, feeling unsafe at home or with peers, lack of stable home or living environment, and disengagement from education are common reasons why young people in this age cohort turn to anti-social behaviour.

14 to 17-year-old

Without intervention, by the time a young person reaches the age of 14 to 17, complex issues can become more problematic and anti-social behaviour and risk of criminal activity may become entrenched. This is demonstrated by some individuals in the youth justice system having many proven offences and spending several periods of time in custody.

Disengagement from school, exposure to domestic violence, parental substance abuse, and housing instability are commonly experienced amongst young people engaging in offending behaviour.

To stop the cycle, behaviour that has become entrenched over years requires long-term and persistent responses and interventions founded in evidence like the RNR model.

All age groups are best supported and discouraged from taking part in criminal activity by having the right access to services like health, education, employment, mental health, disability support, and family support. Where necessary, the government must also intervene to protect children from harm.

Case study

This young person began offending at 15. He had been subject to nine supervised orders for motor vehicle, property and violent robbery offending, spending 233 nights in detention.

When he started intensive case management, he and his family were homeless. He and his siblings had not been to school for more than six months and there was drug use.

In the year the family has been working with intensive case management staff (bringing together government services from education, health, housing, and youth justice), they are now in a house, his younger brother is back at school, and his younger sister is engaged with programs. He has started in another successful program, Transition to Success, and his mum has started a TAFE course.

The family engaged well with weekly family sessions and they are continuing to work together with a support team to overcome issues of homelessness, problematic substance use, domestic and family violence whilst working toward positive educational and employment goals.

Priority cohorts

Within the youth justice cohort are vulnerable groups of individuals who often require specific approaches to break the cycle of crime. The Queensland Government has implemented programs to address the specific needs of First Nations young people, girls in the youth justice system, young people with a disability, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and LGBTQI+ individuals.

| Priority cohort | Programs and initiatives |
|--|---|
| <p>First Nations young people</p> <p>With approximately 70 per cent of young people in youth detention (as at 31 January 2024) identifying as First Nations, these youth are disproportionately represented. We are strengthening partnerships with First Nations organisations for culturally appropriate ways to identify, support and prevent crime.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of First Nations Action Board and First Nations Council. • Indigenous Service Support Officers. • Intensive On Country program. • Family-led Decision Making. • Watchhouse support. • Person-centred navigator and advocacy pilots targeting young people under the age of 18 who have a neurodevelopmental or intellectual disability and who are in contact with the youth justice system. • Breaking Cycles – An action plan: co-designing, developing, and implementing services with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families 2023–2025. • Implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Strategy, and establishment of an independent First Nations Children’s Commissioner. • 41 per cent of youth justice outsourced service delivery contracts are with First Nations-led organisations. |
| <p>Girls in the youth justice system</p> <p>In recognition of the specific experiences and needs of girls and young women engaged with the youth justice system, we are working on improved service responses to adequately meet these needs and address the factors that lead to further offending.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department of Youth Justice (DYJ) is undertaking a gap analysis to have a gender-specific focus to youth justice processes, procedures, and practices to ensure they are aligned with gender-specific requirements. • Gender-specific programs, such as Black Chicks Talking—a cultural program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young women—are delivered by Youth Justice staff. • Gendered bail support program. • Close collaboration with Department of Justice and Attorney-General to enact recommendations from the Women’s Safety and Justice Taskforce, including development of a strategy for women and girls in the criminal justice system as accused persons and offenders. • A Queensland Government commitment through the Queensland Women’s Strategy 2022–2027 (QWS) is that all women and girls are supported and empowered to have the same opportunities regardless of background, age, culture, or experiences. |

Priority cohort

Young people with a disability

Young people with disability are highly vulnerable, often disengaged from numerous support services and disproportionately represented in Queensland’s youth justice system. We are working closely with state and national government and non-government organisations to enhance ways we can identify, assess, and support these young people.

Programs and initiatives

- Person-centred navigator and advocacy pilots targeting young people under the age of 18 who have a neurodevelopmental or intellectual disability and who are in contact with the youth justice system.
- DYJ is developing a framework for young people impacted by neurodevelopmental challenges (NDC). The framework will include practice guidelines to help staff of different agencies develop the skills to ensure young people with NDC receive an appropriate service response and ensure response to young people with NDC and their families are culturally safe and effective.
- Young people in detention are supported to receive comprehensive health services, including diagnosis and treatment.

Taskforce Guardian

Taskforce Guardian, a collaboration between the Department of Youth Justice and the Queensland Police Service (QPS), is a rapid response team addressing sudden surges in youth crime across Queensland.

This expert team, consisting of police detectives; case workers; court coordinators; restorative justice convenors; and First Nations cultural capability officers, supplements local resources by providing strategic advice, additional workforce power, and specialised support.

Each deployment is tailored based on local needs and crime rates, ensuring an effective, collaborative approach to managing youth crime.

Risk level and services available

Young people are provided with programs, interventions and services that match their identified risk level and needs. This alignment also supports interventions to be delivered at a time when the young person is most responsive to change. Early intervention and prevention are a significant focus to reduce the risk of young people coming into contact with the youth justice system. The below table gives an indication of the program and service response at different risk levels.

| Young people | Targeted services |
|--|--|
| <p>Prevention and early intervention</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is opportunity to work collaboratively when vulnerabilities are identified through the education system to identify young children at risk; undertake multi-agency response based on comprehensive (health, home, environmental) screening and triaged immediate priorities; metrics that demonstrate intervention is working. • Education, health, housing and disability support services across government and non-government organisations, along with sport and recreation opportunities. • Economic participation through <i>Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiatives</i> and specialised TAFE courses. |
| <p>Low to medium-risk offenders</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education justice initiative. • Community Youth Response and Diversion services. • Transition to Success. • Alternative Diversion Program. • Core Youth Justice programs, including supervision and case management for all young people under youth justice orders. |
| <p>High-risk (including serious repeat offenders)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensive Case Management. • Multi-agency Collaborative Panels. • Intensive Bail Initiative. • Electronic Monitoring Trial. • Core Youth Justice programs, including supervision and case management for all young people under youth justice orders. |

Young people

Targeted services

Services targeting all young people in the youth justice system

- Restorative Justice Conferencing.
- Navigate Your Health.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Wellbeing Services.
- Family and Child Connect and Intensive Family Support.
- Youth Co-Responder Teams.
- Fast-track Sentencing Pilot program.
- Project Booyah.
- Street University.
- Youth Drug and Alcohol Treatment Service.
- Big Bounce.
- Black Chicks Talking and Young, Black and Proud.
- Changing Habits and Reaching Targets.
- Re-thinking Our Attitude to Driving.
- Emotional Regulation and Impulse Control.
- Aggression Replacement Training.



What has worked and what we have done so far

While we know more needs to be done to drive down youth crime, there are positive signs from the steps we have taken already.

20 per cent decrease in the overall number of youth offenders since 2019.

20 per cent decrease in young people appearing in court since 2019.

Over 40 per cent of young people who attend court do not return to the youth justice system.

85 per cent of young people diverted by police do not have further police contact as a young person.

Legislative changes

The preference is always to give young people the opportunity to turn their lives around by taking part in preventative or corrective programs. However, effective legislation is also needed and the Queensland Government has introduced a number of new laws, including:

- stronger youth bail laws with a presumption against bail for offenders who commit certain offences while on bail. Charges for breach of bail offences have been made against 3372 defendants (as at March 2024).
- the *Strengthening Community Safety Act 2023* enabling courts to declare someone a serious repeat offender, increasing maximum penalties for unlawful use of a motor vehicle and extending and expanding the trial of electronic monitoring devices.
- the Queensland Community Safety Bill, introduced to Parliament in 2024, which proposes additional measures to increase efficiencies and improve outcomes in the youth justice system, support frontline workers, expand effective initiatives such as Jack's Law, increase penalties for certain offences, and enhance victims access to Childrens Court proceedings.

Best Practice Social Service Industry Condition

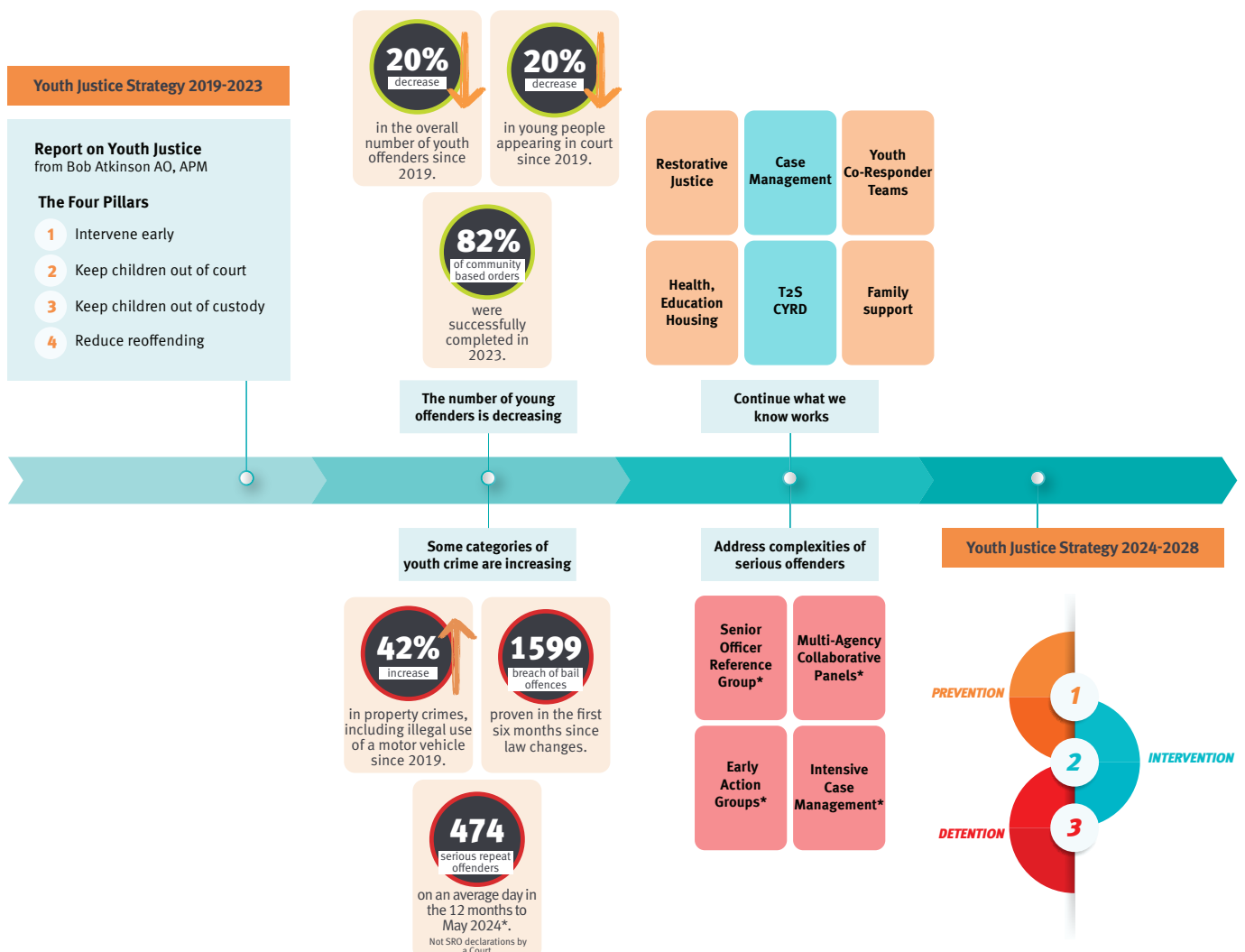
In June 2024, the Queensland Government announced new best practice industry conditions will give social service providers, including those in the youth justice system, the appropriate contractual arrangements to ensure vulnerable Queenslanders continue to get the care they need.

These conditions include default five-year initial terms for service agreements, except where justified by specific policy or service delivery grounds; six months’ notice when contracts will cease or not be renewed; contract renewals offered within three months of the end date; and prioritisation of permanent employment conditions.

Reform agenda since 2019

The holistic approach in *the Strategy* stems from past work, including the *Atkinson Report* and the first Youth Justice Strategy 2019–2023, and includes two fundamental principles:

- public safety is paramount
- community confidence is critical.



*Refer to glossary for more information.

Core programs and those that are continuing from 2019

The following programs are delivered through individualised service response plans for young people based on their assessed needs and risk of reoffending.

Government department abbreviations:

- Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services (DCSSDS)
- Department of Education (Education)
- Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works (DHLGPPW)
- Department of Justice and Attorney-General (DJAG)
- Department of Tourism and Sport (DTS)
- Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts (DTATSIPCA)
- Department of Youth Justice (DYJ)
- Queensland Corrective Services (QCS)
- Queensland Fire Department (QFD)
- Queensland Health (Health)
- Queensland Police Service (QPS)

Restorative Justice Conferencing

A meeting between a young person who has committed a crime and the people most impacted by that crime. They discuss what happened, the effects, and repairing the harm caused to the victim.

Restorative Justice Conferencing is having a positive impact on reducing reoffending rates, with 59 per cent of young people not reoffending within six months of their conference.

Agencies involved: DYJ, QPS

Locations: Statewide

Over 70 per cent of victims reported that the conference process helped them to 'manage the effects of crime'.

Transition to Success T2S

Vocational training and therapeutic service for young people in or at risk of facing the criminal justice system, conducted in partnership with local community groups and small businesses.

Agencies involved: DYJ, TAFE, non-government organisations

Locations: Statewide

Data shows 54 per cent of young people who completed a course in 2021 did not reoffend in the following 12 months.

Intensive Bail Initiative IBI

Supporting high-risk young people on bail and their families through after-hours services, intensive case work, follow-up and referrals to other specialist services.

Agencies involved: Delivered by non-government organisations

Locations: Mount Isa, Townsville, Sunshine Coast, Caboolture, Redcliffe, Brisbane, Logan, Toowoomba, Gold Coast

Family-led Decision Making FDM

Addresses challenges and disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people engaged in youth justice, by inviting families and community to problem solve, lead discussions, and make decisions as the cultural authority for their young people.

Agencies involved: Non-government organisations

Locations: Cairns, Brisbane, Toowoomba

Project Booyah PB

Police mentoring program for young people aged 14 to 17 years, utilising adventure-based learning, leadership skills, problem-solving, resilience training, policing strategies and family inclusive principles.

Agencies involved: QPS

Locations: Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Sunshine Coast, Moreton, Brisbane, Ipswich, Logan, Gold Coast

Youth Co-Responder Teams YCT

The Youth Co-Responder Teams initiative is a joint program between QPS and DYJ, where specialist staff connect with young people who come into contact with the criminal justice system or are at risk of doing so.

Agencies involved: DYJ, QPS

Locations: Mount Isa, Townsville, Cairns, Mackay, Rockhampton, Fraser Coast, Moreton, Brisbane North, Logan, Gold Coast, Brisbane South, Ipswich, Toowoomba

Community Safety Plan for Queensland funding has resulted in an expansion of locations to South West Queensland and Sunshine Coast.

Emotional Regulation and Impulse Control ERIC

A youth justice delivered program which explores underlying issues around poor emotional regulation and impulse control. It includes skills and processes to manage emotions, urges and decision-making.

Agencies involved: DYJ

Locations: Statewide

Aggression Replacement Training ART

An intensive program which helps young people to deal with their anger and aggression.

Agencies involved: DYJ

Locations: Statewide

Navigate Your Health

A service which helps young people involved in the child protection and youth justice systems to access healthcare and developmental assessments, referral coordination and healthcare support.

Agencies involved: DYJ, DCSSDS, Health

Locations: Cairns, Brisbane, Logan

Black Chicks Talking and Young, Black and Proud

Cultural programs focused on developing and strengthening cultural knowledge, awareness, and identity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people engaged in youth justice.

Agencies involved: DYJ

Locations: Statewide

Changing Habits and Reaching Targets

A comprehensive intervention which aims to reduce the risk of reoffending through unpacking offences and supporting key skills development to assist in reducing offending behaviour.

Agencies involved: DYJ

Locations: Statewide

Re-thinking Our Attitude to Driving

A Youth Justice delivered program targeted at young people with motor vehicle offences, or at risk of becoming involved with motor vehicle offences.

Agencies involved: DYJ

Locations: Statewide

Townsville Youth Court

A dedicated magistrate hears matters and proceedings involving young people who are repeat offenders and at high risk of reoffending.

Agencies involved: DJAG, DYJ, QPS, legal services and community justice groups.

Locations: Townsville

Queensland Police-Citizens Youth Club (PCYC) Welfare Association

The PCYC partner with the QPS to deliver crime prevention, youth development and community engagement projects, whilst supporting young people in safe environments and high-need areas.

Agencies involved: QPS

Locations: Statewide

Intensive Case Management ICM

Targeting chronic young offenders and their families to break the crime cycle by addressing risk, encouraging good decision-making, connecting families and addressing issues like problematic substance use.

Agencies involved: DYJ, other appropriately identified government and non-government agencies

Locations: Mount Isa, Tablelands, Cairns, Cassowary Coast, Townsville, Rockhampton, Hervey Bay, Caboolture, Redcliffe, Brisbane, Ipswich, Logan, Toowoomba, Gold Coast, Western Districts and Palm Islands

Community Safety Plan for Queensland funding has also extended ICM to Bundaberg, Redlands, Sunshine Coast, Central West/Emerald, Gladstone.

Data shows a 51 per cent reduction in offending frequency and 72 per cent reduction in the proportion of 'crimes against the person'.

Multi-agency Collaborative Panels (MACP)

Improves integration of government and non-government agencies delivering services in Youth Justice.

Agencies involved: DYJ, QPS, DJAG, Health, Education, DHLGPPW, DTATSIPCA, DCSSDS, QCS

Locations: Statewide

Legal advocacy

Provides young people remanded in custody with legal advice and assistance in making bail applications.

Agencies involved: Legal Aid Queensland, ATSILS and non-government organisations

Locations: Statewide

Road Attitude and Action Planning (RAAP)

QFES currently deliver the Road Attitudes and Action Planning RAAP program. The RAAP program is coordinated and presented by operational firefighters (with additional training in RAAP program delivery) as a preventative strategy to provide information to young people about road safety so that they can make informed decisions.

Agencies involved: QFES

Locations: Statewide

Youth Development and Partnership Fund (YDPF)

The YDPF is designed to support youth crime prevention programs and improve physical and mental health outcomes amongst youth that are at risk of offending or already in conflict with the law.

Agencies involved: QPS, DTS

Locations: Statewide

New programs being trialled or developed

Early Action Groups EAG

Coordination of services and support for young people aged 8 to 16 years and families, where the young person is at a moderate to high-risk of getting involved in crime.

Agencies involved: DYJ, QPS, Education, Health, DCSSDS, DTATSIPCA, DHLGPPW

Locations: Mount Isa, Cairns, Townsville

Fast-track Sentencing pilot program FTS

Identifying, and where possible, addressing causes of court delay to ensure timely finalisation of youth justice proceedings.

Agencies involved: DJAG, DYJ, QPS, Health, Education, DCSSDS, Legal Aid Queensland, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services'

Locations: Cairns, Townsville, Brisbane, Gold Coast (Southport Childrens Court (Magistrate Court) only)

The pilot is showing promising results in reducing case duration of youth justice proceedings, with an independent evaluation to be completed.

Street University SU

Provides a safe space for young people aged 12 to 25 years to engage in vocational and educational workshops, drug and alcohol treatment services, life skills training and mentoring, with pathways to further education.

Agencies involved: Ted Noffs Foundation

Locations: Townsville

JTYouGotThis YGT

Engage young people at risk of being involved in the youth justice system in a 10-week program, including goal setting, mentoring, cultural engagement, and post-program support.

Agencies involved: Non-government organisation

Locations: Mount Isa, Cairns, Townsville

Our families also drive what we do. See what they had to say about some of our programs.

"We did a First Nations painting which helped us to set our goals as a family. I liked it, we need to get back into it soon."

"The voluntary nature helps to build a connection that is not forced. It gives us some ownership over the process."

Youth Drug and Alcohol Treatment Service

A program to reduce the impact of alcohol and drugs as a factor contributing to offending, which also includes a residential component.

Agencies involved: Non-government organisation

Locations: Caboolture

Respected persons co-cautioning

A joint initiative between the QPS and respected persons from First Nations community groups to provide a diversionary option to First Nations young people in the form of a ‘co-caution’, to ensure kinship connections are maintained and the young person receives a culturally appropriate caution, cultural support is being offered in watch houses and follow-up support is prioritised with the young person and their family.

Agencies involved: QPS, First Nations community groups

Locations: Rockhampton (operational); Townsville and Brisbane (trialling)

Electronic Monitoring Trial

GPS enabled monitoring devices fitted to young people as part of bail condition.

Agencies involved: DYJ, QPS, DJAG, QCS

Locations: Mount Isa, Cairns, Townsville, Moreton, Brisbane, Logan, Toowoomba, Gold Coast

See what our young people had to say about some of our programs

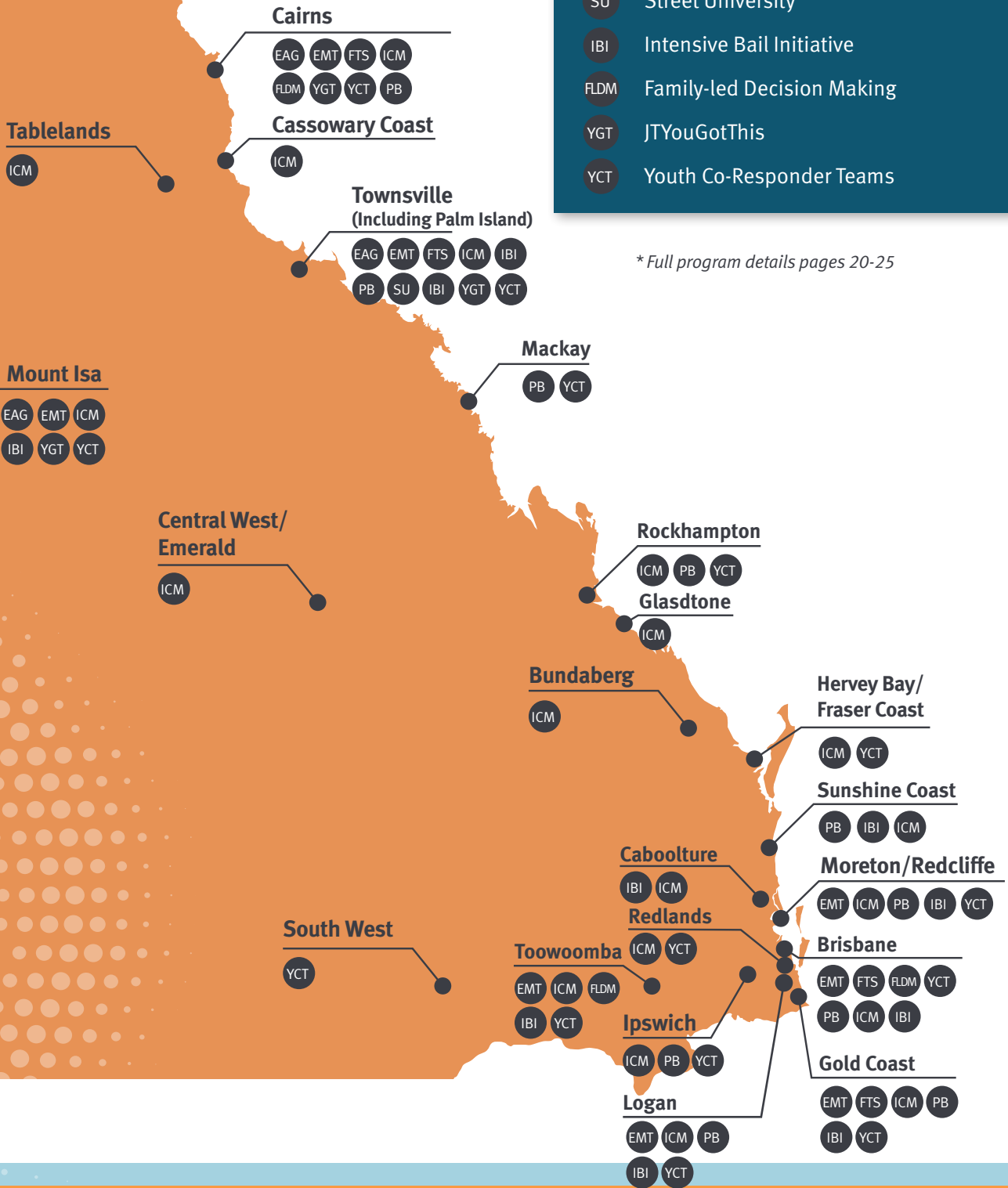
“It’s been helpful. It’s good. I get along with the workers well. They’ve helped me go back to school. I’m in grade 8 this year and you can do courses at school. They were helping me decide what I’d like to do. When I was in grade 7, I was thinking about becoming a lawyer because there’s not many Indigenous lawyers. The workers all said that I can do this. I think it’s better for me to go back to school because then I can graduate and I’ll have more opportunities.”

“One day I’d like to cook a healthy meal with them. They were talking to me about getting my license and helping me do that...the program has helped me work on my anger. Because sometimes I can’t control myself when I get angry. I’m not that social so it [the program] helps me with socialising. I feel a lot better after having yarns with the staff here. It’s helped me because I can go out and do activities. Because otherwise all I do is sleep. I sleep all day. [The program] gets me out of the house and occupies my mind. It’s kept me out of trouble. I don’t jump in cars anymore. Because I know that I can make a change.”

Programs already underway

- EAG** Early Action Groups
- EMT** Electronic Monitoring Trial
- FTS** Fast-track Sentencing pilot program
- ICM** Intensive Case Management
- PB** Project Booyah
- SU** Street University
- IBI** Intensive Bail Initiative
- FLDM** Family-led Decision Making
- YGT** JYouGotThis
- YCT** Youth Co-Responder Teams

* Full program details pages 20-25



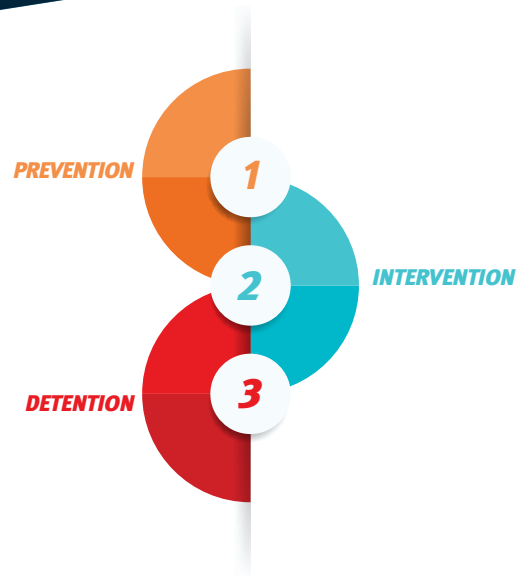
What we are doing

The Strategy is supported by the *Community Safety Plan for Queensland* and backed by \$1.28 billion in additional investment to support victims, deliver for our frontline, detain offenders to protect the community, intervene when people offend and prevent crime before it occurs.

It is also supported by an investment of \$446.4 million over five years to build on actions that have worked, focus on early intervention and prevention, help address the underlying causes of crime, detention where it is needed to keep violent repeat offenders off the street, and to target serious repeat offenders.

Prevention

- Funding \$288 million under the Department of Education’s Youth Engagement Education Reform package to keep kids learning. This includes:
 - expanding the successful Queensland Pathways State College supporting vulnerable students in Years 10–12 to complete their Year 12 education, and create pathways to tertiary education and training
 - establishing specialised alternative learning programs in Cairns, Townsville, Mount Isa and Ipswich to support young persons in contact with youth justice to re-engage in education, training or employment pathways.
- Providing grants for short-term and innovative local solutions to prevent crime and improve the lives of young people.
- Planning to invest \$20.9 billion in 2024–2025 record education budget to deliver the schools, teachers and resources our young Queenslanders need.
- Addressing homelessness through the \$3.1 billion *Homes for Queenslanders* strategy, including delivering eight new youth foyers across the state to help young Queenslanders at risk of homelessness.
- Queensland Government agencies are working together on intensive coordination of services and support to young people and their families at risk of falling into a cycle of crime, through Early Action Groups.
- Expanding the JYouGotThis program for young



people at risk of engagement with the youth justice system.

- Funding for a three-year project to establish effective data sharing between services and agencies with a young person known to multiple services/agencies.
- Delivering the Queensland Health promise to prioritise health services for children and young people either at risk of entering the child protection system, in out-of-home care, or transitioning to adulthood.
- As part of the \$1.645 billion investment into the *Queensland Health Better Care Together Plan*, young people will be supported to address their alcohol and other drug use through a variety of programs and initiatives, including residential treatment.
- Exploring opportunities arising from disability reforms in Queensland including in relation to the finding and recommendations of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability and NDIS Review.
- Delivering Ted Noffs Foundation day and residential programs for young people aged 14 to 17 addressing their experiences with drugs or alcohol, and getting them involved in education.
- Providing after-hours, community integrated and culturally safe diversion response for young people at risk of offending and entering the youth justice system through the Mount Isa Transitional Hub and Lighthouse.
- Investing in the Big Bounce initiative to provide diversionary programs to young people at risk of offending, including community basketball, mentoring and assistance with education and employment opportunities.

Intervention

- Helping schools and police collaborate to better engage parents and anti-social young people who are disengaged from school (including those suspended or truanting) through the Pathway Schools program, and exploring effective and evidence-based programs, like the Ability School Engagement Partnership from The University of Queensland, which targets the root causes of truancy among youth known to police.
- Delivering Youth Co-Responder Teams on the streets to provide comprehensive and effective responses to young people with high-risk behaviours.
- Creating 177 new frontline positions, including four new Court Liaison Officers and eight new Field Officers to work closely with young people appearing before the Childrens Courts to help get their education back on track.
- Investing in personalised and specific health, wellbeing, and disability support for women and girls in youth detention.
- Providing quality gender-specific rehabilitation programs and enhancing programs after release.
- Trialling new Intensive On Country programs to provide cultural based rehabilitation for young First Nations peoples under the supervision of senior First Nations leaders to reduce ongoing reoffending.
- Delivering Multi-agency Collaborative Panels to facilitate intensive collaborative case management of young people considered to be serious repeat offenders. These are now enshrined in legislation.
- Providing vocational training and therapeutic service for young people in, or at risk of facing, the criminal justice system, conducted in partnership with local community groups, through the Transition to Success program.
- Empowering First Nations families to make positive decisions to achieve change in their children's behaviour and meet their ongoing cultural and practical support needs, as part of Family-led Decision Making.
- Ensuring brokerage assistance to young people transitioning from government services, such as Youth Justice and Child Safety, to address their essential housing needs.
- Investing \$6 million, as part of *Community Safety Plan for Queensland* funding, to partner with non-government organisations to provide after-hours support for young people to assist them into accommodation and other support services.
- Developing a number of frameworks for practice and practice standards to ensure vulnerable young people receive the right supports at the right time, including a neurodevelopment framework, gendered framework, and domestic and family violence framework for practice.
- Establishing a Youth Justice peak to assist government develop effective youth crime intervention and prevention strategies and address the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island young people in the Queensland youth justice system and youth detention.
- Funding specialist treatment or rehabilitation services to deliver assessment and counselling to young people aged 10 to 17 who are found guilty of sexual offences.
- Funding the targeted responses to youth crime grants scheme which enables local communities to receive funding for new ideas and projects that support young people who are, or could become, serious repeat offenders, to change their behaviours and improve community connection.
- *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* initiative and pre-apprenticeship programs, both of which receive additional funding through the new *Queensland Skills Strategy* and target disadvantaged job seekers, including youth at risk and youth who are engaged with the criminal justice system.
- Investing in Ted Noffs Foundation and JTYouGotThis programs to meet young people where they are on their journey and create positive behavioural change.

Detention

- Building of a new state-of-the-art youth remand centre is being fast-tracked at Wacol to boost capacity and lead to better outcomes for young people in detention.
- Constructing two new rehabilitative youth detention centres, which build on the good work of the recently constructed therapeutic West Moreton Youth Detention Centre.
- Expand mental, cognitive disability and physical health screening in youth detention centres, as part of *Community Safety Plan for Queensland* funding.
- Commencing transition planning once a young person enters custody, considering what activities a young person can participate in to reduce reoffending upon release. These might include engagement in education, therapeutic supports, and behavioural change and offence orientated programs. Serious repeat offenders are also provided with 72-hour release plans, which are shared with police and other stakeholders to support these young people upon release.
- Providing reoffending programs Changing Habits and Reaching Targets, Aggression Replacement Training, Emotional Regulation and Impulse Control—in line with the behavioural and environmental risk factors for each young person.
- Driving staff recruitment and training activities, which has significantly improved staffing levels and retention. We know having the right staff in our centres is crucial to enhancing outcomes for young people.
- Investing in programs for young people in youth detention which are tailored to meet individual risk and need, including:
 - educational, vocational training and skills offered through the Department of Education
 - targeted cultural programs
 - speech and language programs
 - sport, recreation and fitness programs
 - life skills programs
 - targeted health programs offered through Queensland Health, including mental health, group therapy programs, and problematic substance use intervention
 - behavioural change programs focused on key issues, including domestic and family violence
 - group therapy programs and problematic substance use intervention and behavioural change programs focused on key issues, including domestic and family violence, emotional regulation, and aggression replacement programs.

DYJ program/intervention

What is next?

What we have done

What we are going to do

Queensland Audit Office (QAO)

The QAO commenced an audit of Youth Justice strategies on 24 May 2023. The objective of this audit is to assess whether Youth Justice strategies and programs are effective in reducing crime by serious repeat offenders and improving community safety.

QAO

The Queensland Government will consider outcomes from the report and seek to implement or continue any relevant recommendations.

Youth Justice peak body

A Queensland Youth Justice peak body has been established to drive evidence-based approaches to improve community safety.

The Youth Justice peak body will work with Youth Justice representatives and the state government to inform policy decisions, enhance effective intervention and prevention strategies, address over-representation of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island young people in the Queensland youth justice system, develop strategies to deliver a capable and effective youth justice workforce, and build the capability of service providers in rural and remote locations and those providing services to First Nations and culturally diverse communities.

Strengthened leadership and governance

Implemented a new governance arrangement for oversight of youth justice and youth crime attended by Directors-General, and Deputy Directors-General.

Continue to review our processes to ensure there is an accountable governance system to provide a cohesive response to youth crime.

Youth Justice Outcomes Framework

Implemented a framework to guide development of consistent and comparable data collection and reporting to measure outcomes achieved from programs and services.

New programs and initiatives will include data collection aligned with outcome measures in the Youth Justice Outcomes Framework. The consistent collection of outcome measures improves ability to compare effectiveness of service provision. This will be achieved through the implementation of a new IT system (Unify), that will improve and standardise processes and systems for collecting, recording, and disseminating data.

Strengthened investment and procurement practices

A reporting dashboard is regularly provided for departmental governance to review investment against identified priorities.

DYJ will work collaboratively with the Social Services Industry Reference Group to implement the government's recently developed Best Practice Industry Conditions for Social Service Procurement and develop guidelines and policies that strengthen social procurement capability in what is an increasingly complex environment for social services organisations.

Workforce capability development

DYJ has undertaken a range of activities to address staff shortages across detention centres. Recruitment initiatives include ongoing investment in staff training, utilising analytics to refine processes, strengthening applicant supports, improving staff compensation, building a diverse workforce, redeploying staff as required, and partnering with a range of education and employment service providers to build an ongoing applicant pool for scheduled recruitment cycles.

DYJ is developing an employee value proposition to support development of the Workforce Strategy, which will include a range of professional development and workplace engagement initiatives.

Data governance

Developed the Youth Justice Data Governance Framework and Operating Model to improved and standardise processes and systems for collecting and recording data.

Implement the Youth Justice Data Governance Framework and Operating Model to improve and standardise processes and systems for collecting and recording data.

Community Youth Response and Diversion and Mount Isa Hub

Existing services which aim to divert young people and reduce the number of young people remanded in watchhouses or detention centres.

After-hours services

Enhance after hours services in high needs communities experiencing increases in youth offending by partnering with non-government organisations to provide after-hours support for young people to assist them into accommodation and other support services.

Transitional planning

Transitional planning is undertaken for young people exiting detention.

Improved transitional planning

To support better transitional planning for young people exiting detention, that will reduce recidivism following release.

On Country program

Immersive On Country experience and intensive case work support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

Intensive On Country

Trial a longer residential cultural program that expands on the learnings from the current On Country program. The trial will deliver a wider range of supports to young people and their families to deal with a range of needs that contribute to offending including mental and physical health, problematic substance use, relationship with social media and accessing accommodation.

West Moreton Youth Detention Centre

Located in Wacol (Brisbane) next to Brisbane Youth Detention Centre, West Moreton Youth Detention Centre focuses on working:

- inside-out—keeping an outward focus for young people and building community contacts for them from the point of entry
- outside-in—bringing the community into the centre to work with young people.

Two new therapeutic youth detention centres in Woodford and in Cairns, and Wacol Youth Remand Centre

Builds on learnings from West Moreton to provide therapeutic models and more regional youth detention services, facilitating connection to family, community, country, and support services during detention and when transitioning back into community.

Wacol Youth Remand Centre will lead to improved outcomes through the delivery of essential education and therapeutic services while in detention including a co-designed operating model.

DYJ program/intervention

What is next?

What we have done

Delivered the *Strengthening Community Safety Act 2023* to strengthen laws and hold offenders to account

What we are going to do

Further legislative reform

Taking a whole-of-government approach which includes a focus on breaking the cycle of youth offending by reducing offending and holding offenders to account.

Youth Co-Responder Teams

Police and Youth Justice staff who patrol the streets and engage with young people at local parks and shopping centres, on the street or in their homes, day or night.

Expanded Youth Co-Responder teams

Additional teams in Gold Coast, South Brisbane and Cairns, and expanding to the Sunshine Coast and Southwest regions.

Restorative Justice Conferencing

Brings young people and victims together in a planned and convened conference which allows victims to explain how the young person's offending has harmed them as well as hold young people to account and help repair the harm caused by their offending.

Expanded Restorative Justice Conferencing

Services to ensure victims participating in these processes are supported and experience timely management of their cases.

Intensive Case Management

Provides intensive support delivering evidence-based interventions to a small number of young people with a high risk of reoffending and their families.

Expanded Intensive Case Management

Over two years, across seven locations, including: Bundaberg, Redlands, Sunshine Coast, Central West/ Emerald, Gladstone, and Brisbane and Cleveland Youth Detention Centre. This is in addition to the expansion to Palm Island and enhancement to Townsville programs.

Intensive Bail Initiative

Provides intensive support for young people to help them comply with their bail conditions.

Expand Intensive Bail Initiative

To support the expansion of electronic monitoring of young offenders into additional communities and to a broader cohort.

Electronic Monitoring Trial

Introduced in May 2021 as part of a package of reforms aimed at giving courts the additional tools they need to keep the community safe.

Expanded Electronic Monitoring Trial

To increase the sample size for evaluation:

- include additional geographical areas
- add new prescribed indictable offences
- vary the eligibility criteria including the prerequisite for a prior conviction.

Vulnerable cohorts

- Women’s Safety and Justice Taskforce (WSJT) Report 2 – Women and Girls in the Criminal Justice System.
- *Shifting Minds: The Queensland Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs, and Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan 2023–2028*.
- The Queensland Government’s 10-year reform program to put an end to DFV in partnership with the non-government sector, business and the Queensland community.
- Recommendation of the Queensland Family and Child Commission’s *Queensland Child Rights Report 2023* to strengthen advocacy and representation.
- Queensland Women and Girls’ Health Strategy 2032.

Gendered framework

- More gender-responsive approaches for girls and young women in Queensland’s youth justice system and a framework for girls and young women, including foundational training and capability development materials to support DYJ staff.
- This project contributes towards recommendations from the Women’s Safety and Justice Taskforce (WSJT) Report 2 – Women and Girls in the Criminal Justice System.

Neurodevelopmental

- Person-centred navigator and advocacy pilots targeting young people under the age of 18 who have a neurodevelopmental or intellectual disability and who are in contact with the youth justice system.
- DYJ is developing and implementing a youth justice neurodevelopmental practice framework and practice standards.

DFV Framework

- Community consultation underway to develop a youth justice DFV framework.

Place-based approaches, with locally-led initiatives

Youth Crime Prevention Grants available for short-term, culturally responsive, community-based projects that respond to the causes of youth crime, based on identified local needs and service system gaps.

Youth Crime Prevention Grants:

- Community-based Crime Action grants offer up to \$75,000 for prevention and early intervention programs that encourage at-risk young people to positively engage with their community.
- Targeted Responses to Youth Crime grants offer up to \$300,000 for projects addressing the drivers of youth crime behaviours, particularly young people at risk of reoffending and serious repeat offenders.

Measures, outputs, research and evaluation

In 2023–2024, DYJ commenced public quarterly reporting on three new measures. These new measures, along with other valuable youth justice data, including annual census information, are available the Department of Youth Justice website (desbt.qld.gov.au/youth-justice).

Publicly available data, including Service Delivery Standards (SDS) provide public accountability of our investment in youth justice since 2015, including the 2024–2025 Budget.

| Service standards | 2023–24 Target/Est. | 2023–24 Est. Actual | 2024–25 Target/Est. |
|--|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Effectiveness measures | | | |
| Percentage of orders supervised in the community that are successfully completed: | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young offenders other young offenders all young offenders. | 83% | 77% | 83% |
| | 90% | 87% | 90% |
| | 85% | 81% | 85% |
| Proportion of young offenders who have another charged offence or are referred by Queensland Police Service to a Restorative Justice Conference within 12 months of an initial finalisation for a proven offence. ¹ | 69% | 70% | 69% |
| Rate of young people aged 10 to 17 years who have contact with Youth Justice, per 10,000 population: ² | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young offenders other young offenders all young offenders | 428 | 397 | 390 |
| | 32 | 31 | 30 |
| | 63 | 60 | 59 |
| Proportion of young people declared a serious repeat offender under the <i>Youth Justice Act 1992</i> out of all young people with a proven offence finalised. ³ | 5% | 1.5% | 1.5% |
| Average daily number of young people in detention centres, rate per 10,000 population: | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander other total. | 46.1 | 49.3 | 46.1 |
| | 1.7 | 2.1 | 1.7 |
| | 5.3 | 5.9 | 5.3 |
| Youth detention centre utilisation rate. | 99% | 99% | 99% |
| Efficiency measure | | | |
| Cost per young offender supervised in the community per day. ⁴ | \$363.71 | \$293.92 | \$300.00 |

1. This service standard is also presented in the Queensland Police Service 2024–2025 Service Delivery Statements.

2. The rate of young people per 10,000 who have contact with Youth Justice is falling. In 2023–2024 the rate has been falling more rapidly than expected resulting in the 2023–2024 Estimated Actual being lower than the 2023–24 Target/Estimate. The 2024–2025 Target/Estimate has been revised downwards to reflect the continuing downward trend.

3. Declarations are made under section 150A of the *Youth Justice Act 1992*. The 2023–24 Target/Estimate represents an initial estimation. The 2024–2025 Target/Estimate has been revised downwards to reflect use to date.

4. It is inclusive of the total cost of community-based supervision, divided by the number of young people subject to community-based supervision on an average day. The data available when setting the 2023–2024 Target/Estimate suggested consecutive years of growth in the cost of supervising a young person in the community. The 2023–2024 Estimate Actual, however, reflects a change in this trend through a smaller decrease in the number of young people subject to community-based supervision on an average day than forecasted. As a result, the cost per day is below the target estimate. The 2024–2025 Target/Estimate has been revised downwards to reflect the latest data.

SDS data can show us how our services and programs are impacting on the number of First Nations young people coming into the youth justice system, the number of young people in custody and those declared as serious repeat offenders.

Research and evaluation

A program of evaluations is helping us better understand not only what works, but what works for whom, where and why. We have published 12 program evaluations and reports on the DYJ website. Four evaluations will be published in 2024.

Closing the Gap—Target 11

Closing the Gap aims to improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians by ensuring we work in partnership with First Nations Australians to deliver change.

The Queensland Government is committed to Closing the Gap targets with a specific focus within the youth justice system on Target 11.

Target 11 aims to reduce the rate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10 to 17 years) in detention by at least 30 per cent.

Queensland's progress towards Closing the Gap, including Target 11, can be found on the Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts website (dsdsatsip.qld.gov.au).



Next steps

This strategy sets out a framework to guide future work. While much has been achieved to date, there is more work to be done. An evaluation will monitor and track the progress of our reforms against the following key indicators:

- the change in the rate of youth reoffending
- the number of First Nations young people in youth detention
- the proportion of serious repeat offenders.

These measures will be reported online (desbt.qld.gov.au/youth-justice/data) in the Department of Youth Justice annual report, and through annual reporting on Closing the Gap targets (please see page 34).

We will continue to evaluate existing programs and pilots to make sure they are effective. Guided by

reports of the Youth Justice Reform Select Committee and Queensland Audit Office, we will implement the recommended reforms to make Queensland safer. We will invest in research and development into the contributing factors of young people turning to crime, particularly concerning neurological impairment and mental health.

Engaging with community-controlled organisations and working with First Nations young people and their families will continue to be a major focus for the Department of Youth Justice, to ensure these young people are re-engaged in education and diverted away from crime.

Conclusion

The nature of youth crime is complex and changing, so we need to be agile to stop it. We have listened to experts, victims, young people, and service providers to make sure we are doing what works. We will continue to respond with new programs and policy where new evidence arises or circumstances change.

Our strategy for addressing youth crime is rooted in prevention, intervention, and detention (where necessary), while also promoting partnerships and community involvement and making a commitment to supporting victims. By investing in education, health services, housing and training, we aim to provide our youth with the tools they need to thrive. Simultaneously, we will strengthen our support systems and enhance laws and enforcement to ensure a safe environment for all.

We will be guided by the evidence and research to make sure our strategy is responsive and efficient and seek the input of all those who have a stake in supporting our youth and our communities. A *Safer - Queensland Youth Justice Strategy 2024–2028* is our aim, and this strategy is one in a suite of government initiatives to achieve this.

Glossary

| Name | Meaning |
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| 72-hour release plan | Detailed release plan, including transition arrangements, for serious repeat offenders which cover the first 72 hours upon exiting a custodial setting. |
| Atkinson Review | A 2018 report on Youth Justice, authored by Mr Robert (Bob) Atkinson AO, which also advised on progress of the government’s Youth Justice reform, other measures to reduce recidivism, and recommendations for youth detention stemming from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse. |
| Behavioural change program | An initiative or program designed to help a young person address their harmful behaviours and adopt more positive behaviours. |
| Childrens Court | A specialist court which deals with young people, aged 10 to 17 years old, who commit offences. |
| Closing the Gap | A national strategy which aims to reduce the disparity between Australian and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples on health, education, and economic targets. |
| Co-design | This refers to a collaborative approach between stakeholders, including First Nations peoples and communities, other government organisations, non-government organisations, young people and families, in identifying and implementing solutions. |
| Community Safety Plan for Queenslanders | A Queensland Government strategy, announced on 30 April 2024, which invests \$1.28 billion over five years for community safety measures across five pillars: supporting victims; delivering for frontline; detaining offenders; intervening when people offend; and preventing crime before it occurs. |
| Electronic monitoring | Involves an electronic monitoring device being fitted to an eligible young person, which monitors their location using GPS coordinates, and provides real-time alerts of any unauthorised movements. |
| Family-led Decision Making | Empowering First Nations families to adopt a central role in decision-making and identify solutions to address a young person’s offending behaviour. |
| First Nations | The first Australian peoples, which includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Youth Justice recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people need to be supported in a culturally appropriate way. |
| Illicit substances | Illegal drugs, such as methamphetamine, cannabis, and opiates, as well as non-medical use of drugs that are legally available, such as pain killers and sleeping pills. |

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| Jack's Law | Jack's Law provides police with powers to 'wand' people for knives without a warrant in designated areas. The aim is to reduce knife related crimes. |
| Living document | A document which can be continually edited or updated. <i>The Strategy</i> will be continually updated when new responses to youth crime are trialled, programs and investments are expanded and extended, and as we increase our understanding and evidence base of what works, for whom and when. |
| Property crime | When a victim has their belongings or property stolen, damaged or destroyed, this is called 'property crime'. |
| Proven offence | When a young person has been found guilty or has pled guilty to committing an offence. |
| Putting Queensland Kids First | A Queensland Government initiative, released on 02 June 2024, which invests \$502 million to support Queensland families and children in giving them the best start in life. |
| QATSICPP | The Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak. |
| QCOSS | Queensland Council of Social Services. |
| Queensland Audit Office | An independent auditor of the public sector, ensuring better public services for Queenslanders. |
| Queensland Skills Strategy | A Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT) strategy which seeks to provide pathways into jobs for Queenslanders while delivering priority skills in traditional and emerging industries. |
| Reoffending programs | Programs and interventions that can help address the causes of offending. |
| Risk, Need, Responsivity model | A significant body of evidence which indicates the most effective way to reduce reoffending in youth justice is to apply the RNR model. Services are matched to a young person's risk of reoffending, with work focusing on the highest identified needs, ensuring programs are adapted to meet the individual characteristics of a young person (responsivity). |
| Senior Officer Reference Group | A multi-agency group of Directors-General and Senior Executives who address challenges within the youth justice system. |
| Serious Repeat Offender | The top 20 per cent of youth offenders who are committing crimes at the highest frequency and severity, who generally receive support through Multi-agency Collaborative Panels and other holistic supports. |
| TAFE | TAFE is a government-run system in Australia that provides education after high school in vocational areas. |
| Transition to Success (T2S) | T2S is a training program for young people of 15 to 18 years who are involved in the youth justice system or are assessed as being at risk of entering it. |

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| Young person | Generally referenced as those who are subject to the <i>Youth Justice Act 1992</i> . An individual aged between 10 to 17 years engaged with the Department of Youth Justice. |
| Youth Detention Centre | Youth detention centres are established under the <i>Youth Justice Act 1992</i> to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• protect the safety of the community• provide consequences for offending• prepare detained young people to live productively in the community. |
| Youth Engagement Reform Package | A Queensland Government investment package to support educational engagement for a range of students, including those needing additional support to remain engaged or become re-engaged in learning and those involved in youth justice. |
| Youth Justice census | The statewide census contains information on young people who on the census date were under active supervision in the community or were in custody in a youth detention centre or a watchhouse, collated by case managers/workers, restorative justice convenors and T2S program staff. |
| Youth Justice peak | <p>The new Youth Justice peak was announced on 16 May 2024 and will work with justice representatives and the state government to inform policy that improves community safety.</p> <p>The Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Child Protection Peak (QATSICPP) has been appointed as the inaugural coordinator of the body, supported by QCOSS.</p> |
| Youth Justice Reform Select Committee | On 12 October 2023, the Youth Justice Reform Select Committee was established to conduct an inquiry to examine ongoing reforms to the youth justice system and support for victims of crime. |
| Youth Justice Strategy Reference Group | The Youth Justice Strategy Reference Group provides advice to the Queensland Government on strategies, action plans and emerging issues to identify whole-of-government and community actions required to reduce youth offending (particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people). |



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