



Transition to Success: Evaluation summary report

Department of Youth Justice

September 2018

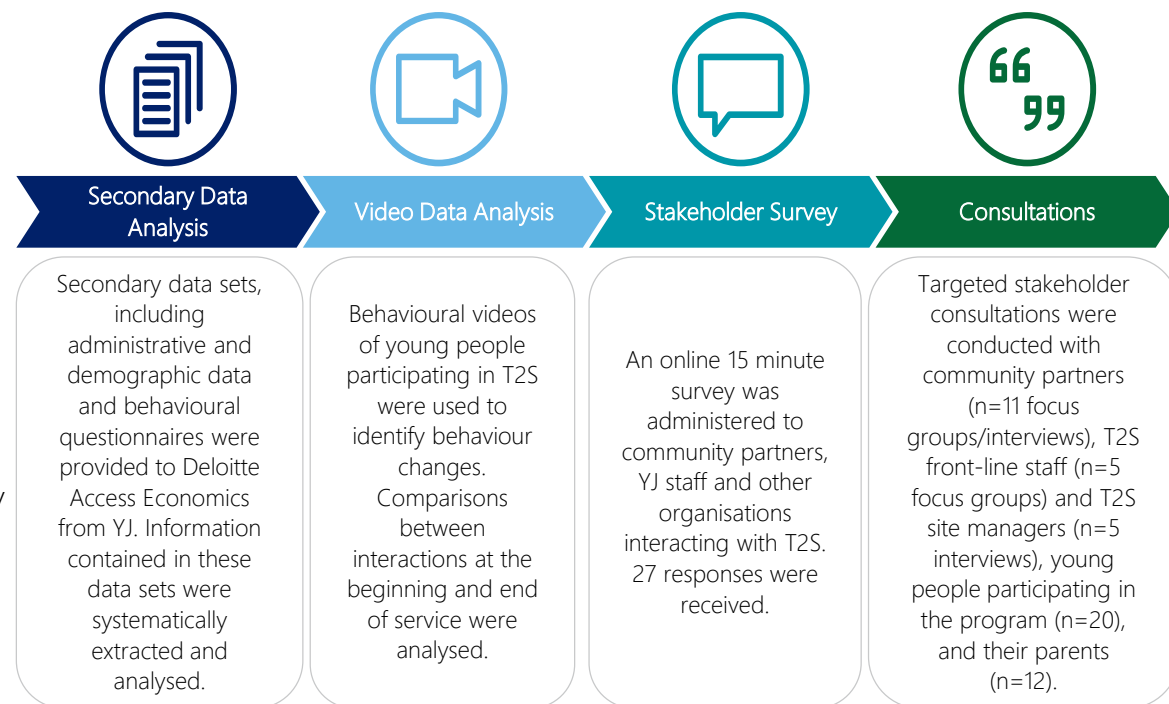
Background and approach

Transition to Success (T2S) is a service delivered by Youth Justice in Queensland under the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women (DCSYW), which aims to prevent at risk young people from entering the criminal justice system and reduce reoffending among young people involved in the system.

Deloitte Access Economics was engaged by DCSYW to conduct an outcome evaluation of the T2S service. The purpose of this evaluation is to:

- Assess the effectiveness of T2S in reducing youth offending and achieving other behavioural and social intended outcomes as identified in the Program Logic;
- Give consideration to the appropriateness, efficiency, sustainability and equity of the T2S program;
- Understand the costs and benefits associated with delivering the outcomes; and
- Identify any unintended impacts of T2S.

Overview of approach to data collection and analysis



Cost benefit analysis

The T2S Program has a net present value (NPV) of \$15.6 million (using a 7% real discount rate) and a benefit cost ratio (BCR) of 2.57. In other words, **every \$1 spent on the program results in \$2.57 of benefits.**

The benefits/avoided costs are driven by the reduction in offending outcomes in the treatment group relative to the comparator cohort. The T2S Program results in benefits to the government and society, including **avoided costs of custody** (\$18.3 million in PV terms over the evaluation period), **avoided costs of supervision** (\$5.1 million in PV terms) and **avoided costs of crime** (\$2.2 million in PV terms).

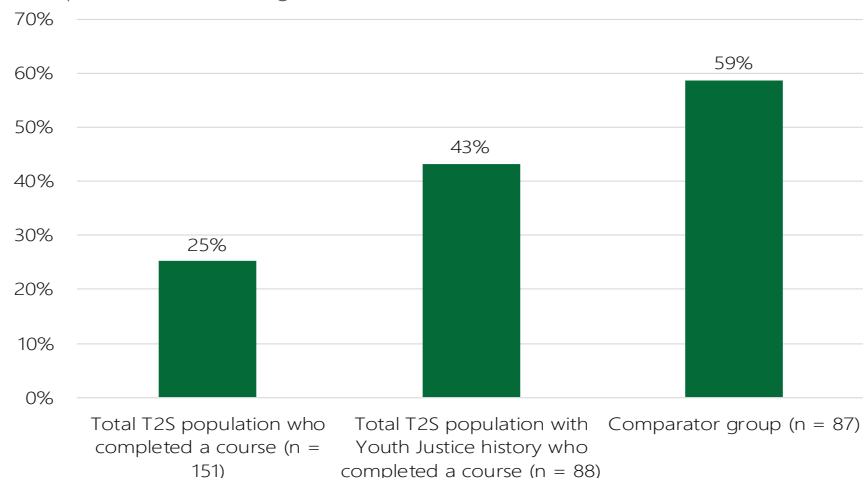
The T2S Program has a total cost of \$10.0 million in PV terms over the evaluation period. This includes payments of wages and salaries to staff as well as any other program operating costs.

Cost benefit analysis results of the T2S program

	Net present value (\$2016-17)
Costs	\$10.0m
Operational costs	\$10.0m
Benefits	\$25.6m
Avoided costs of custody nights	\$18.3m
Avoided costs of supervision	\$5.1m
Avoided costs of crime	\$2.2m
Net present value	\$15.6m
Benefit cost ratio	2.57

Effectiveness and equity

Comparison of offending outcomes for different cohorts



Source: T2S program data, Total T2S Population who completed a course; T2S program data, Total T2S population with Youth Justice history who completed a course; T2S comparator data

Has T2S facilitated engagement with education, employment or training?

Analysis of referral pathways into T2S sites across Queensland show that more than half (59%) of participants are referred from Youth Justice and approximately a quarter (27%) from Education Queensland.

Completion rates among young people accepted into T2S is 81%. The completion rate among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people is comparable to that of the entire cohort, at 82%.

T2S successfully facilitated further engagement with education, employment and training, with 95% of young people following one of these paths or participating in another T2S course.

Young people completing T2S say that the course has given them the skills to get a job or to participate in further education. They also say they feel more confident after completing T2S. They discover talents, and have more optimism about the future. Young people now feel a sense of belonging, where they are away from negative influences and can be themselves.

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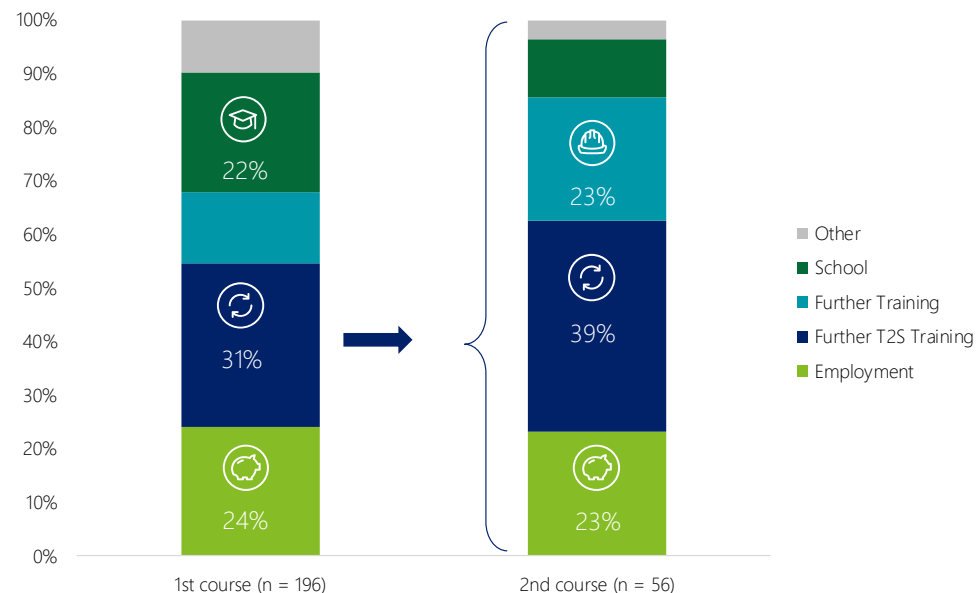
Has T2S reduced reoffending?

Offending outcomes were analysed by comparing a sample of the YJ population matched against T2S young people with prior offending history. Matched characteristics included risk level, nights in custody, gender, age, location, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status and offending profile.

Less than half (43%) of the T2S participants with an offending history (treatment group) reoffended within 6 months of completing their course, compared with 59% of the comparator group. The overall reoffending rate for all T2S participants who completed a course was 25%.

In the 12 months prior to engaging in a T2S course, the treatment group spent an average of 2.2 nights in custody per month. In the 6 months after completing a T2S course, this reduced to 0.5 nights per month. Similarly, the average number of supervision days per month decreased for the T2S treatment group from 13.6 to 13.2 following completion of the course.

Transition pathways disaggregated by number of T2S course completions



Source: T2S program data, all T2S completed courses

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Efficiency and sustainability

Efforts have been made at service sites to use resources efficiently by **leveraging in-kind support** and the facilities of community partners, as well as **using materials and learnings from previous cohorts**. Between T2S sites there is also evidence of synergies by engaging the same RTO, Community of Practice monthly practice meetings, providing standardised training and utilising graduates to act as advocates **to attract and motivate new participants**.

Based on survey responses and consultations, staff and community partners' involvement with **T2S was a positive experience contributing to improved job satisfaction**.

A number of **enablers and barriers** to the effective and efficient operation of the service were acknowledged by stakeholders.

Enablers and areas for improvement for the effective and efficient operation of T2S

Enablers

- Providing a wrap-around service
- Implementing routine and consistency
- Workplace based learning
- Having the right trainers and staff
- Program management
- Setting short-term goals
- Building rapport and a group mentality
- Mentoring, relationship building and role modelling
- Community fit

Barriers


- Lack of motivation and 'readiness'
- Range of influences in their external environment
- Being out of formal education for a prolonged period of time
- Variability in the skills and abilities of the young people
- Cultural appropriateness
- Engagement with families
- Course length

Source: Consultation


Appropriateness

The **T2S service model demonstrates each of the five best practice features** of an appropriate and effective youth justice intervention identified in the literature (community based, multidisciplinary, individualised, culturally appropriate and facilitates reintegration into community), with some variation between service sites.

The key results of the evaluation based on a survey of responses from T2S staff and community partners include:

 **89%**
agree T2S is appropriate
for its **target cohort**

93% 
agree T2S is
appropriately **tailored to
their community**

81% 
agree T2S is
culturally appropriate

Source: Survey data, select stakeholders

Areas for consideration

Based on consultations with T2S staff, community partners, young people and parents, eight key areas of the service model were recognised as priority areas for consideration in future service deliveries.



Engagement with Families – stakeholders noted that some observed changes in young people could not be sustained due to complex home environments that were not being addressed by the service. To produce sustainable change with flow-on effects to either siblings or other family members, would require more intentional engagement of family members in the service delivery, as well as connections with other agencies to provide a wrap-around service.



Transitional pathways out of T2S – despite having individualised case-plans as part of the service, all sites acknowledged they could be more intentional with the transition from T2S into education, training or employment.



Staff resourcing – staff resourcing was mentioned as a barrier to the effective operation of T2S, particularly in locations of larger cohorts. Staff are no longer able to provide the same level of support they provided in previous years because T2S has increased its coverage across Queensland, resulting in resources being stretched.



Opportunities for staff – maintaining a high level of job satisfaction will be key to the effective delivery and sustainability of the program. As a major enabler of the program's success is the dedication of the staff and the positive relationships they form with the young people, consideration needs to be given to succession planning.



Cultural Appropriateness – some sites have made an effort to improve the cultural appropriateness of the T2S service. These include having culturally connected case workers, incorporating activities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and delivering cultural capability training for YJ staff. However, staff acknowledged that the cultural appropriateness of T2S could be further developed.



Balancing Independence – Stakeholders noted that in some cases T2S reduced the independence of young people due to the support-intensive nature of the service, despite it intending to achieve the opposite.



Expansion to other sites – In determining the rollout of T2S sites in the future, consideration should be given to the current lower proportion of young people who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in the T2S cohort



Community investment – Some sites lack investment from community partners due to a lack of community awareness about the program. Sites have to rely on YJ to initiate community involvement, or their existing relationships with local organisations. Development of community campaign materials for use by all the sites, which can be customised based on circumstances and priorities, would reduce the requirement of individual sites to allocate extensive resources to developing their own materials and recruiting partners.