



2021-22 Public Accounts and Estimates Committee Budget Estimates Hearing

The Hon. Natalie Hutchins
Minister for Youth Justice

Wednesday 30 June 2021



We are **focused on diversion** which is **driving down the number of young people** in Youth Justice.

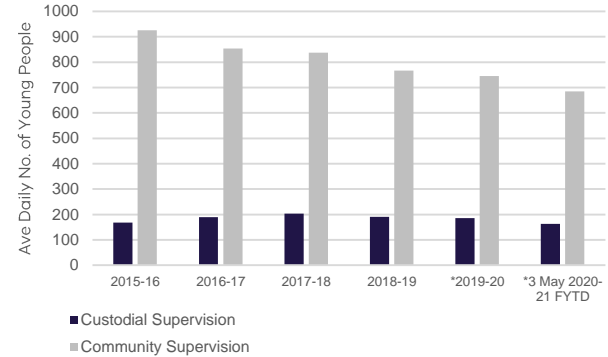
This led to a **18 per cent decrease** in the **average number of Aboriginal children** aged 10-17 in Youth Justice in 2019-20.*

Further, in 2019-20:

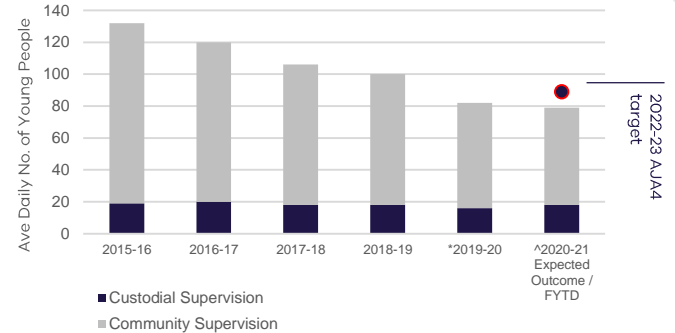
- Victoria had the **lowest rate of young people aged 10-17 per 10,000 population in Youth Justice overall**, as well as the **lowest rate of young people under community and custodial supervision**
- **1,170** diversions through the **Children's Court Youth Diversion Service**, with a 95 per cent success rate.
- **1,706** young people accessed the **Youth Support Service** early intervention program
- **2,159** young people were supported by the **Children's Court Education Justice Initiative**
- **90** young people and their families received intensive family support through **Functional Family Therapy or Multi-Systemic Therapy**.

*AIHW have re-based their 2018-19 results. This has resulted in fewer Aboriginal children aged 10-17 being counted in Youth Justice in 2018-19 (decrease from 108 to 99 young people). This has resulted in the annual percentage decrease in Aboriginal children aged 10-17 years under Youth Justice supervision changing from 25% to 18%.

Graph 1
Young people under Youth Justice supervision



Graph 2
Aboriginal young people aged 10-17 under Youth Justice supervision



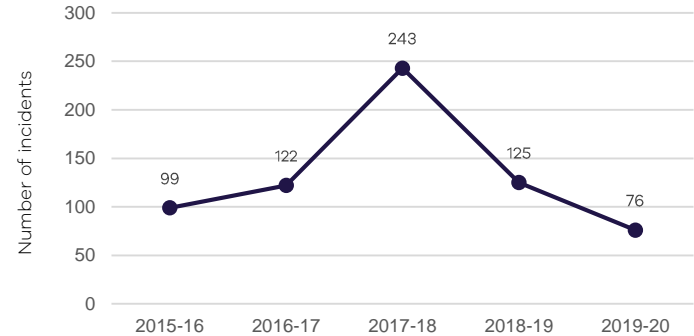
In Youth Justice custody we continue to focus on **stable operations** and invest in our workforce.

Our **Youth Justice Workforce Plan** includes a range of initiatives to **attract, retain and build the capability** of the Youth Justice workforce.

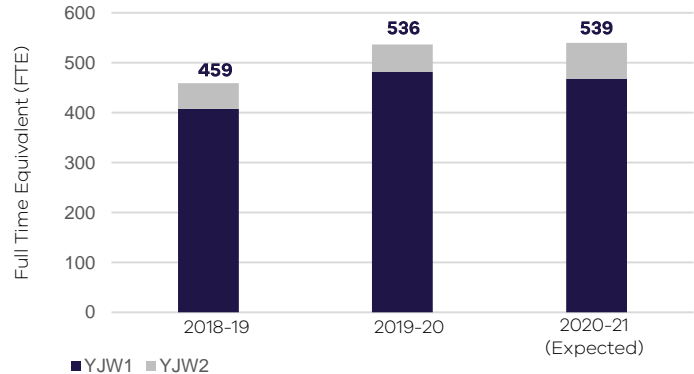
To date:

- A team of **behaviour support specialists** has been employed in YJ centres to support staff to address the behaviours of young people.
- A new **Certificate IV in Youth Justice** has been developed. The qualification will be mandatory for all new entry level staff, with existing staff strongly encouraged to complete the qualification.
- New **training programs** including working with young people from CALD backgrounds, leadership training and COVID-19 infection prevention and control have been developed and delivered.
- **Restorative practice** is being embedded into custodial operations with staff trained.

Graph 3
Category 1 incidents



Graph 4
Custodial staffing numbers



*includes ongoing full time, ongoing part time, fixed term and casual employees



The 2021-22 State Budget invests **\$165.1 million over four years** to continue work to date and further improve Youth Justice Services.



community services such as **after-hours supports** for young people at risk, and the delivery of **evidence-based family therapy**.



workers in local communities to support the **diversion** of children away from the criminal justice system.



dedicated **cultural supports** for children and their families from **culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds**.



treatment programs in custody and the community to help children and young people **address the root causes of offending**.



And **\$1.4 million** for 2020-21, to support Youth Justice's **response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic**.



The **\$165.1 million** includes operational funding for the new Youth Justice facility at Cherry Creek.

Cherry Creek is purpose built and will focus on rehabilitation. It will have **onsite facilities** to support young people's **mental health**.

Smaller accommodation units will help staff address young people's very complex needs.

Works completed to date include:

- Multiple **building structures are nearing completion**, including the reception building. The mental health building is well underway, as are multiple accommodation units.
- **Fit out and finishes are underway**, with the first building to commence commissioning in October 2021.
- More than **500,000 work hours** have been completed on site so far, with an **average of over 400 workers on site every day**.

We are on track for **practical completion** in mid-2022.



The 2021-22 State Budget invests **\$165.1 million** over four years to continue work to date and further improve Youth Justice Services.



\$30.7 million over four years across the Mental Health, Corrections and Youth Justice portfolios, including:

- Funding to support the **mental health and wellbeing** of young people in Youth Justice custody and those transitioning
- Funding to work with partners to **co-design** the new **forensic mental health service**



\$16.5 million over four years across the Police, Crime Prevention, Corrections and Youth Justice portfolios, including funding to continue Victoria's **response to violent extremism**, including to support disengagement and diversion programs in Youth Justice.



\$33.1 million over 4 years for the Attorney-General's portfolio, including funding to **keep 10-13 year old Aboriginal children out of Youth Justice**





Thank you.

