

# Public Accounts and Estimates Committee 2023-24

## Budget Estimates Hearings

**The Hon. Enver Erdogan MLC**  
Minister for Youth Justice

Thursday 15 June 2023



# Youth Justice

## 2023-24 Budget Overview

The 2023-24 Budget invests \$58.92 million to continue our work to deliver a leading Youth Justice system in Victoria, address over-representation and provide children and young people with genuine opportunities to turn their lives around.

This includes funding for new and critical reforms to continue our focus on early intervention and diversion measures, that are keeping children and young people out of the Youth Justice system in the first place.



**\$53.92 million**

Give young people genuine opportunities to turn their lives around:

- Continue effective service delivery across custodial and community operations
- Continue to support evidence-based diversionary measures
- Support and training for frontline custodial staff
- Address over-representation in youth justice



**\$5.00 million**

- Provide early intervention, diversion, and family therapy programs for 10-11 year old children in contact, or at risk of contact with the justice system.



# Continuing effective service delivery

The 2023-24 Budget invests \$53.92 million to support continued effective service delivery across community and custodial operations and address over-representation in youth justice.



**\$53.92 million**

to continue critical initiatives in Youth Justice and support frontline operations

- Culturally responsive services to support Aboriginal young people in custody
- Additional investment in frontline custodial staff and the Safety and Emergency Response Team
- Offence-specific services for young people subject to community-based orders
- Deliver programs to help address the over-representation of at-risk young people in contact with the justice system



**\$34.56 million**

of further funding in 2022-23 will cover COVID-19 related expenses for Corrections Victoria and Youth Justice

- Continuing a safe and proportionate response to Covid-19 in Youth Justice



# Support for progressive reforms

The 2023-24 Budget invests \$5.00 million to deliver critical reforms to prevent children and young people from coming into contact with the Youth Justice system.



The Government implemented the **Early Intervention Investment Framework (EIIF)** in the 2021-22 Budget to improve outcomes for Victorians while reducing pressure on acute services – and reinvesting avoided costs back into future EIIF initiatives.

**\$677 million** over five years is provided in this budget to deliver 22 early intervention initiatives which are anticipated to generate economic and fiscal benefits of around **\$1 billion** in the next decade.

**\$5.00 million via EIIF** to implement Victoria's minimum age of criminal responsibility reform

- Victoria will raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility in two stages – from 10 to 12 years old without exceptions in the first instance, and then to 14 years old with exceptions
- It will be critical to ensure developmentally appropriate services are available for children and their families, to provide targeted support in lieu of the criminal justice system
- \$5 million has been allocated to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing to work with the Department of Justice and Community Safety which will fund early intervention, diversion and family therapy programs for children aged 10 and 11 in contact, or at risk of contact, with the justice system
- This funding forms part of the Early Intervention Investment Framework
- Further work will be undertaken, in consultation with an Independent Review Panel, to determine what the alternative service model looks like ahead of an increase to 14 years old

# Victoria's ongoing commitment to improving and investing in our Youth Justice system

A range of significant reforms have been delivered through this funding, including the **new Cherry Creek Youth Justice Precinct**, the **Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2020-30**, **Wirkara Kulpa**, the **Aboriginal Youth Justice Strategy**, and the **Youth Diversion Statement**.

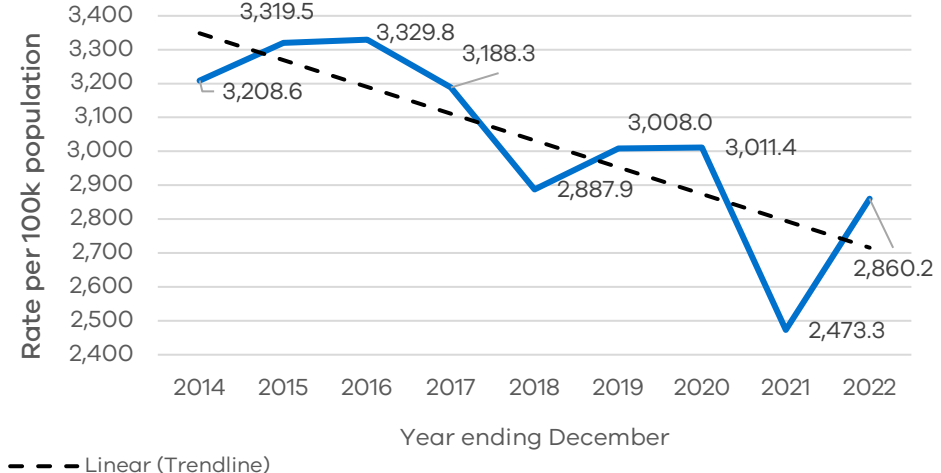
**Youth Justice is committed to diversion, prevention, and early intervention as the most effective way to reduce youth offending**

- In 2021-22, 1544 diversions through the Children's Court Youth Diversion Service, with a 99 per cent success rate
- In 2022-23, 1,594 young people accessed the Youth Support Service and Aboriginal Youth Support Service
- In 2022-23, 118 young people and their families received intensive family support from the Multisystemic Therapy and Functional Family Therapy programs
- As of 31 March 2023, 114 matters have been heard by the Children's Court Weekend Online Remand Court since it commenced in September 2022
- On 30 April 2023, the Youth Justice Bail After Hours Service commenced (formerly Central After-Hours Assessment and Bail Placement Service). It is a state-wide bail assessment service that provides a single point of contact for police who are seeking to remand a young person after-hours

**The investment and reform in Youth Justice services coincides with a long-term decline in the rate of alleged offender incidents in Victoria**

**Graph 1**

**Alleged Offender, aged 10-17, Incident Rate per 100,000 population Victoria (Crime Statistics Agency)**

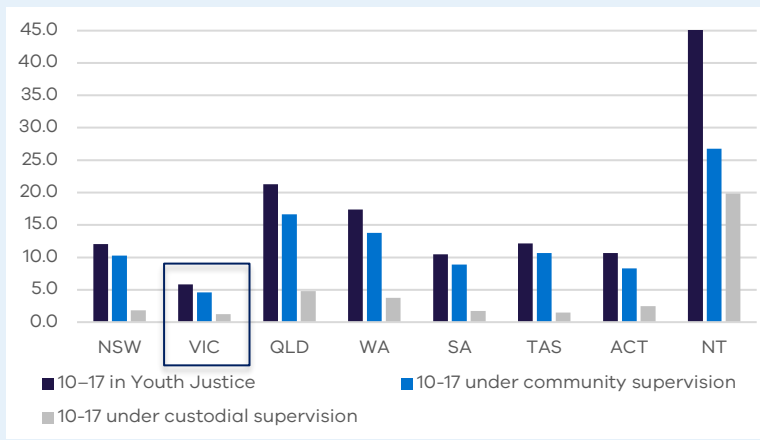


## Meaningful and effective interventions for young people who come into contact with custodial and community services is driving down the number of young people in contact with Youth Justice.

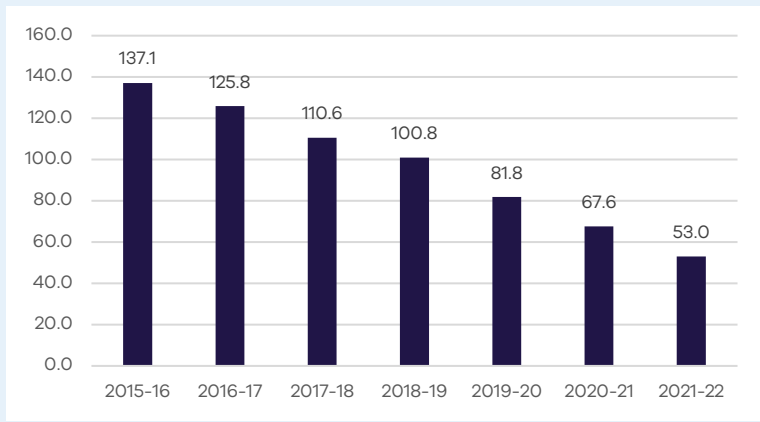
- In 2021-22, Victoria had the lowest rate of young people aged 10-17 in Youth Justice overall across Australia, as well as the lowest rate of young people under community and custodial supervision
- In 2021-22, there were 1.5 young people on an average day in youth justice custody aged 10 – 13 years old.
- In 2021-22, the average daily rate per 10,000 of Aboriginal children aged 10 to 17 years under Youth Justice supervision reduced by 52 per cent over the five years from 2017-18
- Youth Justice is on track to exceed targets under the Aboriginal Justice Agreement 4 and Closing the Gap



**Graph 2**  
Young people aged 10–17 under supervision on an average day, per 10,000 young people, by state/territory, 2021-22



**Graph 3**  
Aboriginal young people aged 10–17 under supervision on an average day, per 10,000 Aboriginal young people in Victoria, 2015-16 to 2021-22



# Cherry Creek is a flagship purpose-built facility, to focus on rehabilitating young people and provide the best working environment for staff



## Purpose-built design

- Built from the ground up to promote rehabilitation
- Provide more targeted, individual support
- Smaller units for four or eight young people



## 140 Beds

- 120 main accommodation rooms
- 20 specialist beds including:
  - 8 mental health beds;
  - 8 intensive intervention beds; and
  - a dedicated unit for males detained on preventative detention (4 beds)



## New security and safety features

- Safer working environment for staff
- Uplifted capabilities and accountabilities of staff to better reflect the increased focus on rehabilitation of young people



## Key features

- Specially designed units, including mental health units
- Education, recreation, cultural and multi-faith facilities





**Thank you.**

