Indigenous Youth Justice Programs Evaluation

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Executive summary

Diversion from the youth justice system is a critical goal for addressing the overrepresentation of Indigenous young people in the criminal justice system. In this report, four programs that were already being implemented by states and territories and identified by them under the *National Indigenous Law & Justice Framework* as promising practice in diversion are examined. The programs were evaluated, as part of a broader initiative, to determine whether and on what basis they represent good practice (ie are supported by evidence). State and territory governments nominated the programs for evaluation.

The four programs sit at different points along a continuum, ranging from prevention (addressing known risk factors for offending behaviour, such as disengagement from family, school, community or culture), early intervention (with identified at-risk young people), diversion (diverting from court process—usually for first or second time offenders) and tertiary intervention (treatment to prevent recidivism):

- *Aboriginal Power Cup* (South Australia)—a sports-based program for engaging Indigenous young people in education and providing positive role models (prevention).
- *Tiwi Islands Youth Development and Diversion Unit* (Northern Territory)—a diversion program that engages Tiwi youth who are at risk of entering the criminal justice system in prevention activities, such as a youth justice conference, school, cultural activities, sport and recreation (early intervention and diversion).
- *Woorabinda Early Intervention Panel Coordination Service* (Queensland)—a program to assess needs and make referrals for young Indigenous people and their families who are at risk or have offended and have complex needs (early intervention and diversion).
- *Aggression Replacement Training* (Queensland)—a 10 week group cognitive-behavioural program to control anger and develop pro-social skills, delivered to Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth assessed as 'at risk' of offending or reoffending (early intervention and tertiary intervention with offenders to reduce risk of reoffending).

For each program, the evaluation team developed a 'program logic', identifying the activities and goals of the program, and how it articulates within a broader framework of criminal justice prevention. This informed the design of the evaluation and the approach to collecting both qualitative data (from young people participating in the program, program staff, family, or other service providers/community members) and quantitative data to identify any effects of the program on individuals, or the broader community.

Aboriginal Power Cup (South Australia)

Many of the requests for quantitative data on educational performance and engagement were not met. Available data showed that Aboriginal Power Cup enrolments have consistently increased since it commenced, but the program is reaching a small proportion of schools and less than 20 percent of potentially eligible students across the state. Data were not available to demonstrate whether or not indicators of school performance/student engagement (eg attendance, retention to following year, retention to Year 12, or academic achievement) for Indigenous youth have increased after introduction of the Cup in particular schools, or whether schools with a high proportion of Indigenous students who have the Aboriginal Power Cup have better performance than similar schools where the program has not been implemented.

Data showed that schools running the Aboriginal Power Cup had overall average attendance rates of 75 percent plus. There appears to be scope for the program to extend its 'reach' by targeting schools with low attendance rates, particularly where these schools also have a high proportion of Indigenous students.

However, without good pre-post implementation data (given the program was already operating prior to the evaluation being commissioned without appropriate baseline data having been collected), or relevant comparison school data, it is not possible to say with confidence that the program is achieving concrete school performance/engagement improvements. Qualitative data, based on interviews with program organisers, participants, teachers and other community members showed that the program is valued, that it facilitates culturally relevant curriculum, that students enjoy participating and it gives them a sense of achievement. A particularly positive addition to the program is the involvement of the school's Aboriginal Community Education Officers.

Tiwi Islands Youth Development and Diversion Unit (Northern Territory)

The focus of the evaluation was the Unit's diversion program for (typically) first-time offenders, who instead of going to court, are given the opportunity to participate in a youth justice conference and are supported by a range of interventions to address risk factors for reoffending, including community service activities focused on reparation.

Data were not available to assess whether or not participants benefit in terms of school engagement/performance. Individual re-offence data for program participants showed that only 20 percent of young people participating in the Unit's diversion program had contact with police for alleged offences in the 12 months following commencement of the program, which compares very favourably with reoffending rates calculated in other jurisdictions.

Qualitative data showed that the program was useful in reconnecting young people to cultural norms and the nature of the program was seen to be culturally 'competent' and directly addressed the factors that contribute to offending behaviour, such as substance misuse, boredom and disengagement from work or education.

Data were not available on the number of potentially eligible young people, so it is unclear as to whether the reach of the program is adequate, or whether there is unmet demand.

Woorabinda Early Intervention Panel Coordination Service (Queensland)

The case management and referral service was seen by young people and family members as a positive program. Out of the 18 young people who have participated since 2006, police data show that five

(27.8%) did not reoffend in the period to 31 October 2012. Of the 13 who did reoffend, data were not available to show whether their rates of reoffending are lower or higher than other Indigenous juvenile offenders in the region. Baseline data for number of offences prior to entry into the program, or comparable data for other young Indigenous offenders not serviced by the program were not available. Qualitative data highlighted the contributions of the service to positive behaviour change for individuals and improved skills for family members to better support their children.

Participants, program staff, families and community representatives felt the program was important, culturally appropriate and responsive to individual needs. However, there were concerns about the reach of the program (compared with the number of Indigenous young offenders in the region) and the limited funding for staffing the program.

Aggression Replacement Training (Queensland)

Although it was initially agreed that data from all young people across Queensland (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) who have participated in aggression replacement training (ART) since July 2011 would be supplied, only pre-post test data from 32 participants were received (16 Indigenous and 16 non-Indigenous).

Scores on the outcome measure of violence-related cognitions (the 'How I Think' questionnaire) showed that:

- on average, cognitive distortions that contribute to aggressive behaviour decreased for all participants, although there were individual differences; and
- the degree of decrease was less, on average, for the Indigenous participants than for the nonIndigenous participants.

Re-offence data were not available for the Indigenous ART participants. Re-offence data would have provided a valuable indicator of whether ART is achieving one of its primary outcomes, namely a reduction in the further offending of young people who participate in the program.

The program logic identified that the focus of ART is narrow, addressing one but by no means the only issue linked to offending behaviour—anger management. Qualitative data showed that it was still seen by participants and program staff as valuable, although evidence of community involvement in selecting the program, or adapting/ensuring its cultural appropriateness, was limited. The implementation of ART was significantly affected by resource constraints and external factors (such as the roll-out of the program and changes to the policy around ongoing data monitoring of program outcomes coinciding with external factors—most significantly, the floods and cyclones affecting most parts of Queensland during various periods of 2010–12). As such, routine data monitoring appears to have been compromised, which limited the capacity of the evaluation team to draw any firm conclusions about attitudinal change, or any consequent effects on reoffending behaviour.

Program design

All four programs addressed an important social need, although ART was more narrowly focused on cognitions that may contribute to aggressive behaviour, compared with the other three programs, which had broader aims and addressed a wider range of needs.

With the possible exception of ART, the remaining three were seen as culturally appropriate or 'competent' and had a level of community involvement in the design, or take up of the service.

All programs seemed to struggle with the available resources, which is not surprising given that many social service agencies and programs confront funding constraints in the face of significant demand. However, resource constraints limited the reach of many of the projects—either in terms of the capacity to roll out the program statewide (Aboriginal Power Cup and ART), or to adequately staff, plan for replacements and include the full range of services needed (both the diversion services in Tiwi and Woorabinda).

Many of the programs did not have adequate mechanisms in place to collect data to allow thorough evaluation of program outcomes. The lack

of baseline and ongoing data collection also impacted the ability of the programs to monitor outcomes and implement program adjustments as necessary to ensure the programs were effective and meeting needs.

Outcomes

The lack of solid data provided to the evaluation team also reduced the capacity to draw conclusions about whether any positive outcomes from program participation are sustainable in the longer term. It was not possible to directly compare the four programs in terms of their effectiveness in diverting Indigenous young people from the criminal justice system. Each operated in a very different context and they were located at varying points along the continuum from prevention through to responding to criminal justice involvement.

ART had the most concrete data available to demonstrate outcomes (although the number of participants for whom data were made available was very limited).

Re-offence data are a problematic measure of success for the programs under examination. It is difficult to calculate on an individual level. Re-offence data is not an accurate measure of a program's effectiveness on a regional level, as programs did not have 100 percent coverage of the area. Further other community (or wider) factors are likely to affect offending behaviour. However, compared with the intended outcomes (ie as outlined in the program logic), qualitative data suggested all four programs were valuable and addressing intended aims. Quantitative data were often lacking or not suitable to demonstrate change in reoffending. Importantly, in Woorabinda, five of the 18 participants did not reoffend over the six year period and in Tiwi, 80 percent did not reoffend in the 12 months postparticipation.

Available data sometimes showed problematic trends (eg continued criminal justice involvement by program graduates from the services in Tiwi and Woorabinda); however, a lack of good baseline data or adequate control groups makes it not possible to determine whether these data are better or worse than had the program not been in operation.

Summary

This report highlights the challenges faced in trying to evaluate programs when there are not adequate data to inform the evaluation. As a result, the evaluation team has been limited in its capacity to assess the effectiveness and impacts of these programs. While findings have been drawn from qualitative data and information and supported by the available quantitative data, if the availability of appropriate data, including baseline data, had been determined before the evaluation commenced, it would have maximised the value of the investment in the programs. Effective resource use would involve the establishment of datasets and a framework for the evaluation during early phases of the program's development and implementation to allow continual quality improvement and ongoing measurement of long-term program outcomes.

Introduction

Despite considerable efforts in recent years, Indigenous Australians are still significantly overrepresented in the criminal justice system. In a report by the Select Committee on Regional and Remote Indigenous Communities (2012), it was found that young Indigenous people are 24 times more likely than non-Indigenous young people to be in detention, with young Indigenous offenders accounting for 48 percent of the total juvenile detention population. Among other organisations, the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (2011) recognised that while Indigenous overrepresentation in the criminal justice system is a problem, the focus of initiatives to address this problem should be on the issues that bring Indigenous offenders into contact with the system in the first place. A similar conclusion was reached by the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (1991), which found that while Aboriginal people did not necessarily die in custody at a greater rate than non-Aboriginal people in custody, they were overrepresented in custodial deaths due to their overrepresentation at all stages of the criminal justice system.

In the 20 years following the Royal Commission, there have been a number of policies and programs adopted by Australian states and territories to address Indigenous overrepresentation in the criminal justice system (cf AIC 2009a, 2009b; AJAC nd; Victorian Government 2005). In late 2009, the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs requested an inquiry into the 'high level of involvement of Indigenous juveniles and young adults in the criminal justice system' (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Affairs 2011: 2). The report of that inquiry had a strong focus on early intervention and crime prevention, with a fundamental reference being to look specifically at 'best practice examples that support diversion of Indigenous people from juvenile detention centres and crime, and provide support for those returning from such centres' (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Affairs 2011: 3).

The Indigenous Justice Programs Evaluation project was designed to assess the effectiveness of four Indigenous justice programs. These programs sit at different points along a continuum, ranging from prevention (addressing known risk factors for offending behaviour), early intervention (with identified at-risk young people), diversion (diverting from court process) and tertiary intervention (treatment to prevent recidivism). The project forms part of a broader evaluation initiative announced by the former Standing Committee of Attorneys-General (now the Standing Committee on Law and

Justice) in 2009. Under this initiative, state and territory governments nominated a total of 20 programs for evaluation, which were identified in the good practice appendix of the National Indigenous Law and Justice Framework (SCAG Working Group 2009). The Australian Institute of Criminology, in partnership with the Australian Institute of Family Studies, was awarded the tender to evaluate four youth-focused programs identified by the state/territory governments. These were the Aboriginal Power Cup, the Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel, the Tiwi Island Youth Diversion and Development Unit, and Aggression Replacement Training. The two year project commenced in December 2010.

The evaluation project aimed to examine whether, and on what basis, the four programs represent 'good practice' in Indigenous youth diversion and early intervention for young people in, or at risk of, contact with the criminal justice system. The evaluation will assist in identifying the best approaches to tackling crime and justice issues in Indigenous communities, highlighting how these can support the aims of the National Indigenous Law and Justice Framework and inform program development, implementation and evaluation.

The evaluation was undertaken in three distinct phases:

- project development and design;
- collection of qualitative and quantitative data (mixed-method design); and
- analysis and reporting.

Project development and design

A key element of the evaluation project development and design stage was the preparation of program logic diagrams for each of the four programs. While all four programs were in operation when the evaluation commenced, program logics had not been developed. Program logics were developed by the evaluation team in conjunction with ARTD Consulting based on information supplied by staff of the programs and other publicly available information, such as funding proposals and information on websites.

The program logic processes identified the short, medium and long-term outcomes intended for each program, the resource inputs and activities needed to achieve those outcomes and external factors influencing the capacity of the programs to deliver their outcomes. The program logic diagrams and the working sheets that informed them have been used to support the evaluation by clearly identifying intended outcomes, attributes of success for these outcomes, guiding the development of evaluation questions and allowing the identification of resource and activity limitations that may have negatively impacted on the programs. The findings section for each program is also framed around the program logic. The discussion begins at the base of the program logic with an examination of the appropriateness of the program design and progresses up through the various elements of the program logic, considering whether the programs are implemented effectively and whether desired outcomes are realised. The program logic diagrams for each program are shown in the Appendices.

Collection of qualitative and quantitative data

To ensure a rigorous evaluation design, the project used a mixed methods approach, tailoring the methodology for each program. The Australian Institute of Criminology Human Research Ethics Committee provided ethics approval. While the methodology for each program is detailed in each relevant section of the report, the overarching evaluation approach is outlined below.

Qualitative data

The program participants, family members of participants (where appropriate), police, community Elders, program staff and representatives of other service providers (such as health providers), and the criminal justice system were interviewed to obtain rich descriptions of each program's processes and impacts. The sampling strategy for each program

was developed to be contextually and program specific. The different approaches to sampling are discussed within the analysis of each program.

Interviews were conducted in both one-to-one and in a group. Often, participants were interviewed together as this approach has been identified as a highly effective means of engaging young people in discussions (McDonald & Rosier 2011). Some participants also joined one-to-one and group interviews.

Not all interviews were recorded. Therefore, several techniques were adopted to ensure the accuracy of collected data. During interviews, responses were regularly paraphrased back to participants, helping to ensure comments were truthfully recorded. Fieldwork and interview notes were also verified with participants during the analysis phase. All interviews were conducted by the first author of this report, Jacqueline Stewart.

Program documentation (where available) was also analysed and program activities observed (where appropriate) to determine how programs operate to achieve desired results.

The qualitative data informed understandings of processes and impacts. The assessment of processes sought to address all aspects of the implementation of programs, including the nature, scope and quality of program activities, to ensure all components of each program were assessed. The findings supported interpretations regarding the reason for successful impacts or help explain their absence and provided guidance on areas of administration and sustainability. Qualitative data also informed the degree to which program goals were attained and the programs' effects on participants, such as changes in criminal behaviour or school and community engagement. These data have informed conclusions regarding each program's effectiveness.

Quantitative data

The initial stage of the quantitative data collection required the identification of data and the potential sources. This process included a preliminary scoping study of publicly available education and recidivism data. This is a key process in identifying gaps in data provision for evaluative research.

Specific data requests and supporting documentation were developed for each data source and program as there were variances in the nature of data required across all four initiatives.

To ensure the evaluation provided holistic impact and outcome-based findings, data were requested for youth in regard to their engagement in education and offending behaviours. Data were sought on various levels, including state, community and individual. The aim of collecting these levels was to provide a comparative baseline for each of the programs. This approach was particularly important, as control groups of a similar nature were not available due to the unique and contextually specific nature of each of the programs in this evaluation. Some of the programs operated in geographically defined areas, while others targeted a narrow or specific cohort of participants. Within the parameters of this evaluation, it was not possible to establish control groups that were matched on key characteristics as some of the characteristics that determined participation—such as living on the Tiwi Islands or being an Indigenous high school student—had a level of influence on the individuals that could not effectively be matched in other individuals. In addition, where community-level indicators were available (such as rates of offending), the evaluation team attempted to negotiate access to relevant administrative data sets for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth. The collection of data for both groups, to the extent that it was available, enabled reflections on the likelihood of Indigenous offenders being diverted at the 'front-end' of the criminal justice system.

There was a number of key limitations associated with the quantitative data collection, which are detailed in the sections of the report relating to each program. While each program experienced specific challenges, factors such as small sample sizes, privacy and confidentiality and limited human resources available in the administering agencies to assign to collating data sets in the face of other resource constraints contributed to the relatively small and subsequently limited data. In light of the limitations associated with program data, quantitative data were used to complement and reiterate findings from the qualitative analysis rather than being used separately to draw any specific conclusions.

Analysis and reporting

Various data analysis techniques were adopted with the quantitative data obtained for the evaluation, including analyses of the variance within sampled participants to identify changes resulting from program participation and descriptive statistics.

Thematic analysis was undertaken to identify recurring topics or subjects from within the qualitative data. These data included the interview transcripts or field notes taken during interviews and results of the document analysis. Themes were initially identified inductively, both from within and across each dataset. Emerging themes were checked against the program logic to determine whether they supported or varied from the suggested theory of change. When variances were identified, further analysis (reading and repeated readings of the data) was undertaken to confirm and re-confirm emerging findings.

Team members regularly discussed emerging themes. These discussions helped to ensure the data was consistently interpreted (ie a peer was available to critically assess the process and whether it proceeded in a systematic manner). A researcher also conducted the analysis over time (eg transcripts were analysed and then reanalysed at a later point) to compare and confirm interpretations. Where possible, findings were verified from two or more sources. Additional documentary resources and quantitative data supported the data triangulation.

The report was designed to fulfil dual aims. It seeks to demonstrate whether, and on what basis, each program can be considered an effective means of crime prevention, early intervention or diversion for Indigenous young people. Through the adoption of common indicators of good practice the report also sets out to identify overarching lessons concerning implementation of justice programs for Indigenous individuals, families and communities.

A draft report was submitted to state/territory government representatives for comment. It provided agencies, typically responsible for funding the programs, an opportunity to comment on errors of fact or provide supplementary information on a program's operation. Where government representatives identified different perspectives or viewpoints to those of the evaluation participants (ie program staff, participants or community members) these are presented in a footnote.

Theoretical considerations

This section outlines the theoretical underpinnings of the four youth prevention, early intervention and diversion programs evaluated through this project. A review of criminological theories affords the opportunity to reflect on the capacity of the program to positively contribute to the aim of reducing adverse contact with the criminal justice system; a key measure of success for any program working with young people who have offended or are at risk of engaging in antisocial or offending behaviour. Specifically, the adoption of a theoretical framework further informs program developers about factors that reduce the likelihood of offending and whether the program addresses these factors.

Aboriginal Power Cup

The theoretical pathway between the Aboriginal Power Cup and reduced youth offending is that enhanced engagement with school and prosocial activities such as sport will result in fewer offences committed by participating students. As such, the program appears to be underpinned by two related criminological theories—social control theory and strain theory.

Social control theory posits that individuals who are bonded to social groups such as the family, school and peers will be less likely to offend (Hirschi 1969).

The theory views social bonds as having four elements—attachment (affection for and sensitivity towards others), commitment (the investment one has in conventional society), involvement (in conventional activities) and belief (conventional moral beliefs).

The Aboriginal Power Cup is underpinned by both commitment and involvement. The program aims to enhance Indigenous students' commitment to conventional activities (school, careers, sports) and therefore assist them to develop a 'stake in conformity'. Under the theory, having a stake in conformity leads to less offending as youth take greater risks when they engage in delinquent behaviour (ie they have more to lose (Hirschi 1969)). Further, as something of a by-product, the Aboriginal Power Cup enhances students' involvement in prosocial activities. Based on the view reflected in social control theory that 'idle hands are the devil's workshop' (Boetig 2005: 18), the Power Cup, like many similar programs, restricts student's opportunities for committing offences by taking up their time in positive, prosocial activities.

Strain theory posits that individuals share similar goals (eg wealth) but have varied abilities to achieve these goals. Those who experience blocked opportunities may resort to illegitimate means to attain these goals (Agnew 1985). The Aboriginal

Power Cup facilitates both students' adoption of conventional goals (eg employment, education) and their capacity to achieve these goals (through leadership training, career options etc).

Tiwi Islands Youth Diversion and Development Unit

The logic for the youth diversion program encompasses the notions of attachment and engagement. As such, it appears to be underpinned by social control theory (Hirschi 1969; described in detail above). This suggests that greater levels of attachment and commitment to social groups and the community reduce the likelihood of offending.

The youth diversion program appears to focus particularly on developing young peoples' attachment, chiefly to families, community role models and schools. Commitment is also a key-underpinning element of the program, with commitment to school being of particular importance. Further, the program enhances young peoples' involvement (eg with school and community work) and therefore decreases young peoples' opportunities to commit offences.

Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel

The Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel Service also appears to be underpinned by social control theory (discussed above). The theory's notion that young people who are attached to social groups are less likely to offend corresponds to the operation of the panel service. The panel service focuses on developing young people's attachment to family, community and school. Through enhanced attachment the panel service seeks to both decrease opportunities and desire to commit offences. Through service coordination the panel service also aims to serve the needs of vulnerable groups better.

Aggression Replacement Training

Acts of aggression are driven by a multitude of causes, both within and external to a young person. According to Glick and Gibbs (2011) a key internal cause is psychological and social skill deficiency. They suggest aggressive young people lack the intrapersonal, interpersonal and social-cognitive skills that compromise prosocial behaviour. ART seeks to address these deficiencies by tailoring interventions and programs to enhance prosocial skill proficiency, increase anger control and advance levels of moral reasoning (Glick & Gibbs 2011).

Research evidence is growing on whether such skills contribute to reduced offending behaviour. A meta-analysis by Andrews and Bonta (cited in Glick and Gibbs 2011) revealed a range of risk factors associated with criminal conduct. These factors include antisocial/pro-criminal attitudes, values and beliefs and personal temperament. As ART enables young people to examine these factors, the program conceivably mitigates against future offending behaviour. However, this theory needs to be tested through further research.

Literature review

There has been a range of specific justice models developed in response to the overrepresentation of Indigenous Australians in the criminal justice system. Examples include Indigenous, circle, Koori and Murri courts, and various early intervention projects focused on diverting Indigenous offenders from the formal criminal justice system (Beranger, Weatherburn & Moffatt 2010). A key priority in this area has been to divert Indigenous offenders into alternative justice processes, thereby reducing formal contact with the justice system. Despite the increased focus on Indigenous diversion, there is a lack of evidence to support positive outcomes for Indigenous recidivism. This review looks at literature relevant to the youth intervention programs under evaluation, noting that these programs are generally more in the nature of prevention than diversion. Prevention programs aim to stop offending behaviours by young people at risk of offending, or further offending by those who have already offended. For instance, a behavioural management program for young offenders may seek to change some of the cognitive distortions that lead to violent offending. Diversion programs operate to divert young people from involvement, or further involvement, with parts of the justice system. As an example, a diversion program may operate to divert a young person from juvenile detention on the basis that they undertake a drug and alcohol program. The literature review also considers community-based justice initiatives, sports-based programs and ART.

Community-based justice initiatives

This section makes use of available national and international research and evaluations to establish the effectiveness of select community-based justice initiatives. Such initiatives have been developed in a framework in which prevention and diversion programs are delivered with and for members of a local community (ie a group of interacting people sharing an environment).

Three initiatives are examined—youth justice conferences, family therapy and collaborative case management. These initiatives were selected because they are comparable to the ones evaluated for this study.

Youth justice conferences

Youth justice conferences provide a forum where participants address criminal and antisocial behaviours. Typically conference participants include the offender and their parents, carer or guardian and

any other persons who may have a positive impact on the young person's behaviour (eg teachers, traditional Elders etc). Victims and their supporters may also be involved. Participants talk about the offence, its impact and what can be done to repair harm caused by crime with the help of a qualified facilitator/convenor. Qualified facilitators can be drawn from a range of agencies. For example, in the Northern Territory contracts have been made with community-based non-government organisations to conduct conferences (Polk et al. 2003).

No clear picture emerges from the available national research as to the capacity of conferencing to prevent future offending. The safest conclusion is that it has not been established that conferencing produces lowered levels of recidivism (Polk et al. 2003).

The mixed results from a number of Australian-based studies illustrates why any evidence-based assessment concerning the effectiveness of conferencing is challenging. The five year Canberra Reintegrative Shaming Experiments project compared reoffending rates post-conference with those following standard court processing for four kinds of cases—youth violent crimes, youth property offending with personal victims, youth shoplifting offences discovered by store personnel and drink driving at any age. Different results emerged for the different offence categories (Sherman, Strang & Woods 2000). The study found that the perpetrators of youth violent crimes who attended a conference reoffended at substantially lower levels than those assigned to court. Yet for both categories of youth property offences, no difference in offending rates was found and for drink driving offenders a small increase in reoffending was discovered.

In later studies, Luke and Lind (2002) and Cunningham (2007) calculated reoffending among young offenders who attended conferences in New South Wales and Northern Territory respectively. Luke and Lind (2002) followed conference participants for between 27 to 39 months. Cunningham (2007) investigated reoffending within 12 months of the conference. Both studies found that compared with court-based responses, conferences produced some reduction in reoffending. Luke and Lind (2002) reported that conferencing produced a 15 to 20 percent reduction

in reoffending across different offence types and regardless of variables predictive of desistence and persistence in youth crime (eg age, gender, criminal history and Aboriginality). Cunningham (2007) revealed that 79 percent of offenders who participated in conferencing did not reoffend compared with 61 percent of offenders who went to court.

The appropriateness of the comparison base for all three studies has been questioned. Polk et al. (2003) argued that a more suitable comparison is between young people who have been through a conference and those who have been warned and released (as opposed to assigned to court). The further young people enter into the justice system, the more problematic the social characteristics of offenders become. Therefore any comparison of young persons participating in conferences versus court is open to challenge on the grounds of selection effects (eg the differences in offending could be due to factors which have not been measured such as employment status, parental support and discipline etc; Polk et. al. 2003).

More recently, a New South Wales study examined the reoffending of young people who underwent a Youth Justice Conference in 2007, compared with a matched group who were eligible for conferencing but had been processed in the Children's Court in the same year (Smith & Weatherburn 2012). The study found no different in reoffending between the two groups, with the proportion of conference participants who reoffended statistically the same as the proportion of reoffending among those who went through the children's court. These results were different from those found by Luke and Lind (2002), although both examined NSW populations. While it is possible that the earlier result was due to selection bias, it is equally likely that Youth Justice Conferences in New South Wales were less effective in 2007 than they were five years earlier, or that the profile of those participating in conferences had changed (Smith & Weatherburn 2012).

Other studies have just considered the outcomes of young people who participated in conferences (as opposed to measuring the effectiveness of alternative processes). Hayes and Daly (2004) studied a cohort of 89 conference participants in South Australia. Forty percent of the cohort were

arrested or apprehended by police in the eight to 12 months following their conference (Hayes & Daly 2003). These same researchers also followed 200 conference participants in Queensland. They revealed that 60 percent of the cohort had a further offence three to five years after their conference (Hayes & Daly 2004). Similarly, Vignaendra and Fitzgerald (2006) found that 58 percent of their conference cohort reoffended within five years. The cohort included 1,711 young people from New South Wales. All studies reported that reoffending patterns varied according to the offender's age, sex, Indigenous status and prior history of offending, finding that the characteristics of younger age, being male, being Indigenous and having a prior history of offending all contributed to higher levels of reoffending. Offenders who were in the youngest age groups (10–13 and 14–15 years) at the time of their conference, male and Indigenous were more likely than older, female, non-Indigenous young people to reoffend. Young people conferenced for an offence against the person or an offence that fell in the 'other' category (drug offences, offensive language, trespass and traffic offences) were more likely to reoffend than young people conferenced for theft or property damage (Vignaendra & Fitzgerald 2006).

The findings of these studies have been questioned because there is no comparison group. Without a proper comparative basis it is not possible to determine if the conferencing experience as opposed to some other pre-existing characteristics of the young people who had no further offences produced the lower levels of reoffending (Polk et al. 2003).

Information on the effect of conferencing for Indigenous youth is limited. In some cases, incomplete information is available on the cultural identity of the conference participants (see Luke & Lind 2002; Vignaendra & Fitzgerald 2006). Other times, the research findings are not disaggregated for a specific diversion program (like conferencing). Therefore, it is only possible to determine whether a collection of diversionary options (ie verbal warnings and conferences) reduced offending (see Cunningham 2007).

Long-term assessments of behavioural outcomes (such as rates of offending) post conference participation are scarce. The lack of long-term data

reflects the relatively recent introduction of youth justice conferencing in Australia (Hayes 2005).

Finally, some of the available research suggests that the conference experience itself makes a difference in observed outcomes (ie the young person's subjective experience of the process). Conferences have been assessed to make a greater difference to levels of offending when young offenders are remorseful, apologise to the victim and when conference agreements are created with genuine consensus (Hayes & Daly 2004; McLaren 2000).

Family therapy

Family therapy involves working with families to nurture changes and development. Its adoption as a response to youth offending is based on the notion that risk factors within the family can influence outcomes for young people; therefore, family members should be part of any intervention to address identified problems or issues (Robinson, Power & Allan 2010).

Of all the therapies multi-systemic therapy (MST) has arguably the most extensive international evidence base. This may be because MST was one of the few family therapy interventions that started out by identifying the causes of offending and then building interventions around them (McLaren 2000).

There is international evidence that MST significantly reduces the recidivism of young people compared with traditional non-familial responses to youth crime. Curtis, Ronan and Borduin (2004) analysed seven randomised controlled trials conducted in the United States. The results reflected an overall effect size (ES; Cohen's d) of .55. Specifically, MST-treated youth experienced a decrease in the number of arrests (and seriousness of arrests), presenting symptoms, deviant peer relations and drug misuse. Young people also experienced increases in positive family relations, supportive peer relations, school attendance and parental monitoring. Follow-up data suggests that treatment effects were sustained for up to four years (Curtis, Ronan & Borduin 2004).

A four year randomised study of MST in four Canadian communities revealed less resounding results. It included a treatment group and a control group. The control group continued with the usual services available through local youth justice and

social service systems. Typical support included supervised probation supplemented by referral to specialised programming as appropriate (Cunningham 2002). Three years post-MST implementation there was no significant difference in the treatment (n=211) and control groups (n=198; Cunningham 2002). Of the treatment group, 68.2 percent had at least one subsequent conviction, compared with 66.5 percent in the control group (Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System 2006–09).

Researchers with the Canadian study offer an explanation as to why their results differ to those of the US studies. In the US MST studies, young people assigned to the control (or 'usual services') group received little in the way of helpful services (eg probation or individual counselling). Leschied and Cunningham (2002: 14) suggest that

> the strong results in favour of MST [in the United States] may have reflected the benefits of an intensive service with high integrity compared with a low-intensity intervention that is not appropriately targeted.

Neither of the highlighted studies disaggregated results according to ethnicity. Therefore, no conclusions were presented regarding the effectiveness of MST for culturally and linguistically diverse groups.

Collaborative case management

Collaborative case management is a high-intensity, high-commitment relationship between two or more parties designed to produce positive outcomes for young people who have come into contact with the criminal justice system. Research literature regularly identifies collaborative case management as an effective means of preventing future offending. Its effectiveness is reported as multi-faceted. Information sharing arrangements mean that comprehensive assessments are prepared, specifying known risk and protective factors. Service providers address these factors in an integrated and coordinated way. Furthermore, the involvement of key stakeholders from a young person's life (such as parents and teachers) acknowledges that these networks are both agents of change and agents for change (Cappo 2007; Dembo et al. 2008; Denning

& Homel 2008; Kathleen Stacey and Associates 2004; KPMG 2006).

Empirical evidence of the effectiveness of collaborative case management is limited. Identified evaluations typically focus on process (ie how the collaboration works) as opposed to results (ie whether the collaboration improved outcomes for young people) (see KPMG 2007, 2006).

Chuang and Wells (2010) studied interagency collaboration between child welfare and juvenile justice systems. They assessed whether collaboration improved access to behavioural health services for children and young people involved in both systems. Three components of collaboration were considered:

- **Jurisdiction**—the development of rules concerning decision-making authorities and information sharing requirements.
- **Shared information systems**—the establishment of methods for agencies to communicate and monitor each other's' activities.
- **Connectivity**—interagency arrangements such as joint decision making and joint budgeting.

Jurisdiction and shared information systems led to improved outcomes for children; connectivity did not (Chuang & Wells 2010).

A similar evaluation analysed the operation of the Youth at Risk Alliance. The Youth at Risk Alliance delivers three key programs including Complex Needs Assessment Panels. The panels are comprised of members of government and non-government organisations involved in service delivery to vulnerable young people. Panel members develop and implement case plans for young people. While there is evidence of effectiveness in process terms, no data (excluding anecdotal accounts) were available to assess whether Complex Needs Assessment Panels contributed to improved outcomes for young people (KMPG 2006).

KPMG (2007) also evaluated the Multiple and Complex Needs Initiative. The Initiative supports young people who experience multiple and complex conditions (including criminal offending). Regional panels have been established to provide coordinated, cross-agency consideration of all potential referrals and to monitor the ongoing care of participating young people. Service providers—

drawn from community as well as the Department of Human Services—were asked via online survey (n=44) and interviews (n=44) whether the Initiative led to better outcomes for the participating young people. The majority of stakeholders reported process improvements (eg improved trust between service providers) and believed that these improvements contributed to improved outcomes for individuals (KPMG 2005). Supplementary case studies contained evidence of observed behavioural change (eg reduced incidences of violence, participation in external social activities etc) for eight out of 16 young people (KPMG 2007), comprising 29 percent of the 59 young people accepted to the Initiative as at the time of data collection in October 2007. However, it is unclear whether and how different components of the Initiative (eg regional panels) contributed to these changes.

Few data were found on the effectiveness of collaborative case management for Indigenous Australians. One review suggested that collaboration enhances the accessibility of programs for Indigenous individuals and families who are disengaged from service systems (McDonald & Rosier 2011). However, further research is needed to fully test this suggestion.

Sport-based programs

The best form of diversion is to prevent young people from coming into contact with the justice system in the first place (ie prevention). A number of programs and services aim to engage Indigenous young people with education and foster positive relationships with family and community in order to reduce the risk of later offending, as well as promote a range of other positive personal prosocial outcomes.

The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody identified the positive effects that sport can have on channelling youth activities (RCIADC 1991). Culture and sport have been considered as a potentially effective method of achieving better health outcomes for Indigenous communities, as programs aim to promote constructive lifestyle choices and improve health outcomes (Tatz 2011). Other reported outcomes indicate that sports programs have been used effectively as a vehicle to

involve youth in educational, employment and life-skills programs, as well as reducing their participation in crime (Quantum Consulting 2008; Sellwood, Dinan-Thompson & Pembroke 2004; Small Candle Consulting 2009). This review looks at the range of benefits associated with sporting programs, particularly in Indigenous communities. It explores the impacts of sporting programs on physical and mental health, social, individual and community development, school engagement and crime prevention. This review also looks at a number of contemporary sporting programs that are run across Australia in both education and community contexts.

Sport as a vehicle for change

The Standing Committee of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (2011: 65) in reporting on an inquiry into the high level of involvement of Indigenous young people in the criminal justice system said that:

> Sport and recreation are shown to have a positive impact on Indigenous Australians, improving overall health, reducing violence, crime, theft and vandalism, reducing substance abuse and self-harm and improving school attendance.

Indigenous participation in sports and physical activity is historically associated with 'colonising practices', where 'Indigenous people were encouraged to engage in sport and physical activity as a pathway toward being civilised' (Nelson, Abbott & Macdonald 2010: 501). Despite the historical discriminatory associations, contemporarily, Indigenous people are thought to have an 'innate sporting superiority' (Nelson, Abbott & Macdonald 2010: 501). As Tatz (1995; 1999) has shown, sporting is a fundamental feature of Indigenous community lifestyles. Furthermore, the Indigenous Youth Strategy (Beckingham 2008: 30) stated that:

> Young Indigenous people love sport. The evidence of this is their enthusiasm for football, regional sporting festivals, interschool sports, cross regional events etcetera. Sport is not only good for their fitness, but also helps build self-esteem and confidence, provides a means of socialising, keeps young people occupied and teaches them responsibility.

There is a range of social and cultural reasons behind the 'strong determination to win' found in sporting games in Indigenous communities (Tatz 1995: 183). Cameron and MacDougall (2002: 2) highlight that key features of team sports such as uniforms, loyalty and belonging create a sense of equality 'which may mean that suicide, truancy and illicit drug use is no longer viewed as an option'. Other researchers agree that for 'many Indigenous people sport provides opportunities for positive life experiences…and a way out of difficult social situations' (Godwell 2000: 1). Similarly, exercise and sport can potentially allow Indigenous youth 'to escape from the reality of family conflict, homelessness or the temptation to use alcohol drugs or inhale petrol' (Cameron & MacDougall 2000: 2).

Indigenous health and sports programs

National statistics indicate that Indigenous Australians' experience significantly higher rates of physical, mental and cognitive disabilities compared with the non-Indigenous population (AIHW 2006). In research exploring Indigenous mental health, Tatz (2011) identified a range of mental and physical health benefits associated with the adoption of sports in remote Indigenous communities. In a presentation about sport and Indigenous suicide, Tatz (2011: 5) stated:

> Sport, however minimal and sparse, provides a sense of belonging and a feeling of coherence. It has a ritual, a set of formal and informal rules, and it provides a sense of what sociologist Ferdinand Tónnies called 'gemeinschaft'; a sense of belonging to an association that puts the group ahead of self and self-interest. Sport is more important to Aborigines [sic] than it is to any other segment of Australian society.

Tatz (2011) reiterated that while there is not sufficient evidence to support the suicide preventative benefits of sports, participation clearly 'defers' the action and has a number of additional mental health benefits. In particular, he highlighted the positive impact that a sense of belonging and association can have on small Indigenous communities. Although research directly linking physical activity with reduced risk-taking behaviours is limited, suggestions have been made that sport and culture do have a positive effect by addressing risk factors such as low self-esteem, depression, poor parental and peer relationships, as well as disengagement with school (Quantum Consulting 2008).

Physical activity and positive behaviour change

There is an increasing body of research that supports the link between sports and recreational activities and positive behaviour change. Sellwood, Dinan-Thompson and Pembroke (2004) suggested that communities that adopted the 'Auskick' program saw a reduction in violence, substance abuse and crime rates, and increased trust between police and Indigenous young people. It has also been argued that offences such as sexual assault could also be addressed through sport programs as 'physical activity could contribute to changing relationships between young women and men' (Cameron & MacDougall 2000: 5). Although there is relatively limited research linking cultural and sporting activities with reduced crime levels, the connection between factors for committing crime such as negative peer role models, low self-esteem and boredom are shown to be mitigated by the participation in physical activities (Quantum Consulting 2008).

In addition to the health benefits, sport programs and competitions sometimes enable participants to travel outside their own communities. Sellwood, Dinan-Thompson and Pembroke (2004) indicated that these trips enable youth to practice making positive life choices in an unfamiliar environment where they can be challenged by new social situations and as a result, enrich their personal integrity and decision-making skills. More so, important notions of 'having a go', 'fair play' and 'doing one's best' (Walker & Oxenham 2001: 29) are other valuable lessons that can be taught through involvement in sporting activities. Mason and Wilson (1988) noted that sport is a strategy that can be utilised within a broader context, involving the development of values, social support and positive role models. It is also suggested community sporting programs can play an important role through helping young people build their social competence and autonomy (Martinek & Hellison 1997).

Community involvement, employment and education opportunities

Crawford (2009) argued that the significance of sport within Indigenous communities is undervalued. In the evaluation of the 'Auskick' program, Sellwood, Dinan-Thompson and Pembroke (2004) reiterate this by highlighting the importance of program ownership within communities. The evaluation indicates that sports and recreation programs need to be coordinated and managed by local parents or volunteers—as opposed to teachers, police and development officers from external or highly transitional positions within the community—to create community ownership. Community ownership of sports and recreation activities is significant. Cameron and MacDougall (2000: 1) indicate, for program success, programs need to be 'connected positively within the social fabric of groups and communities'.

Analysis of community sport programs identified the shortage of human resource capital as a key threat to program sustainability (Quantum Consulting 2008). Alternatively, this seemingly problematic concern has provided a positive opportunity for Indigenous communities as 'sport has often been seen as an avenue…to undertake training and engage in employment within the industry, particularly at a local community level' (Quantum Consulting 2008: 7). The Australian Sports Commission (cited in Cameron & MacDougall 2000: 5) argues that a community ownership approach can give Indigenous people 'the skills and knowledge to design, coordinate and deliver sporting activities in a culturally appropriate way'.

School sporting programs

A number of sporting and recreational programs have emerged as part of the school curriculum. The key aim of these programs is to encourage attendance, school engagement and achievement, life-skill development and further educational and employment opportunities (Eliot nd). Sporting activities are noted as a particularly effective way of enticing young Indigenous students to attend school. Eliot (nd: 15) indicated that

> If young Indigenous people are to benefit from school-based education and training, they must

attend school and engage regularly. And, they must be encouraged and supported to attend and engage regularly. Initially, they may need incentives (and this has worked dramatically in a nongovernment school in the Kimberley where non-attendance has gone from 40% to 10% after the introduction of incentives). For example, young Aboriginal people like to go to school for sport and socialising, therefore these activities should be used as incentives for them to attend and engage.

Projects like the 'Going for Goal' program in New Zealand and the United States are increasingly being used as tools to engage young people in education. These projects aim to teach young people life skills, transferrable across a range of contexts including the classroom to the sporting field (Tatz 1999). Some programs incorporate education in numeracy and literacy with the sport component of the program. This inclusion can address the high drop-out rates for Indigenous youth and providing developmental pathways to employment and further study (Cameron & MacDougall 2000).

Various other community sport programs in Western Australia, Queensland and South Australia demonstrate promising processes for promoting student attendance/engagement (Sellwood, DinanThompson & Pembroke 2004). The 'no school no pool' initiatives in Western Australia and Queensland adopt school registers where attendance is noted twice daily to avoid truancy after morning check-in. The Kickstart program (Australia-wide) records attendance rates and has seen a significant improvement with absences being explained with a letter from the student's family (Sellwood, Dinan-Thompson & Pembroke 2004).

The Clontarf Foundation is a non-government organisation that has been operating in Australia for over 10 years. The program uses the 'passion that Aboriginal boys have for football…[to] attract the boys to school' (Clontarf Foundation 2011: 2). Their program is formed in partnership with a local school and 'is focused on encouraging behavioural change, developing positive attitudes, assisting students to complete school and secure employment' (Clontarf Foundation 2011: 2). The Clontarf Foundation (2011: 2) considers factors such as failure to experience achievement as a predominant influence on young

people's capacity as feelings of failure to achieve can 'lead to alienation, anger and then to more serious consequences'. The program utilises football as the vehicle for Indigenous youth to obtain a sense of achievement, raise their self-esteem and prescribes behavioural guidelines of school attendance, study results and good behaviour (Clontarf Foundation 2011). Recent internal reviews of the school program indicate that there has been an increase to 90 percent year-to-year school retention, 80 percent school attendance rates and 75 percent of graduates obtaining full-time employment within 12 months of graduation (Clontarf Foundation 2011: 2).

Crime prevention

There is a significant gap in literature exploring the role of sports programs and crime prevention, particularly in Australia. Furthermore, there are few specifically targeted crime prevention or diversionary sports programs operating in Australia, as the majority are educational or health focused. While not Australian based, the UK program, 'Positive Futures' is an illustration of a sports-based program that has 'had a positive influence on participants drug use, physical activity and offending behaviour' (Flanagan 2010: 8). The Positive Futures program is described as a 'relationships strategy' (Flanagan 2010: 8) despite its diversionary and sports development features. The program operates by identifying key areas of interest for participants, such as sport, physical activities, arts and education, and engaging them into those areas.

Sports program evaluation and methodology

The current research investigating the impact of school and community sports programs has predominantly focused on the links between physical activities and various health outcomes (Beneforti & Cunningham 2002). Beneforti and Cunningham (2002) indicate that where evaluative research has been conducted, results have been inconclusive. There are a range of reasons underlying this gap in research, with the most common relating to ambiguous and unsystematically changed aims and objectives, limited and fragmented resources for undertaking evaluations (Flanagan 2010), equivocal standard evaluation

measures and the difficulty in disentangling the impact of concurrent policies and programs (Beneforti & Cunningham 2000). Furthermore, while data were necessary to identify a number of outcomes in the reviewed evaluations, as Beneforti and Cunningham (2000) indicate, an effective evaluation should be not be reliant on the ability to quantify outcomes. Rather it should aim to identify the contextual and operational factors that contribute to program effect. 'In other words, absence of proof does not necessarily mean absence of effect' (Beneforti & Cunningham 2000: 22).

Flanagan (2010: 7) emphasises the importance of sound evaluative research on sports programs, indicating that 'sport should not be seen as the 'panacea' or 'silver bullet' that can solve complicated and long standing societal issues'. The effectiveness of sports programs relies on programs being 'carefully designed in conjunction with the specialist policy area across the social justice network and targeted towards specific outcomes' (Flanagan 2010: 7).

Aggression Replacement Training

ART is a form of cognitive-behavioural therapy designed to help young people with their aggressive and violent behaviours. An outline of the key components of ART (Social Skills Training, Anger Control Training and Moral Reasoning) is contained in the section of this report focusing on the use of ART in Queensland.

This section focuses specifically on the evidence base related to ART, one form of cognitive-behavioural therapy. It explores the outcomes of recent evaluation studies of ART as have been used in other Australian jurisdictions and overseas. For details of the efficacy of other forms cognitive-behavioural therapy, see Butler et al. (2006), Chambless and Ollendick (2001) and Tolin (2010).

Australian evaluations of ART

Australian-based evaluations of ART are relatively limited. Currie et al. (2009) undertook one of the few Australian-based evaluations of ART. The evaluation investigated the effectiveness of a pilot ART group program that was run in an Australian youth justice

custodial setting. It assessed the treatment outcomes of ART (cognitive, behavioural and affective). Specifically, whether participation in the program had resulted in lower levels of aggressive thoughts and behaviours, aggression-related cognitive disorders and improved pro-social skills.

Five 17–18 year old males were involved in the 10 week pilot ART program (Currie et al. 2009). All males were serving custodial sentences at a Victorian state Juvenile Justice Centre, having committed violence-related offences. They were required to attend three weekly training sessions, each targeting one of the threes component of ART. Health workers, acting as case managers, referred participants to the program (Currie et al. 2009). Participation in the pilot program of ART was optional, as was participation in the research. Informed consent was obtained from participants, who were screened for histories of substance abuse and psychiatric diagnoses.

Measures used in the evaluation were selected based on two criteria, with one measure used per component (Currie et al. 2009). The first of these criteria was the theoretical relevance of the measure to the respective component of ART. The second was the ability of the measure to assess whether the treatment outcomes had achieved the intended change (behavioural and cognitive) in participants. Based on these criteria, the measures selected were the Aggression Questionnaire (see Buss & Warren 2000), Social Skills Rating System (see Gresham & Elliot 1990), and the How I Think (HIT) Questionnaire (see Barriga et al. 2001). These instruments are summarised in *Appendix 1*.

These measures generally showed the ART had the intended impact on participants. From before and after completion of ART, overall aggression levels declined (with significant reductions in anger and hostility from the Aggression Questionnaire), which is indicative of positive change in cognitive appraisals arising from anger-provoking situations. Prosocial skills similarly increased as expected (with significant increases in self-control from the Social Skills Rating System). However, levels of cognitive distortions did not change as expected, which led Currie et al. (2009) to question the role of moral reasoning in ART.

International evaluations of ART

Goldstein has been a prominent figure in the literature regarding ART (see Goldstein 2004; Goldstein et al. 1986; Goldstein & Glick 1994; Goldstein & Glick 1987; Goldstein et al. 1994; Goldstein & Glick 1996a, 1996b; Goldstein, Glick & Gibbs 1998). Goldstein and colleagues published the results of a number of evaluations of ART— Annsville Youth Center, MacCormick Youth Center, a community-based evaluation, the Gang Intervention Project and other efficacy evaluations.

Annsville Youth Center

This evaluation focused on a group of 60 juveniles who were in detention at a limited-security institution for offences such as burglary, unarmed robbery and drug offences (Goldstein 2004; also Goldstein et al. 1998; Goldstein & Glick 1987). Twenty-four youth had completed a 10-week ART program, while a further 24 formed a brief instruction control group and 12 formed a no-treatment control group. The main purpose of the evaluation was to determine the effectiveness of ART on six levels. These were skill acquisition, minimal skill transfer, extended skill transfer, anger control enhancement, impulse reduction and moral reasoning level enhancement. Analyses indicated four of the investigated 10 skills taught as part of Social Skills Training were acquired at a significant level—making a complaint, getting ready for a difficult conversation, dealing with someone else's anger and dealing with group pressure. Significant differences between the program and control groups were indicated in relation to the number and intensity of acting-out behaviours identified at the facility (measured by behaviour incident reports) and staff's perceptions of impulsiveness. A replication test with the control group completing ART subsequent to the initial program group produced similarly positive results. However, no differences between the two groups were evident in relation to development of moral reasoning. One issue that Goldstein, Glick and Gibbs (1998: 198) identified as a possible barrier to participants maintaining the skills learned through ART was family peers who were 'indifferen[t] or even hostil[e] toward trainees' use of newly learned pro-social skills'. Nonetheless, one year after the completion of ART, participants were found to have

significantly higher levels of in-community functioning in relation to home, family, peer, legal and general skills than non-participants, but no real differences in relation to school or work.

MacCormick Youth Center

Conducted in a similar manner to the Annsville Youth Center evaluation, this particular evaluation focused on 51 of the 13–21 year old males detained at a maximum security facility (Goldstein 2004; Goldstein, Glick & Gibbs 1998; Goldstein & Glick 1987). These juveniles had been charged with offences such as murder, manslaughter, rape, sodomy, attempted murder, assault and robbery. The evaluation found that significant acquisition and/or transfer skills had been developed for five of the 10 Social Skills among ART participants. ART participants were also more likely to experience an improvement in use of constructive and prosocial behaviour and lower levels of impulsiveness. Inconsistent with the results of the Annsville evaluation, however, a significant improvement in moral reasoning was shown, yet participants were no more likely than the control group to have experienced a reduction in the level and frequency of impulsive acts. This latter finding, however, is likely to be a reflection of differences in the size and operation of the two facilities (particularly the fact that detainees are held in single-bed rooms at MacCormick), which limited opportunities for acting-out behaviours.

A community-based evaluation

Unlike the previous two evaluations, this evaluation was in relation to juveniles who had been released from detention back into the community (Goldstein 2004; Goldstein, Glick & Gibbs. 1998; Goldstein et al. 1989). Thus, in this instance, ART was delivered on a post-release basis. The evaluation compared three 'conditions'—the ART program completed by both juveniles and their family, juveniles only and no completion of any kind. Minimal difference in the change in interpersonal skills was indicated across the two conditions for young people receiving ART, but improvement in mild (but not severe) self-reported anger levels was significant by comparison with those youths who did not receive ART. Most importantly, juveniles who completed ART were

rearrested at a significantly lower level than their counterparts; a further substantial reduction was indicated where families had concurrently been involved in ART.

The Gang Intervention Project

This evaluation focused on gang members, the purpose being to determine whether involvement in programs such as ART could have a positive influence on their behaviour (Goldstein 2004; Goldstein, Glick & Gibbs. 1998; Goldstein et al. 1994). Where participants received ART alongside fellow gang members, there were no significant differences in skill development between the program and control groups. However, significant differences in the participants' adjustment to the requirements of finding and maintaining work were indicated. Nonetheless, available rearrest data suggests that ART has a positive influence on participants, with the program and control groups indicating respective rearrest levels of 13 and 52 percent.

Additionally, an evaluation of ART in 26 Washington State courts was conducted as part of a larger evaluation of research-based programs for juvenile offenders in Washington, United States (Barnoski 2004). The evaluation compared two groups—a program group who had participated in ART and a control group (or 'waiting line' approach) of juvenile offenders who were eligible to participate but because of resource restrictions were only able to participate in usual juvenile court services (Barnoski 2004). Juveniles who had participated in ART during the first year of implementation were excluded from the study. Multivariate statistical techniques were employed and mean-adjusted recidivism rates were subsequently calculated to account for any bias between the program and control groups. This is because there was an indication from court staff that preferential assignment may have occurred, with individuals regarded as 'most in need' being assigned to programs first. The 'at-risk' period for recidivism was defined as 18 months, with calculation of rates allowing for a 12 month period for an offence to be adjudicated by the courts (Barnoski 2004).

The three adjusted rates of youth recidivism (misdemeanour and felony, felony resolution and violent felony resolution) indicated that ART had a

significant impact on recidivism levels (Barnoski 2004). Based on 18 month adjusted felony recidivism rates, the ART group had a 16 percent reduction in recidivism compared with the control group. No significant differences were found between measures of misdemeanour and felony recidivism, or violent felony recidivism. However, some differences between courts were identified (Barnoski 2004). Ratings undertaken by an ART expert suggest that these differences are the result of differences in delivery competency across courts; the more efficient the delivery, the greater the reduction in recidivism. Multivariate statistical analyses revealed that while the difference between the recidivism rate of the program and control groups for the 'not competent' courts was not significant, it was for courts regarded as competent or highly competent (the program group having a 24% reduction in recidivism compared with the control group; Barnoski 2004). Furthermore, significant reductions in recidivism for the highly competent courts were indicated in relation to only

misdemeanour and felony recidivism and felony recidivism. Cost-analysis of ART indicated that the program is good value to taxpayers (in terms of avoided crime costs). The average return for each tax dollar spent was $6.71, but as little as $3.10 when the project was not competently delivered or as much as $11.66 when it was competently delivered.

While this review of the literature has mainly focused on evaluation of ART undertaken in juvenile correctional settings, it is of note that the use of ART has not been restricted to this domain. In Norway, for example, ART has been used in educational settings to target behavioural problems in adolescent and early teenaged students (see Gundersen & Svartdal 2006). Similarly, in the United States, ART has been used as a mechanism for targeting antisocial behaviour among adolescents in runaway shelters (see Nugent et al. 1999, 1998). ART has also been used in combination with other treatment methods, such as token economy, at young offender institutions in Sweden (see Holmqvist et al. 2009).

Aboriginal Power Cup

The Aboriginal Power Cup is a joint initiative of the South Australian Attorney-General's Department, Port Adelaide Football Club and the South Australian Aboriginal Sports Training Academy (SAASTA). The program consists of a nine-a-side football tournament and a range of other activities such as workshops on leadership, health, career pathways and Indigenous culture. Students can undertake the program as part of SACE. Students must have good school attendance and participate in the entire school curriculum to play in the football tournament. All participants are Indigenous.

This section presents findings concerning the effectiveness of the Aboriginal Power Cup. Drawing on available data, it examines whether and on what basis the program achieved desired results. To contextualise these findings the section begins with a review of the research approach.

Evaluation approach

A variety of qualitative and quantitative data were collected. The qualitative data, collected largely through stakeholder interviews, includes rich descriptions of the experiences of program participants. These descriptions informed understandings of how the program is implemented. Quantitative data requests focused on student enrolment, attendance and achievement. These data were collected to provide indicators of whether there was measurable individual behavioural change as a result of participation in the Aboriginal Power Cup.

Qualitative data collection and analysis

Students, parents, teachers, volunteers and program organisers shared details of their experiences of the Aboriginal Power Cup. This section provides information about the methods employed to recruit these participants, collect their stories and analyse and interpret their narratives. It also examines how valuable data was obtained via document analysis and observation.

Nominating schools and recruiting school-based participants

In collaboration with SAASTA, the evaluation team identified two schools for involvement in the qualitative research component. These two schools were selected based on a number of criteria:

- the school's capacity to participate—based on an assessment by SAASTA of internal resources to support the research requests;
- location—an urban (metropolitan) and regional school were selected to support considerations of

whether location impacted on the program processes and outcomes; and

- student numbers—only schools that fielded a large team (10 or more) in the 2011 Aboriginal Power Cup were considered for participation. Even with 'refusals' to participate in interviews or absences during field visits, the evaluation team determined that visiting schools with comparatively high numbers of enrolled students was the best way to ensure high participation rates in the study by students.

Only one of the nominated schools chose to participate, with a representative of the other school citing a concern that poor student attendance (following the conclusion of the Aboriginal Power Cup) would result in too few youth being available to join the study. Another school was identified and while not fully representative of the Aboriginal Power Cup population, was included with the support of key project stakeholders. Its inclusion enabled consideration of whether student characteristics impacted on program implementation. Preliminary data analysis, following visits to two schools, suggested that high student numbers demanded high numbers of school-based support staff. The inclusion of a third school with a smaller support staff to student ratio enabled consideration of whether lower levels of student support adversely impacted on program implementation. School representatives undertook participant recruitment on behalf of the evaluation team.

Interviews

To explore participant experiences and expectations, an in-depth and semi-structured approach to interviewing was adopted. Interviews sought to identify opinions and perceptions of program implementation processes and outcomes in terms of observed behavioural changes. Interviews were conducted in both one-on-one and group contexts. Where possible the school-based interviews were undertaken in a group setting, as this has been identified as a highly effective means of engaging young people in discussions (McDonald & Rosier 2011).

To ensure that critical program inputs, processes and outcomes were discussed, the interview schedules were informed by the program logic (see *Appendix 2*). For example, the program logic identified that for the program to succeed, Indigenous students must choose to enrol. Therefore, an interviewer asked students, teachers, parents and organisers about the program 'reach' (ie how did you find about the program or how did you promote the program?). The interview schedules are included in Appendix 3.

The school-based interviews involved teachers, students, parents and volunteers. Table 1 reveals the number of people interviewed from each of these groups.

Table 1 School-based research participants, Aboriginal Power Cup			
Research participants	Regional school	Urban schools	Total
Teachers	5	3	8
Students	15	5	20
Parents	2	--	2
Volunteers (ie coaches and mentors)	1	2	3
Total	23	10	33

Program organisers and community-based volunteers who were identified as critical to program delivery (a total of 4 participants) were also interviewed.

Document analysis

Available program documentation included the integrated learning curriculum (detailing many of the Aboriginal Power Cup activities), evaluation reports (completed by the Port Adelaide Football Club post carnival), media reports and aggregated data obtained through surveys of past program participants (conducted 2009 to 2011). Documentation was analysed to identify key messages concerning how and why the program operates as it does and to garner participants' perceptions of program processes and details of any observed outcomes.

Observations

In addition to participant and stakeholder interviews, a researcher attended the 2011 football carnival and associated events. The observations informed understandings of the nature and scope of the activities and provided a sense of the level of student engagement.

Quantitative data requests and analysis

The evaluation team worked closely with SAASTA to identify available data on the schools participating in the Aboriginal Power Cup. Initially, the evaluation proposed to include a control school to provide a comparison with participating schools. However, it was later decided that due to the unique nature of the Aboriginal Power Cup, normal school units that do not necessarily provide additional incentives to attend school or incorporate a focus on Indigenous students and inclusion of Indigenous culture would not be comparable. To assess differences that the Aboriginal Power Cup may have had on attendance

and retention rates, statewide data were collected to provide a broader comparative baseline.

There were a number of challenges involving the data at both the school and individual participant/ student level. The most significant challenges were—inconsistencies between yearly reporting methodologies and included variables (attendance, post-school education, attendance and participation outside Aboriginal Power Cup etc) and changes in staff that ultimately made some of the data incompatible for a comparative analysis. It is important to note that while every effort was taken to obtain meaningful data to assess program outcomes, there were several aspects of the data that were not made available. In addition to the issues noted above, reasons for data not being available include resource issues in attempting to locate and extract hardcopy data that was held in several locations (although precisely where the data was located could not be established without resource-intensive investigation), contention around conclusions that may be drawn from de-contextualised attendance and retention rates, and how that may reflect on schools, and limited data collection overall in relation to employment or further education outcomes for students.

While limiting the scope of the current evaluation and the extent to which it could draw solid findings, these issues point to concerns for evaluation more generally. Access to data that can be used to measure and analyse key indicators is an important part of the evaluation process, as well as being important for the continual improvement and resourcing of interventions. Failing to establish and maintain stable data collection and management systems from early stages and development throughout the life of an intervention creates a barrier for evaluation and program improvement. Data collection and management should be prioritised in the development of all funded interventions.

Table 2 provides an outline of the data requested and the data that was received for the current evaluation.

Table 2 Data requested and received, Aboriginal Power Cup	
Data requested	**Data received**
The total number of full time equivalent (FTE) students in secondary schools in South Australia in 2010, by Indigenous status and year level	The total number of FTE students in secondary schools in South Australia in 2010, by Indigenous status and year level
The attendance rate for students in years 11 and 12 in South Australia secondary schools in 2010, by Indigenous status	The total number of students enrolled in the Aboriginal Power Cup (stage one and two), by sex and school for 2010 to 2011 (inclusive)
The total number of students enrolled in the Aboriginal Power Cup (stage 1 and 2), by sex and school for 2008 to 2011 (inclusive)	The proportion of all students commencing the Aboriginal Power Cup who complete the unit, by sex and school for 2010 to 2011 (inclusive)
The proportion of all students commencing the Aboriginal Power Cup who complete the unit, by sex and school for 2008 to 2011 (inclusive)	No data available
The attendance rate of each individual youth who participated in the Aboriginal Power Cup, one year prior and one year post each student's commencement of the program, by school	No data available
Highest year level attained by students	No data available
Year 12 attainment of each individual Aboriginal Power Cup participant	No data available
Employment outcomes for each individual Aboriginal Power Cup participant	No data available

The two year period for which the data was provided limits the capacity of the evaluation team to draw conclusive findings from key indicators such as attendance and retention rates at participating schools. Furthermore, the level of data provided only allows assessment on a school level as individual level data was not available.

Findings

Table 3 summarises key findings concerning the effectiveness of the Aboriginal Power Cup. The Table shows, in light of the available evidence, whether and on what basis the program's design, delivery and outcomes (presented at the end of the section) represent excellent, adequate or poor practice.

Table 3 Assessment of the effectiveness of the Aboriginal Power Cup			
Area of focus	**Excellent practice**	**Adequate practice**	**Poor practice**
Appropriateness of the program design			
Addresses a social need	Poor rates of secondary school attendance and retention and involvement in further education or full-time employment, demonstrate the need for the program's focus on school engagement and career pathways		
Serves the target audience	Sport represents a powerful tool for encouraging student participation in a curriculum that over time has come to explore a range of knowledge and skills (eg career options and healthy lifestyle choices)		
Cultural competence		The program contains cultural awareness and education as a core element of the curriculum, but there is considerable scope for this content to be increased. Program organisers committed to incorporating cultural content that is relevant and meaningful to students' interests and needs. They have plans to better reflect the heterogeneous nature of Indigenous culture	
Available resources	The collaboration of a number of agencies means that the program has the resources required to deliver key activities, although on a small scale		
Community involvement		Program organisers advise community members of the program as opposed to actively involving them in its design	
Effectiveness of the implementation of the program			
Program reach			Based on state level data, and individual school enrolments, the program is only reaching a small percentage of eligible Indigenous students. The schools currently participating have comparatively high attendance rates. Targeting schools with higher numbers of Indigenous students and lower attendance rates, could increase the program's reach to the 'at-risk' students

Area of focus	Excellent practice	Adequate practice	Poor practice
Table 3 Assessment of the effectiveness of the Aboriginal Power Cup			
Service objectives	The program appears to facilitate enhanced stakeholder understanding of and engagement with Indigenous students	Program organisers adopt a number of strategies to encourage student participation and support their successful completion of program activities. Even with these strategies in place, student attendance and work quality could be improved	
Data collection and management			Changing data collection processes and staff turnover has meant data were not available to enable program organisers to accurately and consistently monitor progress and achievement of desired outcomes
Responses to external influences / factors		External factors (including teacher workloads and parental involvement) can negatively impact on the program's ability to fulfil desired outcomes. Efforts to address or account for these factors would strengthen the program implementation	
Extent to which program achieves intended outcomes			
Achievement of outcomes in line with program intent		Qualitative accounts suggest that desired outcomes are realised (eg new knowledge and skills gained). However, there is no robust data to test whether students go on to pursue identified career options or further education. Some schools' annual reports indicate that students who participated in the program went onto to further education or full-time employment	
Sustainability of outcomes			This is a significant gap in knowledge for this program. There is no available data to know whether or not short-term outcomes realised via participation in the program are sustained over time. Assessment of the sustainability of outcomes would require further school and student-based data

Program design

Addresses a social need

While the Aboriginal Power Cup seeks to engage Indigenous young people in school, a key question is whether a need exists for such a program. Educational engagement is a multi-faceted concept. Research literature identifies three crucial components to engagement—behavioural, emotional and cognitive. Behavioural engagement is about participation. Students are involved in academic and social activities. Emotional engagement relates to how students respond to the learning environment and is thought to create ties to a school and influence willingness to work. Cognitive engagement concerns the preparedness to exert effort to comprehend complex ideas and master challenging skills. Behavioural engagement is considered important to achieving positive academic outcomes and enhancing retention. Less is known about the connection between emotional and cognitive engagement and retention (Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris 2004).

In the context of the Aboriginal Power Cup and this study, 'engagement' is used to refer simply to encouraging school attendance and retention (a comparatively 'easy' indicator to measure, available in existing data sources). Therefore, to know whether the program addresses a social need it is important to establish the number of Indigenous young people attending secondary school in South Australia and gain a picture of rates of attendance and retention.

According to the Department of Education and Children's Services, there were 8,390.2 FTE enrolments of Indigenous students in government schools in South Australia, comprising 5.1 percent of all enrolments in South Australia government schools in 2010 (DECS 2011). This increased to 8,661 FTE in 2011, accounting for 5.2 percent of total student enrolments in South Australia (DECS 2011). Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) data indicated that in the same year, from the 9,386 (including full and part-time) Indigenous students across all South Australian schools, only 1,693 of that cohort were in Years 10, 11 and 12 (ABS 2011).

Overall, Indigenous students typically under-perform, compared with non-Indigenous students on school engagement indicators, including enrolment, attendance, retention and Year 12 attainment (Purdie & Buckley 2010). According to the Department of Education and Children's Services, the retention rates for the total South Australian student population stood at 84.2 percent, whereas Indigenous retention rates from Years 8 to 12 was 63.9 percent (DECS 2011).

The most recent 2008 ABS publication on the Health and Welfare of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples indicates that there is a link between full-time employment and higher levels of education (ABS 2010a). Nationally, it was shown that Indigenous people were less likely to be engaged in full-time study or employment during 2008. In the same year, the ABS indicated that two in five Indigenous students were engaged in some kind of formal education, either secondary school or a non-school institution (ABS 2010b). However, only two in 10 (21%) Indigenous students reported attaining Year 12, compared with five in 10 (54%) of non-Indigenous students. These data highlight the importance of engaging Indigenous students in higher levels of schooling and suggest the Aboriginal Power Cup is responding to an existing social need.

Serves the target audience

Qualitative accounts from evaluation participants revealed strong support for the design of the Aboriginal Power Cup. Students consistently indicated that they participated because it 'counts towards my SACE'. They also reported that the focus on sport appealed to them:

It shows us that by staying in school we get rewards like getting to play footy in the Power Cup (urban student).

Teachers typically supported these sentiments explaining that the program design is suitable because:

It's getting some SACE points, using that vehicle [sport] that they [the students] feel comfortable with and that they believe they're good at (urban teacher).

Despite the benefits stated by many, one teacher expressed concerns relating to the sports focus:

[The sports focus has] almost been detrimental…like there's this one-dimensional view that Aboriginal students/people are [just] good at football (urban teacher).

They conceded that the program design has improved through the organisers' concerted efforts to acknowledge a broader range of student interests and capabilities:

…[o]riginally when it first started I really think it was centred on 'just because we know that you're good at sport'. But I think now that the person who is writing the curriculum now, as I said before, is really trying to expand that and make it more meaningful. So this is not just telling you that you're good at sport, once again it's using all the tools—reading and writing and also linking in with careers, sexual health, trying to have a holistic view (urban teacher).

However, the same teacher emphasised that schools also needed to work hard to ensure that Indigenous students were supported to identify and explore a range of aptitudes:

I'm really mindful of that in my program because I try to get them to see the whole gamut of stuff that they can do. This is a big wide world and you've got many talents. Sure you can play football but you can also do a whole heap of other things. So I think that it's important that they're not made to feel that that's the whole focus of their schooling (urban teacher).

Overall, students and teachers agree that sport represents a powerful tool for encouraging participation in a curriculum that over time has come to explore a range of knowledge and skills (eg career options and healthy lifestyle choices). Schools are encouraged to continually promote this range to help reinforce the notion that Indigenous students are good at any number of activities.

Cultural competence

Analysis of the curriculum for the Aboriginal Power Cup revealed that the cultural component of the program is growing. In 2011, the integrated learning curriculum mentioned a cultural workshop (held during the carnival) and

encouraged students to consider how their team song might acknowledge community. While not originally highlighted in the curriculum, interviews also revealed that Indigenous history and culture were discussed when representatives of the Port Adelaide Football Club visited schools. The 2012 curriculum identified nine tasks as featuring a cultural component (consistent with the year's theme of personal identity). As a program organiser acknowledged, the substance of these tasks varied. It was noted that:

[For some tasks the cultural focus] might be quite minor, for example, in the individual profile we ask them to put their language group and who they identify with [cultural group] (program organiser).

In other tasks, students were asked to reflect on how their culture featured in a guernsey design, menu plan or team war cry.

In 2011, some students expressed a desire for more Indigenous cultural content during the group interviews. Their comments appeared to suggest an interest in learning about the diversity within Indigenous society. As one student stated:

[There] could be more on the cultural side of it, you know, more traditional owners of the [country where the] carnival [is held] and other communities (urban student).

Program organisers expressed ideas on how to better reflect the heterogeneous nature of Indigenous culture in future; for example, utilising student profiles to identify which additional Indigenous languages to feature in the curriculum (currently only one is highlighted) and involving more Elders in program delivery.

Available resources

Internal evaluation reports clearly indicate that partnership arrangements make it possible to deliver the Aboriginal Power Cup. Each partner contributes the mix of resources (including people and financial and in-kind support) needed for key program activities. For example, the 2011 report reveals that the Office of Youth managed the Aboriginal Power Cup website, SAASTA revised the curriculum, the South Australian National Football League (SANFL)

managed the football carnival and other partners (the University of South Australia, Santos and the South Australian Police) conducted workshops for students.

Community involvement

While the evaluation never set out to comprehensively assess the level of community involvement in the program, participant interviews did reveal some insights into what role community members played in the design of the program. There was limited evidence of a strong community voice in how the program is designed. Program organisers mostly spoke of seeking to promote community awareness of the program as opposed to seeking community input to the program. One organiser typified the approach in their statement:

We go to so many community events and…a lot of our promotional material talks about Aboriginal Power Cup (program organiser).

Other evaluations focusing on sports-based programs for improving educational participation and outcomes have found poor community consultations contributed to a less successful roll out of projects (ACER 2011). While this effect was not evident here, the apparent lack of genuine community feedback on the program design may represent a missed opportunity for the Aboriginal Power Cup. Community consultations in other situations have enabled program organisers to tailor activities according to local contexts and develop community partnerships that provided additional financial and in-kind support and mentoring (ACER 2011).

Implementation

Program reach

Data provided by SAASTA showed that there has been an increase in the number of schools and students participating in the Aboriginal Power Cup. Since the program commenced in 2008 the total number of Indigenous students participating in the program has increased by over 130 percent (see Figure 1). In 2008, there were a total of six participating schools, increasing to 24 by 2012.

Figure 2 shows enrolments in the Aboriginal Power Cup across 14 schools, using data provided by SAASTA for 2010–11. Overall, there was a small increase in the number of students enrolled in 2011 compared with 2010.

In 2010, a total of 283 students enrolled in the Aboriginal Power Cup, 56 percent male and 44 percent female. Enrolments ranged from 12 to 24 students, with an average of just over 20 across all participating schools. In 2011, a total of 293 students enrolled, 49 percent male and 51 percent female. Enrolments in 2011 ranged from nine to 33 students, with an average of just under 21 students per school. The number of enrolments increased in seven of the 14 schools in 2011 compared with 2010, although declined in six schools. Given that the overall numbers of participants in any given school are small, any observed variations in participation are the result of small changes occurring at an individual level and cannot provide any indication of overall changes in participation.

Figure 1 Participation in the Aboriginal Power Cup since commencement				
2008	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**
140 students from 6 schools	240 students from 10 schools	283 students from 17 schools	293 students from 23 schools	336 students from 24 schools

Figure 2 Participation in the Aboriginal Power Cup in 2010 and 2011
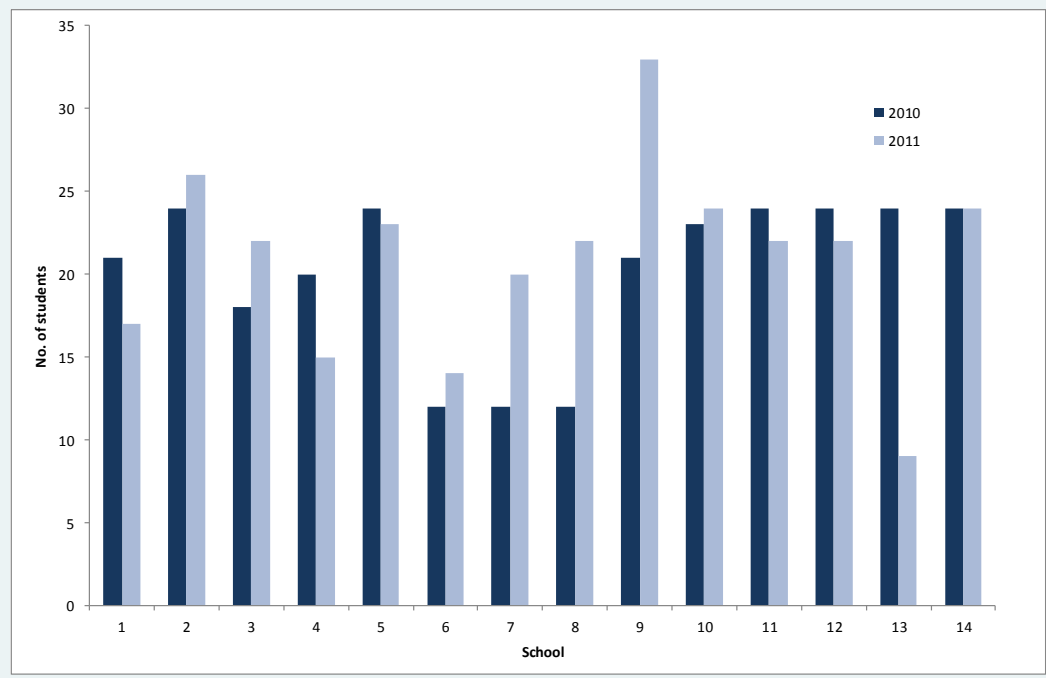
Source: SAASTA Aboriginal Power Cup data

Available quantitative data suggests that the Aboriginal Power Cup is only reaching a relatively small proportion of eligible students in South Australia. ABS data indicated that there were a total of 1,540 Indigenous students enrolled full time in Years 10 to 12 in South Australian government schools in 2011 (ABS 2012b). Data received from SAASTA regarding student enrolments in the Power Cup revealed that 283 students enrolled in 2010 and 293 in 2011. This suggests that the Aboriginal Power Cup is reaching 19 percent of the potentially eligible Indigenous student population.

The majority of schools participating in the Aboriginal Power Cup have attendance rates over 75 percent for all students, however this percentage applies to the overall student population and not specifically Indigenous students (MySchool 2012 – individual school listings as shown in the reference list of this report). There may be value in extending the reach of the Aboriginal Power Cup by targeting schools with poor attendance rates. From the school sample used for this evaluation, schools with a higher number of Indigenous students had lower attendance rates than schools with a lower number of Indigenous students.

Program documentation and qualitative accounts obtained from program organisers revealed that strategies have been implemented in the past to extend the reach of the program. One of these strategies is 'cluster teams'. Cluster teams entail students, located at separate schools, coming together to complete curriculum tasks and field a football team for the carnival. Program organisers indicated that cluster teams reduce the pressure on any one school to find the necessary numbers to create a team. Even so, one teacher indicated that cluster teams create other pressures. They found it challenging to coordinate particular curriculum tasks across sites (eg it was hard to combine guernsey designs from two different locations). Travelling around 90 minutes between schools to enable students to bond and collaborate on projects also added to the workload.

In 2011, a cap was placed on the number of teams participating in the Aboriginal Power Cup. An Aboriginal Power Cup evaluation report states the cap was set at 28 teams (14 male and 14 female), allowing for a maximum of 336 students. Program organisers explained that setting this cap ensures the program has the necessary resources to run.

While 2012 data was not provided by SAASTA, the Aboriginal Power Cup website indicates that approximately 300 students participated from 25 different schools across South Australia in 2012. However, as highlighted above, this number of students represents a small proportion of the potentially eligible student population.

A number of criteria could be used to judge whether a school is 'relevant' for evaluation purposes. Possible criteria include the number (or proportion) of students who are Indigenous, attendance rates and levels of achievement. The available qualitative data only speaks to whether the program is reaching schools with high enrolments of Aboriginal students. Quantitative data (presuming it is available before and during program implementation) is needed to determine whether the program reaches schools with poor attendance and retention, for example.

Available qualitative data did not provide a complete picture of whether the program is reaching 'relevant' schools as per the program logic. However, there appears to be some scope for increasing the program's reach to 'at risk' students by targeting schools with relatively high numbers of Indigenous students and low attendance rates.

Service objectives

To support the realisation of program outcomes, the individuals and agencies involved in implementing the Aboriginal Power Cup set out to meet the following service objectives:

- Promote teachers' and other stakeholders' understanding of and positive engagement with Indigenous students.
- Enable students to actively participate in and successfully complete program activities.

Promoting understanding of and engagement with Indigenous students

Some of the teachers interviewed reported an increased understanding of, and engagement with, Indigenous students as a result of their involvement in the program. Typically, these were teachers who had not previously worked with Indigenous students. For example, one of these teachers spoke of learning that time and dedication was required to build positive working relationships with students:

If you hang around and they see that you're taking an interest, over a decent period of time, in what they're doing they come out to you. As long as they can see that you're serious (urban teacher).

The majority of teachers who participated in the study had worked with Indigenous students prior to joining the program. Listening to their stories it seemed that this previous experience positively contributed to program delivery because these teachers were well placed to support students. Teachers' accounts demonstrated that they already knew how to build strong relationships ('they've got to know each other really well, they know me really well'), how to motivate students ('they don't want to let the team down') and how to create an environment conducive to learning ('a lot more of working at your own pace').

Many of the other Aboriginal Power Cup stakeholders indicated that their involvement in the program had enhanced their understanding of working with Indigenous students. Program organisers highlighted instances of how they had gained insights into how to effectively engage students:

I think by that stage [day two of a leadership workshop for Year 11/12 students] the words were just going straight through 'em, straight out the other side, and I think if we got 'em a little bit more interactive we'd be right (program organiser).

We've modified that a bit now [the team war cry curriculum task]…we're going to film it and then upload it up onto the Aboriginal Power Cup website so that all the kids and the teachers can see it. And then what they would do is they would practice that dance…so all the kids will do the same dance together. And so what that does it that eliminates that shame factor of, you know, I don't want to do this there's…it's embarrassing (program organiser).

In addition to learning how to work with and what works for students, those involved in implementing the program indicated that they had gained new, positive insights concerning the behaviour and abilities of Indigenous program participants. Volunteers, in particular, outlined how collaborating with Indigenous students had positively influenced

their perceptions of these individuals. A carnival official stated:

> …getting to know these kids, changed our attitudes towards them…a lot of police believe that, um, that the Aboriginal teenagers are responsible for a lot of crime in our area and we can say ok we work with this group of people and come back to our management and other police and say these group of kids are fantastic and they're not certainly not responsible for everything in the world (community volunteer).

Such accounts suggest that the Aboriginal Power Cup facilitates stakeholder understanding of and engagement with Indigenous students.

Enabling students to participate in and complete program activities

Qualitative accounts from both interviews and survey responses captured by program organisers revealed a number of ways in which the program enables student participation. The strategies include providing student assistance, ensuring task variety and being responsive to student needs and feedback.

Many students appreciated the level of assistance they received. Teachers, volunteer mentors, volunteer coaches and representatives of the Port Adelaide Football Club (who typically visit participating schools twice during the program) provide this support. The support received appeared to differentiate the Aboriginal Power Cup from other school-based subjects/courses:

> …you have people who care for you and are interested and want to help you (urban student).

> …Gaining SACE credits through the Power Cup is better than doing it in the usual classes because there's more support, less students (urban student).

> …Organisation is pretty good, like the support we've got around [school name] with the Power Cup, make sure we're on task (urban student).

Task variety appeared to be another important means of encouraging student participation. The variety meant that key learnings were passed on and reinforced in different ways. For example, most students reported learning about career pathways.

Some students stated they had gained this information via workshops. Others picked it up through completing curriculum tasks (citing the workshops as dull and unnecessary). This finding suggests that the task variety (where different activities reinforce key content in different ways) positively supported different learning styles, keeping students engaged because of opportunities to learn in their preferred way.

Additionally, program organisers regularly review the content and delivery of program activities. The reviews are designed to ensure students actively participate in program activities. Reviews are based on student feedback and organisers' observations of levels of student interest/involvement. The reviews may be undertaken mid program delivery:

> I guess we started maybe not having a real concentrated effort on the goal setting. We started delving into a bit of the culture side of things. And then we also tried to sit down and if [the students] were up to a particular task that they were having difficulty with we might just let them do that, work through their task. So yeah it started changing from the first three months to the last three months, yeah. I guess we got to a point where we thought the goal setting wasn't really engaging for the kids (program organiser).

The program reviews are also undertaken upon program completion:

> …[we're] getting a lot of feedback from the students from this year's program [which] was good to show us exactly what they're interested in and what they weren't which is good for next year (program organiser).

The program organisers' preparedness to revise program activities in light of feedback and observations support their efforts to keep students involved in the program.

The findings from the qualitative data on whether these strategies (ie student support, task variety and responsiveness to feedback) resulted in high rates of attendance and high-quality work are mixed. To qualify for the Aboriginal Power Cup Carnival, all students within a team must have attended classes at least 70 percent of the time. Teachers reported reasonable attendance, but most acknowledged that student absences were common:

…my first semester just scraped 70 percent just, 70.53 percent or something. So we have 10 lessons, oh we have two lessons a week, two two hour lessons a week, so on average over a term they'll [the students] miss <pause>…six out of the twenty, six or seven out of the twenty [lessons] in a term' (urban teacher).

Yet most teachers also recognised that the vast majority of students made real efforts to attend this particular subject:

Aboriginal students have a poor history of attendance and we've only ever had a couple who've had excellent attendance for various reasons. In as much as the Power Cup goes we've had two students that didn't attend anything else but attended Power Cup activities…[but] they're not typical, I think, of the group…from a retention point of view they [students] love the Power Cup (urban teacher).

…the only subject they're passing is mine because attendance started to drop off in the second half of the year [the Aboriginal Power Cup runs in the first half of the year]. But they'll come back next year to finish their SACE and the main reason I think they're going to come back is because they'll get to do the football again (urban teacher).

And in their first year, and I guess that's the other thing that blew us away was that in our first year of the program, we had managed to raise so many levels of attendance and commitment and interaction (regional teacher).

Data from the Myschool website supported qualitative accounts of reasonable rates of attendance among schools participating in the Aboriginal Power Cup; the majority of schools had attendance rates of over 75 percent for all students (not specifically Indigenous students). However, schools in the sample that had a higher proportion of Indigenous students generally had considerably lower attendance rates (Myschool.com).

Available program documentation and field observations revealed varied accounts of whether students are successfully completing Aboriginal Power Cup activities (ie producing high-quality work). A 2011 summary report on the completion of curriculum tasks suggests that the majority of tasks were completed to the required standard. Throughout 2011 schools submitted a range of tasks to a program organiser. Students either completed these tasks collectively or individually; in the case of the former, the student group nominated one student's work (the 'gold standard') for submission. A judging panel, consisting of representatives of key stakeholders, assessed these tasks prior to the Aboriginal Power Cup carnival to determine which teams were eligible to participate. The assessment criteria included timely submission, completion of all required elements and quality. With 50 the maximum points available for all tasks the 2011 judging panel scored:

- Six teams from 10 schools (with individual schools able to join to form cluster teams)—40 plus.
- Two teams from two schools—35 to 39.
- Five teams from seven schools (cluster teams)—25 to 34.
- One team/school—below 24.

Based on these scores, all teams were identified as eligible to participate in the carnival. Yet an internal evaluation (completed post program completion) indicated that:

The standard of some of the work submitted was lower than expected. Principals should be reminded that there are minimum standards. Some of the good work from 2011 could also be added to the Aboriginal Power Cup Website as case studies to assist students in 2012 (SAASTA 2011).

The interviewer's observations at the 2011 carnival revealed that poor completion of curriculum tasks inadvertently led to one team withdrawing from the competition. The school had arrived with a small team, electing not to bring students who failed to complete curriculum tasks satisfactorily. When participating students were injured, the school was unable to field a team.

Students typically enrol in Stage One (eg Year 10) and then progress, if interested, to Stage Two (eg Year 11). While students in Stage One and Stage Two complete many of the same activities, the assessment and weighting of that assessment varies. For example, in 2011 students enrolled in Stage Two needed to complete an extra assignment on career choices, which represented 30 percent of

their total grade for the subject. SAASTA data provided details of completion rates for Stage One and Stage Two of the Aboriginal Power Cup in 2010 and 2011. In 2010, a total of 203 students completed either Stage One or Stage Two of the Aboriginal Power Cup. A large majority of completing students (n=190; 94%) completed Stage One, with few students (n=13; 6%) completing Stage Two. A total of 116 males completed one of these stages (57% of those completing) and 87 females (43% of those completing). Based on total enrolment numbers, male and females were equally likely to complete the Aboriginal Power Cup. However, 12 of the 13 students who completed Stage Two were male.

The proportion of students completing the program varied between schools in 2010, as shown in Figure 3. The percentages shown are based on a simple calculation of the number of enrolments compared with the number of completions that year. Across the 14 schools, the number of students enrolling completing Stage One ranged from 16.7 percent to 108.3 percent, at an average of 64.3 percent. Completion rates of over 100 were at two schools due to a number of students completing Stage One in 2010 who had enrolled in earlier years.

Few of those students undertaking the Aboriginal Power Cup followed through to completing Stage

Two (with no reasons for this apparent trend evident in the available data. Five schools had students completing Stage Two, with the proportion completing ranging from 4.2 percent to 66.7 percent. At one school eight students completed Stage Two and two completed Stage One. This school produced most of the Stage Two completions in 2010. At nine schools no students completed Stage Two in 2011.

In 2011, 215 students completed either Stage One or Stage Two. Most completing students (n=192; 89%) completed Stage One, while 23 students (11% of those completing) completed Stage Two. Compared with 2010, it is notable that alongside the small increase in total enrolments there was an increase in the proportion of students who continued onto and completed Stage Two.

The proportion of students completing the program also varied between schools in 2011, as shown in Figure 4. At two schools completion rates of over 100 percent were recorded due to a number of students completing Stage Two in 2011 who had enrolled in earlier years. Few of those students undertaking the Aboriginal Power Cup followed through to completing Stage Two and at five schools no students completed Stage Two in 2011.

Figure 3 Completion rates for Aboriginal Power Cup, Stage 1 and Stage 2 by school, 2010

Source: SAASTA Aboriginal Power Cup data
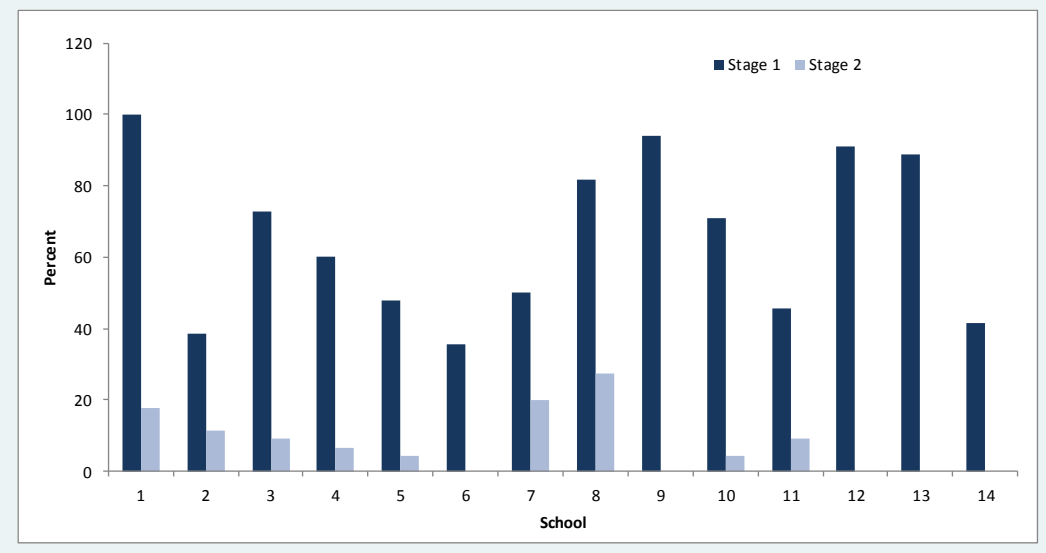
Source: SAASTA Aboriginal Power Cup data

Importantly, a range of circumstances may prevent students from completing Stage one or two of the Aboriginal Power Cup. For example, one school team initially had seven students from a particular school who enrolled in Stage Two. The school's annual report revealed that due to 'individual person circumstances' (Warriapendi High School 2011: 7) only one student completed the program. While nothing about the personal circumstances of those students is known, the evaluation team's consultations with school staff across a range of sites revealed that the types of circumstances that may impact on students include family problems, family responsibilities and obligations, illness or injury, leaving school and involvement in antisocial behaviour.

In summary, program stakeholders adopt a number of strategies (some inbuilt and some additional 'value-add' options organised by schools) to encourage students' participation in and completion of program activities. Even with these strategies in place, student participation and work quality could be improved.

Data collection and management

Internal data collection processes are limited, hampering the capacity of program organisers to verify anecdotal accounts of the effectiveness of the Aboriginal Power Cup. The evaluation team was advised by SAASTA that staff turnover and changes in data collection methods have meant that data collected prior to 2010 are inconsistent with data collected in later years. The two year period (2010–11) in which comparatively robust data are available limits the ability of program organisers to conclusively determine whether, and on what basis, desired outcomes (like improved student attendance and retention) are realised.

Inbuilt evaluation frameworks are vital for the integrity of any program. There are significant opportunities for improvements to internal data collection processes to monitor progress and assess the effectiveness of the Aboriginal Power Cup. Further, as the data publicly available through various sources were inconsistent, further efforts to establish consistent and transparent data collection and sharing across agencies would benefit implementers of programs like the Aboriginal Power Cup.

External factors/influences

The program logic identified a number of factors that may positively or negatively influence the implementation of the Aboriginal Power Cup. The capacity of schools to participate was one of the key

influences and was represented in the available qualitative data. Student support and parental involvement were also identified as two significant factors.

In interviews, program organisers indicated that teachers were sometimes limited in their capacity to fully contribute to program activities. It was noted in interviews that organisers often sought advice from teachers on issues like the students' career interests and used this information to inform the content of program activities. Program organisers indicated that they found it challenging to obtain this information:

> It's important that I get the teachers and schools on board on what I'm trying to do here. And that was the biggest frustration as well just, um [intake of breath], I understand how busy schools, teachers [are] so it was really difficult to try and get teachers just to respond or have a real focus, like I have, because they've got so many other things on their plate (program organiser).

Heavy workloads can also mean that teachers, typically those implementing the program solo, chose not to participate in select program activities:

> …when I went [to visit the school], some schools were really good but they had more than one teacher. The schools that I found had one teacher or two teachers often then if we were there would be at the desk marking or doing something, you know, like they're trying to catch up (program organiser).

Because of this type of experience program organisers suggested that extra school-based resources are required to deliver all program activities:

> I think, you know, 80 percent of these schools are SAASTA schools. I'm trying to talk to them [SAASTA]…you guys need to provide some more resources or tell [teachers] this needs to be a focus, you know. Because these teachers are you know the main contact for these kids and they've got all this rapport with 'em, getting in someone new to talk about careers they're not going to get anything out of 'em and so it comes back on [the teachers] (program organiser).

Available student support is another factor that can influence the successful delivery of the program. For all the supports built into the program, most teachers maintained that more were needed. Existing program supports include mentors and coaches (appointed by the students) and role models (typically Port Adelaide Football players who visit schools midway through the program). All the schools visited provided students with extra assistance outside the formal program supports. At a minimum, the schools reported employing Aboriginal Community Education Officers (or an equivalent). These officers attended most Aboriginal Power Cup-related classes to provide help with literacy and numeracy or to work one-on-one with students with poor behaviour records. Depending on the needs of Indigenous students, some schools also provided further support:

> We do have that really good support system and it's not just about Power Cup. And it's not just about their literacy or their numeracy. It's the whole lot. We've got breakfast programs, we've got health checks that come in once a fortnight, you know we've got mentors that can assist, tutors, access to bus tickets, all kinds of things to help them get to school (urban teacher).

Finally, the analysis identified the lack of parental involvement in the program as a potential inhibitor to the full realisation of program outcomes. Most program organisers, teachers and parents acknowledged that parental involvement in the program is not high:

> It is hard like for parents to go down and watch sports if they're working or financially and stuff like that. But I was lucky I had family I could go and stay with [during the carnival] and stuff. But it is, there wasn't as many [family members] as I would have liked to see there but there was the ones that could make it (parent).

> …that's something we're trying to work on as well. Just getting [Aboriginal Community Education Officers] involved a lot more with parents. That's one of our aims next year…[a school-based rather than program-based initiative] (urban teacher).

Lack of parental involvement represents a possible cause for concern because failure to fully engage

parents has been identified as an Indigenous-specific reason for non-attendance at school (Purdie & Buckley 2010). While parents who participated in interviews did lament the lack of parental involvement, this finding is not based on the comments given by this small sample. Rather the finding that lack of parental involvement is a potential cause for concern is made in light of best practice identified in other similar evaluations (see Purdie & Buckley 2010).

External factors (including teacher workloads and parental involvement) can negatively impact on the capacity of the Aboriginal Power Cup to fulfil desired outcomes. Efforts to address or account for these factors would strengthen program implementation.

Program outcomes

Achievement of outcomes in line with program intent

The program logic includes a range of intended outcomes. These are—enhanced student engagement with school and career options, improved teamwork and leadership skills and a greater awareness of healthy lifestyle choices. Anecdotally, many participants indicated that these outcomes were realised.

Students reported gaining a range of knowledge and skills. These include good nutrition, career options, teamwork and leadership:

> …[With the] nutrition side of it, I learned a lot, the right foods and all that sort of stuff…(urban student).

> …it gives me good career pathways to choose from…[an] understanding [of] what my goals are so it can help me to get to my career choice… (urban student).

> …We learned teamwork, supporting each other and negotiation—there were a couple of arguments and we just had to come together… (regional student).

> …It taught us leadership because everyone has to take initiative at some point…(urban student).

Parents' and teachers, reports indicated that students put this expertise to practice:

> That very first night someone was drinking that high energy drink…I had to say some words because I didn't like, I don't like those drinks for these kids to drink you know and didn't see one after that (coach). Actually I did notice [Name] used to buy them a lot before and she hasn't really bought 'em for quite a while…she was forever wanting to get one…but yeah no she hasn't worried about them for quite a while now (parent).

> …just because they enjoyed the feeling of being healthy [as a result of football training and diet plans]…a lot of students…you see them in two or three years' time and quite a few of them have still got that idea, I want to be healthy, I go to a gym (urban teacher).

> …from someone that originally you would have thought this is one of the students who is going nowhere in the school and has got no skills to actually feeling quite good about herself and then taking some leadership with the other girls (urban teacher).

> …When they weren't playing they were supporting the boys, the boys were supporting the girls and that stuck out (parent).

Teachers and parents also reported that students gained increased self-confidence. Students appeared to gain an awareness of what they are capable of:

> They didn't know they could actually accomplish that [success at the carnival] and they were pretty proud of themselves, which I think did them the world of good (regional teacher).

> How much it's helped the kids with their confidence—out of school and in school sort of thing and yeah I think it's definitely a goer (regional parent).

> …They've got a chance to achieve something as a group. Looking at last year when the [team] won the finals the difference in the way the [team] carried themselves around the school. They wore their grand final medals around the school for the next couple of weeks (urban teacher).

Qualitative accounts suggest that desired outcomes are realised. However, there is no robust quantitative data to confirm self-reported positive outcomes (like the pursuit of career options or further education).

Sustainability of outcomes

Of the noted outcomes (discussed above) all were observed or recorded immediately post-program completion. Therefore, the question remains as to whether the knowledge and skills students develop during the program are sustained after exiting the Aboriginal Power Cup.

Data to assess whether student know-how is sustained and contributes to future positive achievements (such as employment or further study) is limited and as a result there is no conclusive answer to the posed question. Longitudinal data at the school and individual level would provide the necessary information to assess the sustainability of outcomes. Program organisers' ongoing efforts to consistently and reliably collect information for all participating schools and students (around attendance, retention and pathways post program completion) will support future conclusions regarding sustainability.

Further broader research is also required. Sports-based programs for young people in Australia have been found to be an effective means of promoting school engagement and retention (two factors critical to reduced offending). However, little is known about direct links between sports programs and reduced offending behaviour (see the literature review). Further, as highlighted in the 'Theoretical considerations' section, theory suggests these programs have the potential to reduce offending by creating attachments and the desire and means of achieving conventional goals but more research is needed.

Conclusion

Part of the team's analysis tested the extent to which the immediate and intermediate outcomes, as identified in the program logic for the Aboriginal Power Cup, are supported by the available qualitative data. Strong support for the appropriateness of the program design and the available resourcing was found. Program organisers' current efforts to enhance the Indigenous cultural content, along with a heightened commitment to the engagement of community members in design processes, will further help ensure the program fully meets students' needs.

There are many promising signs regarding the program implementation. Evidence of growing student numbers is encouraging. Although the program is still only reaching a small percentage of eligible Indigenous students and participating schools have comparatively high attendance rates. The targeting of schools with higher numbers of Indigenous students and lower attendance rates could increase the programs reach to the 'at-risk' students. Program organisers may also need to reconsider whether their strategy of cluster teams (which joins schools from different locations to enable them to participate in the program) is placing undue pressure on teachers. Furthermore, program organisers need to continue their ongoing review of program activities, retaining the flexibility to revise tasks both mid and post-program delivery. Their reviews, coupled with the involvement of teachers who are experienced with engaging Indigenous students, help to ensure the effective implementation of the program.

Both program materials and qualitative accounts obtained from participants indicate that intended short-term outcomes are realised. Students, teachers and parents reported enhanced engagement in education and career options and improved teamwork and leadership skills.

Quantitative data was not available to conclusively substantiate the finding of enhanced engagement. Given data limitations, it is only possible to conclude that the Aboriginal Power Cup facilitated engagement with at least some aspect of formal education.

Overall, there were a number of complexities and inherent limitations associated with identifying best practice principles within the Aboriginal Power Cup. These complexities include the limited availability of both baseline and post-intervention data, lack of comparative programs, inadequate control groups and the highly dynamic social, political and cultural context in which the program operates. The

evaluation team encountered a number of access problems for data relating to the Aboriginal Power Cup program. However, it is important to note that this is not due to the unwillingness of interagency stakeholders, but rather a direct result of inconsistent record and collection practices through government and staff changes. As a result, conclusive findings concerning the efficacy of the program are not possible. It appears from discussions with SAASTA that better data is now being collected on a consistent basis, as indicated by the data for 2010 and 2011 that was able to be provided. Hopefully, this will be maintained and data will be available over a longer time span to inform any future evaluations.

Tiwi Islands Youth Diversion and Development Unit

The Tiwi Islands of Melville and Bathurst are located 80 kilometres north of Darwin across the Dundas Strait. The islands are home to the Tiwi; a culturally and linguistically distinct people. Most Tiwi (and other residents) live in Wurrumiyanga (known as Nguiu until 2010) on Bathurst Island. The total population of the Tiwi Islands at 30 June 2010 was 2,534 (1,321 males and 1,213 females). At the same point in time, 380 of the total population were aged 10 to 19 years, accounting for approximately 14.9 percent of the population (ABS 2011).

The Tiwi Islands Youth Diversion and Development Unit (TIYDDU) is a service provider based in Wurrumiyanga. It commenced in 2003 as a youth diversion program under the auspices of the Northern Territory Police. This program offers mainly first-time youth offenders (who meet the criteria listed in the section on *Program reach*) the opportunity to avoid a criminal record by agreeing to voluntary conditions that benefit the offender, victim and the community. Typical conditions include participating in a youth justice conference (as described in the literature review), agreeing to apologise to the victim of the crime (in person/ writing), attending school and undertaking community service.

TIYDDU staff (a coordinator and youth workers) run the program with the support of a diversion team within the Northern Territory Police. Team members conduct or participate in youth justice conferences, assess young people's needs and prepare and implement case plans. Case plans are designed to meet the conditions of diversion (described directly above) and ensure young people get access to required supports (eg alcohol and drug counselling). Typically case plans are implemented over a 12 week period; however, the TIYDDU staff continue to look out for young people after they exit the program.

The focus of this evaluation was the youth diversion program described above. The TIYDDU have had involvement in a range of other programs. Examples include school attendance programs, after-school care and vacation care programs and community and family dispute mediation. However, this section examines the effectiveness of the youth diversion program, focusing on whether and on what basis this program achieved desired results, in light of available evidence. The section begins with a review of the research approach to contextualise the findings.

Evaluation approach

Qualitative and quantitative data were collected for the evaluation. The qualitative data collection

generated understandings of the experiences of program staff and program participants. Quantitative data requests focused on levels of participation, school attendance and offending (before, during and after program participation in the community). These data were sought to provide indicators of whether there was measurable individual behaviour change for young people as a result of participating in the youth diversion program.

Qualitative data collection and analysis

Program staff, program participants, community members and representatives of agencies with which the TIYDDU collaborates were interviewed regarding their experiences of the youth diversion program. Qualitative accounts from these informants were gathered through face-to-face interviews, mostly held during a weeklong field trip to Wurrumiyanga in September 2011. Telephone interviews were conducted with informants who were unavailable to participate in the interviews during this field trip. Program staff were also observed in their daily work and available program materials, including closed case files, were analysed.

Interviews

All program staff involved in implementing the youth diversion program were invited to participate in face-to-face interviews. All but one staff member verbally consented to take part (the other was unexpectedly out of community during the field visit). The first hour-long interview was conducted in a group of three. The group interview enabled the team to explore a range of perspectives and assisted in overcoming the risk of presenting a homogenous perspective of why the program operates as it does. Preserving a group focus also allowed for a form of collective control over the information shared, with participants able to reflect on and confirm or further explore each other's experiences of delivering the program (Willis, Pearce & Jenkin 2005). Following the initial group interview, two additional follow-up interviews were undertaken to confirm the understanding of program processes. The program coordinator attended both interviews, with other program staff coming and going depending on their other work commitments.

Former program participants were recruited with the support of program staff. Prior to the fieldwork visit, program staff agreed to circulate invitations and plain language research information sheets to potential recruits. The invitations asked parents/carers to notify the Unit if they did not want their child to participate. With the assistance of program staff, nine youth (8 males and 1 female) were approached and verbally consented to an interview, which was conducted with an interpreter. All youth interviewed had participated in the program between 12 and 18 months prior to the interview. Their average age was 15 years. No parents were able to be interviewed.

A number of community members also agreed to talk about the program. Two community members consented to an official interview, sharing 'for the record' their perceptions of the value of the program to the Tiwi. Even though other community members elected to talk informally, their comments proved invaluable. The interviewer was able to identify new lines of questioning based on information revealed during 'off the record' conversations (eg How actively involved are parents in family conferences? In your experience, does a lack of active family involvement reduce the likelihood of youth achieving positive behavioural change?).

Representatives of agencies that collaborate with the TIYDDU consented to interviews as well. Four people, from three separate organisations identified through desktop research and by program staff, were interviewed from this cohort.

The semi-structured interviews explored interviewees' perspectives of the youth diversion program. The interview topics/questions were informed by the program logic (see *Appendix 4*). Program staff were encouraged to discuss their experiences and expectations of program processes and procedures. Former program participants were asked about their involvement in the program (what they liked, what they did not like) and about any changes they saw in themselves as a result of their participation in the program. Community members were encouraged to share their views on whether the program enhanced the communities' capacity to address the issues confronting Tiwi youth. Finally, other agencies were asked about the operation of any relevant partnering arrangements and to reflect

on the role their programs played in supporting youth (to help us identify 'other influences' on young people, as outlined in the program logic). The interview schedule for each group is included at Appendix 5.

Document analysis

Documented program processes/procedures and closed case files were analysed. A total of 45 case files were reviewed, to supplement verbal accounts of the characteristics of young people participating in the program and to learn about young people's reported achievements immediately upon exiting the program. The Northern Territory Police provided the de-identified case files from February 2008 until June 2011.

Observations

Permission was sought from program staff to observe their daily work. The observations focused on the program's processes, with the evaluator seeking to identify the components, functions and relationships necessary for the program to achieve desired results.

A conference was observed between program staff, family members and a Tiwi youth who had disengaged from school and had adverse contact with the local police. This observation provided insights into how young people are supported and encouraged to adopt responsible prosocial behaviours and how different parties engage in the conference process.

Quantitative data requests and analysis

The TIYDDU is more than a crime prevention initiative and as a result, data were collected on a broader range of measures than just recidivism. The data request was categorised according to recidivism and education data. These data would allow the evaluation to assess the impact of the program on young people's lives in a number of settings as opposed to exclusively focusing on the criminal justice context.

Again, there were several limitations in the receipt of data. One of the major limitations for the receipt of these data were the ethical issues associated with reporting on small numbers of participants for both recidivism and education level data and limited data collection protocols, or capacity within the actual program. Table 4 provides an outline of the data requested and actually received.

Table 4 Data requested and received, Tiwi Islands Youth Diversion and Development Unit	
Data requested	**Data received**
Recidivism data	
The number of alleged juvenile offenders by Indigenous status, age, sex and offence type for 2006 to 2011 (inclusive) in the Tiwi Islands	The number of offences committed in the Tiwi Islands by sex, age, offence type and Indigenous status (2001–11)
The number of juvenile complainants (ie victims) by Indigenous status, age, sex and offence type for 2006 to 2011 in the Tiwi Islands	The number of juvenile victims of offences committed in the Tiwi Islands by sex, age, offence type and Indigenous status (2001–11)
For each individual youth participant in the TIYDDU, the number of police apprehensions for the period of 12 months prior and 12 months after the youth's commencement of the program, by offence type	For each individual youth participant in the TIYDDU, the number of police apprehensions for the period of 12 months prior and 12 months after the youth's commencement of the program, by offence type
For each individual youth participant in the TIYDDU, the 'index' offence (ie the offence for which the youth was referred to the program)	For each individual youth participant in the TIYDDU, the 'index' offence. Also, details of victimisation of participants in the 12 months before and after commencement
Education data	
The number of FTE students enrolled at Xavier Community Education Centre, Tiwi Island College and Murrupurtiyanuwu Catholic College by sex, Indigenous status and year level for each year from 2001 to 2011 (inclusive)	The number of FTE students at each school was available via public sites
The attendance rate of students at Xavier Community Education Centre, Tiwi Island College and Murrupurtiyanuwu Catholic College and, by sex, Indigenous status and year level from 2001 to 2011 (inclusive)	No data received
The attendance rate of each individual youth who participated in the TIYDDU program, one year prior and one year post each youth's commencement of the program	No data received regarding attendance, retention of individual youth who have participated in the program

Findings

Key findings concerning the effectiveness of the youth diversion program are summarised in Table 5. The Table shows, in light of available data, whether and on what basis the program's design, delivery and outcomes (presented at the end of the section) represent excellent, adequate or poor practice.

Table 5 Assessment of the effectiveness of the Tiwi Youth Diversion Unit program			
Area of focus	Excellent practice	Adequate practice	Poor practice
Appropriateness of the program design			
Addresses a social need	There is evidence to suggest that despite the decrease in the number of young people on the Tiwi Islands, the number of offences committed by this cohort has continued to increase (see below discussion). In response to Tiwi youth offending, the program offers mainly first-time offenders the opportunity to avoid a criminal record and connect with locals committed to helping them make positive life choices		
Serves the target audience		A comprehensive assessment of young people's needs informs the identification of appropriate interventions. Limited resources can make it hard to meet all needs. Efforts to reduce the time lag between an offence and a referral to TIYDDU would mean youth are reflecting on offending behaviour as and when it happens	
Cultural competence	The program reinforces Tiwi social and cultural authority and employs a staff with strong cultural knowledge		
Available resources			Limited resources mean important contributors to the program must either volunteer their services or be funded through other means (such as the Community Development Employment Projects—CDEP—scheme). Despite attempts at succession planning, the short-term future of the program relies on the continued employment of the current TIYDDU coordinator
Community involvement	Community members had input to the design of the program and continue to play a role in its implementation		
Effectiveness of the implementation of the program			
Program reach	The Northern Territory Police try, where possible, to ensure Tiwi youth are included in the program and TIYDDU staff work informally with youth, sometimes eliminating the need for a formal diversion		

Service objectives	The program engages community members in the diversion process. This engagement enhances the community's capacity to minimise and address youth offending A detailed assessment process, which involves extended family and kin, means the program identifies both presenting issues and appropriate interventions to address these concerns	
Data collection and management		The receipt of case files and access to interview participants suggests a level of documentation and data/ information management relative to staff capacity. Other data were sought from external agencies, with Northern Territory Police data being obtained and used to inform the evaluation. There is scope to enhance the capacity of TIYDDU to collect data and to investigate data sharing with police
Responses to external influences/factors		TIYDDU staff often work without the support of other youth-focused programs, which can make it difficult for them realise benefits for young people
Extent to which program achieves intended outcomes		
Achievement of outcomes in line with program intent	Young people consistently credit the program with helping them to recognise wrongdoing and adopt strategies to stay out of trouble and this is supported by reductions in police reoffending data	
Sustainability of outcomes		Insufficient longitudinal data prohibits conclusive findings on the extent to which the program produces positive outcomes that are sustained over time. This could be greatly improved by the collection and maintenance of data such as offences committed by participants, educational and employment outcomes, engagement with programs and other services, and perhaps the use of some simple psychometric tools to test changes in factors such as attitudes and social connectedness

Program design

Addresses a social need

Young people are responsible for a relatively high proportion of offences committed in the Tiwi Islands region. During the period between 2001 and 2011, police recorded 646 offences for young people in the 10 to 17 year age group.

As Figure 5 shows, there was a very large increase in the number of offences committed by young people on the Tiwi Islands from 2008, partly due a large number of motor vehicle offences. While the number of offences declined in 2010 compared with 2009, they rose again in 2011 and the overall trend across the 2008–11 period was for a markedly greater number of recorded offences than in the 2001–07 period.

Figure 5 Total offences committed by 10–17 year olds, Tiwi Islands, 2001–11
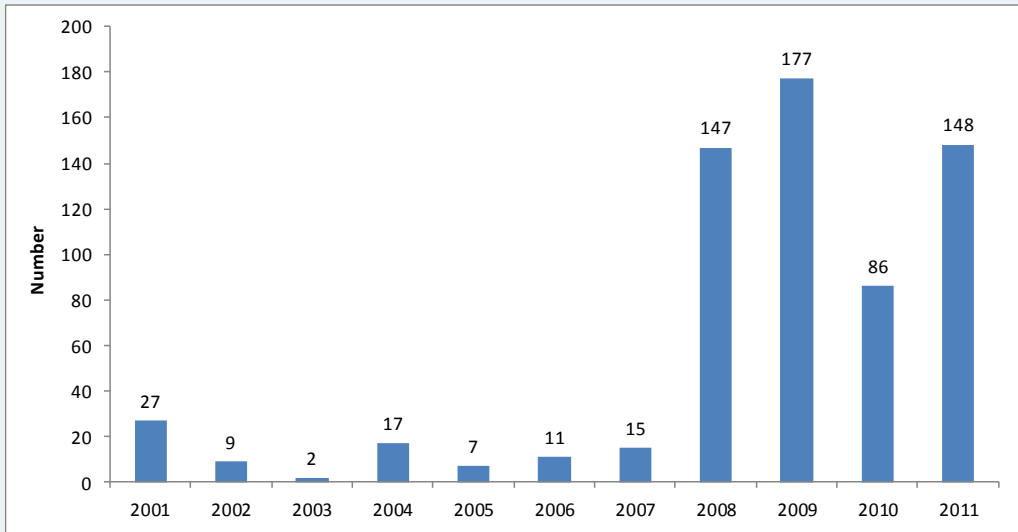
Source: Northern Territory Police, TIYDDU recidivism data: AIC data file

Figure 6 Offences committed by 10–17 year olds Tiwi Islands by age, 2001–11
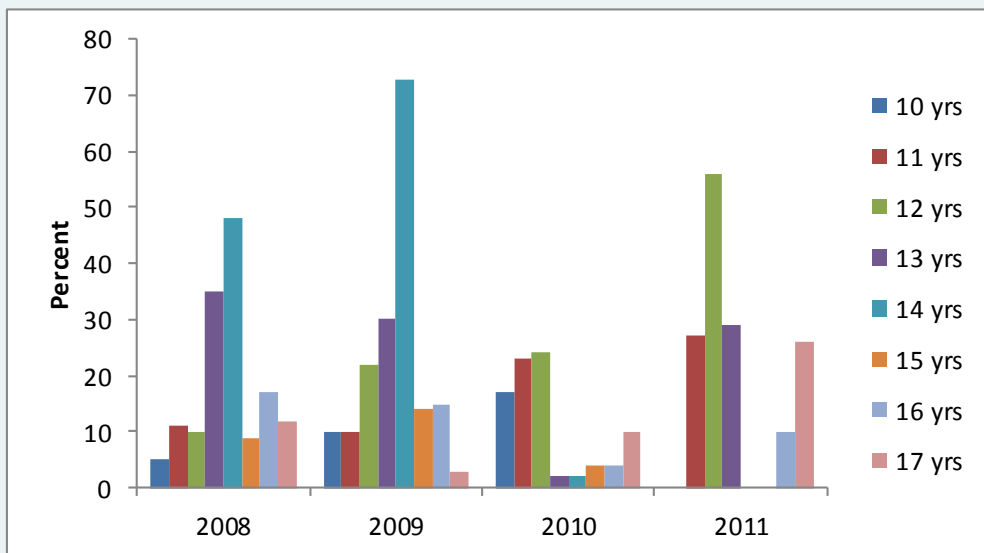
Source: Northern Territory Police, TIYDDU recidivism data: AIC data file

Further analysis shows that the types of offences underpinning this increase varied between years. In 2008, 45 percent of offences (n=66) involved unlawful use of a motor vehicle. Theft accounted for 14 percent (n=20) and unlawful entry 12 percent (n=18). In 2009, unlawful use of a motor vehicle was still the most common offence (36%; n=63), while unlawful entry accounted for 19 percent (n=33) and theft 15 percent (n=26). However, in 2010 property damage accounted for nearly half of all juvenile offences (43%; n= 37), despite only being seven percent of recorded offences in both 2008 and 2009. Unlawful use of a motor vehicle accounted for 20 percent (n=17) of offences in 2010, while unlawful entry was 15 percent (n=13). Incidents of unlawful entry increased in 2011 to 51 offences, 34 percent of all offences in that year. Theft accounted for 32 percent (n=47) of offences in 2011, while the proportion of property damage offences fell to 18 percent (n=26). No other types of offence, aside from those mentioned here, accounted for more than five percent of offences in any of the years from 2008 to 2011.

The types of offences seen among Tiwi Islands young people are generally comparable with the characteristics of juvenile offenders in other parts of Australia. Statistics from Queensland, South Australia and Victoria show that in each of these jurisdictions around one-half of juvenile offenders are apprehended for property crimes and property crime constitutes a higher proportion of juvenile offending than adult offending (Richards 2011b). Children's Court data show that juveniles were most often adjudicated for acts intended to cause injury, theft, unlawful entry with intent, motor vehicle offences and fare evasion-type offences (Richards 2011b).

There were some noticeable annual variations in the ages and sex of the young people committing these offences, as shown in Figure 6. In 2008, one-third (33%; n=48) of offences were committed by 14 year olds who were mostly (92%) male and three-quarters (74%; n=109) of all juvenile offences in 2008 were committed by 10 to 14 year olds.

In 2009, 82 percent (n=145) of juvenile offences were committed by 10 to 14 year olds. One-half of these (n=73) were committed by 14 year olds, 53 percent of whom were male and 47 percent of whom were female.

The overall proportion of offences in 2010 committed by 10 to 14 year olds (79%; n=68) was similar to previous years, but 25 percent of these were committed by 10 year olds, 34 percent by 11 year olds, 35 percent by 12 year olds, three percent by 13 year olds and only three percent by 14 year olds. All were committed by males; there were no offences recorded for 10 to 14 year old females in 2010 and only one offence by an older female young person.

Similarly, in 2011 there were no offences recorded on the Tiwi Islands for 14 year old males or females, nor for 10 year olds. Eighteen percent (n=27) of all offences in that year were committed by 11 year old males, 38 percent by 12 year old males and 20 percent by 13 year old males. There were no offences recorded for 10 to 14 year old females in 2011 and a higher proportion than previous years (17%; n=25) were committed by 17 year olds.

The above figures all refer to Indigenous young people; a very small number of offences on the Tiwi Islands were committed by non-Indigenous young people (a total of 4 offences from 2008 to 2011).

Therefore, the data provided by Northern Territory Police show considerable annual variation in the ages and sex of young offenders, which is likely the result of a small number of individuals being responsible for all juvenile offences on the Islands and with fluctuations influenced by individuals being detained or otherwise absent from the community. Population data from the ABS Census show some annual variations in the number of young people living on the Tiwi Islands, in particular a gradual decrease in the number of 15 to 19 year olds from 2006 through to 2009 (ABS 2011). However, it is not possible to directly compare offence figures with population figures as ABS figures are only available in five year age brackets (10 to 14 years and 15 to 19 years). Also, Northern Territory Police and ABS figures show both Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people; while ABS data show that an estimated 92.1 percent of Tiwi Islands residents are Indigenous, a breakdown by Indigenous status is not available for either of these data sets.

Despite the clear increase in the number of offences committed by young people on the Tiwi Islands, the decrease in the number of 15 to 19 year olds presents an interesting operational context for the

TIYDDU and raises the question of the extent to which TIYDDU participants are involved in this offending behaviour. Data on reoffending by TIYDDU participants is discussed below.

Qualitative data also support the notion of persistent levels of offending by young people in the Tiwi Islands. Program staff recalled 66 referrals to the youth diversion program from 2003 to 2011. The case file review showed these referrals were for a range of offences including property damage; unlawful use of a motor vehicle (car theft) and unlawful entry (break and enter). The types of offences are similar to those committed by the broader group of offenders from within this age group. According to data provided by Northern Territory Police, the most common offences committed by young people (not solely program participants) on the Tiwi Islands during 2011 were unlawful entry and theft, together accounting for approximately 70 percent of the total offences committed that year.

The stories behind these offences—as revealed by program staff, former program participants and the available case files—are typically ones of misadventure and poor choices (eg joyriding in stolen vehicles). With the youth diversion program, these mainly first time offenders have a chance to avoid a criminal record by agreeing to voluntary conditions developed with the support of the TIYDDU.

Community members see the program as addressing need because it connects young people to others who will encourage and support them. A recurring theme in the accounts from program staff and community members was one of diminished cultural authority. Young people were largely seen as making bad choices because they had forgotten the Tiwi way. A community member exemplified the concern as follows:

> And the attitude of young people today is, it would appear to me, that significance of culture and respect of Elders…has diminished to a degree (community representative).

The Tiwi way is encompassed in the TIYDDU philosophy. It involves:

> respecting ourselves (Tayamangamiya), respecting others (Ngawurrayamangajirri) and

working together, caring for and helping one another (Ngaruwanajirri) (TIYDDU coordinator).

The program seeks to strengthen cultural authority through providing counselling and support to young people.

Overall, the program represents a direct response to persistent youth offending on the Tiwi Islands and a desire for a culturally competent community based response. By these measures it addresses a social need.

Serves the target audience

Youth offenders often have complex needs. Commonly occurring issues include substance misuse, mental health concerns and/or educational, employment and family problems (Richards 2011b). A key way in which the TIYDDU serves its target audience is by undertaking a comprehensive assessment to identify these needs. The assessment is designed to reveal factors that contributed to offending and inform appropriate responses:

> [the assessment involves] getting down to the reasons of why they did it in the first place. Hence those questions [in the assessment form] around substance abuse, around family history, that sort of thing…to help guide the case managers (Northern Territory Police representative).

Therefore, provided suitable interventions are available (see external factors/influences below), young people are supported to address the problems or issues that played a part in offending behaviour.

The qualitative data suggested room for improvement in the referral/assessment process. The case file review indicated a substantial gap between when some offences were committed and when the corresponding case file was referred to the TIYDDU to complete an assessment. Of the 45 case files examined for the evaluation, 25 came to the TIYDDU two months or more after the date of the offence. A representative of the Northern Territory Police indicated 'resourcing issues' within the police service contribute to the time delay, exacerbated by the amount of documentation required for referral. It was also clear from previous interviews that considerable work goes into preparing a court ready file, which forms the basis of the referral to TIYDDU:

… there is a presumption under the Youth Justice Act for diversion the file is prepared so it's either ready for diversion or it's ready for court (representative of Northern Territory Police).

Program staff revealed that the delay could be a cause for concern with families. When invited to the conference families can become upset, assuming their child has reoffended. When told the conference is about the past offence:

[it] bring[s] up issues again that people thought had passed (TIYDDU coordinator).

While the TIYDDU staff work with families to clear up any confusion, the question remains as to whether quicker turnarounds might prove more beneficial by helping young people to 'immediately' reflect on their offending behaviour.

To serve the target audience the TIYDDU undertakes comprehensive assesses young people's needs to inform the identification of appropriate interventions. Efforts to eliminate or reduce the time lag between when an offence is committed and TIYDDU receives a referral may enhance program delivery.

Cultural competence

In consultations, the youth diversion program was considered to be culturally competent by the program staff because it embodies the Tiwi way. The operation of the program maintains Tiwi cultural and social authority. In the words of TIYDDU staff the youth diversion program:

…empower[s] Tiwi in the Balanda [white] system (TIYDDU coordinator).

[enables] local solutions to local problems (Education/Liaison Officer).

makes connections…Elders, strong cultural leaders [act as] role models for youth (Skin Group Leader).

[the program] renews relationships, reinforces connections to each other, everyone is connected (TIYDDU coordinator).

A representative of an agency that collaborates with the TIYDDU reinforced these notions:

[the operational model] giv[es] authority back to the people at the grass root level, affords them

respect, show[s] them their ways are respected by white agencies…

[and it promotes behavioural change because] when community members growl it has a bigger impact, they [Tiwi youth] do listen because they [community members] have a relationship and know their situation (service provider).

In this context to 'growl' at someone is to call them out on their bad behaviour and provide guidance on positive behaviours you would like to see.

The culturally competent program design and delivery is a reflection of the cultural knowledge held by the program staff. The team has an in-depth understanding and lived experience of Tiwi law and values and kinship responsibilities and obligations. Consequently they are well placed to deliver the program in ways that are congruent with participants' cultural values and practices. A community member explained it as follows:

I really see that cultural knowledge and the language skill as a huge benefit to those young people going through the diversion program (community representative).

Available resources

Many people contribute to the operation of the youth diversion program. Yet it only has funds for two positions—a coordinator and youth worker. The implications of this funding position are twofold. First, the program must work creatively to respectfully meet the needs of young people and their families. For example, the TIYDDU employs one female worker who receives her wage from the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) program. She assists a male youth worker in their day-to-day dealings with Tiwi youth and their family members:

They work as a team. Between them they cover the four Skin Groups. So who [the male youth worker] can't talk to [the female CDEP worker] can (TIYDDU coordinator).

While this approach enables the team to exercise cultural competence, the TIYDDU had to live with the uncertainty of what changes to CDEP and related policies might mean for the team dynamic.

The second implication of the limited funding for wages is that other important contributors—including Elders, Skin Group Leaders and members of the Strong Woman's group—assist the program on a voluntary basis. While none of the interviewed community representatives indicated that professional support and appropriate remuneration is required or would be appreciated, other studies have suggested that this type of recognition represents a best practice strategy for developing effective services (NADRAC 2009).

Another important resourcing issue relates to succession planning. All interviewed community members and representatives of agencies with which the TIYDDU collaborate identified the TIYDDU coordinator as critical to effective program delivery and almost irreplaceable:

> I know I'm promoting [them], [they] must sound like [a super hero]…[the coordinator] you know not only [has] got links through [their] partner but [coordinator] got fluent language skills and…I think that's, that can only be put down to a bonus to what [they] do…having that language skill, cultural skill [they], it just means that [they] make[s] it happen. And you, I can only hope and that's what we're working to, that you know young [youth worker] that's there um, very much learns from what [coordinator] does to hopefully you know take on that role when [coordinator] you know does decide that [they] needs to have a rest from stuff or from work (community representative).

> One of the unique things about the Tiwis and a couple of the others [communities] is having people like [coordinator] who've got that incredible cross cultural links and engagement. And unfortunately for [coordinator] [they] is very unique in the Tiwi context. [Coordinator is] aware of that and [they] works absolutely appropriately cross culturally from my perspective. But [they're] a very hard person to replace if for any reason [they are] no longer there…But people like that in a remote community context are rare. And those people are absolutely invaluable for these sorts of programs (Northern Territory Police representative).

While plans are in place to train a potential replacement for the coordinator's role, the longevity

of the program is unpredictable in the event (particularly in the short term) of the coordinator leaving. The literature and past observations of small scale programs operating in culturally specific and rural or remote areas highlight the critically important part that individuals can play in maintaining a program's focus and direction. These kinds of programs can benefit strongly from coordinators and other key staff members with strong cultural connections and high levels of personal enthusiasm and motivation. The loss of these individuals from a program can have severe impacts on the program's operations in the short term and sometimes in the longer term and presents a major challenge to the sustainability of these programs.

Limited resources mean important contributors to the program must either volunteer or be funded through other means. Despite succession planning, the short-term future of the program relies on the continued employment of the current TIYDDU coordinator.

Community involvement

Representatives of the Northern Territory Police approached Tiwi Island community members about establishing the youth diversion program. Prior to its establishment, the views of community members were identified and addressed as appropriate:

> …we went to them and said we would like you to run a program for us and this is what we'd like and they said yes… (Northern Territory Police representative).

Community members also play an ongoing role in how the program is delivered. They participate in conferences—with young people and their families, program staff and sometimes the victims of a crime—to identify what conditions might be imposed to repair harm. Their involvement both reinforces Tiwi cultural and social authority and helps to ensure conditions benefit offenders, victims and the community as a whole. There is strong community support for this approach as epitomised in the following comment:

> [the program] involves to a great deal some of the Elders in our community in the process of the juvenile going through conferencing in the diversion program. And I just think that's

absolutely magnificent (community representative).

In short, community members had input into the program design and continue to be involved in its implementation.

Implementation

Program reach

The program reach is largely determined by conditions in the Youth Justice Act (Northern Territory). Under the legislation, police officers must consider, among other options, referring youth (a person under 18 years of age) to a diversion program unless contra-indicators exist. Young people are not eligible for diversion when:

- their whereabouts are unknown;
- the alleged offence is a serious offence (including but not only murder, manslaughter, serious physical assault, sexual assault and some drugs offences);
- they have been referred to a diversion program on two previous occasions; and
- they have some other history that makes diversion an unsuitable option.

Data were provided regarding the number of offences committed on the Tiwi Islands by 10 to 17 year olds during the period from 2001 to 2011. Based an examination of the total number and types of offences committed by young people aged between 10 and 17 years between 2001 and 2011, less than 10 percent of all offences committed satisfied eligibility criteria for the offenders to be diverted to the Unit. However, the data do not show how many discrete offenders are responsible for this subset of eligible offences and clear data are not available to determine what proportion of eligible Tiwi young people the TIYDDU is reaching. Whether there is an unmet demand for diversion services on the Islands is not known.

Qualitative accounts revealed ongoing efforts to ensure greater flexibility in how the 'exclusion criterion' is applied in practice. For example:

…there's a list of like scheduled offences [ie serious offences] that can't be considered for diversion. But there is also like this under riding thing like unless it's in the interests of justice or something like that is the term. So we will consider even the most serious offences. But it's also based on community expectations…we will always consider how we can actually work both within the interests of the community but also the interests of the young person to give them any opportunity we can (Northern Territory Police representative).

The youth under the Act are entitled to two formal diversions. There is discretion beyond that. That is actually at Police Commissioner level. So if the youth has actually undertaken diversion twice and then reoffends it is very unlikely they'll be given a further opportunity at formal diversion...but again it depends, that third opportunity possibility does depend, on the nature of the offending and their own individual circumstances (Northern Territory Police representative).

The police are also looking to change select criterion to better reflect the lived experience of some Indigenous young people (which raises the possibility of higher rates of diversion in future). The proposed change is designed to ensure an appropriate response to certain types of traffic offences, as highlighted:

All traffic offences have to go to court. But we're actually in the process of seeking changes for the drive unlicensed component of traffic offences because in many cases it's not appropriate to go to court…a lot of young Indigenous people will actually be caught for drive unlicensed and often they'll be doing it for reasons. They live out bush, a parent or community family member may for whatever reason—whether it's alcohol related or a sickness or whatever—may insist that a young person drives them to town…We acknowledge that that happens and often it's beyond the young person's control to really say no. For us a really good outcome **used to be** that young person's diversion is actually getting a driver's licence and we would help them to do that (Northern Territory Police representative, emphasis added).

Collectively, this evidence suggests that police seek to ensure young people who might benefit from diversion are not unduly excluded from this type of intervention.

The reach of the program is also extended, in a sense, by the extra efforts of program staff. Whether part of the program or not, young people are supported by program staff. The team observes young people and learn from their community connections about any issues they may be experiencing. The evaluator saw this information sharing in action and witnessed TIYDDU staff taking young people aside for informal chats about behavioural concerns. Northern Territory Police are also aware of, and fully support, the Unit's attempts to eliminate the need for diversion:

> It's one of the positives that I see from that Unit over there because they're doing so much work in the background to stop things getting to this stage with the formal offending that [Northern Territory Police] have to deal with (Northern Territory Police representative).

Due to these efforts, the TIYDDU effectively broadens the capacity of the program to support young people in need.

Together, the Northern Territory Police and TIYDDU staff try, where possible, to extend the reach of the youth diversion program. These efforts are important in light of the estimate that less than 10 percent of all offences committed by young Tiwi (10–17 years) were eligible for diversion (although the number eligible for diversion and the number referred to the TIYDDU cannot be compared on the available data) and also the lack of clear information on whether there is an unmet demand for diversion services. In these circumstances, a collaborative approach to extending the reach of the program represents a positive form of practice.

Service objectives

TIYDDU staff shared stories of disaffected youth. As the TIYDDU coordinator summed up—they feel they have got no one when in fact they have everyone. Hence, the TIYDDU team sees it as their role to get the right people involved and make sure young people do the right thing. These tasks have been interpreted as the following service objectives:

- Engaging community members (described by the TIYDDU team as the 'right people').
- Assisting young people to address the factors that contributed to offending behaviours (ie enabling them to do the right thing).

Engaging community members

Conferences are convened to bring together the 'right people' to support youth who are referred to the program. They always occur when a young person is first referred. These conferences enable a collective assessment of the needs and circumstances of the young person. If problems arise during the period of diversion, conference participants may come together again to explore how to resolve any issues (eg declining school attendance). Typical attendees include the young person and their family, TIYDDU staff and Skin Group Leaders and Elders with kinship obligations to the young person.

There is some evidence that this approach achieves its aim. Community members attest to the great job that the TIYDDU coordinator does in involving Tiwi Elders in the conferences. This involvement is valued because community members believe that a return to Tiwi values and law will help young people to stay out of trouble (see the section on *Addresses need*).

The observation of one conference also revealed that it was an environment in which participants freely and respectfully shared information about the needs of the young person (who was also encouraged to contribute). This information exchange appeared to achieve full disclosure of both the young person's situation and required supports. Further, the carers expressed deep gratitude at being able to work as a group to find a way to reach and assist their child.

Additionally, the case file review suggests that conferences uncover comprehensive information about the young person's circumstances. Completed assessment forms, filled out at a conference, were available in 36 of the 45 closed files. These forms revealed information concerning the young person's family background, lifestyle, education, employment/training, medical history and substance use. While it is not possible to determine how many conference participants contributed information, observations of TIYDDU staff suggest

that a broad range of views would have been sought. The TIYDDU team was regularly witnessed seeking the insights of other community members when following up on whether young people were complying with the conditions of their diversion.

No robust data was obtained from young people regarding their thoughts on whether the 'right people' came together to support them. None of the young people who consented to interviews had any lasting memories of the conference, having participated in the conference 12 to 18 months prior. Similarly, the conference experience did not expressly feature in the documented exit interviews that were typically conducted by TIYDDU staff post-program completion and were considered as part of the case file review. During face-to-face interviews for this study, three young people did indicate they liked being listened to and receiving advice on 'staying out of trouble'. However, it's unclear due to the young people's failing memories under what circumstances these opportunities to be heard and obtain guidance occurred (eg during conferences or in one-on-one sessions with TIYDDU staff).

Overall, the program engages community members in the diversion process. This engagement enhances the community's capacity to minimise and address youth offending.

Addressing factors that contribute to offending behaviour

A comprehensive assessment process (discussed above and in the section entitled *Serves the target audience*) means that the program is well-placed to respond to the factors that contributed to a young person's offending behaviour. The case file review shows that presenting issues—such as substance abuse, poor school attendance and idleness—are identified and addressed with appropriate interventions. Examples of interventions include alcohol and drug counselling, monitored school attendance or support to pursue employment related training opportunities, assistance to participate in supervised recreational activities and community service.

The efforts of program staff to engage young people in community service are noteworthy because of a seemingly unintended consequence. Community service initiatives appear to not only occupy young people's time (addressing the 'boredom factor') but also to provide many youth with a renewed sense of purpose and self-worth. Examples of community service activities include office work with the TIYDDU, supervising other young people at the sports and recreational hall or helping out at other agencies (such as the local childcare centre). Six of the interviewed youth identified community service as the thing they liked most about the youth diversion program. This sentiment was also evident in the majority of available exit interviews (26 in total). The reasons young people gave for appreciating community service included:

> See community work as means of repairing harm/damage caused by actions (case file 12).

> It was good to do the program and help out with the young kids. It wasn't hard to do the work and work on the kids programs, helping to supervise them (case file 18).

> The work was good after school and at night at the rec hall. Sometimes the kids were fighting and I helped to stop them from fighting (case file 22).

> Helped me decide to get a job (field notes).

- Young people's comments about community service point to the capacity of this activity to:
- Promote feelings of self-worth because of what individuals achieved or learned (eg supervision and dispute resolution skills).
- Highlight future possibilities (eg employment prospects).

Provide a means for young people to practically demonstrate feelings of remorse and make amends.

Ongoing monitoring and support appears to be another critical factor in how the program addresses presenting issues and prevents further offending behaviour. Monitoring occurs both during program participation and after a young person exits. By their own admission, the TIYDDU coordinator and youth worker discuss active cases every day. They recognise that young people will face challenges— like exposure to 'grog and ganja' (cannabis)—most days. Therefore, they want young people to know:

> People are there to support you. All you got to do is reach out (TIYDDU coordinator).

While young people did not express any thoughts on this ongoing support (either in the face-to-face interviews or documented exit interviews), others certainly saw this strategy as something unique that TIYDDU can offer to the diversion process:

That's where an organisation like [TIYDDU] is important. They will continue to informally mentor and to support that young person. And that's absolutely critical (Northern Territory Police representative).

The comprehensive assessment process and ongoing monitoring and support (during and post program completion) means TIYDDU staff identify both presenting issues and appropriate interventions to address any problems.

Data collection and management

It is important to note at the forefront that initiatives like the youth diversion program operate in culturally, socially and economically complex contexts. Often, implementing the program and monitoring and supporting participants is a higher priority than collecting and managing data. This is important to take into consideration when looking at the current system utilised by the TIYDDU.

Similar to the other programs evaluated in this report, sourcing both education and recidivism data for the youth diversion program posed significant challenges and subsequent limitations. The evaluation team sought data regarding the offences committed on the Tiwi Islands for each individual participant who had been referred to the Unit, as well as individual school attendance and retention rates. Again, it is important to note that the collection and management of this level of data is not necessarily the responsibility of the Unit.

The data that were made available to the evaluation team suggested the program has relatively effective data collection and management. This was particularly relevant for the qualitative data collection, with the majority of case files made available to the evaluation team for analysis. As noted above, the level of detail included in the case files provided highly relevant information around the contexts in which young people were being referred to the Unit and the outcomes of the referral represents. However, there was limited quantitative data to

compliment suggested outcomes in the case files.

There were several systematic limitations related to the collection of quantitative data. In relation to the education data, all schools from which data were sought were non-government schools and as a result, government agencies did not systematically collect data such as attendance and retention rates. Several avenues were tried to gain access to such data including the Territory education bodies, the individual schools and their associated authorities. The fundamental concern expressed by the schools was associated with maintaining student privacy and confidentiality for individuals and as participants in the diversion program. In addition, where data may have been available, there were significant resource limitations within various government departments in the Northern Territory, which created significant challenges in sourcing available data within our required time periods. However, it is important to emphasise the fact that the limited data, particularly the limited quantitative data, is less about the data management and collection processes of the TIYDDU and appears to be more a result of inadequate information sharing, collaboration and resourcing between various agencies at the local, state and federal level.

External factors/influences

Two factors, external to the program's direct influence, impact on its ability to achieve desired results. These factors are the widespread availability of cannabis and the shortage or inconsistent provision of other programs specifically designed for youth.

All community members who participated in interviews or chatted informally with the evaluator identified cannabis (or ganja) as a huge problem in the Tiwi Islands. Program staff explained that many young people use ganja to escape the problems of the day-to-day life, including problems at school or home. While TIYDDU staff or other experienced professionals provide program participants with alcohol and drug counselling as appropriate, the temptation to use ganja is ever present for many because the drug is so readily available. Program staff suggested that more programs are needed to address the underlying causes of substance misuse (grief, trauma, anger and despair).

The shortage or inconsistent provision of youth-focused programs can also limit the capacity of the TIYDDU to realise benefits for young people. While community members appreciate that a lack of constructive activities can result in young people engaging in antisocial behaviours, funding is just not always available to deliver suitable initiatives:

> There's not a great deal of activity and…[the] shire are very dependent upon funding at both Federal and [Northern Territory] level and, you know, when we don't have funding approved, you know, it can create issues and that. It minimises the level of activity or the number of activities or even the diversity of activities that we can have running for especially our youth. And I see…there is a huge link between like, you know like, a sporting activity or lack of and then, you know, where there's lack of it tends to incur criminal activity or even worse where we have suicide and the like. Where I think young people are getting in trouble is just from sheer boredom, of nothing to do (community representative).

The TIYDDU can only do so much in terms of constructively occupying young people's time (see the discussion concerning community service in the section on service objectives). The availability of other youth-focused programs would open up additional avenues for young people to engage with positive role models/peers, pursue healthy lifestyle choices and occupy their time.

Program outcomes

Achievement of outcomes in line with program intent

Over the 12 weeks that most young people spend with the youth diversion program, the TIYDDU seeks to realise outcomes specific to individual need. Commonly sought after short-term results for Tiwi youth are an enhanced awareness of how to 'stay out of trouble' and regular school attendance. The medium to long-term aim is to prevent reoffending.

The available qualitative data provides insights into whether the program develops young people's awareness of the strategies they can adopt to avoid future adverse contact with police. Young people (both in face-to-face interviews and documented exit interviews) demonstrated remorse for their wrongdoing and a desire to avoid reoffending in the future, typically with the guidance and support of family:

> I learned to share my feelings and to take advice (field notes).

> I am sorry for what I did and won't do this type of thing again…the diversion was good for me to learn the right things and to behave myself at school and listen to my family when they tell me what to do (case file 22).

> [learned that] the right thing is the better thing to do and to stay away from trouble. I liked the program. It taught me to do the right things (case file 29).

> I learned to talk to someone I trust before I get into trouble (case file 39).

Quantitative data to inform an assessment of impacts was provided by Northern Territory Police. These data showed, on a de-identified individual basis, records for 65 young people who participated in the TIYDDU program. Dates of commencement ranged from June 2003 to July 2011. The variables covered by the data included:

- the offence for which the young person was referred to TIYDDU (the 'reference offence');
- the data of commencement in the TIYDDU program;
- number of alleged offences in the 12 months after commencing the program;
- types of alleged offences committed in the 12 months after commencing the program; and
- complaints to police (victimisation) in the 12 months before and after commencing the program.

Figure 7 shows the reference offences for the 65 young people and the alleged offences committed by those in this group in the 12 months after they commenced the program. The largest proportion of young people (38%; n=25) were referred to the TIYDDU program for unlawful entry with intent offences. A further 25 percent (n=16) were referred for unlawful use of a motor vehicle and 15 percent (n=10) for offences against the person (assault). These proportions are roughly equivalent to the

general distribution of offences among young people (*cf* above and Richards 2011b).

A total of 13 of the 65 young people (20%) had contact with police for alleged offences committed in the 12 month period after they commenced with the TIYDDU program. These young people commenced the program on various dates between June 2003 and March 2011 (2 young people among the 65 participants covered by these data commenced after this date—one in June 2011 and one in July 2011). Nine of these young people (14% of participants) had one contact with police, while four (6% of participants) had two contacts with police. The 13 young people were accused of a total of 22 offences. As shown in Figure 7, these were most commonly for motor vehicle or public order offences (each 23%; n=5), followed by offences against the person (18%; n=4).

There is a shortage of reliable information on the extent of juvenile recidivism in Australia and there are a range of problematic issues with the use of recidivism as a measure of program success (*cf* Richards 2011a). At the same time, there is clear evidence that Indigenous young people are substantially overrepresented in juvenile offending, being more than four times more likely than non-Indigenous juveniles to have contact with the criminal justice system (Allard et al. 2010). A recent study using reoffending data from New South Wales found that, over a 10 year period from the date of first contact with the criminal justice system, 84 percent of Indigenous offenders were reconvicted, compared with 56 percent of non-Indigenous offenders (Weatherburn, McGrath & Bartels 2012). Indigenous offenders had an average of six reconvictions across this period, compared with 3.3 reconvictions for non-Indigenous people. While the observation period of 10 years was much longer than in this evaluation study and was confined to the New South Wales criminal justice system, it nonetheless serves as a useful indicator of the extent of recidivism that might be expected among Indigenous young people on the Tiwi Islands.

Figure 7 Reference offences and alleged offences within 12 months of commencement, Tiwi Islands Youth Diversion and Development Unit
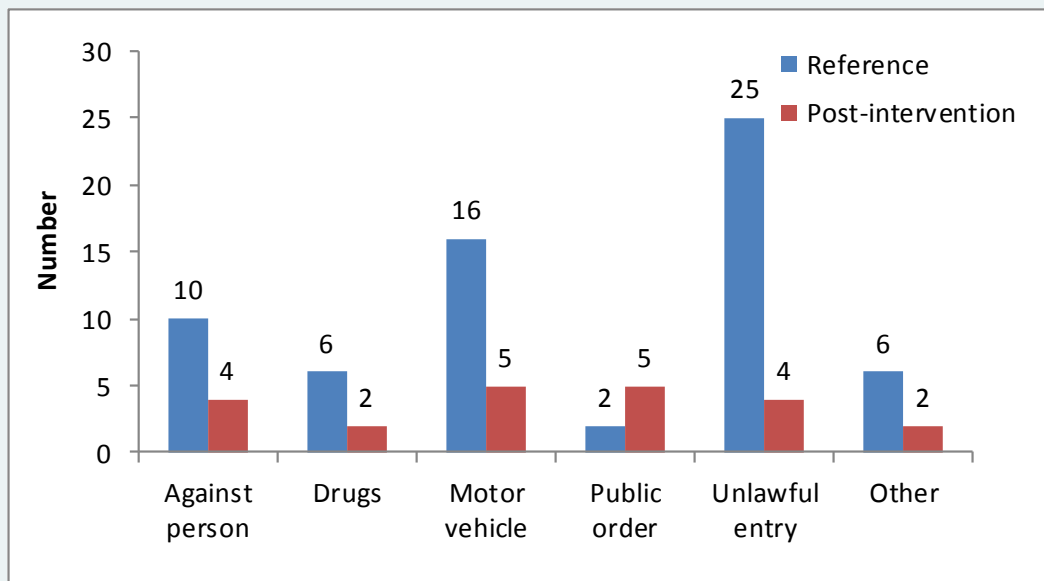
Source: Northern Territory Police, TIYDDU recidivism data: AIC data file

These findings are also supported by a national study, which found that Indigenous adults return to prison at a much higher rate and more rapidly than non-Indigenous adult offenders (Willis & Moore 2008). This study showed that 39 percent of Indigenous ex-prisoners returned to prison within 12 months, compared with 21 percent of non-Indigenous prisoners. Over the following 12 months, a further 17 percent of Indigenous ex-prisoners and 10 percent of non-Indigenous prisoners were readmitted to prison. This shows that while a 24 month observation period is typically used in recidivism studies, the majority of those who reoffend do so within the first 12 months, suggesting the 12 month period available for the Tiwi data is a valid indication of the extent of recidivism among TIYDDU participants.

The adult recidivism study used return to prison as the measure of recidivism, which will generally produce lower rates of recidivism than contact with police for alleged offences, a proportion of which will not result in reconviction and fewer again that will result in incarceration. Being identified as an offender can make a young person more likely to attract further attention from law enforcement agencies and the impacts of this are likely to be more acute when the young person has little or no anonymity from police. Evidence from studies investigating the effects of labelling and the impacts of early life contact with police suggest that young offenders in small and isolated communities such as those on the Tiwi Islands would quickly become known to police and would be relatively more likely to be apprehended for any given offence than young offenders in metropolitan areas (*cf* Weatherburn, McGrath & Bartels 2012).

Given the above, the fact that only 20 percent of TIYDDU participants had contact with police for alleged offences in the 12 months following commencement of the program can be seen as a positive indication of the program's impacts. In the absence of an effective intervention, the rate of reoffending would likely be much higher and 20 percent recidivism is well below what might be expected without intervention. This is particularly so when, as detailed above, most juvenile offences on the Tiwi Islands are committed by 10 to 14 year olds. Research has shown that young people who

have their first court appearance at a relatively young age (between 10 and 14 years of age) have significantly higher rates of reoffending than those whose first court appearance is at a later age (cf Weatherburn, McGrath & Bartels 2012). While the peak offending ages of Indigenous young people do tend to be younger than those of non-Indigenous due to differences in the overall age profiles of the two populations, achieving a reoffending rate of only 20 percent among participants emerges as an impressive result.

Sustainability of outcomes

There are insufficient longitudinal quantitative data to make a conclusive finding about the degree to which the TIYDDU youth diversion program contributes to desired long-term outcomes (such as reduced offending behaviour). The available qualitative data revealed that 12 to 18 months post-program completion young people consistently attributed the program as enabling them to adopt prosocial behaviours.

Data from other sources point to the potential of the program to achieve sustained positive outcomes. As highlighted in the literature review, findings in relation to offending post conference participation suggest that conferences have the potential to reduce offending over the long term, particularly when applied to violent offending. Further, social control theory supports the notion that by focusing on developing young people's social bonds the program should reduce the likelihood of offending behaviour.

Conclusion

The youth diversion program delivered by the TIYDDU is a direct response to community concerns regarding youth offending. Community members were involved in its design and play an important role in its ongoing implementation. The program serves the needs of participating youth because specific issues or circumstances that contributed to their offending behaviour are identified and addressed. Further, the care and support provided to young people is culturally competent because it recognises and demonstrates respect for Tiwi values and social and cultural authority.

Implementation of the program has not been without its problems. While the TIYDDU find creative ways to solve staffing issues, the team lives with the uncertainty of CDEP policies, changes to which may make the program no longer viable. Time lags between when an offence is committed and when program staff receive referrals can cause concern and confusion for family members. Also, the shortage or inconsistent provision of other youth-focused programs mean that TIYDDU staff sometimes work solo in providing constructive outlets for their participants.

Both qualitative and quantitative data suggest that the TIYDDU is effective in reducing adverse contact between young Tiwi and the criminal justice system. The reoffending rate among TIYDDU participants is well below what would be expected for this population. While it is not possible to say conclusively that this is due solely or mainly to the work of the TIYDDU, given the relative shortage of other services and interventions available on the Tiwi Islands this is likely to be the case.

Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel

The Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel operates in Woorabinda, an Indigenous community 170 kilometres southwest of Rockhampton in Central Queensland. Part of its role is to bring together government and community representatives at monthly cross-agency panel meetings to provide a coordinated approach to the care and support of Indigenous young people and their families. Full-time panel staff (a coordinator and youth worker) also directly support young people and their families.

Representatives from a range of government and non-government agencies attend the cross-agency panel meetings. Upon commencement in 2008, nine agencies actively participated in meetings—Child Safety, Rockhampton Youth Justice Service Centre, Wadja Wadja High School, Woorabinda State Primary School, Woorabinda Multi-Purpose Health Service, Central Queensland Rural Division of General Practice, Rockhampton Child and Youth Mental Health Service, Queensland Police Service and Anglicare Central Queensland. During a field visit in July 2012, the interviewer observed that only

three of these agencies were represented.

The cross-agency panel serves two key roles. Collectively members assess the needs of referred individuals and their families. Then on the basis of this assessment, the cross-agency panel plans for, implements and reviews interventions designed to address identified needs.

Identified interventions are either delivered by the agencies represented on the cross-agency panel or by the permanent panel staff (ie a panel coordinator and youth worker). For example, a psychiatrist with the Central Queensland Rural Division of General Practice might provide regular counselling, teachers at the Wadja Wadja High School may monitor attendance and the program's part-time youth worker could offer after-school recreational activities. Initiatives typically offered by the panel coordinator and youth worker include one-on-one in-classroom support, recreational pursuits, health promotion and family support (eg assisting parents to write letters to Housing).

Indigenous young people are eligible to participate in the panel under certain conditions. The young person must:

- be aged between 10 and 17 years;
- be at risk of offending or have been involved in offending and be at risk of becoming entrenched in a pattern of offending;
- have multiple/complex needs (including the aforementioned), be at risk of harm and at the time of referral, require the support of two or more services/agencies; and
- consent to participate in the panel, as must their family or guardian.

Further, the panel must determine that only a collaborative, multiagency integrated service approach can address the complex needs of the young person and/or their family.

This section presents findings concerning the effectiveness of the Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel. Drawing on available data, it examines whether and on what basis the panel achieved desired results. To contextualise these findings, the section begins with a review of the research approach.

Evaluation approach

A mixed-methods approach was adopted to enable the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data provided rich descriptions of the operation of the Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel and the experiences of young people and families who participate/participated. Quantitative data requests focused on school attendance and offending. These data were collected to provide indicators of whether there was measurable individual behavioural change as a result of participation in the Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel.

Qualitative data collection and analysis

Young people and their families, panel staff and other key stakeholders shared details of their experiences of the Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel. Below are details of the methods used to recruit these participants and collect, analyse and interpret their stories.

Interviews

Potential interview participants were identified in partnership with the current coordinator of the Woorabinda Early Intervention Panel. From past experience the evaluation team understood that recruitment was typically more effective when a person known to the community 'vouches' for the project. Due largely to the panel coordinator's efforts, the interviewer was able to speak with former panel staff (n=3), support staff from the Rockhampton Youth Justice Service (n=2) and members of the cross-agency panel (n=3).

Despite its original plans, the evaluation team was unable to speak with community members or parents of young people who were or had participated in the panel service. The newly appointed panel coordinator was still developing relationships with these parties and unable to facilitate suitable introductions. The team's attempts at 'cold-calling' council members secured no interest in participating in the study. Even so, the voice of community members and parents is not entirely absent from the report. Surveys previously completed by these groups (ie prior to this evaluation) were analysed and responses incorporated where appropriate.

The evaluator who visited Woorabinda had the opportunity to interact (in the presence of the coordinator) with many of the young people participating in the panel service. They elected to interview one of these young people through use of a Mature Minded Screen (see *Appendix 8*) to assess whether they were sufficiently mature and competent to make decisions around whether to participate in the low-risk study. The other youth were assessed as unable to provide informed consent.

In-depth and semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore people's experiences of the panel service. The interview schedules were informed by the program logic (see *Appendix 6*) to ensure that critical program inputs, processes and outcomes were identified. The schedules that informed the topics of discussion are available in Appendix 7.

Document analysis

A range of program documentation was analysed. Key documents included open and closed case files (for the youth participants), surveys of former youth participants, their families and sometimes the individual who initiated the referral (ie a panel member) and a pre-panel community survey (conducted by a panel coordinator to help assess the need for the service). Other program documentation like forms, fact sheets and reports on achieved outcomes and activities (written by former program coordinators) were also examined. The aim of the analysis was to identify key messages concerning how and why the panel service operates as it does, to gather participants' experiences of panel processes and details of observed outcomes.

Observations

The interviewer spent one week in Woorabinda collecting data. During this time, the interviewer observed the day-to-day activities of panel staff, including their interactions with participating young people. They also joined a cross-agency panel meeting to learn about how the panel functioned.

Quantitative data requests and analysis

The data sought for the panel service was similar to that sought to support evaluation of the TIYDDU. Data to inform recidivism and education outcomes were requested. The evaluation team received the majority of data sought for the panel. Table 6 outlines the data that was requested and the data that was received for this program evaluation.

The nature and extent of the data request presented a number of challenges. These challenges included:

- Small number of participants in the program—to ensure that participants could not be identified

within the report, all potentially identifiable information had to be removed by agencies with access to these data. This required extensive coordination between various government departments to ensure that all participant information was kept confidential.

- School affiliations and data collection—in addition to the small numbers, the schools included for the evaluation are not government schools. Therefore, government bodies do not collect the data requested for this study. Various letters of request were sent to individual schools and any linked governing bodies to seek the data; however, no data was made available.

Table 6 Data requested and received, Woorabinda Early Intervention Panel Service	
Data requested	**Data received**
Recidivism	
The number of offences committed in the Woorabinda region by sex, age (juveniles aged 10–17 years), offence type and Indigenous status for the period 2006 to 2011 (inclusive)	The number of offences committed in the Woorabinda region by sex, age (juveniles aged 10–17 years), offence type and Indigenous status for the period 2006 to 2011 (inclusive)
For each individual youth participant in the Woorabinda Early Intervention Panel Coordination Service, the number of police apprehensions for the period of 12 months prior and 12 months after the young person's commencement of the program, by offence type	For each individual youth participant in the Woorabinda Early Intervention Panel Coordination Service, the number of police apprehensions for the period of 12 months prior and 12 months after the youth's commencement of the program, by offence type
For each individual youth participant in the Woorabinda Early Intervention Panel Coordination Service, the 'index' offence (ie the offence for which the youth was referred to the program) where appropriate (as not all referred youth have a history of prior offending)	No data received. Note that during the feedback process, representatives of the Queensland Department of Justice and Attorney General clarified that an index offence is not recorded. While they acknowledged that some young people who have offended might be referred to the panel service, an index offence is not recorded because the panel service is an early intervention program, not specifically for offenders
Education	
Attendance rates for students at Woorabinda State School by sex and Indigenous status for Years 8–12 over the period 2006 to 2011 (inclusive)	Attendance rates for Woorabinda State School by sex and Indigenous status (2007–11)
The attendance rate of each individual youth who has participated in the Woorabinda Early Intervention Panel Coordination Service to date, one year prior and one year post each youth's commencement of the program	Attendance rates for other schools in region were collected via public sources. No individual level data was available, only school level data
The highest level of education achieved by each individual youth who has participated in the program	No individual level data received

As a result, the available data for each individual limited the ability to make any substantial quantitative conclusions in terms the impact that the panel may have had on individual participants, particularly in relation to education and school engagement.

The offending data received was comparatively more substantial and provides a broad overview of offences committed by young people (10 to 17 years) in the region between 2006 and 2012. Again, individual level data on panel service participants was limited due to the operational confidentiality requirements of Queensland Police. Quantitative

data was obtained for 18 individuals who had participated in the panel service from 2006 to 2012.

Findings

Table 7 summarises key findings concerning the effectiveness of the Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel. Drawing on available evidence, the Table shows whether and on what basis the program's design, delivery and outcomes (presented at the end of the section) represent excellent, adequate or poor practice.

Table 7 Assessment of the effectiveness of the Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel			
Area of focus	Excellent practice	Adequate practice	Poor practice
Appropriateness of the program design			
Addresses a social need	The panel is a direct response to chronic youth offending and limited cross-agency collaboration, aimed at facilitating positive outcomes for young people		
Serves the target audience		The panel has worked to ensure that young people's needs are matched with services and that services are tailored to their needs. Previously (ie prior to 2012 based on case file analysis) it also involved parents in identifying and addressing problems. Both approaches are consistent with available evidence on how to effectively support target populations with multiple, chronic and interrelated issues. Resourcing issues have inhibited the recent implementation of these strategies.	
Cultural competence		There is past evidence of efforts to build relationships with community members and to engage young people in cultural activities. More recently (late 2011 onwards) resourcing issues restricted ongoing relationship building. The nature of provided cultural activities have also changed as community-based programs come and go	

Table 7 Assessment of the effectiveness of the Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel			
Area of focus	**Excellent practice**	**Adequate practice**	**Poor practice**
Available resources		In-kind support from the Rockhampton Youth Justice Service makes the panel service possible. However, it must function without a dedicated program space. Staff turnover has negatively impacted on the ability of the team to ensure continuity of activities and relationships with young people and their families	
Community involvement			There was no evidence that community members contributed to the design of the panel service. Consultations were undertaken to advise community members (locals and service providers) of the model and work processes
Effectiveness of the implementation of the program			
Program reach		The Panel provides individualised case management services to a small number of participants, representing a small proportion of the potentially eligible population. However, it is not necessarily to be expected that the types of services the panel deliver would be offered to a larger proportion of the population and it is its nature to work with a small client group	
Service objectives	Utilised forms support complete assessments of the needs of young people and their families and enable the matching of appropriate services/ support to meet these needs	The cross-agency panel supports information sharing concerning young people and their families. Declining attendance rates of service providers mean that some agencies' knowledge/ experience is not shared at panel meetings. There is limited evidence that the panel service is supporting the needs of families. Further family involvement in the service has declined, due to resourcing issues. Average length of stay in the program is 1.4 years. Internal surveys of exiting young people/families indicate preparedness to leave because issues have been addressed	

Table 7 Assessment of the effectiveness of the Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel			
Area of focus	**Excellent practice**	**Adequate practice**	**Poor practice**
Data collection and management		The panel staff maintain relatively limited impact/outcome data from an evaluation perspective. However, useful data were obtained from Queensland Police with the support of data provided by the Panel	
Responses to external influences/factors	The panel staff typically work independently of other youth services in Woorabinda, often filling gaps in service provision (eg creating recreational opportunities for youth participants). When programs are available the panel service refers young people with great effect	Stakeholders acknowledge that other justice responses positively contribute to reductions in youth offending. Opportunities may exist for more 'joined-up' responses, in addition to the activities already undertaken by the panel service	
Extent to which program achieves intended outcomes			
Achievement of outcomes in line with program intent		Qualitative accounts reveal signs that panel participation enriched young people's behaviour, enhanced family relations and improved parents' capacity and willingness to seek help	Statistics indicate that participants generally continued to offend in to the years following their participation in the panel. However, data does not indicate when participant commenced offending and when they desisted. Therefore, it is not possible to determine how long after participating in the panel service that offending took place
Sustainability of outcomes			More data (namely the commencement and exit dates of participants) would be required to provide a proper assessment of the sustainability of program outcomes

Program design

Addresses a social need

The Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel was set up to support Indigenous young people who are at risk of becoming entrenched in a pattern of offending. Statistics provided by the Queensland Police indicate that there were 14,999 offences committed in the Woorabinda region from 2006 to 2012. Young people, aged 10–17 years, committed 50 percent (n=7,554) of these offences. Of the total offences committed by young people, Indigenous young people committed 99.7 percent. Statistics suggest there has been a general decrease in offending in the Woorabinda region between 2006 and 2012, as opposed to wider Queensland trends, which have seen a general increase in rates of offending over the same period.

The comparatively high levels of offending among 10–17 year olds in the Woorabinda region reiterate the importance of a program to divert this cohort away from the formal criminal justice system. The key means by which the panel seeks to provide support is through a collaborative, multiagency service approach that involves young people and their families. A pre-panel community survey, conducted in early 2008 by a former panel coordinator, revealed reasonable evidence of the need for such an approach. In undertaking the pre-panel service the panel coordinator surveyed 15 community members (one Elder and 14 representatives of agencies working in Woorabinda). The majority of respondents (n=10) reported that the level of cross-agency coordination needed to improve. Comments in response to a question on whether agencies in Woorabinda work collaboratively included:

> Attempt to do this however not enough resources to be effective.

> Not really—there is some collaboration but it is limited with heaps of room for improvement.

> There is a level of collaborative work that needs to be developed further.

Even when multiple agencies worked with the same young people, 11 of the 15 respondents indicated in the previous survey that cross-agency meetings to share information, identify gaps or duplication of service provision or review case plans were rare or non-existent. Further, according to eight of the respondents, young people and their families were rarely involved in such meetings.

Available data suggests the panel service is a direct response to chronic youth offending in the Woorabinda region and limited cross-agency collaboration to address this problem.

Serves the target audience

In 2008–09, a former panel coordinator systematically collected and collated data concerning the presenting issues or problems of Indigenous young people working with the panel. These data and the collection methods were not able to be independently assessed by the evaluators, but nonetheless provide a unique and valuable source of information for the evaluation.

The findings of these data are presented in Table 8. The data suggested that many Indigenous young people in Woorabinda experience multiple, chronic (long-lasting) and interrelated problems. Of the 10 youth for whom data was collected, all presented with at least two issues. Over half of the young people were identified as experiencing three or more problems including experiences of abuse or neglect, substance misuse and demonstrations of antisocial behaviour (such as violent, offending and risk-taking behaviour).

Table 8 Profile of 10 Indigenous youth participants of the Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel: Presenting issues identified by panel staff, 2008–09										
Youth	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Issue										
Diagnosed mental health Issue	✔			✔	✔	✔	✔		✔	✔
Experiences of abuse or neglect		✔		✔	✔			✔	✔	
Substance misuse		✔	✔			✔		✔		
Learning difficulty					✔	✔				
Involvement with the youth justice system			✔		✔			✔		✔
Behavioural concerns	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔

Source: Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel case files

The data collection process changed in late mid to late 2009. Presenting issues were only recorded in individual case files. While the use of different descriptors across case files made it hard, particularly in comparison to the previous analysis, to conclusively identify patterns or themes in the presenting issues, the case file review revealed continued evidence of Woorabinda youth experiencing multiple, chronic and interrelated problems.

A range of issues appeared common to all past and present youth participants from 2009 onwards. These include substance misuse, prior involvement with the youth justice system and problem behaviour (eg acting out or aggressive conduct). As shown in Table 10, none of these issues were standalone. All youth experience or experienced two or more problems, typically over long periods of time (1 to 2 years). To best support target populations with multiple, chronic and interrelated problems their needs must be matched to services and services must be tailored to their needs (Katz, Spooner & Valentine 2006). The Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel facilitates these processes by ensuring that interventions are based on a young person's needs. For example, the case file review uncovered details of a young person who had disengaged from school and was suspected of smoking marijuana. This young person was supported to re-enrol at school and assisted to participate in an Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug assessment.

Another issue consistently reported in the case files was poor primary or secondary school attendance. Attendance data provided by the Queensland

Government and various annual reports show relatively poor attendance rates among young people in the Woorabinda area, particularly for students in the higher years of schooling, compared with state and national averages (ACARA 2010). There are several schools in the area that young people from the Woorabinda region attend. These include the Woorabinda State School, Wadja Wadja High School, Baralaba State School and schools in Rockhampton. At the Wadja Wadja High School (Years 8 to 12), attendance continues to decrease up until the higher year levels. Among the 10 students for who data was available, from 2009 to 2011 attendance rates in Years 11 and 12 decreased by 67.8 percent and 51.7 percent respectively compared with each previous year. While attendance rates at the Woorabinda State School (prep to Year 7) were relatively consistent across each year level, from 2008 to 2011 student attendance rates have dropped from 83 percent to 73 percent. The panel seeks to address the poor attendance records of youth participants through in-class room support.

The panel also seeks to tailor services according to young people's circumstances. During the observed panel meeting, the cross-agency team discussed a young person who consistently missed scheduled appointments with their psychologist. They worked together to identify a gap in the young person's school schedule that the psychologist could use to start reengaging with this individual and rediscovering their view of ongoing support.

Available evidence also suggests that programs with elements for both young people and parents/carers are more effective than those that target either party

alone (Katz, Spooner & Valentine 2006). In the past (2008–11), the panel approach was consistent with this research finding because it sought to involve parents and young people in all decisions and actions concerning their lives. For example, the case file review revealed that when poor school attendance is an issue young people had the option of in-school support. Further, parents/carers were supported to monitor attendance (through the provision of regular reports from the panel) and to reward regular participation to help reinforce positive behaviour.

In 2012, parental involvement was less evident. The acting panel coordinator, who stepped into the role in 2012 when their predecessor resigned, had spent much of the year working alone. Previous coordinators have shared job responsibilities with a youth worker. Hiring restrictions in the first four to five months of 2012 meant that a youth worker could not be appointed to support the panel coordinator with the day-to-day care and support of participating young people. Without this support, the panel coordinator had restricted capacity to engage with parents.

The panel service has worked to ensure that young people's needs are matched with services and that services are tailored to their needs. Recent resourcing issues have inhibited the implementation of these strategies and restricted ongoing relationship building, particularly with family members of youth participants.

Cultural competence

The available data suggest that the Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel demonstrates cultural competence in two key ways. First, former panel coordinators and youth workers have spent time building relationships with community members. One coordinator described the slow integration of staff to community:

> staff spent approximately 2 and a half months meeting/greeting community members and representatives from community/statutory agencies to inform them of the purpose and process of the panel (former program coordinator).

Community consultations were also seen as crucial to attain support of concepts/model prior to recruitment and implementation of the program.

The subsequent panel coordinator, who acted in the position and prior to this appointment was a youth worker with the service, also sought to maintain positive community relationships. They saw it as a key role of the coordinator to assist with community events and adhere to cultural protocols:

> We try and help out, like if there's a, like they have a barbeque night or if there's something going on we'll go down and help. Like just help out…try and be involved with what the community is doing (former program coordinator).

> All panel members follow protocols related to working in remote Indigenous communities eg notify respected Elders and council members when entering the community and when meetings are being held (panel coordinator).

The panel coordinator acting in the role during our visit has been restricted in their ability to continue the relationship building of their predecessors. As highlighted, previous coordinators have shared job responsibilities with a youth worker. A Department of Communities Manager explained that hiring restrictions temporarily prevented the replication of this work practice. For around four months, the coordinator mainly worked alone, prioritising the care of participating young people over and above other activities like ongoing community engagement. The Manager stated that they were hopeful the current acting coordinator's work priorities would soon change following recent approval to appoint a youth worker. The Manager's stated expectation is that the acting coordinator will focus on ensuring community participation in the panel processes in the future.

The second observed sign of cultural competence was the panel's past recognition of Indigenous culture. The case file review uncovered details of an Indigenous arts program. Commenced in 2008, the program was run by a community Elder for two hours twice a week. The panel referred youth to the program to increase their self-esteem and confidence, develop their creative skills, reduce the likelihood of risk-taking behaviour and enhance their knowledge of Indigenous culture and art. Available

program documentation included no reference as to how long the program ran or when/why it finished. The case file review also revealed that participating young people were involved in a cultural camp in 2008. During the camp young people visited sacred sites, learned about the history of different places and traditional ways of life and participated in dancing and storytelling.

Cultural activities were also evident during the field visit in July 2012. Young people participated in regular craft sessions in which they had the option of using templates to paint native animals. Youth workers also enabled young people to undertake hunting/gathering activities like fishing.

Cultural competence is evident in past efforts to engage community members and involve young people in cultural activities. Recent resourcing issues have restricted ongoing relationship building at the community level and changed the nature of provided cultural activities.

Available resources

There is mixed evidence on whether the Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel has the required resources to function effectively and efficiently. With regard to infrastructure, there are some promising signs. The Rockhampton Youth Justice Service currently provides substantial in-kind support for vehicles, administration, supervision and management. Nevertheless, the panel is without a dedicated space in which to run activities and panel meetings. Presently, it utilises a shared kitchen facility within the Woorabinda Government Hub. While other tenants (Housing and Justice) try not to interrupt activities, the evaluator (during their field visit) observed people inadvertently walking in on meetings exploring sensitive and confidential content. Further because the space is shared, the current panel coordinator reported feeling unable to appropriately display available health promotional resources. They explained that this restriction represents a missed opportunity, as young people are more likely to read and respond to material that is on show (as opposed to packed up in one corner).

The coordinator, panel members and a Youth Justice Service team leader were seeking innovative ways to address the lack of a dedicated program space. In an observed meeting, the coordinator and a panel member (who represents one of the local schools) agreed to run short workshops at the school. Within a week of the field trip, these workshops were up and running. The evaluator received pictures of young panel participants constructing carts for their bikes. This 'space solution' provided both an appropriate place for building projects and helped to encourage school attendance because young people could only participate if they attended school and remained onsite during breaks, which is when the supervised construction took place.

In addition to physical resources, the panel requires experienced personnel to function effectively. A previous internal review of the panel service suggested that 'two full-time workers [were required] to undertake intensive case management, support families and provide support in and out of school to young people' (Department of Communities nd). The panel service has not always been able to employ two full-time workers. A temporary hold on hiring in 2012 meant that the panel coordinator worked without the assistance of a youth worker for between three to four months. A team leader with the Rockhampton Youth Justice Service explained that without a youth worker, the panel coordinator had been unable to engage with parents and community members, as they had needed to focus on the day-to-day support of young people.

Staff turnover has also negatively impacted on the operation of the panel service. From the time it commenced (2008), until the time it was examined for this study (mid-2012), three people had filled the panel coordinator role on an acting basis. A Manager with the Rockhampton Youth Justice Service said that even though the coordinator role has been advertised for over a year, they were reluctant to permanently appoint someone from outside the community. Staff turnover has disrupted the continuity of activities:

> Yeah that's sort of fallen apart [involvement of parents in a reward program designed to keep youth at school]. Because, when I came back into town and yeah, just with the change-over of staff it sort of fell apart. And then I'm leaving again so there wasn't really much point in trying to get it all going again (panel coordinator).

The individual providing this comment was a youth worker with the panel service. They successfully applied for a new role within the Youth Justice Service and left the employ of the program. Following the resignation of the first program coordinator, this person was asked to take their place as the acting coordinator because of their knowledge and experience of the operations. Moreover, staff turnover has made it difficult for the Youth Justice Service to ensure a gender balance within the panel service. When back-filling positions, the Youth Justice Service has not always been able to ensure a male and female worked on the program. Having two males fill positions (as was the case in 2011) negatively influenced the level of engagement with the target populations:

> Ideally they should have like a female worker and a male worker…[with] girls on the books it's a bit more appropriate to have a female worker with them…they [youth participants and their mothers] open up more (program coordinator).

A Youth Justice Service team leader also explained that when the two male workers were in place it was inappropriate for them to work closely with the mothers of participating young people. It could have caused tension/problems in the mother's relationship with their partner.

In-kind support from a government agency makes the panel service possible. However, it must function without a dedicated program space. Staff turnover and hiring restrictions have negatively impacted on the ability of the team to ensure continuity of activities and relationships with young people and their families.

Community involvement

As per the program logic, the evaluation set out to identify how (if at all) the community was involved in the establishment of the panel. The 2008 pre-panel community survey (discussed in the section titled *Addresses need*) showed that community members believed services were poorly coordinated. However, the survey responses provided no indication of whether community members saw the panel service as the most appropriate means of improving coordination.

Community consultations were undertaken in the two months prior to the implementation of the panel service. As highlighted in the *Cultural competence* section, the consultations involved informing community members and representatives of community services about the purpose and processes of the panel. These consultations enabled the team to gain community agreement for the program. However, no further evidence to corroborate this view was obtained.

Implementation

Program reach

According to the case file review, the Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel has supported 19 young people (14 male and 5 female) and their families since it commenced in 2008. The ages of the youth participants ranged from nine to 15 years, with an average age of 12 years.

The total population of Woorabinda in 2011 was approximately 1,033 people (OESR 2012). Reports by the Office of Economics and Statistical Research indicates that approximately 34.5 percent (n=339) of the Woorabinda population was aged from 0–14 and 20.3 percent (n=199) were aged 15–24 years.

Offences are not recorded for people under the age of 10 years as 10 is the minimum age at which a person can have criminal responsibility in Australia. Therefore, the calculations are based on data for offences committed by people aged 10–24 years, whereas the population data includes people aged 0–24 years.

According to Queensland Police statistics, over 70 percent of all offences committed in this area are by people aged 10–24 years. While the upper limits (18–24 years) of this age range are outside the age criteria for those eligible to be referred to the panel, it is clear that this general age group is committing the majority of offences in the area. Based on these numbers, from 2008 onwards the early intervention panel has reached only 3.3 percent of the youth population who offended (however, whether these youth would have met the other eligibility criteria is unknown).

It is important to note that the possible reach of the panel reflects available resources and the nature of the casework. As it stands, the one coordinator and one youth worker assigned to the panel take on a caseload of around eight young people and their families at any one time. Given the intensive nature of their work with young people, it is not necessarily to be expected that the panel would offer support to a larger proportion of the population.

Service objectives

To support the realisation of program outcomes, the individuals and agencies involved in implementing the Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel set out to meet the following service objectives:

Convene a cross-agency panel that promotes information sharing, the identification of service gaps or duplication and the regular review of case plans

Develop and implement case plans that meet the needs of young people and their families.

Convene a cross-agency panel

The cross-agency panel serves a number of functions. It is responsible for referring young people and their families to the service. Collectively, panel members assess the needs of these individuals and identify services to support them to address issues and problems. They also regularly review case plans to ensure that objectives/goals are realised within appropriate timeframes.

Participation in the cross-agency panel has changed since the service commenced. Available program documentation indicates that for the first two years of its operation there was solid attendance. Representatives of nine different institutions regularly attended panel meetings—Child Safety, Rockhampton Youth Justice Service, Wadja Wadja High School, Woorabinda State Primary School, Woorabinda Multi-Purpose Health Service, Central Queensland Rural Division of General Practice, Rockhampton Child and Youth Mental Health Services, Queensland Police Service and Anglicare (Department of Communities nd). In 2012, the panel

coordinator advised that only four of these agencies regularly participated at panel meetings.

A Youth Justice Service team leader attributed the drop-off in attendance to two factors. The first relates to the loss of an influential champion for the panel service. The team leader explained that their interest and belief in the program 'flowed down'; 'other agencies wanted to participate' and questions would have been asked if they chose not to. They reported a direct link between a government reshuffle (in which this champion moved to a new area) and a decline in agency participation in the panel. The second factor relates to the staff turnover. As highlighted, the current panel coordinator worked solo for a period of time, which limited the coordinator's ability to undertake the 'coordinating work', to 'liaise with other agencies' and 'ensure they are actively participating in the panel and supporting youth as appropriate'.

The evaluation team observed one cross-agency panel meeting in which three agencies (2 of the Woorabinda schools and 1 health provider) were represented. Despite the comparatively small representation of agencies (with up to 9 previously attending), there were wide-ranging discussions concerning the six young people's cases presented at the meeting. Collectively, the panel members appeared to construct a comprehensive picture of each young person's circumstances and needs. This information appeared to support considered reflections on whether the school attendance and health care elements of the case plans were meeting objectives and enabled necessary adjustments to ensure young people were appropriately supported.

Panel members, who participated in the observed meeting, did not report feeling disadvantaged by the limited attendance. Each member felt connected enough within the community to collect any additional information regarding a young person and their family as required. However, the unspoken implication of this approach is that this information gathering must take place in addition to the cross-agency panel.

In short, declining attendance rates of service providers mean that some agencies' knowledge/ experience is not shared at panel meetings.

Develop and implement case plans

Based on the case file review and discussions with panel staff, four key steps were identified as critical to the development and implementation of case plans:

- acceptance of a referral;
- assessment of need/circumstance;
- identification and execution of support strategies (including ongoing involvement of young people and their families/guardians in decision-making processes); and
- determination of an appropriate exit point.

Referrals from the panel are accepted when eligibility criteria are met. Most panel members and panel staff expressed support for the appropriateness of the criteria. All agreed that reaching young people before antisocial behaviour became habitual was important. A former panel coordinator summed up the approach as follows:

> Our age bracket is 10–17yrs. We encourage stakeholders to refer younger kids as it is easier to mentor and work with them earlier on…as it is harder to bring them back once they are older (program coordinator).

The then current program coordinator and a team leader did convey a desire to be more inclusive of young people placed on short-term orders. The team leader explained that they understood a short-term order makes the youth ineligible for early intervention. Yet they saw the need for more flexibility to keep the young person in the service and:

> [s]ee what happens with the orders. If the orders don't work out then may be another story, [the youth] may need to exit the program (team leader).

During the review process for this report, Departmental feedback indicated that young people on short-term orders (with the exception of a detention order) are able to participate in the panel service, provided they meet the eligibility criteria. This information suggests a possible need for the Department to improve the understanding of eligibility criteria for the service among staff in the field.

The team leader's comments reflected a desire to retain young people within the care of the panel service, given the existing working relationship, even when they were placed on orders. They expressed no concern regarding the effectiveness of other programs that commonly supported young people who were placed on orders.

Presuming young people and their family/guardian consent to be involved, the panel coordinator will fully assess their needs and circumstances. To carry out this assessment the coordinator completes a Pre Individual/Family Assessment Form. The reviewed Pre Individual/Family Assessment Forms captured information regarding offending history, previous and current involvement in community services and allowed for comments from the young person/family in relation to self-identified needs and concerns. The details within this assessment form are supplemented by the Referral Form—completed by panel members for young people identified as suitable candidates to work with the service. The reviewed Referral Forms captured similar information to the assessment form, particularly in regard to offending history and current/past involvement with community services. However, the Referral Forms also explored the panel members' reason for referral, their ideas on issues to be addressed and details of their understandings the young person's living situation and health status.

The case file review exposed a strong link between the issues identified in the assessment and referral forms and the strategies/interventions identified to support young people and their families. Drawing on the case file review, Table 9 provides some examples of how presenting issues were addressed.

Table 9 Examples of strategies implemented to address the presenting issues of young people and their families		
Youth	**Presenting issues**	**Identified support strategies**
1	Unstable living situation	Supported to maintain home placement
	Poor school attendance	Rewards for regular school attendance
	Financial hardship	Food vouchers
	Poor connections within community	Participation in cultural camp and dance trip
2	Suspected substance misuse	Referral to Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drugs education program
	Poor school attendance	Rewards for regular school attendance
	Anger management concerns	Counselling
3	Disruptive in school	In-school support and modified school hours
	Aggressive behaviour	Counselling

Young people are also commonly involved in regular after school recreational activities. The current panel coordinator saw this engagement as serving multiple purposes. It provides opportunities to ensure young people get a good meal, have someone available to listen to them and give the attention and allows for positive role modelling. As the coordinator explained:

> I aim to be a good influence. Listen to them. Growl at them when needed (panel coordinator).

The case files do not contain strong evidence of family support. Some isolated instances, apparent in around five of the 19 case files reviewed included:

- assistance preparing a letter to Housing regarding getting a fence around the property to the reduce rubbish blowing in and provide a safe place for the children to play;
- referrals to employment services, substance misuse counselling and family support programs;
- supporting parents to attend the court dates of their children; and
- financial support (eg to negotiate payment plans for utility accounts).

As no family members participated in the study (because appropriate introductions could not be made) the evaluation team was unable to confirm whether families felt they were going without required support. Further, the current panel coordinator was unable to comment on the appropriateness of the family support provided in past (given their limited time in the position). They

also acknowledged that without the assistance of a youth worker, they had found themselves unable to engage with families to support their needs.

There is mixed evidence regarding the ongoing involvement of young people and families in decision-making processes. Case file entries pre-2011 show that panel staff were regularly meeting with parents/guardians to discuss their child's progress. As a former panel coordinator explained:

> [with home visits we] just drop-in and see if there's any issues of concern. So you know say hello and, you know, see how they're going and stuff. See if there's anything they need a hand with. And that usually happens every week. We run into them on the street a lot of times because Woorie's pretty small. So we try and have contact with them each week with the parents (panel coordinator).

Entries of this nature were not apparent in 2012. Panel members, who can engage with families outside of the cross-agency panel meetings, also reported family member participation in the monthly meetings had declined in 2012. Panel members, the Youth Justice Service team leader and current panel coordinator all attributed the diminished level of parent involvement and consultation to a lack of resources (discussed earlier).

Of the 19 young people for whom case files existed, 13 had exited the program (with 1 returning 1 year

later). The reasons given for their exit, as recorded in the case files, were as follows:

- met the goals/objectives outlined in their case plans (5 young people);
- left the community (2 young people);
- no longer wanted to participate (2 young people);
- no reason recorded (2 young people);
- no longer eligible for early intervention (ie no longer met the threshold for intervention as per the eligibility criteria; 1 young person); and
- consent for involvement never obtained (1 young person).

The period of time spent working with the panel (if specified; an exit date could not be identified for 4 youth) ranged from one month to two years. Three youth choose to exit within one to six months of consenting to work with the panel service. The average stay was 1.4 years.

Seven of the youth who exited the panel service completed surveys regarding their experience. Surveys were designed and administered by the panel service. All surveys supported the notion that young people and their families felt ready to exit.

Seven young people were working with the panel at the time data were collected. Of these:

- four were referred within the last six months (eg since February 2012);
- one re-entered the program one year previously (their first file was closed in early 2010 because all objectives were deemed to have been met); and
- one had been working with the panel for two years and another for four years.

Of these young people, the current panel coordinator was asked about a potential exit strategy for the longest standing member (4 years). No strategy was identified at that point, primarily because many of this young person's presenting issues (poor school attendance and occasional substance misuse) were ongoing.

In review, developing and implementing case plans entails four key steps. Referrals (step 1) appeared appropriate, although some staff felt youth on short-term orders were unduly excluded (even though Departmental correspondence indicated such an exclusion did not apply except in the case

of detention orders). Assessments (step 2) ensured strong links between presenting issues and identified and executed interventions (step 3); however, evidence of family support was limited. Concrete exit strategies (step 4) also appeared to be lacking.

Data collection and management

To provide a holistic assessment of the Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel, both recidivism and education data were collected in the Woorabinda region (a geographically discrete area that covers the catchment area of the panel service) and on an individual level for panel participants. While outside the scope of the Woorabinda evaluation, the data-collection process exhibited good practice in information sharing and coordination between various government agencies for the recidivism data associated with the panel. The level of information sharing and cooperation between departments provided sufficient data to assess the scope or reach of the program, and offending rates and trends of offenders by comparison with the region and wider Queensland trends across a six year period.

Conversely, there were limitations with receiving education data for participants in the panel service, or for schools in the region. Underpinning these limitations was the small number of both participants and students at each of the schools in the region. Schools expressed concern about the confidentiality and privacy of students if data were to be released regarding school attendance, retention or achievements. As a result, no individual level data was made available for either students or panel participants at schools in the region or for specific groups of students. Data were subsequently collected from various publicly available resources including available school annual reports, the MySchool website and various government education and school reports. These limitations are linked on a broader basis to inconsistencies between government and non-government reporting agencies, with government schools being required to maintain and report data differently from independent schools. While data were sourced from publicly available documents and reports, there were various inconsistencies that limited numbers and statistics to approximations.

It is important to note that this is not an assessment or comment on the Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel's data collection or management processes; rather it is a wider systematic issue within government and program reporting processes. All participant case file notes and program documentation were made available to the evaluation team. While some case files were incomplete, gaps seemed to coincide with periods of staff turnover, suggesting that new team members needed time and experience to determine when/how to utilise available templates appropriately. Furthermore, great effort was made by the panel coordinators to ensure that the evaluation team had access to potential interview participants and assisted with organising and coordinating the interviews.

External factors/influences

The program logic identified a number of factors that may positively or negatively influence the implementation and impacts of the Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel. Of these, two factors featured in the collected data—the availability of other youth support programs and the potential 'confounding' impact of other justice related programs.

During interviews, panel staff (past and present) and Youth Justice Service youth workers all spoke of the importance of keeping young people engaged in constructive activities. As one youth worker suggested:

> The value of the program is it keeps youth occupied [and out of trouble] (youth worker).

However, the panel service only has the capacity to supervise a certain number of young people:

> Because there's not really much for 'em at Woorie to do. Like there's no other programs for kids to go to. We get a lot of 'em turning up at our office…we just don't have enough stuff, material, for all kids to come in. And supervision, it's usually only a youth worker with the kids doing art. It's pretty crazy when you've got more than three kids (panel coordinator).

The lack of other programs means there are limited opportunities to connect young people to different

role models and different types of experiences. When other support programs have been available, the case files attribute many advantages to participation. Documented benefits for the participating young people included association with positive peer influences, heightened respect for culture and Elders and an enhanced sense of connection to community. While some of these benefits can come from working with the panel, other support programs both reinforce and extend on their efforts.

Other justice related programs also appear to play a role in the types of outcomes observed in Woorabinda. While program staff and other stakeholders indicated they believe the panel service is contributing to reduced rates of offending, all freely acknowledged that other initiatives (which were not discussed in any detail) probably play a role as well. For instance, one stakeholder noted that a number of families chose to leave Woorabinda following implementation of the Alcohol Management Plan in 2008 and believed this had reduced offending rates. The role of policing policies in influencing youth offending was also acknowledged.

Panel staff often fill gaps in service provision. When other youth-specific programs are available, the panel service has referred young people with great effect. Given that other initiatives (eg policing policies) can contribute to positive impacts for young people and their families, the panel service may benefit from pursuing more joined-up service responses in addition to the other activities already undertaken by the team.

Program outcomes

Achievement of outcomes in line with program intent

Whether the panel service achieved their desired outcomes was assessed in part through analysis of case files, surveys completed by young people and their families post-program completion and an interview with a current youth participant. Three themes strongly emerged across all data sources—

improved behaviour, enhanced family relations and greater willingness to seek help.

Young people, family members and panel staff commonly reported positive behaviour changes in the young people who elected to work with the panel. Examples were uncovered of young people demonstrating greater respect to others, taking on new responsibilities and communicating more constructively:

> [my] son now listens to [family member] more, doesn't listen to his negative friends and has a good mentor (parent).

> During cultural camp [young person] assisted supervisors, was well behaved and very helpful (youth participant).

> I'm good now, don't play up, don't swear, follow directions…[panel coordinator] does good stuff. I don't mind being good…(youth participant).

> [Parent] and project staff have marked a huge improvement in [young person's] attitude and behaviour…swearing less, following directions more, feeling more settled, utilising [their] manners and accepting of not always getting what [they] want (panel member).

Young people, their families and panel members also reported that panel participation positively contributed to enhanced family relations:

> …definitely strengthened [our] relationship—a lot closer—say something which puts him [young person] on the right line, listens more (parent).

> …made me real proud—supportive when sick and having problems with work…has more respect for me and others (parent).

> Client's behaviour has improved and his relationship with his father has improved, as has the school's relationship with both parties (panel member).

> Listen to [coordinator] about teasing…before I would swear at [family member]. But won't swear now. Listen to [coordinator] (youth participant).

Moreover qualitative accounts in the case files support the notion that family members gained knowledge of who to approach for assistance and skills in how to best support their children:

> [family developed] strong relationships in community, know where to go to access assistance (panel coordinator).

> Parent identified/implemented strategies for maintaining positive sustainable change including open door policy with panel staff (panel coordinator).

> Father no longer appears to reward negative behaviour and has given appropriate rewards for consistent positive behaviour ie helping around the house, school attendance, being respectful etc (panel coordinator).

> [liked to] sit down with panel and discuss problems with them and work out solutions as well as with [health professional] (parent).

No significant or recurring themes were found in the available qualitative data concerning recidivism or school attendance.

Quantitative data was obtained for 18 individuals who had participated in the panel service between 2006 and 2012 (the interviewer examined 19 case files; the team was unable to determine why data were provided for 18 individuals when 19 case files existed). These data showed that 13 of those participants committed a total of 668 offences during the period from 2006 to 2012. No offending was recorded for five of the participants. The total offences recorded by individual participants are shown in Figure 8.

Source: Queensland Police Service Woorabinda recidivism data: AIC data file

Despite this general trend across the 13 participants for who offences were recorded by police, the number of offences did not increase consistently or continually each year. Rather, for the majority of offenders (n=8; 62%) within this group of 13, the number of recorded offences either decreased or remained at zero after the introduction of the panel (2008) and increased in the following years. Of the participant cohort, 23 percent (n=3) had not committed an offence up to three years following the introduction of the panel. However, of the participants who offended (from the cohort of 13) consistently across the six year period, the number of offences increased from 2006 to 2012 by an average of 27 percent. There was wide variation from one year to the next in how many participants were responsible for the offences and what proportion of the offences were committed by each individual. The total number of offences committed by panel participants during this period is shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9 Total offences committed by Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel participant by year, 2006–12 (n)
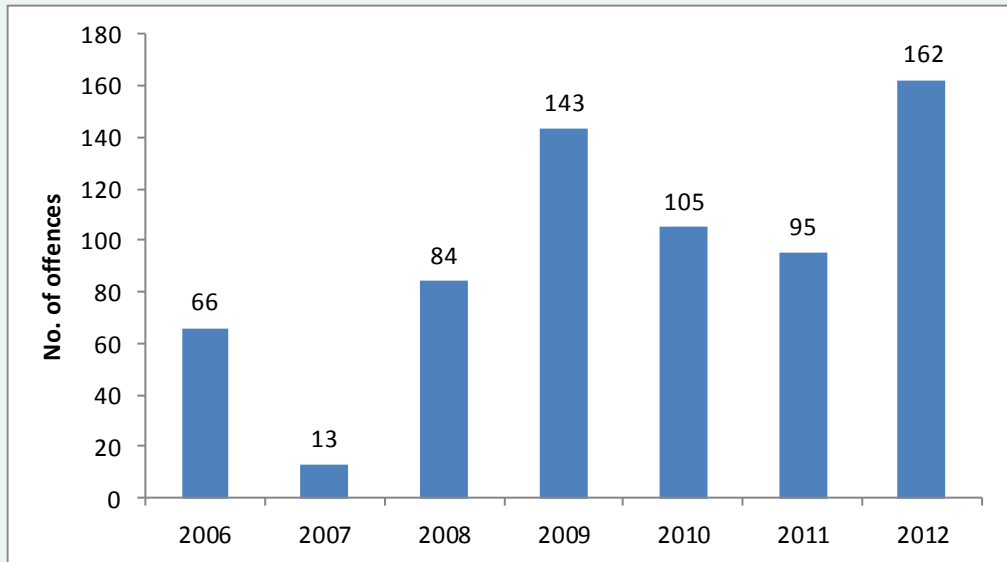
Source: Queensland Police Service Woorabinda recidivism data: AIC data file

For comparison, Figure 10 shows the total offences committed by 10 to 17 years in the Woorabinda region between 2006 and 2012, based on Queensland Police recorded offence data. There is no apparent similarity of pattern between the number of offences committed by panel participants and the number committed by other young people on a yearly basis. It does appear that panel participants were responsible for 38 percent of offences recorded in the Woorabinda region in 2012 and that one individual panel participant, who had 59 recorded offences in 2012, was responsible for

14 percent of all offences in the region in that year. However, there were no baseline data available on the number of offences committed by panel participants before their participation in the panel. Case files recorded whether a participant had previous contact with the criminal justice system. For some, but not all, individuals basic details of the types of offences were recorded but this was inconsistent and no further details of offending history were noted. Without these data, it is not possible to say whether involvement with the panel had any impact on their level or type of offending.
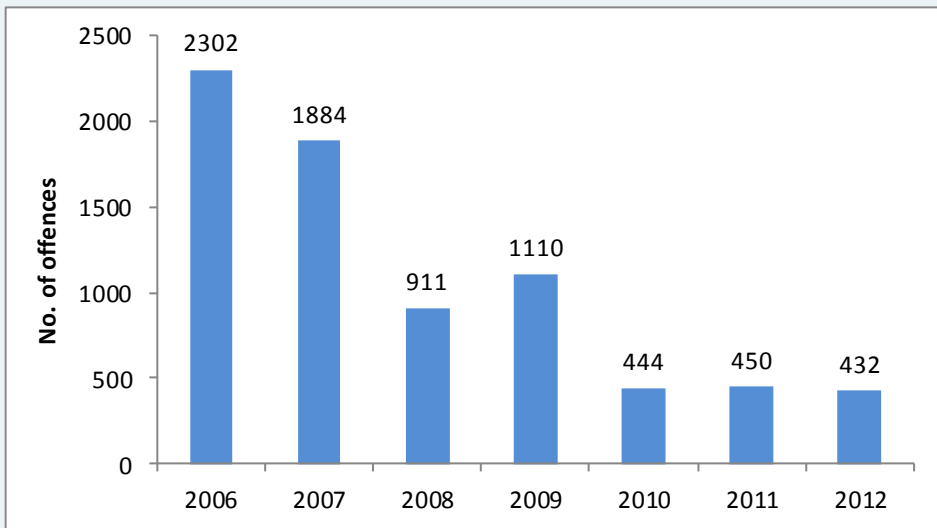
Source: Queensland Police Service Woorabinda recidivism data: AIC data file

There was limited data available to assess any significant trends in the school attendance or retention rates of individual panel participants. The attendance data provided by the Queensland Department of Education and Training Performance Measure Unit demonstrates inconsistent attendance during the period from 2007 to 2011 for all 18 students who participated in the panel from 2007 to 2011. While ages were not provided, students ranged from Year 1 to Year 11. Only two were shown as being active enrolments as at September 2012. Of the 10 students who participated in the panel that data was provided for, attendance details were not available for every student in every year (ie records showed no attendance in at least 1 year for each student). There was wide variation in attendance between individual students, with yearly attendance ranging from 96.2 percent to 14.1 percent.

Figure 11 shows the average attendance of these students for each year during the period. This is based on the average for students who had some attendance recorded each year. Where a student had zero recorded attendance, it is not clear whether this means the student did not attend school at all in that year, or that the data is incomplete and their attendance is not captured in the data. These possible gaps in the data, together with the lack of other data to link attendance with dates of participation in the panel for any individual students, means these data cannot usefully inform an understanding of the impacts of the panel on student attendance.

Figure 11 Student attendance rates in Woorabinda (%)
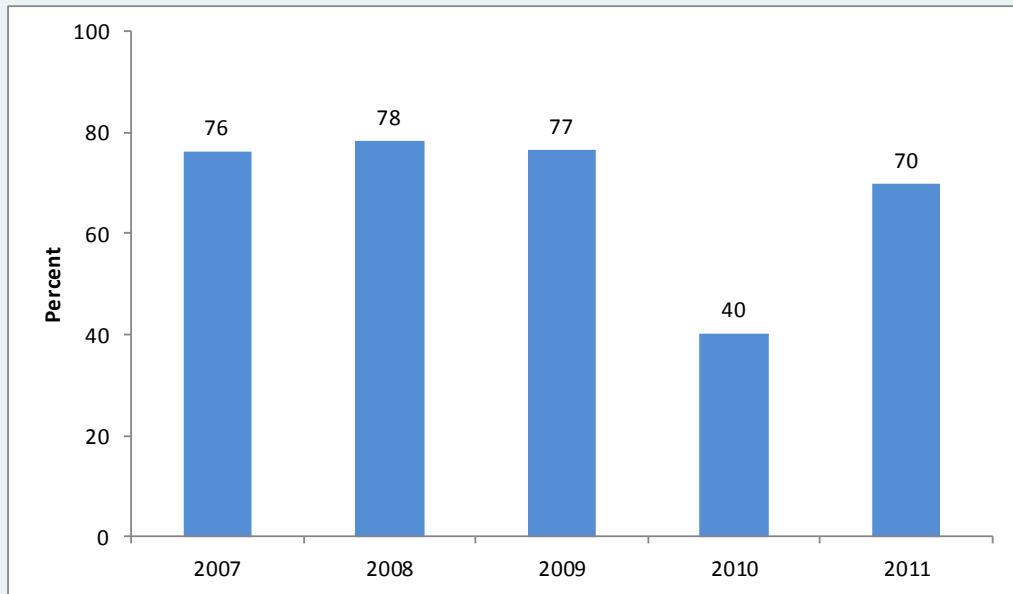
Source: Queensland Department of Education and Training Woorabinda attendance data: AIC data file

It is important to note that these data were collected at September 2012 and only include a selection of participants from the Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel. Not all students could be located on the system to report attendance rates and there are inconsistencies in the data, with two students only recorded as attending school in 2007. Similarly, another student was recorded as attending school in 2007 and then not attending again until 2010. Data was not provided regarding the dates that students shown here entered or exited the panel. Accordingly, it is not possible to determine from this dataset the impact the panel may have had on the school attendance of these individuals. However, across the five year time span, the average attendance rate of this student cohort decreased from 76.4 percent in 2007 to 69.9 percent in 2011.

Qualitative accounts reveal evidence that panel participation improved young people's behaviour, enhanced family relations and improved parent's capacity and willingness to seek help. Quantitative data indicated that 13 out of 18 individuals continued to offend in the years following their participation in the panel service. However, offences

did not increase consistently or continually. Assessments of any significant trends in school attendance or retention rates of panel participants were not possible due to data limitations.

Sustainability of outcomes

The panel service sets out to achieve a number of outcomes, including enhanced family relations, the adoption of prosocial behaviours by participating young people and a reduction in offending. Longitudinal data were not available to assess the sustainability of all desired outcomes. Of the available data, it appeared that the number of offences committed by participating young people increased over a six year period (2006 to 2012). However, as start and finish dates for panel participants were not able to be matched with individual offending histories, it is not possible to determine when offending occurred (eg 3 years after exiting the panel service). The evaluation team was also unable to determine whether and how offending habits changed over time (eg the youth might have been referred for unlawful entry and a subsequent offence might have included vandalism/graffiti). The

data do show that unlawful entry (with or without intent) was the most common offence among participants (39% of all offences), followed by 'offences against property' (31%). There were relatively few instances of assault or other violent crime (10% of all offences by panel participants) and data for participants as a group showed no pattern of escalation into more serious offences.

External evidence supports the potential of the panel service to reduce offending or reoffending. Family therapy and collaborative (cross-agency) collaboration have been found to lead to improved outcomes for young people at risk (see the *Literature review*). Also the panel service's efforts to enhance attachments aligns with the theory that young people who are bonded to social groups are less like to offend.

Conclusion

Chronic youth offending and limited cross-agency collaboration facilitated the establishment of the Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel in 2008. While there was limited evidence of community involvement in the program design, since its establishment the panel has worked closely with young people and their families. Mostly this work has been carried out with limited resources (eg there is no dedicated program space and the panel coordinator functioned without the support of a youth worker for a time following staff turnover). Further, given the intense nature of the work, the panel only supports a small number of young people and their families at any one time.

The implementation of the panel demonstrates signs of excellent practice. Comprehensive assessments enable panel staff to identify participating young people's needs and tailor service responses to these needs. Efforts to boast attendance at cross-agency panel meetings would further support this work and potentially identify opportunities for more joined-up responses. Panel staff also need to consider developing clear exit strategies for participating young people.

Limited data collection and monitoring prevents firm conclusions regarding the degree to which the panel contributes to positive outcomes. However, statistics present some worrying signs concerning rates of youth offending in Woorabinda. Extra efforts, in addition to the panel service, may be warranted to prevent offending behaviour and divert young people from the criminal justice system.

Aggression Replacement Training

ART is a 10 week group program designed to teach young people alternative ways of reacting to situations likely to provoke anger. It is based on the principle that 'every act of adolescent or child aggression—in school, at home, in the community—has multiple causes, both external and internal to the youth' (Goldstein, Glick & Gibbs 1998; 33; also Glick 2006). To help manage or address these causes, the program incorporates three interrelated components. The descriptions of each component are drawn from Glick and Gibbs (2011):

Social Skills Training—Adopting of a set of social learning instructional procedures, Social Skills Training is intended to develop prosocial skills (Goldstein, Glick & Gibbs 1998). The four adopted instructional procedures are modelling, role playing, performance feedback and transfer training. Taught skills include understanding the feelings of others, dealing with someone else's anger, helping others, responding to failure and dealing with group pressure.

Anger Control Training—Based on anger control and stress inoculation research (Meichenbaum 1977; Novaco 1975), Anger Control Training is complementary to Social Skills Training in that it teaches young people what unacceptable behaviour is (Goldstein, Glick & Gibbs 1998). It focuses on self-control, reduction and management of anger

and aggression, and is similarly taught through practical means. Anger Control Training also focuses on teaching participants to recognise triggers and physical cues of anger, adopt anger 'reducers' and reminders of anger management techniques successfully applied in the past. The use of the appropriate Social Skills as an alternative to anger or aggression and self-evaluation are also promoted.

Moral Reasoning Training—Focusing on moral values, the third and final component of ART is intended to develop behaviours that would allow young people to enhance their prosocial and reduce their antisocial behaviour (Goldstein, Glick & Gibbs 1998). It involves discussing problem situations (like telling someone a life-long friend is mixing with peers who break into people's houses) and identifying which skills (from the Social Skills and Anger Control Training) would help to deal with situations appropriately.

In Queensland, these components are generally taught to young people in small groups. In youth detention centres, no more than four young people are enrolled at any one time. In the community, Youth Justice Services (the agency responsible for delivering ART) convene groups of anywhere from six to 12 (with a group of around 8 preferred), depending on received referrals. Youth Justice Services in Queensland is responsible for providing a

range of programs and services to respond in a fair and balanced way to young people involved with the criminal justice system, including holding them accountable for their safety, encouraging reintegration into the community and promoting community safety (Queensland Government 2012). Interventions provided by Youth Justice Services include assisting young people to meet the terms of their court orders, operation of youth detention centres, support services, offence-focused programs and developmental intervention (Queensland Government 2012).

Commonly, three sessions of around 60 minutes each are delivered every week for 10 weeks. However, many ART facilitators who participated in interviews spoke of condensing the content (eg delivering within 7 weeks instead of 10) at least once. Typically, this decision was driven by a desire to keep young people engaged in the content.

The literature shows that the effectiveness of ART is dependent on the quality of the program delivery (experience of the trainer and their ability to appropriately adapt content) and the characteristics/ motivation of the group. Queensland-based facilitators are from a range of backgrounds such as youth work, case management and corrections. Lead facilitators receive comprehensive four day training. Co-facilitators receive one day's training. Refresher training is available on a needs basis. Further, during a 10 week ART program, trainers are required to submit an audio and visual recording of their sessions at weeks three and eight. The recording is analysed by a Master Trainer who provides performance related feedback, as appropriate. A Master Trainer also makes themself available for phone and email consultations concerning training delivery.

Evaluation approach

The evaluation of ART used both qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data informed understandings of how ART was delivered, specifically to Indigenous participants. Quantitative data requests focused on identifying whether there were measurable individual behavioural changes following completion of ART.

Because ART is delivered to Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people in Queensland, a mix of data was obtained. The qualitative data focuses on Indigenous young people's experiences of the training or the experiences of ART facilitators who have worked with Indigenous young people. The available quantitative data relates to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous ART participants, comparing the different groups where possible and appropriate.

In reading this evaluation of the ART program in Queensland, it should be noted that aspects of the program's implementation were significantly affected by resource constraints and external factors such as changes to the policy around ongoing data monitoring of program outcomes coinciding with external factors—most significantly, the floods and cyclones affecting most parts of Queensland during various periods of 2010–12.

Qualitative data collection and analysis

ART facilitators and Indigenous young people who had graduated from ART shared details of their experiences of the program. This section provides information about the methods employed to recruit these participants, collect their stories and analyse and interpret their narratives. It also explains the document analysis undertaken to develop understandings of the training content.

Interviews

Seven ART facilitators, from both urban and regional locations in Queensland, consented to participate in the study.

The facilitators who participated in the study had a variety of training experience. Two facilitators had delivered ART on numerous occasions (eg 30 plus). Typically, past training groups had included Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people. However, they had each delivered ART exclusively to Indigenous youth on at least two occasions. The other facilitators had delivered ART anywhere from one to four times. On all occasions, their training group included a mix of Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people.

Former participants of ART were recruited with the support of Youth Justice Services. Initially, the

evaluation team had tried an opt-in approach—where young people completed a form immediately after graduating from ART to indicate if they would be willing to be contacted by the evaluation team. While a number of young people consented to a follow-up, their transient lifestyles meant contact details quickly dated and it became impossible to find them. Instead, case managers at different Youth Justice Services explained the study to a number of Indigenous young people. Their efforts resulted in seven youth—at urban and regional locations—voluntarily consenting to group interviews. One group of young people was interviewed in a youth detention centre. All youth had participated in ART between three and 12 months prior to the interview.

An in-depth and semi-structured interview style was adopted. Interviews sought to identify perceptions of the ART content and instructional strategies, with a focus on whether the content/strategies were relevant or appropriate for Indigenous audiences. Interviewees were also asked to reflect on observed or realised behavioural changes. The interview questions (see *Appendix 9*) were informed by the program logic (see *Appendix 10*) to ensure that critical program inputs, processes and outcomes were explored. Yet these questions served merely as a starting point and topics (like homework or parental involvement) were explored as and when they arose during discussion.

Document analysis

The ART curriculum was analysed. The aim was to understand the training content, instructional tactics and review the guidelines on how the course might be adapted for different cultural groups.

Quantitative data requests and analysis

A set of quantitative data for the ART program was requested to assess what changes, if any, the program had on participants, offending rates and violent behaviour. The original data request was based on an agreement with representatives of the Queensland Department of Communities to provide—de-identified data on rates of reconviction and sentencing outcomes for all Indigenous participants of ART (pending availability), pre and post assessments completed for individual

participants of ART from July 2010 to May 2011 and other outcome data from another ART evaluation they had commissioned in 2010. The 'pre and post assessments' were before and after assessments of participant aggressive behaviour, adaptive cognitions and social skills via three reliable. and valid psychometric instruments (the Aggression Questionnaire, the HIT Questionnaire and the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire) were planned as part of an evaluation commissioned by the Department in 2010.

There were significant challenges in collecting quantitative data on participants. The Department's implementation of pre and post-assessments did not proceed as planned, causing it to later commit to provide pre and post-scores from the HIT questionnaire (discussed below) from January to June 2012. Other data, such as rates of reconviction and sentencing outcomes, were also unavailable. Consequently, much of the data requested could not be provided. This limited the ability to comment on any behavioural changes or offending patterns prior to and post-participation in the program.

The only data able to be provided were individual risk-assessment scores, based on HIT questionnaires. The HIT questionnaire is a tool designed to aid professionals in assessing self-serving cognitive distortions (thinking errors), such as blaming others and assuming the worst. According to the HIT questionnaire manual, the easiest way to examine changes in thinking is through changes in risk scores. Upward or downward changes to risk scores, or the graduated changes in percentages of youth scoring within clinical, borderline-clinical, or non-clinical ranges, may be used to provide an indication of increased or decreased likelihood of engaging in thinking errors believed to contribute to offending behaviour (Barriga, et al. 2001).

Table 10 provides a comparative overview of the data that was sought and the data that was received. It is a program implemented in 17 target Youth Justice Services in Queensland by trained caseworkers. The program is designed to assist young people to understand beliefs/attitudes supportive of offending behaviour and to re-examine motivations and develop skills to pursue new pathways in the future.

Table 10 Data requested and received, Aggression Replacement Training	
Data requested	**Data received**
The number of alleged offences by each individual participant in ART for the period 12 months prior to program commencement and 12 months post-program commencement by sex, Indigenous status and offence type	Demographic data for 60 participants during 2010–11. This included: • Indigenous status; • residential location; • enrolment; • state and completion dates; • risk levels; • Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YSL/CMI) risk levels on six month review; • order types; • breach of orders; and • Changing Habits and Reaching Targets (CHART) enrolment start dates, number of CHART modules completed, date completed CHART, reasons for not completing CHART
The index offence (ie the offence for which the offender was referred to the program) for each individual participant in ART	No data available
HIT questionnaire scores immediately prior to and post-program commencement by sex, Indigenous status and offence type, for each individual participant in ART from January to June 2012	HIT questionnaire scores for individuals pre and post-intervention for 16 Indigenous young people and 16 non-Indigenous young people

The ART evaluation posed a number of challenges. The fundamental challenge was how to design the evaluation methodology to ensure that available data reflected the actual outcomes of the program. As a consequence of the delayed start to the collection of ART program data (July 2011) due to a crisis response in Queensland, quantitative data could only be collected three to six months post-offender participation in the program. While ART had been running since 2008–09, the period between 2010–11 was selected as it would allow alignment of data with the cohort of participants the evaluation team aimed to recruit for participation in the qualitative component of the study.

The data provided significantly limited the ability to establish any substantial conclusions regarding changes in violent or offending behaviour among ART participants. As a result, ABS and various publicly available statistics were collected to provide a baseline comparison with the available ART data.

Findings

Table 11 summarises key findings concerning the effectiveness of ART for Indigenous youth participants. The Table shows, in light of the available evidence, whether and on what basis the program's design, delivery and outcomes (presented at the end of the section) represent excellent, adequate or poor practice for the identified audience.

Table 11 Assessment of the effectiveness of the Aggression Replacement Training for Indigenous youth participants			
Area of focus	Excellent practice	Adequate practice	Poor practice
Appropriateness of the program design			
Addresses a social need	ABS data indicate that the number of Indigenous offenders aged between 10–19 years has increased and the number of non-Indigenous offenders has decreased. There is evidence to suggest that Indigenous offenders are more likely to have committed a serious offence (violent or sexual in nature) than non-Indigenous offenders. There is a clear need for rehabilitative programs to address violent behaviour among Indigenous young people		
Serves the target audience		Assessment tools, along with professional discretion, represent the key means of identifying whether ART might address the needs of young offenders. There is limited Australian-based evidence of the appropriateness of these tools for Indigenous Australian young people	External pressure (real or perceived) may mean that caseworkers/facilitators feel unable to recommend that ART is not the most suitable intervention for a young person at a given point in time
Cultural competence		Where possible, an Indigenous co-facilitator or support worker joins ART courses with Indigenous participants. However, time pressures can restrict their ability to fully explore content in a way responsive to the cultural context. The Queensland Department of Justice and Attorney General elaborated on measures taken to ensure cultural competence. When ART was first implemented Indigenous representatives from Youth Justice Services came together to determine how to deliver the training in a culturally appropriate way. Specific measures taken included developing more relevant moral reasoning problem situations (highlighted in the introduction), delivering content in Indigenous languages (such as Creole in Far North Queensland) and including Indigenous Elders in the program	

Table 11 Assessment of the effectiveness of the Aggression Replacement Training for Indigenous youth participants			
Area of focus	**Excellent practice**	**Adequate practice**	**Poor practice**
Available resources			Limited funding was allocated to the delivery of ART. Some Youth Justice Services find ways to deliver the course within available funding. Other Youth Justice Services are unable to run the course, even in areas with high numbers of Indigenous youth and high rates of violent crime, typically because staff need to make other work the priority (like court appearances). The Queensland Department of Justice and Attorney General specified the available resources during the feedback process for this report. To deliver ART each Youth Justice Service is supported to send staff to four day training and refresher training as needed. An annual sum of $20,000 is also provided to Youth Justice Services to implement offence specific programs such as ART. Some services have used this funding to contract an ART facilitator when they did not have resources internally to deliver the program
Community involvement		Although ART is an internationally recognised evidence-based program for young people who offend, there is no evidence of community involvement in selecting or developing the program or its implementation or determining its cultural appropriateness. The Queensland Department of Justice and Attorney General confirmed that non-government organisations have been involved in delivery or co-delivery of ART	
Effectiveness of the implementation of the program			
Program reach		ART has only been delivered in four of the nine regions identified as having high Indigenous populations and to a relatively small group of offenders	

Table 11 Assessment of the effectiveness of the Aggression Replacement Training for Indigenous youth participants			
Area of focus	Excellent practice	Adequate practice	Poor practice
Service objectives		Through experience, facilitators have identified ways of adapting ART to ensure the training content and experience meets the needs of Indigenous participants. Further efforts to share this know-how across the facilitator group would enhance the ability of inexperienced trainers to appropriately support this cultural group	
Data collection and management			Data to inform ongoing improvement of program and individual outcomes and to support evaluation are not routinely maintained. Program staff could make more effective use of assessment tools during and after program than appears to be the case. Despite agreeing to collect and provide data from HIT questionnaires on all ART participants from January to June 2012, it appears this tool has not been widely or consistently implemented by Youth Justice Services due to resource issues. Recidivism data could not be provided for ART participants due to the late start of the ART program and data collection, which meant an insufficient post-program observation period to collect reliable recidivism data
Responses to external influences/factors		ART is overwhelmingly aimed at changing the individual. Broader structures (such as families, communities etc) may put them at risk of further offending behaviour	
Extent to which program achieves intended outcomes			
Achievement of outcomes in line with program intent		Qualitative accounts suggest young people are learning skills to refrain from acting on feelings of anger and to develop positive relationships with family and friends. However, these accounts come from a small sample of seven participants. The generalisability of these results are not known	
Sustainability of outcomes			Longitudinal data were not available to assess the impacts of ART on offending behaviour among Indigenous youth

Program design

Addresses a social need

It is well documented that Indigenous young people are overrepresented in the criminal justice system (AIC 2012). ABS data based on annual counts of police recorded offences suggest that from 2008–09 to 2010–11 the number of Indigenous offenders aged between 10 and 19 years increased by five percent, where non-Indigenous offenders of the same age decreased by 12 percent (ABS 2012a).

Data are not available to show categories of offence for juvenile offenders by Indigenous status. Published data on adult prisoners shows that just over one-third (33%) of Indigenous people in Australian prisons have committed or been charged with a most serious offence of acts intended to cause injury, which is essentially assault (ABS 2012c). The next most common offence or charge for Indigenous prisoners was unlawful entry with intent (15.4%), while similar proportions were imprisoned for sexual assault (9.5%), robbery (9.3%) and offences against justice procedures (9.2%). By comparison, a smaller proportion of non-Indigenous prisoners were imprisoned for acts intended to cause injury (14.5%) and were most likely to be imprisoned for illicit drug offences (15.2%; ABS 2012c).

> There is some further evidence to suggest that Indigenous people commit more violent crimes, both in incidence and the nature of the offence, than their non-Indigenous counterparts. The Sentencing Advisory Council (2011) indicated that 71 percent of Indigenous offenders (ie all offenders not just young offenders) were incarcerated due to a serious offences (being violent or sexual in nature) compared with 51 percent of non-Indigenous offenders. In their report on sentencing trends for violent and sexual offences, the Sentencing Advisory Council (2011) highlighted that Indigenous offenders are more likely than their non-Indigenous counterparts to have an offence including 'assault occasionally bodily harm (20% to 10%), wounding (9% to 2%), 'grievous bodily harm' (8% to 4%), 'serious assault' (8% to 3%) and 'threatening violence' (0.7% to 0.4%). Further, in a study undertaken in South Australia, Wundersitz indicated that

on a per capita basis, Indigenous young people faced a much higher risk of being apprehended across most violent offence categories than non-Indigenous youth' (2010: 41).

However, despite these studies the evidence to suggest that Indigenous offenders commit more violent crimes is limited.

In light of these findings, it is important to identify evidence-informed approaches to prevent and minimise offending, including violent offences. In their Australian-based evaluation of ART, Currie et al. (2012) promoted the need for a violence and anger management program; namely because aggressive and violent crime often result in increased expenditure on policing, security and imprisonment, and increased financial burdens on the individual, the victim and the community (Polaschek & Dixon cited in Currie, et al. 2012). There are also significant non-financial costs including public perceptions of safety and indirect victimisation (Serin, Gobeil & Preston 2009). While these effects are real, there is still no conclusive evidence to suggest that aggression leads to violent crime. This finding is compounded by the fact that violent offenders are more likely to reoffend in both violent and non-violent ways compared with non-violent offenders (Motiuk & Belcourt cited in Serin, Gobeil & Preston 2009).

ART addresses one (but by no means the only) issue associated with offending behaviour—anger management. For example, emerging research suggests other initiatives, like depression-focused treatment, may also be relevant given depression and hopelessness have both been implicated as risk factors for criminal offending (Wanklyn et al. 2012).

Serves the target audience

Caseworkers use youth justice risk/needs assessment tools, along with their professional discretion, to determine whether ART represents a suitable intervention for all would-be participants. The existing evidence on the effectiveness of the tool for Indigenous young people is mixed.

The assessment tool is the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI). It is designed to estimate the risk, need and responsivity in young people who offend. The YLS/CMI is made up of seven components. The Assessment of Risks

and Need component assesses both risk factors for recidivism and criminogenic needs (ie factors empirically linked with offending behaviour that are amendable to change). The Assessment of Other Needs/Special Considerations includes questions designed to estimate responsivity; that is, the offender's capacity to learn in a therapeutic situation (Thompson & Stewart 2005; Young 2009). Other studies suggest that the YLS/CMI provides reliable estimations among young people across gender and ethnicity. However, much of this research compared the validity of assessments for Indigenous and non-Indigenous offenders in the United States and Canada. There is limited Australian-based research on the use of the YLS/CMI with young Indigenous offenders (Thompson & Stewart 2005; Young 2009). This limitation makes it difficult to make conclusions about the degree to which YLS/CMI appropriately identifies Indigenous young people for possible inclusion in ART.

The HIT questionnaire is another tool that was administered during the evaluation period (by Youth Justice Service staff) to provide insights into the degree to which ART serves the target audience. The evaluation team received pre and post-assessments from the HIT questionnaires for 16 Indigenous participants and 16 non-Indigenous participants. While data was only sought for Indigenous participants, data for non-Indigenous participants was also provided. This was retained for analysis due to its potential to identify differences between the two groups of participants.

One way to analyse the scales of the HIT questionnaire is to determine which of the three ranges—non-clinical, borderline-clinical and clinical—the score falls in to. A classification in the clinical range indicates symptoms of clinical significance (ie outside the range of 'normal'). The data provided suggested that from the sample, 81 percent of Indigenous and 75 percent of non-Indigenous participants were classed in the clinical range. Sixty-eight percent of Indigenous and 56 percent of non-Indigenous participants were classed as being within the clinical range for behaviours including oppositional-defiance and physical aggression. According to the HIT Manual, the overall HIT score is an indication of externalising psychopathology and requires further assessments. Higher scores on the overt scale suggest potential

predispositions to antisocial behaviour that may include confrontational behaviours with victims, whereas higher covert scores suggest the opposite. These data potentially identify the need for an anger management intervention, particularly when the scores as rated on the HIT questionnaire are so high. While these scores cannot be generalised across a wider sample, it does suggest that offenders with particularly high levels of aggression and other antisocial tendencies are being referred to the ART program.

Professional discretion complements the results of the YLS/CMI and HIT questionnaire (when administered). Caseworkers and facilitators consider factors that experience tells them will negatively impact on the capacity of young people to actively participate in ART.

> …[I]n most cases look I've met the mix of kids. I've seen them all now. This person isn't right for the group…you can go realistically where this kid is at…in terms of completely itinerant living or completely engaged in sniffing…I have to think about, if I'm really trying to say this is a commitment from us for 10 weeks can you ask that commitment from somebody who's in [that] place (ART facilitator).

> …[W]e try and get them in say the contemplative, you know, decision-making stage where they are actually willing to do changes…we have one of our psychologists who…sort of gauges how they are feeling about engaging and sort of being challenged and being willing to change. We need that (ART facilitator).

Most caseworkers/facilitators who participated in interviews stated that they felt able to exclude young people from ART on the basis of their appraisal of extenuating circumstances. Yet some suggested that this type of professional override was not always possible or exercised:

> I think the mindset in Queensland, because the Department of Communities went to the trouble for the first time ever of getting a program…[is] we've spent all this money on people being trained for it, now everybody must be using it and the stats will be counted…we've got to keep the figures going because they're breathing down our neck because they've spent all this money on the program (ART facilitator).

Certain life events/dramas can make it hard for young people to focus on the training. Effort needs to be put into selection. [Facilitator] is not confident that centres that 'churn youth through' will ultimately have success (ART facilitator).

To provide context to the first quote above, the Queensland Department of Justice and Attorney General explained it monitors the delivery of ART to ensure there are therapeutic responses to identified youth justice client needs (Queensland DJAG 2012). As ART is currently the only evidence-based program for young people who offend available within the Youth Justice Service, the Department aims to ensure it is utilised appropriately.

The implication of ignoring professional discretion is that the ART may not address young people's needs (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) because they are not 'in a place' (personally, emotionally) to engage with the training. However, allowing unfettered professional discretion carries a risk that the program may not be directed to those most at need and most able to respond. The YLS/CMI also gives an assessment of responsivity to treatment, which needs to be balanced with caseworker discretion. Appropriately balancing formal assessment with less formal discretion is important for achieving the right targeting of a program such as ART.

Assessment tools, along with professional discretion, represent the key means of identifying whether ART might address the needs of young people. The appropriateness of these tools for Indigenous Australian young people is yet to be fully tested. Additionally, there is some suggestion that professional override of a decision to enrol an Indigenous youth in ART may not always be possible.

Cultural competence

The ART Training Manual addresses the issue of cultural competence. It states that:

ART is most effective when it is delivered with appreciation for such culturally relevant notions as skill strengths and differences versus skill deficits, the need for differential training strategies and instructional tactics, participant channels of accessibility and communication styles, potential for stereotyping, and culturally associated qualities of

participants. Facilitator knowledge, skill and sensitivity are required in these areas (Glick & Gibbs 2011: 22).

In short, the onus is on the facilitator to exercise cultural competence.

The Queensland Department of Justice and Attorney General confirmed that support has been provided to ensure the cultural competence of ART. When ART was first being implemented a think tank of Indigenous representatives from Youth Justice Services came together to identify ways to deliver the training in a culturally appropriate way. One initiative was the development of more relevant moral reasoning problem situations. ART has also been delivered in Indigenous languages, including Creole in Far North Queensland.

Interviews revealed that in most cases Indigenous co-facilitators or support workers are available to help deliver ART in a manner responsive to cultural context. Even so, limited time within a full training schedule can inhibit a full and proper exploration of the thoughts and actions of Indigenous learners.

All but one of the interviewed facilitators delivered ART with the assistance of an Indigenous co-facilitator or support worker. Their involvement was seen as a critical means of putting Indigenous participants at ease, ensuring content is interpreted and presented in light of cultural differences and challenging cultural prejudices.

For a lot of our [Indigenous] young people there is that shyness. So I think just having someone [an Indigenous support worker] there from the start is, and we've always made sure that from the start, is really, really important. And then it's [the training is] not a big deal (ART facilitator).

Murri [facilitator] has said that even they find the thought traps difficult. Can see that [the facilitator] fall into those thought traps because of their life experience. With this particular content the Murri trainer uses a lot of storytelling, talks about people they know, keeps it relevant to situations/ circumstances the [Indigenous] youth might have experienced. Need to do this to help make the connections, to see that the content is relevant (ART facilitator).

Having an Indigenous youth worker involved was critical. The youth worker was able to challenge

ideas (eg it's not ok to steal a white fella's car) and introduce different scenarios relevant to the participating Aboriginal males (ART facilitator).

While Indigenous facilitators are seen as adding value to the learning experience of Indigenous youth, their ability to demonstrate cultural competence can be inhibited by time pressures. An Indigenous co-facilitator summed up the frustration felt by them and some colleagues:

…[W]ould have liked more time to tease out issues in a culturally appropriate way….Murri young people quickly worked out what answer the facilitator wanted to hear—they're switched on. Therefore, it was important to have time to challenge the Murri young people, to present them with situations and work out culturally appropriate responses (ART facilitator).

The key then is to find ways to deliver the material in a manner responsive to Indigenous culture within the available time. Failure to do so may mean that Indigenous participants do not internalise knowledge, attitudes and behaviours.

Available resources

Limited resources have posed challenges for the effective delivery of ART. Two facilitators explained the resourcing situation as follows:

[A] lot of research went in before we purchased [ART]. But there was no money put into youth justice services about the delivery. Yes we trained people. But now if someone is going to train someone they've got to be away for four days. And now there's no budget for training outside [ie employing external ART facilitators]. So, if you're doing it for 10 weeks and you've got two or three people taken up with that [task] that's a big impost onto everyone else in the service centre or the people who are doing it [delivering the course]…[and the] best practice of keeping that family [involvement], having the transport…there was no money put in at the start for [these activities] (ART facilitator).

[ART delivery results in a] huge impact on facilitators' workload, especially follow-up requirement locating young person or undertaking make-up sessions. Impacts on rest of office including admin support (ART facilitator).

According to the Queensland Department of Justice and Attorney General, while no funding was provided for the implementation of ART it coincided with another major initiative (an Intervention Framework) that highlighted a new role for Youth Justice Services; namely the delivery of 'offence focused' programs. To support this initiative, Youth Justice Services are allocated $20,000 per annum to implement 'offence focused' programs, including ART. It was expected that Youth Justice Services would move away from non-offence programs (like recreational and leisure programs) and concentrate on offence focused programs (core business). The Department suggests the services that raise resourcing issues may be continuing to deliver programs that are not offence focused. Further, some ART specific support was provided. As highlighted in the introduction, staff at each Youth Justice Service received comprehensive four day training and refresher training. These training options have been provided continuously since 2008. Also the Department suggested that it falls within the job profile of Youth Justice Services to utilised existing resources (like youth workers) to support programs like ART (through transport etc).

Essentially, many Youth Justice Services struggle to manage the extra training workload. They rarely have extra funds to 'back-fill positions' when a caseworker delivers the training. Yet they are not in a position to employ external trainers. Further extra resources are typically not available for 'best practice strategies' like meeting with the family members of participants and providing transport to ensure high attendance rates.

Youth Justice Services respond to the resourcing challenges in different ways. Some come up with innovative solutions like re-allocating work to allow for a permanent ART facilitator or appointing a coordinator to reduce the administration burden:

Some people have been I think savvy. Ok, let's elect this person to be our ART facilitator and just do ART…actually put the resource in and had to fiddle around other places [to cover their previous workload] (ART facilitator).

[Coordinator] prepared agendas, organised logistics and kept the case notes for all youth. As all other co-facilitators needed to keep up with other work as well as delivering ART this support was valued (ART facilitator).

Other services were simply unable to cope with the extra demands imposed by ART; other work (like supporting Indigenous youth to attend court) takes priority. Consequently, these services did not deliver the course, even though ART has been identified as a suitable intervention for Indigenous young people in their region.

During the course of the evaluation there was a change of government in Queensland, resulting in some major changes of direction in criminal justice policy. Youth Justice Services staff interviewed for the evaluation indicated resources for ART had been reduced under the new government and there was doubt about the extent to which the program would be able to continue into the future.

Community involvement

Assessing whether and how community members were involved in the decision-making process behind the selection of ART was not specifically incorporated into the evaluation process. However, some insights into community involvement were uncovered.

A few facilitators spontaneously discussed their understanding of how ART came to be delivered in Queensland. They understood that the Department of Communities decided on ART following extensive research into suitable interventions for young people who offend. These facilitators described it as a top-down decision and were unaware of any community consultations regarding the suitability of the program for Indigenous young people.

The Queensland Department of Justice and Attorney General explained that when ART was first implemented, Indigenous representatives from Youth Justice Services came together as a 'think-tank' to determine how to deliver ART in a culturally appropriate way.

Facilitators typically raised the issue of community involvement (or the possible lack thereof) in the context of their understanding of when ART is most effective. Since the rollout of ART across particular locations in Queensland, individual Youth Justice Centres have sought to involve Indigenous parents and community members in the program. They see this as best practice. These types of collaborations are discussed further in the section on service objectives (see below). The Queensland Department of Justice and Attorney General confirmed that non-government organisations have been involved in the delivery or co-delivery of ART through partnership agreements with the Department.

Implementation

Program reach

Data are not available to enable a reliable assessment of the extent to which ART is reaching Indigenous youth. Such an assessment would require detailed offender data, beyond that available to inform the evaluation.

Data provided by the Queensland Department of Communities indicates there are six major regions in Queensland (Far North and Central Queensland, Brisbane, South West and East Regions with the Youth Detention Centres also recorded as a 'region') that have had varying forms of engagement with the ART program. Figure 12 demonstrates the levels of commencement, participation and completion with the ART program in each region in 2012. It is unclear why more people completed ART in central and south west Queensland than actually commenced it. This apparent anomaly could be a result of data being collected over different time periods. It is likely that some graduates of the program had commenced ART before the data collection period, yet completed it during the data period.

Figure 12 Offenders who commenced, completed or exited ART (n)
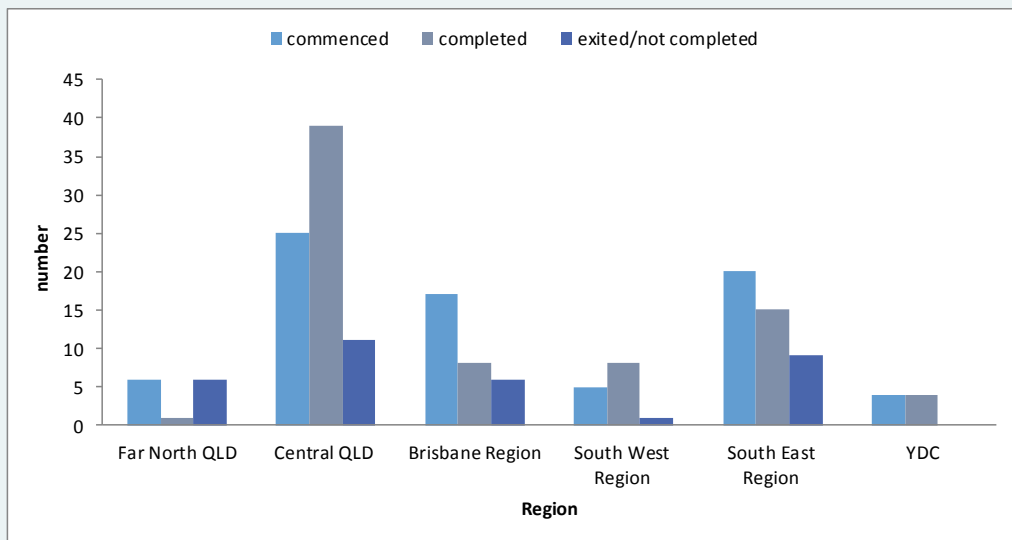
Qualitative accounts complement this data. Document analysis revealed that from January to June 2012, ART was only delivered by four of the nine Youth Justice Services identified by the Queensland Department of Communities as operating in locations with a high proportion of Indigenous youth (56% or more of the local population of young people aged 15–24 years). These four services were in Mackay (central Queensland) and Townsville, the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre and Cairns (far north Queensland); although, the Cairns-based program experienced difficulties retaining young people. The services unable to deliver ART were Rural and Remote (the Rural and Remote Youth Justice Service operates in the Cape York Peninsula and Torres Strait), Atherton and Mt Isa (far north Queensland) and Rockhampton and Roma/Charleville (central Queensland). Three of these Youth Justice Services (Mt Isa, Roma/Charleville and Rural and Remote) operate in locations where the proportion of Indigenous youth exceeded 80 percent of the population of young people aged 15–24 years.

Service objectives

The key service objective is to effectively deliver ART to eligible young people who have offended.

Drawing on accounts from interviews, this section explores facilitators and former participants' views of what it takes to effectively deliver the course to Indigenous participants.

Most of this know-how has been gained overtime. In other words, it is not expertise typically learned from a train-the-trainer course. Further, efforts to communicate ART 'hints and tips' across sites/ regions may enhance facilitators capacity to meet the needs of Indigenous participants; helping inexperienced facilitators to effectively tackle the challenges already addressed by their predecessors.

Identify the 'right' training group

ART groups are usually a mix of Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants. Of the seven facilitators who participated in interviews, just two reported having delivered ART to an all Indigenous group. They explained that typically the referral pool was not big enough at any given point in time to enable group selection solely according to cultural background. One facilitator lamented the absence of Indigenous-specific groups. In their view young people opened up more when working with other Indigenous peers than in mixed groups:

> Ensuring the same culture will help to bring stuff up, it will come to the surface quicker…if you

compared video footage from a mixed cultural group with that taken from an all Indigenous group you'll see that the youth [in the latter group] got more out of the role plays (ART facilitator).

Given it may not be feasible to construct all Indigenous training groups, Youth Justice Services efforts to identify the 'right' training group are about creating a group dynamic conducive to open, honest discussion and learning. Caseworkers, team leaders, youth workers and facilitators come together to consider all potential referrals to ART and reflect on the implications of mixing together different individuals (eg some individuals will not talk to each other; one female with a group of males is inappropriate; a 17 year old may be too mature to join a group of 14 year old males).

One facilitator also highlighted the extra responsibility of considering whether kinship obligations might positively or negatively impact on group interactions when working with Indigenous young people. While kin may end up being included in the same training group, prior discussion regarding the existing relationships was presented as a means of helping facilitators to pre-plan for any issues that may arise (eg a youth blaming another for wrongdoing because they felt compelled to join in because of kinship obligations).

One Youth Justice Service found a way to extend on the practice of discussing referrals as a multidisciplinary team to identify the 'right' mix of training participants. This service organised a team building exercise prior to commencing ART to help a cross-cultural group and facilitators get to know one another. The training team reported that the exercise:

Eased a lot of young people's anxiety to start the program with others they may not know or have histories with (ART facilitator).

In light of reported benefits, pre-training team building exercises may be worth considering where resources allow.

Identify the 'best' available training team

Most facilitators suggested that when Indigenous youth are scheduled to participate in ART, it is ideal to employ an Indigenous facilitator or co-facilitator. As one facilitator explained:

Not only can Indigenous facilitators ensure culturally appropriate content they can also act as an inspiration to Murri participants—'she not shame' (ART facilitator).

It is pertinent to note that the concept of shame is very important within many Indigenous communities. Indigenous peoples may feel shamed when asked to behave in certain ways (such as putting themselves forward in a training session). The idea of not having shame ('she no shame') is about demonstrating that it is acceptable to speak up.

However, limited resources can inhibit the ability of Youth Justice Services to implement this practice. Instead the represented Youth Justice Services aim to engage an Indigenous worker in the training process. If available, their role is to support Indigenous participants as and when appropriate. This support could include anything from transport, to updating family members on training progress or de-briefing with participants after a session:

…have someone who's respected, that's got the nous or the respect in the community from the start. Because who are you? [the non-Indigenous facilitator]. You know? Yeah, they might know you or whatever but, you know, all of a sudden these families are trusting you…so it they see, you know, it's Uncle Eric or Uncle Raymond, you know, all of a sudden their anxiety goes (ART facilitator).

Of the interviewed former Indigenous participants of ART, all held strong views on their preferred facilitator. They wanted individuals who were respectful, shared good words (ie positive feedback) and enforced rules (eg no swearing). A good facilitator was also described as fun, not always serious. Participants reported feeling annoyed when facilitators were too serious. It was only when prompted that the former participants identified that facilitators must be Indigenous.

Adapt the content/delivery methods

All interviewed facilitators agreed that the ART content needed to be modified for all groups (Indigenous and non-Indigenous). However, there

were mixed views on the exact nature or scope of required changes. Most facilitators shared the view that it was necessary to 'break down' or simplify key messages, use more pictures to explain content, incorporate games or icebreakers and localise language (ie find substitutes for words like school hall or cafeteria). Other facilitators advocated for far-reaching changes including reducing the 10 week training window and re-branding ART to help people see it less as a program about aggression and more as a program about social skills education.

Out of all the adaptations adopted or recommended by the facilitators who took part in the evaluation, two stood out as specific to Indigenous audiences. First, all facilitators emphasised the importance of ensuring the training acknowledged the lived experience of Indigenous youth. As one facilitator explained:

> Youth will say things like: the course talks about this as a choice. I haven't been able to choose to grow up without violence (ART facilitator).

As such the interviewed facilitators have found it important to be realistic about the choices available to young people. One interviewee provided an example of the conversation they might have with young people to realise this aim:

> We've had to be very aware of what situations these young people are in and not making them feel oh because they couldn't do that…[eg] go to the police and what they'd call dog [inform] on someone…it's not a failure…what are some of the things you could do? You know? Just sort of putting that in rather than saying you need to go to the police. Well no you don't. Let's live the life how they've lived it, you know. It's about the conversation (ART facilitator).

A group of Indigenous youth reinforced the importance of this conversation in a focus group. They said fighting is all some boys know; they lived this way their whole life. So, it can be a shock to learn about choices and alternative ways of acting. Yet from this group's viewpoint, talking about issues helps individuals learn how to take it back to community to implement.

The second adaption commonly recommended by interviewed facilitators relates to the method of delivery. Facilitators consistently reinforced the importance of creating situations in which Indigenous participants learn from each other. Peer to peer learning was presented as a means of promoting learning and empowering young people:

> [Facilitator talking about an Indigenous young person's experience of peer to peer interactions] he said…talking to these guys [his peers], like he didn't even say anything about us the facilitators…he said like talking to these guys, and like how we have our discussion, I'm now thinking a lot more about it and I think I can make better decisions when I get out. It was really good because it was just self-discovery. He wasn't forced to discover that and it came out of him … (ART facilitator).

> Peer support can be very important means of supporting [a] young person. Help them become involved by allowing them to perform tasks collectively…involving peers can [also] be very empowering—the youth see that they can learn from each other and can support each other (ART facilitator).

Incentives

Each of the Indigenous young people and facilitators who participated in the study concurred that incentives must be provided throughout the training. Former participants mostly expressed appreciation for food rewards. Food appeared to represent a tangible acknowledgement of their contribution to discussions. Snacks also seemed to be a powerful motivator when their attention spans started to wane. Most young people also said they valued playing games to get a break from the content and 'good words' (positive reinforcement) from trainers.

On the whole, the interviewed ART facilitators supported these sentiments. They also provided further insight into how and why food was so important. Food, particularly breakfast, was seen as a way of providing young people with the energy reserves needed to participate in the training, helping the group bond over shared meals and reinforcing pro social behaviours (eg practicing table manners, cleaning up etc).

Make-up sessions

Like many of their non-Indigenous counterparts, Indigenous young people who participate in ART typically confront a range of external factors that can make regular attendance or participation in training challenging. Therefore, most facilitators identified make-up sessions as critical to address material that individuals missed through their absence on a scheduled day of the program. While time intensive, make-up sessions enable youth to successfully complete the training and can aid learning because of the one-to-one attention:

> The advantage of these [make-up] sessions is that it afforded the opportunity to challenge the youth. As [name] established a relationship with the young people they knew how far to push without going over the edge. The downside is that it's time intensive (ART facilitator).

All participating facilitators also made it clear that students (regardless of cultural background) rarely completed homework. Therefore, they scheduled sessions before the 'official' training day commenced to talk about the homework tasks and record the young people's thoughts and ideas.

Involve family

While limited resources constrain the capacity of Youth Justice Services to accomplish this activity, all facilitators stated that it was ideal to engage with the family members of Indigenous participants. Accounts from interviews revealed that the level of involvement varied across services. Commonly provided examples included sharing updates on training progress (face-to-face, where possible, or over the phone in detention settings) and including family in graduation ceremonies. Family involvement was seen as critical because they can help to reinforce key lessons and motivate students:

> … [I]f someone is doing really well letting mum or dad, you know, that family [know] about [it] because all of a sudden if you know Johnny comes home and you know and mum says oh you know [facilitator X] told me that you've been doing really, really well, all of a sudden that reward centre is open. So it's not just us saying yeah putting in a good effort, all of a sudden there are some benefits are home…also letting

the families know what we're doing. Look this week…he's identified swearing…If you see that he's you know give him some encouragement. Say: 'I notice you haven't been swearing at me'…So it's actually sort of cementing the learning (ART facilitator).

> …[O]ne day a week we would, on one afternoon, go and see, try and drop in on, parents and say hey you were great today. You should have seen the role play he did in this or that. And it really, you could see that the parents were initially hesitant and like you can't come in and why are you here, what's he done wrong now. And over time I think they even came to enjoy a bit the visits. And I think that the kids loved knowing that they were getting some positive feedback given to their parents and stuff…(ART facilitator).

In conclusion, ART facilitators have identified ways of planning for and adapting the training content to meet the needs of Indigenous participants. Further efforts to share this know-how (which extends on material covered in train-the-trainer sessions) across the facilitator group would enhance the ability of inexperienced facilitators to appropriately support Indigenous young people.

Data collection and management

Resource constraints appear to be the main reason why the ART program staff were not able to provide comprehensive data to inform this evaluation. Despite an initial agreement to do so, it appears that data related to program outcomes and impacts have not routinely been collected by the Queensland Department of Communities. Program staff were able to set up some arrangements to collect data for a limited period specifically to assist the evaluation team, but this was without baseline data preceding the evaluation and could not be sustained beyond the limited evaluation period.

The only data able to be obtained by the evaluation team was in the form of HIT questionnaires for a sample of 32 participants (16 Indigenous and 16 non-Indigenous), taken before and after their participation in ART (see the next section, *Program outcomes* for details of the results). While this was able to yield some information to assist the evaluation, as detailed below, it only provides a

measure of change in one dimension of cognition. A program such as ART, if it is effective, can create change that has wide-ranging influences across many aspects of a young person's life, including influences on their family and other community members. Many aspects of this change will not be captured through an instrument such as the HIT questionnaire and a broader set of data and information would be needed to begin to understand the many dimensions of change. As ART is intended to reduce reoffending, recidivism data obtained directly through ART or through arrangements with criminal justice agencies would be one key element of this extended dataset.

Some of these dimensions and insights into the impacts of the program for individual participants could be usefully informed by post assessment application of the YLS/CMI. There could be considerable value in the assessment derived from the YLS/CMI being revised during and after a young person's participation in ART to examine whether their level of risk and need has changed in any way and what this might mean for the individual impacts of ART and adaptation or extension of service to meet their individual needs. However, it does not appear that the YLS/CMI assessment is being used to inform delivery of ART and other services beyond the initial assessment and referral.

External factors/influences

ART is overwhelmingly aimed at changing the individual rather than broader structures (such as families, communities etc) often associated with offending behaviour. The Indigenous young people who participated in the evaluation from within a detention centre demonstrated a heightened awareness of these external causes. While these youth indicated they intended to put their learning into practice, they were also realistic about how things on the outside (availability of illicit substances, poor job prospects etc) will make this goal challenging. Speaking to these young people, it was clear that this program represents but one means of reducing offending behaviour. Broader structural changes are also required as the individual benefits that may accrue from participation in ART could easily be undermined by factors external to the program, such as family conflicts or community-level changes that lead to increased violent behaviours.

External factors exist outside the control of program facilities and present risks to the sustainability of benefits for individuals. It is important that facilitators of cognitive-behavioural programs such as ART are aware of these influences and as much as possible build the capacity and resilience of individual participants to help them respond appropriately outside the program. Linking ART graduates with services such as treatment and individual or family counselling would be one way Youth Justice Services could help build this capacity and resilience.

Program outcomes

Achievement of outcomes in line with program intent

The program logic identified two intended outcomes, relevant for ART participants in both community and detention settings. These outcomes were that young people refrained from acting on feelings of anger or aggression and developed improved familial and social connections.

Acting on feelings of anger or aggression

All interviewed young people attributed positive behavioural changes to the training. These changes included learning how to manage feelings of anger, resolve conflict and find constructive ways to relax. Young people talked about examples of how ART has taught them positive strategies such as:

> Learned to walk away, think something happy, to talk it out.

> Think better [post training], plan out a lot more, make better choices, learned to talk better.

> Learned breathing in and out [taught response to anger].

> Learned to walk away from someone who is aggravating you.

Supplementing these qualitative accounts is data from the completed HIT questionnaires. The analysis of these data is set out in detail in Appendix 11. Both non-Indigenous and Indigenous participants showed a reduction in measures indicative of aggressive thoughts and behaviours. These measures can serve as a proxy for assessed risk of

engaging in violent behaviour, including offending. The reduction for non-Indigenous participants was significantly greater than for Indigenous participants. At an individual level, nine of the 16 Indigenous participants recorded a reduction in HIT scores, indicating a reduction in risk, while seven of the 16 showed an increase in their scores. Only two non-Indigenous participants showed an increase in their overall HIT score. It would theoretically be possible, and potentially quite informative, to compare HIT results with initial YLS/CMI assessments to identify characteristics of those whose HIT scores increase. However, these assessments were not available for this evaluation.

The sample of 16 participants is too small to make reliable conclusions about the effectiveness of ART in reducing pro-violence cognitions and the HIT questionnaire only provides a limited measure of the likelihood of engaging in violent behaviour. Nonetheless, the finding of reduced HIT scores for some participants provides one empirical measure of the impacts of ART. The finding that the reduction is significantly greater for non-Indigenous participants, while not in itself reliable, strongly suggests the need for further research on the efficacy of ART for use with Australian Indigenous populations.

Improved family connections and pro-social skills

Two young people also spoke about how ART had improved their familial and social connections. They expressed similar ideas in the sense that each individual was more willing to listen, to talk things through and not run others down.

While few facilitators maintained close contact with young people post training, most reported observing positive changes during the course. Commonly they observed changes to the young people's confidence and self-esteem:

> [Name] saw how participating in the course built participants' self esteem…finishing the course provided all participants with a real sense of achievement (ART facilitator).

> Has seen confidence grow, often as a result of positive reinforcement provided throughout the training (ART facilitator).

Some facilitators also provided accounts of young people demonstrating learned skills:

> …[Y]ou know, a kid stole some money from me in the program…But the mum walked him down and got him to come and apologise which was a skill that we'd learned in the program (ART facilitator).

> Some of them you do see a progression, or say you know, they'll come in and say 'oh I had this thing and I used whatever'—having a difficult conversation [a skill taught during the social skills training component]—and we'll talk to them about it and they'll tell us what they did. So you see a progression there (ART facilitator).

Overall, qualitative accounts, from a small group of former ART participants, suggest young people are learning skills to refrain from acting on feelings of anger and develop positive relationships and gaining confidence. Quantitative data showed some reductions in measures indicative of aggressive thoughts and behaviours.

Sustainability of outcomes

Longitudinal data were not available to assess whether ART reduces recidivism among Queensland-based Indigenous youth. However, international research has demonstrated that ART can be successful in reducing offending behaviour up to 18 months post program completion (see the literature review). Emerging research also suggests that ART promotes expertise and protective factors—such as prosocial attitudes, values and beliefs—that are believed to reduced offending behaviour, as discussed in the literature review section.

Conclusion

As noted, there were limitations in the data obtained to evaluate ART. The available data indicates that both Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants achieve improvement in cognitive factors contributing to aggressive and violent behaviour. It appears that non-Indigenous participants, on average, achieve a greater degree of positive impact from participation. The data available does not allow

for robust findings of a kind that could be generalised outside of this sample, but do suggest the need for further research to investigate the efficacy of ART for Indigenous young people.

The available qualitative data suggests that Indigenous young people will get the most out of ART when supported by experienced facilitators who have the capacity to deliver the course according to the individual needs of the young people involved. These facilitators must have the capacity to determine when is the most appropriate point for a young person—in terms of their individual preparedness and responsivity, as well as their circumstances and external influences—to participate in the program. For those who are not ready, other services and programs may be available to assist them towards readiness. Facilitators must be able to engage an Indigenous co-facilitator or support worker, if required. Further they must have know-how to adapt the content and delivery in keeping with the needs and circumstances of Indigenous young people.

Stakeholders who participated in the study to emphasised the effective service delivery was constrained by resources. Presently, there are Youth Justice Services operating in regions with high numbers of Indigenous youth yet they are unable to offer the training. Youth Justice Services that do offer the training may be under pressure because of limited resources. Staff may be carrying heavy workloads and best practice strategies (like family involvement) may not be possible to implement.

Discussion

This evaluation project set out to accomplish the challenging task of evaluating four separate and distinct programs operating in three Australian jurisdictions. The programs have in common a focus on reducing the involvement of Indigenous young people in offending and all address important social needs through this focus, although the programs occupy different positions along the spectrum of crime prevention, early intervention, diversion and rehabilitation. Three of the programs specifically target Indigenous youth. The other (ART) is not Indigenous-specific but, by virtue of the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in youth offending, works with a cohort of Indigenous clients. All to a greater or lesser extent take a holistic approach to addressing some of the underlying factors that contribute to this overrepresentation.

The programs also differ in a range of critical respects and it is in these differences that some of the key findings of this evaluation emerge. One of the programs (the Aboriginal Power Cup) works in a school environment to build attendance, retention and educational attainment, in turn building resilience and giving young people life options that can help them towards prosocial activities and interactions. Another works at a community level with young people who typically committed first offences, aiming to give them the capacity to make better and stronger choices in future (TIYDDU).

Another program also sets out to empower young people in their options and choices, but aims to do so through collaboration with other agencies to support young people with complex needs and high levels of potential or realised risk (Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel). A fourth program (ART) works on an individual basis focused on a specific type of offending, helping to change the way young people respond in situations where they might otherwise turn to aggression or violence.

In many ways, the four programs evaluated through this project cannot be directly compared. While the areas of commonality have allowed for core elements of the research design and methodology to be carried across each element of the evaluation, the areas of difference mean each program must be evaluated in its own right. Through this report, the evaluation team has presented what are essentially four separate but linked evaluations and examined each of the programs in detail. The team has also used common indicators of good practice to allow a common language to be spoken across each of the evaluations.

The evaluation project has not been without challenges. To an extent, these were always anticipated. Evaluating programs concerned with Indigenous Australians inevitably raises ethical and practical considerations. Where the program

involves young people in vulnerable situations and extends across three jurisdictions, these considerations are heightened. The evaluation team had to find ways of ensuring the evaluation privileged the voices of those involved in supporting and delivering the programs, the communities that are affected by their outcomes and most importantly, the young people who receive the programs and contribute their energy to the programs achieving their desired outcomes. The fieldwork for the evaluations involved extensive negotiation, travel and adaptation. As will be discussed later in this section, the evaluation team also encountered a range of difficulties gathering solid, quantitative data to inform the evaluations. These difficulties have given rise to some important best practice findings and recommendations.

Each of the four programs evaluated through this project demonstrated at least one indicator of excellent practice and some demonstrated several indicators. Across many indicators, the programs demonstrated adequate practice—practice that allowed the program to meets its aims and objectives and to yield potential or realised benefits for young people and the community, but without necessarily establishing a benchmark from which other programs could be built, or against which they could be judged. Across the four programs, there were also areas of poor practice that may undermine the ability of the program to achieve its intended outcomes, or at least prevent these outcomes being properly measured.

Appropriateness of program design

Addresses a social need

Each of the four programs demonstrated excellent practice against an indicator assessing whether the program was targeted at a significant social need. Against this indicator there emerged a clear need for programs that use diversionary approaches to reduce Indigenous youth offending. The question here is not just whether there is a need for some kind of programmatic response. Given the realities of over-representation it would be hard to argue

against the need for a wide range of programs to address Indigenous offending. The question to be examined is whether a given program is the best way of dealing with the issues.

The Aboriginal Power Cup takes an excellent approach to dealing with one of the core influences on offending and antisocial behaviour—school attendance and participation. The TIYDDU utilises a community-based and multifaceted approach to dealing with the individual and circumstantial factors that contribute to offending. The Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel also takes a multifaceted and multiagency approach to dealing directly with an observed problem of chronic offending and a lack of collaborative responses between service provider agencies. Each of these programs has the potential to reduce the full range of offending behaviours and to go at least part way to addressing some of the underlying factors that help create and maintain these behaviours—each seeks to be holistic and multi-focused in its approach. Conversely, ART deals with one form of offending and one element that may contribute to violent offending. There is little doubt that violence is a problem and that effectively helping someone find alternative responses to dealing with anger and frustration is valuable. ART does not, nor does it aim to, address other forms of offending and antisocial behaviour, and does not resolve any of the environmental contributors to violence. Based on the information able to be gathered for this evaluation, it does not have the potential to contribute as broadly to diverting youth from the criminal justice system as the other programs. However, it is still considered excellent practice in addressing a social need due to the clearly demonstrated need for effective rehabilitation programs to address violent behaviour among Indigenous young people.

Serves the target audience

The evaluation project assessed the extent to which programs served their target audiences. This was one area with quite divergent results. The Aboriginal Power Cup was found to demonstrate excellent practice against this indicator, using the very powerful and engaging medium of sport as a tool for encouraging attendance and active participation at school. Sport is not only a form of healthy and

prosocial recreation for Indigenous young people, it can provide an avenue to building self-esteem, supporting identity and creating life opportunities. The program enhances these benefits by including a range of curriculum elements that build skill, knowledge and cultural connections. These approaches in turn help the Aboriginal Power Cup effectively engage with its Indigenous target group. The TIYDDU demonstrates adequate practice through the use of effective assessment techniques, which are to an extent undermined by the inability of available resources to meet all assessed needs, which perhaps also contributes to the extended time lag sometimes seen between the young person committing an offence and being referred to the program. Time lags also result partly from police referral and implementation practices. Better resourcing of the Unit and the agencies it works with could create excellent practice in this program. In a similar way, resource issues have impacted on the capacity of the Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel to meet its service delivery objectives, despite the efforts of the panel to match the needs of young people with services. The ART program shows adequate practice through the limited international evidence supporting the appropriates of its assessment tool for use with young people; but practice is negatively affected by the existence of pressure—perceived or actual—on service delivery personnel to recommend ART as the most suitable intervention for all eligible young people and by limited opportunities for cultural adaption (see below). This potentially leads to a mismatch of needs and services in a way that could have detrimental outcomes.

Cultural competence

All of the evaluated programs demonstrated a degree of cultural competence in their design and implementation. The TIYDDU demonstrates excellent practice. The Unit works closely with the community and program content and delivery works in a way that reinforces Tiwi cultural authority. Staff of the Unit have strong, relevant cultural knowledge and use this knowledge effectively with Tiwi young people. The Unit's approach is able to draw on Tiwi culture positively and effectively. The Aboriginal Power Cup incorporates cultural education and culturally appropriate elements within its design and

organisers have shown commitment to building the way cultural content is used to support the program's objectives. Further building of cultural content could see the Aboriginal Power Cup demonstrating excellent practice in the future. The ART program staff appear conscious of the needs of Indigenous young people engaged with the program and use Indigenous facilitators where possible. However, the structured nature of the program and the need to maintain basic program integrity constrain the extent to which Indigenous-specific content can be included. While the structure of the program has positive and negative aspects for program delivery, the inclusion of cultural content is largely due to the efforts and insights of experienced facilitators. Documentation on the Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel shows that it has engaged effectively with the Indigenous community and incorporated culturally specific activities in the past, but its capacity to maintain cultural competence has been impacted by resource issues in recent years. Further, directed resourcing could raise the level of practice in the Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel from adequate to excellent.

Available resources

Resourcing is an issue for any intervention program and the extent and availability of resources was a useful indicator for the evaluation process. The Aboriginal Power Cup is able to effectively draw on government support to boost the resources available to it through extensive non-government agency collaboration, demonstrating excellent practice through its multi-agency approach. The TIYDDU makes good use of the limited resources available to it. A concern for the ongoing operation of the Unit is the extent to which it is reliant on the efforts and good will of volunteers and the contribution of personnel who are supported by CDEP funding. The future of CDEP is uncertain and any change to CDEP policy, or decisions by individuals to stop volunteering their services, could directly impact on the viability of the Unit. The Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel relies on in-kind government support and is able to operate effectively through this support, but lacks some key resources such as dedicated program space and staff turnover has negatively impacted on

the panel's ability to maintain ongoing effective service relationships with young people. Limited resources have hampered delivery of ART, which has resulted in some Youth Justice Services offices being unable to run the program and others not being able to deliver the program to its full potential. At the time of writing, it was unclear whether the program would be able to maintain sufficient funding to continue into the foreseeable future.

Community involvement

Community involvement in the development and implementation of a program can be a vitally important factor in whether the program will meet local needs, receive community support and generate community ownership. Excellent practice would demand that communities be fully involved in the program through its inception and ongoing operation. Of the evaluated programs, only the TIYDDU was able to demonstrate excellent practice. The Unit works very closely with the community. The program incorporated community input into its design and continuing implementation and local community needs and values are integrated into the Unit's work. Those responsible for developing and running the Aboriginal Power Cup program provide advice to the community about the program and raise awareness of its benefits to young people and there is some opportunity for the community to contribute to the program through school associations, but there did not appear to have been community involvement in its design. Those responsible for the Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel provide limited advice to the community about the panel and there was evidence of community input to its design or operations, with a survey undertaken before establishment of the panel seeking feedback and input on how services could be improved. The ART program was assessed as having not had community involvement in the decision or the implementation or operation of the program, despite it being internationally recognised as an evidence-based intervention. However, comments from the Queensland Government provided in feedback on a draft of this report (discussed earlier) that described a range of efforts

undertaken to make ART culturally appropriate for Indigenous participants should be noted.

Effectiveness of the implementation of the program

Program reach

The extent to which programs reach their target audience is an important practice indicator. The effectiveness of a program in achieving its outcomes is in part a direct function of the extent to which programmatic interventions reach those who need them. The evaluation found the TIYDDU to demonstrate excellent practice in program reach as a result of the Northern Territory Police and the Unit staff working together to try and include Tiwi youth in the program. Some of the informal approaches taken by Unit staff have been particularly effective in eliminating the need for formal diversion processes. The program reach of the Aboriginal Power Cup was assessed as poor practice, as while it was able to reach eligible students across a range of schools in different locations, it was still only reaching a small proportion of all potentially eligible Indigenous students in South Australia. Those schools that did participate in the Aboriginal Power Cup tended to be those with relatively high levels of attendance in any case. Both ART and the Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel provide services to only a small proportion of the potentially eligible population, based on eligibility and assessment criteria. In the case of these programs, it is not necessarily to be expected that the types of services they offer would be to a larger proportion of the population and it is in their nature to work with a small client group.

Service objectives

The evaluation considered the extent to which each program met its service objectives; that is, its specific aims in seeking to deliver its services in a particular way. The Aboriginal Power Cup demonstrated excellent practice through facilitating enhanced levels of stakeholder understanding and engagement. However, other aspects of the service

objectives achieved by the Aboriginal Power Cup were only considered adequate practice. While organisers used various strategies to support students, the evaluation found that the rates of attendance of participating students and the quality of the work they produced through the curriculum program could be improved. The TIYDDU demonstrated excellent practice in reaching its service objectives. Supported by the detailed assessments undertaken on clients, the Unit works with the community it serves to enhance the community's capacity to deal with many of the issues that lead to youth offending. Very effective assessment practices were also demonstrated by the Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel, which used assessment to match young people and their families with appropriate services for their individual needs. However, the effectiveness of these efforts were impacted by declines in information sharing and family support between agencies, largely resulting from limited resources. The panel also seems to lack an effective exit strategy, with young people remaining in the panel's client base for extended periods. The panel's practice would be benefited by clearly articulated plans, strategies and goals for the young people to work towards. The ART program showed some strong practice elements in meeting its service objectives, with senior facilitators effectively drawing on their experience to shape the content of the program and its delivery to young people. The overall service delivery of the program would be aided through established means for these senior facilitators to share the benefits of their knowledge and experience with less experienced facilitators.

Responses to external influences/ factors

As identified through the development of a program logic for each project, they all face a range of external influences and factors that affect their operation and can directly affect the circumstances of the young people the programs work with. How well a program responds to these external influences is an indicator of the strength of its practice and its capacity to maintain the delivery of outcomes in the context of changing circumstances. Of the four programs, only the Woorabinda Early Intervention

Coordination Panel was assessed as demonstrating elements of excellent practice. The panel largely works independently of other youth services, but maintains knowledge of the other services and refers young people effectively when appropriate programs are available. At the same time, the panel's independent approach may mean that opportunities for more 'joined-up' responses involving partnerships and collaborations with other agencies are being missed. It is also difficult for the panel to separate its impacts from those provided by other services young people may be using. As part of the South Australian school curriculum, the Aboriginal Power Cup is subject to external factors including teacher workloads and the nature and extent of parental involvement. While some aspects of these are beyond program organisers' control, the evaluation found indications that other aspects of these influences could be better controlled and managed. The TIYDDU operates on limited resources and is susceptible to external influences, such as changes to the CDEP policy. There are few services available on the Tiwi Islands and staff of the Unit often work without support from other programs and services. Working to build relationships that could provide this support, to the extent that other services exist, could substantially improve the Unit's capacity to sustain its services in the context of influences to which it is currently highly vulnerable. Due to the nature of the program and its focus on individual behaviour change, external influences on the ART program potentially affect outcomes for individual clients more so than the overall program (resource issues discussed above notwithstanding). Changes in personal, family and community circumstances can all potentially undermine the benefits of the program for an individual young person and will generally be outside the control of the program facilitators.

Data collection and management

Data collection and management was the area for which none of the programs were able to demonstrate excellent practice and in some cases practice was demonstrably poor. As detailed in the individual program sections earlier in this report, the evaluation team was only able to obtain a small amount of the data requested. An additional challenge was that all of the programs were in

operation at the time the team was commissioned to evaluate and so the absence of appropriate baseline data or agreed comparison groups significantly detracted from the ability to draw firm conclusions about the effectiveness or otherwise of each of the four programs.

The availability of reliable, high-quality data is a critical consideration for effective evaluation and the broader implications of poor data practice will be discussed further below. The evaluation found that the TIYDDU collected a reasonable level of data given its limited resources and demonstrated adequate information management practices. For the Aboriginal Power Cup, changes in data management processes, physical locations for data storage and staff turnover meant that only limited data could be provided and earlier data, while it may be in existence, could not be accessed and compiled. The evaluation team's request to access individual school attendance and retention data (very important measures of the program's outcomes and impacts) raised a range of issues about how these measures might be interpreted and the validity of what they showed. Similar concerns, together with issues of privacy and confidentiality, arose in relation to education data to inform evaluation of the Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel.

Resource issues were a major limiting factor in the data collected by program staff for the ART program and faced with balancing resources with program delivery needs, little data was maintained or available regarding the program other than that specifically collected for the purposes of this evaluation. The evaluation team had made arrangements with the Queensland Department of Communities to provide data from three pre and post-intervention questionnaires administered over a period commencing from 1 July 2011. Delays in implementation and changes to processes by the Department mean that data was only available for a very limited period January to June 2012. While enquiries were made with the Department about the possibility of extending the data collection period at the expense of delays to this evaluation project, the evaluation team was advised that resources were not available for any additional data collection.

Extent to which program achieves intended outcomes

In some ways, the ultimate measure of an intervention program is whether it achieves its identified outcomes. For the programs under evaluation, outcomes were identified through the program logic process. In each case the research team's ability to draw solid conclusions about program outcomes was hampered by a lack of quantitative data, although good qualitative data and information was able to inform assessment and quantitative data was available to answer some evaluation questions. The research team found the TIYDDU was able to demonstrate indications of excellent practice. Young people interviewed for the evaluation consistently credited the program with helping them identify antisocial behaviour and strategies to avoid engagement with behaviours that could result in offending. These statements were supported by police data showing that the number of TIYDDU participants engaging in further offending in the 12 months after they commenced the program was well below what would be expected for this population. While further data over a longer period would be needed to reach definite conclusions, it appears that the TIYDDU may be very effective in achieving a reduction in offending behaviour among participants. This was against a backdrop of data showing an increase in police-recorded offending by Tiwi youth, providing further indications of the effectiveness of the program for those participating in it. Of course, the limited reach of the Unit would mean that this is not a valid measure of the Unit's success. The qualitative evidence from a small sample of young people who had graduated from ART showed strong positive outcomes, but reoffence data were not available to support these outcomes. This can also be said of the Aboriginal Power Cup and the Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel, with qualitative findings indicating beneficial outcomes for young people that are not supported by quantitative empirical data.

The lack of solid data provided to the evaluation team also reduced the evaluation team's capacity to draw conclusions about whether any positive outcomes from program participation are

sustainable in the longer term. For the ART program, there is evidence from the literature that this program can produce sustainable outcomes. However, this is predicated on the program being delivered effectively and with program integrity to appropriately assessed and selected participants. Whether this is the case for the Queensland program and whether the program is in any case suitable for use with Australian Indigenous young people is not known and therefore, this evidence is at best indicative. For the other programs, little can be said about whether any outcomes they achieve—which in themselves cannot really be determined—are sustainable over time, as there are not longitudinal data available to inform an evaluation of sustainability. The absence of data is perhaps most acute in the case of the Aboriginal Power Cup, where an assessment of sustainability would require longitudinal data from several separate sources covering participants' school education and post-school involvement in employment, further education, possible welfare receipt and possible offending. Such data are simply not available in Australia outside a heavily funded, complex and lengthy research project.

Given that the programs evaluated during this project are concerned with offending behaviour and at least partly, designed to divert young people from involvement with the criminal justice system, a reduction in adverse contact with the criminal justice system among participants is a strong indicator of success. As noted above, reoffending data suggest that the TIYDDU is having a positive impact, with reoffending rates among participants less than might be expected without the program. Due to data limitations, it is not possible to say with any certainty whether any of the other programs demonstrate good practice against this measure. At a broad level, there is empirical support for the efficacy of ART in reducing cognitions and behaviours that can result in violent offending. The evaluation found some evidence to suggest that ART participants in Queensland develop skills that mitigate against offending, but further research and data would be needed to assess the effectiveness of the program in this context. The most that can be said for the Aboriginal Power Cup is that assuming it is operating effectively in other respects, its program and service model should theoretically promote protective factors that can reduce offending and

antisocial behaviour. The Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel approach can also theoretically reduce offending behaviour, but the evidence from this evaluation suggests that there may be no reduction in offending among young people who participated in this program. There may even be an increase, but a lack of baseline data does not allow conclusions in either direction. While further evidence would be needed to examine this more accurately, it appears the Panel may yield benefits for participants and their families, but these do not necessarily extend to reduced contact with the criminal justice system.

Questions remain as to whether reduced offending and reduced adverse contact with the criminal justice system should necessarily be expected outcomes from the programs evaluated for this project and whether a failure to demonstrate these reductions is an indication of poor practice. Richards (2011a) has noted that recidivism is a highly problematic measure and measures such as improved life skills, education and indicators relating to employment, risk-taking behaviour and health and wellbeing may be more meaningful. Each of the evaluated programs has a range of objectives and expected outcomes, as highlighted by the program logic process. The Aboriginal Power Cup, for instance, works at a broad school level and seeks to improve school attendance and retention as a way of building protective factors against offending. Most of the students participating in the program will not have been involved in offending and few, if any, will have been convicted of offences. While the Aboriginal Power Cup approach theoretically reduces the potential for antisocial and offending behaviour among participants, only a proportion of participants would have engaged in this behaviour in any case and benefits of the program are likely to be manifested in a variety of ways over a long period. Conversely, ART is directed at an individual level towards young people who have demonstrated issues with violent behaviour. For these participants, effective results should be demonstrable on a narrower range of behavioural indicators within a shorter period of time. However, even in this case, it may be that a single programmatic intervention cannot reasonably be expected to change behaviour that may have developed throughout the young person's upbringing in the context of challenging

environmental influences that are beyond the reach of the program. In the case of a program like ART, these influences may result in a young person continuing to be involved in offending but perhaps at a reduced level and perhaps demonstrating more positive behaviours in other aspects of their life, such as improved interpersonal relationships. These positive changes may be hidden from the administrative data typically used to inform evaluations and are likely to only be revealed through qualitative investigation.

The lack of solid quantitative data has been a challenge for these evaluations and has a limiting effect on the findings. Programs for which evaluation frameworks are developed *prior* to implementation and for which good data are maintained throughout the life of the program are better able to be evaluated than those for which such data are not available. Programs that cannot be effectively and comprehensively evaluated cannot be held as examples of best practice, depriving those responsible of opportunities to seek resources and more importantly, provide the best outcomes for participants and clients. Best practice in this respect requires that the data needed to most effectively design, target and operate the program, inform its continuing improvement and allow it to be comprehensively evaluated should be identified early in the program development process and systems and processes developed and implemented to support the collection and maintenance of these data. Critical data include baseline and appropriate comparison group data. These systems and processes should be robust enough to maintain data quality and integrity through changes in staffing and resource availability, changes to underlying systems and modifications to the program and its operating environment. Possibilities for data sharing arrangements between key agencies, using common identifiers to allow data to be linked across the criminal justice, education, health and child protection agencies should be explored by each jurisdiction. While there are many barriers, particularly in terms of privacy and information communication technology challenges, to establishing these links, their value in helping to improve outcomes for young people in many domains of their lives makes it important to work towards overcoming the barriers.

Data collection and management needs to be recognised as a fundamental aspect of the program

rather than an externally imposed obstacle. At the same time, the research team recognises that providing data for an evaluation can require a considerable amount of resources and that most programs, particularly small-scale programs targeting a small group of clients and participants in discrete communities do not have these resources available. However, providing these resources should be seen as a necessary part of continual improvement and monitoring of programs and the human resources needed to provide data for reporting and evaluation purposes are reduced when good data-management systems have been put in place.

Aside from the Aboriginal Power Cup, each of the evaluated programs services only a small number of Indigenous young people and the small numbers of participants create additional challenges for quantitative analysis, which are usually collected and reported at a geographic regional level. Working with small datasets reduces options for statistical analysis and reduces the power of those analyses. Reporting data from small datasets also raises issues of privacy and confidentiality as the data reported may inadvertently become identifying. These issues can be resolved to an extent through the appropriate aggregation of data and the use of carefully de-identified case studies, but limitations on the ways the data can be used will remain.

The research team has developed a list of suggested data requirements to assist agencies and service providers with developing data collection and management processes to support program operation and evaluation (see *Appendix 12*). Other good resources to assist agencies with improving evaluation and monitoring capacity are available at: www.aifs.gov.au/cafca/pubs/sheets/rs/rs1.pdf

The limited data available to inform the evaluations has not prevented the research team from reaching solid findings about many good practice indicators for these programs. As suggested above, some of the positive outcomes of these programs are likely to be relatively intangible, such as an improved quality of interpersonal relationships and improved attitudes, which will not be revealed through administrative data. While various psychometric tools could be used to measure behaviour change (and are used in the case of a program like ART), outcomes of this type are most effectively revealed

through responses and disclosures given through consultations, interviews and focus groups. The information and themes that emerge through the qualitative data collection process, particularly when voiced by multiple participants, can provide deep, rich and powerful indicators and insights that cannot be gained through quantitative techniques. There is no doubt better quantitative data would have strengthened the evaluation findings, particularly in terms of demonstrated outcomes. However, for the types of interventions being evaluated through this project, the value of qualitative data should not be discounted.

Implications for future evaluations

A fundamental aim of this evaluation was to assess and identify best practice in Indigenous justice programs. As illustrated above, there was a number of limitations with availability and accessibility of data necessary to qualify the outcomes of each program. However, these limitations are inherent to evaluative research and well documented within the literature. The literature highlights the key challenges as:

- aims and objectives that are unclear and changeable;
- limited and fragmented resources for undertaking evaluations equivocal standard evaluation measures; and
- the difficulty in disentangling the impact of concurrent policies and programs (Beneforti & Cunningham 2000; Flanagan 2010).

A number of these factors, particularly the concurrent policies and programs exacerbate the inherent difficulties in conducting evaluative research in an Indigenous context.

There are a number of factors that need to be taken into account in the process of identifying initiatives to evaluate for best practice examples. Priest et al. (2008) identified several factors that contribute to effective evaluative research design. These include:

- adequate control groups;
- baseline and post intervention data;
- valid evaluation measures;
- a sound theoretical basis;

- consultation with the tertiary education sector;
- state and territory collaboration and coordination;
- consistent use of indicators; and
- pre-determined and maintained research priorities.

It is important to note that these factors should be a key component of the program design. Inherent evaluation processes, such as valid evaluation measures, should be pre-determined and implemented into the program from the beginning. However, as the operational contexts for Indigenous justice are complex, these factors should be considered on a program-specific and operational level. The evaluation shows that these factors were generally not included in the four programs the team sought to evaluate. It appears that the ability to be evaluated had not been included or maintained as a core element of the design and implementation of all four programs and this has reduced the capacity of the programs to provide concrete evidence of their impacts and outcomes.

To increase a program's ability to be evaluated in the context of Indigenous justice and government programs, the following components could be identified for future evaluations:

- Agreed evaluation framework prior to commencement of a pilot or program—the programs identified for research and evaluation should be designed to include the availability of outcome data at the beginning of design and implementation. By pre-determining any subsequent evaluations, the necessary components (as outlined) can be included.
- Consistency of data collection methods—one of the big limitations for data collection was the changes in data collection during changes in staff and government, resulting in inconsistent data. Ensuring that the program has pre-determined data collection methods and indicators will ensure that the evaluation analysis is also consistent and reflective of the operational outcomes.

Cross-jurisdictional collaboration—where programs operate across jurisdictions or where evaluations are operated by a different jurisdiction to the program operator, there needs to be agreed collaboration for a variety of reasons, namely the consistency of data collection and indicators and cross-agency and cross-jurisdictional access and availability of data.

Improving practice

This evaluation project and the findings detailed in this report have yielded some valuable insights that can be applied to improving practice in Indigenous justice programs. While developed in the context of the four programs evaluated through this project, these guidelines can be used to inform a broader range of interventions. They are written from the perspective of interventions targeting Indigenous youth offending and diversion, but the principles reflected in these guidelines can be readily adapted to a wide range of interventions, particularly those targeting vulnerable populations.

Community involvement

Interventions working with Indigenous Australians, particularly those living in small communities with a predominantly Indigenous population, benefit from genuine community involvement. This can lead to programs that are better attuned to local priorities, needs and wishes; that align with local systems and circumstances; and that generate community participation and ownership. This requires more than just advising communities of decisions, it involves engaging with appropriate community representatives throughout the development and ongoing implementation of the intervention, facilitating open input using methods and styles that

match with Indigenous communication and knowledge sharing needs and preferences. Achieving effective and appropriate community involvement also requires balancing 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches so that the partnership can incorporate the differing and potentially conflicting needs of government agencies, non-government agencies and community groups.

Cultural competence

Delivering interventions that are culturally competent and culturally safe requires in-depth considerations at many levels of the intervention's design and delivery. This will include the overall purposes and aims of the intervention, its ways of engaging with the full range of stakeholders and interested people, its messages and how they are communicated, how staff will interact with participants, how participants interact with each other, what will be expected of participants and how the intervention will intersect with the local and broader environment circumstances of each community. A discussion of the full range of issues to be addressed in creating a culturally competent intervention and the different approaches to eliciting cultural competency and safety are well beyond the scope of this report, but some sources of further information are referenced

in the suggested data requirements for effective program evaluation (see *Appendix 12*).

Goals and exits

Interventions, particularly those taking a holistic approach, need to include measurable and definable individualised goals and the intervention should have a defined end point or exit strategy. It is important that participants have an end point to work towards, as this will help to maintain engagement with the program, channel energy and effort towards achieving program goals, and help program staff allocate resources appropriately. Failing to establish achievable and well-defined goals can undermine participant confidence and enthusiasm, while the lack of an exit strategy can create dependence and prevent limited resources being directed towards other needs.

Resourcing

Many agencies and organisations involved with delivering programs to Indigenous Australians carry out their work in a climate of constrained funding. The distribution of limited resources can result in programs only being able to establish plans and goals for short periods into the future and sometimes relying on tenuous in-kind support, as well as volunteers and help from communities. While limited funding and resources will always be an issue for program delivery, those responsible for funding programs should seek to ensure that programs operate on a resource foundation that is as solid as possible in all the circumstances. Adequate and appropriate resources will help staff concentrate on program delivery, maintaining program integrity and building relationships while also helping to ensure the program is able respond appropriately to external influences and maintain proper data management and other administrative arrangements. Where programs have limited scope in a defined geographic area, existing administrative data will not likely be an effective tool for measuring change.

Collaboration

Effective collaboration between organisations can be critical in making good use of limited resources, allowing programs to extend their impacts. Offending by young people is typically the result of a set of interconnected factors beyond the reach of any one service. Collaboration can help to achieve multifaceted outcomes for clients with complex needs. The scope of collaboration and the best ways for collaborative arrangements and partnerships to be explored, established and maintained will vary between locations. However in any situation, open and frank communication between organisations and a willingness to flexibly negotiate on behalf of young people will be key elements of meaningful and sustainable collaboration.

Risk assessment of external influences

A comprehensive risk assessment is an important component of any program and a key element of good project management practice. Risk assessment should be undertaken early in the program development phase and then at intervals throughout the program's life. The program logic approach used to inform this evaluation can be used to inform the risk assessment, but the responsible organisation should identify the most appropriate risk-assessment tools and techniques for their circumstances. In the context of Indigenous youth offending and diversion programs, the risk assessment should always include consideration of external influences and external factors that can negatively impact on the program's operations. The viability of interventions with small communities can be susceptible to changes in those communities that can manifest at an individual level. A comprehensive and properly maintained risk assessment can help to buffer interventions from influences outside the scope of the intervening organisation.

Data collection and management

The collection and maintenance of accurate, timely and quality data are fundamental to the effective and sustained operation of any intervention program. Data can be used to inform many decisions such as targeting of services, improving individual and group outcomes, making efficient use of resources, promoting awareness of impacts and informing research bids, research and evaluation. Achieving good data collection and management will involve the identification of relevant data needs, definitions of the data to be collected, methods for collecting the data and systems for storing and accessing data. Data requirements will vary between programs and must be individually determined and reassessed, taking into account best-practice principles. While it is not possible to identify data needs from a high-level perspective, Appendix 12 of this report provides suggestions for a minimum data set and best-practice principles for data management.

It is critical that the data requirements for programs be determined at an early stage of a program's development, taking into account the longer term needs of all stakeholders. These stakeholders will typically include the organisation delivering the program, external funding providers, external agencies that work with the program's clients, the clients themselves, their families and the community. Establishing formal agreements or memoranda of understanding between agencies can be important for ensuring data are collected and provided regular, and data sharing and linkages between agencies

using common individual identifiers should be investigated. The interests of stakeholders will usually bring other interested parties, such as evaluators and researchers, into involvement with the program and its outputs. This in turn involves a consideration of the intended outcomes from the program. For instance, if a program is seeking to reduce recidivism among offenders, data requirements will include post-intervention assessments. These data may be available directly to the program organisers or their collection may require the establishment of cooperative arrangements with criminal justice agencies. Depending on their intended outcomes, other programs may require arrangements to collect education, employment, health and other data.

Summary

This report has highlighted the challenges faced in trying to evaluate programs when there are not adequate data to inform the evaluation. As a result, the evaluation team has been heavily limited in its capacity to assess the effectiveness and impacts of these programs. While findings have been drawn from qualitative data and information, and supported by the available quantitative data, if the availability of appropriate data, including baseline data, had been determined before the evaluation commenced it would have maximised the value of the investment in the programs. Effective resource use would involve the establishment of datasets and a framework for the evaluation to enable assessment of outcomes and the continual quality improvement of services.

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'MySchool' references

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Ceduna Area School, Ceduna, South Australia http://www.myschool.edu.au/SchoolProfile/Index/67934/CedunaAreaSchool/49421/2012

Christies Beach High School and Southern Vocational College, Christie Downs, South Australia http://www.myschool.edu.au/SchoolProfile/Index/80639/ChristiesBeachHSSouthernVocationalCollege/49567/2012

Coober Pedy Area School, Coober Pedy, South Australia http://www.myschool.edu.au/SchoolProfile/Index/61931/CooberPedyAreaSchool/49512/2012

John Pirie Secondary School, Port Pirie, South Australia http://www.myschool.edu.au/SchoolProfile/Index/70068/JohnPirieSecondarySchool/49475/2012

Le Fevre High School, Semaphore South, South Australia http://www.myschool.edu.au/SchoolProfile/Index/66190/LeFevreHighSchool/49488/2012

Murray Bridge High School, Murray Bridge, South Australia http://www.myschool.edu.au/SchoolProfile/Index/67125/MurrayBridgeHighSchool/49468/2012

Para West Adult Campus, Devoren Park, South Australia http://www.myschool.edu.au/SchoolProfile/Index/63227/ ParaWestAdultCampus/40421/2012

Port Augusta Secondary School, Port Augusta, South Australia http://www.myschool.edu.au/SchoolProfile/ Index/68630/PortAugustaSecondarySchool/49473/2012

Port Lincoln High School, Port Lincoln, South Australia http://www.myschool.edu.au/SchoolProfile/Index/62106/ PortLincolnHighSchool/49474/2012

Salisbury High School, Salisbury, South Australia http:// www.myschool.edu.au/SchoolProfile/Index/68930/ SalisburyHighSchool/49496/2012

Wadja Wadja High School, Woorabinda, Queensland http:// www.myschool.edu.au/SchoolProfile/Index/61988/ WadjaWadjaHighSchool/48040/2012

Warriappendi School, Marleston, South Australia http:// www.myschool.edu.au/SchoolProfile/Index/69881/ WarriappendiSchool/49636/2012

Whyalla High School, Whyalla, South Australia http://www. myschool.edu.au/SchoolProfile/Index/63864/ WhyallaHighSchool/49490/2012

Windsor Gardens Vocational College, Windsor Gardens, South Australia http://www.myschool.edu.au/SchoolProfile/ Index/61423/ WindsorGardensVocationalCollege/49505/2012

Woorabinda State School, Woorabinda, Queensland http:// www.myschool.edu.au/SchoolProfile/Index/64906/ WoorabindaStateSchool/46819/2012

Appendicies

Appendix 1: Measures used to evaluate the effectiveness of ART

Aggression Questionnaire (AQ): Written at a third-grade level and consisting of 34 items on five subscales (physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger, hostility and indirect aggression), this measure is designed to assess aggressive tendencies for both children and adults. This measure requires respondents to rate each item on a 5-point scale from 'not at all like me' to 'completely like me'. Internal consistency for the total scale of this measure is regarded as very high, with the reliability of individual items being regarded as moderate to high.

Social Skills Rating System (SSRS): The specific version of the system used was the Secondary Student Form for the purpose of measuring social skills. This form consisted of 34 items on four subscales (cooperation, assertion, empathy and self-control) and required respondents to rate each item on a 3-point scale ('never', 'sometimes' and 'very often'). The reliability of the total scale is regarded to be high, although that of the individual items is only adequate to high.

How I Think (HIT) Questionnaire: Designed to assess four types of self-serving cognitive distortions (self-centred, blaming others, minimising/mislabelling and assuming the worst) that are believed to be related to antisocial behaviour and criminogenic thinking, this is a 54-item self-report measure. First-person statements are subsequently rated on a 6-point scale ranging from 'agree strongly' to 'disagree strongly' and requires respondents to have a fourth-grade reading level. The internal consistency of the total scale is regarded as very high, while the reliability of the subscales ranges from moderate to very high.

Appendix 2: Aboriginal Power Cup Program Logic

Contribution to policy outcomes

Increased community safety and reduced overrepresentation of Indigenous juveniles in the criminal justice system

Other influences

Economic and social changes

Other support measures (CTG)

Other programs for juvenile offenders

Policing and sentencing approaches

Reduced adverse contact with the criminal justice system (CJS)

| Reduced victimisation of Indigenous juveniles | More effective prevention of offending by juveniles | More effective diversion of Indigenous juveniles from the CJS | More opportunities to reduce negative contacts with CJS | Better rehabilitation and other intervention at tertiary end of CJS |

Program achieves intended outcomes

More positive perceptions of Indigenous juveniles in community

Students are more engaged in education employment and career, make healthier lifestyle choices, have improved skills in teamwork, leadership and life skills

Program implemented effectively

Improved service system

Schools and teachers have increased understanding of, and engagement with, their Aboriginal students

APC stakeholders have better collaboration and improved understanding of working with Indigenous juveniles

Improved outcomes for target

Students successfully complete APC activities
-teams qualify for finals
-attend carnival and careers expo
-gain SACE credits

APC activities conducted effectively

Students fully engage in APC activities, attend school

At-risk Aboriginal students at participating schools enrol

Other influences

Other programs for Aboriginal students

Capacity of schools

Priorities and capacity of AFL

Community attitudes to AFL

Schools with high numbers of Indigenous students Y10–12 agree to participate, teachers commit

Communication and enrolment processes reach relevant schools, students

Program established

Program design is culturally competent and appropriate, has community agreement, supported by evidence. Program has adequate auspice, staff, resources, partnership arrangements

Appendix 3: Aboriginal Power Cup interview schedule

Teachers

Describe the students who participate in the program.

> How interested are the students in school?

> To what extent are they motivated to learn and do well?

> How many have aspirations to finish Year 12?

> What is their behaviour like at school?

> Attendance? Class room behaviour: punctual, follow rules, contribute to discussions

Is the Aboriginal Power Cup attracting the 'right students'? (ie students who will potentially gain a lot through participating)

Desired outcomes

What are the intended outcomes of the Aboriginal Power Cup?

What knowledge, skills or attitudes do you hope students will demonstrate upon completion?

What changes in knowledge, skills or behaviours of participating students have you observed?

Processes that contribute to outcomes

What in the curriculum helps to develop these knowledge/skills/attitudes?

What are the strengths of the curriculum? How might it be enhanced?

Why build the curriculum around Australian Rules Football? What makes this sport an important part of the mix?

Think about the football carnival

Is attendance important? If so, why?

What value (if any) do the extra activities (like the workshops) hold?

Students

Finding out about the Power Cup and choosing to participate

How did you find out about the Aboriginal Power Cup?

What made you want to take part?

Impacts

What was it like to take part? What did you learn?

What did it feel like to take part in the Aboriginal Power Cup?

What did you like about it?

What didn't you like about it?

What did you learn?

   What knowledge did you get out of the Power Cup?

   What skills did you develop?

Who thinks the Power Cup changed how they think or act?

   How did how you think or act change?

   Did anyone find they attended school more often because of the Power Cup?

Program processes that contributed to change

You worked with a range of people—team members, coach, mentor, photographer and visitors from Port.

   What was it like to work with these people? How (if at all) did they help you? What did you learn from working with them?

Taking part in the Aboriginal Power Cup involves a lot of different stuff—attend classes and complete all these curriculum tasks, play footy, go to a carnival, work closely with teachers and other volunteers.

   Of all the stuff you did what part did you learn the most from?

   What part did you learn the least from? What part could organisers get rid of because it really didn't help you get new knowledge or skills?

If another student came to you later today and said—I don't know whether or not to get involved in the Aboriginal Power Cup. What's so good about it? What would you tell them?

Community members

Describe your involvement in the 2011 Power Cup.

What involvement (if any) did you have prior to 2011?

What (if anything) did you know about the Power Cup before becoming involved?

What is your sense of how widely known the Power Cup is in your local community?

What do you see as the main purpose of the Power Cup?

In your view is the Power Cup fulfilling its purpose?

What change (if any) did you seen students go through as a result of participating the Power Cup?

What new knowledge/skills did they gained?

What behavioural changes did you observe?

What would you change about the Power Cup? How could it be improved?

Program organisers

Describe your role as part of the Aboriginal Power Cup. When and for what reason was this role set up?

What do you see as the main purpose of the Power Cup? Is it fulfilling this purpose?

What components of the Power Cup are most crucial to achieving its desired goals or objectives?

Describe the practices/strategies adopted by the program to acknowledge and demonstrate respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

What changes (if any) have you observed in the knowledge, skills or attitudes of the participating students that you work with?

In your view what are the strengths of the Power Cup?

How might the Power Cup be enhanced? What might be changed?

From what you see how widely known is the Power Cup (ie beyond the people that directly participate)?

Parents

How did you first hear about the Aboriginal Power Cup?

Have you been involved in the running of the Power Cup? What was your involvement?

Based on your knowledge/experience of the Power Cup, would you say it's a good thing for students to take part in?

    What makes it a good thing to be involved in?

    Is there anything you don't particularly like about the Power Cup?

What things have you seen your child learn from taking part in the Power Cup?

    What new knowledge did they develop? What skills did they develop?

Do you think taking part in the Power Cup made your child more likely to go to school? What about the Cup was it that made them want to go to school?

Appendix 4: TIYDDU Program Logic

Program logic for Tiwi Islands Youth Diversion & Development Unit

Contribution to policy outcomes

Increased community safety and reduced overrepresentation of Indigenous juveniles in the criminal justice system

Other influences

Economic and social changes

Other support measures (CTG)

Other programs for juvenile offenders

Reduced adverse contact with the criminal justice system (CJS)

Reduced victimisation of Indigenous juveniles

More effective prevention of offending by juveniles

More effective diversion of Indigenous juveniles from the CJS

More opportunities to reduce negative contacts with CJS

Better rehabilitation and other intervention at tertiary end of CJS

Program achieves intended outcomes

Juveniles and families have sustained benefits

Program implemented effectively

Improved service system

Improved outcomes for target group

More juveniles engaged in prevention and diversion activities (school, culture, recreation, health care, sport) and fewer in CJS

Community has greater capacity for prevention and diversion that can address key issues for juveniles

Assisted juveniles (and their families) respond to and benefit from support

Other influences

Other programs operated on Tiwi Islands

Other justice programs—AG, state/territory

Capacity of community, schools and other services

Opportunities for community capacity building supported

Juveniles at risk (and their families) assisted directly or through access to prevention & diversion activities (school, culture, recreation, health care, sport)

Program established

Program design is culturally competent and appropriate, has community agreement, supported by evidence. Program has ces, partnership arrangements

Appendix 5: TIYDDU interview schedule

Program staff

Target audience

Without naming anyone in particular, tell me in general terms about the young people you work with as part of the diversion/conferencing program

Gender, age, schooling, family circumstances, living situation

Previous contact with police

Types of offences

Referrals to the program

Who makes referrals to the program?

How do these individuals/agencies learn about the program?

What are the eligibility criteria for the program?/Under what circumstances will the referral agencies make a referral?

Running the program

Why hold a victim/offender conference? What makes the conference an important part of your process?

Community members are involved in the conference. How else have the community been involved in the set up or operations of the program?

Apart from the referral agencies what other service providers do you work with to deliver the program? How do you work together?

How do you make sure the agreement you prepare is suitable for the young person?

How often does it happen that a young person is involved with your diversion program and another one of your programs (like the sports and rec program)?

How have these other programs worked in the past to support youth involved the diversion program?

Program results

What results are you aiming to achieve by running the program?

Are you achieving these results?

What improvements (if any) have you see in school attendance?

How often (if at all) do youth reoffend after completing the program?

What knowledge/skills/attitudes do participating youth develop?

Of all the things you do as part of the program, what is the most important? What part is most important to achieving positive results?

Former program participants

How did you first hear about the program?

When you first started out what did you think the program would involve? What were you expecting to happen?

What things made it easy for you to be part of the program?

What things made it hard for you to be part of the program?

What was it like to work with the program staff? Did you feel welcome and comfortable? What helped you feel this way?

What did you like most about the program?

What did you like least about the program?

What would you change about the program?

Did taking part in the program change how you think or act? If yes, how?

Community representatives

How did you first find out about the program?

What involvement have you had with the program?

How does the program involve community members in its operations?

Can community members give feedback about the program? Do you know about a time when this has happened?

Do you think the program has resulted in any changes in the community? What changes have you seen?

Would you say that taking part in the program has changed how the youth who take part act or behave? If yes, how?

Service providers that work with the program

Tell me about you work together with the Tiwi Islands Youth Diversion and Development Unit to support young people participating in their youth diversion program.

Outline your general observations of how taking part in the program has influenced the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the young people who take part.

Agency/group responsible for making referrals to the Tiwi Islands Youth Diversion and Development Unit

Identifying referrals to the TIYDDU

What information is used to determine whether a referral is appropriate?/Where does this information come from?

What tools/resources (if any) are available to help determine when a referral is appropriate? What training (if any) is provided to staff responsible for making referrals?

What (if any) flexibility exists in the application of the 'eligibility' criteria?

Obtaining consent

I understand that the youth and a responsible adult must consent to diversion. How is this consent obtained? How (if at all) is this consent documented/recorded?

Review/feedback mechanisms

Can a youth/responsible adult request diversion (particularly if this option was not identified by the NT Police)?

If a youth/responsible adult was dissatisfied with any aspect of the diversion process how might they provide feedback? What processes are in place?

Appendix 6: Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel Program Logic

Program logic for Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel

Contribution to policy outcomes

Increased community safety and reduced overrepresentation of Indigenous juveniles in the criminal justice system

Other influences
Economic and social changes

Other support measures (CTG)

Other programs for juvenile offenders

Policing and sentencing approaches

Reduced adverse contact with the criminal justice system (CJS)

| Reduced victimisation of Indigenous juveniles | More effective prevention of offending by juveniles | More effective diversion of Indigenous juveniles from the CJS | More opportunities to reduce negative contacts with CJS | Better rehabilitation and other intervention at tertiary end of CJS |

Program achieves intended outcomes

Juveniles have more positive engagement in school and other activities.

Families benefit from support and from juvenile's greater engagement

Program implemented effectively

Improved service system

Improved outcomes for target group

Other influences

Other justice programs—AG, state/territory

Other support programs for Other Programs for Aboriginal students

Capacity of schools and other support services

YP achieve objectives in case plans

Support services (gov and community) have improved capacity for working with at-risk juveniles

Juveniles have appropriate case plans (meet needs, culturally appropriate, use local services)

Juveniles have increased educational and family support

Suitable panel established and functions

At-risk juveniles & their families who meet project criteria are identified, agree to participate

Program established

Program design is culturally competent and appropriate, has community agreement, supported by evidence. Program has adequate auspice, staff, resources, partnership arrangements

Appendix 7: Woorabinda Early Intervention Coordination Panel interview schedule

Program staff

Target audience

Without naming anyone in particular, please tell me in general terms about the young people you work with as part of the service:

   (Gender, average age, interest in school, family circumstances, living situation, previous contact with the criminal justice system, types of offences)

How do you determine whether a youth and their family are invited to participate in the service? (ie What (if any) eligibility criteria exists?)

How are youth/families invited to participate in the service?

Referrals to the service

Who makes referrals to the service?

How do these individuals/agencies know of/first hear about the service?

Type of support provided

How do staff engage young people and their families?

   What strategies/practices do they adopt to build relationships?

Describe the ways in which youth and their families are supported and assisted by the panel service.

Who is typically responsible for implementing these strategies/activities? (eg panel service members, Coordinator, Youth Worker, family members?)

How do you work out which strategies and activities to put in place for different individuals and their families?

How (if at all) are cultural knowledge and practices incorporated into the operations of the panel service?

Community engagement

Describe how community members have been involved in the set up and/or running of the panel service.

Program results

What results are you aiming to achieve by running the program?

Are you achieving these results?

   What improvements (if any) have you seen in school attendance?

   How often (if at all) do youth reoffend after finishing up with the service?

What knowledge/skills/attitudes do participating youth develop?

How do you monitor that your activities are having the desired effect?

Of all the things you do as part of the panel service, what is the most important? What part is most important to achieving positive results?

Panel members

Please describe the role of the panel.

Please describe the strategies and practices the panel employs to coordinate the delivery of services to young people and their families.

How are panel members identified and recruited to participate?

How (if at all) has membership changed since the service commenced in 2008?

How (if at all) are community members involved in the operation of the panel?

What are the strengths of the panel (and how it operates/functions)?

How might the panel/its operations be enhanced?

Please share any observations of how taking part in the service has influenced the knowledge, skills or attitudes of the young people who take part.

Past/current service participants

When did you start visiting the service/working with the Coordinator/Youth Worker?

What type of things did you do with the Coordinator and Youth Worker?

What was it like working with the service staff?

What did you like about the time you spent with them?

What didn't you like about spending time with them?

How did working with the staff help you?

What things made it easy for you to work with the service?

What things made it hard for you to work with the service?

What did you like most about the service?

What did you like least about the service?

How might the service be improved?

Would you say taking part in the service changed how you think or act? If yes, how?

Appendix 8: Mature-minded screening tool

Please read the oral consent script aloud to all participants aged under 18 years.

Determining mature minor status:

- Does the potential participant have **sufficient information** on which to decide?
- Does the potential participant have **sufficient understanding** of the material to make a reasoned choice?
- Does the potential participant have the **ability to understand and decide**?
- Is the potential participant's decision their decision and is the consent given **voluntarily**? Are they used to having their views listened to?

So, determining 'mature minor' status:

- Discuss in detail with the individual their consent to participate
- Ensure they understand what they are consenting to
- Assess whether there are any ground for impaired judgement to consent

Participant deemed mature minor, proceed with the informed consent process.

Participant not deemed mature minor, please explain to participant you are not able to proceed, provide referrals to services as required. Record details of decision below:

Age of individual: _____

Sex of individual (please circle): Male/Female

Recruitment site: _____

Brief description of reason not considered a mature minor participant / deemed mature minor (i.e., lack of understanding of what consenting to): _____
_____
_____

Appendix 9: ART interview schedule

ART facilitators

Background

Roughly how many times have you facilitated the complete ART program (ie all 10 sessions)?

    Do you typically deliver ART solo or with a partner?

    How do you divide the work when working with a co-facilitator?

How well prepared do you feel to facilitate ART?

    What training/support did you receive to become an ART facilitator?

    What ongoing support/assistance (if any) do you receive to enable your role as an ART facilitator?

Training delivery

What role (if any) do you play in selecting the young people who come together for the group training?

    How do you decide which youth to bring together into the one training group?

Typically how many youth are in the ART programs you deliver?

    Do you have a preferred group size?

Please describe the training facilities available to you.

Working with Indigenous youth

In your experience how have Indigenous youth responded to the training content?

    What aspects did they seem to find most useful for managing their feelings of anger?

    What aspects were they less inclined to engage with/less interested in?

Do you find it necessary to tailor the training content for an Indigenous audience? If so, what type of revisions do you make?

What training strategies/instructional tactics do you find most suitable for Indigenous participants?

    How readily can you employ these strategies/tactics when delivering ART?

How (if at all) is Indigenous culture addressed in the training?

What changes (if any) have you observed in the knowledge, skills and attitudes of participating Indigenous youth:

    During the training?

    Post training completion?

ART participants

How long ago did you attend Aggression Replacement Training (ART)?

Out of the 30 sessions how many were you able to get to?

What parts of the training did you like the best?

What parts didn't you like?

    Were there things that you were meant to do that didn't make any sense to you?

What parts of the training (if any) do you find you use now?

What benefits did you get out of going to the training?

    Since the training do you find it easier to manage feelings of anger?

    Since the training do you find your relationships with others have changed?

What did you think of the trainers who delivered ART?

    What did you like about them?

    Is there anything they could change to do better for next time?

Other topics

Homework

Relevance of case studies/stories

Cultural relevance

Appendix 10: ART Program Logic

Program logic for ART across Youth Justice Services

Contribution to
policy
outcomes

Increased community safety and reduced overrepresentation of Indigenous juveniles in the criminal justice system

Other influences

Economic and social changes

Other support measures (CTG)

Other programs for juveniles offenders

Reduced adverse contact with the criminal justice system (CJS)

| Reduced victimisation of Indigenous juveniles | More effective prevention of offending by juveniles | More effective diversion of Indigenous juveniles from the CJS | More opportunities to reduce negative contacts with CJS | Better rehabilitation and other intervention at tertiary end of CJS |

Program
achieves
intended
outcomes

Juveniles at risk of violent reoffending
- refrain from acting on feelings of aggression
- have better familial and social connections
-

Improved outcomes for target group

Improved service system

Program
implemented
effectively

Juveniles successfully complete ART:
- have knowledge and skills to control anger
- understand aggressive behaviour of self and others

Other influences

Cultural factors

Regional differences

Familial and social relations

Adequate YJS

ART is delivered effectively and culturally appropriately to eligible juveniles, including Indigenous juveniles, across Queensland YJCs

YJCs provide effective

All Queensland YJS have the capacity to provide ART for all eligible juveniles

Juveniles who meet eligibility criteria agree to participate in ART

Program delivery staff trained and accredited to provide ART

Program
established

ART program is adapted for the target group, retains techniques shown to change aggressive behaviour in juveniles, is culturally competent and appropriate.

Appendix 11: Analysis of 'How I Think' scores

This Appendix provides a detailed explanation of the analysis of 'How I Think' (HIT) questionnaire data provided by the Queensland Department of Communities for this evaluation. Discussion about the findings from this analysis can be found in the body of the report.

The data indicates that of the Indigenous participants, the overall percentage of those classed as being within the clinical range at the pre-survey stage (described in the section on *Serves the target audience*) dropped from 81 percent to 61 percent in their post survey scores. Similar decreases were shown for the number of participants classed as clinical in the Overt Scores calculated on scores for Oppositional-Defiance and Physical Aggression. In addition to the pre and post scores, data was provided for the overall thought shift for each participant. This data provides an indication of overall changes in cognitive thought processes and patterns believed to contribute to aggressive or antisocial behaviour. The Thought Shift score is simply the difference between the pre and post HIT scores on each indicator (overall HIT, overt and covert scores). On average, the overall HIT score decreased for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants, indicating that externalising behaviours and associated cognitive patterns may have decreased. Non-Indigenous scores decreased by -0.61 points and Indigenous participants by -0.08 points, indicating a positive change in antisocial or aggressive behaviours. However, not all participants demonstrated a positive change. Of the 16 Indigenous participants, seven demonstrated an increase in behavioural scores, indicating no change, or a potential increase in externalising or psychopathological behaviours. Only two of the non-Indigenous participants demonstrated an increase in their overall HIT score.

While the raw score data indicates some changes between pre and post HIT scores, further analysis is required to assess if these changes are statistically significant. An ANOVA test was undertaken to assess the difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants on the physical aggression subscale and then on the overall HIT scores, overt and covert scores prior to undertaking the ART program and then again at completion (data did not indicate how long after completion of ART that HIT survey was undertaken). The physical aggression subscale was included in this testing, as there is some indication in publicly available statistics and literature that Indigenous prisoners are more likely to have committed a violent act or have a violent aspect to their offence than non-Indigenous prisoners (Wundersitz 2010).

The aim of this test was to assess if the differences experienced by Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants in the ART program identified above (as determined by the HIT questionnaire) are statistically significant. However, it is important that this data be interpreted with some specific caveats as HIT only measures some aspects of cognitive change and some aspects of the risk assessment are the result of external and static life factors that cannot be influenced by a cognitivebehavioural program. In the ART referral process, offenders are assessed on eight different categories. This includes offence history, family circumstances, education/employment, peer relations, substance abuse, recreation activities, personality and behaviours, and attitudes/orientation. To be referred to the ART program, offenders only have to receive high assessments on the last two categories. However, the risk assessment also takes into account external factors, such as poor family or peer relationships, or inadequate supervision and discipline that can increase a young person's risk level but are beyond the young person's control. The assessment is based on the premise that a young person's decision to engage in criminal activity occurs in a complex network of variables and influences. Assessor interpretation and professional judgement may also account for slight variations in scores.

The ANOVA test for the physical aggression scores indicated that that while there was a slight difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous ART participants in terms of physical aggression prior to undertaking the ART program, it was not statistically significant (f value=0.03; *p* value=0.82) (see Table A11.1).

Table A11.1 ANOVA: Pre- ART HIT (physical aggression subscale) scores for Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants

Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F	p value	F crit
Between groups	0.02	1	0.02	0.030434	0.862682	4.170877
Within groups	19.715	30	0.657167			
Total	19.735	31				

Source: Queensland Department of Communities HIT data

The ANOVA test was also performed on the subscale scores for physical aggression between Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants following completion of the ART program. The test revealed that Indigenous status did not have an impact on the level of change in antisocial or aggressive thought processes (F value=2.37; p value=0.13).

Finally, an ANOVA test was performed on the overall pre- and post- ART scores for Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants (see Table A11.2 and Table A11.3).

Table A11.2 ANOVA: pre- ART overall HIT scores for Indigenous and non-Indigenous

Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F	p value	F crit
Between groups	0.689791	1	0.689791	1.224792	0.277218	4.170877
Within groups	16.89572	30	0.563191			
Total	17.58551	31				

Source: Queensland Department of Communities HIT data

Table A11.3 ANOVA: post-ART overall scores for Indigenous and non-Indigenous

Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F	p value	F crit
Between groups	3.677296	1	3.677296	6.68943	0.014796	4.170877
Within groups	16.49152	30	0.549717			
Total	20.16882	31				

Source: Queensland Department of Communities HIT data

As demonstrated in Table 11.3, Indigenous status is not related to the different experiences of potentially psychopathological cognitive distortions prior to undertaking the ART program. However, as Table 11.2 shows, there is a significant difference between the changes experienced by Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants following the completion of the ART program (p value=0.015), with Indigenous participants on average showing less reduction in cognitive distortion than nonIndigenous participants.

The above tests indicate that there are differences in risk-related outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants in the ART program. To investigate if these differences are represented within each cohort, a t-test (2 sample with assumed unequal variances) was performed on the overall HIT score, and the overt and covert scores for each cohort. The t-test performed for the Indigenous pre and post ART overall HIT scores revealed that the difference was not significant (insert scores)

The Table confirms the results from the ANOVA test that revealed that there was a significant difference between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous pre and post ART HIT survey scores, with both groups achieving a reduction in cognitive distortions consistent with aggressive behaviour, but this reduction being significantly greater for non-Indigenous participants. While there is no corroborating evidence to reiterate this difference, there may be several factors that influence Indigenous reporting scores. Factors such as socioeconomic status, family and peer relationships, school engagement and access to support services may hinder the change in antisocial or aggressive cognitions. However, on face value, these results suggest

that the ART program produces different outcomes and changes for Indigenous and non-Indigenous offenders.

Table A11.4 T-test: post-ART HIT scores for Indigenous and non-Indigenous		
Measure	pre	post
Mean	3.204125	2.5913301
Variance	0.530981	0.39993875
Observations	16	16
Hypothesised Mean Difference	0	
df	29	
t Stat	2.5405	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.008341	
t Critical one-tail	1.699127	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.016683	
t Critical two-tail	2.04523	

The t-tests performed on the pre- and post- ART HIT scores for the overt and covert scores demonstrated the same outcomes; the positive change in cognitive thought processes for the overt scale—which includes the behavioural referent subscales such as opposition defiance and physical aggression—indicated that non-Indigenous participants in ART demonstrated a more significant positive change than their Indigenous counterparts. This was replicated for the covert subscale that include the cognitive distortion factors such as self-centred and blaming others.

Appendix 12: Data requirements

As discussed in the body of this report, data collection and management are essential elements of best practice program operation. While, as noted in the report, data requirements will differ between all programs and it is not possible to comprehensively identify data requirements from a high level perspective, the following is suggested as an indicative data set for all Indigenous youth diversion and similar programs. This is not presented as a minimum data set as some items will not be relevant to all programs, but most will have broad relevance.

Service provider items	Client/offender items	Intervention/episode items
Unique service provider identifier	*Demographics*	Referring agency identifier
State/territory identifier	Unique client identifier	Date of referral
Region/area identifier	Sex	Date of first contact with client/entry to service
Geographic location identifier (postcode or geospatial identifier derived from the Australian Standard Geographical Classification—ASGC)	Date of birth	Reason for referral
	Indigenous status	Client accommodation status on entry
Service type identifier	Last known home (suburb/ town; postcode or geospatial identifier)	Client employment status on entry
	Cultural background/identification	Type of service/program/intervention
	Preferred language	Number of sessions planned (if applicable)
	Education history (highest level of attainment; attendance record; diagnosed or assessed learning difficulties)	Number of sessions attended
	Employment history (if applicable)	Date of exit/ cessation from service
	Offending history	Reason for exit/ cessation
	Prior imprisonment (yes/no)	Other service providers referred to or engaged with (using their unique identifiers)
	Most serious offence (for most recent detention episode)	Impacts and outcomes
	Offence/s for which referred to program	Post-intervention follow-up
	Assessed risk of reoffending	Post-intervention reoffending (offence/s, date/s, outcome/s)
	Type of legal order at current episode (eg parole order)	Post-intervention involvement with other services
	Needs assessment	
	Main service/intervention need	
	Secondary service/intervention needs (include provision for up to 5 as needed)	

The following are some key considerations to be applied during the program development stage to ensure data collection and management processes are maintained:

Data requirements

- What data is required to support program operations?
  - Including for continuing improvement, reporting requirements, research and evaluation purposes.
- Who will need to access data and for what purposes?

- What data is available already?
  - Can these be used to establish baselines from which changes due to the program can be measured?
- What other data needs to be collected?
- What resources need to be developed to support the data requirements?
  - List of variables, data formats, data definitions and counting rules.

Systems

- What electronic and other systems will be used to collect and store data?
- What legislative and policy requirements must data systems comply with?
  - Including privacy legislation, freedom of information legislation, information security policies, audit requirements, funding body requirements.
- Will this require hardware, software and other infrastructure not currently available?
- Are suitable and reliable information communication technology systems available?
- What expertise is required to establish and maintain data systems and to access data in the form of reports and data extracts?
  - Is this expertise currently available?
  - Are resources available to acquire and maintain this expertise?

Collection

- How will data be collected?
- Who will be responsible for collecting data?
- How will data collection be integrated with other elements of service delivery and program administration?
- What tools (such as hardcopy or electronic forms) will be needed to ensure consistent and reliable data collection?
- Will consent be required from clients?
- Will data need to be collected from other organisations?
  - What processes and protocols will need to be established to support this?

Accessing and reporting

- Who will be responsible for accessing, collating, analysing, interpreting and reporting data?
- Are staff available with these skills?
- What further staffing or training will be required?
- What reports are needed on a regular basis?
- What *ad hoc data* requests can reasonably be anticipated?
  - Are the means (staff, systems) available to meet these requests?
- What protocols need to be in place for the access and use of data?

AIC Reports

Indigenous Youth Justice Programs Evaluation