

Youth Justice Reform Taskforce Action Plan

2024–2025

October 2024

Youth Justice Reform Taskforce, Keeping Children Safe Unit
Department of Premier and Cabinet



Acknowledgement of Country

In recognition of the deep history and culture of this island, we acknowledge and pay our respects to Tasmanian Aboriginal people, the traditional Owners and ongoing Custodians of Tasmania. We recognise Tasmanian Aboriginal people's continuing connection to Land, Sea, Waterways, Sky and Culture and extend our respects to Elders, past and present.

We are committed to working in partnership with Tasmanian Aboriginal people, to address the over-representation of Aboriginal children and young people in the youth justice system, ensuring they are safe and supported to live culturally-rich and thriving lives.

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Contents

Introduction.....	2
Delivering the Taskforce Action Plan.....	4
ACTION ONE	
Finalise and commence implementation of a Youth Justice Model of Care.....	5
ACTION TWO	
Implement a range of early intervention, prevention and diversion programs and options.....	7
ACTION THREE	
Implement a range of assisted bail and transition from detention options.....	10
ACTION FOUR	
Develop a Tasmanian Aboriginal Youth Justice Strategy.....	12
ACTION FIVE	
Design and construct a new Tasmanian Youth Justice Facility.....	14
Action snapshot	16
Monitoring and evaluation	17

Introduction

The *Youth Justice Reform Taskforce Action Plan 2024-2025* (the Taskforce Action Plan) outlines a series of actions and the approach over the next twelve months to progress a number of *Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings* (Commission of Inquiry) recommendations that align with the longer-term *Youth Justice Blueprint 2024-2034* (the Blueprint).

The Taskforce Action Plan is a companion document to the *Keeping Kids Safe 2024-2026 in Detention Action Plan* which outlines actions the Tasmanian Government is progressing to keep children safe in detention settings.

The Taskforce Action Plan focuses on immediate and short-term priorities over the next twelve months that will progress crucial infrastructure, prevention and diversion activities, and support therapeutic practice to advance reform across the youth justice system.

The Taskforce will accelerate progress against Commission of Inquiry recommendations including, but not limited to the following:

Reducing the number of children and young people in youth detention

- Whilst the Taskforce is not the lead Agency responsible for the implementation of this specific Commission of Inquiry recommendation, the Taskforce will continue to consider and plan for the service system requirements necessary to fulfil the Government's intent to raise the minimum age of detention to 16 years and increasing the age of criminal responsibility to 14 years by 2029 (Recommendation 12.11).

It is anticipated that there will be multiple action plans over the 10-year life of the Blueprint and the final *Change for Children* Strategy.



Intervening early with children and young people in the youth justice system

- Commence implementation of the Youth Justice Model of Care (Recommendation 12.18);
- Develop a Diversionary Services Framework (Recommendation 12.13);
- Commence work to reduce the number of children and young people in detention and on remand through the implementation of early intervention, prevention and diversion initiatives and programs including the commencement of assisted bail and transition from detention options (Recommendation 12.13 and partnering to deliver Recommendation 12.14); and
- Develop an Aboriginal Youth Justice Strategy (Recommendation 12.27).

Design and construct a new Tasmanian Youth Justice Facility

- Finalise the schematic design for the new Tasmanian Youth Justice Facility ensuring that it is smaller and incorporates design features that reflect best practice international youth justice facilities (Recommendation 12.16);
- Aboriginal co-design of the new youth justice facility and services (Recommendation 12.28);
- Ensure Ashley Youth Detention Centre (AYDC) and any replacement facilities are culturally safe for Aboriginal children and young people (Recommendation 12.29); and
- Close AYDC as soon as possible (Recommendation 12.1).



Delivering the Taskforce Action Plan

Accountability for implementation of the actions outlined in the Taskforce Action Plan is through the Secretary DPAC to the Minister for Children and Youth.

Strategic Direction

The Taskforce Action Plan for the next twelve months focuses on five priority actions that form the foundational elements required to deliver an integrated and connected youth justice system with a focus on improving outcomes for children and young people from now until July 2025.

ACTION ONE

Finalise and commence implementation of a Youth Justice Model of Care

ACTION TWO

Implement a range of early intervention, prevention and diversion programs and options

ACTION THREE

Implement a range of assisted bail and transition from detention options

ACTION FOUR

Develop a Tasmanian Aboriginal Youth Justice Strategy

ACTION FIVE

Design and construct a new Tasmanian Youth Justice Facility

ACTION ONE

Finalise and commence implementation of a Youth Justice Model of Care

Developing a common model of care across all parts of the youth justice system will facilitate improved outcomes through therapeutic, trauma-informed and culturally safe service delivery to reduce the involvement of children and young people in the youth justice system.

The Youth Justice Model of Care (Model of Care) will outline the approach to service provision for children and young people across the youth justice system, drive contemporary and consistent practice across different organisations and staff, enable effective collaboration, and promote accountability across the youth justice system.

The development of the model of care has been informed by stakeholders across the youth justice service continuum through a comprehensive consultation and co-design process involving children and young people, Aboriginal communities, government agencies and community service providers. An implementation plan will support organisations to implement the model of care within their service. The implementation of the model of care will commence through the development of a practice framework for Services for Youth Justice. The practice framework will provide more detailed guidance as to how the service objectives and principles outlined in the model of care will be applied across community and custodial youth justice, including providing the foundation for the new youth justice facility and related workforce.



01

Outputs - 2024-2025

Output	Completion Date
Release of the Model of Care.	November 2024
Commence implementation of the Model of Care across the youth justice system.	November 2024
Agencies/organisations produce Model of Care Implementation Plans for their agencies/organisations.	November 2024 (ongoing)
Development of the Services for Youth Justice Practice Framework.	February 2025

Long term outcomes

- Children, young people and staff experience an increased culture of safety.
- There are greater safeguards to keep children and young people safe and well.
- There is increased professionalism of the workforce in keeping with Commission of Inquiry recommendations.
- Children and young people receive more therapeutic support.
- Staff receive increased training and skill development in keeping with Commission of Inquiry recommendations.
- Children and young people receive increased consistency in service delivery.
- Children and young people in the youth justice system experience increased support.



Lead (under the Taskforce)

Department of Premier and Cabinet

Partners

Department for Education, Children and Young People, Department of Health, Department of Justice, Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management, Commissioner for Children and Young People, Custodial Inspector, non-government organisations, Aboriginal organisations, children and young people.

ACTION TWO

Implement a range of early intervention, prevention and diversion programs and options

This action is focused on implementing a range of evidence-informed diversion programs that provide children and young people with prosocial pathways, effectively preventing contact with the criminal justice system and reducing recidivism. It will commence with the development of a Youth Justice Diversionary Services Framework (the Framework).

Youth Justice Diversionary Services Framework

The development of the Framework will provide guidance on the application of the Model of Care to diversionary programs to support service providers in the delivery of diversionary programs that are effective, developmentally appropriate, evidence-based and meet the needs of Tasmanian children and young people. This guidance will relate to evidence-based policy and practice, underpinning principles, desired outcomes of diversion, identification of priority areas or cohorts based on needs, and how we will work with Tasmanian Aboriginal people and organisations.

An initial Draft Framework has been informed by engagement with stakeholders across government, including consultation that has informed the development of the Model of Care. The Draft Framework will be shared with members of the youth justice reform governance groups for their input, including the Youth Justice Reform Expert Panel, Community Engagement Group and Aboriginal Reference Group.

02

Place-based Diversionary Approaches

Funding of \$2.3 million over three years has been allocated to support innovative, local initiatives and partnerships that address the underlying drivers of offending behaviour in local communities, support children, young people and their families and divert children and young people from the criminal justice system.

The Taskforce has commenced work to identify an initial location to implement a place-based approach. This location will be identified using youth crime data and criteria to assess community readiness and capacity to collaboratively develop diversion and early intervention options for children and young people at risk of offending and those who have offended, in line with the objectives of the Blueprint.

Intensive Case Management

There has been initial consultation with community sector organisations on the development of a model of case management that can be implemented more immediately by leveraging off the expertise and capabilities of existing community services. Development of the case management model will also be informed by broader consultation and research undertaken for the new Youth Justice Model of Care.

The case management model will provide clear referral pathways and a continuum of support from early intervention to intensive case management for children and young people at risk of entering, or escalating within the formal youth justice system, including those who otherwise may have been remanded to AYDC.

The case management model will be consistent with the Youth Justice Model of Care and Diversionary Services Framework, work being undertaken by the Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP) in response to the Commission of Inquiry, and existing case management services funded through DECYP.

The children and young people supported by the case management model will not be subject to a child safety order and will not have a youth justice worker. It is this cohort of at risk children and young people who often fall through service system gaps and without access to more immediate interventions and supports and may continue along a trajectory of anti-social and offending behaviours.

Consultation and work on the development of the case management model is continuing and it is anticipated the first phase of its implementation will be underway by the end of 2024.



Lead (under the Taskforce)

Department of Premier and Cabinet

Partners

Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management, Department for Education, Children and Young People, Homes Tasmania, non-government organisations, Tasmanian Aboriginal people, children and young people.

Outputs – 2024-2025

Output	Completion Date
Youth Justice Diversionary Services Framework	
Release and commence implementation of the Youth Justice Diversionary Services Framework.	November 2024
Place-based Diversionary Approaches	
Identification of the first location for place-based approaches to reduce youth offending.	October 2024
Model developed for first place-based approach co-designed with community stakeholders.	November 2024
Place-based approach commences	December 2024
Identification of the second location for place-based approaches to reduce youth offending.	February 2025
Intensive Case Management	
Subject to approvals, undertake a procurement process for the delivery of a case management model that supports children and young people who otherwise may have been remanded to AYDC.	November 2024

Long term outcomes

- Increased early intervention, prevention, and diversion programs that meet the needs of children, young people and their families.
- There is a greater focus on supports that address underlying causes of offending behaviour.
- Fewer children and young people are entering the criminal justice system including into adulthood.
- Children and young people are engaged in prosocial behaviour, are supported by their communities and have supportive and safe home environments.
- There is increased understanding of the effectiveness of programs through incorporating evidence-based approaches and evaluation.
- Aboriginal children and young people are accessing Aboriginal-led diversionary, early intervention and prevention support programs.

ACTION THREE

Implement a range of assisted bail and transition from detention options

Maximising opportunities for children and young people to be admitted to bail and minimising the number of children and young people on remand was a focus of the Commission of Inquiry.

This action will develop a 24-hour bail and transition from detention service system which provides safe, stable accommodation and trained workers to help children and young people to access programs and services based on their needs, and to follow prosocial pathways. As part of this work, the current bail support program provided by 54 reasons (the REBOOT program) will be reviewed.

The Taskforce has commenced development of a 24-hour bail and transition from detention service system. Homes Tasmania and community sector providers have been engaged to explore accommodation and support options for children and young people in Tasmania.

This action will be developed to integrate with the Intensive Case Management proposal under Action 2.

03

Outputs - 2024-2025

Output	Completion Date
Investigate flexible options for children and young people on bail.	December 2024
Review of the current bail support program (REBOOT) finalised.	January 2025
24-hour bail and transition from detention service system designed and implementation plan developed.	March 2025
Implementation of the 24-hour bail and transition from detention service system.	June 2025

Long term outcomes

- Fewer children and young people are on remand.
- Fewer children and young people are re-entering the youth justice system.
- Opportunities for children and young people to be admitted to bail are maximised.



Lead (under the Taskforce)

Department of Premier and Cabinet

Partners

Department for Education, Children and Young People, Department of Health, Department of Justice, Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management, Homes Tasmania, non-government organisations, Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, children and young people.

ACTION FOUR

Develop a Tasmanian Aboriginal Youth Justice Strategy

The goal of this Taskforce action is to accelerate the reduction of the number of Aboriginal children and young people in the youth justice system, in detention or being supported away from family and community. This will be undertaken by enabling self-determination and services led by Aboriginal service providers, families and local community groups.

The strategy will be delivered working with Tasmanian Aboriginal people and organisations to access, inform and understand the lived experience of Aboriginal children, young people and their families. In addition, the strategy will integrate the Government's commitment to cultural connection and safety for Aboriginal children and young people into the youth justice system.

The strategy is aligned with the four Priority Reforms under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (Closing the Gap) and the Government's commitment to partnerships and capacity building activities with Aboriginal organisations.

The cultural and professional knowledge of Aboriginal organisations providing youth justice services is critical to the development of the Strategy.

04

Outputs - 2024-2025

Output	Completion Date
Negotiation of partnership and engagement arrangements with Aboriginal organisations and people.	October 2024
Co-development of approach, scope of work, barriers and gaps in services.	October 2024
Map services and funding opportunities and negotiate priority services with government agencies.	November 2024
Initiate priority services using Outcomes Framework service agreements.	January 2025

Long term outcomes

- Tasmanian Aboriginal children and young people in the youth justice system are supported in a culturally safe environment that promotes connectivity to Country, Culture, family and extended family.
- A reduction in the rate of Aboriginal children and young people (10-17 years) in detention (Closing the Gap Target 11).



Lead (under the Taskforce)

Department of Premier and Cabinet

Partners

Tasmanian Aboriginal organisations providing youth justice services, government agencies, and non-government service providers.

ACTION FIVE

Design and construct a new Tasmanian Youth Justice Facility

In November 2022, the Tasmanian Government announced it would build a statewide therapeutic youth justice facility located in the South as one element of a reformed youth justice system. The new option will provide the opportunity for intensive intervention and support through a therapeutic and trauma-informed service model that focuses on improving outcomes for children and young people.

The new option reflects the broader redesign of the whole service system so that fewer young people are being held in detention. This action also builds on previous development work and will progress the processes for the physical build and construction.

In keeping with the Commission of Inquiry Recommendation 12.16, the design will be smaller and incorporate features that reflect international best practice approaches. The place will be co-designed with Tasmanian Aboriginal people to ensure cultural connection and safety for Aboriginal children and young people.

It will be a secure youth justice facility and culturally-designed to support a therapeutic service delivery model for a smaller number of young people sentenced to detention, in line with the Commission of Inquiry recommendation.

05

Outputs - 2024-2025

Output	Completion Date
Project initiation	Complete
Public consultation (identified sites)	Complete
Identification of preferred site	Complete
Site assessments	Complete
Site confirmation	Complete
Early works package commenced	In progress
Facility design complete	In progress – due 2025

Long term outcomes

- Children and young people in custody experience improved outcomes.
- Staff, children and young people in the new youth justice facility experience increased safety.
- Improved facilities support a new therapeutic service model.



Lead (under the Taskforce)

Department of Premier and Cabinet, Department of State Growth, and Department for Education, Children and Young People

Partners

Department of Health, Department of Justice, Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management, Homes Tasmania, non-government organisations, Aboriginal organisations, children and young people.

Action snapshot

Action	Relevant blueprint strategies	Relevant CoI rec.	CoI deadline
1 Finalise and commence implementation of a Youth Justice Model of Care	1 2 3 4 5	12.18 and 12.24	July 2026 July 2029
2 Implement a range of early intervention, prevention and diversion programs and options	1 2 3 4 5	12.13	July 2029
3 Implement a range of assisted bail and transition from detention options	1 2 3 4 5	12.13, 12.14 and 12.24	July 2029
4 Develop a Tasmanian Aboriginal Youth Justice Strategy	1 2 3 4 5	12.27	July 2026
5 Design and construct a new Tasmanian Youth Justice Facility	1 2 3 4 5	12.1, 12.16, 12.28, 12.29 and 12.38	July 2026

Blueprint strategies

- 1 Prioritise prevention and early intervention to reduce engagement with the youth justice system
- 2 Ensure diversion from the youth justice system is early and lasting
- 3 Establish a therapeutically based criminal justice response for children and young people
- 4 Integrate and connect whole-of-government and community service systems
- 5 Provide an appropriately trained, supported and culturally aligned therapeutic workforce

Monitoring and evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation of these actions will be embedded within the broader whole-of-government reporting framework, which will be periodically assessed to ensure alignment with the evolving needs of the children and young people.

The Child Safety Reform Implementation Monitor will play a pivotal role in this process, providing an independent and objective review of the progress made under the *Change for Children* Strategy and Action Plan.

The Implementation Monitor will ensure that all stakeholders remain accountable for their roles in implementing the reforms and that any emerging risks or challenges are promptly addressed.

Relevant actions within this Taskforce Action Plan will undergo evaluation to ensure its effectiveness, relevance, and alignment with the overarching goals of the Blueprint. This will ensure a culture of continuous improvement, allowing us to adapt and refine our approach as necessary, ensuring that our efforts remain responsive to the evolving needs of those we serve.



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