

Significant Policy Moments: Victoria 1990-2002¹

Last updated: 10 January 2014

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1990

– *Children and Young Person's (Amendment) Act 1990*

Amends the *Children and Young Person's Act 1989* (C&YP Act). Makes changes including the addition of a new sub-section in section 52 which requires the court, where it appears that a child found guilty of an offence is intellectually disabled, to request a pre-sentence report and that report has to include a declaration of eligibility issued under the *Intellectually Disabled Persons' Services Act 1986* (if that child is deemed eligible) and specify services which are available under that Act. Amends sentencing provisions with regard to age, to provide that a court cannot make certain orders that extend beyond the child's eighteenth birthday.

– *Establishment of Young Offenders Health Board*

Established in partnership with the Health Department of Victoria, the new framework superseded the Health Access Program. The YOHB has 4 key areas of concentration: basic health care; alcohol and drug services, psychiatric and psychological services (focusing on very serious offenders); and infection control including HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis B.

– *Planned redevelopment of Winlaton Youth Training Centre (YTC)*

As required by the anticipated proclamation of the *Children and Young Persons Act*. Planning covered program enhancement, capital works, staff development and operations.

– *Young Offender Services Advisory Committees*

Established in 5 metropolitan and 3 rural regions. Bring together representatives of key agencies involved in the local juvenile justice system (including the Department of Community Services responsible (for youth offending), police, and the Children's Court). Intended to provide a focal point for integration and coordination of community-based programs for young offenders, as well as a forum for early identification of issues.

– *Youth Parole Board*

Community representation increased on the Board to 2 people in 1990, with the new requirement that one of these must be a woman.

– *Youth Supervision Unit Managers*

Coordination of young offender services changed with the appointment of managers in all rural regions. Enabled the Youth Attendance Order Program to operate state wide and increased focus on the provision court advice. Although the program was expanded in 1990/1991 the Department's annual report indicates that fewer YOAs were made than in the previous year.

– *Development of bail advocacy programs*

Opened in several regions including Otways and Loddon-Mallee to minimise the need for remand services.

¹ Note: This work is based on departmental annual reports only.

- *Implementation of anti-graffiti program*

In partnership with the Public Transport Corporation.

- *Development of YTC guidelines*

Guidelines were developed for individual case planning in youth training centres (detention centres).

- *Young Women's advocacy program*

Commenced at Winlaton YTC aimed at enhancing access to community-based options. A pilot was also tested at Winlaton YTC for young women, demonstrating the potential benefits of access to challenging physical recreation activities and outdoor experiences.

1991

- *Children and Young Persons Act 1989 (C&YP Act) proclaimed*

Proclaimed in September 1991 following recommendations of the 'Carney Report', Child Welfare Practice and Legislative Review Committee 1983-1984. Promoted separation of young offenders from those requiring protective intervention. Established a sentencing hierarchy for the criminal division of the Children's Court and added Youth Supervision Order and Youth Residential Centre Order disposals.

- *Departmental restructure*

The Department of Community Services (CSV) responded to the commencement of the C&YP Act by separating its services and programs so that young people with welfare needs were dealt with by the Children's and Family Services Branch, and offenders were dealt with by the Juvenile Justice Branch. Turana YTC and Nunawading Youth Residential Centre were thereafter dedicated to young people on criminal orders and people on guardianship orders were no longer admitted.

- *Establishment of Nunawading Youth Residential Centre*

For people aged 10-14, established in September 1991 with the proclamation of the C&YP Act.

1992

- *Children and Young Person's (Amendment) Act 1992*

Key changes affect mandatory reporting provisions; amends section 129 to clarify the manner in which a child taken into custody is to be released on bail or remanded in custody; amends provisions relating to pre-sentence reports; sentencing provisions concerning undertakings, good behaviour bonds, fines, conditions of youth attendance orders; requires the court to give written reasons for detention; and provides entitlements for people who are detained.

- *Departmental restructure (Oct)*

The Department of Community Services Victoria and the Department of Health were amalgamated to form the Department of Health and Community Services (H&CS).

- *Turana Redevelopment project (February)*

Intended to improve accommodation and program facilities for up to 60 young people on remand or sentence. Includes construction of 4 accommodation units, provision of

program and recreation facilities, security, upgraded intake facilities and staff development.

- *Youth officers strike at Turana Youth Training Centre (May)*
Lasted 25 days.

- *New model for client service planning*
Expected that by the end of 1992 all young offenders entering CSV supervised services will have a client service plan.

- *Introduction of Koori justice workers*
In projects located in Robinvale, Shepparton and Lake Tyers to try and reduce the number of young Kooris in services under the CY&YP Act. The projects are intended to develop community support to minimise offending behaviour, support and supervise young Kooris on correctional orders and promote the interests of young Kooris within the JJ system.

1993

- *Opening of Melbourne Juvenile Justice Centre and security upgrade at Parkville Youth Residential Centre*
A new 60 bed, high security centre was commissioned for \$14 million and opened in December 1993 (formerly known as Turana YTC). The high security centre caters for 15-17 year old males and is comprised of four 15 bed accommodation units, a program and recreation complex (managed by YMCA) and a reception and admitting office. Intended to represent a major break with the structures and service philosophy of the Turana YTC that it replaced.

The Melbourne JJC is adjacent to the Parkville Youth Residential Centre, which caters for 10-20 year old females and 10-14 year old males; and includes a Remand and Classification Unit for 17-20 year old males. A review and upgrade of all security was completed during the year following several escapes.

- *Planning for major re-development of Malmsbury YTC*
Planning began for redevelopment of an open, minimum security facility north of Kyneton, for 17-20 year old males sentenced by an adult court.

- *Transfer of responsibility for education in custody*
Responsibility for the education of young offender's in custody was transferred from schools to the TAFE system. The schools in YTCs closed down in December 1992 and TAFE campuses were established at Turana YTC and Malmsbury YTC in 1993.

- *Burdekin Human Rights Commissioner report: Human Rights of the Mentally III*
Released in October 1993. Based on inspections of Victorian psychiatric institutions and hearings into public mental health services conducted in 1991.

- *Evaluation of the Youth Attendance Order program*
Conducted by La Trobe University during 1993-1994. The program has diverted 580 young people from custodial sentences since its inception in 1988.

- *Male Adolescent Program for Positive Sexuality*

A group program for adolescent males convicted of sexual offences began in July 1993 as a group program. Designed to provide early intervention and treatment for young offenders on both community and custodial orders. The program was later extended in 1994 to include younger males on less serious court imposed sentences.

– *Multicultural Juvenile Justice Project*

Funding was provided to the Ecumenical Migration Centre to develop a project targeted at ethnic communities with high participation rates in the JJ system.

– *Expansion of Koorie Justice Project*

Expanded to 6 locations in order to provide community supervision and diversion programs. Since December 1990, the number of young Kooris in the juvenile justice system has fallen by 40%.

– *Employment Access Program*

Re-established within H&CS to develop employment and training opportunities for young offenders. Note: The Employment Access Program for young offenders was transferred from CSV to the Department of Labour in 1989.

– *Development of new H&CS standards*

New standards were developed for security, prevention of suicide and self harm, and the temporary leave program.

– *Violence prevention program*

Introduced in December 1993 with a strong emphasis on training staff in strategies to curb violence among young people, with a group program for violent offenders.

1994

– *Allocation of funding for redevelopment of Malmsbury JJ Centre*

The Department allocated \$10 million to upgrade the centre to accommodate all 17-21 year old offenders sentenced to a youth training centre.

– *Expanded health service at Parkville Youth Residential Centre*

An expanded multidisciplinary service will be delivered through the Centre for Adolescent Health, part of the Royal Children's Hospital.

– *Group conferencing pilot program*

Began in partnership with the Mission of St James and St John and funded by the William Buckland Foundation. The pilot aims to give young offenders and their families a more significant role in dealing with offending behaviour and preventing its reoccurrence.

– *Pilot program for Pacific Island young people*

A pilot jointly funded with the Ministry of Justice aims to reduce the rate of Pacific Island young people in the JJ system by strengthening their supports at a local level in the Frankston area.

– *Pilot for Alternatives to Custody for Young Women Offenders*

Small number of young women will serve part of their sentence supervised in the community; accommodated in structured intensively supervised placements for increasing periods. The pilot will operate for 1 year as an addition to the Parkville YC's existing custodial services.

- *Evaluation of the Adolescent Drug and Alcohol Peer Education Program*
Evaluation showed that in the last year 100 young people were trained as peer educators and over 1,000 of their peers received information.

1995

- *Development of Youth Crime Prevention Strategy*
An interdepartmental committee chaired by the Chief Commissioner of Police was charged with the task of developing a youth crime prevention strategy. A report is scheduled for consideration by Government in the second half of 1995.

- *Development of new JJ Client Information System*
Will record key client information at all centres, units and from the Youth Parole Board. Implementation of the system is scheduled for March 1996.

1996

- *Children and Young Persons (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 1996*
Repeals the *Youth Affairs Act 1986*. Permits the transfer of a young person in certain circumstances from a prison to a youth residential centre, or from a youth residential centre to a youth training centre, or from a youth training centre to a prison. Clarifies the issue of custody when a child is brought back to the Children's Court after an adjournment.

- *Departmental restructure*
The Department of Human Services came into operation on 4 April 1996. Incorporates the former Department of Health and Community Services, the Office of Housing, and the Office of Youth Affairs.

- *Design Guidelines for Juvenile Justice Facilities in Australia and New Zealand*
Published by the Australasian Juvenile Justice Administrators' Group, Victoria took a lead role in producing the Guidelines.

- *Melbourne JJ Centre Cultural Heritage Program*
Designed to introduce Aboriginal clients of the centre to cultural heritage issues.

1997

- *Internal Departmental restructure*
A new Youth & Family Services Division was created within DHS to bring together primary care and intervention services.

- *Continued redevelopment and increased funding for Malmsbury JJC*
Due for completion in January 1998 at a cost of \$12.5 million.

- *Redevelopment of Parksville JJ precinct*
Construction commenced in 1997, at a total cost of \$14.25 million.

- *National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families*

Chapter 24 of the report relates specifically to Juvenile Justice, highlighting the over-representation of Indigenous youth and how this varies across jurisdictions.

– *Implementation of JJ Client Information System (JJCIS)*

Implemented across Victoria. Designed to improve monitoring and planning of JJ services.

– *Redevelopment of JJ Adolescent Forensic Health Services*

Being redeveloped to create better linkages with mainstream adolescent mental health services to better meet needs of high risk clients.

– *Aboriginal Strategic Plan*

Developed by Victoria Police during 1996-1997 as a response to RCIADIC.

– *Turning the Tide*

Under this new drug strategy, drug and alcohol counsellors were employed at juvenile justice centres.

1998

– *Establishment of a new metropolitan-based Adolescent Forensic Health Service*

– *Implementation of the Young Offender Pilot Program*

A Commonwealth/State initiative to develop best practice approaches which divert young offenders from a pattern of crime and instead engage them in education, training, employment and community activities.

– *Development of the Victorian Aboriginal Justice Plan*

The Plan is being jointly developed by the Department of Justice and the Department of Human Services in partnership with the Koori Community. The Plan is designed to provide a strategic planning and program delivery framework to reduce Aboriginal contact with the criminal justice system. The Plan draws on the principles and planning models adopted by the Department of Human Services in the Koori Services Improvement Strategy. It is proposed that the partnership between the Koori community and Government will be formalised through the signing of the Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement.

– *Indo-Chinese Support Services for Young Offenders*

Commenced operation in September 1998. Involved intensive post-release support to young people on release from custody; consultancy services for Juvenile Justice staff; and information, advice and referral services for young offenders and their families.

1999

– *Government's second implementation report on the recommendations of the 'Bringing them Home' report*

In October 1999, Aboriginal Affairs Victoria published the Victorian Government's second implementation report on the recommendations of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's report, *Bringing Them Home*.

- *Hanging out report: Negotiating young people's use of public space* (National Crime Prevention 1999)

Reports the results of a literature review, interviews with young people, authority figures and older people, planners, designers and architects and proposes and presents key elements that should comprise a strategic framework for youth crime prevention through the development, management and regulation of public space.

2000

- *Release of the Ministerial Statement: A Balanced Approach to Juvenile Justice in Victoria*

Resulted in implementation of a range of diversion, rehabilitation, transition and post-release strategies for young people.

- *Policy framework for A Balanced Approach to Juvenile Justice in Victoria (August)*

The framework emphasises: The diversion of minor offenders from unwarranted detention; the rehabilitation of more serious offenders; and the expansion of pre-release, transition and post-release support programs.

- *Juvenile Justice New Initiatives*

A diversionary initiative run jointly by DHS and the Department of Justice, which aims to provide more effective community-based responses for young offenders aged 17-21 years old who have been sentenced by an adult court.

- *Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement (VAJA)*

The Premier officially launched the VAJA on 31 May 2000 during Reconciliation Week. The Department of Justice and AAV jointly developed the Agreement in partnership with Victoria's Aboriginal communities. It provides a strategic planning and program delivery framework to reduce Aboriginal contact with the criminal justice system. The plan draws on the principles and planning models adopted by the Department of Human Services in the Koori Services Improvement Strategy.

- *Working Together Strategy released*

The Working Together Strategy is an initiative that seeks to achieve better health and welfare outcomes for high need clients who require access to multiple services, such as mental health, protection and care, drug treatment and juvenile justice. The Strategy aims to strengthen cross-program collaboration and communication, and to build the capacity of regional service networks. All nine Department of Human Services Regions have established Working Together Strategy processes that are dedicated to strengthening links between Child Protection, Mental Health, Drug Treatment Services, Juvenile Justice, Housing and DisAbility Services at a local level. A number of innovative service approaches are being piloted or have been fully implemented including: Enhanced therapeutic residential services; inter-service protocols; and joint professional orientation and training programs.

2001

- *Construction of new facilities at Malmsbury and Parkville JJs*

As part of the continuing capital works program.

- *Development of rehabilitation model*

The Department developed an evidence based practice model by reviewing and documenting current rehabilitative approaches in both custody and the community, and applying a risk/needs summary tool.

- *JJ Conferencing Initiative commenced*

- *Growing Victoria Together (November)*

Broad policy statement outlining priorities for the next 10 years.

2002

- *Establishment of Juvenile Justice Custodial Services*

The JJ Custodial Services (JJCS) Branch was established in the Operations Division in May. Victoria's 3 JJC's – Melbourne JJC, Malmsbury JJC and Parkville YRC are now managed by a single scheme and report to JJCS. The revised reporting arrangements aim to maximise accountability and consistency across the state.

- *New Ulabara Unit*

Established the new Ulabara Unit at Malmsbury Juvenile Justice Centre for senior males who require a more secure environment, reducing the reliance on inappropriate and dated accommodation in the senior youth training centre system. This facility is intended to maximise rehabilitation outcomes.

- *Housing Pathway Initiative*

Targets 20 young people annually aged 17-21 who are exiting JJCS. The Salvation Army Eastcare supports young people accommodated within the program, in 11 allocated properties. Evaluated in June 2003 – no parole deferrals were due to a lack of suitable accommodation, stability of accommodation had increased for most young people in the program, and the number of parole orders cancelled were fewer as re-offending fell.