

juvenile Justice

YOUTH JUSTICE CONFERENCE CONVENOR INFORMATION PACKAGE

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1 ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE



Minister Graham West



Chief Executive Peter Muir

1.2 Our Vision

A community in which young offenders participate without reoffending.

1.3 Our Statement of Purpose

To provide services to young offenders to decrease their reoffending and increase their capacity to successfully reintegrate into their communities.

1.4 What We Do

- Administering and managing the Youth Justice Conferencing scheme in accordance with the *Young Offenders Act 1997*;
- Providing supervision to young people on bail at the direction of the courts;
- Providing formal supervision of juvenile offenders whom the courts have placed on good behaviour bonds, probation orders, community service orders, parole orders and suspended sentences;
- Providing programs and intervention aimed at reducing reoffending;
- Providing safe and secure care of young offenders who are sentenced to custody by the courts or who are remanded to custody in a juvenile justice centre pending the finalisation of their court matters;
- Providing custodial services at six specialist Children's Courts and the secure transportation of detainees between centres, to appointment and from centres to courts.

1.5 Service Locations



Key to service locations

-  Juvenile justice centres
-  Juvenile justice community services
-  Regional offices
-  Youth justice conf. administrators



2 YOUTH JUSTICE CONFERENCING

The purpose of a conference is to make decisions and recommendations about, and to determine an outcome plan in respect of, the child who is the subject of the conference – Section 34(2), *Young Offenders Act 1997*.

‘Conferences are focused upon the young person taking positive action to put right the wrong they have done’

*NSW Excerpt from second reading, Attorney General, Legislative Council
May 21 1997*

2.1 Stages of the Conference Process

Stage one: Assessing & Allocating	Days 1-2	The Assistant Manager (YJC) <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ receives▪ assesses and allocates a referral to an appropriate Convenor
Stage two: Arranging the conference	Days 3-6	The Convenor <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ contacts participants▪ explains the conference and▪ arranges a time and venue▪ provides details to participants in writing
Stage three: Preparing participants	Days 7-16	After receiving written notice of conference details, the young person has a 10-day ‘cooling off’ period. During this time the Convenor prepares participants for the conference.
Stage four: Conference facilitation	Days 17-28	The conference is held while the information provided on preparation is still fresh in the minds of the participants.

2.2 Persons entitled to attend a conference

- Young person
- Convenor
- Person responsible for the child
- Young person’s family and extended family
- An adult chosen by the young person
- Young person’s legal practitioner
- Investigating Police Officer
- One trainee Police Officer
- Specialist Youth Officer/Youth Liaison Officer
- Victim or their representative
- Victim support person(s)

2.3 Persons who the convenor may invite

- Respected member of the community
- Interpreters
- Representative from the young person's school
- Skilled persons where participants have a cognitive disability or a disability impacting on their ability to communicate effectively
- Social worker or health professional
- Juvenile Justice supervising officer
- Person requested by the child or family
- Observer/researcher with permission of Minister

2.4 Elements of a conference

1. Introduction
2. Young person's story
3. Victim's story
4. Supporters thoughts
5. Time out for young person and support people
6. Presentation of proposed outcomes
7. Negotiation of final outcome plan
8. Outcome plan written and signed
9. Refreshments

3 CONVENORS

Conference convenors are not Public Servants, but statutory appointees under section 60 and Schedule 1 of the *Young Offenders Act* 1997 [the Act].

A convenor is engaged to prepare and facilitate a Youth Justice Conference by the Assistant Manager (Youth Justice Conferencing) (AM (YJC)) under [section 42](#) of the Act. The engagement of a convenor for a particular conference is in the nature of the engagement of an independent contractor.

Legally, convenors are deemed employees for the purposes of:

- Tax Administration Act
- Superannuation Guarantee
- Workers Compensation
- Occupational Health and Safety

Conference convenors are responsible for ensuring that personal contact is made with all conference participants prior to the conference taking place; for consulting with the young person, their family or supporters and the victim about the time and place of the conference; for notifying participants of the conference details; for inviting appropriate persons to attend and for ensuring that the victim's needs are taken into account.

3.1 Conditions of Appointment

The following information may help you decide if you are suited to the role of convenor:

- Under [section 43](#) of the Act, a conference must, ideally, be held within 28 days after the referral for the conference is received by the AM (YJC). This means that convenors must have the time available to be able to contact all conference participants, meet them face-to-face, and facilitate the conference within 28 days.
- As each conference is unique, the number of hours required to prepare and facilitate each conference will vary greatly. This time includes:
 - Preparation** (usually 8 – 10 hours)
 - contacting participants;
 - organising a suitable venue , date & time for the conference;
 - preparing participants for their role in the conference; and
 - Facilitation** (1 – 2 hours)
 - Post Conference** (*up to 1 hour*)
 - debriefing with Manager
 - finalising administrative requirements
- There is an expectation that convenors will be available to accept referrals when contacted by the AMs (YJC). From time to time, a convenor may have to decline a referral due to other commitments. The convenor is not disadvantaged when this occurs on an individual basis; however the AM (YJC) will take patterns of convenor availability into account when assessing applications for renewal of competency.
- Convenors are engaged on a needs basis and the volume of referrals dictate the frequency with which they will be offered work. The availability and frequency of work cannot be guaranteed.
- Convenors are expected to complete compulsory policy and procedure training and/or reading and to keep these up to date as directed by the AM (YJC). Convenors are not paid for these activities.
- As contractors, there is an expectation that convenors will accept responsibility for their own professional development. Convenors are expected to attend training and/or meetings during the year conducted by the AM (YJC). Convenors are not paid for these activities but are reimbursed some expenses to attend training.

3.2 Secondary Employment

- Federal and State public servants applying for appointment as a convenor are encouraged to apply as soon as possible for approval from your CEO to engage in secondary employment. Evidence of such approval will be required if successful in completing the training.
- [Section 60 \(4\)](#) of The Act provides for a police officer to be appointed as a convenor in the police officer's private capacity. Sworn officers in an operational role in the NSW Police Force will not be allocated a conference referral for a young person who resides in their

Local Area Command (LAC). Intended applicants are encouraged to discuss the implications of this policy for their particular circumstances with the AM (YJC) nominated as contact officer for this selection process.

3.3 Voluntary Redundancy

- People who have accepted a voluntary redundancy (VR) from a Government Department that contains a restriction on undertaking work with Government for a specified period are strongly encouraged to read the Premier's Department Memo M96-05 Managing Displaced Employees, in particular sections relating to Voluntary Redundancy.

3.4 Payment Rate

- Normal expenses incurred in preparing and facilitating conferences are included in the convenor's basic payment of \$39.50 per hour. This rate includes most incidental expenses such as normal postage, telephone communications, stationary, and travel. The payment rate is determined by the Minister for Juvenile Justice and reviewed on an annual basis.

4 SELECTION CRITERIA

- Effective group facilitation skills
- Ability to work with local community networks
- A sensitivity to, and understanding of, issues facing young people, victims of crime, indigenous people, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, people with disabilities, and gender issues
- A knowledge of and commitment to the principles of Youth Justice Conferencing
- Effective oral and written communication skills
- Demonstrated ability to work with limited supervision, manage time and meet strict deadlines

5 SELECTION PROCESS

Applications – You will need to demonstrate your competency in the identified criteria. A panel will assess your application. Candidates considered possessing appropriate skills will progress to the next stage.

Assessment of applications - A panel will assess nominees through a formal interview or group selection process, including referee and criminal history including; Apprehended Violence Orders, Working with Children Checks and Prohibited Employment Check. Successful nominees will be offered a place on the training course.

Training – Convenors are assessed on the basis of the skills and experience they possess. As applicants will not have specific expertise to conduct Youth Justice Conferences, Juvenile Justice provides workplace compliance training.

Appointment as a Youth Justice Conference Convenor is subject to being assessed as competent in all components of the training. Applicants should note the following:

- Training is compulsory as there is no recognition of prior learning.
- There is no guarantee that applicants who are unable to attend the complete training program will have an opportunity to complete it at a later date.
- Nominees will NOT be paid to attend training, however meals are provided and trainees may be eligible for paid accommodation, reimbursement for travel and a percentage of approved child care expenses.
- Training may be offered in Metropolitan, Regional or Rural areas. There is no guarantee training will be offered in close proximity to your place of residence.

Training will consist of four days face-to-face training with written assessment activities.

Appointment – Candidates who successfully complete training will be recommended for appointment and if approved, receive an Instrument of Appointment. The Instrument of Appointment will be valid for an initial term of 12 months. Subsequent appointment periods may be recommended, and are subject to appropriate certification of continuing competence to prepare for and conduct conferences.

Induction – Once appointed all convenors attend the local Juvenile Justice office for an induction session before they are allocated their first conference. This takes a maximum of 3 hours. Convenors are also required to complete mandatory Juvenile Justice policies, which may involve familiarisation with the policy or completion of self-paced learning session.