

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The primary purpose of the Post Release Support Program (PRSP) is to support clients released from custody by addressing barriers to reintegration and facilitating successful reintegration into their communities.

The Department developed and introduced a new PRSP model in 2002. The model reflects best practice in transitional support for juvenile justice clients, and also builds on the strengths of the existing program, which had been operating since 1996. The evaluation of the PRSP has been conducted over a three year period since 2002.

The PRSP is a structured twelve-week program designed to achieve an overall reduction in the number of clients who re-offend after release from a juvenile justice centre. The PRSP is enhanced by a brokerage system that supports clients who are geographically isolated and not readily accessible by the PRSP provider. There are ten PRSP programs operating throughout New South Wales.

The PRSP addresses offending behaviour through concentrating on the economic, social and welfare needs of young offenders. There is evidence that the program has had a positive effect on reducing re-offending. Both Departmental staff and PRSP service providers thought the program reduced re-offending. Some 78% of young people interviewed stated that the program had helped them stop re-offending. The statistical data on re-offending is inconclusive on this issue. However, particularly positive results were found with Aboriginal young people and young women.

There is evidence that the program has delivered positive outcomes across the targeted areas for support. Most services reported positive outcomes in the key outcome areas. Services were also realistic about what they can achieve. Providing stability for the young person through income and accommodation were seen as the two key outcomes, followed by education, training and employment. Providing for the legal needs of young people is also a very important outcome of the PRSP.

Interviews with young people detailed in this Report show how meeting the five most important outcome areas (income, accommodation, education/training, employment and legal needs of young people) directly impacted on reducing the likelihood of re-offending. Young people saw themselves as less likely to re-offend when provided with basic support. Assisting with the legal needs of young people meant they were more likely to comply with existing orders and meet outstanding fines. It appears from the interviews, that young people least likely to benefit from the PRSP were those who had ongoing and unresolved alcohol and drug problems.

The evaluation of the PRSP found that there was strong support for the program from young people who had participated in the program, from Departmental staff and from PRSP service providers. The PRSP filled a

serious gap in service provision, fulfilled important client needs and was consistent overall with the Department's approach to reducing offending behaviour. Departmental staff noted that meeting the welfare needs of clients on release from custody is an important component to reducing offending.

Although the major focus of the Department is on criminogenic need, assisting clients to meet their economic, social and welfare needs is not mutually exclusive of this goal. Indeed they should be seen as complementary. Policies that promote social reintegration and assist in providing basic social services for young people are a human right and are required by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

There is evidence that the program is cost effective, although there are significant differences between services in terms of the number of clients and the cost ratio to clients. Overall cost effectiveness of the program would be enhanced through increased referrals to services with low numbers.

There are also significant improvements that can be made to increase the effectiveness of the PRSP. The proposed changes are outlined in the Findings and Recommendations and detailed in the full Report.

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# FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 1. Strengths of the PRSP (9.2, 9.3, 9.4, 9.5, 9.6)

- There was a common view that the PRSP filled a serious gap in service provision, fulfilled important client needs and was consistent overall with the Department's approach to reducing offending behaviour.
- In particular, providing stability around income and accommodation, assisting with community re-integration, improving self-esteem and reducing social isolation were identified as the most important achievements.
- Departmental staff and PRSP services were of the view that the program has a positive effect on reducing re-offending.
- Young people who had been clients of the program were highly supportive of the assistance they had received and were positive concerning the effect on re-offending.
- Some 78% of young people interviewed stated that the program had helped them stop re-offending. For those who continued to re-offend drug and alcohol issues played a significant role.

## 2. Unmet Needs (9.7)

- The main unmet needs identified by stakeholders which the PRSP cannot resolve included lack of appropriate services such as accommodation, lack of access to training/education opportunities, and lack of employment opportunities.
- The other main unmet need identified was the intense support that some young people require and the entrenched nature of offending with some young people.

## 3. Weaknesses and Limitations of the PRSP (9.7)

Identified by DJJ staff:

- The need for the flexibility to define locally the parameters of the program and the criteria for entry.
- The need for clear definitions of the respective roles of departmental staff and PRSP workers.
- The need for culturally specific workers.
- The need for better systems of ensuring accountability and outcomes.

Identified by PRSP staff

- Limited resources for client-specific needs.
- The lack of timely referrals and need for more referrals.
- The twelve week period for the program.

- For some services it was the large number of referrals, high caseloads and the limited number of hours that could be spent with a young person.

Identified by both departmental staff and PRSP staff

- The limitation of working across a broad geographical area covered by only one or two workers from a single service, and with inadequate services in outlying towns to use for brokerage.

#### **4. The Policy Context of PRSP (9.8)**

- The PRSP was seen by most departmental staff as a critical part of the department's delivery of programs and services.
  - Meeting the welfare needs of clients on release from custody is an important component to reducing offending
  - Policies which promote social reintegration and assist in providing basic social services for young people are a human right and are required by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (see literature review).
  - Although the major focus of the Department is on criminogenic need, meeting welfare needs is not mutually exclusive of this goal. Indeed they should be seen as complementary.
- In certain areas the PRSP may provide for a duplication of services. The best way to avoid duplication is through case planning and regular meetings between the JJO and the PRSP worker.
- There needs to be recognition that the PRSP in itself cannot solve the problem of either a ready supply of community-based services in some areas, nor the lack of services in outlying rural areas. Effective case planning and case management can resolve issues of overlap or duplication. To some extent brokerage can resolve the issue of services in remoter, smaller towns – providing there is a service to broker to. If there is no service, then some type of mentoring arrangement may be appropriate.

#### *Recommendation 1*

*The PRSP is generally successful, widely supported and fulfilling an important role within the overall context of Departmental programs and services. It should be continued subject to further recommended changes.*

#### **5. Statistics on Re-Offending (8)**

- The small number of cases available for analysis, the relatively short follow-up period and the small scale of any effects make it difficult to establish statistically significant results in relation to re-offending.

- The available data at present does not show a significant reduction in re-offending for PRSP participants overall.
- There is however indication that the program may be having a beneficial effect with lower re-offending for female participants and Indigenous participants.

#### *Recommendation 2*

*It is recommended that the rehabilitative effects of the scheme be tested again when an additional year of participation and of follow-up data is available and that DJJ approach the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research to see if they would make available information from their Re-offending Database so that the analysis can include offending both before and after 18 years of age.*

## **6. PRSP Numbers and Costs (4.1)**

- In 2002/03 there were 343 referrals to the PRSP program and 257 young people accepted as PRSP clients across New South Wales.
- Breakaway Newcastle (54), Barnardos Marickville (40) and Marist Blacktown (38) had the largest number of clients accepted on to the program in 2002/03.
- There are significant differences between services as to the number of clients on the PRSP and differences between service's estimates of numbers and those appearing on CIDS.
- The average cost for each client accepted onto the PRSP program was \$3,568 in 2002/03 with the most expensive averaging \$16,125 per client and the least expensive at \$2,452 per client.

## **7. The Profile of PRSP Clients**

### *Offence Profile (5.1)*

- For PRSP clients the most common groups of offences prior to their referral to the PRSP were theft (41.6%), followed by offences against the person (37.2%).

### *Prior Offending History (5.1.1)*

- Some 84% of young people had offending histories prior to the court appearance that lead to their referral to the PRSP. Some 40% had between one and three prior proven appearances, and a further 44% had four or more previous proven appearances.

### *Age (5.2)*

- More than 60% of young people accepted in the PRSP were 16 or 17 years of age. Almost 22% were 18 years or older.

### *Young Women (5.3, 8.3)*

- 12.5% of young people accepted onto the program were young women. This is greater than their comparative representation in detention.
- Young women have particular post release needs and can pose staffing issues where the PRSP worker is male.
- A greater proportion of young women (46.4%) referred to the PRSP had offences against the person immediately prior to the referral than young men (36.1%). However, this difference is not statistically significant.
- Young women are slightly more concentrated among those with no previous proven appearances or fewer prior appearances than young men. However, this difference is not statistically significant.
- Young women who completed the PRSP had lower offending rates than comparable young women released from custody without post release support

#### *Recommendation 3*

*Brokerage should be used to provide specific services to young women where the PRSP does not have a female worker. See Recommendation 12 below.*

### *Aboriginal Young People (5.5, 8.3, 9.7.1)*

- 30% of all referrals to the PRSP involved Indigenous young people. This proportion of all referrals is significantly lower than the proportion of Aboriginal young people in detention during the same period.
- However, once referred to the program, Indigenous young people had a higher acceptance rate on to the PRSP than other referrals (84% compared to 79%).
- There were no statistically significant difference in the offence categories between Indigenous and non-Indigenous offenders prior to being referred to the PRSP.
- Aboriginal young people are concentrated among those with longer prior records and this difference is statistically significant. Some 41% of Indigenous young people have more than five previous proven appearances, compared to 19% of non-Indigenous youth. Only 8.6% of Aboriginal young people had no previous proven appearance, compared to 19.1% of the equivalent non-Indigenous group.
- Indigenous young people who completed the PRSP had lower offending rates than comparable Indigenous young people released from custody without post release support

#### *Recommendation 4*

*There needs to be an intensive effort by JJCS and JJC managers to increase the referral rate of Aboriginal young people on to the PRSP. This is*

*particularly important given their over-representation in detention and the indications identified in this evaluation that the PRSP is more effective with Indigenous young people than other youth.*

*Brokerage could also be utilised more with Aboriginal organisations and/or mentors.*

*Both JJOs and PRSP staff need greater training in Aboriginal community agencies and resources available in remote and rural communities that might be suitable for brokerage.*

#### *NESB Clients (5.6, 9.7.1)*

- Young people from Pacific Island and Asian backgrounds are well represented on the PRSP. However, young people from Middle Eastern background are fewer than would be expected given their detention centre population.

#### *Recommendation 5*

*There needs to be ongoing monitoring to ensure the PRSP is servicing the broad ethnic composition of young people discharged from detention.*

*Consideration should be given to promoting the employment of an Arabic-speaking PRSP worker.*

#### *Disability (5.7)*

- Newcastle is the only PRSP service to keep data on disabilities and their clients – it estimated 30% of the PRSP clients had a disability.
- Disability is an important issue effecting young people. There does not appear to be a mechanism to record disability among DJJ clients either in the community or in custody.

#### *Recommendation 6*

*There is a need to improve data collection by Community Funded Agencies (not only PRSP) on the incidence of disability among their clients. The current Justice Health, DJJ health survey of young people in the community should also be reviewed when completed for its implications for PRSP service delivery.*

### **8. Acceptance and Rejection of Referrals (4.1.1, 4.1.3)**

- Overall there is a high level of acceptance of referrals on to the program (75%), although this varies between services.
- The major reason for rejecting referrals relate to the young person not engaging in the program (41%).

- The largest single group of referrals were of young people serving a control order (46%).
- A significant proportion of young people referred to the PRSP were not in custody at the time of the referral, and had not been in custody during the prior two weeks to referral (39%).
- 59% of clients who were referred from custody and accepted on the PRSP had served long term custody of more than three months.

## **9. Changes in PRSP Client Base (3.7, 3.8.10, 3.8.11)**

The client base for the PRSP changed significantly between 2000-01 and 2002-03.

- The number of young people released from detention after serving a control order has declined by about a quarter, both as a proportion of all discharges and in absolute terms.
- Non-mandated clients on control orders and serving more than two weeks decreased by 30%; mandated clients on control orders and serving more than two weeks declined by 21% over the same period.
- The number of young people released from detention after serving a period in remand has increased, both as a proportion of all discharges and in absolute terms. Short term remandees (serving two weeks or less) increased from 83.4% to 86.8% of all remandees.

### *Recommendation 7*

*It is recommended that the eligibility criteria and the referral process for the program be flexible enough to engage the growing proportion of (short-term) remandees released from custody and the decline in non-mandated control order clients.*

## **10. Referral Guidelines and Criteria: Custody, Remand and Bail (4.1.3, 4.1.5, 9.7)**

- There are significant differences between services as to whether they are accepting referrals 'outside' the guidelines.
- Most services and some departmental staff were of the view that the PRSP was suitable for remandees and many thought it was suitable as an early intervention tool. There is a range of policy issues that arise from this possible use of the program including policy issues around the prioritising of clients, process issues such as referral, case planning and management, and service delivery issues for the different needs of remandees.
- There is a widespread view among departmental staff that there needs to be flexibility to define locally the parameters of the program and the criteria for entry.

*Recommendation 8*

*There needs to be greater flexibility in the guidelines to allow for regional and local variations in client need. Variations in the prioritising of clients could be determined for regional and local JJCS/JJC areas through regional management meetings.*

**11. Referral Process (3.3, 3.8.3, 4.1.3, 4.1.5, 4.1.6)**

- It is current Departmental policy for JJOs to conduct the referral process for the PRSP
- There appears to be significant disparities between JJOs in the referral and use of the PRSP. This may be related to differing case loads (both within and between JJCS offices) or knowledge about the program. Ongoing training, and support and monitoring from JJCS and JJC management may resolve some of these issues.
- The referral process generally works, but it could also be significantly improved. There are ongoing problems with JJOs completing intake forms. A more major issue raised has been the need for greater involvement of JJC staff in initiating referrals, particularly for specific institutions like Yasmar and for specific groups of clients such as short term remandees.

*Recommendation 9*

*That the referral process be altered to allow for Centre staff, in cooperation with JJOs, to refer young people directly to the PRSP. The weekly CSM could provide a time and place where referral decision might be made. This could be trialled at Yasmar first to determine if there are any particular difficulties.*

**12. Length of Time (4.2, 9.7.1)**

- Most clients are staying on the program longer than the 12 week period. However, it is not recommended that the 12 week period be altered. Where there is a need the PRSP service provider can apply for an extension.

**13. Location of the Service (4.1.2, 9.6)**

- Responses by young people on the question of where the PRSP should be located were fairly evenly divided between those who thought it was important that the PRSP not be located with the Department of Juvenile Justice and those who did not, with slightly more in favour of a separate location for the PRSP.

**14. Better Accountability, Communication and Knowledge (3.2, 3.3.4, 3.8.1, 3.8.4, 4.1.2, 9.7.1)**

- While the relationships between the Department and the PRSP service providers are generally very positive (all services reported good cooperation with the Department), a number of issues emerged where improvements can be made particularly around accountability, joint training, case planning, better provision of information on the PRSP service, and attendance of PRSP personnel to JJCS offices and Centres on a regular basis.

#### *Ongoing Training*

- The need for ongoing training was identified by Departmental staff and PRSP staff. To ensure effective communications between the relevant parties, this training should be held jointly for Departmental and PRSP staff.

#### *Case Conferences and Case Planning*

- The PRSP service providers should be invited to case conferences and involved in the case planning process.
- Case planning should also be used to ensure there is no duplication in service provision.

#### *Regular Meetings/ Case Notes*

- There should be regular (monthly) meetings between JJO/IPU staff and the PRSP workers. The provision of case notes would also be helpful.

#### *Attendance at Juvenile Justice Centres*

- The PRSP service providers should be in regular attendance at the Centres relevant to their area of service.

#### *Recommendation 10*

*Either specific memorandum of understanding (MOU) or the Community Funded Agencies Funding Agreement can be used to specify performance and responsibilities of both the Department and the PRSP service provider in relation joint training, case planning, regular meetings with JJOs/IPU staff, case notes and attendance at Centres. These should provide minimum standards for the operation of the PRSP.*

### **15. Brokerage (3.4, 3.8.5, 4.3)**

PRSP service providers and Departmental staff were aware of the brokerage system and the purpose of these funds.

- Brokerage is an important part of the PRSP and necessary for the successful operation of PRSP services in rural areas. However, it needs greater clarification and flexibility.

#### *Recommendation 11*

*There needs to be greater flexibility in the guidelines to allow for brokerage on the basis of specific need (eg a female worker for a young woman), as well as*

*geography. There needs to be a clearly allocated budget for brokerage for each region.*

## **16. Outcome Streams (6,7)**

Although there are serious data limitations, the combined views of departmental staff, the PRSP service providers and young people themselves indicated that the service is providing positive outcomes in the identified outcome streams.

### *Data Collection (6,7)*

- A significant limitation in conducting this evaluation was the number of missing data in the fields on the CIDS database relating the eleven outcome areas. It is the responsibility of the Department to ensure the completion of data entry. Often 50% or more of the cases have missing data, and in some outcome areas the missing data exceeded 80% of cases. This significantly restricts conclusions relating to the data on outcome areas.
- There are problems with the choices available for data entry in some outcome areas, where the choices are ambiguous (for example, they do not provide the opportunity for a categorical statement that an outcome area is not being met); or do not distinguish whether the question is appropriate to the particular client. These problems no doubt lead to greater levels of missing data.
- Some areas where data is entered seem irrelevant to either evaluation, monitoring or policy development needs (for example questions on the extent of support by the PRSP at intake, then at exit).
- Where there is data, then in general it would appear that the PRSP is making a contribution to improving the relevant outcome area.

### *Recommendation 12*

*The data fields relating to the PRSP should be thoroughly revised on CIDS (or CIMS) with the aims to reduce the total number of questions that require answering, and to provide accurate and relevant response choices.*

*Screen entry for the PRSP should be made mandatory, requiring each field to be completed before progress can be made to the next screen.*

*There should be a monitoring and auditing process put in place to ensure that the data collected is accurate, timely and complete.*

- Most services reported positive outcomes in the key outcome areas. Services were also realistic about what they can achieve. Providing stability for the young person through income and accommodation were seen as the two key outcomes, followed by education, training and employment.
- Providing for the legal needs of young people is also a very important outcome of the PRSP.

- The extent to which particular outcome areas are met, or prove particularly problematic varies between services and with clients. Meeting outcome areas such as accommodation varies depending on factors such as the cultural background of the clients and the likelihood they will return home. Employment opportunities vary between different service locations.
- The interviews with young people were very positive concerning the support provided by the PRSP workers.

#### Recommendation 13

The PRSP provides for a holistic approach and all outcomes areas have some importance. However it needs to be recognised that the five most important outcomes relate to meeting income, accommodation, education/training, employment and legal needs of young people. Consideration should be given to dropping 'social and personal skills' as an outcome area because individual changes in this area essentially arise incidentally to meeting other identified needs and through interaction with the PRSP service providers. The current three key result areas<sup>1</sup> of the PRSP are not helpful and should be dropped.

#### *Education (6.1)*

- Where data was available it showed very few PRSP clients had completed Year 10 or above.
- PRSP service providers found the program helpful in identifying the educational needs of clients, and in linking young people back into education where this is desired.
- Almost half the young people interviewed stated that the post release worker had helped them get back into education, a further one third stated that the PRSP worker 'had tried'. About half of the young people stated they had wanted help in accessing education or alternative schooling.
- A little over one third of those interviewed were in education at the time of the interview. This is a good outcome given the variety and the complexity of the issues involved.

#### *Training (6.2)*

- Where data was available, more than half of clients were shown as not in training on intake into the PRSP.
- The PRSP services generally expressed more success with training than education and services reported positive outcomes. However, there were still problems in getting young people into training, including literacy, numeracy and motivation.
- Most young people (78%) who were interviewed were aware that training was needed to obtain the particular job they wanted.

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<sup>1</sup> Reintegration planning and implementation, network building, and working collaboratively.

- Nearly three quarters of the young people interviewed noted that the PRSP workers had helped them get into some type of training – not all of them stayed in training but they were clearly appreciative of the assistance.
- Most young people (91%) who were interviewed thought that training would be helpful to them. However, at the time they were interviewed (63%) were not in or no longer in training.

### *Employment (6.3)*

- PRSP services agreed that the program is helpful in identifying the type of work young people want, and working towards obtaining that goal. The main limitations were whether the young person was not 'job ready' and there was no employment was available.
- Just over half (53%) of young people interviewed believed they were ready to get a job.
- Comments from those who did not believe they were ready for employment indicated either low self esteem or the prioritisation of education and training over employment.
- Generally PRSP services reported being able to secure employment for a small number of clients. The PRSP directly assists with employment by helping with a resume, helping with interviews skills, driving clients to interviews and to find work.

### *Accommodation (6.4)*

- There are significant differences between services and their clients as to whether young people will return home, whether the extended family will assist in accommodation. When young people who cannot return home, there are limited accommodation options.
- Key problems with accommodation include lack of services, lack of family support, lack of acceptability in the rental market and inappropriate accommodation.
- PRSP services report that they do meet the immediate accommodation needs of clients – even if through emergency accommodation.
- The majority (63%) of young people interviewed received help with accommodation, and 53% stated that they needed the PRSP to find them somewhere to live.
- In those cases where the PRSP did not find the client somewhere to live, all but one returned to their (extended) family.
- For those young people who returned to their family the PRSP was helpful in working through family conflict.

### *Income (7.1)*

- All PRSP services agree that the program has a major impact on ensuring Centrelink payments, both through assistance with ID and with ensuring ongoing payments by avoiding breaches. PRSP are able to explain requirements in relation to training and jobsearch.

- Two thirds of young people interviewed had Centrelink payments as their source of income. Nearly three quarters of young people said they received assistance from the PRSP in obtaining their ID and Centrelink payments.

#### *Health (7.2)*

- The types of health issues identified by the PRSP service providers which the program can assist, include: Hepatitis C, sexual health, family planning, drug and alcohol, and mental health.
- The assistance the PRSP provides included arranging for young people's appointments or referrals with general practitioners, counsellors, specialists and specialist clinics.
- Approximately 60% of the young people interviewed stated that had health problems on leaving detention, and of these the majority identified and alcohol and other drugs as the key health issue.

#### *Living and Survival Skills (7.3)*

- Many of the organisations which operate the PRSP also run living skills programs. In these cases it is common for the PRSP to link the young person with a living skills worker who is available within the organisation. The PRSP workers may also provide more informal assistance in areas such as budgeting, shopping, cooking, health and hygiene issues.
- More than two thirds (69%) of young people interviewed believed the program had assisted in their ability to live independently.

#### *Social and Personal Skills (7.4)*

- A few PRSP engage directly in counselling to develop interpersonal skills. Most services saw that the development of social and personal skills arose with the successful meeting of other outcomes areas.
- As an indicator of whether the program had changed peer influence, young people were asked whether the post release worker had helped them make new friends – slightly less than a third answered that they had made new friends.

#### *Legal Issues (7.5)*

- PRSP assistance with legal issues includes direct assistance or advocacy, and referral to other agencies.
- Comments from young people who were interviewed show that the program is fulfilling an important role in this area.

#### *Family Networks (7.6)*

- PRSP services saw working with families as a fundamental part of the program. However, there are significant differences between services as to whether their clients maintain family contact and return home.
- Half the young people interviewed acknowledged that the post release worker helped them with their family relationships when they were released from custody.

### *Leisure and Recreation (7.7)*

- There are differences among the PRSP in how they approach the issue of sport and recreation. Some PRSP attempt to link young people with particular activities, but do not prioritise this unless there is a specific goal in the young person's case plan (such as joining a gym). Other PRSP will directly engage in sport and recreation, for example obtaining a pass for gym and aquatic centre, or running recreation programs such as art, music and boxing, or organising camps.
- Some 62% of young people interviewed stated that the post release workers had organised activities with them.

## **17. Post Release Literature**

Post release support addresses the full range of social, economic and environmental needs of young people who have been released from detention. Examples of these needs include: health; treatment; accommodation; financial support; employment assistance; vocational training; legal resources; and personal development.

Most post release literature deals with adult offenders. In the case of juveniles, however, it is acknowledged that incarceration can prevent the very acquisition of life knowledge, which might otherwise have occurred had the young person not been incarcerated. Post release support attempts to redress this, in order to equip young people with the skills and knowledge they need to survive without offending. Increasingly, effective post release support is also seen as the solution to the problem of re-offending, particularly amongst juveniles. Beyond this, however, post release support is marked by wide variations in the identification and prioritisation of post release needs; the delivery of services and programs to address these needs; and the coordination and resourcing of these services and programs. Whilst the resultant literature does not necessarily provide a coherent analysis of best practice, it yields insights into particular programs and approaches that, when combined, inform a broad-ranging and inter-agency approach to post release support.

### *Education (2.5)*

- The lack of, or inadequate, education can undermine the ability of a young person to live crime-free. Post release support can address education needs on an individual basis in order to assist successful transition into the community and to encourage non-offending behaviour.

### *Employment (2.6)*

- The literature suggests that programs in detention have failed to address the education and skills needs of inmates, for reasons including inadequate resourcing and over-crowding in detention facilities. Post release support should recognise this and address any residual training and skills needs. Research also shows that Indigenous young people are particularly vulnerable to unemployment post release. Employment programs are most effective when implemented transitionally, and run in conjunction with education programs. Employment prospects can be improved through community education about the needs of young offenders post release.

### *Personal development (2.7)*

- Self-esteem and the personal development of young people are highly vulnerable during detention. Research shows that low self-esteem can hinder the integration of young people into their communities post release. Strategies such as mentoring have been embraced for successfully addressing the self-esteem and personal development of young people post release.

### *Health (2.8)*

- Young people in detention are at greater risk of long-term health problems than young people in the general community. Research shows that people with mental health problems are particularly vulnerable to being criminalised. Post release support programs addressing the health of young people are likely to be most successful when incorporated into case management and pre release programs.

### *Accommodation (2.10)*

- There is an increased risk of criminalisation by being homeless. Whilst there is very little general research into accommodation needs post release, existing housing services are inadequate to address the accommodation needs of young people post release. Addressing the accommodation needs of young offenders is crucial to reducing the re-offending behaviour of young people post release.

### *Legal Needs (2.11)*

- An area neglected in the literature on post release is the issue of legal needs of young offenders after their release from detention, although it is an area of important work by some post release agencies. The neglect of legal needs may directly contribute to further criminalisation, for example, through unpaid fines, failure to meet supervisory requirements, missed courts appearances, etc.

### *An inter-agency approach (2.11)*

- There is general acceptance in the literature that the wide range of needs of young people post release can only be addressed by a whole-of-government approach. This approach will be most effective if

combined with work by non-government agencies that specialise in youth services.

*The cost-benefit of successful post release support (2.13)*

- Detention is the most expensive cost of any justice system. Post release support policies have the potential to reduce the costs of detention both financially and socially, in reducing the impact of re-offending by juveniles.

*Addressing the welfare needs of young people (2.14)*

- Historically, young people in the welfare system have been particularly susceptible to criminalisation. This 'drift' has been detrimental to the social and welfare needs of young people. Post release support has the potential to bridge the divide between justice and welfare systems for the benefit of young people, by addressing the social causes and welfare needs that can lead to offending behaviour.