

# Townsville Community Champion Report

(correct as at 2 Mar 18)

## Recent activity

-Defining the problem:

'How do we develop Townsville youth to promote socially responsible behaviour, reduce incidents of youth crime, strengthen community spirit, and promote Townsville as a preferred destination for business and lifestyle.'

- Note list of meetings and tours completed during last 30 days
- Talks with Townsville City Council and QPS on rapid removal of signs of crime such as abandoned cars
- Discussion with Townsville City Council on reinvigorating Community Service programs
- Formal invitation to Townsville City Council to appoint representatives to the Stronger Communities Executive Committee and Action Group

## Future activity

- revisit Editor of Townsville Bulletin
- revisit Cleveland Youth Detention Centre

## Observations

-The appointment of the Community Champion has calmed the community, as evidenced by Townsville Bulletin news coverage and Facebook site discussions

-The community desires more information on government and non-government youth development programs to deter crime

-The community has a shared opinion on actions to:

- Help parents and teachers mentor and keep children in schools
- Improve the judicial process so children are dealt with more quickly
- Make offenders accountable for their actions through community service and restorative engagement

## Proposed actions

- Examine Community Service and Restorative Justice programs to improve programs
- Small group community consultation on 5 March
- Public community consultation in April after Commonwealth Games

# Townsville Community Champion Report

(correct as at 15 Apr 18)

<p><b>Recent activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Defining the Problem: 'How do we develop the youth of the Townsville Community in order to promote socially responsible behaviour, reduce incidents of youth crime, strengthen community spirit, and promote Townsville as a preferred destination for business and lifestyle.'</li> <li>-Small group community consultations conducted 5 Mar and 4 Apr</li> <li>-second visit editor TVL Bulletin to develop articles</li> <li>-second meeting Elders</li> <li>-second visit Cleveland Youth Detention Centre</li> <li>-second participate QPS Rapid Action Patrol</li> <li>-meetings Ingham Mayor and Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>-monthly updates to QLD Govt local representatives</li> <li>-discussions with Minister Farmer and QLD Dept Child Safety, Youth Women on reducing child detention</li> </ul>	<p><b>Observations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The small group community consultations have been successful in that they have informed residents on existing services and programs and discussed methods to strengthen these programs.</li> <li>-There has been positive comment on social media regarding small group community consultations.</li> </ul> <p>Individual consultations continue to reveal broad public support for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Community Service Orders</li> <li>-Restorative Justice</li> <li>-Programs to address school truancy</li> <li>-Programs to reduce child remand duration</li> <li>-Programs to mentor families and at risk youths</li> </ul>
<p><b>Future activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-based upon public demand, extend small group community consultations to 2 and 9 May with focus on information on programs to reduce school truancy</li> <li>-conduct planning for Community Consultation Forum 3 Jun as per Engagement Plan</li> <li>-continue Community Champion Strategic Plan</li> </ul>	<p><b>Proposed actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-No later than 15 May, provide QLD Premier with evidence to support interim recommendations for strengthening Community Service Order and Restorative Justice programs as per community request</li> </ul>

## Townsville Community Champion Report (correct as at 15 May 2018)

<p><b>Recent activity</b></p> <p>-Defining the Problem: 'How do we develop the youth of Townsville to promote socially responsible behaviour, reduce incidents of youth crime, strengthen community spirit, and promote Townsville as a preferred destination for business and lifestyle?'</p> <p>Community consultations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-attended Anzac Day ceremony at the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre</li> <li>-meeting of Upper Ross Community Voice group</li> <li>-Small group community consultation on school attendance procedures conducted 13 May</li> <li>-visit to Project Booyah QPS youth program</li> <li>-visit to Clontarf and Stars youth development programs at Thuringowa High School</li> <li>-Visit to Queensland Pathways College</li> <li>-meetings with several victims of crime</li> <li>-meetings with Indigenous Elders</li> </ul>	<p><b>Observations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-We have experienced a cycle of general and social media interest in youth crime</li> <li>-The small group community consultations remain successful because they inform residents on existing services and programs and discuss methods to strengthen these programs.</li> <li>-Key community solution themes remain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• programs to address school truancy</li> <li>• programs to mentor families and at risk youths</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Townsville City Council has accepted involvement with the Stronger Communities Action Group.</p>
<p><b>Future activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-small group community forum on 31 May</li> <li>-re-engagement with Townsville Bulletin editor, Chamber of Commerce, Townsville Enterprise, Townsville City Council</li> <li>-Community forum on 3 Jun as per Engagement Plan</li> <li>-continue Community Champion Strategic Plan</li> </ul>	<p><b>Proposed actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Please note interim recommendations for strengthening youth offender completion of Community Service</li> </ul>

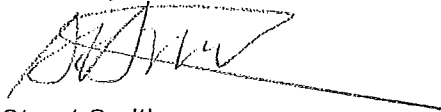
14 May 2018

The Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk MP  
Premier of Queensland

Dear Premier,

As a part of the May 2018 update to the Premier please consider the following document that outlines three interim recommendations. These recommendations have been informed based on community feedback, research conducted within the field and consultation with the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women. The recommendations and relevant information are presented for considerations.

Sincerely,



Stuart Smith  
Major General (ret) AO, DSC  
Townsville Community Champion

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are driven from community feedback and a review of relevant literature, policy and legislation.

1. That the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women establish an offender accountability board.
  - a. The board be managed by Youth Justice.
  - b. The board include a representation of the Townsville community including (but not limited to): business, government (including local government), non-government, academic, citizens and cultural representation.
  - c. The board identify a program of works that places emphasis on giving back to the community through activities that are visible and meaningful.
  - d. Youth Justice report back to the board on the progress of activities.
2. That the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women enable offenders to continue to give back to the community through completing community service activities whilst residing at a youth detention facility. This could include:
  - a. Activities that generate income that can be re-invested back into the community to address crime issues.
  - b. Activities that may be delivered as a component to training and/or education.
3. That the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women prioritise an audit of community service operations across Townsville commencing August 2018. The result of the audit should be provided to the proposed offender accountability board and resourced by Youth Justice. The audit should focus on the following:
  - a. Explore how to better measure the effectiveness of activities that hold offenders to account to ensure the types of activities are effective in achieving their objectives, including:

- i. Prioritising activities that reduce offending rates.
  - ii. Establishing and monitoring targets of effectiveness.
  - iii. Being seen by the community to hold offenders accountable.
- b. Assess the effectiveness of program activities delivered through the offender accountability board compared with the effectiveness of program activities prior to the establishment of the board.
- c. Incorporating state-wide standards and departmental performance processes.

## COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

The Townsville community has provided the Townsville Community Champion with consistent feedback that the community would like young offenders to be held accountable for their actions. The feedback further details how the community believes that this should occur through activities that give back, such as community service. The following recommendations are focused on enhancing or expanding activities that give back to the community while holding child offenders accountable for their actions.

## CURRENT SITUATION

Youth Justice manages the current community based activities completed within the juvenile justice system. This includes activities that may be negotiated through a restorative justice process both through Police referral and as referred or ordered by the Court. Community service orders, probation orders, conditional release orders, and supervised release orders all may have some form of community based activity attached to the order.

Information provided by Youth Justice indicates that in the 2016-17 financial year there were 1199 restorative justice agreements completed. 95 of these agreements resulted in the victim negotiating a form of work activity statewide. The Childrens Court of Queensland annual report indicates that across Queensland there were 209 (20.9%) less community service orders made and 63 (14.7%) less conditional release orders made relative to the previous year. There was a total of 792 community service orders and 365 conditional release/immediate release orders made. Community service orders represented 15.1% of all penalties issued by the court and conditional release orders represented 7%. The Court made a total of 5245 sentence orders. Of the 939 community service orders commenced throughout Queensland in the 2015-16 financial year 238 had breach proceedings initiated by the end of June 2017 an increase of approximately 4% over the last five financial years. Of the 278 conditional release orders commenced throughout Queensland in the 2015-16 financial year 111 had breach proceedings initiated by the end of June 2017 an increase of 12% over the last five financial years. Information provided by Youth Justice indicates that there were 101 community service orders made in Townsville during the 2016-17 financial year.

The focus of Youth Justice is to ensure that offenders are matched to the most suitable type of activities and that the activities are meaningful. For activities connected to a community service or restorative justice order the offenders are offered voluntary therapeutic case management services. With other order types the therapeutic case management service is a component of the order. The *Youth Justice Act 1992* requires that the offender must consent to the making of any community based order.

There is no formal process in which Youth Justice engages the community to determine the program of activities that would best reflect the community wishes. There are limited measures of effectiveness and performance in relation to activities that are designed to

hold offenders to account. Offenders are not able to complete community service activities whilst remanded in custody or held in custody on sentence.

## **CONCLUSION**

Considering the community feedback and the current situation within Youth Justice it became apparent that there is room for enhancement. Firstly, a process that engages the community in making decisions regarding what type of activities can be utilised to hold offenders accountable for their actions without negatively impacting on rehabilitation. Secondly, residing at the detention centre should not stop an offender from being held to account for their actions through activities that give back to the community. Finally, enhancing the current measures of performance and effectiveness regarding activities will enable effective decisions to be made about what type of activities could be utilised to hold offenders accountable whilst increasing the likelihood of rehabilitation.

## **CONSULTATION**

The Townsville Community Champion consulted with many local and regional staff from the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women. Consultation also occurred with the Director-General of the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women Mr Michael Hogan. Mr Hogan has indicated support for the recommendations based on the incorporation of the department's feedback. The feedback obtained from Mr Hogan has been incorporated into the current recommendations.

## **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

It is anticipated that there will be resource implications that include financial and personnel. It is envisaged that resources would be required to lead, manage, potentially remunerate board members, conduct the audit and to provide a potential increase in personnel required to provide the supervision of activities. The resource implications will vary considerably dependent on the way recommendations are implemented. Feedback from the Department of Child Safety Youth and Women indicates there is some capacity within current resources. It is recommended that a full assessment of resource implications would be required.

## **BACKGROUND SUMMARY**

### **Aims**

- Investigate the current measures of effectiveness/measures of performance as they relate to community service practice in Townsville Queensland.
- Investigate whether voluntary or mandatory community service is more effective.
- Provide recommendations in relation to how community service may be enhanced or complimented in line with community feedback.

### **Measures of effectiveness & measures of performance**

Youth Justice currently monitor the throughput requirements of community service orders however are not currently tracking the effectiveness of throughput measures nor effectiveness of activity types in reducing offending behaviour or increasing pro-social behaviours.

- Youth Justice currently monitors how many community service orders are made and how many are completed.

- More detailed assessment may be occurring at local sites however, are unable to be reliably tracked at a state level.
- Focus on matching community service activities to offender skills and interest. Supported in literature by Lipsey et al. (2010), that program components that assist in reducing offending behaviour must include a therapeutic focus, while programs with a punitive component tend to increase offending rates.
- Turner & Trotter (2013) indicate that there are limitations in the literature regarding the effectiveness of different types of community service activity and offender desistance from offending.

### **Impact of voluntary or mandatory community service on effectiveness**

The *Youth Justice Act 1992* currently requires consent to be given by the child prior to a court being able to include a community based order in a sentencing decision. Likewise, the offender and victim must both consent to include community service activities as part of a negotiated agreement through the restorative justice framework. The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice "The Beijing Rules" (1985) also make comment in relation to diversionary community service without consent conflicting with the United Nations convention regarding the Abolition of Forced Labour. There is no direct conflict with sentenced community service orders however legislative change would be required to make such an order.

- Unable to locate research that investigates effectiveness of mandatory community service in reducing future offending or increasing pro-social behaviours.

### **Complimenting or enhancing community service**

The *Youth Justice Act 1992* currently provides scope for community service to be negotiated through a restorative justice process whether through a diversionary option or as part of a court sentence. The Act also allows the court to impose community service in combination with a range of community based orders for any offence that may attract a period of detention.

- Research conducted by Snowball & Bartels (2013) indicates that Community Service Orders are more effective than unsupervised community bonds in reducing re-offending rates amongst adult offenders in New South Wales.
- Diversion for first offence has lower re-offending rates than attending court. (Dennison, S, Stewart, A, & Hurren, E., 2006).
- No current planned review of sentence orders in the juvenile jurisdiction within Queensland.
- There is currently no diversionary pathway for community service to occur outside of the restorative justice process. *Youth Justice Act 1992*, Queensland Police Operations Manual.
- Offender motivation may increase if they find the community service work they conduct to be meaningful to both themselves and the community. (Parliament of Victoria 2014-18, Centre for Justice and reconciliation).
- Lipsey (2009) and Trotter (2012) provide research that indicates that a community service program that includes capacity to link to a therapeutic relationship that assists in future goal orientation will have greater impact in reducing future offending and increasing pro-social engagement.

## Reference

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- Internal CSO briefing documents made available to the Townsville Community Champion.
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- Lipsey, MW, Howell, JC, Kelly, MR, Chapman, G., & Carver, D (2010), Improving the effectiveness of Juvenile Justice Program: A new Perspective on Evidence-Based Practice. As viewed on 20 April 2018. <https://cjr.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/ebppaper.pdf>
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- Queensland Police operation manual as viewed on 20 April 2018. <https://www.police.qld.gov.au/corporatedocs/OperationalPolicies/opm.htm>
- Snowball, L, Bartels, L (2013), Community Service Orders and Bonds: A comparison of reoffending, *Crime and Justice Bulletin*, Number 171.
- Trotter, C (2012) Australian Government – Institute of Criminology, Effective community based supervision of young offenders.
- Turner, S, & Trotter, C (2013), *Best Practice Procedures for the Operation of Community Service Schemes: A Systematic Review of the Literature*, Monash University Criminal Justice Research Consortium, as viewed on 24 April 2018 [http://assets.justice.vic.gov.au/corrections/resources/236ff344-d17c-4342-ad43-8e3fbac13c78/review\\_literature\\_bestpracticecwplacement.pdf](http://assets.justice.vic.gov.au/corrections/resources/236ff344-d17c-4342-ad43-8e3fbac13c78/review_literature_bestpracticecwplacement.pdf)
- United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice "The Beijing Rules" (1985) as viewed on 20 April 2018. <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/40/a40r033.htm>



# Townsville Community Champion Report

(correct as at 20 Jun 18)

## Recent activity

Defining the problem:

'How do we develop the youth of Townsville in order to promote socially responsible behaviour, reduce incidents of youth crime, strengthen community spirit, and promote Townsville as a preferred destination for business and lifestyle?'

Community consultations:

- **completed community forum on 3 Jun**
- visited St James and Brooklea retirement villages
- small group consultation on child safety procedures conducted on 31 May
- fun run with Clontarf Foundation participants
- discussion with young participants in youth services programs
- address given to Neighbourhood Watch Australasia Crime Prevention Forum
- drafted media statement for QLD Premier support to Townsville community forums

## Future activity

- Service providers workshop on 28 Jun
- Consultation update with Chamber of Commerce, Townsville Enterprise and Townsville City Council
- Continue Community Champion Strategic Plan

## Observations

The community forum on 3 Jun was calm and valuable in identifying community-led solutions in response to consistent themes:

- address school truancy
- improve programs to mentor families and at-risk youths
- hold youth offenders accountable through community service orders.

Mainstream Townsville media has questioned utility of public forums in light of repeated incidents of youth crime, however social media interest has not significantly changed.

## Proposed actions

- Review communications and engagement plan, including provision of Qld Govt information, to support community consultation program and provide regular updates in general and social media

# Townsville Community Champion Report

(correct as at 13 Jul 18)

<p><b>Recent activity</b></p> <p>Defining the problem:          'How do we develop the youth of Townsville in order to promote socially responsible behaviour, reduce incidents of youth crime, strengthen community spirit, and promote Townsville as a preferred destination for business and lifestyle?'</p> <p>Community consultations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>completed community forum on 3 Jun</b></li> <li>- <b>completed service providers workshop/forum on 28 June</b></li> <li>- consultation updates to Townsville City Council Mayor, Chamber of Commerce, Townsville Enterprise, QPS Commissioner</li> <li>- meeting Townsville Taxi/SUNBUS services</li> <li>- Address to Queensland Legacy</li> </ul>	<p><b>Observations</b></p> <p><b>The service providers forum on 28 Jun was valuable in identifying gaps and barriers for community-led solutions in response to consistent themes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- provide greater support for parents and families (Prevention)</li> <li>- increase access and engagement with youth services after hours (Intervention)</li> <li>- the need for increased integration of services for youth offenders (Rehabilitation)</li> </ul> <p>The Townsville Bulletin has agreed to sponsor a monthly Stronger Communities column, commencing 30 Jul, to keep the public informed on youth development/crime consultations and initiatives.</p>
<p><b>Future activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- conduct Townsville Leaders Forum 9 Aug</li> <li>- continue Community Champion Strategic Plan</li> </ul>	<p><b>Proposed actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- incorporate Commissioner Bob Atkinson Youth Justice Report in Townsville Community Champion Strategic Engagement Plan and assist development of Youth Justice Strategic Framework</li> </ul>