



**bunuru**

# Youth Justice Services in WA today

The Department of Corrective Services (DCS) has always maintained focus on safety, security and rehabilitation. The increasing numbers of prolific offenders, violent offences and the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and CaLD young people over the past 10 years has provided additional challenges to our system. Previously, Youth Justice Officers (YJOs) had the capacity to work directly with young people in a mentoring/supervisory role. The significant increase in the number of court report requirements and other demands on the Youth Justice Services (YJS) has resulted in a higher focus on court deadlines, taking YJOs away from their previous strength as mentors. DCS and the What Works principles focus on individualised, longitudinal mentoring with a focus on collaboration and partnership between sustainable services. There is a real need for culturally appropriate programs and a strong throughcare approach to rehabilitation. This is where we stand today.

## What is Bunuru?

Bunuru (meaning 'the season of adolescence' in local Noongar language) is a working consortium comprised of the Wirrpanda Foundation, Outcare and Holyoake – three likeminded, experienced providers committed to cultural competency and person centred support to achieve high level and far reaching results. Bunuru puts the young person and their unique needs at the centre of their rehabilitation journey. Our practices are based on the What Works principles, drawn from robust international research and local knowledge and understanding. Our vision is united and fully in line with that of DCS: to rehabilitate young people, improve their social and emotional wellbeing and make our communities safer.

## What will Bunuru achieve?

Bunuru is focused on delivering lasting, positive social change. By assisting and supporting YJOs, providing holistic and wide reaching support, firmly rooted in cultural competence, Bunuru propose to break the cycle of recidivism and reduce offending rates in WA. Not only will we do this in a seamless manner, built on proven best practice, but we will deliver this in a fully measured and evidenced environment that encourages ongoing evaluation and continuous improvement. Through our actions we will assist DCS to achieve its strategic goals, helping young people to find a positive identity, reducing the severity, frequency and chronicity of criminal behaviours and ultimately creating safer communities.

## Inclusive from the ground up

Bunuru recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) youth are severely overrepresented in the youth justice system. This is reflected in the appointment of the Wirrpanda Foundation as the consortium's lead agency.

The Foundation will be responsible for ensuring culturally competent service delivery, cultural awareness training for all consortium staff and ensuring ATSI families are comprehensively supported by the Bunuru service delivery model. The consortium recognises Aboriginal culture as one of the longest surviving in the world and celebrates the foundation of family that Aboriginal culture is built upon. The strength of Bunuru lies in the fact that the service delivery model has been designed for Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people and will be delivered predominantly by Aboriginal staff.

## Bunuru, a simple, elegant solution, powerfully delivered

Bunuru brings together the experience of three well credentialed and culturally competent agencies with a strong history of innovative, value for money, and highly successful interventions with young people in WA. Together we have captured the learnings and effectiveness of individual programs, including Holyoake's extensive experience over 40 years in delivering alcohol and drug support programs, Outcare's Live Works Program, Youth Pilot Program, Community Inclusion Program and the Wirrpanda Foundation's Moorditj Ngoorndiak Pilot Program, the first program funded by the Youth Innovation Fund, to create enhanced and individualised programs for delivery by Bunuru. We have created a consortium of experts, ready to deliver a person centred and individualised approach to service delivery.

**bunuru** is Nyoongar for the second summer, the season of adolescence



Wirrpanda



Holyoake

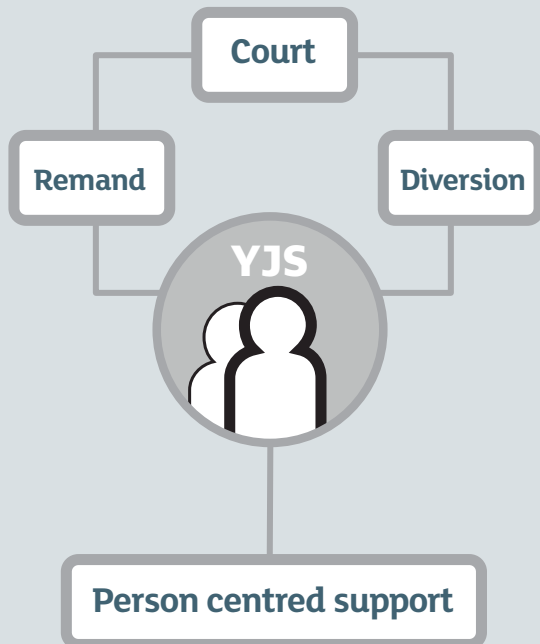


Outcare



Department of  
Corrective Services

# Today



## How YJS works currently

Bunuru recognises that the current demands on the YJS are extensive. Due to the increase in population, the role and demands on YJS staff has changed in recent years. We acknowledge that, on average, YJOs at each centre are required to manage 20 young people at any one time, a number of whom will be on a monitored caseload. Bunuru is designed with these needs in mind. Our service will partner with YJS staff, complementing the work they do and providing a streamlined external service that includes young people and their families from the outset.

## Strengths and weaknesses

Our integrated model ensures that the expertise of YJS staff is paramount in shaping the intervention for the young person. Bunuru will become the single point of contact for the Department and the young person. Using an integrated model to share information across the consortium, Bunuru will reduce the need for young people to retell their story, thus increasing efficiency and reducing the workload and time involved. Our ability to offer services to young people across the full spectrum of court outcomes combined with the longitudinal nature of continuing care means that we are able to provide a service for family members and significant others, supporting them throughout their journey to full rehabilitation and reintegration.

# tomorrow...

**“We need more generally available vocational and remedial programmes which can be undertaken when required upon the making of an SRO. Outcare’s Youth Programmes are a good example of what we wish was more generally available... The capacity to tailor the programme to the individual needs of the young person ideally suits the Board to discharge its duty to devise an SRO best suited to end the cycle of offending.”**

Supervised Release Review Board Annual Report. 2014/15.  
The Honourable M J Murray AM QC, Chairman.

## **YJS, meeting the challenges head on**

**It is very difficult to overhaul a justice based multi-stakeholder engagement system from the inside out. Bunuru sees the challenges faced by YJS every day. Bunuru is designed to address these issues from the very heart of the system. We advocate an innovative approach which drives best practice and responsive solutions to promote early engagement based on the cumulative skill sets of all stakeholders, DCS included. This approach not only adds capacity but empowers more effective and measurable service delivery powered by global best practice.**

## **How?**

Bunuru will deliver a collaborative model managed by one central Program Manager responsible for reporting, administration, communication between all partners and compliance with governance, contract objectives/outcomes/ measures and KPIs. We will draw on our extensive experience in the sector, our culture of innovation and our ongoing program development to ensure the youth of WA receive the best interventions which are both culturally appropriate and meet their personal needs now and into the future.



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#### **Collaboration**

Bunuru is a collaborative model, creating a 4-way partnership between the Wirrpanda Foundation, Outcare, Holyoake and DCS putting the needs of the individual at the centre of everything we do. By integrating a shared assessment process and utilising agreed delivery objectives shared with all partners, the young people involved and their families, we are able to maximise service investment targeted to key delivery outcomes. A genuine non-hierarchical culture across all agencies will provide collective, added value to deliver the best outcome.

#### **Co-ordination**

Coordination is critical to success. A full-time Program Manager will be employed to: act as primary point of contact for DCS (community and custody), service providers; ensure service delivery is compliant; collate and report information; report on project progress, grievances and contractual issues; administer and coordinate steering and compliance committee meetings; ensure communication between consortium members and the wider community as relevant. Placing coordination at the heart of our approach enables us to ensure a smooth, streamlined delivery that delivers against our targets and supports DCS.

#### **Optimisation**

By engaging with the young person at the earliest possible point in his or her journey through the system, we are able to intervene quickly and efficiently, assessing both the immediate and future needs of the individual. This makes it possible for us to establish a progressive program of intervention that will place the young person on a positive pathway that fosters success. Early assessment and involvement not only enables us to better support the YJOs but also to involve family and the wider community early on in our intervention.

#### **Continuation**

What Works research supports a 'continuing care approach'. This involves the provision of ongoing support for up to 12 months, until issues have been effectively resolved or self-managed. In line with this, young people and their families engaged with Bunuru will have access to a range of continuing care options from Bunuru well beyond the expiry of any statutory order. Integral to our design is continuous quality improvement, coordinated through the Bunuru Program Manager.



**The power in our solution lies not in attempting to reinvent the wheel but in making it operate more effectively and efficiently. Bunuru’s model creates a network to support and empower our youth to reduce criminogenic activity, provide alternative positive pathways for success and community inclusion to ultimately break the cycle of recidivism. It does this by creating a network which channels best practice and innovation directly to the centre of the YJS whilst supporting service delivery right from day one.**

#### **Programmes that work**

The Bunuru approach is one with relevance, evaluation and innovation at the very core. Each of the three consortium partners has extensive experience in delivering programs that work, suited to the very real and changing needs of our customers.

Outcare’s Disability Services Program moved through a period of evaluation and change, actively placing the individual at the very centre of all actions and decisions. By actively involving care givers as well as the individual, Outcare was able to move the focus directly onto the goals and aims of the individual. The result saw an increase from a 36 % success rate to a current success rate of 100 %.

The Wirrpanda Foundation’s Moorditj Ngoorndiak Program (MNP) is aimed at re-engaging Aboriginal males, aged 12-19 in contact with the criminal justice system, with education, employment and community. The program provides intensive individual mentoring for participants and their families.

The Foundation, in partnership with DCS and the Youth Justice Board, launched the Moorditj Ngoorndiak longitudinal pilot mentoring program in March 2015. The Youth Justice Board is supporting the Foundation to pilot the program for 12 to 19 year old boys in detention at Banksia Hill as a part of the Youth Innovation Fund. The focus of the program is reducing recidivism amongst young Aboriginal males in this age group.

The first year of the MNP has seen some great outcomes. After long histories with Youth Justice, participants have re-engaged in

school, in training, football programs, employment programs and in one case being in the post release phase for over 12 months. YJOs have noticed a marked improvement in the young people’s participation, engagement and the communication with Wirrpanda Foundation Mentors. The MNP has been extremely successful in preventing participants from reoffending and returning to detention.

Holyoake has a long track record for delivering evidence based counselling and support interventions designed to address problematic Alcohol and other Drug (AOD) use issues for both adults and young people. Individual evaluations conducted at the end of counselling programs provided to young people at YJS highlights the positive impact of these programs. In 2015, this included the majority of respondents reporting reduced AOD use, improved relationships with their families, and increased knowledge and skills for dealing with their substance use.

Holyoake has also provided AOD programs at Banksia Hill Detention Centre during 2015/16 and identified the need to develop new interventions to address young people returning to the centre. As a result, several new programs have recently been introduced specifically targeting relapse prevention strategies. This demonstrates Holyoake’s commitment to person centred and innovative approaches.

The knowledge, experience and evaluative approach taken by each consortium member underpins the approach and value offered by Bunuru.

### A truly outcome driven approach

Bunuru's commitment to delivering robust outcomes is designed to maximise DCS's return on investment. A responsive reporting culture, managed and overseen by our Program Manager, will create a culture that recognises that data collection and evaluation are integral to new program development and ongoing continuous improvement.

The Program Manager will be responsible for the collation of information from the three consortium members to include annual Disability Access and Inclusion Plans as well as biannual Program and/or Service Progress Reports. Steps are in place for an extraordinary Executive Steering Committee should any consortium member fail to provide sufficient information, thus enabling the Program Manager to resolve any issues and ensure continuity of service and quality of delivery.

Delivering a good return on investment is integral to our programs and our ability to deliver against this is evidenced by the social return on investment in programs such as the Live



but collectively we provide a solution that combines all of our unique skill and experience sets with that of global understanding and research, drawn from all sectors across the criminal justice space.

To us, innovation is not an added extra, but rather an integral part of ongoing growth and change. Outcare recently brought this to life with the creation of shared collaborative spaces that enabled stakeholders from all levels of the organisation to come together in a supported environment to share their thoughts and problem solve to great effect. Using this model, we have found that true innovation occurs when stakeholders overlap to work in synergy, supporting and assisting one another to achieve the strongest and most robust outcome for the individuals concerned.

### Working out what works, in WA, and why.

The Bunuru approach is about working with clients from the ground up. This culturally inclusive model addresses the specific



Works Program delivered by Outcare and the MNP delivered by the Wirrpanda Foundation.

In 2014/2015 the Live Works intensive program, delivered across multiple sites, returned \$12.08 for every dollar invested in the program. This figure only outlines savings received from keeping young people out of detention. It does not reflect the additional substantial savings gained from a reduction in crimes, nor does it include the added benefits to the community from young people engaging in meaningful employment and community inclusion. The new and further improved program currently underway is expected to deliver even higher returns.

In the first pilot period the MNP recorded a success rate of 60% of young people not returning to detention in a 6-month period. DCS statistics in 2014/15 showed that 69% of young people returned to detention within a 6-month period. The average cost of a young person in detention is \$150,000 therefore MNP potentially saved DCS up to \$900,000 in 2015.

### Global thinking delivered locally

Bunuru is not three organisations coming together for a tender, rather Bunuru is about bringing together four stakeholders to create a measurable and profound positive impact on the lives of youth in Western Australia's criminal justice system. It is designed to achieve not only a reduction in recidivism but also one that is measurable and adds value to DCS and to the taxpayers of WA.

Individually we all draw from extensive experience in the sector

needs of young people in WA in an objective and measurable manner. It incorporates the elements of the What Works research that will work in WA and develops those that require alteration to meet the needs of our local cohort.

Illustrating Outcare's cultural competence and success in delivering adult and youth Aboriginal services, Anthony Heiser, Adviser, Community Safety Program Management, Community Safety Branch Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, commented:

"The overall analysis indicates that Outcare's Aboriginal Prisoner Through Care Project has delivered sound community safety outcomes over the years it has been funded. Only 20% of clients receiving post-release case management returned to prison during that period, and only 11% overall since 1 January 2012." (Mead, 2001).

The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet has funded Harvard University researchers to conduct a study of the effectiveness of throughcare case management of Aboriginal offenders. Outcare is one of three Australian Aboriginal service providers that are participating in this research and providing data that will be analysed in the findings of the final report. The Bunuru 4-way partnership draws on the well credentialed and culturally competent proof of service delivered by our organisations all of whom have a strong history of innovative, value for money, and highly successful interventions with young people in WA. Bunuru is the future focused partner created to assist DCS in reducing recidivism in WA.





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The Bunuru consortium has been founded on the basis of each service provider's likeminded client centred approach to service delivery, experience in youth justice services and commitment to cultural competency and complimentary organisational values.