**WHAT IS THE ABORIGINAL REINTEGRATION AND TRANSITION PROGRAM AND WHAT DOES IT DO?**

The Ngudjoong Billa[[1]](#footnote-1) Aboriginal Reintegration and Transition Program (the Program) offers intensive case management to Aboriginal young people and focuses on strengthening cultural identity by building connections to family, community and country, while reducing the risk of reoffending.

Young people are eligible for referral to the Program if they are Aboriginal, assessed as medium to high risk of reoffending and are supervised by a YJNSW Community Office in Nowra, Batemans Bay or Bega, or are moving to an area within these districts following the completion of their order. This includes young people transitioning from custody into the community, and young people with a Youth Justice Conference (YJC) referral. There are no age or gender restrictions.

The key objectives of the Program are:

* To increase levels of cultural identity and cultural connectedness among Aboriginal young people exiting YJNSW custody and community supervision; and
* To increase levels of pro-social outcomes among Aboriginal young people exiting YJNSW custody and community supervision including engagement in education, training and employment, wellbeing, pro-social attitudes, conduct and peer problems, self-efficacy and self-esteem.

**Cultural Planning**

The Program has a focus on reconnecting young people with their Aboriginal culture and assisting them on their own cultural journey. Although the type of support provided is to be tailored to each young person according to their identified needs and referral outcomes, there is a specific focus on the provision of Aboriginal cultural support and education.

A key element of the Program is the **development of a Cultural Plan** with the young person. The young person’s Cultural Plan sets out the actions to support the young person to strengthen their cultural identity, identifies strategies for achieving the Plan, and whether they were achieved during the young person’s time on the Program.

A **Cultural Questionnaire** is a key component of the Cultural Plan and helps the worker explore the young person’s background, their connections and supports, and their cultural knowledge. It assists the Program to understand the young person’s cultural needs and any expectations of the Program.

**Working with families and carers of the young people to support ongoing positive relationships** is also a key component of the program and involves working with communities to increase sustainability and develop local support for the young people on the program and their families.

Like the Casework Support Program, the Program delivers socio-cultural and welfare-focused services to complement the offence-focussed case management undertaken by YJNSW’s staff to address offending behaviour. The Program is focused on young people identified as needing additional support to achieve their YJNSW Case Plan goals[[2]](#footnote-2) or YJC Outcome Plan. It is designed to achieve cultural goals as well as address practical issues such as:

* Aboriginal cultural support and education
* Income support and accommodation
* Returning to school
* Applying for work or training courses
* Attending medical or counselling appointments.

**It is important to emphasise here that the Program complements and supports the work of Youth Justice NSW. Program Workers must not discuss a young person’s offending with them. This is the role of YJ NSW staff only. If a young person initiates a conversation, please advise them that it is something they must speak with their YJNSW Caseworker about and that the Program Workers have a different role.**

The program is intended to **deliver four to six hours of weekly support over a 20 week period**. This is **inclusive of four weeks of rapport building and 16 weeks of intensive service delivery.** Re-referral is available if an extended period of support is needed.

**If the young person is in custody, weekly support** is expected **to be initiated four weeks prior to release via face-to-face visits**, **AVL or over the phone.** At least one face-to-face visit in custody is recommended, and the program support worker is expected to be involved in the Discharge Case Conference.

A further component of the program involves working in particular communities to increase community sustainability and develop community support for the young people on the program and their families. Approximately 20% of the support workers’ time will involve developing and implementing this community capacity building activities in particular communities in the Shoalhaven and far South Coast areas.

**Brokerage** is available to assist with social and cultural goals and to facilitate engagement e.g. buying a phone for young person to help Program worker locate them and keep in touch. The best use of brokerage is to be determined in consultation with Youth Justice caseworkers.

Each referralwill have **referral goals** which must directly link to the YJNSW case plan goals or YJC Outcome Plan. These goals must be developed in collaboration with the YJNSW caseworker, the young person, the young person’s family or carers (where appropriate) and the CSP worker at the **Intake Meeting**. The **referral goals** must be reflective of any cultural-specific goals in the young person’s YJNSW case plan.

The Program may provide up to 20 weeks of service but, if the **referral goals** are achieved earlier, the referral can be finalised early. The referral can also be extended (for a short period e.g. up to 4 weeks), or the young person can be referred again if necessary. In addition, the referral can be temporarily put “on hold’ if needed – e.g. in the instance where an Aboriginal young person may need a few weeks to deal with Sorry Business.

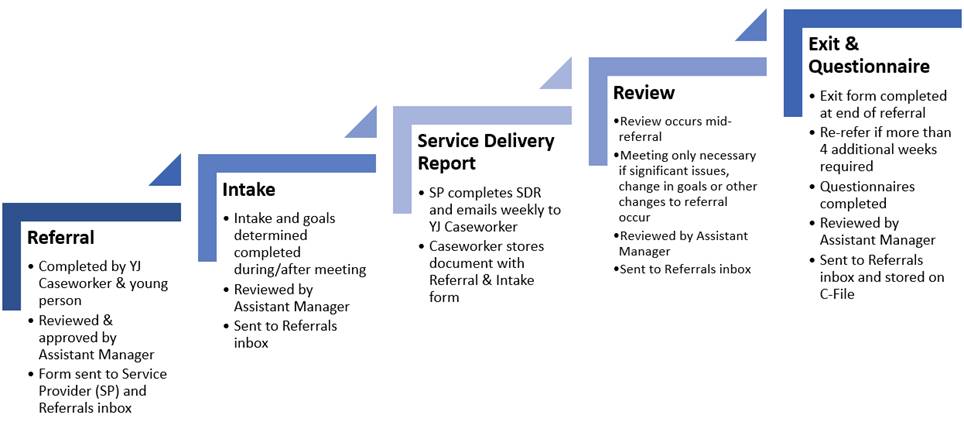


Figure 1: Flowchart of the Referral Process

Generally, it is expected that each Program worker will have a caseload of 4 to 5 young people at any one time, with each receiving 4 to 6 hours of Direct Support per week. **Direct Service** includes meetings with the young person either in person or by audio-visual means, as well as time spent organising referrals and appointments. Program flexibility allows for the differing needs and circumstances of individual young people to be addressed through negotiation with the YJ Caseworker.

It is anticipated that support is provided to 8-10 young people per year/caseworker. There are three full-time positions workers Two workers are based in Nowra and a third in Batemans Bay.

The **Service Delivery Report** is completed by the Provider and submitted weekly to the YJNSW Caseworker. It details the work that has been done with the young person and progress towards achieving goals. It is expected that the Provider will detail frequency of contact with the young person, and any challenges or highlights for that week.

**The Provider may discuss with the YJNSW Caseworker if they believe there is need for further or additional assessment of the young person at any stage during the life of the referral.**

A **Referral Review** is completed around the half-way mark. It reviews the progress on goals, any achievements, and if changes to the goals are needed. A **Referral Review** meeting isn’t necessary unless there is a significant change in the young person’s circumstances, goals needs to be revised, or other issues have been identified. If a meeting is necessary, this can be by phone or video call. The **Referral Review** should also be used by YJNSW Caseworker to obtain feedback from the young person regarding the services being provided.

Prior to the young person exiting the Program, the YJNSW Caseworker will arrange an **Exit Meeting** with the young person, the Program worker and the young person’s family or carers. The purpose of the meeting is to confirm the **referral goals** achieved as well as to discuss if there is a need for a further referral to the Program and/or referrals to other services.

The **Exit Meeting** also provides an opportunity for feedback from the young person regarding the service provided by the Program.

**WHAT OUTCOMES IS THE PROGRAM CONTRIBUTING TO?**

YJNSW is responsible for delivering programs and services that contribute to the NSW State Outcome of *Reduce Reoffending.* Our current business plan identifies:

* Two areas of focus under the theme “*Safety and Wellbeing*”:
  + Our staff feel safe, engaged and well at work
  + Young people in contact with Youth Justice feel safe and supported.
* Three areas of focus under the theme “*Delivering Outcomes*”:
* Reducing the number of young people who reoffend following a Youth Justice Conference, a custodial order, or a supervision order
* Reducing the average daily number of Aboriginal young people in custody
* Reducing the number of juvenile domestic violence reoffenders each year.

The Program contributes to the delivery of these strategic priorities through facilitating access to services to support young people’s financial, educational, accommodation, cultural, health and employment needs as well as assisting with improving their community connections and support. The Program also contributes indirectly to other State Outcomes (safer communities, active and inclusive communities, children and families thrive) and Premier’s Priorities (reducing DV reoffending, reducing recidivism in the prison population, protecting our most vulnerable children, reducing homelessness)

The effectiveness of the Program will be demonstrated through the measurement of outcomes based on the seven domains of the Human Services Outcomes Framework (HSOF) (see figure 2). Aligning sevice delivery with the HSOF will assist YJNSW demonstrate the value of its services and help to inform future decisions in relation to services offered.

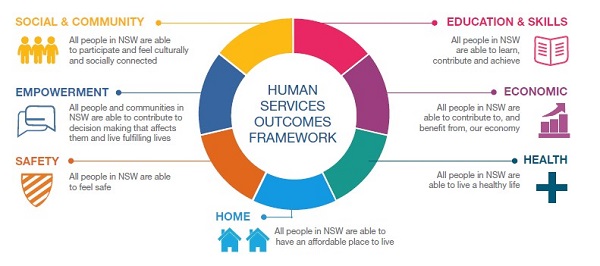


Figure 2: Image taken from <https://www.finance.nsw.gov.au/human_services>.

**PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

1. **Aboriginal Cultural Responsivity**

Aboriginal Cultural Responsivity refers to how individuals and organisations work and adapt to deliver and maintain culturally safe and effective practice for Aboriginal people. It includes the approaches we take in engaging with Aboriginal young people and how we act to embed what we learn in practice. It is the means, by which we achieve, maintain and govern cultural safety.

To reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal young people in the YJNSW system there is a clear need to ensure the Program is specifically designed to meet the needs of Aboriginal young people.

It is important to recognise the importance of cultural connection in our relationship and work with Aboriginal young people and their families. Young people’s individual choices need to be respected and considered in their cultural journey.

To assist YJNSW staff and Providers to do their work in a way that is culturally responsive and supports cultural practice, the *Youth Justice Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People Good Practice Guide, 2020* (the Good Practice Guide) has been developed. Cultural Competence can be viewed as a Continuum as outlined in the Good Practice Guide.

An annual **Aboriginal Participation and Outcome Plan** is to be developed in collaboration with local YJNSW staff. The Plan is to include measurable deliverables regarding working in partnership with local Aboriginal organisations and community groups to assist young people to achieve their cultural goals.

The Provider will be responsible for fee for service payments to Aboriginal organisations and Aboriginal community members contributing to the achievement of referral goals and cultural activities for the young people.

**Performance Measures** regarding Aboriginal cultural respect, cultural safety and cultural competency will be incorporated into the Plan and will need to be met throughout the life of the Agreement. Achievement will be assessed through evidence and examples provided in the Aboriginal Participation and Outcome Plan reports and feedback from Youth Justice staff and young people.

A report on the achievements (including evidence) related to the Plan activities will need to be submitted as part of the regular meetings with YJNSW staff. Examples of evidence may include:

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| **Examples of Evidence of Aboriginal Cultural Responsivity** |
| 1. Program staff participate in local Aboriginal cultural events of significance |
| 1. YJNSW young people participate in cultural programs and activities with local Aboriginal organisations or community members |
| 1. Program staff network and collaborate with Aboriginal organisations and community members to develop local culture knowledge and ensure culturally appropriate service delivery |
| 1. There is an Aboriginal Employment Strategy that has increased the number and retention of Aboriginal staff across all levels of the organisation (including Board of Management) |
| 1. Involvement in interagency meetings, Youth Justice Aboriginal Community Consultative Committees (if applicable), or other consultations with Aboriginal community organisations |
| 1. There are organisational policies, strategies and ongoing learning and development initiatives regarding cultural respect, cultural safety and cultural competency |

1. **Responsivity to the Diverse Needs of Young People**

Providers are to be outcomes-focused in meeting the needs of young people and be responsive to their individual circumstances. As an integral part of core service delivery, strategies are to be in place to ensure the needs of young people are met, regardless of background, gender, disability and sexual preference.

An annual **Equity Plan** is to be developed in collaboration with local YJNSW staff. A report on the achievements of the Equity Plan is required every six months as part of the regular meetings with YJNSW staff.

The purpose of the Equity Plan is to outline how the service will meet individual needs of young people, including:

* **Young people with disabilities –** Providers must identify young people with a disability and provide appropriate supports and services, including young person’s engagement and participation in the NDIS. Further, programs, activities and interventions are inclusive of young people with disabilities to participate.
* **Girls and young women –** have equitable access to a full range of services, programs, activities and interventions appropriate to their needs, and Providers are inclusive and enable their participation. Providers are to work with specialist services, such as mental health, trauma counselling, domestic and family services, specialist homelessness, and drug and alcohol services.
* **LGBTQI+** – inclusive policies are to be in place for working with gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual people. It is important to identify and engage with local LGBTQI services and networks to improve LGBTQI identity and belonging for those young people. This can include meeting and interacting with other LGBTQI people to develop a sense of community, connecting with other LGBTQI people, and assist with feelings of isolation and loneliness. This is particularly relevant in rural areas where young people may experience feelings of isolation, lack of social acceptance and lack of visibility. In some cases, young people may need assistance with contacting these services. In cases where there may not be a local network, Providers should provide information about services in metropolitan areas that will provide phone support.

1. **Listening and responding to the Voice of Young People participating in the Program**

Engagement with young people, their families and carers is key to understanding what is important to them, how they make and act on decisions in everyday life, and what influences those decisions.

Listening and responding to the voice of young people is critical for designing and implementing services that better meet young people’s needs. Importantly, by involving young people, we can empower and support them to shape and influence their own lives and the services they access.

Feedback can be obtained through consulting, involving or collaborating with young people and their families and carers, using various methods of engagement including: surveys (on-line or paper); interviews (on-line, phone or face-to-face); focus groups; workshops; submissions and codesign.

As part of the regular meetings with YJNSW staff, Providers will need to provide evidence of how they have sought feedback from young people referred to the Program and provide examples of how this feedback has informed and changed service delivery.

1. **Service staffing**

Each caseworker is required to have the minimum qualifications or experience of a Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services (SCHADS) Modern Award, Social and Community Services employee level 4 Paypoint 4. Section B.4.3 of the Award outlines the qualifications and/or skills and experience required for a Casework Support Worker. Please see the Glossary for a full definition.

Ideally the Provider will engage staff from an Aboriginal background, with expertise in working with adolescents, preferably adolescents with complex needs. Staff must be provided with regular professional development, training and supervision to ensure a high standard of service delivery.

Staff must have the capacity to work closely with YJNSW Caseworkers to achieve **Referral goals** and provide a quality service to the young person.

Staff must be provided with regular professional development, training and supervision (including Cultural supervision) to ensure a high standard of service delivery.

**ABORIGINAL REINTEGRATION AND TRANSITION PROGRAM DELIVERABLES**

**Key Performance Measures**

The Program will be measured against standards and performance measures that the Provider is required to meet including:

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| **Key Performance Measures** | **Targets**  **Frequency** |
| Percentage of accepted referrals | 90% |
| Percentage of young people accepted into the Program who received the service | 80% |
| Percentage of Program Referral Goals achieved | 80% |
| Frequency of contact per young person | Average Weekly |
| Satisfactory submission and review of ***Service Management Report***at the meetings with YJNSW Area Managers | Quarterly |
| Evidence of obtaining and acting on feedback from young people | Quarterly |
| Evidence of successful completion/achievement of outcomes identified and agreed ‘*Aboriginal Participation & Outcome Plan*’ | Quarterly |
| Evidence of successful completion/achievement of outcomes identified and agreed ‘*Equity Plan’* | Quarterly |
| Submission and approval of ‘*Aboriginal Participation & Outcome Plan*’ | Annually |
| Submission and approval of ‘*Equity Plan’* | Annually |
| Satisfactory completion of Funded Services Annual Performance Report | Annually |
| Reporting and other requirements are met as requested | 100% |

**GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

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| --- | --- |
| **Term** | **Definition** |
| **Aboriginal Cultural Responsivity** | Aboriginal Cultural Responsivity refers to how individuals and organisations work and adapt to deliver and maintain culturally safe and effective practice for Aboriginal people. It includes the approaches we take in engaging with Aboriginal young people and how we act to embed what we learn in practice.  It is the means, by which we achieve, maintain and govern cultural safety. |
| **Aboriginal Participation and Outcome Plan** | The plan is completed annually in collaboration with YJNSW local staff. The plan must include measurable deliverables regarding working in partnership with local Aboriginal organisations and community groups.  A report on the achievements (including evidence) relate to the plan activities is to be submitted as part of the regular meetings with YJNSW staff. The format of the plan and report will be developed and provided by YJNSW. |
| **Annual Performance Report** | The format of the report will be developed and provided by YJNSW. |
| **Aboriginal Reintegration and Transition Program** | The Program offers intensive case management to Aboriginal young people and focuses on strengthening cultural identity by building connections to family, community and country, while reducing the risk of reoffending.  The key objectives of the Program are:   * To increase levels of cultural identity and cultural connectedness among Aboriginal young people exiting YJNSW custody and community supervision; and * To increase levels of pro-social outcomes among Aboriginal young people exiting YJNSW custody and community supervision including engagement in education, training and employment, wellbeing, pro-social attitudes, conduct and peer problems, self-efficacy and self-esteem.   In addition (as with the Casework Support Program (CSP)) the Program delivers socio-cultural and welfare-focused services to complement the offence-focused case management undertaken by YJNSW’s staff to address offending behaviour.  The Program is focused on young people identified as needing additional support to achieve their YJNSW Case Plan goals or YJC Outcome Plan. It is designed to achieve cultural goals as well as address practical issues. |
| **Casework Support Program (CSP)** | YJNSW funds non-government organisations (Providers) to deliver the Casework Support Program (CSP) to young people being supervised by YJNSW. This includes those in the community, young people transitioning from custody into the community, and young people with a Youth Justice Conference (YJC) referral.  The CSP delivers socio-cultural and welfare-focused services to complement the offence-focused case management undertaken by YJNSW’s staff to address offending behaviour.  The CSP is focused on young people identified as needing additional support to achieve their YJNSW Case Plan goals or YJC Outcome Plan. It is designed to address practical issues, such as:   * Income support and accommodation * Returning to school * Applying for work or training courses * Attending medical or counselling appointments. |
| **Referral goals** | Goals which directly link to the YJNSW case plan goals or YJC Outcome Plan. These goals must be developed in collaboration with the YJNSW caseworker, the young person, the young person’s family or carers and the CSP worker at the Intake Meeting. These goals need to adhere to SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely) principles. |
| **Cultural Blindness** | The belief that that service or helping approaches traditionally used by the dominant culture are universally applicable regardless of race or culture. These services ignore cultural strengths and encourage assimilation. |
| **Cultural Competence** | Acceptance and respect for difference continuing self-assessment, careful attention to the dynamics of difference, continuous expansion of knowledge and resources, and adaptation of services to better meet the needs of diverse populations. |
| **Cultural Destructiveness** | Intentional attitudes, policies and practices that are destructive to cultures and consequently to individuals within the culture. |
| **Cultural Incapacity** | Lack of capacity to help minority clients or communities due to extremely biased beliefs and a paternal attitude towards those not of a mainstream culture. |
| **Cultural Plan** | The Cultural Plan sets out the actions to support the young person to strengthen their cultural identity, identifies strategies for achieving the plan and whether they were achieved during the young person’s time on the Program. |
| **Cultural Questionnaire** | The Cultural Questionnaireis a key component of the Cultural Plan and helps the worker explore the young person’s background, their connections and supports, and their cultural knowledge. It assists the Program to understand the young person’s cultural needs and any expectations of the Program. |
| **Cultural Pre-Competence** | The desire to deliver quality services and a commitment to diversity indicated by hiring minority staff, initiating training and recruiting minority members for agency leadership, but lacking information on how to maximise these capacities. This level of competence can lead to tokenism. |
| **Direct Service** | Direct Service includes meetings with the young person either, in person or by audio-visual means, as well as time spent organising referrals and appointments |
| **Equity Plan** | The Equity Plan is to outline how the Provider will meet the individual needs of young people, including: Young People with disabilities; Girls and Young Women; and LGBTQI+.  The Equity Plan is to be completed each year in collaboration with local YJNSW staff. A report on the achievements of the plan is required every six months as part of the regular meetings with YJNSW staff. The format of the plan and report will be developed and provided by YJNSW. |
| **Exit Meeting** | Meeting arranged by the YJNSW Caseworker with young person, their family or carers and the Program worker at completion of the referral. |
| **Intake Meeting** | Meeting with YJNSW Caseworker, young person and their family/carer, and the Providers held to discuss and agree on the referral goals after receipt of the referral.  It is important to seek agreement about the goals and time frames at this meeting and ensure everyone understands the referral goals. |
| **Program Flexibility** | Program flexibility allows for the differing needs and circumstances of individual young people to be addressed through negotiation with the YJ Caseworker. It allows for a flexible approach towards the timing and length of referrals to assist meet the young person’s needs and goals. |
| **Referral Review** | Reviews the progress of goals, any achievements, and if changes are needed. A Referral Review meeting does not need to occur unless there is a significant change to the young person’s circumstances, goals need to be revised, or other issues have been identified.  The Referral Review should also be used by the YJNSW Caseworker to obtain feedback from the young person regarding the services being provided. |
| **SCHADS Modern Award** | The Provider must engage staff with expertise in working with adolescents, preferably adolescents with complex needs, with the minimum qualifications or experience of a Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services (SCHADS) Modern Award, Social and community services employee level 4 Paypoint 4.  **Section B.4.3 of the Award is as follows**  **Requirements of the position**   1. **Skills, knowledge, experience, qualifications and/or training** 2. knowledge of statutory requirements relevant to work; 3. knowledge of organisational programs, policies and activities; 4. sound discipline knowledge gained through experience, training or education; 5. knowledge of the role of the organisation and its structure and service; 6. specialists require an understanding of the underlying principles in the discipline. 7. **Prerequisites** 8. relevant four year degree with one year relevant experience; 9. three year degree with two years of relevant experience; 10. associate diploma with relevant experience; 11. lesser formal qualifications with substantial years of relevant experience; or 12. attained through previous appointments, service and/or study, an equivalent level of expertise and experience to undertake a range of activities |
| **Service Delivery Report** | Is completed by the Provider and submitted weekly to the YJNSW Caseworker. It details the work that has been done with the young person and progress towards achieving goals. It is expected that the Provider will detail frequency of contact with the young person, and any challenges or highlights for that week. |
| **Quarterly Management Report** | A management report provided to YJNSW Area Manager and includes a summary of the referrals received and accepted, reporting on the Aboriginal Participation and Outcome Plan and the Equity Plan as well as any management or procedural issues. |
| **YJ Case Plan** | Goals that are developed to address the criminogenic risks/needs that are identified as a result of the YLS/CMI-AA (Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory – Australian Adaptation) assessment conducted by YJNSW. |

1. Ngudjoong Billa, a permanent waterhole, place of reflection and healing in the Dharawal language. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The YJNSW Case Plan goals are developed to address the criminogenic risks/needs that are identified as a result of the YLS/CMI-AA (Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory – Australian Adaptation) assessment conducted by YJNSW. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)