



Youth Justice NSW

# Youth Justice Conference





## What is a Youth Justice conference?

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A Youth Justice Conference is a meeting between a young offender, their victim and other people who know about the offence.

The young offender accepts responsibility by talking about the offence and thinking about the harm they have caused. The victim tells the young person how they felt about the offence and how they were harmed. They can also ask the young offender questions about what happened.

At the Youth Justice Conference the participants decide on an outcome plan. This plan sets out tasks for the young offender to complete to make up for some of the harm they have caused. This can include an apology, actions directly for the victim and steps to link the young offender into the community.

A Youth Justice Conference is a restorative justice practice. Restorative justice focuses on repairing the harm caused by the offending behaviour and on restoring relationships within the family and broader community.

## Benefits of a conference

- The young offender is given the chance to take responsibility for their actions and learns how they have hurt other people.
- The victim can speak to the young offender about how the offence affected them.
- The victim can suggest what the young offender could do to make up for their offence.
- The young offender is linked to services to help them not reoffend.
- The victim is linked to support services if needed.
- The young offender and the victims' families and support people can participate in the conference.
- In many cases there is no criminal record for the young offender for the offence.

## Who can attend a conference?

- The young person
- The young person's support people
- The victim of the offence
- The victim's support person or their representative
- Conference Convenor
- Police
- Other people who may be able to help develop an outcome plan or support the young person to complete their plan.

## Who can refer a young person to conference?

- NSW Police
- The Court
- Office of Director of Public Prosecutions.

## What is an outcome plan?

An outcome plan is a set of tasks agreed to by the victim and the young person. An outcome plan:

- Includes tasks a young person can do to repair the harm caused and prevent future offending behaviour
- Can include an apology, voluntary work, reparation to the victim or community or referral to appropriate programs and services
- Is a legally binding agreement.

## Legislation

The Young Offenders Act 1997 (NSW) is the legislation that provides an alternative process for dealing with young people who commit certain offences in NSW.

The Act sets out three options:

- Warning
- Caution
- Youth Justice Conference (YJC).



## What happens in a conference?

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- Conference participants introduce themselves and explain their role to the group.
- The victim is given the opportunity to explain how they have been affected by the offence and can also ask questions about the offence.
- The young offender tells their story of what happened.
- The Convenor will assist the conversation by asking questions.
- Other participants can talk about the offence and its impact.
- The Convenor asks the victim what they would like the young offender to do to repair the harm they have caused.
- The young offender, victim and other participants discuss and consider the outcome plan tasks and any support needed to help the young offender complete these tasks.
- The outcome plan is written up and the conference finishes with refreshments.



## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

**Department of Communities  
& Justice – Youth Justice**

**[www.justice.nsw.gov.au](http://www.justice.nsw.gov.au)**



## **LEGAL ADVICE AND SERVICES**

**Legal Aid Youth Hotline**

**Phone: 1800 10 18 10**

**Aboriginal Legal Service**

**Phone: 1800 765 767**

**Victim Services – Victim enquiries  
and Support Access Line**

**[www.victimservices.justice.nsw.gov.au](http://www.victimservices.justice.nsw.gov.au)**

**Phone: 1800 633 063**

**Phone: (02) 8688 5511**

Sydney metro victims

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander  
Victim Services contact line**

**Phone: 1800 01 91 23**