



Youth on Track Social Outcomes Evaluation

Final Report

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Executive summary

Introduction

Youth on Track is an early intervention scheme for young people aged between 10-17 years who have a medium to high risk of becoming entrenched in the juvenile justice system. Youth on Track is a voluntary scheme, and young people who are referred will have already had formal contact with the justice system. In July 2013, the Department of Justice commenced funding non-government organisations to deliver Youth on Track in three start-up sites. The aims of the scheme are to reduce further contact with the police and the justice system; offer support in a timely manner; address the young person's criminogenic needs and risks through coordinated evidence-based and offence-focused interventions; increase access to and awareness of support services, education, employment, health and other community services; enhance engagement in learning, social and community activities; and strengthen positive relationships between young people and their parent/carer and/or supportive community members.

Evaluation approach

The evaluation of Youth on Track focused on social outcomes, specifically, the evidence of the impact of the scheme on the client's and the family's wellbeing that are related to risk of re-offending including: antisocial behaviour and thinking; contact and interactions with pro-social peers; alcohol and other drug use; attendance and participation in education and/or employment; family functioning and interactions for the caregiver, siblings and participant; and connections within the community and confidence to access community support. The evaluation also sought to understand Youth on Track clients' satisfaction with the scheme, facilitators and barriers to achieving successful outcomes and opportunities for process improvements. This social outcomes evaluation is part of a broader evaluation plan and will sit alongside an evaluation of the impact of Youth on Track on re-offending, as well as a cost benefit analysis scheduled for 2018. The results of the evaluation will inform decisions for state-wide expansion of Youth on Track.

A mixed methods approach was used to evaluate Youth on Track. Quantitative and qualitative data covers the period January 2015 to September 2016. The following data sources were used:

- Qualitative interviews with 61 participants, including Youth on Track clients (n=18), family members/carers (n=18), Youth on Track staff (n=10) and secondary stakeholders (n=15);
- Youth Level Service/Case Management Inventory – Australian Adaptation (YLS/CMI-AA) assessment scores at three months (n=79) and at six months (n=33); and
- Satisfaction surveys with 44 participants, including surveys completed by clients (n=22), family members/carers (n=16), and with both clients and family members/carers present (n=6).

Qualitative evaluation data formed the basis of the findings and was supplemented by concurrent triangulation of YLS/CMI-AA assessment scores and satisfaction survey data. Limitations of the methodology included lack of access to/engagement with participants who may have been critical of Youth on Track as well as those who had disengaged from or declined to participate in the scheme.

Limitations of the YLS/CMI-AA tool were also presented and included: No opportunities for clients' self-assessment and no opportunities to record degrees of change across the criteria included in each domain. Further, no comparison of Youth on Track clients' assessment data with a control group was possible as there is no similar group in terms of risk of re-offending with whom the YLS/CMI-AA is conducted.

Evaluation findings

The evaluation indicates that Youth on Track is contributing to enhanced social outcomes for many clients. The success of the scheme appears to relate to the application of strong evidence of 'what works' in interventions to address the individual criminogenic risk factors of the young person.

It was recognised that the structure of the scheme contributed to positive attitudinal and behavioural shifts for some clients. Stakeholders, clients and staff reported positive outcomes as a result of the provision of one-on-one case management and the concomitant coordination of service delivery, facilitation of access to supports and the delivery of interventions that address the individual young person's criminogenic needs and that aim to increase pro-social behaviour. Behavioural, family and educational interventions were all noted as especially beneficial for the client and, where applicable, their family.

The performance of skilled and trained caseworkers and family therapists was noted by stakeholders as a key contributory factor to successful outcomes for clients, as was the way in which supports were provided in open and non-judgemental ways. All stakeholders reported that the collaborative way in which Youth on Track staff work is another key strength and contributes to positive changes for some clients, particularly for those with high-level needs and those who experience issues around access to services generally. In this sense, Youth on Track has been described as a very effective 'one-stop shop'. Tailoring supports to the needs of the individual client, and their families where applicable, also contributed towards the success of Youth on Track and the corresponding high level of satisfaction experienced by clients.

These positive results were echoed in the quantitative analysis of assessment scores, which demonstrated significant improvements in total risk assessment scores at three months and six months, in the education/employment and leisure/recreation criminogenic domains, with the six-months' assessment also showing significant improvement in clients' peer relations. Similarly, satisfaction survey results revealed an overwhelmingly positive response to the Youth on Track scheme overall, with participants placing particular value on the tailored support provided by caseworkers.

Discussion

A range of facilitators and barriers to Youth on Track achieving enhanced outcomes for clients and their families have been identified. The most frequently mentioned elements of the scheme considered successful by all stakeholders included: Early intervention focus addressing a service gap; capacity to provide holistic and tailored responses; performance of trained and skilled caseworkers and family therapists; capacity to work with families and around family relationships; and collaboration with other services.

Behavioural interventions were reported by stakeholders as invaluable to helping clients understand the consequences of their actions and learn to manage their behaviours so they do not react or engage in situations that could lead to antisocial behaviour and/or offending. Families who had worked directly with the family therapist reported strengthened positive relationships as a direct result of the practical and emotional support they had received through their engagement with Youth on Track. Clients' re-engagement with school and other learning environments was noted as one of the most successful outcomes of Youth on Track by all stakeholders.

Stakeholders recognised that the specialised training that Youth on Track caseworkers and family therapists receive is crucial in increasing clients' understanding of their behaviours, motivations and consequences of offending. Caseworkers' and family therapists' skills and knowledge have been attributed to creating positive shifts in many clients. This is supported by satisfaction survey results which indicated that caseworkers and family therapists (where relevant) were rated highly by clients and parents.

Conclusion

Overall, evidence from the qualitative consultations, analysis of change in YLS/CMI-AA assessment scores and satisfaction survey results suggests improvements in social outcomes are being made for many of Youth on Track's clients. Clients and their family members placed value on the support that was tailored to respond to their individual needs. While improvements were observed, challenges in obtaining referrals (particularly from schools) and issues with initial engagement were identified. Future studies could consider why some young people decline to participate and others engage in the scheme.

Glossary

Term	Definition
AOD	Alcohol and other drugs
CHART	Changing Habits and Reaching Targets
CIRCA	Cultural and Indigenous Research Centre Australia
Client	Refers to a young person that has been referred or participated in the Youth on Track scheme.
Criminogenic domains	Risk factors known to be associated with the risk of re-offending.
LAC	NSW Police Local Area Command
LSI	Level of Service Inventory
Participant	Refers to an individual who participated in a qualitative consultation or survey. This could include a Youth on Track client, family member of Youth on Track client, Youth on Track staff or external stakeholder.
RNR	Risk-Needs-Responsivity
Staff	Refers to Youth on Track caseworkers and coordinators who participated in a qualitative consultation for this evaluation.
Stakeholder	Refers to an individual who participated in a qualitative consultation for this evaluation who was not a Youth on Track client, or family member of a Youth on Track client. For example, included NSW Police, Aboriginal Client Service Specialists (NSW Courts), school representatives, out-of-home-care stakeholders, representatives from community services, legal practitioners, Headspace, Juvenile Justice, and the Youth on Track Provider Uniting.
YLS/CMI-AA	Youth Level Service/Case Management Inventory – Australian Adaptation

BACKGROUND

1. Introduction

The NSW juvenile justice system diverts some young offenders out of the system through cautions and youth justice conferences. However, prior to Youth on Track, young offenders did not receive intensive interventions to address the causes of their offending until they were convicted by a court and received a sentence with some type of supervision by Juvenile Justice. In 2010, the *NSW Commission of Audit Final Report* recommended that the Government examine measures to promote a concentrated and whole-of-government approach to dealing with juvenile crime. It emphasised that the approach should be one of prevention and early intervention, in line with strong evidence that supports the effectiveness of these approaches. Also in 2010, the Minister for Juvenile Justice commissioned the Noetic Group to undertake a strategic and comprehensive review of juvenile justice in NSW, the *Strategic Review of the New South Wales Juvenile Justice System* (Noetic Solutions Pty Ltd, 2010a). The Review noted that the juvenile justice system in NSW needed to be considered afresh, with a focus on intervening early and reducing those problems making some young people more likely to commit crime.

Thus, the Youth on Track model – which commenced on 1 July 2013 - takes into consideration the work and recommendations of recent research (including the Noetic Group), by targeting young people, aged between 10-17 years, who have a medium to high risk of becoming entrenched in the juvenile justice system. It is not a diversionary program, but operates alongside and after formal contact with the justice system providing the opportunity for government to redirect spending from prisons to early intervention. The scheme not only aims to reduce offending and related costs but to improve the social outcomes for young people and their families.

The key objectives of Youth on Track are to reduce young people's contact with police and the juvenile justice system; offer support in a timely manner; address young people's individual criminogenic needs/risks through coordinated evidence-based and offence-focused interventions; increase access to and awareness of support services, education, employment, health and other community services; enhance engagement in learning, social and community activities; and strengthen positive relationships between young people and their parent/carer/or supportive community members.

Youth on Track provides police and education with an opportunity to refer young people, known to be at medium to high risk of re-offending, to a support service without requiring a mandate and where the young person's engagement in Youth on Track is voluntary. Youth on Track focuses on providing young people and their families with targeted, individualised interventions to address the underlying causes of the young person's involvement in crime. Interventions include family interventions, behavioural interventions and assistance to re-engage with education.

At the time of this evaluation, Uniting was contracted by the NSW Department of Justice to deliver the Youth on Track scheme in three sites: Blacktown, Newcastle City and Mid North Coast Local Area Commands (LACs). Each of the three sites expanded on 2 February 2015 to include broader Hunter/New England locations - Manning Great Lakes, Lake Macquarie, Port Stephens - and Mount Druitt and Quaker's Hill LACs in Sydney.

The NSW Department of Justice commissioned the Cultural and Indigenous Research Centre Australia (CIRCA) to evaluate the contribution of Youth on Track toward improved social outcomes for young people, and their families who are at risk of long term contact with the juvenile justice system.

CIRCA is an independent consultancy with extensive experience working on research and evaluation projects related to the criminal justice system in both state and federal jurisdictions in Australia, with specific expertise working with culturally diverse and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The social outcomes evaluation is part of a broader evaluation plan, and will sit alongside an evaluation of the impact of Youth on Track on re-offending, as well as a cost benefit analysis scheduled for 2018. This evaluation will provide evidence to NSW Treasury, Department of Premier and Cabinet, and NSW Cabinet about whether the Youth on Track scheme is meeting its objectives and reducing the criminogenic risk factors of young people, as well as Youth on Track's alignment with the evidence about what is effective practice in juvenile justice.

2. Youth on Track – evidence-informed

The Youth on Track intervention model is informed by evidence around ‘what works’ in reducing juvenile offending behaviour for young people aged 10-17 coming into early contact with the justice system including Risk-Need-Responsivity principles, case coordination, family and behaviour interventions. The key principles of the Youth on Track model include:

- Intervening early to divert young people from the juvenile justice system;
- One-on-one case management to manage and support juvenile offenders and those at risk of offending;
- Separating treatment from punishment;
- Responding to risk and need rather than simply to crime; and
- Responding promptly to enable a response to an immediate problem

The following provides an overview of research that relates to the aims, objectives and implementation of the Youth on Track model.

2.1 Young people and crime in NSW

Research shows that while a significant proportion of young people will at some time commit some type of offence, it is only a small proportion that do so on an ongoing basis. Most young people who do offend will stop without any form of intervention and without ever coming into contact with the juvenile justice system (Nelson, 2015).

However, there is a small group of juvenile offenders who do not stop, and this group has been found to be responsible for a disproportionate amount of crime. These young people often come from disadvantaged backgrounds characterised by poor education, disrupted families, disability, low income, and engagement in regular risk taking behaviour such as substance abuse and acts of aggression (Chen, et al., 2005).

Young people in NSW who receive their first caution are likely to be male, non-Indigenous, live in a major city and be aged between 15 and 17 years old; and one in five young people who are cautioned will offend at least a further three times in three years (Lind, 2011).

Indigenous young people in NSW are 15 times more likely than non-Indigenous young people to have greater levels of contact with the juvenile justice system or to receive community supervision, and 17 times more likely to spend time in detention (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2013).

Research also shows that young people who come into contact with the juvenile justice system at a very young age are the most likely to continue offending for longer and are more likely to be Indigenous (Chen, Matrugilo, Weatherburn, & Hua, 2005). Meanwhile, unless young offenders receive targeted individualised intervention to address the underlying causes of their involvement in crime they are more likely to continue offending into adulthood (NSW Government Attorney General & Justice, 2012).

In 2016, 9,722 juveniles were given warnings by police, 6,373 were given a caution (including a cannabis caution) and 539 participated in a youth justice conference. 29,563 juveniles received an infringement notice, and 7 received a criminal infringement notice. A further 10,440 juveniles were formally proceeded against to court. These figures equate to a total of 56,644 juveniles who were legally proceeded against for recorded criminal events by the NSW Police Force in that year (Unpublished data from NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (Reference Number: jh17-15059).

2.2 Risk and protective factors

Juvenile offending does not exist in isolation but is linked to well established causal risk factors that lead to offending behaviour. A survey of young people in detention in NSW (Indig, Vecchiato, Haysom, Beilby, Carter, Champion, ... & Whitton, 2011) found that they have a range of social attributes and face a range of social problems. Young offenders are often from disadvantaged backgrounds, characterised by poor educational attainment, disrupted families and engagement in regular risk-taking behaviour. Key risk factors are those associated with school attendance/behaviour and past contact with the juvenile justice system. Not being at school, having been suspended or expelled from school and having had several prior contacts with the juvenile justice system all independently increase the likelihood of another conviction (NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, 2007). Children and young people who enter the care system are also at risk of entering the juvenile justice system; 28% of male and 39% of female juvenile detainees between 2003-2006 had a history of being placed in care (Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW, 2008).

While much of the evidence suggest a well-designed intervention can achieve statistically significant outcomes for young people irrespective of gender (Lipse, 2009; Evans-Chase & Zhou, 2014), there are a number of studies that emphasise different factors associated with risk and protection for justice-involved males and females (Brogan, Haney-Caron, & DeMatteo, 2015).

Australian studies exploring the factors associated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offending and incarceration recognise factors such as poor living standards, poor primary and mental health, alcohol, drugs and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, poor cultural identity and being a member of the Stolen Generations (Weatherburn, Snowball, & Hunter, 2008; Blagg, Bluett-Boyd, & Williams, 2015; Wundersitz, 2010).

As the female youth detention population increases, particularly for increases in violent offences, early intervention programs need to recruit people and practices that provide effective support to young women. This is particularly the case for young Aboriginal people, with data from New South Wales and other states indicating Aboriginal women offend at between nine and sixteen times the rate of non-Aboriginal women (Bartells, 2010).

The interplay of these risk factors and resulting complexity means that there are no simple solutions for preventing juvenile offending. The evidence base suggests that addressing risk factors, intervening early and preventing children and young people from entering the juvenile justice system is the most cost effective approach (Noetic Solutions, 2010a). Farrington and Ttofi (2012) also identifies dynamic or changeable risk factors which can be impacted through early intervention strategies. Protective factors that can reduce a young person's exposure to multiple risks and the likelihood of a young person

engaging in criminal behaviour have been identified in the literature and include pro-social behaviour (such as empathy); good cognitive performance (such as appropriate language development, and good academic performance); supportive, interested parents or carers; engagement with community activities and possession of social and problem solving skills (Sutherland, Merrington, Jones, & Baker, 2005; Farrington & Ttofi, 2012).

2.3 Reducing juvenile crime - what works, what doesn't?

Evidence produced over more than 30 years through empirical studies conducted in Australia, the USA, New Zealand and Europe clearly shows that traditional penal or 'get tough' methods of reducing juvenile crime, such as juvenile incarceration, overly strict bail legislation, trying juveniles in adult courts, 'scared straight' programs, boot camps, along with vague and non-directive counselling programs are ineffective in reducing recidivism among young people (Noetic Solutions Pty Ltd, 2010; Farrington & Welsh, 2007).

There is considerable literature around 'what works' in reducing juvenile offending behaviour which indicates that young people should be provided with services that are based on best practice research and proven to be effective (Latessa & Lowencamp, 2011). Effective methods focus on addressing the underlying factors behind the offending behaviour of juveniles such as the removal or reduction of risk factors, such as family dysfunction, a delinquent peer group, truancy or alcohol abuse, as well as the adding or strengthening of protective factors such as good parenting, having a positive role model or part-time employment as evidenced in the Youth on Track model. These methods emphasise the need to divert young offenders from entering the juvenile justice system altogether and focus on responses conducive to behavioural reform such as family, school or community-based services (Noetic Solutions Pty Ltd, 2010).

The limitation of some of this literature in relation to Youth on Track is that it was primarily conducted with young offenders undertaking custodial or community sentences rather than young offenders voluntarily entering a program, as is the case for young people who are clients of the Youth on Track scheme.

2.3.1 Understanding Risk-Need-Responsivity principles

Risk-Need-Responsivity principles are linked to attempts to build an evidence base and framework for 'what works' in reducing juvenile offending. Research indicates that adhering to these principles, outlined below, results in a 30% decrease in re-offending as opposed to 6% when the principles are not followed (Bonta & Andrews, 2007; Bonta, Bourgon, Rugge, Scott, Yesine, Gutierrez, & Li, 2010).

Recent literature supports shifting the 'risk/need' assessment paradigm that informs early intervention programs to the 'risk-need-responsivity' (RNR) model, which is dominant in the adult corrections sector. However, the research suggests that few tools have been developed to measure risk, need and responsivity for juveniles and then match them to appropriate interventions. The Youth Level Service / Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI) model, which builds on the widely-used Level of Service Inventory (LSI), includes a case-planning tool that combines criminogenic needs and responsivity factors (Brogan, Haney-Caron, & DeMatteo, 2015).

Youth on Track adopted the RNR model, which provides a useful framework for an effective criminogenic intervention. Prior to the implementation of Youth on Track intensive interventions aimed at reducing re-offending behaviour were only provided following formal contact with the court system. That is, it was only after a young person had had multiple and increasingly serious contacts with the juvenile justice system that they were likely to be provided with an intensive intervention that is aimed at reducing their criminal behaviour (NSW Government Attorney General & Justice, 2012).

The Risk Principle states that the frequency and focus of interventions should match the offender's assessed risk of re-offending and that programs should be more intensive and targeted at higher risk offenders, while interventions targeted at low risk offenders should be relatively brief (Bonta, Wilson, & Hoge, 2013).

The Need Principle aims to assess criminogenic needs and target them in treatment, and refers to the 'Central 8' and the 'Big 4' as the main factors associated with a risk of recidivism (Andrews, Bonta, & Wormith, 2006). The 'Big 4' are antisocial attitudes, antisocial peers, history of antisocial behaviour and antisocial personality pattern. The other four criminogenic risk factors that contribute the 'Central 8' are: problematic family circumstances, problems at school/work, problems with leisure activities and substance abuse. These and the most significant areas to focus on to decrease re-offending (Bonta, Wilson, & Hoge, 2013).

The Responsivity Principle considers individual offender characteristics such as personality, culture and educational levels to maximise the likelihood of interventions being successful. It recognises that interventions need to be adapted to reflect changes in the offender being treated and is responsive to individual and family factors (Nee, Ellis, Morris, & Wilson, 2012). Examples of responsivity factors are anxiety, personality, learning capabilities and client motivation.

A study by Nee and colleagues (2012) of a RNR model implemented with very young offending children (age 7 and up) found 'very favourable effect sizes', with the strongest effects in the first six months of intervention but sustained and a 'notable' drop in police charges against the intervention group compared to a control (Nee, Ellis, Morris, & Wilson, 2012). In this trial, which offered a mix of educational support, group work, outdoor activities and one-on one support, treatments were driven by criminogenic and non-criminogenic needs rather than risk.

2.3.2 Family and behaviour interventions

Youth on Track works with young people and their families to provide increased access to support services, education, employment, health and other community services and to strengthen positive relationships between young people and their parent/carer/or supportive community members and the importance of this approach is reinforced in the literature.

Family is 'central to nearly all life course development theories', with a range of family and parenting factors, including single parenting, poor parental supervision, family breakdown, living in disadvantaged areas, child abuse and neglect and criminal fathers identified across literature as factors that can lead to criminal and antisocial behaviour (Derzon, 2010) and informing a growing focus on targeting prevention at the families of children and young people at high risk.

Farrington and Ttofi (2012) concluded that the key elements of parenting that can predict likelihood of offending are supervision and monitoring, discipline or parental reinforcement, 'warm or coldness of emotional relationships' and the degree of parental involvement with their children. Poor parenting is recognised as a key factor in the onset of impulsivity in children, due to parents not teaching children self-control in their early years (Derzon, 2010).

2.3.3 Program implementation and program fidelity

In the Lipsey study, a regression analysis was undertaken to identify the intervention characteristics that were related to the greatest effect sizes on juvenile offending. That analysis found that, aside from delinquency risk level, the 'most consistent relationship with recidivism effects' was the quality of program implementation (Lipsey, 2009). This is consistent with broader crime prevention studies that emphasises the importance of program implementation, with Homel suggesting that good governance at an organisational level requires 'structures and arrangements that support staff recruitment, training, coaching and performance evaluation' (Homel in Farrington and Welsh, 2012: p.426). The importance of training for effective juvenile interventions was also demonstrated through Trotter's study of the impacts of juvenile justice supervision on recidivism in New South Wales (Trotter, 2012).

A key learning identified by Lipsey was that effective program implementation was often associated with programs that were either research or demonstration projects, which accounted for close to half of the programs found to have 'high fidelity to the program as intended' (Lipsey, 2009). It was suggested that these programs benefit from researchers' involvement in supervising or sometimes delivering programs, and that care was taken to give program staff training and supervision and that the projects were properly monitored.

2.3.4 Youth Level Service Case Management Inventory – Australian Adaptation (YLS/CMI-AA) scores

The Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory¹ (YLS/CMI) is a risk/needs assessment and case management tool designed to inform the level and types of interventions to ensure that case planning activities are focused in the appropriate areas of need. Thus, the objective of the YLS/CMI is to improve the quality of the decision-making process within juvenile justice systems by using standardised instruments that can be applied to all clients.

The YLS/CMI was adapted to improve the validity and reliability of the tool within an Australian context. The YLS/CMI – Australian Adaptation (YLS/CMI-AA) has been used by Juvenile Justice NSW since 2001 (NSW Department of Juvenile Justice, 2002). A crucial component of the YLS/CMI-AA, and the focus of this analysis, is Part 1 – Assessment of Risks and Needs. The items in Part 1 focus mainly on

¹ *Australian Adaptation of Youth Level of Service/ Case Management Inventory* by R.D. Hoge, PhD and D.A. Andrews, PhD. Copyright 1995, Multi-Health Systems Inc. In the USA: P.O. Box 950, North Tonawanda, NY 14120-0950, 1-800-456-3003. In Canada, 3770 Victoria Park Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M2H 3M6, Canada, 1-416-492-2627. Adapted by Anthony P. Thompson, PhD on behalf of NSW Dept of Juvenile Justice in 2002. All rights reserved. Reproduced by Permission

eight risk factors or criminogenic domains known to be associated with the risk of re-offending (see section 2.3.1):

1. Prior and current offences (9 items)
2. Family and living circumstances (7 items)
3. Education / Employment (7 items)
4. Peer relations (4 items)
5. Substance abuse (6 items)
6. Leisure/recreation (3 items)
7. Personality/behaviour (7 items)
8. Attitudes/beliefs (5 items)

For Youth on Track, the YLS/CMA-AA is used by case managers to conduct a thorough assessment of level of the client's criminogenic risks and need. Upon completion of Part 1, scores are tallied for items marked across the eight domains and each domain is ranked on a three-tier system – Low, Medium, or High to produce a Summary of Risks and Needs (see Appendix 1: YLS/CMI-AA assessment). The overall risk/need score is also calculated against a four-tier system, set specifically for Juvenile Justice NSW in 2014:

- Low (0 – 7);
- Medium (8 -17);
- Medium High (18 – 30); and
- High (31+)

This overall level of risk/need will determine the level of service to be delivered to the client. Clients that are assessed as low risk are recommended to be on Youth on Track for up to 3-months, clients assessed as medium risk for 3 to 6-months, and for medium high to high risk clients, a minimum of 6-months.

2.4 The Youth on Track model

The Youth on Track model has six key stages, encompassing:

1. Referral and screening
 - Discretionary referrals by NSW Police Youth Liaison Officers and local schools
 - Automatic referrals using the police database
2. Engagement
 - Youth on Track caseworkers work with NSW Police, local schools, community groups, and other stakeholders, including existing case managers where applicable, to locate and engage young people and their families

3. Assessment

- The YLS/CMI-AA is administered – a validated risk/needs assessment and case management tool. Eight domains of criminogenic risks and needs in the client’s life are assessed by consulting family, schools, police and the young person, which informs the level and types of interventions to ensure that case planning is focused in the appropriate areas of need
- Child and Adolescent Intellectual Disability Screening Questionnaire (CAIDS-Q) is administered – The CAIDS-Q indicates whether the client should be referred to an appropriate clinician to receive further assessment

4. Case management

- The Youth on Track service provider must provide individual case management to each client. A case plan is developed with each client and their family that focuses on addressing the client’s individual risks and needs as identified through the assessment tools. This is a combined direct service case management and coordination model that focuses on criminogenic needs. This combined model requires Youth on Track case managers to coordinate service delivery, facilitate access to supports, and deliver offence-focused interventions

5. Interventions

- Family intervention
- Behavioural intervention
- Engagement with education
- Referrals to additional programs and services

6. Exit planning

- The Youth on Track case manager identifies through the YLS/CMI-AA whether a client has completed the scheme and is ready to exit Youth on Track. Exit planning focusses on strategies for the client and their family to continue to improve outcomes and reduce the likelihood of the client re-offending

2.4.1 Caseworker training

To work effectively within the parameters of the evidence of ‘what works’ to reduce offending and to improve the social outcomes for young people and their families, Youth on Track caseworkers and family therapists completed specialised training, including:

- Background to Youth on Track
- Conducting assessments and developing case plans (YLS/CMI – AA)
- Risk assessments / workplace health & safety
- Motivational interactions
- Behaviour intervention
- Family intervention
- Criminal justice system
- Youth mental health first aid
- Working with young people with a cognitive disability in the criminal justice system

• Cultural competence (Aboriginal)

The behaviour intervention workers are trained to deliver includes an individualised offending behaviour program designed specifically for young people – Changing Habits and Reaching Targets (CHART). CHART builds on current good practice, skills and knowledge base and is a 12-module program, consisting of six core modules (delivered in full as a structured, sequential intervention) and six discretionary modules (delivered as appropriate for the client to address particular offences, specific behaviours and offence-related needs). Modules include: Mapping my offences; motivation to change; offending thinking; problem-solving; lifestyle balance; relapse prevention plans; healthy relationships; violence; motor vehicle offending; alcohol and other drugs; education and work.

3. Method

The evaluation of Youth on Track aims to determine the effectiveness and impact that the scheme has on Youth on Track clients with regard to social benefits, and to consider the impact of the scheme on family and siblings. It focused on evidence of the impact of the scheme on the client's and the family's wellbeing that are related to risk of re-offending (criminogenic domains): antisocial behaviour and thinking; contact and interactions with pro-social peers; alcohol and other drug use; attendance and participation in education and/or employment; family functioning and interactions for the caregiver, siblings and participant; connections within the community and confidence to access community support.

The evaluation also sought to understand Youth on Track client's satisfaction with the scheme, facilitators and barriers to achieving successful outcomes, and opportunities for process improvements.

The evaluation was conducted in two phases.

- **Phase One** focused on the development of the evaluation plan. The plan was developed following a series of workshops that discussed the evaluation plan, monitoring and evaluation data and indicators with key stakeholders. An initial workshop was conducted on 14 July 2015 and included representatives from Juvenile Justice, Uniting, NSW Police, Aboriginal Affairs, NSW Office of Communities, NSW Treasury and the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research. Site visits were then conducted to the three Uniting sites in Hunter, Blacktown and Mid North Coast and consultations were conducted with the manager, the Youth on Track coordinators, caseworkers and family therapists.
- **Phase Two** included the collection of quantitative and qualitative monitoring and evaluation data, analysis and reporting.

Table 1 outlines the data sources and approach for qualitative and quantitative analysis of the Youth on Track scheme.

Table 1. Data sources and approach for qualitative and quantitative analysis of the Youth on Track scheme

Data source	Analysis approach	Evaluation participants
Qualitative consultations		
Young people (clients)	Thematic analysis of the qualitative data was conducted in order to identify themes across the different qualitative consultations. Data was coded and analysed. This involved a process of data familiarisation, data coding, theme development and revision. This enabled the identification of key themes which emerged and the richness of the qualitative data to be explored.	N=18
Families		N=18
Staff		N=10
Secondary stakeholders		N=15
Quantitative monitoring data		
YLS/CMI-AA assessment scores	Paired samples t-tests were used to compare means of YLS/CMI-AA total and domain scores between the first and second assessment (n=79) and first and third assessment (n=33). One-way between groups ANOVA was used to determine the effect of the following independent variables on mean total YLS/CMI-AA score at assessment one and two: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status ▪ Youth on Track referral site 	N=79 N=78 N=79
Satisfaction survey	Descriptive analysis was conducted.	N=55

3.1 Ethics approval process

CIRCA prepared and submitted an ethics application to the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and to Bellberry Limited Human Research Ethics Committee as the Justice Health Human Research Ethics Committee were not able to assess an application for the project. Bellberry Limited is a national, private not-for-profit organisation providing streamlined scientific and ethical review of human research projects across Australia. Ethics approval was provided by both AIATSIS and Bellberry in May 2016.

3.2 Qualitative evaluation data

The key principles for the qualitative research were flexibility, sensitivity, and responsiveness, with a focus on creating a safe and comfortable avenue for client participation in the evaluation. The approach is summarised below.

- Clients and families were asked how they wanted to provide feedback and given a variety of options including location, face-to-face or telephone, and a choice of being interviewed on their own, or with family/carer/support person/caseworker. Clients were also asked if they would like the caseworker to be 'nearby' when participating in the evaluation. Family members and

carers were also able to choose whether they would like to be interviewed alone or with their children or a support person.

- CIRCA negotiated with Youth on Track coordinators and staff from each site to identify appropriate fieldwork approaches and suitable times. The fieldwork for each of the three sites included site visits for two to three days.
- Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal research consultants conducted the research jointly in all locations and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients were interviewed by an Aboriginal research consultant.
- Clients were provided with a participant information statement and consent form.
- The following groups were included in the qualitative research:
 - ~ Current clients who have achieved the minimum timeframe. For clients with a low risk of re-offending, 3 months' participation in Youth on Track is the minimum timeframe, for medium risk – 3-6 months, medium-high/high risk – minimum 6 months.
 - ~ Completed clients (clients who have completed in the previous 3-6 months prior to fieldwork being conducted)
 - ~ Families who have received the family intervention
 - ~ Families who have not accessed the family intervention

In total, 61 qualitative consultations were conducted between July and September 2016 with Youth on Track clients (n=18), families (n=18), staff (n=10), and secondary stakeholders (n=15). The evaluation comprised a total of six site visits, including two site visits to each of the three Youth on Track sites (Blacktown, Hunter and Mid North Coast), where qualitative interviews were carried out. Telephone interviews were also conducted with stakeholders and with clients and families where this was appropriate.

Qualitative consultations with clients and families

Qualitative consultations offer considerable benefits as they provide detailed feedback from clients and families about their experience, and allow individual narratives to be captured and understood, which is important for understanding the social benefits of Youth on Track. Qualitative consultations with clients and families explored the effectiveness and impact that the scheme has had on them with regard to social benefits that relate to risk of re-offending. Table 2 outlines the demographics of Youth on Track clients participating in a qualitative consultation.

Table 2. Demographics of Youth on Track clients participating in qualitative consultation (n=18) between July to September 2016]

	Sample Profile	Youth on Track clients (n=18)
	Age range	13-17 years
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	3
Youth on Track site	Blacktown	6
	Hunter	5
	Mid North Coast	7
Length of time on Youth on Track	0-3 months	5
	3-6 months	5
	6-12 month	8 (2 on scheme for 12 months)

Qualitative consultations with stakeholders

Stakeholders provided feedback on strengths and opportunities for improvement of Youth on Track and the impact of the service on clients and families. Stakeholders included NSW Police Youth Liaison Officers (n=4), Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers (n=3), school representatives (n=3), representatives from community organisations and NGOs (n=2), legal practitioners (n=1), and Headspace (n=2). In each site, Youth on Track coordinators provided contact details for the relevant stakeholders. CIRCA conducted either telephone or face-to-face interviews with stakeholders, depending on their preference.

Qualitative consultations with staff

CIRCA also consulted with staff at Youth on Track sites in Blacktown (n=3), Mid North Coast (n=3) and the Hunter, Newcastle (n=4) to gather feedback on the impact of Youth on Track, strengths and weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement. Staff responses are included in the stakeholder sections of the report.

3.3 Quantitative monitoring data

3.3.1 Sample selection of YLS/CMI-AA assessment scores

The YLS/CMA-AA is used by case managers to conduct a thorough assessment of level of the client's criminogenic risks and need (see section 2.3.4 for further information). In total, 367 clients were referred from January 2015 to June 2016, of these, 55 clients were referred at least twice. Their most recent client journey was included in the analysis. Of the 367 clients referred, 239 did not participate, with 211 clients exiting the scheme (66% client declined to participate; 22% unable to contact; 10% disengaged; 2% unsuitable or referred to Juvenile Justice), 21 clients waitlisted, and 7 clients consented to participate but did not receive an initial assessment (see Figure 1).

Of the 367 clients referred, 128 received an initial assessment. Post initial assessment, 49 clients discontinued, with 28 clients exiting the scheme (82% disengaged client; 18% referred on to Juvenile Justice), 20 clients consenting but not continuing, and 1 client with pending status. For the purpose of the analysis, only clients who had at least two assessments were included. This was to enable an appreciation of how the scores change during the scheme. Allowing for these exclusions, the dataset that was analysed was based on 79 unique clients. Of the 79, 33 had at least three assessments and six had four assessments (see Figure 1). During the research period, 29 were recorded as having completed the Youth on Track scheme.

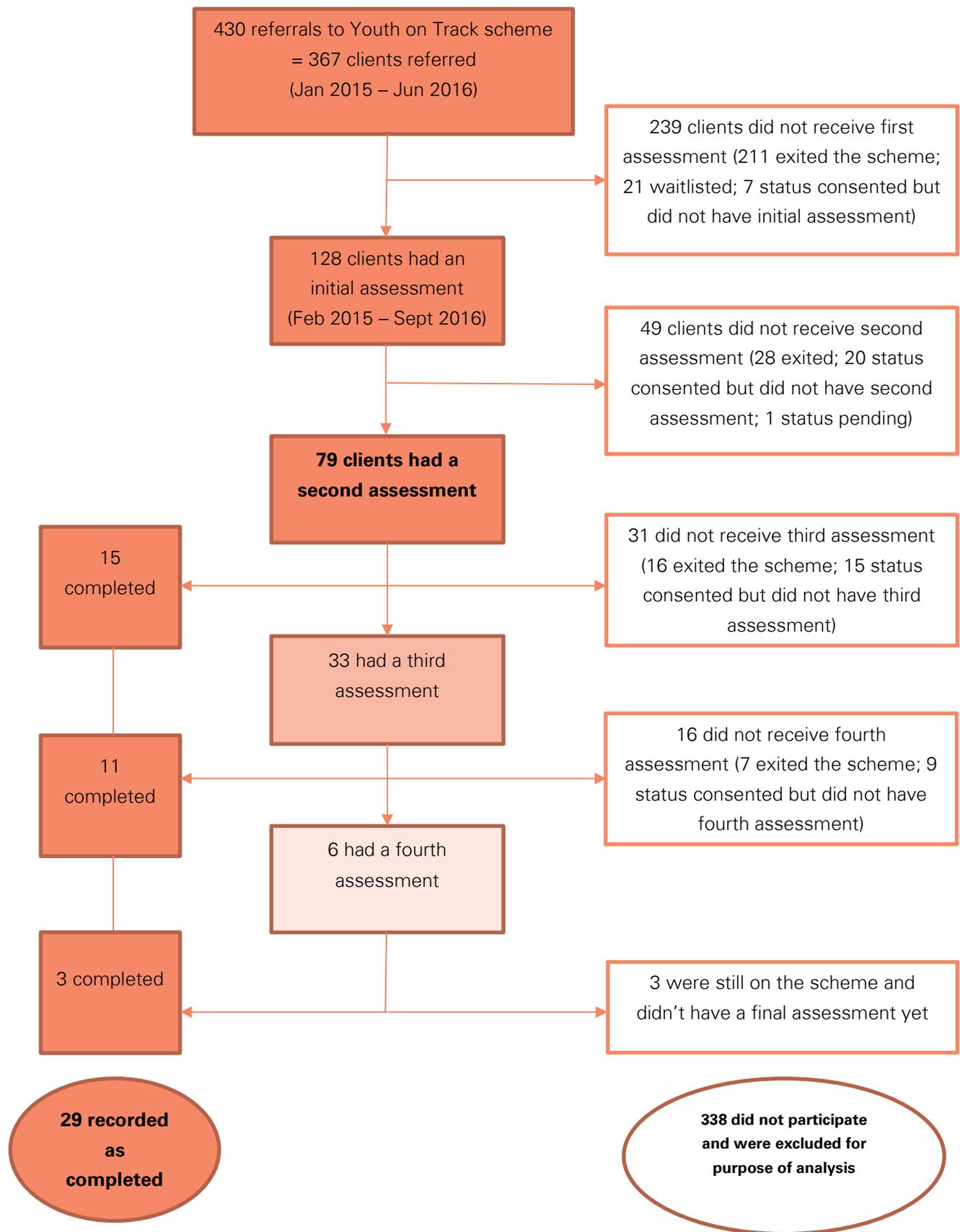


Figure 1. Flow diagram illustrating clients referred to Youth on Track scheme and their status after each YLS/CMI – AA assessment from January 2015 to September 2016.

3.3.2 Demographics of YLS/CMI-AA sample

Overall, demographics of the sample of clients that received at least two assessments (n=79) was similar to the overall clients referred (n=367) and clients who did not participate in the scheme (n=239), with greater representation of clients from the Mid North Coast and less from the Hunter compared to the wider samples (see Table 3). Demographics of clients that completed the scheme does not appear to be representative of the wider group in terms of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, Youth on Track site and risk profile (see Table 1).

Table 3. Demographic comparison of clients referred (n=367), clients that did not participate (n=239), clients that participated (n=128), clients participating for minimum three months (n=79) and clients that completed the scheme (n=29) between January 2015 – September 2016.

	Sample Profile	Clients referred (n=367)	Clients who did not participate (n=239)	Clients participated (n=128)	Clients participated for min. 3months (n=79)	Clients completed scheme (n=29)
	Mean Age	14.9	15.0	14.8	14.9	14.7
Gender	Female	21%	20%	23%	22%	21%
	Male	79%	80%	77%	78%	79%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	46%	47%	45%	44%	38%
	Non-Aboriginal	52%	51%	55%	54%	62%
	Unknown	2% (n=7)	3%(n=6)	<1%(n=1)	1%(n=1)	4% (n=1)
Youth on Track site	Blacktown	32%	33%	31%	27%	21%
	Hunter	34%	36%	29%	28%	41%
	Mid North Coast	34%	31%	41%	45%	38%
	Assessment 1 mean total YLS score	N/A	N/A	21.2	20.6	17.2
Risk at Assessment 1	High	N/A	N/A	8%(n=8)	6% (n=5)	0% (n=0)
	Medium high			63% (n=80)	66% (n=52)	52% (n=15)
	Medium			24% (n=31)	23% (n=18)	41% (n=12)
	Low			6% (n=7)	5% (n=4)	7% (n=2)

N.B. Percentages were rounded to the nearest whole number and thus do not equal 100% in all cases.

Youth on Track has a large number of clients from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, with 46% of clients referred to Youth on Track recorded as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander during the period of this evaluation. This is noteworthy, as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are considerably over-represented in the juvenile justice system, with just over half (52%) of young people in detention on an average night in the June quarter 2014 being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2013).

3.3.3 Analysis approach for YLS/CMI-AA assessment scores

Paired samples t-tests were used to compare means of YLS/CMI-AA total risk/need score and criminogenic domain scores between the first and second assessment for clients on the scheme for a minimum three months (n=79) and first and third assessment for clients on the scheme for at least six months (n=33) from the period February 2015 to September 2016.

One-way between groups ANOVA was used to determine the effect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status (n=78)² and Youth on Track referral site (n=79) on mean YLS/CMI-AA total risk score at assessment one and two between February 2015 to September 2016.

CIRCA reviewed data quality including considerations such as the multi-site nature of the data, missing data or varying data quality, and demographic factors.

The following points summarise the parameters of this approach:

- The Youth on Track scheme was expanded to include an additional five Local Area Commands (LACs) on 2 February 2015. At this time, the YLS/CMI-AA version replaced the YLS/CMI-2.0 version that had been used for the first 18 months. As a result, February 2015 is the starting point for analysis of the data. This also means that the initial start-up phase when the Youth on Track service was being developed was not included in the analysis.
- The data collection period included in the analysis was for all new clients entering the scheme from 2 February 2015 through to 3 October 2016, which means the cut-off for new clients was from 2 July 2016 (where three months is the minimum timeframe) and 2 April 2016 (where six months is the minimum timeframe).

3.3.4 Satisfaction Survey

For the purpose of this evaluation, a pre-existing exit survey implemented by Youth on Track coordinators for clients who had completed the scheme was evolved to include two additional questions aimed at gathering information on levels of satisfaction and perceived impact. Given that the previous survey had been solely an exit survey, the language in the survey was changed slightly for current clients who had participated in Youth on Track for the minimum timeframe and clients who were exiting.

The satisfaction survey was implemented by Youth on Track coordinators between 12 October 2015 to 28 September 2016. In this period, 55 survey interviews were conducted across a total of 44 participants (nine participants were interviewed twice and one participant was interviewed three times). Of the 55 interviews conducted, over half (n=28) of the interviews were conducted with the client alone, 20 with the parent alone and 7 interviews with both the parent and the client present. Just over a half were conducted as a progress evaluation (n=28) and the other half as an exit evaluation (n=27).

Descriptive analysis was conducted for the survey results. The demographic profile of the survey sample (n=44) was compared with the profile of clients referred onto Youth on Track (n=367), to assess

² Within the sample of clients that completed at least two assessments (n=79), one client had unknown Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status and was excluded from the ANOVA test.

any non-response bias. The profile of the participants in the satisfaction survey sample was similar to the clients referred to the scheme in terms of mean age and gender. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were slightly over-represented in the survey sample (50%) than the clients referred (46%) (see Table 4). Further, the satisfaction survey had a greater representation for Mid North Coast and less in Blacktown than the overall clients referred to the scheme.

Table 4. Demographic comparison of satisfaction survey participants (n=57) between October 2015 to September 2016 and overall clients referred to Youth on Track scheme between February 2015 to September 2016.

	Sample Profile	Satisfaction Survey Sample (n=44)	Clients referred to Youth on Track (n=367)
	Mean Age	15.0	14.9
Gender	Female	23%	21%
	Male	77%	79%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	50%	46%
	Non-Aboriginal	48%	52%
	Unknown	2% (n=1)	2%(n=7)
Youth on Track site	Blacktown	27%	32%
	Hunter	34%	34%
	Mid North Coast	39%	34%

3.4 Limitations

Limitations of qualitative consultations

- Those participating in qualitative consultations may be skewed towards clients and families who have a positive view of Youth on Track, those who are more confident to engage in the evaluation, and those who are easier to contact. To address this limitation, consultations with external stakeholders collected feedback on Youth on Track in relation to the range of clients who have been referred to the service.
- None of the clients nor their families who participated in this evaluation had previously disengaged from/declined to participate in the scheme. Therefore, we have no insights into why participants decline or disengage from the client’s perspective. Stakeholders, however, provided some insights into why participants may decline or disengage and these included: reluctance to acknowledge they have a problem; lack of willingness or desire for change; and family members/carer’s lack of willingness to support and/or acknowledge the young person’s offending behaviours.

Limitations of YLS/CMI-AA assessment analysis

- The YLS/CMI-AA is completed based on caseworker consultations with clients, families, and other relevant stakeholders. This process does not include self-assessments from clients or

families. This evaluation looked at changes recorded for personality/behaviour and attitudes/beliefs, these results are not based on self-reporting from the client.

- The criteria included in the YLS/CMI-AA are dichotomous, and it is not possible to record degrees of change across the criteria included in each domain. This limits the usefulness of this tool in identifying the range of changes that may be experienced by Youth on Track clients. The qualitative research aims to address this by exploring degrees of change in these consultations.
- It is not possible to assess the changes in the YLS/CMI-AA assessment data in comparison to a control group as there is no similar group in terms of risk of re-offending with whom the YLS/CMI-AA is conducted.

Alternative measures and suggestions were considered however limitations in their use were identified. These are summarised below:

- The Adolescent Offending Decisional Balance Scale was reviewed, and while this addresses the gap of not having a self-reported tool to assess changes in antisocial behaviour and thinking, the potential limitations of this tool were felt to outweigh the benefits. The main limitations were that the tool would be time consuming and difficult for the caseworkers to administer, and it would not be possible to draw on other control groups for comparison.
- It was suggested that a tool could be developed to provide a self-assessment measure for clients, or for caseworkers to complete to enable the degree of change to be recorded. As there are no existing validated tools for this purpose, it was felt that the level of confidence in results gathered from tools developed specifically for this evaluation would be limited.

Limitations of satisfaction survey analysis

- Limited number of responses introduces potential bias as it only provides results for those clients who are engaged and able to be contacted, and may be skewed towards those who have positive views of Youth on Track.
- Surveys were administered by Youth on Track coordinators, which may have skewed responses (although it is worth noting that the Youth on Track coordinators were not directly involved in service delivery). A benefit of the Youth on Track coordinator administering the survey was that it meant that if any issues arose, they could have been responded to by Uniting, and additional support could have been provided to clients if needed.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

4. Youth on Track scheme

“Youth on Track can help with not re-offending. This is part of what they work on, the caseworkers. There are 12 different points – from family life to peers, education and so on. They look at the positives and the negatives in those sub-categories and work on those most effective to stop re-offending. Integrating with the community is part of that - encouraging them to do things, engaging with local community and how well they can improve the attitude of the young person. I can't say 100% towards re-offending – but for some is their attitude improving since being with Youth on Track? Yes. They want to go well at school or they want to get a decent form of employment. Things are working with the family. The areas of improvement might vary but we definitely see some.” (Stakeholder, Mid North Coast)

The following sections details the evaluation findings from the evaluation in terms of the effectiveness and impact that the scheme has on Youth on Track clients (and their family and siblings) with regard to social benefits that relate to risk of re-offending. These are based on the 'Central 8' criminogenic domains (see section 2.3.1) and have been conflated into the following areas:

- Anti-social behaviour and thinking
- Peer relations
- Alcohol and other drug use
- Educations and employment
- Family functioning
- Connections to community

Overall, the structure of the Youth on Track scheme was attributed to positive shifts in attitudes and behaviours that some Youth on Track clients have experienced. In particular, the provision of one-on-one case management which requires Youth on Track case managers to coordinate service delivery, facilitate access to supports and deliver interventions to address the individual young person's criminogenic needs and to increase pro-social behaviour. The kinds of interventions that were noted as especially beneficial included behavioural interventions with the young person, family interventions and educational interventions/engagement.

Working collaboratively with other service providers was noted by stakeholders as another key strength of the Youth on Track scheme who attributed interagency collaboration to positive changes for some clients.

Owing to the high level of needs that many clients experience, many stakeholders noted how Youth on Track is a service that helps them with a wide range of issues. This involves caseworkers addressing several problems and challenges and, in a sense, Youth on Track was described by stakeholders as a very effective 'one-stop shop' especially for clients.

Overall, there was a high level of satisfaction with Youth on Track and the way in which the support was tailored to specifically respond to the individual needs of the young person. That the support was offered in an open and non-judgemental way was highly appreciated and valued, as was the 'patience' and 'honesty' with which the caseworkers responded to their clients.

Satisfaction survey results indicated that participants were positive about the service. When asked if the Youth on Track scheme has provided young people with the skills to choose not to re-offend, an overall average score of 8.2 was produced on a scale of 1 to 10 (where 10 was the highest rating and 1 was the lowest rating). When participants were asked if they would recommend Youth on Track to other young people, on average, participants scored 9.2 out of 10. A higher mean score of 9.7 was observed among parents (n=17) who completed the survey separately from the client, in comparison to the mean score of 8.6 among clients (n=20), indicating a stronger positive response among parents (see Table 5).

Table 5. Youth on Track satisfaction survey mean scores on a scale of 1 to 10 (where 10 was the highest rating and 1 was the lowest rating).

	Would you recommend Youth on Track for other young people?		Do you feel that Youth on Track has given you/your child the skills to choose not to re-offend?	
	n	Mean score	n	Mean score
Overall	42	9.2	55	8.2
Clients only	20	8.6	28	8.3
Parents only	17	9.7	20	8.3
Both client and parent present	5	9.8	7	7.9

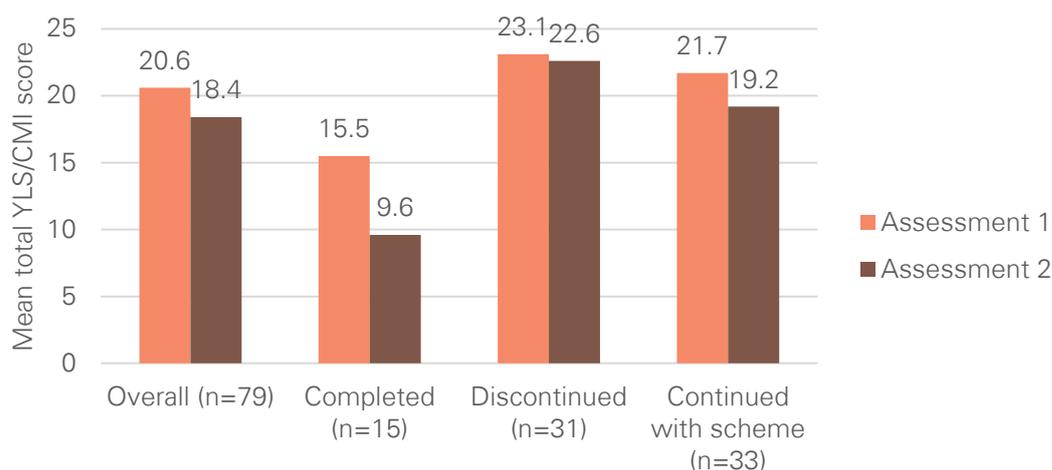
4.1 Changes in total YLS/CMI-AA assessment scores over time

4.1.1 Change over three months

A paired samples t-test indicated evidence of a statistically significant decrease in the mean total YLS/CMI-AA score between the first assessment ($x_1=20.6$) and second assessment ($x_2=18.4$) ($t(78)=3.07$, (s.d. 6.67), $p=0.003$) for the overall sample of clients receiving at least two assessments ($n=79$) (see Figure 2).

Due to the small sample sizes of the sub-groups, further statistical analysis was not conducted to determine significance levels on the Completed ($n=15$) and Discontinued ($n=31$) sub-groups, thus, results reported for these sub-groups should be interpreted with caution.

Clients that discontinued with the scheme after three months did not show considerable change. Of these, 84% (26 out of 31) were assessed as 'high risk' ($n=4$) or 'medium high risk' ($n=22$) at their initial assessment. Reasons recorded for discontinuing with the scheme included referrals to Juvenile Justice, Community Corrections, or Alcohol and other Drug counselling, and the inability to contact or find the client.



Group	n	X1 mean YLS score	X2 mean YLS score	Mean difference between X1 & X2	Paired Standard deviation	p-value
Overall	79	20.6	18.4	2.2	6.67	0.003*
Completed	15	15.5	9.6	5.9	N/A	N/A
Discontinued	31	23.1	22.6	0.5	N/A	N/A
Continued	33	21.7	19.2	2.5	N/A	N/A

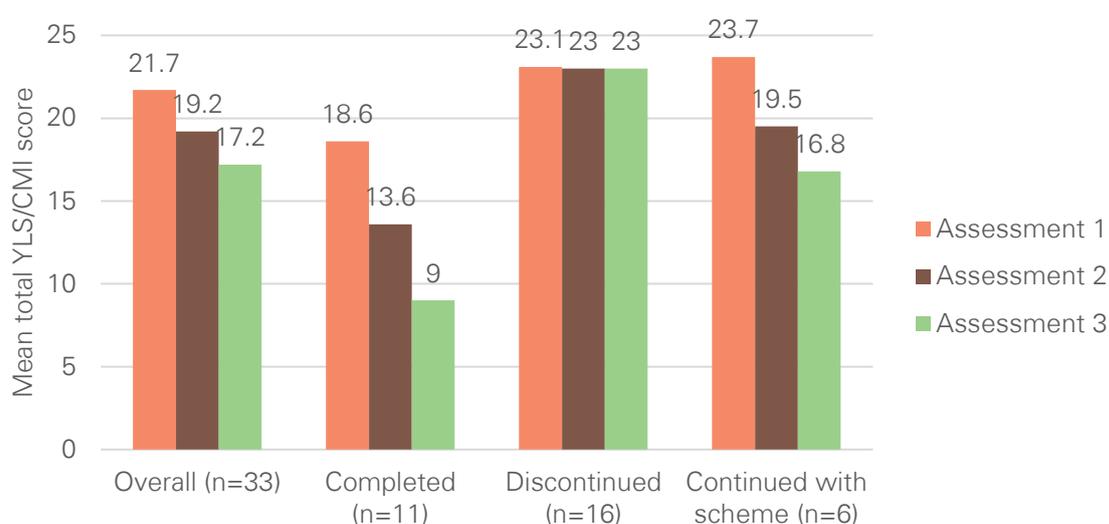
*Statistically significant

Figure 2. Comparison of total mean YLS/CMI-AA score at initial assessment and second assessment for Youth on Track clients receiving at least two assessments (three months on the scheme) between February 2015 – July 2016. Includes comparison overall ($n=79$), and for clients that completed the scheme ($n=15$), discontinued ($n=31$) and continued with the scheme after their second assessment ($n=33$).

4.1.2 Change over six months

Of the clients that continued with the scheme for six months, 76% (25 out of 33) of these clients belonged to the 'medium high risk' (n=24) or 'high risk' (n=1) group. The change in mean total YLS/CMI-AA score between the first and third assessment for the overall sample of clients receiving at least three assessments (n=33) was compared using a paired samples t-test. Upon their third assessment at six months, these clients demonstrated a significant decrease in mean total YLS/CMI-AA score between their first assessment ($x_1=23.7$) and third assessment ($x_3=16.8$) ($t(32)=2.73$, (s.d. 9.38), $p=0.01$) (see Figure 4).

Due to the small sample sizes of the sub-groups, further statistical analysis was not conducted to determine significance levels on the Completed (n=11), Discontinued (n=16), and Continued (n=6) sub-groups, thus, numerical results reported for these sub-groups should be interpreted with caution.



Group	n	X1 mean YLS/CMI-AA score	X3 mean YLS/CMI-AA score	Mean difference between X1 & X3	Paired standard deviation	p-value
Overall	33	21.7	17.2	4.5	9.38	0.01*
Completed	11	18.6	9.0	9.6	N/A	N/A
Discontinued	16	23.1	23.0	0.1	N/A	N/A
Continued	6	23.7	16.8	6.9	N/A	N/A

*Statistically significant

Figure 3. Comparison of total mean YLS/CMI-AA score at initial assessment, second assessment, and third assessment for Youth on Track clients on the scheme for six months between February 2015 – July 2016. Figure demonstrates comparisons overall (n=33), and for clients that completed the scheme (n=11), discontinued (n=16) and continued with the scheme after their third assessment (n=6). N/A applies where no paired-samples t-tests were conducted.

The following sections detail the findings from the evaluation in terms of the effectiveness and impact that the scheme has on Youth on Track clients (and their family and siblings) risk of re-offending across the following areas: 1. Anti-social behaviour and thinking; 2. Peer relations; 3. Alcohol and other drug use; 4. Educations and employment; 5. Family functioning; 6. Connections to community.

5. Antisocial behaviour and thinking

5.1 Shifting behaviour and thinking

Qualitative consultations with all stakeholders suggest that noticeable and positive behavioural changes have occurred for many of the clients engaging with Youth on Track. A key theme repeated by stakeholders was how participation in the scheme has helped clients to understand the consequences of their actions and learn to manage their behaviours so they do not react or engage in situations that could lead to antisocial behaviour and/or offending. For many clients, this is new information and it has helped them to build skills to make decisions and exercise control over their own actions. Stakeholders reported that clients had also learnt skills in relation to managing their anger, and walking away from situations that may get them into trouble. Stakeholders, including parents/carers, pointed out that positive outcomes for clients have encompassed much more than their merely 'no longer offending' and have extended to their engagement in different/new activities and caring about the situations they find themselves in. One stakeholder reported how the caseworkers encourage clients to think about victims of crime, 'to look outside of themselves, so they can develop empathy'.

"I got to a point with not being able to cope with my anger, I just wouldn't care about anything, I used to not care what happened. I would get in that mood and happily kill somebody and throw my whole life away. Youth on Track helped me a lot - completely helped. I'd be in jail if I hadn't been to Youth on Track. You would've seen me on the news for doing something violent... Youth on Track gave me the skills to make me the person that I am today." (Client, Blacktown)

One family reported how Youth on Track had intervened in her son's life just as he was on the brink of 'going off track' - providing the motivation for him to examine the short and longer-term consequences of his behaviour, noting that this was 'extremely helpful and will definitely reduce future offending'.

"Things that [client's name] has learned through Youth on Track will definitely reduce future offending. I don't think [client's name] would go out any more and do something that he would get into trouble for. He has learned from his mistakes. Learned about not hanging around people, associating with the wrong people. I see it when he is driving, he is critical of drivers who speed, says they will get into trouble. I think he has understood all the trouble that we had, all the stress and torment that we had to go through happened for a reason and now he sees 'Hey, I am happy. I'm good so why would I wreck it all?' He will turn into a pretty positive young man, already has." (Family, Mid North Coast)

While qualitative consultations yielded some evidence of behavioural changes, significant changes were not observed in the YLS/CMI-AA assessment scores. Change in mean YLS/CMI-AA scores against the personality/behaviour and attitudes/beliefs criminogenic domains were compared between the first and second assessment (three months on the scheme) and first and third assessment (six months on the scheme) using a paired samples t-test. The Bonferroni correction³ was used and as a

³ Bonferroni correction is a conservative adjustment made to P-values when multiple paired t-tests are being performed to reduce the chances of obtaining false-positive results.

result, the new threshold for statistical significance for this analysis was $p=0.007$. While there was a numerical decline, clients receiving at least two assessments ($n=79$) did not show significant reductions in the criminogenic domains; after their second assessment personality/behaviour ($t(78)=2.08$, (s.d. 1.68), $p=0.04$) and attitudes/beliefs ($t(78)=0.59$, (s.d. 1.33), $p=0.6$) or after their third assessment ($n=33$) for personality/behaviour ($t(78)=2.85$, (s.d. 2.02), $p=0.008$) and attitudes/beliefs ($t(78)=1.09$, (s.d. 1.92), $p=0.3$) domains (see Figure 6).

The lack of statistically significant changes in YLS/CMI-AA assessment scores for personality and attitudinal domains may be explained by their complexity. Stakeholders and parents alike noted that for sustained change to occur in these circumstances, intervention over a longer timeframe than the Youth on Track scheme allows for (maximum of 12 months) is required. Furthermore, YLS/CMI-AA assessment scores do not include self-assessments by the client in terms of shifts in personality and attitudes/beliefs, domains that are both highly personal and introspective. It was also important for stakeholders that recognition be given to a client's incremental attitudinal and behavioural shifts, especially for those clients whose antisocial/offending behaviours are deeply entrenched. Given these limitations, qualitative analysis should be considered closely in regards to these domains.



	Criminogenic domain	X1 mean YLS/CMI-AA score	X2 mean YLS/CMI-AA score	Mean difference between X1 & X2	Standard Deviation	P-value
3 months (n=79)	Personality / behaviour	3.9	3.5	0.4	1.68	0.04
	Attitudes / beliefs	2.0	1.9	0.1	1.33	0.6
6 months (n=33)	Personality / behaviour	4.2	3.2	1.0	2.02	0.008
	Attitudes / beliefs	2.1	1.7	0.4	1.92	0.3

Figure 4. Comparison of mean YLS scores across personality and attitude criminogenic domains between first and second assessment at three months ($n=79$) and between first and third assessment at six months ($n=33$) from February 2015 to September 2016 ($n=33$).

Qualitative consultations revealed that poor relationships with the police were a significant factor in the offending histories of a number of clients and many saw the police and their role in relation to young people negatively. While most of the clients interviewed for this study reported that they were unlikely to go to the police for help, or expect any help from them, they nonetheless had become more aware of the different pathways that had led to their offending behaviours and that had put them in touch with the police in the first instance. Learning new skills, and practising them, so that they could avoid situations that might get them into trouble and/or find alternative activities to engage them had been described as 'invaluable'.

"It feels bad to think about the incident that happened with the police. I feel bad for mum. Youth on Track helped me to learn ways to avoid trouble. Now I go do something like motor bike riding, hang out with mates. Helped a lot to avoid getting into trouble again. Gets me out of trouble, because now I am not just sitting round home doing nothing." (Client, Hunter)

The challenges of changing antisocial behaviour and thinking was expressed by one stakeholder, particularly for those clients whose 'negative family environment means there will be a high risk of re-offending behaviours regardless of a Youth on Track intervention'. Mental health issues, little to no parental engagement and involvement in their lives, being 'brought up in a family that is not in a good place' all contribute towards clients being at high risk of offending and re-offending. Youth on Track caseworkers reported that developing and building trust with all clients, regardless of their background, is key to shifting attitudes and beliefs, with caseworkers posing questions such as 'Where would you like to be? What are your aspirations?' to instil a sense of hope.

One parent reported that her daughter had not been getting into trouble since participating in Youth on Track, but with her track record of antisocial/offending behaviour, she believed that 12 months was not sufficient to ensure that she avoids re-offending in the future; rather, support for a further 12 months was considered necessary. Other stakeholders also noted how there 'could be consideration around the time-frame – for some clients, 12 months is not long enough and they may need 18-24 months' support'.

Overall, however, stakeholders highlighted the benefits of the intervention and provided examples of how a client's life can 'turn around as a result of their engaging with Youth on Track'. For example, one stakeholder, working with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander client whose personal history included domestic violence, inter-generational involvement in the juvenile justice system, and drug misuse has credited Youth on Track for helping him to address many of the underlying issues that have contributed towards his offending behaviours. As a result of the support provided through the scheme, it was noted how the client's offending behaviours have since stopped.

"I can see from this boy how he turned his life around and has not been offending since Youth on Track ... He was able to heal from the trauma and drugs and the domestic violence, losing his father, his mother in the justice system – he addressed all those issues. What Youth on Track has done for him - it has made such a difference to him and he now has some strategies to deal with things he has gone through. If he falls off the track in the future, he has the confidence to do something about it. Imagine, 40 offences and he has not offended since Youth on Track - all in less than a year." (Stakeholder, Blacktown)

5.2 Trained caseworkers and family therapists

These shifts in attitudes and behaviours have been directly attributed to the ways in which Youth on Track caseworkers have worked with clients to address their offending beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours.

All stakeholders reported how the Youth on Track caseworkers and family therapists are trained in, and skilled at, modelling and encouraging pro-social behaviour which, for many clients, has had a positive impact on the ways in which they relate to others. In addition, their approach to addressing clients' problems and goals has been noted as collaborative, with the caseworker and the client working together to realise or achieve successful outcomes usually by setting realistic targets to change entrenched habits. For example, one client explained how 'quick I was to anger and how slow I was to calm down' and, with the support of his caseworker, he was able to 'work through how I could change ... work through what was happening in my brain, what was making me do this'. The valuable support of the caseworkers was reinforced by satisfaction survey results which revealed that when participants were asked about the helpfulness of their caseworker (n=53), an overall mean score of 9.4 was produced on a scale of 1 to 10 (where 10 was the highest rating and 1 was the lowest rating).

Caseworkers explained how they had received a lot of training, mentoring and supervision to deliver the Youth on Track intervention including Changing Habits and Reaching Targets (CHART). CHART forms the basis of the structured, individually tailored intervention that aims to reduce the client's risk of re-offending. As a 12-module program, caseworkers noted how CHART allows them to situate the client's specific circumstances within the context of the modules. For example, one stakeholder reported how they will talk to their clients about their peers and ask them to reflect upon their influences to identify triggers to aggressive or anti-social behaviour.

Parents also reported how the caseworkers and family therapists are helping to build their resilience, through emotional as well as practical support/guidance, and how this

CHANGING ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS

Kevin* is a Youth on Track client who has demonstrated a shift in attitude and behavior as explained in his own words.

Prior to Youth on Track, Kevin was not sure how he felt about offending and getting into trouble with the police, "I don't think that I felt anything".

Since participating in Youth on Track, Kevin feels as though he is more aware of the consequences of his actions and the importance of positive choices. The guidance of his caseworker has been especially valuable in supporting this realisation as they showed him all the possible consequences, and the short and longer-term impacts, should he continue offending.

"I feel like I changed completely. After I got to understand the consequences, I just didn't want to go that way again. It helped a lot. Now I think that if I even started to think about offending I would just not do it."

**Name changed*

has proved invaluable for some whose own internal resources were stretched to almost breaking point prior to the intervention.

“Our caseworker was a saving grace for me ... what she did I can't praise her enough. She has helped with the whole family including the others having trouble. The support that I have had from the Youth on Track girls has really helped me through ... I don't know what I would have done without them.”
(Family, Blacktown).

6. Peer relations

All stakeholders noted how peer relations can have a positive or negative influence on a client's behaviour, including antisocial and offending behaviours. Where peer relations have been reported as 'negative', Youth on Track caseworkers have helped their clients understand, and be aware of, how they are being influenced by others; they have assisted them to focus on making their own decisions and resist antisocial behaviour and negative influences.

"Whatever my friends do, that's up to them, they're the same friends but I do what I want to and what I think is right to do now, not so much under the influence of my friends. I can make my own decisions." (Client, Blacktown)

Clients and stakeholders also expressed that, while challenging, some had left their peer group behind in an effort to change their previous patterns of behaviours and offending.

"I haven't found new friends to hang out with because I don't want to hang out with anyone that might get me into trouble." (Client, Blacktown)

Stakeholders noted how for some clients making new friends was a positive experience, especially for those who were previously isolated and lacking in confidence. Caseworkers were credited with successfully building clients' confidence so they could link with pro-social peers. Moreover, stakeholders and clients alike reported that the ways in which Youth on Track caseworkers related to the clients - being respectful of them, working in collaboration with them, modelling positive interactions - encouraged pro-social behaviour outside of those interactions.

Stakeholders also noted how some clients' engagement with others had become more constructive since engaging with their caseworker, even those whose peer groups had not changed.

Being made aware that it is possible to have positive interactions with people, on the one hand, and of the ways in which peers can assert a negative influence over them, on the other, has allowed some clients the confidence to stop and think before participating in antisocial/offending behaviours.

While quantitative analysis of the criminogenic domain, peer relations, showed no significant⁴ change in mean YLS/CMI-AA score between the first ($X_1=3.1$) and second assessment ($X_2=2.8$) at three

⁴ Bonferroni correction applied, adjusted P-value = 0.007.

POSITIVE PEER INTERACTION

In the six months since his participation in Youth on Track, Tom's* family have noticed big changes in relation to the kind of people he surrounds himself with.

Previously, Tom would hang around with "the ones that roam around the street and get into trouble".

Tom's family noted that the Youth on Track scheme has encouraged Tom to look at the friends he had and work out who he wanted to hang out with and make that change.

Tom has now developed new friendships and engaged in activities such as fishing or watching movies.

**Name changed*

months ($t(78)=1.87$, (s.d. 1.15), $p=0.07$), there was strong evidence of a significant reduction between the first ($X_1=3.2$) and third assessment ($X_3=2.5$) at six months ($t(32)=3.15$, (s.d. 1.22), $p=0.004$) (see Table 6). Of the clients engaged with the Youth on Track scheme for at least six months ($n=33$), 76% were assessed as medium high ($n=24$) or high ($n=1$) at their initial assessment. This suggests greater progress in YLS/CMI-AA scores in the peer relations domain was made for clients on Youth on Track over six months. This may indicate the complexity of peer relationships for medium high and high risk clients (at initial assessment) and the length of time it takes to develop pro-social relationships.

Table 6. Comparison of mean YLS/CMI-AA peer relation scores between first assessment and second assessment ($n=79$) and first and third assessment ($n=33$) from February 2015 to September 2016.

	Criminogenic domain	X1 mean YLS/CMI-AA score	X2 (3 months) or X3 (6 months) mean YLS/CMI-AA score	Mean difference	Standard Deviation	P-value
3 months (n=79)	Peer relations	3.1	2.8	0.2	1.15	0.07
6 months (n=33)	Peer relations	3.2	2.5	0.7	1.22	0.004*

*Statistically significant

7. Alcohol and other drug use

In accordance with ethical approval to carry out this research, no questions were asked of the clients interviewed about previous or current alcohol and other drug (AOD) use and if/how Youth on Track has contributed to changes in this area. There were stakeholders who participated in this research, however, who were in a prime position to comment upon changes in some participants' AOD use as they either engaged directly with Youth on Track clients on a regular basis and/or they worked closely with AOD counsellors who also worked with Youth on Track clients.

7.1 Resistance to change

Problematic AOD use was the one domain that stakeholders agreed was the most unlikely to change for the majority of clients, despite Youth on Track intervention. This was consistent with the quantitative analysis of mean YLS/CMI-AA scores which showed no significant⁵ reduction for the AOD criminogenic domain between the first ($X_1=2.4$) and second assessment ($X_2=2.0$) at three months ($t(78)=2.49$, (s.d.1.31), $p=0.02$) and first ($X_1=2.5$) and third assessment ($X_3=1.8$) at six months ($t(32)=2.41$, (s.d.1.52), $p=0.02$) (see Table 7).

Table 7. Comparison of mean YLS/CMI-AA AOD scores between first assessment and second assessment at three months ($n=79$) and first and third assessment at six months ($n=33$) from February 2015 to September 2016.

	Criminogenic domain	X1 mean YLS/CMI-AA score	X2 (3 months) or X3 (6 months) mean YLS/CMI-AA score	Mean difference	Standard Deviation	P-value
3 months ($n=79$)	AOD	2.4	2.0	0.4	1.31	0.02
6 months ($n=33$)	AOD	2.5	1.8	0.6	1.52	0.02

Furthermore, Youth on Track staff across the consultation sites also reported that the YLS/CMI-AA does not measure incremental changes and, where a client's AOD use may have changed (decreased in frequency or, for example, through a move from ICE to cannabis), these changes would not necessarily be registered on the YLS/CMI-AA score. In addition, some parents reported that Youth on Track had been instrumental in their child changing their AOD habits, while for others the scheme has made no difference to this aspect of their behaviour.

It was also noted by stakeholders that revealing AOD misuse requires a high degree of trust and, for the majority of clients, this takes time to develop. The Youth on Track caseworkers recognise this, and introduce the issues around AOD misuse in a safe, non-confrontational way.

"Young people are not very forthcoming around this. It takes time for them to trust us with this knowledge. The caseworker does an assessment when she goes to the family – it's a foot in about where kids are at... It's also about finding the right moment to introduce the topic of AOD misuse. We

⁵ Bonferroni correction applied, adjusted P-value = 0.007.

start by introducing safe party practices and develop plans to keep themselves safe.” (Stakeholder, Hunter)

Stakeholders emphasised the normalisation of AOD use among young people, especially smoking marijuana and drinking alcohol, noting that even some young people under the age of eight thinking smoking marijuana was acceptable. One stakeholder explained how, prior to Youth on Track, there was no counselling or any other form of AOD support for the younger demographic (between 8-10 years of age). The interagency collaborative approach that Youth on Track operates has opened the possibility for these younger clients to access the supports provided by Youth on Track.

Furthermore, Youth on Track caseworkers seek to address the dangers of AOD use through asking clients to consider motivations for AOD use and providing clients with the tools to make better choices and ways of saying no. Such support has yielded some positive outcomes as one stakeholder reported, ‘one [Youth on Track client] has stopped and I think the other has minimised his use’. Youth on Track was also credited by one parent for contributing towards a significant shift in her son’s AOD use and associated violent behaviours, noting how the caseworkers had encouraged him to consider his actions and the consequences of those actions. For this parent, this shift has resulted in a son with an enhanced sense of self-regard of whom she is no longer afraid: ‘Since Youth on Track he is calmer, more respectful and less likely to break the law. He said he just didn’t give a crap and now he cares.’

8. Education and/or employment

Working in conjunction with schools to improve clients' access to and engagement with education is a key component of the Youth on Track scheme and the significance of clients' re-engagement with school was raised consistently by stakeholders. Stakeholders reported how caseworkers have prioritised re-engagement with the education system for Youth on Track participants who are under 16 years of age and who have either been expelled and/or regularly suspended from school, or who had very low to non-existent attendance rates.

For many Youth on Track clients, the experience of school and work had often been challenging. Some of the difficulties experienced with school included: expulsions/suspensions; general dislike of school; poor attendance; poor literacy; and behavioural problems. Overall, the kinds of supports that the Youth on Track caseworkers provided have included talking with teachers and advocating on behalf of the client and their families, helping clients with transport or uniforms, addressing problem behaviours directly with the client, and being there to talk with and support the client as they re-engage with the school environment.

As a result, stakeholders repeatedly noted that education and employment were key areas of significant change for many clients. This is supported by the quantitative analysis of the YLS/CMI-AA assessment scores against the education/employment criminogenic domain. Paired samples t-test indicated strong evidence⁶ for a significant decrease in mean YLS/CMI-AA scores between the first ($X_1=3.4$) and second assessment ($X_2=2.8$) at three months ($t(78)=3.53$, (s.d. 1.63), $p=0.001$) and first ($X_1=3.6$) and third assessment ($X_3=2.4$) at six months ($t(32)=3.57$, (s.d. 2.05), $p=0.001$) (see Table 8).

Table 8. Comparison of mean YLS/CMI-AA education/employment domain scores between first assessment and second assessment at three months ($n=79$) and first and third assessment at six months ($n=33$) from February 2015 to September 2016.

	Criminogenic domain	X1 mean YLS/CMI-AA score	X2 (3 months) or X3 (6 months) mean YLS/CMI-AA score	Mean difference	Standard Deviation	P-value
3 months (n=79)	Education/employment	3.4	2.8	0.6	1.63	0.001*
6 months (n=33)	Education/employment	3.6	2.4	1.3	2.05	0.001*

*Statistically significant

⁶ Bonferroni correction applied, adjusted P-value = 0.007.

8.1 Caseworkers as advocates for clients

Stakeholders emphasised how caseworkers were fierce advocates for their clients' rights to an education and how their persistence has been a major contributing factor to clients' re-engagement with the education system. In some instances, clients were assisted to go back to school part-time or were moved to new learning environments. With their networks across the education sector at the local level, stakeholders noted how caseworkers are constantly attempting to seek solutions within specialist schools that would suit the client better than the mainstream system.

"School is very often an issue for these young people and schools can be the hardest agency for the caseworkers to work with. The only reason the school is taking [client's name] back is because the caseworker has advocated on his behalf. Many of these young people are exempted from school. They sometimes move to an alternate school, which sometimes works... For Indigenous children, they are sometimes disengaging from year 3. Their families will also have a history of disengaging, so education past year 10 is not really happening – it didn't happen for their parents so it won't be part of the lexicon." (Stakeholder, Hunter)

Although schools are one of the services authorised to refer clients to Youth on Track, stakeholders indicated that this was rarely done. Of the 367 clients referred to Youth on Track between January 2015 to June 2016 (18 months), 3% were referred by schools (see Figure 7).

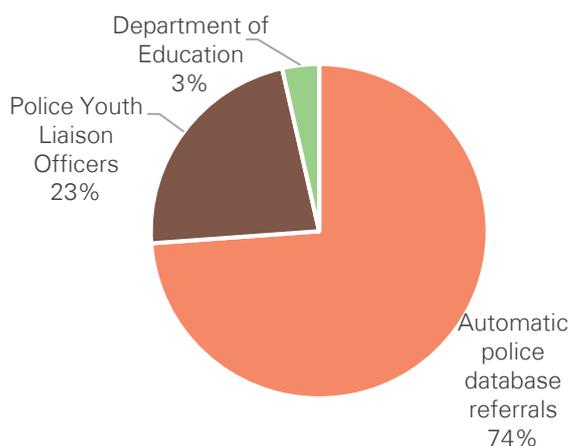


Figure 5. Referral sources for Youth on Track clients (n=367) referred between January 2015 to June 2016.

Some stakeholders noted that schools can be difficult to work with, often inflexible and sometimes more concerned with school boundaries and who is responsible for a particular client than ensuring the

RE-ENGAGING WITH SCHOOL

Peter* had experienced a number of challenges in the school environment. After a schoolyard fight Peter was expelled and an Apprehended Violence Order was placed against him by another parent.

As a consequence, Peter was absent from school for three months, during which time the Youth on Track caseworker worked with both Peter and the school system to ensure that a suitable placement was secured for him.

Peter's family have since explained that he is doing very well, '...his attitude has changed, he is happy to go to school. Youth on Track helped with that a lot'.

**Name changed*

best outcomes for the client. The time required to work effectively with schools was noted as being significant, particularly in building effective partnerships with schools.

Stakeholders also acknowledged that while 'it's disturbing the amount of suspensions some of the schools give for such minor stuff' there is recognition that some clients' behaviour is violent and aggressive within (and outside of) the school setting. In these instances, schools need to weigh up, and protect, the safety of all students and teachers. However, stakeholders felt strongly that 'schools have a hard battle ... but, suspending is not the answer'.

8.2 Skill development

Many clients had no experience of writing a resume or preparing for a job interview and reported that Youth on Track had helped them develop and apply these skills with success. Clients also needed ongoing support and encouragement to maintain engagement and confidence in their work role.

"He has successfully completed school. Now he is doing a Cert III in Hospitality and currently doing work experience. Youth on Track motivated him internally. They helped with resumes, helped him apply for jobs. I don't know what he would have done without this help." (Family, Mid North Coast)

For some clients, employment opportunities are already severely limited owing to their long-term disengagement from school. With the assistance and guidance from caseworkers - where sometimes even very basic situations present as challenges for the client, for example, buying and using an OPAL card - their prospects may improve and employment may seem less of an impossibility.

"Quite a few of the young people, age 16/17, don't have prospects of re-engaging at school or many job prospects, so Youth on Track's efforts are focused on getting them geared up for work, encouraging appropriate behaviours/manners for work. They teach them to take public transport, help them with OPAL card, buy work boots/clothes, help them with TFN etc. Some of this stuff the school would help with but they are not engaged, so Youth on Track is filling in gaps." (Stakeholder, Hunter)

8.3 Interagency collaboration

Interagency collaboration has been cited by other service providers as one of the most successful aspects of the Youth on Track model. By working collaboratively with other services, stakeholders revealed that they were able to identify how they could each help support their clients into relevant courses, with transportation, linking in with job networks, etc. For some, this has resulted in clients' participating in alternative education, for example, TAFE or short programs. Overall, this stakeholder noted it was the holistic approach to supporting clients 'that eased the way'.

Moreover, there were often other issues that needed to be tackled to help a client re-engage with school or find work such as housing, family conflict, and health issues. Stakeholders reported that the holistic approach to supporting clients adopted by the Youth on Track scheme, 'eased the way' to accessing essential services. One stakeholder, working within the health system, noted how participation in Youth on Track has removed barriers around issues of access to essential health

services for some clients. For another stakeholder, there was recognition that Youth on Track is fulfilling a need/addressing a gap that is outside of the scope/remit of other service providers.

9. Family functioning

Many of the clients going through the Youth on Track scheme face multiple complex challenges, and family functioning appeared to be compromised for many. All stakeholders reported that Youth on Track played an important role in helping clients to manage and improve their relationships with parents, siblings and other family members. Wider family intervention and support was also available through the trained family therapists who focus on such things as helping parents and children communicate more effectively and safely, collaboratively solve problems, resolve conflict, and improve parenting skills. For some parents, this support has resulted in positive shifts in attitudes and behaviour towards their child. One stakeholder reported how the improved behaviours of the client, in the home environment, had allowed the parents to recognise that 'it wasn't all the young person's fault and that some changes needed to come from them'.

Where enhanced family functioning was reported by the families, this tended to be reported by the adults rather than Youth on Track clients. For example, one parent reported how she had been able to alter her responses to her child's anger through good advice from the family therapist '... who is a professional, so it's not just a friend giving you advice, her advice is legit'. Where previously the mother would scream back at her son, the family therapist showed her how she could make different decisions, with better outcomes for all concerned.

Some stakeholders specifically referred to the positive impact that the family intervention had also had on siblings. For example, the family therapist had helped another mother by identifying things in her behaviour that she could change such as balancing her reactions to her children when issues arise, with overall family functioning improving as a result.

"Youth on Track has helped us as a family a lot - helped to rethink everything... I think it has had an effect on my little fella too. I used to be angry, now we get on better, more at ease, more peaceful.. Youth on Track has changed how confident I feel as a parent... it made me more positive about things and people don't doubt me so much anymore because he has settled right down." (Family, Hunter)

This positive response to family intervention is reiterated by satisfaction survey results which indicated that when participants were asked about the helpfulness of their family therapist (n=32), an overall mean score of 8.5 was produced on a scale of 1 to 10 (where 10 was the highest rating and 1 was the

IMPROVED FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Brian* and his father have been working with the Youth on Track caseworker and family therapist to ease their relationship.

Their support has helped Brian's father understand his son better. As a result, his expectations of Brian changed and he came to realise that Brian is a young person who thinks differently to him and that this is ok.

For Brian, the relationship with his father has improved, "things have changed a lot ... he lays off hassling me now and it's better than it was. My caseworker also talked to me about my attitude towards my Dad. Things are better now".

**Name changed*

lowest rating). In particular, parents who responded to this question (n=12) were especially positive, yielding an average score of 9.3/10.

One stakeholder, who worked with many of the Youth on Track families in that local area, reported that there were 'numerous occasions' where family functioning and interactions were improved as a direct result of Youth on Track intervention. Improved family functioning included spending time together as a family unit, talking about some of the issues that are impacting negatively on the family, parents providing breakfast for their children and so on.

"There is most definitely an improvement... Young people that were withdrawn from the family are now not disengaged. The parents take the young person out once a month for an excursion, a family day out. They had never done this before – they did their own thing. There were underlying family issues and Youth on Track helped identify this." (Stakeholder, Blacktown)

Interestingly, analysis of changes in mean YLS/CMI-AA scores for family and living circumstances criminogenic domain showed no significant⁷ change between the first ($X_1=3.2$) and second assessment ($X_2=2.9$) at three months ($t(78)=1.15$, (s.d. 1.66), $p=0.3$) or first ($X_1=3.2$) and third assessment ($X_3=2.8$) at six months ($t(32)=0.98$, (s.d. 1.95), $p=0.3$) (see Table 9). While statistical analysis did not show evidence of significant change, it should be noted that the degrees of change against the seven individual items in the family functioning domain (inadequate monitoring; difficulty controlling behaviour; inappropriate discipline; poor relations with father (step-father); poor relations with mother (step-mother); antisocial values in family; and homelessness) are not fully captured in the YLS/CMI-AA assessment. Each domain item is scored dichotomously (0 or 1) producing a total score that ranges from 0 to 7. As such, only substantial changes will be recorded. Nonetheless, the more nuanced changes in family functioning have been revealed through qualitative data as previously discussed.

Table 9. Comparison of mean YLS/CMI-AA family and living circumstances domain scores between first assessment and second assessment (n=79) and first and third assessment (n=33) from February 2015 to September 2016.

	Criminogenic domain	X1 mean YLS/CMI-AA score	X2 (3 months) or X3 (6 months) mean YLS/CMI-AA score	Mean difference	Standard Deviation	P-value
3 months (n=79)	Family & living circumstances	3.2	2.9	0.2	1.66	0.3
6 months (n=33)	Family & living circumstances	3.2	2.8	0.3	1.95	0.3

⁷ Bonferroni correction applied, adjusted P-value = 0.007.

10. Connections within the community

Youth on Track has helped clients and, in some instances, their family to access community supports which has been an important element in helping them to engage and make local connections with other young people and services. Stakeholders reported how community connections and support came in many forms, with Youth on Track caseworkers responsive to the needs of clients, including making connections through music, building basic skills like shopping and cooking, and learning to drive. Sport was an important and new connection for many clients and was effective in engaging them in a healthy group activity. Youth on Track was also able to help with barriers to playing sport such as transport, uniforms and fees, enabling them to participate. Many clients themselves were appreciative of the time given to them by Youth on Track caseworkers and valued the effort made to help and support them.

“I played football last year and Youth on Track helped with that, we had to play in Canberra and they helped me with transport and uniforms so I could participate. They helped me with looking for a job and with the music, supported me with all that.” (Client, Blacktown)

Analysis of change in YLS/CMI-AA assessment scores for the leisure/recreation criminogenic domain similarly indicated improvements in this area. Paired samples t-tests demonstrated strong evidence of a reduction in mean YLS/CMI-AA leisure score between the first ($X_1=1.9$) and second assessment ($X_2=1.5$) at three months ($t(78)=3.54$, (s.d. 0.92), $p=0.001$) and first ($X_1=1.9$) and third assessment ($X_2=1.4$) at six months ($t(32)=2.97$, (s.d. 0.94), $p=0.006$) (see Table 10).

Table 10. Comparison of mean YLS/CMI-AA leisure/recreation domain scores between first assessment and second assessment ($n=79$) and first and third assessment ($n=33$) from February 2015 to September 2016.

	Criminogenic domain	X1 mean YLS/CMI-AA score	X2 (3 months) or X3 (6 months) mean YLS/CMI-AA score	Mean difference	Standard Deviation	P-value
3 months (n=79)	Leisure / recreation	1.9	1.5	0.4	0.92	0.001*
6 months (n=33)	Leisure / recreation	1.9	1.4	0.5	0.94	0.006*

*Statistically significant

Some of the stakeholders identified that there are many clients who don't have strong rapport with police. One of the ways in which Youth on Track is trying to break down these barriers is through their links with local PCYCs and in encouraging clients to join in their programs. Clients participating in local activities also enables the caseworkers to spend some time with them in an informal and relaxed environment where the client can get to know and trust their caseworker outside of the work environment. Caseworkers reported that they seek out the interests and hobbies of their clients and build from there.

With regard to awareness of support services, satisfaction survey results revealed an average score of 7.6 out of 10 in response to the question: Are you aware of services that can offer you support? (n=54). While this overall score is high, almost a quarter (24%) of participants responding to this question scored 5 or less. This suggests that there may be an opportunity to raise the profile of support services for young people. Linking in with community programs also enables these clients to meet up with other young people facing similar issues, serving as an avenue in which some participants are building new friendships.

It was acknowledged, however, that there is a correlation between the low socio-economic status of many Youth on Track participants and their lack of engagement with local services. Encouraging participation in community supports/activities, therefore, also requires practical assistance such as transportation to and from an activity which the Youth on Track caseworkers willingly provide.

DISCUSSION

11. Facilitators and barriers to achieving outcomes

The social outcomes evaluation of Youth on Track aimed to determine the effectiveness and impact that the scheme has had on Youth on Track clients with regard to social benefits and to identify the facilitators and barriers to achieving enhanced social outcomes for clients, their families and siblings. During qualitative consultations, stakeholders were asked to discuss their views, knowledge and experiences of how much of a difference the scheme has made for clients known to be at medium to high risk of re-offending. In addition, YLS/CMI-AA mean total assessment scores and domain scores were analysed to determine whether there had been any statistically significant changes over three months and six months together with a descriptive analysis of satisfaction survey results.

The structure of the scheme, which is informed by the strong evidence of what works in interventions that address the individual criminogenic risk factors of the client (see Latessa & Lowencamp, 2011; Noetic Solutions Pty Ltd, 2010) has been regularly cited by all stakeholders as fundamental to the success of Youth on Track. The most frequently mentioned elements of the scheme considered successful by all stakeholders were:

- Early intervention focus addressing a service gap;
- Capacity to provide holistic and tailored responses;
- Performance of trained and skilled caseworkers and family therapists;
- Capacity to work with families and around family relationships; and
- Advocacy and collaboration with other services.

The above elements are contained within the key stages, listed below, of the Youth on Track model that form the basis of the following discussion.

1. Referral
2. Engagement
3. Assessment
4. Case management
5. Intervention
6. Exit planning

11.1 Referral



11.1.1 Education

It has been noted in the literature and throughout the consultations that a high proportion of Youth on Track clients have/will likely have experienced early disengagement from education: Well established causal risk factors for juvenile offending include poor educational attainment and for those clients who do not attend school, who have been suspended or expelled from school and who have had several prior contacts with the juvenile justice system there is an increased likelihood of another conviction (NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, 2007). It is within this context that the Youth on Track model prioritises opportunities for clients' re-engagement with education and, in support of the research and existing evidence-base, it would seem important for Youth on Track to actively and consistently promote the scheme within these mainstream institutions.

Referrals to Youth on Track come from NSW Police Youth Liaison Officers (discretionary referrals), local schools (discretionary referrals), and through the police database (automatic referrals). During the qualitative consultations, participants noted how local schools are the least likely to refer a young person at risk of long-term involvement with the juvenile justice system to Youth on Track. Possible explanations for this included lack of awareness of the scheme, lack of awareness of the parameters for referral to the scheme, and schools being out of touch with those young people who would benefit most from Youth on Track both due to poor school attendance rates and fractured school attendance concomitant with regular suspensions or expulsions.

This notwithstanding, participants reported how Youth on Track caseworkers continue to support their clients to remain within, or re-engage with, the educational environment by addressing any identified behavioural, emotional or cognitive issues which may impact upon the client's positive educational participation. Participants emphasised how caseworkers persisted in advocating for their clients' right to an education by, for example, attending the school with the client and their family to help broker 'a mutually beneficial arrangement'. Examples of caseworkers' facilitating access to alternative learning environments for those clients who might not be suited to a mainstream educational environment were also provided throughout the consultations. At one of the consultation sites, several examples were cited of clients' re-engagement with education as a direct result of their introduction to, and acceptance into, their local community-based education and training provider. Such positive improvements were echoed in the statistically significant reductions in mean YLS/CMI-AA scores against the education/employment domain among clients on the scheme at three months and at six months.

11.1.2 NSW Police Youth Liaison Officers

NSW Police Youth Liaison Officers have discretionary responsibility for referring young people into Youth on Track. These stakeholders reported that they will only make a referral if Youth on Track's waiting list is less than two weeks. If they perceive that a young person is likely to benefit from an immediate intervention they will direct the young person to the service that can offer immediate

supports despite being a strong and vocal proponent of Youth on Track. While the length of the waiting list was not raised as a barrier to referral by other stakeholders, particularly other service providers, it is important to note that NSW Police Youth Liaison Officers are one of only three referral options into Youth on Track. Therefore, timely responses to referrals would seem to be of paramount importance; as one stakeholder reported, 'Youth on Track are doing a fabulous job, but that waiting list is not on'.

Where Youth on Track caseworkers and the local NSW Police Youth Liaison Officers are working collaboratively, transparent communication and sharing of information was noted as highly valuable.

11.2 Engagement



Stakeholders reported that a key component of Youth on Track is to respond promptly once a referral has been made. It was noted, however, that initial engagement with the referred client can be challenging. For example, it can take time to track down clients because the correct contact information had not been provided – the client had either moved and/or given false contact information to Police or Juvenile Justice or does not wish to engage. Of the 367 clients referred to Youth on Track between January 2015 to June 2016, 211 exited the scheme before their first assessment, two thirds of which declined to participate (66%) and 22% were uncontactable.

Stakeholders also noted that there is no formal initial engagement process. Rather, caseworkers might identify client interests and hobbies, for example football, and go and kick a ball around the park when they know they are likely to be there. Through these avenues, caseworkers initiate an informal dialogue with their client. This method is especially relevant for clients who have offending behaviour and have been through police custody and an interview process. Being flexible and responsive to individual clients' needs was a recognised characteristic of the Youth on Track approach and aligns with the Risk-Need-Responsivity principles upon which the model is based (see Bonta & Andrews, 2007; Bonta et al., 2010).

11.3 Assessment



A risk assessment is conducted initially through Juvenile Justice. When the client is assessed as medium or high for re-offending, the referral goes through to the Youth on Track service provider who allocate a caseworker. Stakeholders reported that the YLS/CMI-AA is subject to individual interpretation, noting that some clients can be given a lower score by Juvenile Justice and then go on to receive a higher score by Uniting with Juvenile Justice's score giving the appearance of 'a lower range of risk factors when this may not be the case'. Owing to the YLS/CMI-AA's 'highly subjective

nature' caseworkers reported how all cases are discussed among the team to avoid the possibility of subjectivity.

Stakeholders reported that the more comfortable the client feels working with the caseworker, the more likely they are to be upfront and reveal some of their 'risky' behaviours. This has the potential to increase their YLS/CMI-AA score, giving the appearance of risk factors increasing rather than decreasing over the time of their engagement with Youth on Track.

11.4 Case Management



Youth on Track's case management model requires caseworkers to coordinate service delivery, facilitate access to supports, and deliver interventions to address the client's criminogenic needs and to increase pro-social behaviour. Stakeholders reported how individual casework and tailored interventions are cornerstones of the Youth on Track model and how responding to an individual based upon their risk factors and their needs is making a difference in the lives of some of these clients. Stakeholders cited numerous examples of the kinds of supports that have been provided to clients and the benefits that clients have derived from this case management approach, including AOD counselling, training and employment programs, accommodation and accommodation support service, and recreation and leisure activities.

11.4.1 Interagency collaboration

The literature reports six key principals that support the implementation of effective practice in juvenile justice and it is noted how integration of the juvenile justice and welfare/human services systems with police, courts, education and health authorities is critical and involves measures that maximise stakeholder buy-in and strengthen multi-agency collaboration in all areas (see Noetic Solutions Pty Ltd., 2010b, p. 73). Many stakeholders commented upon the strength of the relationships that Youth on Track had with other agencies and how this was pivotal to facilitating a client's access to services they may otherwise never access. In some instances, Youth on Track caseworkers work collaboratively with other service providers to carry out the young person's assessment: 'The relationship works well – they do criminal offending and family therapy and I address other issues like neglect and financial support. We've taken that approach with all three Youth on Track cases I have been involved with'. Continuing to build relationships and awareness of Youth on Track is important to the long-term sustainability of the scheme and to the continuation of enhanced social outcomes for participants, their families and siblings.

11.4.2 Trained and skilled caseworkers and family therapists

The Youth on Track target group often come from an unstable family background, have an increased risk of homelessness, may have one parent who has spent time in prison, have a higher likelihood of a history in care, have experienced mental health issues, and demonstrate lower than normal cognitive and academic ability. In addition, a high proportion is likely to have experienced early disengagement

from education and have used alcohol or other drugs. To work effectively with this target group, Youth on Track caseworkers and family therapists are required to undergo specialised evidence-based training that enables them to respond to risk and need rather than simply to crime. The considerable literature around 'what works' in reducing juvenile offending behaviour highlights the need for a focus on addressing the underlying risk factors behind the offending behaviour, such as family dysfunction, a delinquent peer group, and truancy or alcohol abuse. Adding or strengthening protective factors such as good parenting, having a positive role model or part-time employment is also emphasised (Latessa & Lowencamp, 2011; Noetic Solutions Pty Ltd, 2010).

The literature also highlights how cognitive and behavioural methods are more successful than other types of treatment approach, noting how these programs are structured, goal-oriented and focus on the links between beliefs, attitudes and behaviour (see the Victorian Juvenile Justice Rehabilitation Review, 2003 - Hollin, C.R. (1999); Treatment programs for offenders. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, vol.22, 361-72.). Thus, in addition to the above specialised training, caseworkers apply a structured, individual intervention program called CHART (Changing Habits and Reaching Targets). CHART is a practical tool to support casework with young offenders and employs a skills-oriented, cognitive-behavioural focus and uses active, participatory learning methods. Whilst not referencing CHART specifically, all stakeholders reported that clients' shifts in attitudes and behaviours can be directly attributed to the ways in which Youth on Track caseworkers have worked with clients to address their offending beliefs, attitudes and behaviours and focused on improving skills in problem solving.

11.5 Intervention



Research suggests that addressing risk factors, intervening early and preventing children and young people from entering the juvenile justice system is the most cost effective approach to preventing juvenile offending (Noetic Solutions, 2010a). Youth on Track provides evidence-informed interventions to support the client, their family and siblings to reduce the client's contact with police. All stakeholders reported how Youth on Track interventions are effective for many clients. This is supported in the analysis of change in YLS/CMI-AA assessment scores for clients participating between February 2015 to September 2016, which revealed significant reductions in overall risk/need score after three and six months on the scheme.

These positive gains may be attributed to the Youth on Track model and how they include modelling and encouraging pro-social behaviour, and focusing on client problems and goals using a collaborative problem-solving approach. This approach is reinforced in the literature with evidence demonstrating that programs that work across social settings, such as within the family and school, can impact on the whole of the young person's life (Derzon, 2010; Farrington and Ttofi, 2012).

Stakeholders also noted how Youth on Track is a 'one of a kind' scheme in the geographical locations within which it operates and how it is fulfilling an identified service gap, i.e., intervening early and reducing/addressing those problems making some young people more likely to commit crime.

11.5.1 Family interventions

There is a body of research that shows that working with families, particularly in a behaviourist or problem-solving nature, has an effect on criminogenic needs, particularly changing behaviour of young offenders and improving family functioning (see Derzon, 2010; Farrington and Ttofi, 2012). Several stakeholders noted how parental/broader family involvement in, or at least their support of, the scheme can make the difference between a successful or unsuccessful outcome for the client.

"Juvenile Justice see kids already on the 'offending' ladder, those who are already on the road to offending being entrenched. It's refreshing to see families' faces when they are willing participants. Can make a huge difference. For young people, this helps towards building relationships/positive relationships/strengthening relationships with their families/carers." (Stakeholder, Hunter)

For those families who had worked directly with the family therapists, support – both practical and emotional – was invaluable. Strengthened positive relationships between clients, their families and siblings have been reported for some of Youth on Track's clients, particularly where the family was receiving supports through the family therapist.

11.5.2 Behavioural interventions

Research regarding effective criminogenic interventions shows that the use of structured interventions which focus on developing skills while using cognitive-behavioural methods that address the dynamic criminogenic needs of the client can be effective. It has already been noted how the Youth on Track model is delivered within the context of CHART and tailored to address a client's particular offences, specific behaviours and offence-related needs.

11.5.3 Education

Stakeholders all reported examples of where a client had re-engaged with school since their participation in Youth on Track. For some, they have re-engaged with their old school and for others they have transitioned into a new learning environment better suited to their needs. Without the intervention of Youth on Track it was unanimously agreed by stakeholders that these clients would have 'continued to fall through the gaps'. As the research highlights, causal risk factors that lead to offending behaviour include poor educational attainment and for those young people who have not been at school and who have had prior contacts with the juvenile justice system there is increased likelihood of continued contact with the justice system (NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, 2007). Youth on Track's focus on facilitating clients' re-engagement with educational environments is premised on, and supported by, the evidence that educational attainment is conducive to diverting young offenders from continued engagement with the juvenile justice system (Noetic Solutions Pty Ltd., 2010).

11.5.4 Demographic differences

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients

From our consultations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and stakeholders working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and families, there were as many similarities around elements of Youth on Track considered successful as there were for non-Aboriginal stakeholders.

This is consistent with the quantitative analysis of YLS/CMI overall assessment scores, which indicated that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status beared no significant effect on assessment scores (see Appendix 2: ANOVA Demographic differences).

An area of difference arose with regard to re-engagement with school. Stakeholders reported that one-on-one tailored support is required for some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients where school is perceived as overwhelming and outside of their comfort zone. Stakeholders also referred to the challenges around initial engagement with services generally for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and their families, noting how integral notions of trust and rapport with caseworkers is essential to their engagement with a service. Access to an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander caseworker was noted as crucial to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients' needs are being met in culturally appropriate ways. For example, engagement of some very hard to reach young men in one of the evaluation sites was only possible because of the ways in which the Aboriginal male caseworker interacted with them, including during the initial contact period. It was recommended by caseworkers that this be an option across all Youth on Track sites, where possible.

"Indigenous clients can take longer to build rapport with the caseworker, to build trust. It sometimes helps to have an Aboriginal caseworker and we often find that Aboriginal young people will choose to do the program without parents." (Stakeholder, Hunter)

Stakeholders talked about the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the justice system and how crucial an early intervention like Youth on Track is to 'get them early before they become adult offenders'. As reported in the literature, young people who come into contact with the juvenile justice system at a very young age are the more likely to be Indigenous (Chen, Matrugilo, Weatherburn, & Hua, 2005) and for this reason alone a targeted, individualised and culturally relevant and appropriate intervention that addresses the underlying causes of their involvement in crime is essential to reduce the likelihood of continued offending into adulthood (NSW Government Attorney General & Justice, 2012).

Effect of Youth on Track site on total assessment score

There was no significant effect of the Youth on Track sites, Mid North Coast, Hunter or Blacktown on mean total YLS/CMI-AA score for clients participating in the scheme for a minimum of three months (see Appendix 2: ANOVA Demographic differences).

11.6 Exit planning



As an intervention with definable individualised goals, Youth on Track also has a defined end-point or exit strategy. Stakeholders noted how important it was for clients to have an end-point or something to work towards and how this was determined by their initial YLS/CMI-AA score and then subsequent scores as they progress through the scheme. Setting and achieving goals has helped clients to maintain engagement with Youth on Track as well as having contributed towards an enhanced sense of self-confidence. At a process level, stakeholders also reported how exit planning is important in terms of resource allocation, particularly around allocating cases to individual caseworkers.

CONCLUSION

The evaluation indicates that Youth on Track is contributing to enhanced social outcomes for many clients. The success of the scheme appears to relate to the application of strong evidence of 'what works' in interventions to address the individual criminogenic risk factors of the young person as the basis of the Youth on Track model, in particular, Youth on Track's embodiment of the principles of: intervening early to divert young people from the juvenile justice system; one-on-one case management to manage and support juvenile offenders and those at risk of offending; separating treatment from punishment; responding to risk and need rather than simply to crime; and responding promptly to enable a response to an immediate problem.

Satisfaction survey results also indicated an overwhelmingly positive response to the Youth on Track scheme overall, with clients and family members indicating a willingness to recommend Youth on Track to other young people in a similar situation. Clients and their family members valued support that was tailored to specifically respond to their individual needs, and that the support was offered in an open and non-judgemental way. Youth on Track caseworkers and family therapists receiving specialised training in order to address the individual criminogenic risk factors have been recognised as crucial in increasing understanding of behaviours, motivations and consequences of offending and as such creating shifts in many clients. This is supported by satisfaction survey results which indicated that caseworkers and family therapists (where relevant) were rated highly by clients and parents.

These positive results were echoed in the quantitative analysis of assessment scores, which demonstrated improvements in total risk assessment scores at three months and six months, particularly in the education/employment and leisure/recreation criminogenic domains, with the six-months' assessment also showing significant change in clients' peer relations. Such results were consistent with qualitative data which presented evidence of clients undertaking significant lifestyle shifts to reduce the risk of re-offending, including developing new friendships, enrolling in a vocational educational training program or joining a football team.

While improvements in social outcomes were observed, challenges at the earlier stages of the Youth on Track model remain. At the referral stage, school referrals remain low and waitlists are still a barrier for stakeholders concerned about an immediate intervention. Obstacles to initially engaging the client were also identified, with numerous clients disengaging prior to their initial assessment and uncertainty around the reasons for discontinuing. Stakeholders also reported the importance of rapport building with clients, and that the absence of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander caseworker may be a hindrance to building rapport with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.

Future considerations

- **Referral:** Youth on Track to actively and consistently promote the scheme within mainstream and alternative educational institutions
- **Referral:** Consideration given to referral response times (waiting lists)
- **Engagement:** Consideration given to finding out why clients do not engage/disengage

APPENDIX 1: YLS/CMI-AA ASSESSMENT

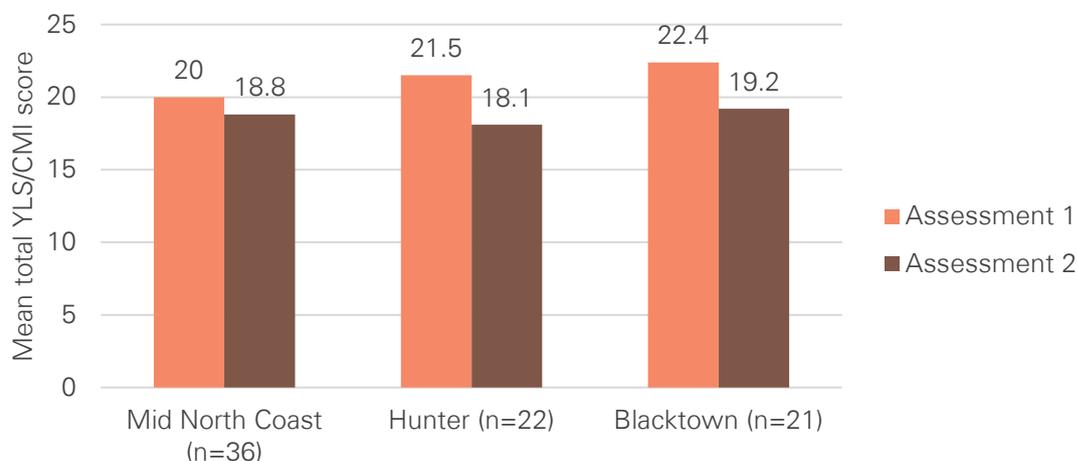
Part 2 – Summary of identified risks/needs

PART 2 – Summary of identified Risks/Needs									
	1. Prior and current offending	2. Family and Living Circumstances	3. Education / Employment	4. Peer Relations	5. Substance Abuse	6. Leisure / Recreation	7. Personality / Behaviour	8. Attitudes and Beliefs	Overall total
Scores									
									High □ (31+)
	High □ (5, 6, 7, 8, 9)	High □ (4, 5, 6, 7)	High □ (4,5,6,7)	High □ (3, 4)	High □ (3, 4, 5, 6)	High □ (3)	High □ (3, 4, 5, 6, 7)	High □ (3, 4, 5)	Medium High □ (18-30)
	Medium □ (3, 4)	Medium □ (2, 3)	Medium □ (2,3)	Medium □ (2)	Medium □ (1,2)	Medium □ (1,2)	Medium □ (1,2)	Medium □ (1,2)	Medium □ (8-17)
	Low □ (0, 1, 2)	Low □ (0, 1)	Low □ (0,1)	Low □ (0,1)	Low □ (0)	Low □ (0)	Low □ (0)	Low □ (0)	Low □ (0-7)

APPENDIX 2: ANOVA Demographic differences

Youth on Track site

A one-way between groups ANOVA was conducted on clients receiving at least two assessments (n=79) to compare the effect of Youth on Track referral site on total YLS/CMI-AA assessment score for clients referred to the Mid North Coast (n=36), Blacktown (n=21) and Hunter (n=22). There was no significant difference in mean YLS/CMI-AA score between Youth on Track sites at assessment one ($F(2,76)=0.65$, $p=0.5$) or assessment two ($F(2,76)=0.1$, $p=0.9$) (see Figure 6). Thus, there was no significant effect of the Youth on Track sites, Mid North Coast, Hunter or Blacktown on mean total YLS/CMI-AA score for clients participating in the scheme for a minimum of three months.



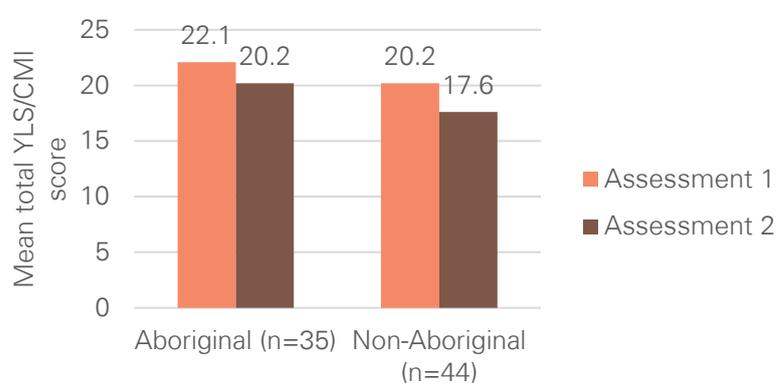
		<i>N</i>	<i>Mean YLS/CMI-AA score</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Assessment 1	Mid North Coast	36	20.0	7.58	0.65	0.5
	Hunter	22	21.5	7.50		
	Blacktown	21	22.4	9.51		
	Total	79	21.0	8.08		
Assessment 2	Mid North Coast	36	18.9	9.43	0.10	0.9
	Hunter	22	18.0	8.34		
	Blacktown	21	19.2	8.31		
	Total	79	18.7	8.75		

Figure 6. Effect of Youth on Track site on mean total YLS/CMI-AA scores at first assessment and second assessment (February 2015 – July 2016).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients

From our consultations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and stakeholders working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and families, there were as many similarities around elements of Youth on Track considered successful as there were for non-Aboriginal stakeholders.

This is consistent with the quantitative analysis of YLS/CMI overall assessment scores, which indicated that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status bore no significant effect on assessment scores. A one-way between groups ANOVA was conducted on clients receiving at least two assessments ($n=78$)⁸ to compare the effect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status on mean total YLS/CMI-AA score at assessment one and assessment two. There was no significant difference in mean YLS/CMI-AA score between Aboriginal ($n=35$) and non-Aboriginal ($n=43$) clients at assessment one ($F(1,76)=0.98$, $p=0.3$) or assessment two ($F(1,76)=1.73$, $p=0.2$) (see Figure 7).



		<i>N</i>	<i>Mean YLS/CMI-AA score</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Assessment 1	Aboriginal	35	22.1	7.67107	0.98	0.3
	Non-Aboriginal	43	20.2	8.46869		
	Total	78	21.1	8.12047		
Assessment 2	Aboriginal	35	20.2	9.14937	1.73	0.2
	Non-Aboriginal	43	17.6	8.41806		
	Total	78	18.8	8.79440		

Figure 7. Effect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status on mean total YLS/CMI-AA scores at first assessment and second assessment (February 2015 – July 2016). One client's status was unknown and has been excluded from the sample of clients receiving at least two assessments.

⁸ 1 client excluded from overall sample of clients receiving at least two assessments due to unknown Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status.

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