



YOUTH ON TRACK Snapshot Report

2021 Calendar Year



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Overview

The annual snapshot report is an analysis of outcomes achieved through Youth on Track over the 2021 calendar year.

Youth on Track is an early intervention scheme that identifies and responds to young people aged 10-17 at risk of long-term involvement in the criminal justice system.

The Department of Communities and Justice, Youth Justice NSW (YJNSW) funds non-government organisations to engage eligible young people and their families in case management and provide evidence-informed interventions that respond to assessed levels of risk and criminogenic needs.

Youth on Track currently operates in seven sites:

- Blacktown (2013)
- Hunter (2013)
- Mid North Coast (2013)
- Coffs (2016)
- New England (2016)
- Central West (2016)
- Riverina (2019)

The data in this snapshot covers the 2021 calendar year for all seven sites.

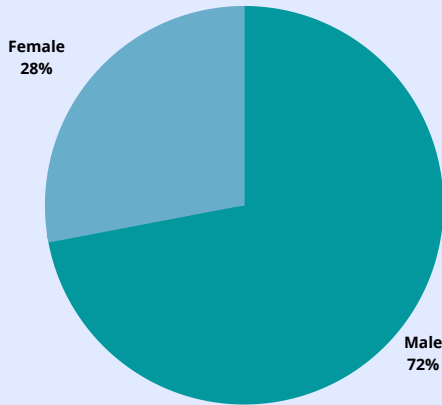
In 2021, Youth on Track continued to deliver positive outcomes for young people, in alignment with the NSW State Outcome to reduce reoffending. The program also supports the Premier's Priorities to reduce adult reoffending, and reduce the percentage of children and young people re-reported at risk of significant harm.

COVID-19 continued to disrupt service provision limiting the ability to provide face-to-face interventions. As a result, service providers utilised technology and creative strategies to continue providing quality services while minimising disruptions in the delivery of case management and other programs. These include the use of Zoom and Facetime calls and socially-distanced appointments.

The NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) is finalising their evaluation of the Youth on Track program and is expected to deliver the final report in March 2022. This report evaluates the impact of Youth on Track on participant's reoffending and other social outcomes using a Randomised Control Trial (RCT).

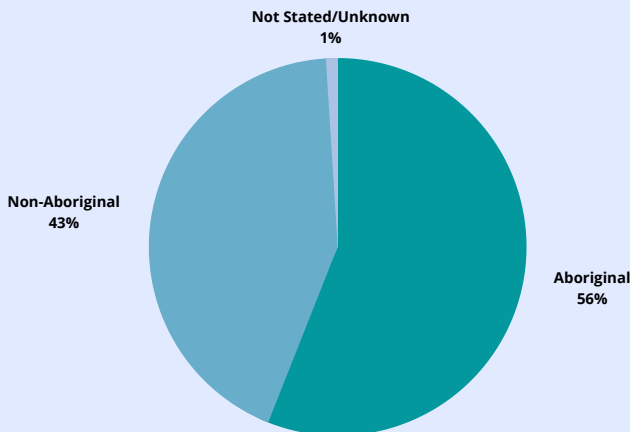
Participant demographics

Gender



In 2021, 72% of young people participating in the program were male, this is down from 76% in 2020.

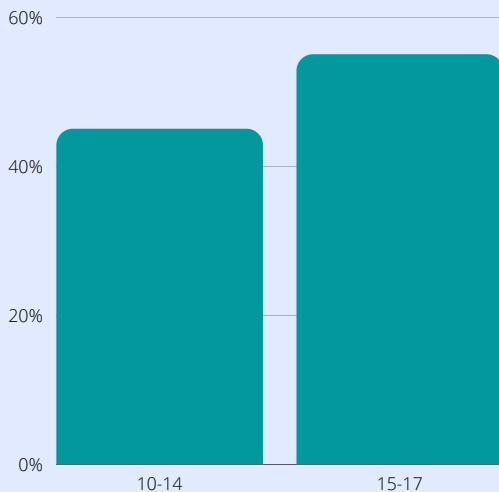
Indigenous status



In 2021, 55% of participants identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. This is slightly down from 59% in 2020.

Age

(Average age 14.7 years old)



In 2021, the average age of participants was 14.7 years. This remained consistent with 2020.

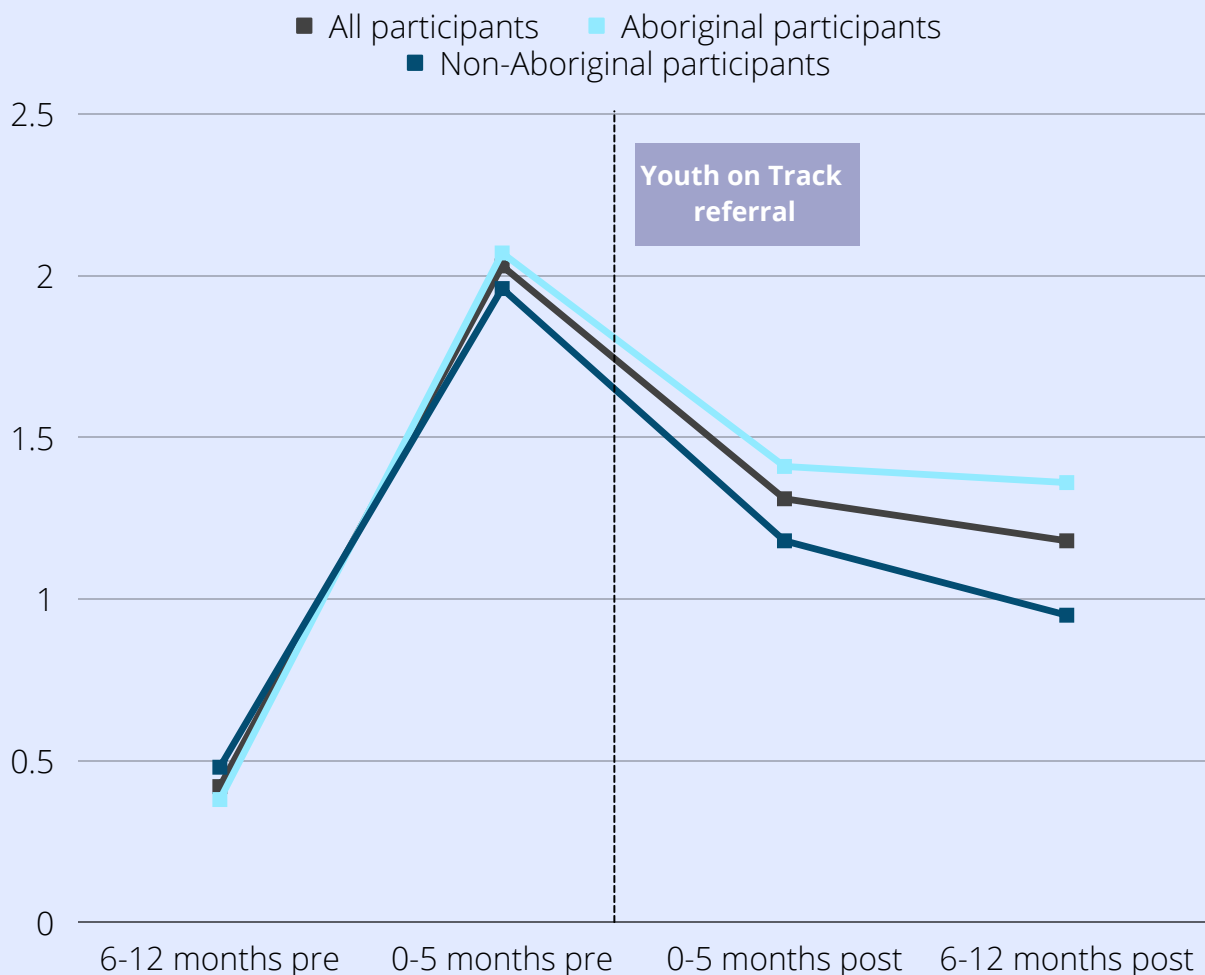
Reducing contact with police

In the 12 months following referral to Youth on Track, the overall rate of formal police contact **substantially decreases** for the cohort of participants between 2017 and 2021 compared to the rate of formal police contact at their point of referral.

This demonstrates the continued effectiveness of the program's ability to contribute towards reducing young people's contact with police post engagement with the program.

Formal police contacts are considered either a caution, Youth Justice Conference or charge.

**Formal contacts with police
pre and post Youth on Track referral
(2017-2021)**



Risk and needs management

Youth on Track measures the program's effectiveness against outcomes that assess whether a young person's criminogenic risks and needs have reduced, their participation in education and employment have improved and that their family displays positive behaviours.

In 2021, Youth on Track used a range of Key Performance Indicators to assess the degree to which these outcomes were being achieved. It was reported that:



62%

of participants **reduced their level of risk of re-offending** after **three** months of program participation. (Target 50%)



79%

of participants **reduced their level of risk of re-offending** after **six** months of program participation. (Target 70%)



100%

of participants **reduced their level of risk of re-offending** after **completing the program**. (Target 100%)



69%

of participants with a **high risk level for education and employment improved their outcomes** at exit from the program. (Target 40%)

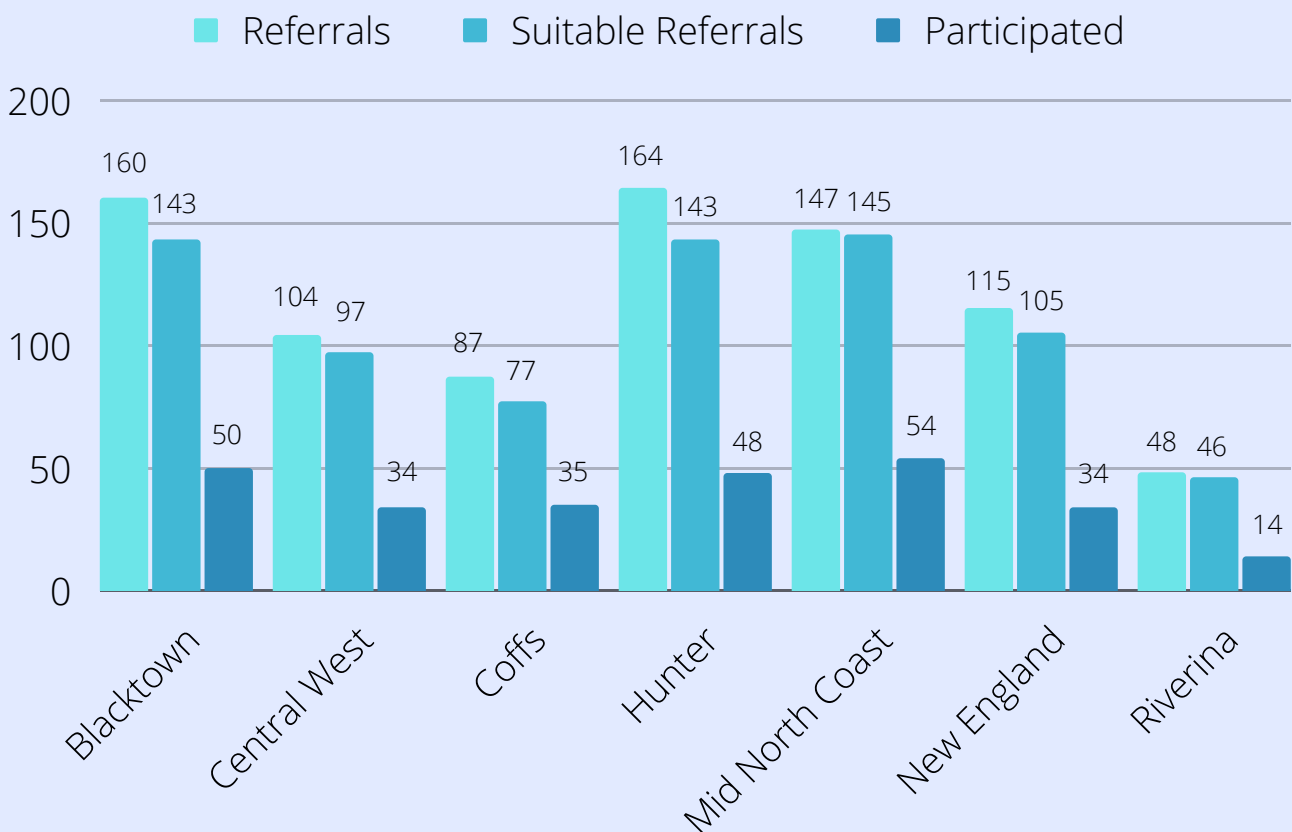
Referrals

Referrals to Youth on Track can be made to each of the seven sites through either an automatic or discretionary process. Eligible referrals are forwarded to program managers in the relevant service area.

92% of all referrals made were determined suitable, highlighting the effective communication channels and sector awareness of entry criteria for young people to access Youth on Track.

79% of eligible referrals (up to site's target capacity) were accepted by service providers across the seven sites in 2021.

269 young people deemed eligible consented to participate in Youth on Track. Restrictions to service delivery during periods of lockdown in 2021 reduced the number of young people consenting to participate in Youth on Track



Site information

In 2021, Youth on Track was delivered in seven sites throughout NSW. These sites cover metropolitan and regional NSW locations and provide program capacities relative to their resourcing and demand:

- Blacktown: 48
- Hunter: 48
- Coffs: 48
- Central West: 48
- New England: 60
- Mid North Coast: 60
- Riverina: 23

Figure 1. Youth on Track sites



Analysis of 2021

In 2021, Youth on Track continued to be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Service providers experienced disruptions in delivering the program particularly in the provision of face-to-face case management.

To overcome issues presented by COVID-19, caseworkers utilised available technologies including video conferencing software such as Teams, Zoom and Facetime to conduct case management sessions when face-to-face meetings weren't allowed due to social distancing regulations. This helped to ensure service delivery was able to continue with minimal disruption.

The effects of COVID-19 resulted in a decreased number of young people who consented to participate in Youth on Track. Nonetheless, there was still a recorded number of young people on the waitlist to access Youth on Track. This demonstrates the demand for the program and the positive view of the program held by referrers.

The program continued to focus on providing culturally appropriate services to young Aboriginal people participating in the program and strove to ensure that the staff cultural mix reflected the participant cultural mix.