

ATTACHMENT: QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE AND FURTHER INFORMATION AGREED TO BE SUPPLIED AT THE HEARINGS

Hon Jenny Mikakos MLC YOUTH AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

The following questions were submitted to the Chair from PAEC members absent from the hearings:

1. Part of the *Legal Assistance – Victoria Legal Aid* initiative funds the Youth Diversion Program, which aims to address the underlying causes of offending.¹ Recent crime statistics show that 182 young people (1.6% of youth offenders) are committing 23.6% of all youth offences in Victoria.² Through the *Supporting Young People* initiative, the government is also funding programs like the Regional Presence project to “support young people to engage with work, school, family and community life”.³ Ensuring at risk youth can effectively engage with education, work and society is critical to preventing and stopping offending.

Has the government considering benchmarking its programs against models like the highly successful Spanish model, where psychologists draw up individual programs for each child and educators – not guards – are the focus of youth justice centres?

The statewide youth diversion program was funded in the 2016-17 budget.

The Government has commissioned the review of youth support, youth diversion and youth justice services undertaken by Ms Penny Armytage and Professor James Ogloff to examine the current Victorian approach and global best practice in delivery of youth justice services.

2. The budget papers note that as part of the *Forensic mental Health Implementation Plan – Priority Service Reforms* initiative, the government will establish a ‘2-bed secure forensic mental health unit’.⁴

a. Will those two beds be enough for current demand?

This output sits under the Minister for Mental Health’s portfolio.

b. Are there any plans to further increase capacity?

This output sits under the Minister for Mental Health’s portfolio.

The 2017-18 Victorian State Budget has delivered funding to the Department of Health and Human Services to help identify young clients who are at risk of entering the criminal justice system and provide specialist forensic mental health support for young people. This includes:

- \$3.163 million over four years to establish a Forensic Youth Mental Health Service, including an early intervention problem behaviour program, for young people with mental illness and violent, threatening and/or sexualised behaviours and a high risk of offending in the North and West Metropolitan Region and South Metropolitan Regions of Melbourne
- \$4.153 million over four years to enhance clinical mental health assessment, treatment and support services for young offenders in the youth justice system
- The options to establish 2-bed sub-unit within a youth mental health inpatient unit are currently being scoped. The proposed two beds are expected to meet current demand and the suite of services enables the delivery of safe, responsive and recovery oriented forensic mental health services. It means that we can intervene early to treat young Victorians and increase the likelihood that they will recover and stay well in the community.

This commitment is a start to building capacity specifically to support young people.

¹ Department of Treasury and Finance, *Budget Paper No.3: 2017-18 Service Delivery* (2017), p.95

² P Sutherland and M Millstead, *In Brief: Patterns of Recorded Offending Behaviour Amongst Young Victorian Offenders*, Crime Statistics Agency, September 2016.

³ Department of Treasury and Finance, *Budget Paper No.3: 2017-18 Service Delivery* (2017), p.86

⁴ Department of Treasury and Finance, *Budget Paper No.3: 2017-18 Service Delivery* (2017), p.87