

Public Account and Estimates Committee

Inquiry into the 2026 -27 Budget Estimates

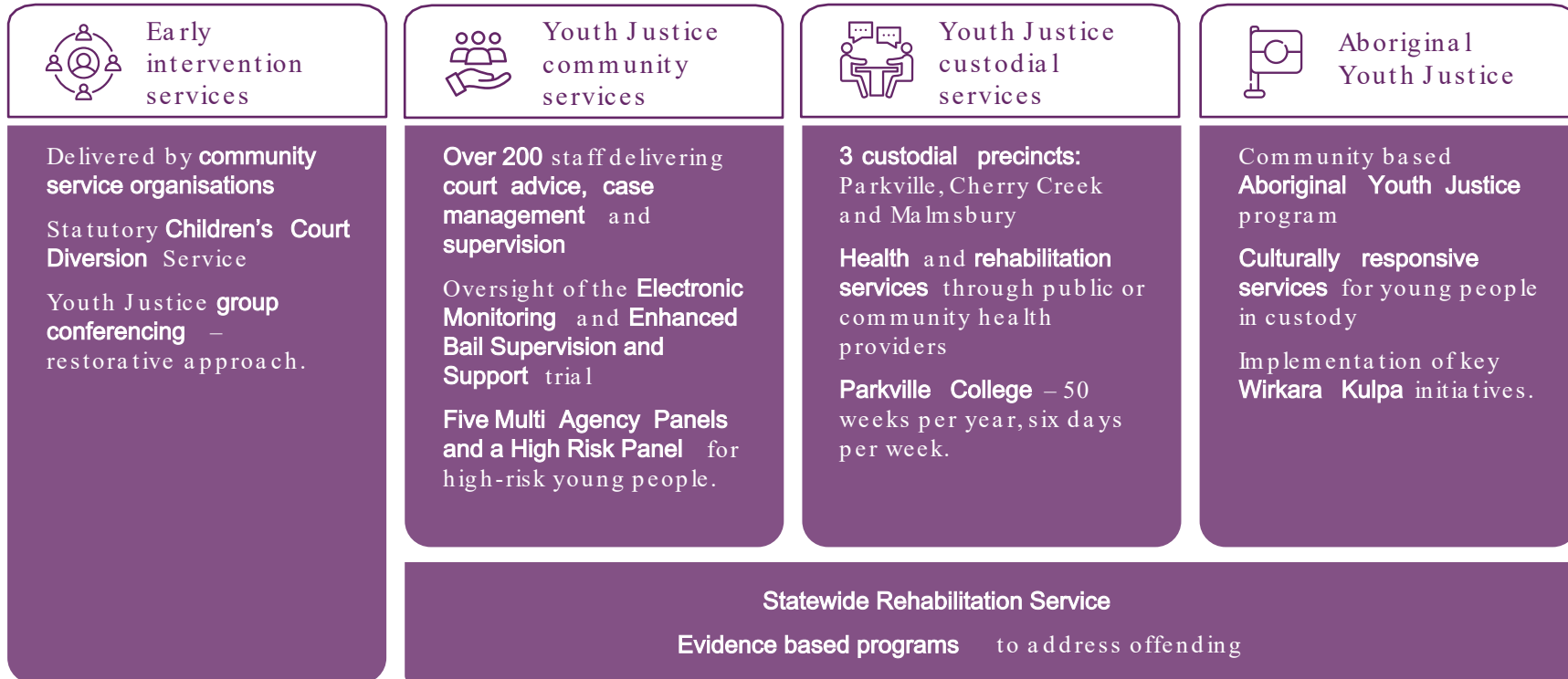
The Hon. Paul Hamer MP
Minister for Youth Justice

Friday 22 May 2026



System overview

Youth Justice is responsible for the **statutory supervision** of children and young people who come into contact with the criminal justice system.



2026-27 Budget Overview

The 2026-27 Victorian Budget supports Youth Justice to continue to deliver a leading Youth Justice system that focuses on keeping the community safe.



We are investing \$229 million as part of Government's Community Safety Package

- Additional capacity to deal with the increasing number of young people in custody and ensure safe and stable operation of custodial facilities
- Supporting attendance at the specialised County Court youth list to fast-track serious matters and deliver serious consequences sooner



We are also investing \$8.6 million to support a safe and effective Youth Justice system

- Evidence-based programs and early intervention
- Support for key justice agencies to implement the landmark *Youth Justice Act 2024*



An additional \$5.5 million to begin implementing key recommendations of the South Sudanese Australian Youth Justice Expert Working Group

- Initiatives to address the over-representation of South Sudanese Australian young people in the criminal justice system
- Continuation of targeted community programs





Community Safety Package – Youth Justice

The 2026-27 Budget invests **\$229 million** for the community safety reforms, including **investment into the Youth Justice portfolio** that will support **reduced offending** by children and young people and **make Victorians safer**.



Funding for **over 100** new frontline custodial staff to **recommission 45 additional rooms** at Malmesbury Youth Justice Precinct



Investing in **expanded health care** to support children and young people with complex needs



Funding for dedicated **specialist Youth Justice staff** to support *Adult Time for Violent Crime* reforms

Supporting a safe and effective Youth Justice system



Youth Justice achieved **13** of **14** Budget Paper performance measures for 2024-25.

2025-26 expected outcomes



95% of young people on supervised community-based orders have a case plan completed within 6 weeks.



95% of young people on custodial orders have a case plan completed within 6 weeks of the commencement of the order.



80% of young people in youth justice custody participated in community re-integration activities.



90% of community-based orders are completed successfully.



The average daily number of young people (under 14 years) in custody is **<5**.



The average daily number of Aboriginal children and young people (under 18 years) in custody is **13**.

Youth Justice Act 2024

The 2026-27 Victorian Budget provides further funding to implement the landmark Youth Justice Act.

Once fully implemented, the Act will:



Divert children and young people from the justice system (where appropriate)



More effectively **hold young people who offend to account**



Keep the community safe.

Some reforms have already commenced, including:

- Earlier access to **rehabilitation programs for young people on remand**
- Raising the **minimum age of criminal responsibility** to 12
- **Adult Time for Violent Crime** reforms.



The Youth Justice Act commences in full on 30 September 2026.

Key reforms include:

- A pre-charge diversion framework
- More graduated sentencing hierarchy
- Responses to address serious offending
- longer periods of community supervision for children aged 15+
- Supports for Aboriginal children and young people in youth justice, and address overrepresentation
- New Youth Justice Victims Register.

Thank you.

