

VICTORIAN INTER-CHURCH CRIMINAL JUSTICE TASKFORCE



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Submission to the Standing Committee on Legal and Social Issues Inquiry into Youth Justice Centres in Victoria 3 March 2017

The Victorian Inter-Church Criminal Justice Taskforce welcomes this opportunity to make a submission to the inquiry into youth justice centres in Victoria. The churches that make up the Taskforce, Anglican, Catholic, Salvation Army and Uniting, have long standing positions that prison should be a last resort, used only when necessary to ensure community safety. That position is held particularly strongly in the case of minors and children, where the prospects for rehabilitation are higher and where the impact of prison or prison-like detention has been shown comprehensively to result in a greater likelihood the young person will reoffend.

This submission will briefly address the following terms of reference of the inquiry:

- Implication of incarcerating young people who have significant exposure to trauma, alcohol and/or other drug misuse and/or the child protection system, or who have issues associated with mental health or intellectual functioning, in relation to –
 - The likelihood of reoffending;
 - The implication of separating young people from their communities and cultures.
- Additional options for keeping young people out of youth justice centres.

More detailed submissions have been prepared separately by some of the member organisations of the Victorian Inter-Church Criminal Justice Taskforce.

The Victorian Inter-Church Criminal Justice Taskforce work towards just outcomes within the Victorian justice system. It is auspiced by the Victorian Council of Churches, and comprises representatives from the Uniting Church, The Salvation Army, the Anglican Church and the Catholic Church.

Is it vital that at this time the Victorian Government preserve the things that have been shown to work in reducing youth crime, such as a separate youth and adult system, our dual track system, and a strong commitment to diversion.

As noted by the Victorian Ombudsman in her February 2017 report, children in the youth justice system are often in need of support services, with 63% having been victims of abuse, trauma or neglect, 30% having mental health issues, 18% having a history of self-harm or thinking about suicide, 66% having a history of both alcohol and drug misuse and 10% being homeless or living in insecure housing.¹ Half of all children in Victoria's youth detention centres have been in the child

¹ Victorian Ombudsman, 'Report on youth justice facilities at the Grevillea unit of Barwon Prison, Malmsbury and Parkville', February 2017, p. 4.

protection system.² The Victorian Government has not provided enough people on the ground to support young people and address these problems in the community, as well as in the youth justice system.

Katherine McFarlane from the Centre for law and Justice at Charles Sturt University argues that residential care in the child protection system is a contributing factor to children breaking the law. In her assessment, badly trained and poorly supported staff, inadequate matching of children of different ages, experiences and backgrounds (offenders and victims of abuse are often placed together), and a readiness to call police to manage children's behaviour are all factors contributing to children being turned from children-in-need to children who break the law.³

It is well established in criminology that there is an 'age-crime curve' whereby criminal behaviour commences in late childhood or early adolescence, increases throughout adolescence and peaks in late adolescence or early adulthood, before declining.⁴ However, more recent research has shown that sub-populations of people who offend follow markedly different offending trajectories. A study of Victorian youths who offended identified four categories, low-rate of offending (who were 88.7%), adolescent limited offending (who were 6.4% of the group), late developing in offending (who were 3.4% of the sample) and those who had a high rate of offending (1.6% of youths who break the law).⁵ The latter three groups were found to have a disproportionate number of young people who were in the 30% of most socio-economically disadvantaged postcodes in Victoria and were more likely to be from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.⁶

While Victoria has seen a 40% reduction in the number of young people breaking the law between 2008-2009 and 2014-2015⁷, more crime is being committed, more violently, by a small group of young people who keep breaking the law and who the system is failing to deal with. A quarter of all crimes committed by young people are committed by just 182 youths.⁸

As of 10 January 2017 there were 190 young people detained in youth justice facilities, with approximately half of them on remand.⁹

An Effective Youth Justice System

An approach to the needs of children and young people must recognise that:

- children involved in the child protection and criminal justice systems often come from disadvantaged backgrounds and have complex needs – many of them have experienced trauma
- children lack developmental maturity and this developmental immaturity is often exacerbated in children who have experienced abuse or neglect
- involvement in the criminal justice system at a young age often causes further harm and further involvement in the criminal justice system

² Katherine McFarlane, 'The faulty child welfare system is the real issue behind our youth justice crisis', The Conversation, 13 February 2017.

³ Katherine McFarlane, 'The faulty child welfare system is the real issue behind our youth justice crisis', The Conversation, 13 February 2017.

⁴ Paul Sutherland and Melaine Millsteed, 'Patterns of recorded offending behaviour amongst young Victorian offenders', In Brief, Crime Statistics Agency, September 2016, p. 1.

⁵ Paul Sutherland and Melaine Millsteed, 'Patterns of recorded offending behaviour amongst young Victorian offenders', In Brief, Crime Statistics Agency, September 2016, p. 4.

⁶ Paul Sutherland and Melaine Millsteed, 'Patterns of recorded offending behaviour amongst young Victorian offenders', In Brief, Crime Statistics Agency, September 2016, p. 6.

⁷ Victorian Ombudsman, 'Report on youth justice facilities at the Grevillea unit of Barwon Prison, Malmsbury and Parkville', February 2017, pp. 5-6.

⁸ Victorian Ombudsman, 'Report on youth justice facilities at the Grevillea unit of Barwon Prison, Malmsbury and Parkville', February 2017, p. 2.

⁹ Victorian Ombudsman, 'Report on youth justice facilities at the Grevillea unit of Barwon Prison, Malmsbury and Parkville', February 2017, p. 9.

- engaging in developmentally appropriate restorative justice processes can help children to understand the effects of their behaviour on others and reduce recidivism.

An effective path to reducing youth crime and improving community safety invests its efforts first and foremost in preventing crime. This means addressing underlying drivers of crime (such as disadvantage, low education, unemployment) and investing in prevention and early intervention (especially early childhood services), something that as a society we are yet to do in a systematic long-term way.

Second, once someone is going off track, we must take steps to divert them from the criminal justice system or rehabilitate them through appropriate supports and programs that extend to their family and community environment. Programs such as the Youth Diversion Pilot Program and Youth Justice Group Conferencing have proven very successful in this regard.

For those who have seriously gone off track (for example, the current small group of hardcore offenders), we need to create a strong network of support that will hold them while they face up to their situation, take responsibility and reset their lives in a positive direction.

We must balance compliance mechanisms, monitoring and accountability with tailored programs that change their behaviour and build solid skills, offering hope and a chance to build a healthy identity. The work must not cease until that behaviour change occurs and the young person is on a pathway to a positive and contributing future. A strong emphasis must be placed on building relationships in a safe, secure and therapeutic environment where staff are skilled and appropriately trained. Supporting people in their transition from custody to community is also critical, particularly in terms of linking with family, providing stable accommodation and re-engaging with education and employment pathways.

Punitive Approaches Don't Work

Research consistently shows that incarcerating children and minors is more likely to push the young person down the path of continued criminal behaviour and fails to deliver on community safety in the long run. For example, a report released by the Harvard Kennedy School, Program in Criminal Justice Policy and Management, *The Future of Youth Justice: A Community-Based Alternative to the Youth Prison Model*, released in October 2016 concluded when it came to imprisoning young people in the USA:¹⁰

Whether the benefits and costs of youth prisons are weighed on a scale of public dollars, community safety, or young people's futures, they are damaging the very people they are supposed to help and have been for generations. It is difficult to find an area of U.S. policy where the benefits and costs are more out of balance, where the evidence of failure is clearer, or where we know with more clarity what we should be doing differently.

This ill-conceived and outmoded approach is a failure, with high costs and recidivism rates and institutional conditions that are often appalling. Our approach to youth in trouble with the law requires a watershed change to one that is more effective, more informed by evidence of what works, more likely to protect public safety, more developmentally appropriate, more humane, and more community based. Every youth prison in the country should be closed and replaced with a network of community-based programs and small facilities near the youth's communities. Closing these failed institutions requires a clear-headed, common-sense, bipartisan policy approach, and a commitment to replace these facilities with effective alternatives that are already available.

¹⁰ Patrick McCarthy, Vincent Schiraldi and Mariam Shark, 'The Future of Youth Justice: A Community-Based Alternative to the Youth Prison Model', Harvard Kennedy School, Program in Criminal Justice, Policy and Management, October 2016, p. 2.

The report notes the US explosion of imprisoning children was driven by hysterical predictions of youth crime, a warning lesson for Victoria and those media outlets pushing for a US style of youth justice. The Harvard Kennedy School, Program in Criminal Justice Policy and Management report:¹¹

Responses to the drug epidemic of the late 1980s and early 1990s, along with a spike in violent youth crime, ushered in an era of even more stringent approaches to youth incarceration. Public fear was stoked by media coverage and by “tough-on-crime” stances taken by many public officials. Social scientists such as James A. Fox, John Dilulio, and others promulgated doomsday scenarios. In 1995, for example, Fox predicted a “bloodbath in about 10 years.”² In 1996, Dilulio predicted that there would be “270,000 more young predators on the streets” (Dilulio, 1996). Pronouncements like these were wrapped in racialized, demonizing language that further inflamed public alarm. “The black kids who inspire the fear seem not merely unrecognizable but alien,” wrote Dilulio (1996), calling young people who came into contact with the justice system “radically impulsive, brutally remorseless” (Bennett, Dilulio, and Walters, 1996). The most memorable and damaging description was “superpredator” (Dilulio, 1995).

Neither Fox nor Dilulio noted that violent youth crime had actually begun to decline a few years earlier. It has been plummeting ever since. Violent crime arrests of youth dropped by 68 percent between 1994 and 2014, and youth homicides, which peaked in 1993, have declined by 83 percent since then.

Although Fox and Dilulio have since acknowledged that their predictions were based on faulty analyses and recanted, the damage was done. The public was encouraged to see young people not as individuals who had gotten off track and needed help but as scary, dehumanized predators from whom they needed to be protected at all costs. Policymakers responded to Dilulio’s exhortation that we “will need to incarcerate at least 150,000 juvenile criminals in the years ahead” (Dilulio, 1995), resulting in record numbers of young people confined in adult-style prisons and giving rise to a wave of youth prison construction. For example, at the heart of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 was a program that provided billions in federal funds for states to build or renovate prisons.

What works in youth justice

Evidence shows that the use of support services and restorative justice approaches are more effective in reducing re-offending among children than the use of custody and prison sentences.¹²

The Washington State Institute of Public Policy does thorough and objective assessment on what works to prevent and reduce crime and thus improve community safety. They have assessed that providing access to basic and post-secondary education for people in prison is guaranteed to have benefits that outweigh the costs. These benefits on average are \$18 for every \$1 invested into providing education in prison.¹³ Providing vocational training to people in prison is also found to be guaranteed to have benefits greater than the cost of the education and on average will deliver \$12 of benefit for every \$1 invested.¹⁴

The UK What Works Centre in Crime Reduction, that has a core team from the College of Policing, has assessed that education and skills training programs in prisons work to reduce crime and the evidence for this is very strong.¹⁵

¹¹ Patrick McCarthy, Vincent Schiraldi and Mariam Shark, ‘The Future of Youth Justice: A Community-Based Alternative to the Youth Prison Model’, Harvard Kennedy School, Program in Criminal Justice, Policy and Management, October 2016, pp. 3-4.

¹² KPMG, ‘Review of the Youth Justice Group Conferencing Program’, prepared for the Victorian Department of Human Services, 2010.

¹³ <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/BenefitCost/Program/9>

¹⁴ <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/BenefitCost/Program/6>

¹⁵ <http://whatworks.college.police.uk/toolkit/Pages/Intervention.aspx?InterventionID=42>

The What Works Centre in Crime Reduction also found there is strong evidence that mentoring for people who have offended reduces the likelihood they will reoffend.¹⁶

The Washington State Institute of Public Policy has also found that drug courts are guaranteed to have a positive impact and have an average benefit of \$2.60 for every \$1 invested. Drug courts seek to address the behaviour of those who break the law around drugs. The drug court can provide comprehensive supervision and access to drug treatment services so people can get off drugs and get their life back together.

The UK What Works Centre in Crime Reduction states overall, the evidence suggests that drug courts have reduced crime. The overall evidence is taken from a review based on 60 studies, all of which were from the USA. The review found that drug courts significantly reduce reoffending: this equated to participants having a reoffending rate of 45.5% compared to a 54.5% reoffending rate for the comparison group.¹⁷

Based on 42 research studies, the What Works Centre in Crime Reduction has also found that therapeutic communities are effective in reducing crime by people who have had drug problems. Therapeutic communities are a participative, group-based approach used to treat long-term drug addiction. The approach is usually residential, with the people and therapists living together, but increasingly residential units have been superseded by day units. Therapeutic communities can be based in custodial and non-custodial settings, and aim to induce behavioural change. Using professionals and former drug users, these communities use work as an organising therapeutic activity.¹⁸

One positive example of what works in the youth justice space is the Jesuit Social Services' Next Steps program, which involves case management, family therapy, a residential component and outreach. Next Steps, funded by the Victorian Government as part of its Homelessness Innovation Action Projects, works to prevent homelessness for vulnerable young people aged 16-24 involved with the criminal justice system. It does this by delivering intensive case management support and providing supported accommodation through Dillon House, a three-bedroom property in inner-city Melbourne.

Case Study from Next Steps: Alex¹⁹

When Alex first engaged with Jesuit Social Services' Next Steps program after exiting the youth detention system, his case workers recall a young man who struggled with confidence and self-motivation.

When Alex first came to Dillon House he was struggling with grief and mental health problems linked with his offending.

Moving into Dillon House provided him with safe and secure housing that wasn't available otherwise.

"His prospects in terms of housing and finding a home were limited," says Roger Pugh, Senior Project Officer at Jesuit Social Services.

"He enjoyed the fact that he felt he had independence but that there were also people around to help keep him safe," says Roger.

¹⁶ <http://whatworks.college.police.uk/toolkit/Pages/Intervention.aspx?InterventionID=44>

¹⁷ <http://whatworks.college.police.uk/toolkit/Pages/Intervention.aspx?InterventionID=34>

¹⁸ <http://whatworks.college.police.uk/toolkit/Pages/Intervention.aspx?InterventionID=38>

¹⁹ Not his real name

“He knew it was a safe place – a refuge – here and it was the first time he had a constant in his life.”

Living at Dillon House, Alex was able to develop his independent living skills such as cooking and cleaning. He was also linked in with activities including a local gym and study opportunities.

At the same time, be addressing the root causes of his behaviour Alex was reducing the likelihood of him re-offending and working towards becoming a productive member of society.

Alex lived at Dillon House for 18 months until exiting in 2016.

“Eighteen months is a long time to work intensively with someone but it demonstrated that Alex could build trust in us,” says Roger.

Alex now lives in a sharehouse with friends, where he uses the independent living skills he had developed during the program. Next Steps has also provided him with material aid and financial assistance, and he continues to meet with case workers in community settings regularly.

Whereas Alex was once too anxious to hand his resume in at a café, he is now actively handing out his resume at local businesses seeking casual employment.

“Next Steps allowed Alex to grow his identity and develop from a boy into a young man.”

The case of Matty²⁰ reported in the press highlights the struggle faced by young people who break the law when adequate support systems are not there to assist them get their lives back on track.

Case Study about need for supports: Matty²¹

Matty went to youth detention at age 13 for theft, criminal damage and arson. By age 21 he'd spent all but six months of the previous nine years in detention or prison.

Even inside drugs were readily available.

“I got to Malmsbury [Youth Justice Centre] and I had just about every drug that was coming in that place. You name it: speed, ecstasy, heroin”, he said.

When Matty was released from Barwon prison as a 21-year-old he found crystal methamphetamine

“I was a ratbag, mate. I was a write-off ratbag”, he says. “I played up a lot”.

Despite being an ice drug addict, Matty managed to hold down a full-time job, buy a block of land and get engaged. But it didn't last.

“I didn't have a car, I'd screwed that many jobs over, once I split with [my partner] I moved back to Mum's, my health was deteriorating.”

In 2016, at age 29, he moved into the Foundation 61 drug rehabilitation centre.

“I don't want to be doing this when I'm 40”, he said. “I'm done”.

He says that having access to drug and alcohol rehabilitation services post-prison is something that could have helped him get his life back together earlier.

²⁰ Not his real name

²¹ Harrison Tippet, ‘Refugee from life of crime’, *Geelong Advertiser*, 21 December 2016.

“I really think there should be more services for people coming out”, he said. “[When I was released] it was pretty much I was put out on the street.”

Matty’s case also highlights how people can grow out of breaking the law and reach a point where they want to have a regular life in our society, with a job and family.

The New Zealand Government has adopted an approach of seeking to rehabilitate teenagers who break the law, get their lives back on track and heal the community. Five years ago New Zealand police apprehended about 39,000 children aged 10 to 16. That number has dropped by 40% and the number of children appearing in court has dropped by over 60%, from 4,998 to 1,959 between 2007 and 2015, its lowest number in 20 years. This story of success has been driven by the New Zealand Government 2013 Youth Crime Action Plan. The cornerstone of this approach has been greater collaboration between schools, government agencies, community organisations and the police to better support families to address their children’s behaviour that causes them to break the law. There are special youth courts that adopt a flexible approach which focuses on accountability and making amends.

The reduction in youth crime is similar to what has been achieved in Victoria. In February 2017 the Victorian Ombudsman released a report on the youth justice detention facilities in Victoria, in which she noted that youth crime in Victoria is decreasing overall, from over 5,000 children and young people breaking the law in 2008-2009 compared to less than 3,000 in 2014-2015.

The member churches of the Taskforce and their agencies see the harmful path people are pushed down after encounters with the criminal justice system if proper supports are not provided.

Case Study of Poor Support: John²²

John is 26 and first went to prison in his late teens for drug related charges. Since then he has been incarcerated four times, exiting into insecure accommodation each time with no support. John has had several bouts of rough sleeping after his other accommodation fell through. The last time he was released, he went to a rooming house that contained 60 other people, many of whom he knew from prison.

The rooming house had shared facilities and his small room held only a bed. Although John was determined to make a fresh start and avoid using drugs, on the first day at the rooming house an older man offered to sell him ice or cannabis. John managed to say no. On the second day, John heard fighting and when he opened his door he saw two men assaulting each other, so he stayed in his room for the entire day.

Desperate to get out of this environment, John looked for other accommodation options but he could only afford another rooming house. He moved a week later, but it quickly became obvious that this new place was no better than the last. Within a week John was scared, bored and lonely, so he had a few drinks with other tenants out the back and ended up using ice. The other tenants were talking about getting money by robbing the shop down the road. After three days on ice, John robbed a house and was later convicted and sentenced to a further six months in prison.

Each time John has been incarcerated, he loses hope that his life can be any different. He wants to get his act together and see more of his kids but without stable housing and some support outside, he can’t see how that will happen.

Diversion from the Juvenile Justice System

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy has found the diversion of young people from the juvenile justice system is 97% likely to have benefits.²³

²² Not his real name

²³ <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/BenefitCost/Program/21>

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy has also found that providing education and training to teenagers in the juvenile justice system is guaranteed to have benefits and on average the benefits will be \$31 for every \$1 invested into the education and training.²⁴

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy has assessed that providing mentoring to youth who come into contact with the juvenile justice system is almost 90% likely to have benefits that outweigh the costs, with on average there being \$6 of benefit for every \$1 invested.²⁵

Barreng Moorop

Young Aboriginal children who first have contact with the justice system aged 14 or younger are among the highest risk indicators of subsequent involvement with the system in later life. With this in mind, and the need to divert vulnerable children away from the youth justice system, Jesuit Social Services delivers the Barreng Moorop program for Aboriginal children aged 10-14 years old and their families across north-east and western metropolitan Melbourne.

The program, recently re-funded by a further three years by the Commonwealth Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, is delivered in partnership with Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS) and the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA).

Barreng Moorop understands and acknowledges trauma that reaches across generations and works with young people and their whole family, including extended relatives, to achieve sustainable and genuine outcomes.

In the last financial year, the program worked with 24 young people and their families.

For mother [REDACTED], the parent of 13 year-old [REDACTED], Barreng Moorop has been a life-changer.

“The support we get from this program means we aren’t living paycheck to paycheck – they’ve helped supply food vouchers and pay for [REDACTED] football registration. Sometimes I can take him to the pictures which I don’t have the money for myself,” she says. “If you’re used to having nothing and you get something, it feels like a million dollars.”

[REDACTED] says it’s not just “the fun stuff” that the program has assisted with.

“They’re here to keep an eye on him, they are always asking what we need to make our lives easier.”

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] are working to re-build their lives after experiencing the trauma of family violence.

Seeing the difference in her son – who [REDACTED] says has become more confident and trusting as a result of the program – has been a huge gain.

“He thinks they’ve done a hell of a lot to help him. He says life is so much better now and for the first time ever he is happy for the future.”

Jesuit Community College

Jesuit Social Services recently devised an innovative new program with cultural connection at its heart for young Maori and Pacific Islanders who have had contact with the youth justice system.

Seven young people took part in the 14 week program, based largely on traditional Polynesian carving workshops.

²⁴ <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/BenefitCost/Program/616>

²⁵ <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/BenefitCost/Program/369>

Many of the students will move onto accredited training and complete a Certificate in General Education for Adults.

Bully Zero (Jesuit Community College)

The often difficult path between committing an offence and transitioning back into education and employment has been made easier by an innovative new program.

Bully Zero is an unpaid community work program developed in partnership between Jesuit Community College, Corrections Victoria's West Metro Community Work Team and Bully Zero Australia Foundation.

The 14 participants have not committed offences related to bullying, but they are learning about the important issue while fulfilling the hours stipulated by their Community Correction Orders and simultaneously working towards a nationally recognised accreditation.

Participants are encouraged to share their personal stories creatively – via text, drawing and painting – with their works to be compiled into an educational book.

The program is successful because participants feel valued when being asked to participate to tackle this silent but serious illness occurring in society, bullying. They enjoy the classroom environment where they are not treated as criminals but as a citizen participation in a small learning and teaching community.

Bully Zero participants meet for five hours a week in a venue in Braybrook, provided by the Department of Justice and Regulation. As well as participants fulfilling court-issued hours, they are completing units of competency towards a General Education for Adults qualification.

With greater understanding and knowledge, participants will be equipped enough to make wiser decisions and choices by setting concrete goals. This will result in valuing oneself, increased self-confidence and self-esteem which develops their sense of belonging and gives them a social identity.

Youth Justice Group Conferencing

Youth Justice Group Conferencing, where the young person who has broken the law needs to meet with the people impacted by their behaviour and hear of the impact of their actions, is another option to divert young people from incarceration.

A KPMG review of youth justice group conferencing in Victoria found for every \$1 invested by the Department of Human Services on Group Conferencing, at least \$1.21 is saved in the immediate and short term. They concluded that these savings are likely to underestimate the actual saving to Government for each young person over the course of their lifetime. KPMG concluded that the Victorian Youth Justice Group Conferencing Program was broadly effective in meeting its stated objectives.²⁶

The Washington State Institute of Public Policy has assessed that this type of youth justice group conferencing is over 75% likely to have benefits and that on average those benefits are over \$4 for every \$1 invested into the conferencing.²⁷

The UK What Works Centre for Crime Reduction has assessed there is strong evidence that youth conferencing helps to reduce crime.²⁸

²⁶ KPMG, 'Review of the Youth Justice Group Conferencing Program', prepared for the Victorian Department of Human Services, 2010, p. 2.

²⁷ <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/BenefitCost/Program/45>

²⁸ <http://whatworks.college.police.uk/toolkit/Pages/Intervention.aspx?InterventionID=24>

Case Study on Youth Justice Group Conferencing: Lucas²⁹

Participating in a Youth Justice Group Conference through Jesuit Social Services has been a turning point for Lucas. Arrested for burglary and ordered to attend the diversionary program which aims to intervene at an early stage of contact with the justice system and prevent ongoing crime, Lucas, aged 16, was made to face his victims and learn the true impact of his offence.

Lucas has been out of school since he was 13 and hasn't been participating in any programs that would help keep his life on track. Living out of home, he was 'bored and 'frustrated by family expectations to find stable employment. Although he did want to get a job, he didn't know where to start and found it hard to ask for help even though he desperately needed it. Lucas broke into a family home and burgled it because, "he wanted nice stuff' and didn't think the owners would be particularly impacted by their missing items.

Sitting in a room across from the father and daughter victims, with both parties aided by family and professional supports, Lucas was confronted with the reality of his actions and felt great remorse for what he had done and how the victims felt about it. Both Lucas and the father and daughter spoke about what happened, how they were affected and made a plan to make things better.

Lucas promised to write two apology letters and return the daughter's iPad which he had stolen. In an effort to prevent further offending, Lucas plans to get his life back on track by enrolling in a plastering pre-apprenticeship at TAFE, committing to avoid extended periods in the area which the offence occurred, attend counselling and get his learner's permit. Lucas is now hopeful for his future and is determined to turn his life around. The father and daughter victims were satisfied with the conference outcomes and Lucas's plans for amendment.

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²⁹ Not his real name