



South East Metro

Moorditj Benang – Strong Tomorrow program

Brief Description

Strong Tomorrow is a specialist intensive youth mentoring program working in close collaboration with Youth Crime Intervention Officers (YCIOs) to support targeted young offenders aged 10-14 to reduce offending. The program aims to increase young people's safety, positive connection with community, life skills and cultural values and pathways to education.

Background

Aboriginal young people are highly over-represented in the crime statistics, with Aboriginal young people accounting for approximately 75 per cent of juvenile detainees in WA. Furthermore, a significant proportion of WA's detainees are from Armadale (approx. 20%), mainly due to the high level of disadvantage and the large Aboriginal population. Evidence demonstrates that antisocial/criminal behaviour in adolescents is often caused by underlying social and environmental issues, such as generational poverty, exposure to substance misuse, lack of positive role models, amongst other factors. Therefore to reduce offending and recidivism we aim to address these underlying causes.

In January 2014 the WA Police funded Save the Children \$25,000 to run the intensive youth support program as a Pilot Program until June 2014. Save the Children is working collaboratively with local Youth Crime Intervention Officers (YCIOs) to support targeted young offenders to reduce offending and increase pro-social behaviours. The service focuses specifically on supporting Aboriginal young people within the South East Corridor of Perth with a particular focus on working closely with the YCIOs stationed in Armadale.

The program contributes to the frontline policing priorities, as related to both the 'Tackling Crime' and 'Keeping Community Safe' initiatives. We work towards a reduction in participant offending/reoffending by 40 per cent, through a collaborative partnership with police and other agencies. We achieve this through addressing the underlying social and environmental issues that lead to crime, marginalisation and victimisation by providing targeted and intensive support.

This program is imbedded within Save the Children's existing metro Aboriginal Services which includes; night time engagement, family support services and cultural camps. We are able to leverage off existing trust and relationships with the Aboriginal community and young participants.

Key Program Objectives

- Increased engagement and positive participation with community, peers, family and services
- Increased life skills and cultural values and ability to respond positively to risk
- Increased connection to formal education and training opportunities
- Increased family functioning and stability
- Increased awareness of the effects of drug and alcohol use

Youth Work Model

Accessible

This program is outreach based. In order to provide an accessible service youth workers engage with young people in their own environment, starting with casual engaging activities to build rapport and building up to more structured and focused activities as a trusting relationship is established.

Strengths-Based

At the core of this program is a strengths-based, solution-oriented approach to youth work, which individually assesses and provides for the needs of each client. Recognising that criminal behavior is influenced by a myriad of factors, we seek to

address issues such as anti-social behavior, family breakdown, drug and alcohol abuse, spiritual homelessness and disengagement from education, as guided by the young person's needs.

Whole-of-Family and Whole-of-Community Approach

The program takes a 'whole-of-family' approach to engaging with, and supporting young people, and involves family and kinship networks and the wider community to ensure that underlying issues are addressed and ongoing and sustainable support networks are established. Linking the young person with strong community mentors to build their cultural knowledge, understanding and community connectedness are critical to this programs success.

Program Operations

The Intensive Youth Mentor is based at the Champion Centre in Seville Grove with a focus on outreach.

The program supports 4-6 highly at-risk young people age 10-17 as identified by the YCIOs over the funding period. The case-load may vary dependent on the complexity of the young person's needs. Referrals and engagement is recorded and managed through a pre-existing comprehensive database and case notes system.

SCA works with the referred young people and their families to address the complex issues they may be facing, which influence their offending behaviour. This includes, providing an accessible outreach and case-management support program, including:

- Comprehensive case management plans
- Practical day-to-day support
- Informal mentoring and role-modelling
- Referrals to specialist services
- Establishing viable and ongoing support systems
- Brokerage
- Linking into pre-existing group work and pro-social activities

In addition, young people are linked in to our pre-existing programs which provide an array of group-work and cultural activities that help foster an environment of positive peer culture, strong families, and connected communities. These services include our Back to Country Camps, night-time youth engagement programs, as well as programs offered by community partners.

Future Potential

SCA has the ability to quickly scale up our existing Intensive Youth mentoring Staff and case-management mechanisms to take on greater responsibility and client loads as needed.

Program Contacts

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