



Public Accounts and Estimates Committee

Budget Estimates Hearing

The Hon. Natalie Hutchins MP

Minister for Youth Justice

Wednesday 18 May 2022





The 2022-23 State Budget invests **\$401.6 million** over four years to continue work to date and further improve Youth Justice community and custody services.



Expansion of the Central After-Hours Assessment and Bail Service to service young people over the weekend.



Funding to support the after-hours Children's Court service, including for Victoria Legal Aid.



Additional community grant funding for Aboriginal Youth Justice Hubs.



Continuation of custodial Behavioural Support Specialists, strengthening our custodial workforce and funding new remand beds at our Youth Justice Precincts.



In addition, \$4.5 million has been provided over one year to continue the Youth Crime Prevention Program to help support young people at risk of entering the criminal justice system.



In addition, \$54.3 million has been provided for 2021-22, to respond to COVID-19 across Corrections and Youth Justice.

Opening Cherry Creek is a once-in-a-generation opportunity

to continue to improve the Youth Justice system and drive better outcomes for young people and the community.

Custodial settings are more **settled, safe and effective** when young people are placed in **smaller facilities** that **focus on rehabilitation**.



140 beds

140 bed capacity, with 56 beds in two units to open first.



First half of 2023

Accommodation of young people scheduled for 2023.



Key design

- Specialised health care and mental health unit.
- Education and vocational skills centre.



Units of four

Groups of four young people, so staff can provide more targeted and individual support.



Youth Justice is focused on reducing the number of young people under our supervision.

With Youth Justice reforms, the system has some of the **lowest rates** of Youth Justice supervision in Australia.

Victoria has the **lowest rate** of Aboriginal young people aged 10 to 17 in Youth Justice custody*, a rate that has **decreased 54 per cent** in five years.

*For jurisdictions that provided data. In 2020-21, Tasmania and the ACT did not provide data for 'Aboriginal young people under Youth Justice custodial supervision on an average day' for the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 'Youth Justice in Australia' Report.

In 2020-21:

- **1,216 young people** accessed the Youth Support Service early intervention program.
- Victoria had the **lowest rate** of young people under community supervision and the second lowest custodial supervision rate.
- **1,166 diversions** occurred through the Children's Court Youth Diversion Service, with a **98 per cent** success rate.
- **55 young people** and their families received intensive family support through Functional Family Therapy (FFT) or Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST), programs that work directly to strengthen family functioning and support parents to improve boundary setting and supervision during high-risk times.
- The Government launched the Putting Families First initiative – an \$18 million trial of multidisciplinary case management teams to work with **200 families** in Goulburn and Brimbank-Melton with multiple and complex needs to provide personal, practical and targeted support.

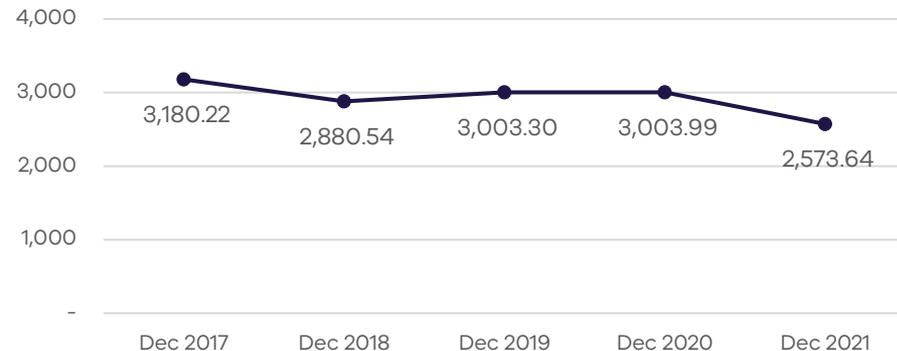
Victoria's Youth Justice system has undergone significant reform in recent years, backed by **over \$1 billion of investment** into the system since 2014.

The investment is supporting reforms across Youth Justice, as outlined in the **Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2020-2030** and **Wirkara Kulpa, the Aboriginal Youth Justice Strategy**.

Youth Justice is focused on **early intervention to divert young people** from Youth Justice and to **prevent offending**, while working to **decrease youth offending rates** and **improving safety in our custodial centres**. This focus is reflected in the Youth Justice Diversion Statement launched earlier this year.

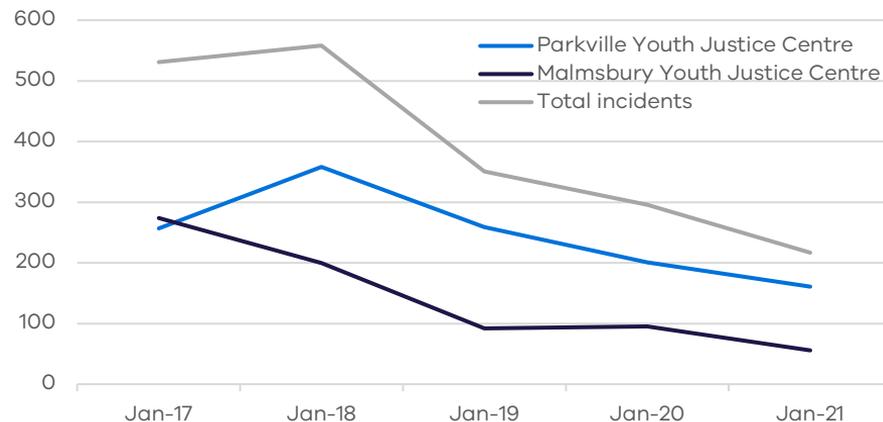
Graph 1

Alleged offender rate (per 100,000 young people aged 10 to 17 years in Victoria)



Graph 2

Number of offences (incidents) in Youth Justice Facilities



We have seen a **stabilisation in custody**, with a **significant decrease** in both **category one incidents** and **episodes of behavioural or security-based isolation**.

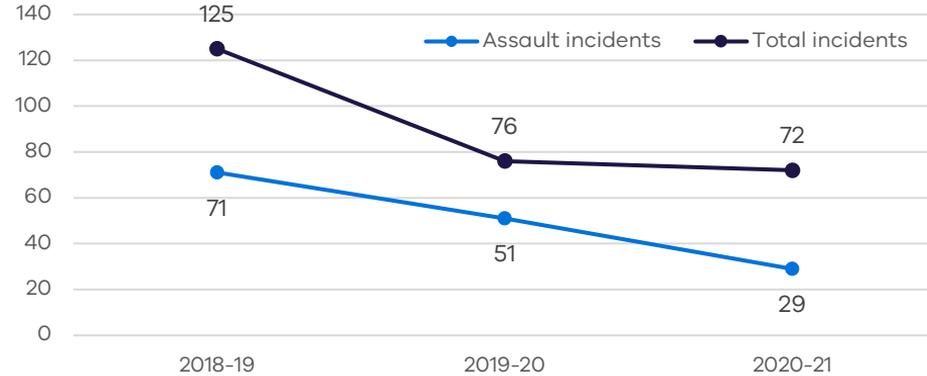
We are achieving this by investing in:

- **Targeted behavioural programs** for young people in custody
- An **Intensive Intervention Unit** for the most high-risk young people in custody
- **Additional Behavioural Support Specialists**, to support custodial staff
- Rolling out the **Certificate IV in Youth Justice for new recruits and current staff**, supported by the Workforce Plan launched in 2021
- A new **Operational Safety Training Package**
- An **onsite clinician for staff** who seek individual psychological support

We're also focused on **supporting our passionate and hard-working staff**, with funding to **support attraction and retention initiatives**.

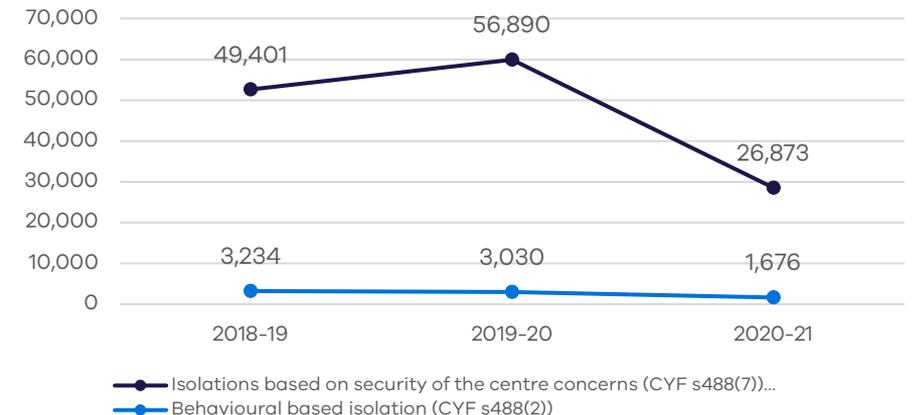
Graph 3

Category One Incidents in Custody



Graph 4

Isolation Episodes in Youth Justice Centres





Thank you.

