Report to the ACT Human Rights Commission on Structures and Organisational Arrangements to Support Reform in ACT Youth Justice

Gail Winkworth and
Michael White
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Gail Winkworth
Adjunct Professor
Australian Catholic University
Gail.winkworth@acu.edu.au

Michael White
MW Group Consulting
micwhite@iinet.net.au

RESEARCH TEAM

Gail Winkworth
Michael White
Lydia Connell

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Executive Summary

Following a resolution in the ACT Legislative Assembly, the ACT Government directed the Human Rights Commission1 (The Commission) to undertake a review of conditions at the Bimberi Detention Centre. As part of their review the Commission engaged two consultants to interview executives of the Community Services Directorate and to advise on organizational processes and structures required to implement reform in Youth Justice. The consultants sought to address the questions:

- How can the Youth Justice system best deliver public value in the future to vulnerable children and young people and the broader ACT community?
- What organisational processes and structures are needed to achieve good outcomes for children and young people in the ACT Youth Justice system?

A brief overview of children and young people in the youth justice system and the articulated goals of the ACT Youth Justice System framed the interviews, analysis and our proposals to the Commission.

The purpose of Youth Justice in the ACT

The ACT Government, in its submission to the Review, articulates four goals for its Juvenile Justice system:
Within a human rights framework and applying the best interests principle, the objectives of the ACT youth justice system are:

1) To prevent young people from entering the youth justice system and to divert those young people who do come into contact with the youth justice system at all opportunities

2) To support the holistic development and wellbeing of young people in the youth justice system to keep them safe and to maximize their opportunities to achieve positive life outcomes

3) To promote young people's rehabilitation and reduce recidivism

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[1] The Human Rights Commissioner and the ACT Commissioner for Children were directed to undertake concurrent reviews and to provide a single report

4) To facilitate effective throughcare and transitioning to assist a young person's reintegration into the community [2]

These goals clearly articulate a rehabilitative approach to Youth Justice
In the Justice literature, theories of rehabilitation acknowledge the importance of earlier experiences and family life of the young person, treatment and other psychologically based strategies to prevent offending behaviour, and taking account of the agency and capacity of the young person for change. The rehabilitative approach which is explicitly stated in the goals of Youth Justice, will focus on encouraging young people to take responsibility for their actions alongside comprehensive efforts to build their capabilities for a positive future.

Young People in Youth Justice Detention

Since 2000 the ACT government has been concerned about the rate of children and young people in the ACT Youth Justice system. Nationally, the ACT is not performing well on three key measures: the rate of young people on remand, the rate who are on community supervision orders and the rate in detention. Further, the majority of young people who are detained at Bimberi have not been sentenced; they are there because they have either been refused bail or they are subject to a remand order. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are greatly overrepresented in all parts of the system.

A recent discussion paper Towards a Diversionary Framework for the ACT (Feb 2011) acknowledges these concerns and canvasses options for improving performance in the diversion of young people from the system and for better meeting their needs.

An overview of the international literature and the limited Australian research on young people in the Justice system provides a compelling case for much stronger collaborative arrangements across government and non government agencies, and the wider community. The social and economic costs of failure to do so are apparent when consideration is given to typical profiles of young people in the Justice system.

For instance many involved with Youth Justice, and the majority of those in detention, have significant histories of trauma through child abuse, neglect, and family violence.

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[2] ACT Government (2011) *The ACT Government's Submission to the Human Rights Commission's Bimberi Reviews, p. 30*

Research indicates that institutionalization, stigma and poor self-concept are found to accompany periods in youth detention especially when this is prolonged. There is also a tendency for young people, who are cut off from families and communities to strengthen criminal networks. However, ongoing criminal activity is not the only issue of concern for these young people and for society; those who have been incarcerated are also more likely to be violent with their intimate partners, become parents very young and to abuse and neglect their own children. There is also strong evidence that incarceration is intergenerational.

Young people detained in custody are likely to have encountered many human service systems along the way, including education, mental health and drug and alcohol agencies, child welfare (including out of home care) and public housing. Far from being active recipients of what are generally regarded as universal or targeted services a picture emerges of young people who either do not access services, drift away from key institutions critical to their future or are actively excluded from them. Previous Australian inquiries into children and the legal system have identified the vulnerability of children exiting detention (many of whom are Aboriginal) especially in getting the assistance they need in education, health, housing, and employment.

Recurring themes in the literature are the early indicators of later criminal behaviour and the increasing difficulties faced by young people as alienation from key institutions and service systems becomes more entrenched.

With this understanding of vulnerable young people, and particularly those who spend periods of time in detention, we asked a number of senior executives in the Community Services Directorate their views about future structures and organizational arrangements that could bring about reform in Youth Justice.

The Interviews

Confidential interviews were conducted with 16 executives[3] across the Community Services Directorate, [4] almost all of whom had worked for many years in practice with disadvantaged children, young people and their families. The genuine wish for the system to improve the lives of very vulnerable children was strongly evident in the interviews.

Participants spoke of their high hopes for Bimberi, particularly the intention to drive change away from the custodial culture that had developed in Quamby in its latter years. Many participants spoke of the need for a relationship focused culture in which the time that young people spent in Bimberi could be used as an opportunity to identify and address life barriers.

Almost all spoke of the impacts of a struggle to employ enough skilled staff, as the lack of diversionary options caused numbers to rise in Bimberi, and the negative impacts of a reactive political environment and a media which is quick to sensationalise. Risk averseness grew along with an increasing preference for the 'lockdown' of young people to deal with security risks and thus avoid the panic engendered by damaging media.

We heard of the gradual decline in key programs for young people: education, sport, and in getting competency based training in place, due to the deteriorating staffing situation. We also heard how good staff stayed despite these events and the public humiliation of recent months.

We heard that substantial efforts are being made to address problems at the Centre and to widen the focus of these efforts to each of the articulated goals of Youth Justice, including with the broader group of vulnerable children and young people who are at risk of poor outcomes.

In particular participants spoke positively about vastly improved recruitment processes (levels, permanency, qualifications, and competency based training) , much stronger communication between "Moore St"' and the centre, a significant refocusing on education and skills of residents, one to one tutoring for children

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[3] The Commission provided the consultants with the list of executives to approach for these interviews. All invitees agreed to participate

[4] We asked interviewees:

"Thinking about the Government's stated goals for Youth Justice, including for Bimberi:

      What works well now that may assist in the future?

      What continues to be a problem?

      What future organizational arrangements can bring about lasting positive change for vulnerable children and young people in the ACT?"

with very poor literacy, agreements with CIT (albeit limited ones) and partnerships with Registered Training Organisations. Sporting and music programs have been strengthened and some industry partners are being identified for future employment opportunities.

Participants also spoke of issues they felt still required attention if these gains were to be sustained beyond the Review. We use a well known theory of public sector change[5][6] to organize our analysis of these issues.

1. Firstly it is apparent that managers feel there is more work to be done in communicating the 'public value' of a Youth Justice system which is focused on rehabilitation outcomes. Many participants felt there was a need for the government to more strongly communicate this vision and purpose, and the reasons for taking this approach. Many also expressed the view that there should be more attention to performance measures and other accountability mechanisms which support this vision. For example managers are frustrated with:

   - Formal performance frameworks in which current measures do not recognize the importance of systems working together to improve outcomes for young offenders.

   - External oversight bodies which are appropriate and necessary but lack the advocacy focus necessary for system wide change

   - Internal management systems in which the focus has been on safety and security and not on children's outcomes. Participants wanted to see a much greater role for internal quality assurance systems and external experts in Youth Justice.

2. Secondly mangers identified problems in creating the authorizing environment necessary to achieve the better outcomes for vulnerable young people. They did not feel there was yet a coalition of key groups and individuals across sectors to support the rehabilitation vision or the actions needed to achieve it. Some of the concerns which fall into this category include:
   - A lack of legislated and policy options to divert young people from detention and mechanisms to achieve good throughcare;

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[5] Moore, M (1995) *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government.* Cambridge, Massachussetts: Harvard University Press
[6] Benington, J., & Moore, M. (2011)Public Value: Theory and Practice

- Recognition that although good progress has been made at Bimberi more work is needed to ensure staff understand the vision and fully embrace it;
- The ongoing frustration with lack of a whole of government approach. The view was put many times that other agencies (government and non government) lack clarity of their roles with vulnerable youth, before, during and after detention.

3. Finally participants identified the need to build greater operational capacity to support the vision. The areas identified as most needed included:

- Earlier intervention - participants identified unleveraged opportunities for earlier local, cross agency interventions – especially for 9-14 year olds. A number of existing programs such as the Child and Family Centres, Schools as Communities and various collaborative ventures in schools (the G8, for example) were identified as good platforms for collaborative early intervention approaches

- Continuity of case work approaches (including case management) across all phases of youth justice and between child protection and youth justice – and need for an afterhours youth justice response collocated with the afterhour's child protection response, was considered essential. Existing models of practice such as the Child Protection Case Conferencing pilots were thought to be appropriate for extension into Youth Justice.

- A shared practice framework for vulnerable children and young people, including across Youth Justice; one which would embed a common set of principles and models which are relationship and outreach focused, ecological, and sustained for as long as the young person requires assistance. A Practice Guide for Youth Justice which sits underneath the overarching Practice Framework for vulnerable youth could provide a much greater level of consistency of principles and approaches.

- Continued recognition of the need to 'over staff ' Bimberi , ensure that staff are appointed permanently whenever possible but also maintain a good pool of trained casual staff

- The need for partnerships with RTOs, industry and philanthropic bodies so that staff and young people can access competency based training, and that young people will have opportunities for further education, skill development and employment when they leave.

What Needs to be Done to Support the Change

The interviews pointed to a number of underlying problems in the operation of the Bimberi centre as a component of a broader, effectively functioning response to addressing the needs of vulnerable and at risk young people.

Some of these problems relate to day-to-day management and resource issues. Others are more systemic and if not addressed, will ultimately undermine the good work which is being done to address current tangible, operational challenges. One of the key issues with regard to the operation of Bimberi has been the lack of a common view throughout the Government, the Department and the ACT community more broadly, of its purpose and role in the overall response to young people at risk.

The second issue has been the centre's separateness – some have described it as the "oil rig". This separateness appears to be at the core of a number of the criticisms of the centre, ranging from the development of a separate staff culture, poor continuity of case management and uncertainty of resourcing for therapeutic and educational programs.

The proposals of this report seek to establish the mechanisms that will underpin the maintenance of an organizational culture focused on the reform and rehabilitation of young people detained at Bimberi, but more widely those that come in contact with the ACT youth justice system.

Essentially an effective organizational architecture will be characterized by both clarity and agreement around the values and purpose of the organization. These will be communicated throughout the organization and will shape the day-to-day activities which characterize its operation.

This shared values statement and clarity of purpose will be given expression through an effective monitoring and performance management system that will be owned and operated by the staff within the organization. It will underpin human resource issues from day-to-day staff management and supervision to staff recruitment and training. From the outside its existence will be recognized by the coherence of the organization and its capacity to focus on achieving common

goals. It is an approach that is sometimes summarised by the term "organizational culture".

Without a rigorous commitment to the maintenance of a coherent set of values throughout the organisation, from the top levels of its leadership to the day-to-day frontline staff delivering services, the organisation faces the risk of a "cultural drift" in which component parts of the organisation developed separate cultural identities and operate effectively for divergent and sometimes competing purposes.

What the proposals will achieve

With this in mind we have developed a set of proposals for the Commissioners to consider in the development of their recommendations. The proposals build on the views of the executives and managers we interviewed but also reflect our interpretation of contemporary best practice in organizational design in public sector agencies. In summary the proposals seek to bring about the following changes in the way the ACT responds to vulnerable young people.

1. Bimberi will not operate as a separate entity disconnected from the broader response to vulnerable youth in the ACT but will be part of a co-ordinated system which focuses on achieving good outcomes for this high need group.

In order to achieve this a number of things need to be put in place outside Bimberi as well as within it.

External Factors

2. Led by the newly created Strategic Board the ACT will adopt a clear statement of the goals to which it aspires for vulnerable young people. This statement will include an aspiration to improve the health, safety, wellbeing, learning and development of this vulnerable group.

3. The achievement of broadly based outcomes for vulnerable young people will not occur through the actions of a single directorate but will require the input of a number of different directorates. The Strategic Board will take responsibility for coordinating these directorates and overseeing the allocation of resources to support the outcomes.

4. The Strategic Board will prepare an annual report to government on how this group of vulnerable young people are faring, describing them in terms of their health, safety, wellbeing, learning and development.

Internal Factors

5. The practices of responding to these vulnerable young people will reflect the principles of continuity, a focus on outcomes (how the young people are rather than what the government is doing), and the use of interdisciplinary teams.

6. Within that overarching focus on the needs of vulnerable young people there will be a statement of purpose for Bimberi that reflects the opportunities it provides to actively address young people's range of developmental needs. Its purpose will not simply be conceived as the incarceration of young people as a punishment for an offence; but will be judged by its contribution to the improvement of outcomes for this group.

7. The performance management, training and recruitment of staff will be revised to reflect that purpose to reflect that purpose.

Proposals

Whole of government coordination

Proposal 1

That the Strategic Board establish a committee on vulnerable children and young people which reports annually on its strategic directions and achievements for this group of ACT citizens.

Agreed statement of purpose

Proposal 2

That a statement of purpose which reflects the rehabilitation role of the Bimberi centre be developed and agreed across government.

Adopting an outcomes framework

Proposal 3

That the Board adopt an outcomes statement for vulnerable young people in the ACT and jointly monitor these outcomes, reporting annually on their achievement. This outcomes statement should describe the health, safety, wellbeing, learning and development of young people and should be supported by a set of performance indicators related to these five core areas.

Proposal 4

Within the context of this outcome statement the Community Services Directorate will have a particular responsibility to report on vulnerable young people including those who have spent time as residents of Bimberi.

Proposal 5

At the same time, the Strategic Board itself should take joint responsibility for the achievement of the outcomes, providing an authorizing environment for the collaboration necessary between health, education, community services and justice agencies.

Continuity of case management

Proposal 6

That managers of the Community Services Directorate pursue the development of mechanisms for case management continuity. This would be designed to remove the distinction between community youth justice case managers and those operating within Bimberi to ensure that, for a young person on remand, continuity of case management would be the rule rather than the exception.

Proposal 7

The Community Services Directorate should re-examine whether the existing legal framework is sufficient to support continuous involvement of case managers for young people after they leave Bimberi.

Mechanisms of case coordination

Proposal 8

That multidisciplinary care teams be established to manage the needs of the most vulnerable at risk young people in the ACT.

Proposal 9
It is recommended that case managers within these interdisciplinary teams have continuing responsibility for the care of young people regardless of their setting and placement.

Senior authority for case coordination

Proposal 10
That an executive level group is established across the directorates of education, health, community services and other relevant directorates to review systemic issues with regard to the management of complex cases of vulnerable or at risk youth. This group should meet quarterly and be an ongoing part of the case management process, reviewing one or two cases each time it meets.

Internal organizational process

Proposal 11
That the ongoing improvement plan be developed for the Bimberi centre to be monitored and reviewed internally through a self-study process which is externally validated, annually.

Standards framework for ongoing review

Proposal 12
That the improvement plan be developed in response to a standards framework that draws on national best practice in juvenile detention centres and the outcomes framework against which the well-being of vulnerable young people in the ACT will be monitored.

Building the process

Proposal 13
That the development of the continuous improvement plan and its monitoring include the key components of authorization, goal setting, data collection and review, external validation and replanning in order to ensure a continuous cycle of service improvement.

Human resource management
Proposal 14
That all staff who have regular contact with Bimberi residents have at least certificate for qualifications in youth work, youth justice or social work.

Proposal 15

That the Bimberi service be seen as an important opportunity to intervene therapeutically in the cycle of disadvantage for vulnerable young people and that it be staffed accordingly with educational, health and mental health professionals.

Performance management for senior managers and team leaders

Proposal 16
That the performance management process should be based on measures of both the managers' achievement of performance goals as well as process measures such as the maintenance of productive working relationships within their area of responsibility.

Proposal 17
That individual development and support plans be core components of the implementation of the matrix model of performance management.

Conclusion

The interviews with senior executives in the Department pointed to a number of underlying problems in the operation of the Bimberi centre. Some of these problems relate to day-to-day management and resource issues, such as the use of temporary staff and the associated pressure on existing staff as they cope with high numbers of young people. These operational issues are important and it is evident that senior management has made substantial efforts to address these in the last 6 to 8 months.

However there are other difficulties executives identified which are more systemic and if not addressed, will ultimately undermine the good work which is being done to address the tangible, operational challenges which the centre faces. These difficulties relate to the organisational processes and structures which are the focus of this report.

In summary, the changes being implemented in Bimberi need to be supported by organisational and policy changes which ensure that Bimberi is seen as only one part of a comprehensive co-ordinated system of response to the needs of vulnerable and at risk youth.

Bimberi is one part of the youth justice system which is in turn one part of a broader set of services focused on the care, protection, education, health and well-being of young people. Effective long-term reform will be dependent on ensuring that the objectives of the ACT government are delivered through a coordinated response. While Bimberi remains an isolated and discrete element of the overall programme for the vulnerable young people it is at risk of losing its

focus on the therapeutic and rehabilitation of goals to which the ACT government is aspiring.

On the basis of the discussions with senior executives of the Community Services Directorate the proposals in this report have been designed to overcome this difficulty and to underpin a coherent response to the well-being of vulnerable young people in the ACT.

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Background

Following a resolution in the ACT Legislative Assembly, the ACT Government directed the Human Rights Commission7 (The Commission) to undertake a review of conditions at the Bimberi Detention Centre. The Commission was tasked with investigating a number of specific operational concerns at the Centre as well as more broad ranging issues of relevance to a wider group of vulnerable youth in the Territory.

These included programs for education and training, health and wellbeing and rehabilitation; early intervention services; the effectiveness of diversionary strategies; the ongoing monitoring of recidivism particularly for detainees held in remand; and throughcare and aftercare services provided to detainees and Community Youth Justice clients.

The Commission recognised that the implementation of any recommendations it made to respond to these issues would need to be facilitated by the organizational arrangements in place within the responsible ACT Government agencies. In this regard the Commission sought the advice of two consultants with experience in public administration and community services in the ACT and more widely.

Specifically the Commission asked the consultants to concentrate on the views and perspectives of current and former senior executives of the ACT Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (now the Community Services Directorate). The consultants were not asked to evaluate the effectiveness of the current arrangements or to comment on the performance of departments, organizational units or individuals. Rather the Commission required the consultants to provide a set of proposals about Bimberi within the wider context of Youth Justice and other organizational units of critical importance to Youth Justice, that would embed long lasting positive change.

This is the report of those consultations and proposals. The interviews and the writing of this report took place in May 2011.

The approach

The consultants sought to address the questions:

- How can the Youth Justice system best deliver public value in the future to vulnerable children and young people and the broader ACT community?
- What organisational processes and structures are needed to achieve good outcomes for children and young people in the ACT Youth Justice system?

Specifically we wanted to know:

- What needs to be done to communicate a common vision for a Youth Justice system in the ACT?
- How can this system deliver good outcomes to children and young people and how will we know this has been achieved?
- Is there a strong authorizing environment or mandate for this vision? What could strengthen the mandate for implementing the vision?
- Are operating models in place to support good outcomes for children and young people in the ACT Youth Justice system? How can these be improved?

To answer these questions we interviewed executives from the Community Services Directorate and asked them a range of questions about current and future arrangements in Youth Justice. To prepare for these interviews we canvassed key policy and planning documents, literature about children and young people in the Youth Justice system and change theories which provide a useful basis for conceptualising reform in public sector administration.

Background information also included the body of literature known as 'What Works' (Australian Institute of Criminology, 2002; Buttrum, 1997; Elliott-Marshall, Ramsay, & Stewart, 2005; Harper & Chitty, 2005; MacKenzie, 2000) and up to date reviews of 'Wraparound' (an evidence based model of service delivery to young people with high and complex needs) (Burns, Schoenwald, Burchard, Faw, & Santos, 2000; Carney & Buttell, 2003; Walter & Petr, 2011). We also reviewed the public policy and organizational literature to inform our discussion of future arrangements (Lundin, 2007; Sinclair, 1993; Winkworth & White, 2010, 2011). A review of this literature is outside the scope of our brief however we do provide a short overview of what we know about the vision for the youth justice system in the ACT and children and young people who are in that system.

We do this in order to state from the outset assumptions that we have about the purpose of the Youth Justice system and also about the needs of young people in that system. In doing so we set the scene for our central thesis, which is the need

for a much stronger whole of government and, whole of society, responsibility for vulnerable young people in the ACT if the Youth Justice system is to be successful in its vision to rehabilitate these young people.

The purpose of ACT Youth Justice

As is the case with Youth Justice systems internationally debates about Bimberi are prone to vigorous criticism from both ends of the spectrum; on one end there have been claims that the Centre fails to provide much needed services to vulnerable children or to protect their human rights; at the other end the government has been criticized for failing to hold young people accountable or to protect society from dangerous young criminals.

Underpinning these arguments are different ways of thinking about the purpose of justice systems. The Retributionists argue the primary aim is to deliver punishment for crimes committed; the utilitarian perspective is that the primary goal of Justice systems is stopping reoffending (that is, reducing recidivism).

The third perspective is the humanitarian approach, which argues that the sole aim of Justice systems is rehabilitation. Some theories of rehabilitation tend to be concerned mainly with treatment and other psychologically based processes to stop offending behaviour. Others focus strongly on acknowledging the agency and capacity of the young person for change; encouraging them to take responsibility for their actions alongside efforts to build their capabilities for a positive future.

> *This means being held directly accountable in some way, and that they are meant to do things themselves, rather than simply being passive actors in the criminal justice systems…. Intervention strives to reach a point where the young offender will be seen as a community asset rather than a liability (White. R., 2008:49)*

Rehabilitation within this conception draws together elements from the two ends of the spectrum: it emphasizes the importance of enhancing the talents and skills of the young person in a way that builds their sense of personal agency; it also acknowledges the importance of personal responsibility, but in a way that is respectful, hopeful for positive change and cognizant of the role of others in this change.

It has been argued that utilitarian and humanitarian perspectives are not mutually exclusive and that both approaches should be applied to young offenders. Most Australian youth justice systems articulate goals that are consistent with both approaches. However they do this often within highly reactive political environments that at times push strongly for punitive and retributive youth justice systems.

So much so there are claims internationally that the eroding of the "parens patriae premise"[8] (the state as parent) has meant that Youth Justice systems are increasingly responding to calls for tougher regimes and are therefore less able to properly invest resources in environments that address the factors which have brought them into the Justice system; factors that will impact on them while they are in the system, and when they leave it (M. Moore & Wakeling, 1997).

The ACT Government, in its submission to the Review, articulates four goals for its Juvenile Justice system:

Within a human rights framework and applying the best interests principle, the objectives of the ACT youth justice system are:

1) To prevent young people from entering the youth justice system and to divert those young people who do come into contact with the youth justice system at all opportunities

2) To support the holistic development and wellbeing of young people in the youth justice system to keep them safe and to maximize their opportunities to achieve positive life outcomes

3) To promote young people's rehabilitation and reduce recidivism

4) To facilitate effective throughcare and transitioning to assist a young person's reintegration into the community [9]

These goals, which in summary propose a vision for Youth Justice of prevention, inclusion, rehabilitation and reintegration, position the ACT Youth Justice system clearly within the humanitarian philosophical discourse. With this vision at the forefront we are better able to frame our interviews, analysis and proposals.

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[8] Latin term which refers to the inherent jurisdiction of the courts to make decisions concerning people who are not able to take care of themselves (http://www.duhaime.org/LegalDictionary/P/ParensPatriae.aspx). **Parens Patriae** situates juvenile deviants/delinquents between criminal and civil law. Since those considered children, under the parens patriae doctrine, are not treated as criminals, the focus of corrections was on treatment (http://homepage.mac.com/brenn/Child%20Savers.html

[9] ACT Government (2011) *The ACT Government's Submission to the Human Rights Commission's Bimberi Reviews, p. 30*

Children and Young People in the Youth Justice System

Our task is also guided by an understanding of children and young people in the youth justice system.

What Australian data systems tell us

Australia has an emerging evidence base about children and young people in Youth Justice systems drawn mostly from the annual data collection of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW, 2009) and a number of reports just released by the Australian Institute of Criminology (Richards, K, 2011(a), Richards, K, 2011 (b); Richards, K & Lyneham, M, 2010).

A snapshot of youth justice in the ACT is provided in the Government's discussion paper on a diversionary framework (Department of Disability Housing and Community Services, 2011) and we will not revisit it in detail here. However it is not possible to overstate the significance of the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in all Australian Youth Justice systems including in the ACT where Aboriginal children and young people are overrepresented in both community supervision and detention, with overrepresentation higher in detention than community based orders. The data also indicates that since 2000 the rate of children and young people generally in the ACT, in community based orders and in detention, is higher than the national rate (DHCS, 2011: 7).

This upward trend is in spite of Australian policy over the past three decades to actively divert young people away from the criminal justice system and to reduce the numbers of young people who receive custodial sentences. The policy towards diversion is influenced by international evidence which indicates incarceration, in and of itself, is limited in its impact over rates of recidivism and, may in fact, contribute to it (MacKenzie, 2000; UK Home Office, 2005).

The stigma of incarceration, and the actual impacts of removal from family, communities, education and employment are well documented in the international literature (Altschuler & Brash, 2004; Armstrong, 2003; Goldson, 2000; Maxwell, Kingi, Robertson, Morris, & Cunningham, 2004). Young people who are incarcerated are more likely to be disengaged from education and to experience mental health, drug and alcohol issues and generally poorer health(NSW Department of Juvenile Justice, 2003).

Institutionalization (the decreasing ability to live independently), stigma and poor self concept (Borzycki, 2005) accompany periods in detention especially when this is prolonged. There is also the tendency for young people, who are cut off from

families and communities to strengthen criminal networks. These negative effects are worse for those with mental health issues, females and young Aboriginal people (Moore, T., et al, 2008).

The ACT Government acknowledges that at the national level the ACT is not performing well on all three key measures related to the effectiveness of diversion: the rate of young people on remand, the rate who are on community supervision orders and the rate in detention. Of concern also is the fact that majority of young people who are detained at Bimberi have not been sentenced; they are there because they have either been refused bail or they are subject to a remand order (Department of Disability Housing and Community Services., 2011:1).

The recent discussion paper Towards a Diversionary Framework for the ACT (ACT Government, 2011) canvasses options for improving performance in the diversion of young people from the system and for better meeting their needs.

Child abuse and neglect and juvenile justice – the same children

An overview of the international literature and the limited Australian research on young people in the Justice system provides a compelling case for much stronger collaborative arrangements across government and non government agencies, and the wider community. The social and economic costs of failure to do so are apparent when consideration is given to typical profiles of young people in the Justice system.

Very little Australian research is available to shed light on the backgrounds and experiences of children and young people in the youth justice system or what happens to them after they leave the system. However the international literature consistently shows the link between children who have suffered trauma through child abuse and neglect with later episodes of juvenile crime (Mersky & Reynolds, 2011), intimate partner violence and abuse of their own children.

Retrospective studies examining the early histories of young offenders indicate that between one and two thirds have experienced maltreatment (Colman, Mitchell-Herzfeld, Kim, & Shady, 2010). Further, those who have been removed from their families by State authorities because they have been abused, are more likely to be detained in custody than those who do not share a child welfare history.

The need for rehabilitative environments which address trauma is also apparent through research which indicates the increased likelihood that young people who are incarcerated will not only become younger parents than the average but will

experience highly conflicted and often violent intimate partnerships while their children are young. In addition to heightened tendencies to domestic and family violence, there are indications that other forms of child maltreatment are more prevalent in young people who were juvenile offenders10 (Colman, et al., 2010).

Intergenerational impacts

Furthermore, parental incarceration which starts in juvenile detention appears to be intergenerational (J. Murray & Farrington, 2008; J. Murray, Janson, & Farrington, 2007; National Crime Prevention, 1999) (National Crime Prevention 2000; Murray 2007). For example boys' anti-social behaviour throughout their life is predicted by parental incarceration. In Murray and Farrington's study 48 per cent of boys who were separated from their parents because of parental imprisonment between birth and age 10 years were convicted as an adult, compared to 25 per cent of boys who were separated for other reasons (J. Murray & Farrington, 2008) and predicts mental health issues in males.

Parental incarceration has also has been found to predict mental health issues in males. Travis, McBride and Solomon (2003) note that traumatic separation from parents may interrupt the achievement of key developmental tasks resulting in, for example, impaired parent-child attachment, acute traumatic stress reactions, developmental regressions, rejection of limits on behaviour, and an impaired ability to overcome future trauma (Travis, McBride, & Solomon, 2003).

These in turn are considered key risk factors for juvenile offending (National Crime Prevention, 1999). As evidence of this, a NSW study, found that 11% of juveniles in detention had a parent in prison on the day of the survey whilst 40% had a parent who had been in prison at some time (NSW Department of Juvenile Justice, 2003).

Many service systems know these children and young people

In the absence of Australian research we look to the international evidence which indicates young people detained in custody are more likely to have encountered many human service systems but tend not to engage with them in a sustained way or in a way that positively contributes to their future wellbeing. These systems include education and special education, mental health and drug and alcohol agencies, child welfare agencies, out of home care and housing (Maschi, Smith Hatcher, Schwalbe, & Scotto Rosato, 2008). Far from being active recipients

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[10] For example in a prospective Study which tracked 999 young offenders (499 girls) released from New York State correctional facilities in the early 1990s nearly two-thirds of the girls were investigated by child protective services for alleged acts of child maltreatment and over half became clients of both the child welfare and adult criminal justice systems (Colman et al, 2010).

of what are generally regarded as universal services (such as health and education) or secondary level services for those who need additional assistance (such as those mentioned above), a picture emerges of children and young people who either do not access services, drift away from key institutions that are critical to their future or in many instances are actively excluded from them.

For instance, the literature suggests that many youth who enter the youth justice system lack consistent community health care prior to and after incarceration. In fact, for many youth, the justice system provides their first access to needed health care services (Pumariega;, et al., 1999; Rogers, Pumariega, Atkins, & Cuffe, 2006). Research shows the association between juvenile offending, substance use and mental health, with substance use frequently cited as a contributing factor at the time of a young person's arrest. For example in one US study between 40%-69% of young people in detention had an illegal drug detected in their urine at the time of arrest (National Institute of Justice., 1999)

Young people in detention often have had substance use problems for a long time. Abrantes et al (2005) found that 150 out of their sample of 252 youth in the detention centre met the substance use dependence criteria, with the average time of use being 4.56 years. These young people also reported an average of 2.5 years from the time they began misusing substances to their first brush with the Youth Justice system (Abrantes, Hoffman, & Anton, 2005).

The comorbidity of mental health and substance abuse issues is also common among young offenders. In the above study the overwhelming majority (90%) of young people in the study were diagnosed with major depressive disorders, mania, conduct disorders, and substance dependence, with the latter two being the most frequently reported co-occurring conditions (Abrantes et al, 2005)[11].

Although education is highly valued in our society as the universal right of all, barriers to staying engaged with school such as the prevalence of learning disabilities, serious emotional disturbances and mental health issues, inability to read and write, major family disruption including family violence, are all evident in the histories of children and young people in the justice system Bruns, et al, 2005; Kaufman et al, 2004 and Malmgren & Meisel, 2002 in Maschi et al, 2008).

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[11] Golzari et al., 2006 M. Golzari, S. Hunt and A. Anoshiravani, The health status of youth in juvenile detention facilities, Journal of Adolescent Health **38** (6) (2006), pp. 776–782. Article |

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Although there are almost no studies of educational barriers experienced by young people in Australian youth justice systems a recent unpublished study in the ACT provides poignant accounts by young people themselves of their fragmented school histories and early exclusion from education. Furthermore this study clearly demonstrates the difficulties that these young people will face after they leave incarceration in gaining educational qualifications, skills and employment. Despite their high hopes not to return to detention some were back within the month (T. Moore et al, 2008).

Previous Australian inquiries into children and the legal system (Australian Government, 1997) have identified the vulnerability of children exiting detention (many of whom are Aboriginal), especially in getting the assistance they need in education, health, housing, and employment.

Young offenders are particularly vulnerable. They are seen as undesirable housing clients. They receive few services from the mainstream health system and their particular health problems, such as drug and alcohol abuse, are often seen to be their own fault, a consequence of their lifestyle choices (The Director of the Department of Juvenile Justice in NSW) (Australian Government, 1997).

What children and young people say about their experiences in Youth Justice

The voices of young people in Youth Justice have been almost entirely unheard despite the perspectives this could bring to improving outcomes for this vulnerable group. In other human service domains, particularly health there is an established tradition of consumers as key participants in service design, delivery and evaluation. Yet apart from some inquiries into how young people experience incarceration (Wilson & Rees, 2006) and their interactions with police (Hurst, Frank, & Browning, 2000) the voices of these young people are almost absent from Australian research (Abrams & Auilar, 2005).

A recent unpublished study in the ACT (T. Moore et al, 2008) identifies the gap in research with children and young people as particularly evident in their experiences of transition from juvenile detention and their reintegration back into the community. In their study Moore and others, tracked 11 young people on committal orders to Quamby Detention Centre in the ACT over an 18 month period. During this time, young people were interviewed within the facility and, where possible, back in the community. Four young people identified as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and three were from a culturally or linguistically diverse background. The following excerpt from this research describes the cohort.

> These young people had family members who had their own alcohol or other drug problems, who were engaged in criminal behaviour, who were unable to provide children with safe, stable and positive home environments. By late primary school these young people had begun to drop out of education, drink heavily and commit petty offences. Some of these young people had parents who tried to protect their children from the negative influences in their home environments while others failed to do so. Most had some involvement with Care and Protection services, with at least four spending some time in Out of Home Care.
>
> These young people began to appear before the courts around the age of 12 and the experienced constant recycling through the juvenile justice system – escalating their crimes from petty theft and misdemeanours to car thefts and aggravated assaults. Each time they exited Quamby they failed to develop strong connections with schools, positive peers or support networks and often returned within 12 months of release (p. 8 of Executive Summary).

Although this research refers to a previous detention centre and a different time (2007-2008) it does illustrates the importance of hearing directly from young people themselves and way in which their voices add a compelling new dimension to the public understanding of who these young people are. In this instance we hear how young people did not feel their time in detention was one of rehabilitation. They were generally sceptical because they believed most of the programming was focused on what they did while they were in detention rather than in preparing them for release.

They also felt that they were returning to the same set of risk circumstances in their environments as they left. Further "many young people recognised that they had become reliant on the system, had lost many living skills and often felt ill-equipped for dealing with the challenges confronting them outside" (T.Moore et al, unpublished, p.23-24).

Interviews with Departmental Executives

Confidential interviews were conducted with 16 executives across the Community Services Directorate, including the Director General and Deputy Director General, a number of former and current executives with responsibility for the Children and Young Peoples division, and two other people with responsibilities associated with Bimberi and the current Review. The Commission provided the list of people to be interviewed.

Given the specific focus of the reviews carried out by the Commission itself we decided to lightly structure these interviews with a view to providing participants with maximum opportunities to voice their opinions about future change. We framed our questions with reference to the stated goals of Youth Justice (DHCS, 2011:30)[12]

We asked interviewees:

"Thinking about the Government's stated goals for Youth Justice, including for Bimberi:

- What works well now that may assist in the future?
- What continues to be a problem?
- What future organizational arrangements can bring about lasting positive change for vulnerable children and young people in the ACT?

Reflecting on the past

We did not specifically ask about problems in the past, preferring to set boundaries around these issues which will be addressed by the Commission. However, most of the people interviewed chose to discuss concerns about the situation in Bimberi last year.
The genuine wish for the Youth Justice system to improve the lives of very vulnerable children was strongly evident in the interviews. Despite the professional and personal pressures of the Review and the high levels of public scrutiny and admonition inherent in statutory work, most indicated a desire to

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[12] Within a human rights framework and applying the best interests principle, the objectives of the ACT youth justice system are:

1) To prevent young people from entering the youth justice system and to divert those young people who do come into contact with the youth justice system at all opportunities
2) To support the holistic development and wellbeing of young people in the youth justice system to keep them safe and to maximize their opportunities to achieve positive life outcomes
3) To promote young people's rehabilitation and reduce recidivicm
4) To facilitate effective throughcare and transitioning to assist a young person's reintegration into the community (DHCS, 2011:30

continue to be directly involved in developing and improving service delivery systems for disadvantaged young people.

Many spoke about the high hopes they had for Bimberi, the extensive consultation processes that were used in the lead up to building the facility; the desire to drive cultural change through the architecture and layout of the building and the efforts made to create excitement about the human rights compliant environment

> *We wanted it to feel different for the staff. It was deliberately on the other side of town from the old Quamby. We went to great lengths to change culture. We organized special events, barbeques and other events to build the excitement.*
>
> *The hope was to drive change away from a custodial culture to one that was more relationship focused and to use the time that children spent in Bimberi as an opportunity to identify and address life barriers.*
>
> *We knew that this might be the only time in their lives that they had the opportunity to have a positive educational experience.*

However almost all participants also spoke of concerns with levels and quality of staff, management styles and the safety and security of both staff and children and young people at the Centre. Staff on temporary contracts, remuneration levels which (without penalty rates) compared unfavourably to staff in the rest of the Department and the ACT government, 12 hour shifts, many staff without formal qualifications and a strained relationships with Centre management all contributed to an uncertain staff group.

Repeatedly we heard about what can occur in a youth detention centre where there has been a struggle to employ skilled staff, in a reactive political environment and where media is quick to sensationalise.

Some participants told us that these volatilities led to risk averseness and an increasing preference for the 'lockdown' of young people to deal with security risks. We heard of the gradual decline of key programs for young people: education, sport, music, and competency based training due to the deteriorating staffing situation as well as a perception of remoteness between the Centre and the central operations at 'Moore St'. The situation further deteriorated with what a number of participants referred to as the 'demonizing of children' and the running down of the reputation of the Centre in the media. It became harder to attract good staff at any level.

We also heard that some good staff stayed despite these events and the distressing public humiliation of recent months.

> *The kids were locked down because there were not enough staff. When staff are insufficient they always go to the lowest common denominator and that is safety and security. Then bad staff stay and good staff go. Its always the same. Fortunately some good staff stayed. They were stubborn and resilient and they couldn't leave the kids or their teammates.*

Many were disappointed in the limited opportunities for young people in the centre while they served their sentences. The view was put that a preoccupation with the building, the 'space itself' [of Bimberi] and the focus on being human rights compliant, while entirely appropriate, had inadvertently resulted in a failure of a bigger imagination about these young people including the longer term view of what was needed to assist them for the rest of their lives.

What is the problem now?

Communicating a common understanding of purpose

Most participants identified a lack of a shared understanding of the purpose of the Youth Justice system, and Bimberi within this system, as one of the overarching problems that continued to undermine external and internal support for rehabilitation.

Analysis of policy documents and the Department's website confirmed that written forms of the vision, goals, and principles which underpin the system are not strongly communicated. While the stated goals appear in the Government's submission to the Review[13] there is only a light reference to young offenders (some of whom are as young as 10) in the ACT Young People's Plan and almost no reference in the ACT Children's Plan. The lack of a strong and clearly stated vision, which is uncompromising about rehabilitation, was the most often stated concern among participants. For example we were told:
> *There is a need for greater awareness and consensus of objectives. Fundamental changes are needed here.*

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[13] ACT Government (2011) *The ACT Government's Submission to the Human Rights Commission's Bimberi Reviews, p. 30*
Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (2004) *The ACT Children's Plan 2004-2014, ACT Government, Canberra 2004*
[13] Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (2009) The ACT Young People's Plan 2009-2014, ACT Government, Canberra, Dec 2009

We need more glossies with the five key goals

Some felt there was a fundamental lack of clarity about the role of Youth Justice and Bimberi's role within it.

We are not clear on the systemic role of Youth Justice and Bimberi's place in achieving the goals.

One of the biggest challenges is determining 'what is the purpose of Bimberi and the broader Youth Justice system?'

There was also a view that while the written documentation is now stronger about the need to prevent child abuse and neglect, family violence, and other known contributing factors to serious social, emotional and economic disadvantage to children, it stops short of including children in the youth justice system in this narrative. In this sense the policy, the story does not strongly acknowledge the crossover between children under the notice and care of Care and Protection services and children who interact with Youth Justice. Participants frequently acknowledged the serious levels of disadvantage experienced by these children particularly those who are Indigenous and those who have been previously removed from their families.

Several managers made the point that research continues to demonstrate the absence of any evidence base for punitive and coercive approaches in Youth Justice. Furthermore, they claim there is an absence of evidence of any apparent value to most young people in being detained, other than the opportunities this may afford to link them with health, education, employment, and other social programs that have the potential to make a positive difference in their lives.

People think we bring crime down through being tough on kids. This is not true. We prevent crime by allowing kids to grow up, get girlfriends, get jobs, by promoting their development. This is how we get good results.

We are too driven by the community safety crime prevention agenda.

Several participants referred to the hopes they had about the culture of Bimberi when it was built. They were dismayed about political reactivity in relation to some incidents which they felt were natural in a youth detention environment. There was a view expressed by a number of participants that the community's reaction to safety or disciplinary matters at the Centre diverted the service from its rehabilitation focus. They felt that the Centre had come to be judged by

community and other oversight bodies on a limited set of objectives related primarily to safety and security rather than the broader rehabilitation focus of the work.

> *We really struggled with the way incidents got into the political realm – the media outcry and intolerance over the roof incident. [for example].*
>
> *Then the pressure to be more secure. We were sent the wrong messages and we sent the wrong messages to the community - that this is not to happen again rather than realising the kids would come down in time.*
>
> *The facility was purpose built for a less custodial culture. We need to be better at developing a story and communicating the story. The Department has not effectively maintained the narrative*
>
> *Our messages are very reactive. The emphasis is all about security. We have failed to send out strong messages about what Bimberi is about. When the media got involved and it got into the political domain then debate shut down.*
>
> *We seemed to have lost the big picture and we've lost the little picture We need bipartisan support for the role of Bimberi.*

And as another participant put it:

> *The act of courage is to hold the line that Youth justice is not about stopping youth crime It's about helping vulnerable young people. It is by focusing on developmental outcomes for these children that we stop juvenile crime.*

Absence of performance measures and other accountability mechanisms to support the vision

Participants were aware that there are a number of mechanisms commonly used to increase the quality and integrity of public systems. These include formal performance frameworks (using a range of agreed indicators against which performance is measured); internal management systems to hold managers to account for their particular areas of responsibilities and external oversight bodies which have legislative powers to hold agencies to account.

Our consultations indicated frustration with all of these mechanisms and a perception that individually and collectively they fall short of supporting improved outcomes for vulnerable children and young people.

Performance measurement includes strategies used to assist governments assess the impact of what they are doing, to improve service provision and to target resources more effectively (AIC, 2011). However, in youth justice systems across Australia recidivism is the only agreed measure of performance. This is problematic for Youth Justice agencies which argue that many factors influence recidivism and most of these are not within their control. As one manager said:

> *We have no control over who comes into our system*

Another argued that although it should be the whole of society's responsibility to look after vulnerable children Youth Justice is the agency least able to influence health, education and other positive social outcomes, yet it is the one compelled to take responsibility.

> *We need to be clearer about what the department is responsible for and what we are having to manage.*

While there are no specific performance indicators for Bimberi[14] the Directorate is required to provide information on enrolment and attendance at an educational institution to the Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services. The limitations of this as an indicator for driving improved educational outcomes for children in Bimberi is understood when it is realized that despite a lack of any educational awards or achievements to young people in Bimberi last year the government achieved 100% on this indicator because all children are enrolled in the Murrimbidgee Education Centre.

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[14] Performance indicators are identified in the ACT Government Budget papers in the Strategic Indicators and Accountability Indicators in Output 4.1 Youth Services.

Interviewees took the view that performance attention is currently focussed on safety and security. There is a need for a performance framework that is more focussed on rehabilitation and outcomes for young people .

> *We need a coordinated whole of government data report*

There was also the view that Youth Justice and other government agencies tend to be mainly measured against timeliness indicators. The problem here is that staff focus on what they are being measured against rather than on better outcomes focus for young people.

People perform to their performance indicators. We need to shift expectations to outcomes.

External oversight bodies were regarded as appropriate and necessary to ensure statutory agencies, including the youth detention centre, were accountable and open to scrutiny. However most of the managers who took part in these consultations expressed a view that, in spite of the relatively large number of oversight bodies in Canberra, there is a lack of advocacy for system wide change including the need for whole of government, whole of community approaches to improving life outcomes for these children. Instead,

> *There tends to be a focus on things like haircuts, newspapers and visitors.*
>
> *Our focus has been on complying with human rights without concern for what happens when they come out. Human rights should be business as usual.*
>
> *Oversight bodies have not tended to see advocacy for wider systemic change as their role, such as the need for more diversionary processes. Rather there is a tendency to focus on complaints and to give feedback about what the department is doing wrong. We have been frustrated by a lack of willingness to go beyond the responsibilities of this department to deal with issues.*

Lack of robust data systems - The participants indicated that the lack of a robust data system within the directorate has a number of implications. The existing arrangements do not help the ACT community understand the serious, long standing disadvantage of children in the system and what happens to them after they leave detention, the severity and scope of problems or how well the system is doing in addressing these problems.

There is a view by a number of participants that existing data systems including paper based systems, registers and spreadsheets are inadequate for the tasks they are required to perform. Firstly there is difficulty in gathering a basic profile of children - their child protection histories, the number who are or have been in out of home care, their education and health histories.

Then there is difficulty meeting local or national data reporting requirements. For example, we were told it will be difficult to easily gather information for the Performance Indicators currently being developed by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) (safety and security, number of assaults and incidents of self harm).

Finally it is an ongoing challenge (within current resources) to service requests for information from oversight bodies and to regularly report to them.

Internal performance management Interviewees suggested this was an area for considerable improvement. The political sensitivities around Bimberi, the lack of media and community support for rehabilitation objectives, and performance measures that are predominantly focused on safety and security have driven management performance priorities away from achieving rehabilitation and integration goals. Although new arrangements this year for much greater level of onsite presence of managers and senior managers at Bimberi were already showing positive signs of improving practice, there was more to be done. Participants made a number of suggestions including a much greater role for quality assurance systems and self study that provides opportunities for self reflection and evaluation. Other jurisdictions have made greater use of experts in youth justice who are commissioned to conduct thorough audits against a wide range of indicators. These indicators go much further than current performance indicators which focus on safety and security; they include critical measures of an effective rehabilitative culture such as quality of relationships.

As one interviewee observed

> *This can be quite comprehensive even down to the level of food, the way the cooks interact with the kids*

Legislation and policy does not always support the vision

There were three areas of consensus about the need for stronger policy and/ or legislative frameworks to support a rehabilitative vision for youth justice: diversion from the system, throughcare, and procedures in relation to how and where casework with young people on orders takes place. The people we interviewed described this as the need for greater attention to active outreach.

Diversion - Although endorsing the strength and continuing relevance of the Children and Young People Act 2008 there is a shared view that other relevant legislative frameworks such as the current Bail Act may not support the best interests of children caught up in the Justice system. This has been discussed at length in the Government's discussion paper on a Diversionary Framework for the ACT15 and in the Commission's report. That numbers of children in Bimberi are twice the national average, and five times the number in Victoria, supports the call for scrutiny of legislation and related orders as to whether there is sufficient flexibility for diversion from detention.

All of those interviewed identified the lack of diversionary options to detention as a major contributing factor to the problems last year. They acknowledge that this continues to be a major barrier to a rehabilitative youth justice system.

> *There is an oddity in the Canberra figures. Young people are locked up at twice the national average and five times the number in Victoria. And this does not only apply to children in detention. The figures show that we have 1.5 times national level in community youth justice. Y J. Its hard to make sense of this when you consider our demographics here in Canberra.*

The need to leverage existing legislative provisions for throughcare - All operational managers who were interviewed expressed concerns about throughcare and the extent to which existing legislation authorized continuing relationships with children after they leave Bimberi. Agreement was strong that an ideal Youth Justice system would position detention in Bimberi as a small interruption in what is otherwise an ongoing casework relationship with highly vulnerable children; 'its just a change of address' as one person observed. However there are different views and some uncertainty about whether existing provisions such as Good Behaviour Orders are sufficient to achieve this or new

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15 Department of Disability Housing and Community Services (2011) Discussion Paper: *Towards a Diversionary Framework for the ACT,* Australian Capital Territory, Canberra, Feb 2011, p. 30

legislation, for example provision for parole, is required for what some regard as more effective continued support.

It was also acknowledged that although the recent budget provided substantial resources for young people leaving care, including those reaching the age of 18, there still existed a significant throughcare policy gap for young people turning 18 who do not meet this criteria. The point was made that these youth often had significant child welfare histories, may have previously been in care and were leaving the youth justice system ill equipped for the next stages in their lives.

Not all key stakeholders support the vision

Change theories consistently point to the importance of engaging stakeholders, whose support is critical to the outcomes sought. Many who were interviewed believed that key stakeholders were not engaged with the vision and goals of a rehabilitative Justice system for young people.

There was a view among many managers that last year Bimberi operated like an 'oil rig. In one sense this referred to the challenges for senior management, not based at the centre, in gaining a first hand experience of the culture and day to day practices of the centre. It also referred to the sense of isolation from Central Office and from each other that some staff at the Centre experienced. The view was expressed that at the centre, some staff were

> *heavy on security rather than being heavy on relationships, rules based rather than person based.*

> *Anything so out of sight develops its own culture….We need to get more people out there.*

Others also indicated the best way to ensure safety and security for all was to 'open it up'

> *The best protection in an institutional setting is to have lots of providers coming in and out*

While there is recognition there is more to be done considerable efforts have been made to improve communication between Bimberi and 'Moore St' and within Bimberi itself. Strategies are also in place to build more positive relationships with the young people. However it was acknowledged that more work was to be done in building the 'coalition for change' including a shared vision across the Directorate, the ACT government and the community before Bimberi could embrace all aspects of the change.

A widely held view is that other ACT agencies lack clarity about their responsibilities to vulnerable youth before, during and after their contact with the justice system. We heard that

> *this group of shared clients who come into contact with many systems are really non clients. They belong to everybody yet they belong to nobody*

Others spoke of the need for much more support 'on the outside'

> *People do what they have to but there is no real commitment. The links are OK but the 'buy in' is really poor Trying to get [other ACT government agencies] to commit resources was like pulling teeth.*

Frustration was expressed about the unclear roles of Education and CIT. We heard about promising initiatives to respond to youth at risk such as the G8 in Gininderra and the forthcoming T20 in Tuggeranong, which are cross sectoral and collaborative across Education and Child Protection. However overall the people we interviewed felt the issue of a shared responsibility for this group of children was particularly uncertain across the Justice and the Education systems. Examples were given of ongoing battles for additional resources to assist young people with major literacy and numeracy problems. That some Indigenous children have made dramatic improvements with additional one on one support in recent weeks attests to the value of tutoring and other more individualized approaches, however, 'it is never clear who pays or how long they will pay'.

Casework

Participants identified several concerns about current casework/case management arrangements. They also indicated that there are plans within new tendering arrangements to change the case management model to include a greater focus on Aboriginal young people and to increase the role of the non government sector. However concerns overall about casework interventions can be summarized as: the need for much earlier interventions where children exhibit risk profiles for later offending, the absence of continuity across phases of contact with child protection/ youth justice systems, the need for a much stronger ecological focus for casework (ie: working with people and places that matter to children and young people) and the need for an overarching practice framework for working with vulnerable young people.

Early intervention

Participants pointed to the evidence that children and young people at risk of trajectories into Youth Justice can be identified much earlier. They indicated the need for earlier team based interventions with very vulnerable children and their families. This would require a more local, cross agency approach

> *We are well resourced in this town. But there is a huge pressure on managers in statutory agencies like care and protection and youth justice to stay focused on their core business. We need to use our resources differently. We need to create a higher level focus on working out in the community. We could even conceive of multi disciplinary teams in the four regions of Canberra and trial different approaches.*

A view was held by several that there is a particular gap in services for children aged 9-14 where specific young offending risk factors become very clear, and that this should be an obvious focus for earlier intervention.

Continuity

There was widespread recognition among participants that existing casework/case management arrangements lacked continuity. This occurs across Youth Justice itself in that there is a lack of clarity about the program boundaries of Youth Connections, Wraparound and other Youth Justice Programs particularly when young people are sentenced or remanded in Bimberi.
There is a further lack of continuity when young people leave Bimberi. We heard of a number of structural and legislative barriers such as those mentioned above which apparently prevent ongoing contact. Programmatic boundaries in non government sector programs also appear to currently prevent ongoing contact with young people after they leave Bimberi.

> *At times we have had lots of services coming into Bimberi but the contact stops as soon as the young person is discharged*

A critical gap in the continuity of casework support for young people in the Youth Justice system is the lack of an afterhours response. This is recognized by participants (and has been identified in the Departments Discussion Paper on Diversion) as a contributor to young people detained at Bimberi (rather than in other accommodation including with kin, in out of home care or in other youth facilities).

Models that are ecological and enduring

Participants indicated that the considerable rhetoric in public documents about outreach strategies with vulnerable children, young people and their families, this was often not matched by reality. Many felt there was a need to strengthen outreach and other community and "ecologically based foundations" to the policy/ practice framework. The current requirement for young people on orders to see their caseworkers at the Moore St building was given by several as an example of a procedure which is not based in an ecological understanding of the needs of very vulnerable children and young people.

> *It is not helpful for young people to have to come into this building to report to the Department*

> *Of course they will not choose to come into here after they leave Bimberi. The cost of bus fares, parking, and the humiliation of waiting downstairs with security will inhibit that. We need to get much better at going out to them and offering them support.*

A shared practice framework

Participants observed that the focus on relationships has diminished as Bimberi became more "rule structured" and "risk averse". In reflecting on the past there was a view that

> *We didn't invest anywhere near enough in staff, our most important resource. Instead the investment went into the physical structure of the place.*

> *It was in the quality of staff, and the investment in staff that the Department was seen as having an opportunity to model the kind of respectful relationships it wanted to see between staff and young people.*

> *We've never taught the staff how to achieve this.*

Participants noted that lack of resources has prevented the development of a comprehensive and shared practice framework across operational units which work with vulnerable young people, including Youth Justice; one which would embed a common set of principles and models which are relationship and outreach focused, ecological (working with the people and places that matter to young people), and sustained for as long as the young person requires assistance.

What is working well now and has potential for future arrangements?

A strong legislative framework

We asked interviewees if they thought the legislation supported the articulated goals of the Youth Justice system.

The general consensus was that the Children and Young People Act 2008 which took some years and a great deal of careful attention to develop was probably adequate in its current form. It has a strong human rights focus, represents best practice in Juvenile justice institutions and provides a strong framework for a rehabilitative system. Of particular significance in the Act are provisions that enable the CEO or his delegate to "declare a Care Team" so that information can be shared among professionals and family members, where a number of different agencies are involved with vulnerable children and young people.

While it is not clear how often this provision has been used in relation to children in the Youth Justice system it is acknowledged by managers in this consultation as potentially powerful in enabling earlier, collaborative planning across agencies and with families for children identified as at risk of offending.

The potential to expand existing models of practice across the system to improve outcomes for very vulnerable children and young people

A number of existing initiatives were identified as having potential to be modified and expanded so that they are of greater relevance to Youth Justice. These programs provide platforms from which other early intervention and prevention programs can operate. Managers indicated that The Child and Family Centres at Tuggeranong, West Belconnen and Gungahlin which have a specific focus on children aged 0 to 8 years (by which time most children at risk of a youth justice trajectory can be identified) and the Schools as Communities program have the potential to more effectively identify children in the early childhood years or kindergarten.

There is also currently a developing momentum, a coalition of concerned practitioners in the Directorate and across other sectors (mental health, education, family violence, and universities in Canberra) for a developmental trauma recovery and research centre which would work with children and families, many of whom may have later contact with the Justice systems.[16]

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[16] This meeting of concerned professionals met at the University of Canberra on June 8 to discuss a way forward for children and young people in the child welfare and youth justice systems affected by trauma

As well as building social support and leveraging community resources to reduce isolation for very disadvantaged families these programs were regarded as ideally placed to identify young children at high risk and to set in train integrated approaches to prevent poor outcomes including young offending behaviour. There was a view held that the potential of these programs had not to date been fully utilized.

We also noted that there is a commitment in the youth Justice area to implementing key messages from the previously mentioned "What Works" literature including strategies that focus on risk assessment frameworks and instruments designed to better identify which youth require secure detention; these can be important in diverting young people from detention by providing an evidence based assurance to courts that the right decisions are being made about secure vs non secure arrangements. Participants hoped that these initiatives could continue to be supported and that much needed training of staff across Youth Justice in their use would be given a greater priority than it had in the past.

The recent Child Protection Case Conferencing Pilot (Nov 2009-June 2010) was also identified as another successful model with potential for implementation across Youth Justice and Care and Protection Services. The model, which uses an independent chair and the Care Team provisions of the Children and Young People Act, brings together key people and agencies to plan for vulnerable children. An internal evaluation[17] recently indicates what is possible using strengths based approaches, interagency collaboration and active family involvement.

Recent changes at Bimberi show what is possible

The view was held that the Review has sparked considerable change and provides opportunities for a much greater focus on vulnerable children. It has placed the spotlight on processes that some managers have been concerned about for a long time such as case management, throughcare, staff recruitment and skills; it has provided a major injection of funds immediately to address urgent problems and the potential to make positive improvements for children has been demonstrated.

Some managers spoke about the changes which in their view indicate what is possible to achieve with more attention to staffing and specific program issues. The most frequently mentioned changes included:

Staffing

Participants indicated that considerable progress had been made over the past few months in the following areas:

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[17] Office for Children, Youth and Family Support (2010) Child Protection Case Conferencing Pilot Evaluation, Unpublished document, September 2010

- Staffing levels - A concentrated effort to recruit and an agreement to 'overstaff' has resulted in a greatly improved levels of staffing at the Centre
- Staff permanency: All staff are now on permanent contracts and efforts are being made to ensure there is a robust casual pool of staff
- Staff qualifications – The Department is supporting staff diplomas in Youth work. Bimberi staff are currently attending weekly CIT certificate IV workshops with graduation expected in June 2011. A further 7, from the last recruitment round, have enrolled in the CIT workshop. They are expected to graduate in March 2012. The Diploma of Youth Work commenced on Friday 15 April, with 15 starters, with graduation scheduled for December 2011.

Refocusing on education and skills of residents

We were told that last year at Bimberi no young person gained a certificate or a formal award for school or any other other vocational achievement. However a number of changes this year show what is possible with additional resources to the school and the development of partnerships with CIT and industry: for example

- Resources made available for one to one tuition of some children and young people with major literacy and numeracy deficits have made dramatic differences to learning and behaviour
- 16 kindles have been purchased to provide children and young people with more intensive, self directed reading tuition
- Limited agreements with CIT for enrolment of young people and partnerships with both Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and Industry partners such as the construction industry have immediately opened up opportunities for young people that have not existed for some time.
- Resumption of critical wellbeing programs due to better staffing levels and the greater sense of safety and security that this affords. For example sporting and music programs have been resumed after having been disbanded last year.
- Staff report that communication at the centre has also greatly improved under new management arrangements.

It's a different world now from what it was last year. Communication has dramatically improved. We're having regular weekly meeting with management at the Centre, Moore St is coming out every week and there really seems to be a belief that things need to be opened up.

> *There seems to be the thinking that consultation and openness of communication is the only way to solve problems. With all the drama of the inquiries they actually have helped propel some changes.*

But concerns remain about the future…

However along with a sense of relief that the Centre is currently fully staffed, resources are flowing and that a more positive staff culture focused on children and young people is emerging, a number of managers expressed a lack of conviction about how long lasting the changes would be. Some who have been part of previous reviews felt that changes only last as long as the political imperative remains

> *These kinds of changes [the ones that stem from media and political scrutiny] never last. Its started off well; there is a sense of urgency and that's good but when the urgency disappears what will happen then? Will it all go?*

Managers said that staff are noticing the change but still feel more is needed. There is also an anticipation that a change which continues to be driven 'by the papers' may not endure.

What Needs to Be Done to Support the Change

The complexity of issues faced by children and young people in the Justice, system described earlier in this report were reinforced in our interviews with Departmental executives, most of whom have spent the majority of their professional working lives in services concerned with vulnerable children, young people and their families. The far reaching impacts of a failure to address the needs of young people costs society dearly, including the costs of: recidivism as juveniles then as adults, the tendency for young people who have been incarcerated to become very young parents often without family or other social support, the increased likelihood of family and intimate partner violence, serious ongoing physical and mental health and substance use issues, a greater chance of abusing and neglecting their own children, and these children and young people more likely to engage in juvenile crime.

While it is self evident that a short period in detention cannot by itself address the magnitude of issues confronting many young people when they leave custody (Mears & Travis, 2004) there is also considerable evidence that it is possible, at critical early points, to identify children and young people who are likely to enter the youth justice system (National Crime Prevention, 1999), particularly as they and their parents interact with early childhood, housing, health, education, and social security systems.

A much greater collaborative response across government services the community services sector and other key community institutions is required to prevent entry into the system in the first place, provide a wider range of options to incarceration, and to provide young people who are incarcerated with opportunities to "build their talents and skills" through education, training and/or employment.

Although collaboration between services can produce significant improvements for young people, on its own service this kind of collaboration does not tend to produce long term ownership or increase the sense of control that people and communities have over their own destinies (Gray, 1996; Huxham, 1996; Huxham & Vangen, 2005). Partnering with local community organisations and the business sector can create opportunities for people to participate in the normal social and economic lives of their communities. Sporting clubs, industry bodies, philanthropists, churches, are examples of other community entities that can provide the formal and informal social support, resources, prosocial networks and opportunities critical positive futures away from welfare and correctional institutions. (Appendix 1 illustrates a case study of how such an approach worked in practice in Berks County Pennsylvania)

The substantial literature that has developed in recent years on joined up approaches claims that goals can be best accomplished by agencies coming together to actively work on accomplishing a broad common mission. Certainly there is a view in the child welfare literature that the two most important shifts in policy and practice are the moves towards integrated or collaborative ways of working and the increasing emphasis on improving outcomes for children and young people (N Frost, 2005; N. Frost & Stein, 2009)

The usual approach to outcomes by Government in contemporary program management is to identify high-level outcomes such as a "a strong diversified economy" or "a fair socially cohesive and vibrant society" and then to specify a related set of outputs in budget documents and annual reports. Intermediate outcomes are specified and a results logic is set up to drive program decision making, with service delivery plans then based on a hierarchy of results (White 2006: 11).

However the problem with this approach is that by their very nature outcomes, which apply to complex policy, challenges (such as reducing juvenile recidivism) are often shared across departmental structures in which a particular agency is only one of a number of contributors to the outcome. This becomes even more challenging for government when the role of other sectors is also critical to the outcomes sought. The causal link between outputs and outcomes is often not clear (White, 2006:12).

As the research indicates, outcomes for children and young people in Youth Justice are clearly the result of many inputs many of which are not within the control of any one agency of government. Yet the reality for government is that the community will continue to judge it based on its ability to make an impact on the outcomes outlined in its policy agenda. For example, in the ACT the community will continue to judge Youth Justice and the Community Services Directorate on its ability to address its key goals – prevention, rehabilitation, inclusion and reintegration (DHCS, 2011:30).

We address these and other issues in the following section. To guide the analysis we use a theory of change which is widely used in public administration.

A conceptual model guide the analysis and proposals

To guide the analysis and the proposals we used a model developed by Mark Moore[18], to broadly identify the conditions necessary to successfully implement public sector change and address questions about structural arrangements (internal and external) that could bring about long lasting positive change for the children and young people in Bimberi and in the wider Youth Justice system. The premis of this model which is particularly applicable to Bimberi is that regardless of how much individuals and organizations desire to bring about change this will only happen if the change has: legitimacy and support (authorization) from those affected; public value which is recognized by those implementing the change; and the necessary operational capacity to implement the change.

Moore's work focuses on the ways in which leaders of public organizations can engage communities in supporting and legitimatizing their work. All public investment, according to Moore, is "founded on the shifting sands of public aspirations" so to survive they must be able to generate support for what they do. This support is built on shared understandings and commitments to the purposes intended to be served by the public investment. Moore claims that the foundations of public initiatives therefore lie in their "mandates for action" (Moore 1990, 1995 in Moore, 1997:254).

This theory of change provides a way of framing our analysis and proposals for structural and organizational arrangements required to support reform in Youth Justice. First we will discuss each of these concepts and what they mean in practice.

Public Value

Moore (2000) argues that any successful enterprise requires a 'story, or an account of what value or purposes the [activity/ enterprise/ change] is pursuing' (p.197). While some public enterprises are founded on "durable, widely supported foundations" others, (and Moore specifically refers to Youth Justice) are "fickle, hotly debated, inconsistent and hard to operationalise" (1997:254). The interviews clearly indicated that the Department had not yet effectively communicated a compelling vision with clearly defined goals and principles; nor were there evaluation and accountability mechanisms in place to support this. In the case of Bimberi we identify the need for a strong statement of purpose and supported by an outcomes framework. These are two key mechanisms, which will

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[18] Mark Moore is Professor of Public Policy at the John F Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

flow on to a range of other strategies to improve the quality of service delivery. These are described in more depth in the Proposals.

An authorizing environment

The authorizing environment refers to the high level mandate for an activity to occur. Even where practitioners, managers and others are committed to a Youth Justice system which focuses on prevention, rehabilitation, inclusion and reintegration, without a strong mandate for this vision it may be easily undermined in a reactive political environment.

The elements of a strong authorizing environment previously identified include: a formal mandate through legislation, endorsement through public enquiries, policy documents, memoranda of understanding, and information sharing protocols (Winkworth & White, 2010, 2011).

Authorisation also requires the vision to be endorsed by members of critical operational staff groups, in this case the Bimberi staff are just such a critical group; other agencies whose involvement is critical to successful outcomes (for example, education and health) and experts in the field (in this case, experts in Youth Justice).

In our proposals, the ACT Strategic Board, set up under the Hawke review and other governance bodies will be required to embed a stronger authorizing environment, including by other government agencies, for reform in Youth Justice.

Operational Capacity

Many reforms fail because they cannot be delivered. In operational child welfare contexts, including youth justice this often relates to staffing resources, including skills, numbers, practice models that address issues confronting children and young people in Youth Justice, shared practice frameworks among those who are critical to the delivery of practice models, and other resources and infrastructure.

In the case of Bimberi we propose a range of delivery mechanisms to bring about to the changes in practice identified in the literature and the interviews.

Analysis and Proposals

The interviews with senior executives in the Department pointed to a number of underlying problems in the operation of the Bimberi centre as a component of a broader, effectively functioning response to addressing the needs of vulnerable and at risk young people.

Some of these problems relate to day-to-day management and resource issues, such as the high use of temporary staff and the associated pressure on existing staff as they cope with high numbers of young people. These operational issues are of course important and it is evident that senior management has made substantial efforts to address these in the last 6 to 8 months.

However there are other difficulties which are more systemic and if not addressed, will ultimately undermine the good work which is being done to address the tangible, operational challenges which the centre faces. These difficulties relate to the organisational processes and structures which are the focus of this report.

This report set out to answer the questions: -

- How can the Youth Justice system best deliver public value in the future to vulnerable children and young people and the broader ACT community?

- What organisational processes and structures are needed to achieve good outcomes for children and young people in the ACT Youth Justice system?

These questions raise significantly different issues from the day-to-day operational issues mentioned above. They relate to aspects of the organizational architecture of the ACT's response to vulnerable and at risk young people. They may manifest themselves as observable issues such as "poor communication" or more generally "cultural clashes" but at their heart they are manifestations of more fundamental difficulties in organizational design and implementation.

Essentially an effective organizational architecture will be characterized by both clarity and agreement around the purpose of the organization. This purpose will be communicated throughout the organization and will shape the day-to-day activities which characterize its operation. As referred to above very often this clarity of purpose will be based on a shared values statement relating to the outcomes the organization seeking to achieve (Moore, 1997).
This shared values statement and clarity of purpose will be given expression through an effective monitoring and performance management system which will

be owned and operated by the staff within the organization. It will underpin human resource issues from day-to-day staff management and supervision to staff recruitment and training. From the outside its existence will be recognized by the coherence of the organization and its capacity to focus on achieving common goals. It is an approach which is sometimes summarised by the term "organizational culture".

Without a rigorous commitment to the maintenance of a coherent set of values throughout the organisation, from the top levels of its leadership to the day-to-day frontline staff delivering services, the organisation faces the risk of a "cultural drift" in which component parts of the organisation develop separate cultural identities and operate effectively for divergent and sometimes competing purposes.

One of the key issues with regard to the operation of Bimberi has been the lack of a common view throughout the Government, the Department and the ACT community more broadly, of its purpose and role in the overall response to young people at risk.

The second issue, perhaps related to the first, has been the centre's separateness – some have described it as the "oil rig". This separateness appears to be at the core of a number of the criticisms of the centre, ranging from the development of a separate staff culture, poor continuity of case management and uncertainty of resourcing for therapeutic and educational programs.

The proposals of this report seek to establish the mechanisms which will underpin the maintenance of an organizational culture focused on the reform and rehabilitation of young people detained at Bimberi, but more widely those that come in contact with the ACT youth justice system.

Its major features are outlined in figure 1 below.

**Fig 1   DELIVERING PUBLIC VALUE THROUGH BIMBERI YOUTH CENTRE
SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**
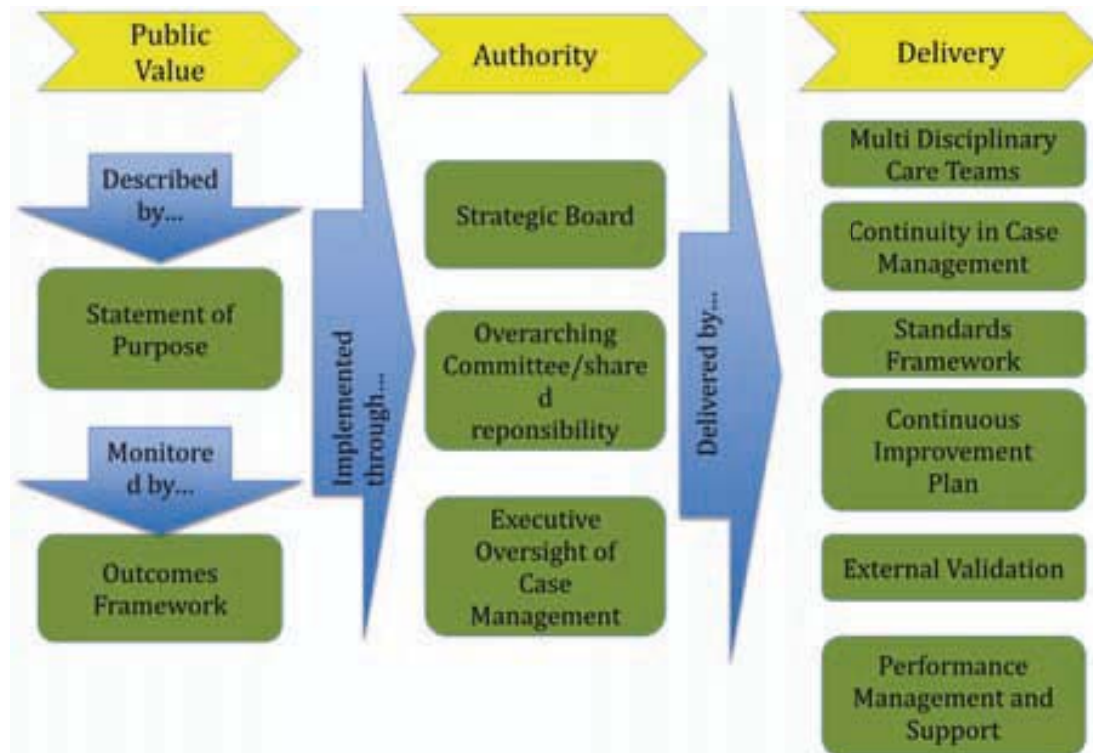
What the proposals will achieve

In summary the proposals seek to bring about the following changes in the way the ACT responds to vulnerable young people

1. Bimberi will not operate as a separate entity disconnected from the broader response to vulnerable youth in the ACT but will be part of a co-ordinated system which focuses on achieving good outcomes for this high need group.

   In order to achieve this a number of things need to be put in place outside Bimberi as well as within it.

External Factors

2. Led by the newly created Strategic Board the ACT will adopt a clear statement of the goals to which it aspires for vulnerable young people. This statement will include an aspiration to improve the health, safety, wellbeing, learning and development of this vulnerable group.

3. The achievement of broadly based outcomes for vulnerable young people will not occur through the actions of a single directorate but will require the input of a number of different directorates. The Strategic Board will take responsibility for coordinating these directorates and overseeing the allocation of resources to support the outcomes.

4. The Strategic Board will prepare an annual report to government on how this group of vulnerable young people are faring, describing them in terms of their health, safety, wellbeing, learning and development.

Internal Factors

5. The practices of responding to these vulnerable young people will reflect the principles of continuity, a focus on outcomes (how the young people are rather than what the government is doing), and the use of multidisciplinary teams.

6. Within that overarching focus on the needs of vulnerable young people there will be a statement of purpose for Bimberi that reflects the opportunities it provides to actively address young people's range of developmental needs. Its purpose will not simply be conceived as the incarceration of young people as a punishment for an offence; but will be judged by its contribution to the improvement of outcomes for this group.

7. The performance management, training and recruitment of staff will be revised to reflect that purpose to reflect that purpose.

The following discussion and proposals will describe how these seven elements of a new approach to delivering better outcomes for vulnerable young people will come about.

Whole of government coordination

All jurisdictions struggle to provide integrated services to young people. Governments have long sought to achieve broad policy outcomes through the creation of separate portfolios with accountabilities to deliver on specific policy agendas. In many ways this approach has been inconsistent with the development of collaborative approaches to delivering outcomes in the social services field in which broad policy outcomes may be the responsibility of a variety of separate departmental regimes.

In Victoria, the difficulties of this approach have been recognized and an attempt made to address them through the creation of the Children Services Coordination Board established under the auspices of the Child Well-Being and Safety Act. This Board comprises the heads of departments in the Victorian government bureaucracy including the Department of Premier and Cabinet as well as Treasury and Finance, police, justice, Education, Human Services and Health. Its role is to provide an opportunity for the complex needs of children and young people to be seen holistically and to create a forum in which broadly based advice can be developed for government.

In this regard the opportunities created by the Hawke review in the ACT provide the basis for developing an integrated approach to the difficulties of vulnerable young people in the ACT. The Review noted that:-

> *"Traditional public service departments and hierarchies are not well adapted to dealing with the complex and interrelated issues to which governments around the world are increasingly being required to turn their minds……"*[19]

Hawke recommended a number of changes to the structure of the ACT administration which are designed to promote a much more integrated approach. In particular the creation of the Strategic Board, and the potential to develop subcommittees of the Board, provide the ACT with an opportunity to place the needs of this complex group in an environment where they can be considered jointly and in which all Directors-General can make an ongoing commitment to responding to the difficulties of vulnerable and at risk youth.

It also provides an opportunity for authorizing joint funding and accountability mechanisms focused on broadly based outcomes rather than simply on specific outputs which in the past have tended to form the basis of departmental funding regimes.

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[19] Hawke page 5

Proposal 1

It is proposed that the Strategic Board establish a committee on vulnerable children and young people which reports annually on its strategic directions and achievements for this group of ACT citizens.

Agreed statement of purpose

While there have been significant improvements in the operations of the Bimberi centre in the last six months, these been largely driven by reactions to the concerns raised in late 2010 rather than by a series of systemic reforms.

If these significant improvements are to be maintained, one of the first issues to be resolved is the development of a common statement of purpose which is agreed by government, senior administrators and by staff at the centre. The statement of purpose needs to have a number of features. The statement of purpose must:-

- Emphasise the therapeutic as well as custodial nature of the service

- Recognise that most residents of Bimberi are there for short periods and are often connected to other service systems

- Be agreed across government and communicated throughout the service system for vulnerable young people

- Be used as the basis for assessing and monitoring outcomes.

It would be appropriate that the strategic board provide the authorizing framework for this statement of purpose. However it's dissemination needs to be significantly wider than the board. In particular the statement of purpose needs to be incorporated in the leadership, supervision and training processes for Bimberi staff to ensure that a consistent message is maintained across this group.

In this regard the managers and executives within the Community Services Directorate need to maintain close connection with the Bimberi centre providing leadership to ensure that the service operates in a way that it can consistently deliver on the statement of purpose.

Finally, it is important that this statement of purpose be placed in a broader context of the plan for children and young people in the ACT. As part of the vision statement for children and young people, it would be appropriate that the particular needs of this vulnerable group are clearly identified and that strategies

are articulated to achieve the broad objectives of rehabilitation and reintegration of this group into the wider ACT community.

It is understood that some work has already commenced in relation to the development of such a statement of the vision for youth justice however its placement within a broader framework of a whole of government response to vulnerable young people is unclear.

Proposal 2

It is proposed that a statement of purpose which reflects the rehabilitation of role of the Bimberi centre be developed and agreed across government.

Adopting an Outcomes framework

The success or otherwise of achieving these broad goals for children and young people is closely related to the way in which the goals are both specified and monitored. When organizations are assessed on specific outputs or indicators these tend to become the dominant focus on the service, not only in how it is judged but also in how it operates.

In the particular case of Bimberi its key performance indicators appear to have become dominated by matters of security and custodial management. While these issues are important they are by no means the only reason for the service's existence. In fact, for many of the executives interviewed for this report it was a matter of concern that the broader objectives of rehabilitation and reintegration have been given a very low profile.

In recent years human services departments in Australia have worked to develop broad outcomes frameworks which describe features of children and Young People's development which go beyond more simple descriptions of program outputs which have characterized public sector administration in recent decades. In this regard outcomes frameworks developed in Victoria, Tasmania, West Australia are notable.

These frameworks take a broader ecological approach to children and Young People's development and allow governments and organizations working with young people to focus on the broader outcomes of the work rather than on specific features of their day-to-day activities. For example, these frameworks identify outcomes in health, learning, development, safety and well being of young people and link these to indicators which can be reliably measured. This represents a significant change from more traditional approaches which focus on measures of activity, outputs or processes. While the more traditional

measures can be useful as program management devices, their existence can obscure the fundamental purpose of the provision of the service.

The ACT Young People's plan provides a sound basis on which an outcomes approach might be developed. The existing plan makes significant commitments around the implementation of programmes and other initiatives. It would be an appropriate step to overlay this plan with an outcomes framework and associated monitoring system, which will inform the ACT community on the broader question of how young people are faring.

Shared responsibility

If Bimberi is to be successful in achieving excellent outcomes for young people its role in a broader service context needs to be recognized. Bimberi is only one of a number of agencies which needs to take responsibility for outcomes for the young people in the ACT. So, for example, while Bimberi has a role to play in ensuring that residents are able to achieve educational or employment outcomes, so to do other agencies within the ACT service community share this responsibility. One of the agencies which would have a key responsibility in this area is the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT). As the lead public sector provider of vocational educational and training the CIT would the agency most likely to assist Bimberi in delivering on these outcomes for its residents.

It is the experience of many jurisdictions that describing goals in terms of outcomes makes a significant difference to the opportunities and willingness of services to develop collaborative programs to achieve these outcomes.

This will be particularly true if the ACT is able to make best use of the opportunities of the new public sector arrangements to promote joint accountability and responsibility through mechanisms such as the strategic board and its committees. This is not a simple task.

> *"The fact that outcomes are usually the result of many inputs, and these inputs may not all be within the government control, means that measuring the effectiveness of government action can be difficult. This is not the case with outputs, which are designed to be the direct product of government action and are much more amenable to measurement, which in turn leads to an evaluation of program effectiveness.*
> *Nonetheless, the reality is that the community will continue to judge the government by its impact on the outcomes outlined in its policy*

agenda and so new ways of monitoring these outcomes and reporting these results to the community need to be found and implemented."[20]

Proposal 3

It is therefore proposed that the Strategic Board adopt an outcomes statement for vulnerable young people in the ACT and jointly monitor these outcomes, reporting annually on their achievement. This outcomes statement should address the health, learning, development, safety and well-being of young people and should be supported by a set of performance indicators related these five core areas.

Proposal 4

Within the context of this outcome statement the Community Services Directorate will have a particular responsibility to report on vulnerable young people including those who have spent time as residents of Bimberi.

Proposal 5

At the same time, the Strategic Board itself should take joint responsibility for the achievement of the outcomes, providing an authorizing environment for the collaboration necessary between health, education, community services and justice agencies.

Continuity of case management

It is apparent that many of the young people who are residents of Bimberi were clients of the youth justice system prior to their entry to the centre. In addition many of these young people have been through the ACT's care and protection system. Certainly they are all eligible to be part of the education system although many have been not attending schools for some time.

Similarly, many of these young people have particular health needs including drug and alcohol problems and/or mental health problems.

After they leave Bimberi virtually all of these young people will have some sort of contact with support services, education services or police and justice services into the future.

From this perspective it is hard to justify the systemic separation of case management responsibilities within the Youth justice area. It is apparent that case managers within Bimberi begin a separate case management process once a

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[20] White, M. (2006). Victoria's approach to putting children first. *Public Administration Today*(8).

person has entered the service. In some cases this is justifiable, particularly if the young person is remaining in the service for a substantial period of time. However, for many young people the disruption of the case management as they enter and leave Bimberi is hard to justify. Case management practices appear to be driven, at least to some extent, by the security needs of the custodial environment rather than by the needs of the young person.

This issue was raised by a number of those interviewed for this review and we are aware that senior managers are keen to develop a more continuous system. Such continuity will allow the development of longer-term objectives for the young person, the development of an ongoing relationship with an individual case manager and greater clarity of responsibility for outcomes.

Proposal 6

It is proposed that managers of the Community Services Directorate pursue the development of mechanisms for case management continuity. This would be designed to remove the distinction between community youth justice case managers and those operating within Bimberi to ensure that, for a young person on remand, continuity of case management would be the rule rather than the exception.

This issue is addressed more fully below in a discussion of the development of multidisciplinary teams. With regard to case continuity the key issue is that the distinctions between community youth justice case managers and those operating within Bimberi reflect a structural divide created by the decision of the courts.

This does not necessarily reflect a substantial difference between the needs of the young person, nor between the skills of the professionals challenged with overseeing the coordination and delivery of services designed to assist the young person. The young person's needs remain substantially the same and this should be reflected in the case management system.

Legal Basis for ongoing case management of vulnerable young people.

In addition to developing organizational and professional mechanisms for ongoing continuous case management, it is apparent that the Department needs to clarify the legal basis for such ongoing case management. Some participants in this review indicated the need for the development of a parole system to provide a legal basis for engaging with young people once they have left Bimberi.

On the other hand others indicated that the new legislation already provides an opportunity for such ongoing management. The difference between the two points of view appears to be that the parole option allows for decisions around

ongoing case management to be made while the young person is within the service. On the other hand post-release Good Behaviour Orders allow for ongoing case management but need to be made at the time of sentencing. It is beyond the scope of this particular review to resolve this matter.

Proposal 7

However the Department should re-examine whether the existing legal framework is sufficient to support continuous involvement of case managers for young people.

Mechanisms of case coordination

Interdisciplinary Teams for High Risk Young People

If the ACT were to adopt the proposal in this report that it develop a framework describing its goals for the developmental outcomes of young people, then this needs to be accompanied by a more interdisciplinary approach to the delivery of services to young people. Such interdisciplinary approaches generally require the establishment of locally based teams of professionals that can take responsibility for particular areas action to support vulnerable young people.

The ACT has the opportunity to develop such mechanisms under its existing Act. In particular the Director-General of the Community Services Directorate has the power to create a "Care Team" to provide co-ordinated case management. Within the context of these care teams officers have the authority to share information regarding the young person and to develop plans with the child's family for their well-being.

This is an authority which could be used more widely, building off the existing effective practices already in place around programs such as Turnaround and Youth Connections. The creation of such "Care Teams" around particularly vulnerable youth would need to be implemented in conjunction with an authority for continuous case management so that the work of the team was not hindered or interrupted by the young person being placed on remand or even committed to Bimberi.

The development of interdisciplinary care teams focused on the ACT's most vulnerable "at risk" youth would assist in moving the focus of professional work with this group away from particular interventions or events in the young person's life. Under the present arrangements the young person acquires a different status depending on the nature of the current intervention, and this brings with it a different set of resources and staff. For example the "care and protection"

response is different from the "on remand" response and different again from the "community-based order" response. This results in a fragmentation of the services and management of the young person's needs and can act to obscure the fundamental purposes of the intervention.

As one participant in our interviews noted that "Bimberi is in many ways just a change of address". Services to this highly vulnerable group of young people need to be built off the assumption that they will have a variety of living arrangements (family, kinship, youth refuge, Bimberi, independent living,) and will come in contact with a variety of service systems. The mechanisms put in place must be built on the assumption of the continuity of the young person's needs rather than separation of the systems we use to respond to these needs.

Proposal 8

It is proposed that interdisciplinary care teams be established to manage the needs of the most vulnerable at risk young people in the ACT.

Proposal 9

It is proposed that case managers within these interdisciplinary teams have continuing responsibility for the care of young people regardless of their setting and placement.

Senior Authority for Case Co-ordination

In addition, it would be important that these Care Teams are able to access resources to ensure that the broader goals of education, employment and health are supported regardless of the young person's placement in Bimberi or elsewhere.

This interdisciplinary approach raises the issue of providing an authorizing environment for the case management decisions regarding the complex needs of vulnerable young people.

The care teams themselves may provide an effective vehicle for the day-to-day coordination of case management however they do not provide the level of authorization and strategic systemic review which would be necessary for the continuing management of complex cases for vulnerable children and young people and their families.

Models of high-level authorization exist within the care and protection systems in a number of jurisdictions in Australia. In these models senior managers meet on a regular (monthly, bimonthly or quarterly) basis to review progress on the management of particular cases. The meetings generally focus on only one or two cases at a time.

It is important in these models that senior managers do not feel the need to take over the role of day-to-day case management but focus on the broader systemic issues which relate to the management of the case. This approach leads to the identification and resolution of blockages that may develop between agencies; and at the same time has the advantage of addressing difficult cross portfolio issues with regard to particular cases.

Proposal 10

It is proposed that an executive level group is established across the directorates of education, health, community services and other relevant directorates to review systemic issues with regard to the management of complex cases vulnerable or at risk youth. This group should meet quarterly and be an ongoing part of the case management process, reviewing one or two cases each time it meets.

Internal Organisational Processes.

Effective implementation of change and the maintenance of that change require the sort of high-level authorisation and day-to-day senior management involvement which has been outlined in the sections above.

Without this high-level leadership and active management the energy for change can often dissipate and former practices will be readily re-established. However, in addition to these external processes there are a number of key actions, which can take place within the service.

One of the most powerful of these is an ongoing analysis and review of service quality and achievement by the service itself.

On-Going Review

There are currently many external forms of oversight for Bimberi, including the Human Rights Commission, the Children's Commissioner and the Official Visitor. However these forms of oversight, valuable as they are, tend to be "post-hoc" processes which focus on specific aspects of the centre's operation or events that have taken place within it. When they are more comprehensive such as the current review, they tend to only occur sporadically and years apart.

If genuine changes are to be sustained these need to be owned by the staff of the service and constantly monitored by the staff at the centre itself. This is not an unusual process with human service agencies in Australia. Accreditation processes associated with other human service delivery activities such as hospital accreditation systems, aged care and child care systems both promote and rely on self-study mechanisms which are externally validated.

Key advantages of this approach are not only the regularity of the reviews but the ongoing ownership of the review by the staff and the opportunity to self critique in an environment which they feel they control.

A key element of this approach is that the self-study process operates within an agreed framework of standards and leads to the development of an ongoing improvement plan. Performance against this improvement plan would be regularly reviewed by the centre itself, assessments made of performance against the plan and new goals set for consideration at the next review. Without this commitment to an ongoing process it is likely that the improvements in the operation in the Bimberi centre in the past six months will not be maintained.

An important addition to this self-study process is an annual external evaluation or audit of the improvement plan by a body or individual with an expertise in the youth justice field but also with an understanding of the particular goals adopted by the ACT.

An example of this in operation is the work conducted within Western Australia by the Office of Inspector of Custodial Services. The regular reviews undertaken by

this Office provide an excellent model for the external evaluation which would be a necessary part of an ongoing reform process within Bimberi. However it should be reiterated that external processes alone cannot provide the ongoing support for systemic reform necessary.

Proposal 11

It is proposed that the ongoing improvement plan be developed for the Bimberi centre to be monitored and reviewed internally through a self-study process and which is externally validated annually.

Standards Framework for ongoing review

It has already been proposed above that the ACT develop a common purpose statement for the Bimberi service which is nested within a broader statement related to the vulnerable and at risk young people. Further it has been proposed that this is articulated in a statement of outcomes for these young people which is monitored on a regular basis.

These will form a strong basis for developing a regular ongoing internal self-study review process whereby managers lead staff of the service through a regular analysis of the performance in relation to these outcomes statements.

Other components on which this self-study approach could be built include the Standards for Juvenile Custodial Facilities prepared by the Australasian Juvenile Justice Administrators (1999) and the more recent Juvenile Justice Standards prepared by the same body in 2009. In addition to work of the West Australian Office of The Inspector of Custodial Services could be drawn upon to develop a framework of standards appropriate to the service environment of the ACT and its own policy framework. In this regard is important to note that the office of the Inspector of custodial services has recently released draft standards for juvenile detention facilities.

This is not to suggest that either of these documents provides all that the ACT, and the Bimberi service, would need in framing a self-study process. In fact it can be assumed that linking an outcomes framework for young people with some of the activities and procedures required to deliver these, would require some significant development. Nonetheless both the content of such documents and processes which would support it provide a useful starting point for this work.

Proposal 12

It is proposed that the improvement plan be developed in response to a standards framework that draws on national best practice in juvenile detention centres and the outcomes framework against which the well-being of vulnerable young people in the ACT will be monitored.

Building the process

With regard to the process elements of such an approach there are a number of key factors necessary to ensure the approach was successful.

Key features of an effective self-study process can include that it :-

- Is led by service leaders who provide authorisation, mentoring and support for the process
- Is founded on a clear set of desirable outcomes, which can be described by simple concrete examples good practice
- Engages the whole staff, particularly in a multidisciplinary environment
- Engages stakeholders and clients, including children and families.
- Leads to the adoption of specific development goals
- Monitors progress towards these goals.

Steps to establishing an externally validated self review process

Step 1 – Authorisation

An effective self-review process must be authorised by the governing board of the service. In this case the appropriate authorization would come from the Community Services Directorate. Within the service itself the management group would need to adopt, and commit to the self-study process, establishing a subcommittee of the Management and staff to take responsibility to promote and manage the continued self-study process.

The self study can be seen as a series of cycles where questions are posed, data is collected, shared reflection occurs and decisions are made about what further to do. This is a shared process that needs to involve a broad range of staff and stakeholders.

Service leaders in key programme areas would need to be committed to this type of approach as well as becoming familiar with the standards against which it would be agreed that the service would be measured. They would need to provide leadership to their own staff and mentoring for them throughout the process.

Step 2 - Data Collection and Information Gathering

In the first instance, the whole staff would review the standards in a structured workshop and make an assessment of the current performance of the service against the overall standards. As part of this workshop, staff would provide practical examples of how they believe the service was meeting these standards.

Gathering information from clients.

Service users and other stakeholders should be advised that the service is conducting the self-study process. Where appropriate the subcommittee might prepare simple surveys to elicit information from clients where they could provide useful insights into the centre's achievement of particular standards. In the past 6 months staff and residents of Bimberi have had the opportunity to respond to surveys of the kind proposed here.

The value of these types of surveys will be significantly enhanced by placing them in the context of a comprehensive review, linking them to agreed standards, using the outcomes to inform planning and guaranteeing that they will be repeated as part of an ongoing cycle.

Step 3 - Goal Setting Planning and Monitoring

Having gathered the relevant information and having made an assessment of the service's performance against the agreed standards, the service will make a decision regarding those aspects of the standards which the service will undertake to develop within the next 12 months.

In making this decision the service would need to consider the following principles:

Priority areas for development.

The priority areas for development for the service would need to reflect the priorities identified in the overarching policy document developed by the Strategic Board, but also may be driven by areas which it believes are of high professional importance, such as improving service quality, or are areas in which overall performance is relatively low.

Realistic assessment of possible progress

The creation of a set of standards would provide a framework in which the service may set short term or long term goals. For example in some areas the service may decide because of the difficulties to achieving change, it would only aspire to moderate achievements against the standards. In other areas the service may choose to be more ambitious and set goals further along the continuum of development.

Identifying opportunities and barriers

As part of developing a plan for improvement the service will be assisted by being explicit about the barriers to improvement in particular areas and by identifying opportunities to overcome these barriers. This list of barriers and opportunities can become an essential part of the monitoring process.

Monitoring Progress

Progress towards improvement should be described in practical terms which relate to the operation of the particular service. In this way members of the service will be in no doubt of what needs to be changed and what progress looks like "on the ground". A timetable should be established for reporting progress through the governance structure of the service and to clients and stakeholders. While this will vary depending on the area of action chosen, quarterly reports provide a regular opportunity for review without an undue burden on staff.

Step 4 Validation

The completion of this self-study process would be through a validation process to confirm whether the service's assessment of its of performance can be confirmed. This validating team would need to be well briefed on the purpose of the Bimberi service within the wider framework of a strategy of responding to vulnerable and at risk youth in the ACT.

It should be re-emphasised that it is not simply a matter of importing a set of standards which may be appropriate for a particular jurisdiction but which may, at least to some extent be inconsistent with the policy directions of the ACT. At the same time the use of a well established agency with expertise in this complex area has many advantages of both quality and efficiency which should not be ignored.

Proposal 13

It is proposed that the development of the continuous improvement plan and its monitoring include the key components of authorization, goal setting, data collection and review, external validation and replanning in order to ensure a continuous cycle of service improvement.

Human Resource Management

It was not the purpose of this particular review to enquire into the day-to-day operations of the Bimberi service. Rather it was the intention of this to provide some proposals on how organizational processes and structures can be put in place to sustain reforms begun in the service.

Notwithstanding this it is appropriate to make some observations on the basic features of human resource management within the service which go to the issue of how the change will be sustained. Fundamental to these is an emphasis on ensuring that centre staff are appropriately qualified for the tasks which are central to the management of residents of the Bimberi centre.

A key issue here is ensuring that the training and qualifications of staff are consistent with the provision of the service which is at its core developmental and therapeutic for young people detained at the centre. While there is undoubtedly a custodial and security component of the work the view of the ACT government is that the core goals of Bimberi relate to rehabilitative and restorative outcomes.

From this perspective it is essential that all staff are employed on the basis of qualifications which support this rehabilitative outcome. At the very minimum in would be necessary to have staff qualified at certificate four level in areas such as youth justice/youth work/social work if they are to be in regular contact with young people at the centre.

In addition it would be expected that the centre would employ a significant complement of professionally trained staff in areas of education, mental health, social work, and psychology. Staff qualified in range of health services should be either working in the centre or available readily to it.

Earlier in this paper the concept of interdisciplinary teams working with the most vulnerable at risk young people has been canvassed. If the time a young person spends in detention, as opposed to that spent in community-based services, is to be maximized then the service must take the opportunity to providing the most effective therapeutic environment that it can. Time spent at the centre provides

an opportunity to break the cycle of disadvantage that characterizes the lives of many of these young people.

It provides a time in which family relationships might be re-established if appropriate, mental health issues can be assessed and addressed and educational and health deficits identified and young people given the opportunity to succeed in an educational environment. While the service will rely on a range of external agencies to assist in this regard, it is essential that effective case management and casework will occur through the agency of well-qualified staff.

Proposal 14

It is proposed that all staff who have regular contact with Bimberi residents have at least certificate for qualifications in youth work, youth justice or social work.

Proposal 15

It is proposed that the Bimberi service be seen as an important opportunity to intervene therapeutically in the cycle of disadvantage for vulnerable young people and that it be staffed accordingly with educational, health and mental health professionals.

Performance management for senior managers and team leaders

The other element of human resource management that is essential to maintain change processes is a performance management system that supports and is congruent with the strategic direction of the service.

It is a recipe for failure for the organization to espouse a particular strategic direction and then judge the performance of its managers on the basis of a different set of indicators. While this may seem routinely obvious it is not uncommon for services to espouse (say) developmental and rehabilitative outcomes on the one hand and then judge the performance of a service such as Bimberi on its security and custodial measures.

For example the performance indicators that appear to be given the most attention are those related to custodial matters. In this context it is appropriate to note that the failure of residents at Bimberi to acquire certificated qualifications should raise the same sense of concern as escapes or incursions into prohibited spaces within the centre.

Performance management systems need to integrate two components – an ongoing review of performance which reflects strategic directions of the service and a support mechanism which assists staff and managers to successfully achieve the objectives set out in the performance management system.

Review process

Performance management systems are well known and well tried within agencies such as the Community Services Directorate. It is not the place of this report to rehearse the basic principles of performance management systems. Notwithstanding this, having interviewed a range of managers there are some observations which, if implemented, might be useful in sustaining the change process which senior executives envisage. One of these is the implementation of the matrix model of performance management.

Our interviews with senior managers in the Department led us to conclude that there are two broad areas in which the performance of leadership staff within the Bimberi service might be developed. On the one hand leadership staff are usually assigned the responsibility of delivering on a series of performance outputs that can be measured by the core activities of the service. In this case these outputs would relate to effective and efficient operation of the centre, as well as some key outcome measures relating to the well-being and development of the residents.

On the other hand senior executives of the Department are keen to see that the management of the service is conducted in positive and productive ways to ensure that staff are valued and that principles of transparency and equity underpin the management and recruitment of team leaders and frontline staff. In particular executives emphasized the importance of building and maintaining productive working relationships within the centre, including between staff and residents.

One approach to ensuring that this is possible is to adopt a matrix model of performance management. In a matrix model managers are judged according to a number of broad dimensions and need to show evidence of achievement in each of these in order to receive a satisfactory rating through the performance management system. For example the diagram below indicates that a manager who performs well on the outcome/output measures but poorly on the processes of effective staff management is not rated highly. On the other hand a manager who rates highly in the processes of staff management and is unable to achieve effective outcomes is also not rated highly.

Matrix of Performance
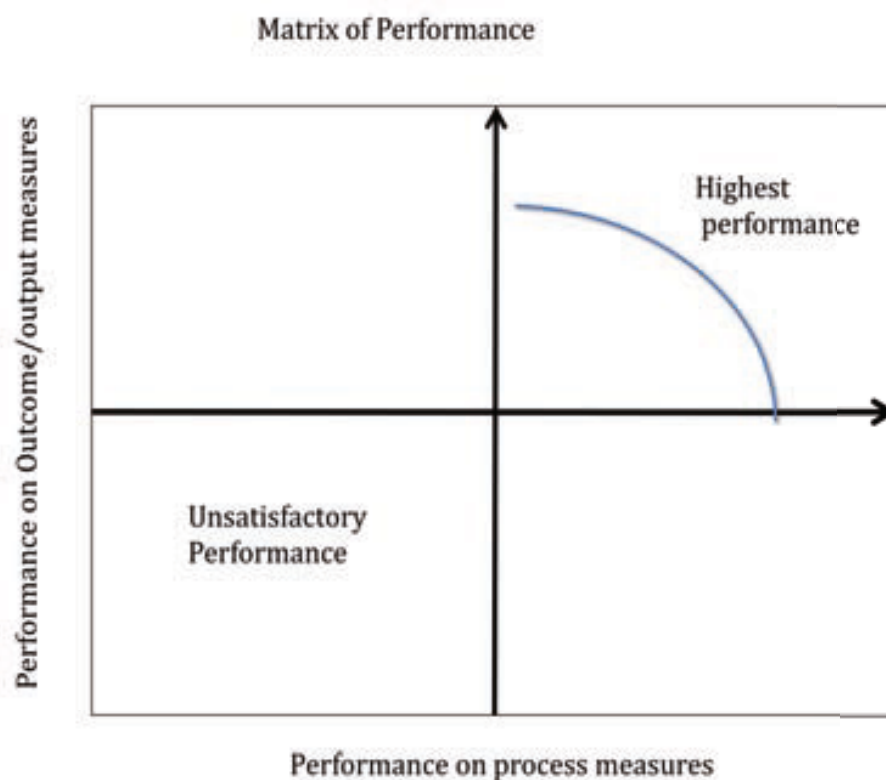
Proposal 16

It is proposed that the performance management process should be based on measures of both the managers' achievement of performance goals as well as process measures such as the maintenance of productive working relationships within their area of responsibility.

Accompanying this matrix approach there would need to be supervision model which provides support for staff in achieving outcomes on both aspects of the matrix. This is particularly true for team leaders and unit managers within the centre whose task of directing front-line staff can often be the determining factor of outcomes. It is the team leaders and unit managers who face the difficult task of interpreting the value statements, outcome measures and other performance indicators into day-to-day leadership and management decisions which provide clear guidance staff working with residents.

From this perspective it is the responsibility of senior managers within the centre to provide regular supervision and support for these team leaders. These support supervision sessions would be based around a clear individualized performance

plan for each of the team leaders. These performance plans need not be complex documents and indeed may well benefit from being simplified to focus on a few key goals against which the progress of the manager/team leader may be reviewed. As with all performance plans an element of professional development and support required by the individual needs to be maintained as a necessary part of the plan.

It is not the place of this review to explore these areas in detail. Other processes and reviews are in place to comment on these matters. Suffice to say that sustaining change management requires active and ongoing performance management within a framework which translates broad strategic directions into everyday activities and management tasks within the centre. The key to this is to ensure congruence between the two and to conduct sufficiently regular reviews to ensure the activities of the service continue to be consistent with its broad strategic directions.

Proposal 17

It is proposed that individual development and support plans be core components of the implementation of the matrix model of performance management.

Conclusion

In summary, the changes being implemented Bimberi need to be supported by organisational and policy changes which ensure that Bimberi is seen as only one part of a comprehensive co-ordinated system of response to the needs of vulnerable and at risk youth.

Bimberi is one part of the youth justice system which is in turn one part of a broader set of services focused on the care, protection, education, health and well-being of young people. Effective long-term reform will be dependent on ensuring that the objectives of the ACT government are delivered through a coordinated response. While Bimberi remains an isolated and discrete element of the overall programme for the vulnerable young people it is at risk of losing its focus on the therapeutic and rehabilitation of goals to which the ACT government is aspiring.

On the basis of the discussions with senior executives of the Community Services Directorate the proposals in this report have been designed to overcome this difficulty and to underpin a coherent response to the well-being of vulnerable young people in the ACT.

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APPENDIX 1

CASE STUDY OF A WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY APPROACH TO DIVERSION

One recent example of how a genuinely cross sectoral approach worked to reduce the number of young people sentenced to detention and build their talents and skills for positive futures is the story of Berks County Pennsylvania (http://www.macfound.org/site/c.lkLXJ8MQKrH/b.4464457/apps/s/content.asp?ct=8405511) . This compelling youtube clip describes how key community leaders, business and government developed a partnership with a philanthropic Foundation to address the escalating numbers of young people sentenced to detention.

The Foundation provided technical and financial assistance to collect better data thereby improving everyone's understanding of the scope and severity of their problem as a community, especially the overrepresentation of young people of colour in the youth justice system. Partnerships between the government, the foundation, community agencies, volunteer mentors with concrete skills and other role models, and the local high school which provided rooms, computers and cafeteria between 3-9 each night, have resulted in a halving of the number of young people sentenced to detention, a saving of $2 million dollars in one year and only one young person from the program committing another crime.