



SHINE for Kids®

Legislative Assembly: Committee on Law and Safety Response to Supplementary Questions for SHINE for Kids

1. How long has the issue of youth crime been prevalent in your region, and why do you think it's continued?

Youth crime has been a persistent issue in Kempsey for many years. In the past five years, several factors have contributed to its rise, including the increasing cost of living, lack of parental control, limited access to services, transportation challenges, and issues with drugs and alcohol. Additionally, some youth are drawn to crime for excitement or peer influence. Younger children are often led by teenagers into activities such as drug sales, motor theft, and break-ins.

As members of the Police and Community Consultancy (PACC), we meet once a month to discuss and address issues of crime and seek preventative measures to reduce them in the community. The inclusion of pump tracks, school sports, and other community recreational activities offer positive alternatives. However, a lack of collaboration of youth workers and services in Kempsey, and lack of overall coordination in youth services, especially during evenings and weekends when crime is most frequent, is a weak point in the current service system.

Many services such as PCYC, community organisations and OOSCH provide services from 9am – 5pm on a weekly basis and not during evenings or on weekends when youth crime is most frequent. Aside from PCYC there are few agencies with facilities to address youth boredom, stimulation, meals or support needs, and none which exist out of hours. A youth centre with extended hours could provide critical support, mentorship, and safe spaces during these peak times.

2. With respect to any programs you deliver for young people for which you receive funding:

a. How many programs are currently delivered and what is each program called?

We currently deliver two key programs:

Belonging to Family (BTF)
Stand As One

b. What is the purpose and audience of each program:

Belonging to Family (BTF): This holistic Aboriginal designed and led program supports incarcerated Aboriginal parents and their families, with a particular focus on parent-

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child relationships and re-establishing or supporting family unity. The aim is to strengthen family bonds, reduce reoffending, and address the impact of incarceration on children. The program gives the incarcerated parent the opportunity to reflect on their relationship with the carer and their children, which often becomes a key driver for addressing offending or harmful behaviours in families.

Stand As One: Provides one-on-one pre- and post-release support for young people transitioning out of the justice system, providing a positive adult role model for young people who also supports them to access opportunities for study, employment, housing, mental health and AOD services and providing social and emotional wellbeing support for re-integration challenges

c. Number of young people in each program:

Belonging to Family: We have supported 42 children aged 0 to 17 from January to November 2024.

Stand As One: We have intensively supported 43 young people in this program in NSW from January to November 2024

d. Full-time equivalent staff in each program:

Belonging to Family: 1 full-time staff and 2 part-time staff members support this program.

Stand As One: 1.6 full-time staff support this program at Frank Baxter YJC, 1 full-time staff member at Reiby YJC.

e. Days per week of direct engagement with young people:

Belonging to Family: Family support staff engage directly three days per week. The program manager is involved five days per week. Part-time staff sometimes work on an as-needed basis outside their regular hours if required.

Stand As One: 5 x days per week direct engagement with YP at Frank Baxter YJC, 3-4 days direct engagement with YP at Reiby YJC.

f. Young people on waiting lists or unable to be supported:

Belonging to Family: All 42 referrals within the correctional component of our program have been supported. Currently, no young people are on a waiting list in the community; most community referrals come through word of mouth or walk-ins.

Stand As One: Currently 7-9 YP on waitlist for Stand As one Frank Baxter YJC, 7 YP on waitlist at Reiby YJC.

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3. How is the Belonging to Family program helping to reduce recidivism and break the cycle of offending?

Belonging to Family (BTF) program works collaboratively with incarcerated parents, families, children and involved kinship networks to help break the cycle of offending. By allowing incarcerated individuals to self-refer and involve family members, the program facilitates ownership of past actions and meaningful reflection on their impact on families and communities.

Participants attend 2-hour weekly workshops with facilitators which includes structured reflective and yarning sessions covering topics such as family communication techniques, parenting support, relationship skills, social and emotional behaviours, cultural values and understanding offending patterns and the impact of violence and incarceration on children. Additionally, facilitators and program staff engage in ongoing communication with families and kinship networks on the outside to bring all perspectives together, helping to equip families with the space, cultural support and tools they need to heal and strengthen connection, which helps to break the cycle of offending and recidivism.

The post-release component provides continued support, assisting with parole requirements, job applications, and resource access. For instance, through collaboration with DCJ Housing, the BTF program successfully secured housing for a former inmate, facilitating family reunification and stable employment. This case underscores how comprehensive support prevents recidivism and fosters a positive family environment.

Case Study:

To speak to a concrete example of how the Belonging to Family program has supported participants, including through inter-agency relationships and referral partnerships, we recently created a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with DCJ Housing in Kempsey to supply housing for at-risk and recently released parents in custody.

We recently had a program participant released to the community facing homelessness, who was also disconnected from his son, daughter and mother who resided outside of Kempsey.

In partnership with DCJ Housing, the Aboriginal employment strategy, we were able to house, provide furniture, a mobile phone, employment and connect this program client back with one child (his son) who now resides with him in Kempsey.

Due to housing shortages and having few rental references, this client faced the possibility of returning to crime to support himself, however with the successful coordination of a number of agencies and targeted casework and mentoring support from Belonging to

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Family staff, this client has successfully re-integrated into the community. The work this participant has done in custody has strengthened his ability to connect and communicate with his family, and he receives ongoing support from Belonging to Family staff who follow up weekly with the client and his child.

As of November 2024, this client has not re-offended in 12 months and has remained in stable housing over the same period, with our Belonging to Family team still remaining in touch and checking in to ensure this individual knows they have a trusted agency and someone they already know and trust to turn to if needed.

4. Examples of effective pre- or post-release programs in NSW or other jurisdictions

Belonging to Family: This program offers intensive, family-oriented support for incarcerated individuals pre- and post-release, uniquely tailored to Aboriginal families. It includes structured re-entry planning, housing assistance, employment connections, and ongoing community support.

Stand As One: SHINE for Kids program delivering intensive, holistic and trauma-informed one-on-one mentoring support to young people transitioning out of custody. This program features 3-months pre-release trust and rapport building, goal setting and post-release planning, with 9-12 months of post-release support provided to the young person to help them navigate challenges of reintegration, provide a positive adult role model and pro-social relationship, helping young people in the program to develop the confidence and self-reliance to build a more fulfilling future

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