

Media Release

The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP

Minister for Crime Prevention

Minister for Corrections

Minister for Youth Justice

Minister for Victim Support



Wednesday, 16 September 2020

YOUTH JUSTICE TRIAL TO BOOST SAFETY AND REDUCE REOFFENDING

A pilot program to help young people build important life skills including developing stronger relationships and make better life choices is now underway in Victorian youth justice centres.

Minister for Youth Justice Natalie Hutchins announced \$350,000 in funding for the pilot program, which will improve the day-to-day operations of youth justice centres by reducing violence and conflict.

Using restorative justice principles, young people will be taught how to manage conflict and interpersonal relationships in custody so they prosper on their release into the community.

Restorative justice helps to build positive, respectful relationships and encourages young people to take accountability for their actions and address harm that may have occurred.

The trial is being run by Jesuit Social Services, drawing more than 20 years of experience using restorative justice processes across Australia to guide young people towards positive pathways.

The pilot program will run for two years at both the Malmsbury and Parkville centres in partnership with the Department of Justice and Community Safety.

The funding forms part of the Government's ongoing commitment to make youth justice centres safer places for young people and staff.

Earlier this year the Government launched the Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2020-2030 to prevent crime, reduce reoffending and provide genuine opportunities for children and young people to turn their lives around.

The Government is tackling the root causes of crime, while at the same time providing safe, secure, and rehabilitative services to young people in both the community and custodial settings.

The *Victorian Budget 2019/20* included \$45.5 million for initiatives to strengthen the Youth Justice system and support rehabilitation.

The Government has also invested a total of \$18 million into the Youth Crime Prevention Grants program since 2016–17.

The Government has also invested more than \$1 billion to overhaul our youth justice system, delivering more and better trained and equipped staff, and upgrading infrastructure to keep the community safe.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Youth Justice and Crime Prevention Natalie Hutchins

"Through this trial we're supporting young people to make better decisions and reduce reoffending by better managing conflict and interpersonal relationships."

"Our youth justice staff work in complex and challenging environments, this trial will make a significant contribution to ensuring that they are supported to do this safely."

"Jesuit Social Services have extensive experience in working with young people to help turn their lives around, keeping them and the community safe."

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