

# Media Release

**The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP**

Minister for Crime Prevention

Minister for Corrections

Minister for Youth Justice

Minister for Victim Support



Friday, 1 April 2022

## PUTTING YOUNG LIVES BACK ON THE RIGHT TRACK

The Andrews Labor Government's transformation of the youth justice system is giving more young people the best chance to live a rewarding life – with the latest statistics showing Victoria has the lowest rate of young people in supervision in the country.

The Youth Justice Diversion Statement – a guiding document released today which reinforces the need to address community safety by tackling youth offending issues – highlights how the Government's significant reforms are making a difference for both staff and young people within the youth justice system.

The Diversion Statement shows that in 2020-21 Victoria had the lowest rate of total young people under Youth Justice supervision (7.3 per 10,000 young people aged 10-17) as well as the lowest rate of young people under community supervision (5.7 per 10,000) in the country.

It also shows that over the past five years in Victoria, the custodial detention rate for children and young people has decreased by 75 per cent – from 0.8 in 2017 to 0.2 in 2021.

Over the past five years the Government has invested \$125.7 million in Youth Justice diversion through community-based programs.

Initiatives include the Youth Support Service and Aboriginal Youth Support Service, which has supported 1216 young people in 2020-21, and the Youth Justice Community Support Service, which is funded to support 573 young people annually, including at high-risk times on evenings and weekends.

The Diversion Statement includes investment in a new Crime Prevention program – the Youth Engagement Grants – which builds on existing programs and will provide \$1.7 million in funding for small multicultural and Aboriginal clubs and community organisations to support young people aged eight to 24 years at the local level.

The grants will deliver positive community engagement opportunities for young people through sport, arts, music and other creative activities and connect them with other supports and services to tackle the underlying causes of offending and steer young people away from the justice system.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Youth Justice Natalie Hutchins

*"Our evidence-based focus on rehabilitation and crime prevention is keeping young people out of the criminal justice system, with Victoria currently having the lowest rate of young people under youth justice supervision in the country."*

*"By supporting children and young people to engage in positive activities within their community we're not only creating a better future for them, but a safer Victoria for everyone."*

*"Our work to rehabilitate at-risk young people is having a real impact on their lives and their futures. We'll continue to follow an approach backed by evidence to ensure we have the most effective youth justice system in the country."*