



YOUTH
ADVOCACY
CENTRE INC

Youth Advocacy Centre

Annual Report 21/22



YAC affirms that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the Traditional Owners of Australia and acknowledges their unique relationship with their ancestral Country.

In particular, we acknowledge the Turrbal and Jagera peoples, the Traditional Custodians of the land in and around Brisbane, and pay our respects to their Elders, past, and present. We acknowledge our Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff and the insight they bring to YAC and their support for it to continue to develop as a culturally competent organisation.

YAC is proud to support its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and staff, its LGBTIQ+ clients and staff, and welcomes diversity in all its forms.

Contents

- 4 Message from the CEO
- 5 Message from the Chairperson
- 8 Our Objectives
- 8 Our Strategic Intent 2021-22
- 9 Our Story
- 11 Key Logic Assumption
- 14 Our Impact 2021/22
- 16 Legal Support
- 20 Community Legal Education
- 22 Bail Support
- 24 Youth Support
- 26 Youth Court Assistance
- 28 Family Support
- 30 Advocacy & Policy
- 32 Community Projects & Events
- 34 Partnerships & Supporters
- 35 Management Committee
- 35 Volunteers & Students

Message from the CEO



2021/22 has been another year of change for YAC. We were not immune to the 'great resignation' and, in response, we hired 18 new staff. We also said goodbye to my predecessor Katie Acheson, and are grateful for all of her work during this period.

With domestic violence statistics continuing to worsen, we secured two years of funding for our wonderful domestic and family violence specialist solicitor Rika Wani. We have developed stronger relationships with our sector and government colleagues and, with a prolonged housing crisis setting in, we aim to capitalise on these ties to the advantage of our young people.

We have also benefited from the generosity of CBP Lawyers in dealing with legal challenges

which arose in 2021/22. And, given YAC is an organisation for young people, YAC's Communications Officer, Josh Higgins, and Community Legal Education Officer, Sarah Krause, introduced YAC to the world of TikTok with the significant help of UQ law student volunteers.

Looking forward, we want to continue to expand the great work of our youth and case workers and lawyers – too many to name – so they can help even more young people reach their potential. Our workers are a professional and committed group who persevere in even the most challenging circumstances. I overhear their discussions in the office about the young people they are supporting together and individually, and their camaraderie and purpose is inspiring and a reminder of YAC's very serious and substantial reason for being.

We also aim to help address the ongoing disgrace of detaining young people in adult watch houses around Queensland. A complacency has set in around this issue which has meant that there are many young people at risk of having their human rights breached by being held in the adult watch houses for days or even weeks at a time: it is shocking that this is no longer shocking.

Our wonderful operations teams (in particular Operations Manager Elena and formidable Finance Manager Marissa) are working to bring YAC's finances, systems, procedures and policies in-line with the medium-sized professional organisation that YAC has become. This in turn enables our frontline workers to continue to perform their duties as effectively as possible.

We are all committed and determined to continue performing our own particular duties as well as possible, to help those young people who have suffered trauma or been left behind and forgotten.

We thank you for your ongoing support and look forward to providing an update on our successes this time next year.

Katherine Hayes, CEO

"We are all committed and determined to continue performing our own particular duties as well as possible, to help those young people who have suffered trauma or been left behind and forgotten."



Message from the Chairperson



Some friends were telling me recently about an issue that arose in their family. They were a couple with a number of children of which one - let's call her Ruby - had particular challenges. The other children were complaining that Ruby was receiving all the encouragement and support, and that it was unfair. In the end, the family took themselves off to see a psychologist and she didn't miss a beat. She pulled out a sheet of paper and deftly drew a diagram. It showed all the family standing strong and peering curiously over a fence, except for Ruby. She was struggling because she was too short to see and, for that reason, the parents had placed a box under her. The other children understood immediately, and harmony was restored.

It occurred to me that, in that metaphor, YAC is not the caring parents, or even the insightful psychologist. We're the humble box! Our clients come to us with a whole raft of disadvantages or crises, and we provide tools, representation and referrals so that they can see the landscape and decide where they want to go.

Over the last few years YAC has grown very steadily so that we now employ 29 staff and provide many services at locations throughout Queensland. I figured that this might be a good time to show the wider YAC family, at least in outline, what our staff do.

In the first place, we have a Legal Support team. There are four solicitors. They act as duty lawyers around Brisbane, and they also have their own caseloads of young people who approach YAC about criminal issues, discrimination, social security challenges etc. One of those lawyers is tasked specifically to deal with a topic which seems way under-resourced, namely the way in which young people are affected by family violence.

Second, we have a Bail Support team. That involves up to ten case workers. They ensure that young people have the resources to comply with bail orders. They may take them to mandated appointments, remind them of their next court appearance, arrange transport, or help the young person satisfy accommodation conditions. The service extends to the Sunshine Coast and includes an outreach component, as well as a co-responder model where we work with other agencies. As you can imagine, this team is hugely valued because they are vital to make sure the court system works as intended, and young people are not held unnecessarily in remand.

Third, we have a Family Support team. As they have done for many years, they liaise between family and young people (regardless of whether there has been any contact with the criminal justice system) to help overcome crises. There are two workers and they tend to divide their roles so that, in a given scenario, one deals with the family and the other liaises with the young person.

Fourth, we have a Policy and Advocacy team. They are involved in the public statements of YAC but also, more regularly, in informing young people at schools, detentions centres and elsewhere throughout Queensland, as to their rights in relation to issues like vaping, sex, mobile phones, move-on powers etc. The education can extend to training trainers in rural centres so that they can themselves work with local young people.

Fifth, there is a Youth Support team. Independent of bail conditions, in Caboolture, Brisbane, Ipswich, and Cairns, they help young people navigate the court system and broader issues. We like to think of them as doing the work that might otherwise be provided by a parent; provide modest brokerage money, helping the young person with where they need to go, driving them to a counselling session, etc. The Cairns youth worker, has been particularly valuable to YAC in monitoring the young people held in the Cairns watchhouse and providing the much needed support to those young people who have been held there, sometimes for up to two weeks at a time.

Finally, there is the Operations team, which effectively makes sure that YAC runs responsibly, and the service providers can have an unimpeded run at their front-line work.

"Our clients come to us with a whole raft of disadvantages or crises, and we provide tools, representation and referrals so that they can see the landscape and decide where they want to go."

That summary really doesn't describe the passion and the nuance that our staff bring regularly (often in edgy or dangerous conditions) to assisting their clients. The Management Committee heard a story recently about a young person, bereft of any immediate support, who had been involved in a truly harrowing series of events, only to be charged by the police for a very incidental and petty offence. As you might expect, the police intervention only exacerbated a sequence of self-harm. The YAC workers gently assisted the young person in setting up his life again but they also noticed that, as they spoke to him, he would draw or doodle, showing real talent. They approached GIVIT, and arranged for the client to be supplied with an Ipad, drawing software and a stylus and I understand it was the first time our people saw that boy show genuine joy.

Apart from all of this, the Committee and YAC more generally is committed to improving the narrative for youth justice in this state. From time to time, there will be an horrific event involving young people and, inevitably, it will bring out a public call in some quarters for tougher measure on youth justice. For YAC, that seems a horribly unambitious response. It apparently involves waiting for catastrophes to occur and then punishing some players (who, unsurprisingly, themselves come from backgrounds of disadvantage). The only thoughtful approach, it seems to YAC, is that we act pre-emptively and work towards a community where young people are supported in families and in accommodation so that they can lead the same full lives we all wish for ourselves. Until then, YAC will continue to play the part of the humble box.

Damien Atkinson, Chairperson

Youth Advocacy Centre

The Youth Advocacy Centre provides a holistic program of youth services in South-East Queensland and Cairns including social, legal, bail, homelessness, and family support.

YAC also advocates on behalf of and in support of young people on systemic and policy reforms in pursuit of justice and equality.

YAC support services include:



Bail Support



Legal Support



Court Support



Youth Support



Family Support



Community
Legal Education



Advocacy

Our Vision

Young people achieve their full potential through the community accepting collective responsibility for their importance, empowerment, rights, well-being and humanity.

Our Mission

To increase young people's access to legal and social justice by actively supporting and speaking out, with and for young people.

Our Approach

YAC seeks to provide an holistic response to the issues a young person is facing and, where appropriate, we use a multidisciplinary approach whereby YAC's legal and social welfare staff work collaboratively to assist with the diverse needs of the young person.



Our Objectives

1

To support and advocate for the legal needs and rights of disadvantaged and/or vulnerable young people.

2

To support and advocate for the social welfare needs of disadvantaged and/or vulnerable young people involved in, or at risk of involvement in, legal systems.

3

To enable young people, families, and workers with young people, to better understand the law and the legal system as it is relevant to them.

4

To support the development of a socio-legal system that is more responsive and appropriate to the needs of young people and which takes account of their developmental and situational issues and Australia's international obligations.

5

To provide and maintain high quality support and advocacy services to young people.

Our Strategic Intent 2021-22

Advocacy

To be strong advocates with and for individual young people in need and/or in conflict with legal and other systems across the greater Brisbane area.

To be a strong voice, informed by research and evidence and the experiences of our clients, to influence and achieve better outcomes for children and young people in Queensland collectively.

Profile

To be considered a significant contributor to discussion and decisions about legal and social welfare systems and processes which have, or potentially have, an impact on children and young people at a local and state level.

Sustainability

To maintain the model of the Youth Advocacy Centre as an effective and appropriate response to disadvantaged and vulnerable young people, particularly for those with legal as well as social welfare issues.

To develop the current model/services, in particular to have at least two staff per program and an education/training support program, and identify innovative ways to deliver services to ensure the model is contemporary.

Our Story

For over 40 years YAC has been supporting young people in Queensland. Here are just some of our key moments over that time.

1977

The Justice for Juveniles Group was formed following concern from community members over the treatment of young people in the justice system and detention centres.

1981

The Youth Advocacy Centre was officially established with funding from the Queensland Legal Aid Commission and set up the first ever office at in the Hibernian Building on Queen St.

It had three staff members: Father Wally Dethfels, Office Administrator; David Hook, Legal Aid Solicitor on secondment; and Gwenn Murray, Office Manager.



1983

YAC's After Hours Legal Service was set up with 43 volunteer lawyers on the first roster.
Bayside Adolescent Boarding Incorporated (BABI) was set up as YAC's first accommodation project.
Accommodation related projects would continue to expand in 1985 and 1986.

1984-1992

YAC contributed to many public discussions surrounding the rights of young people, including:
- the National Inquiry into Homeless Children. YAC presented written and oral evidence at the hearing (1988)
- Initiating a public campaign for the prevention of detention of children in watchhouses (1991)

1982

After relying on volunteers and students, YAC employed its first ever social worker in 1982.

In conjunction with the Legal Aid Office, Duty Lawyer Schemes were established to operate in all children's courts in the Brisbane metropolitan area.

1993

YAC publicly released the 'Juvenile Justice: Rhetoric or Reality' reports examining and critiquing the youth justice system and *Youth Justice Act 1992*.

2000

YAC took on their first ever Detention Centre Family Worker.

1996

YAC began the Community Legal Education program with a dedicated solicitor to educate young Queenslanders.

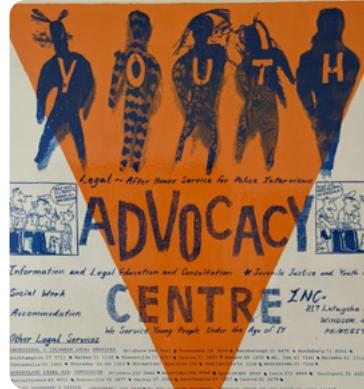
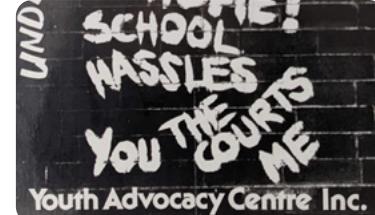
1997

YAC wrote a submission, 'A Matter of Priority: children and the legal process', in response to the draft recommendations paper published by the Australian Law Reform Commission and the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

2001

YAC attended the official closure of The Wilson Detention Centre which was demolished not long afterwards.

The Youth Bail Accommodation and Support Service (YBASS) was established. The service would be extended to the Sunshine Coast in 2005.



2022

YAC continues to be a crucial support for young people in Queensland with services including legal, bail, social, accommodation, and family support, as well as community legal education and advocacy. YAC also hired its first ever specialist Domestic & Family Violence Lawyer.

YAC also continues to advocate for young people rights in the justice system through campaigns such as raising the age of criminal responsibility, and stopping the use of police watch houses to detain children.

2021

YAC celebrated 40 years of operation.

2022

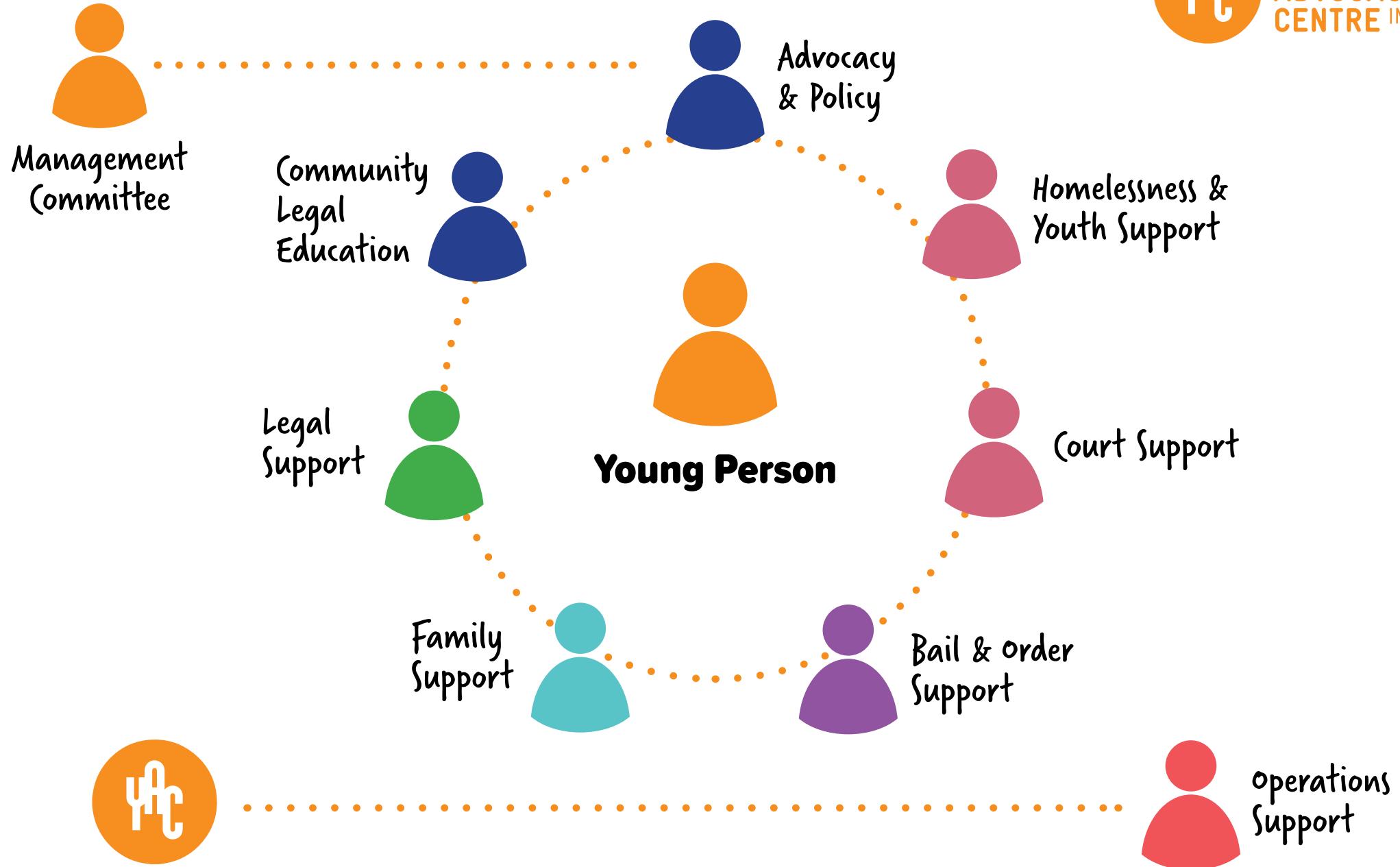
YAC released 'Orange Paper #3' which addressed the need to raise the age of criminal responsibility in Queensland.

2018

The amendment to Qld law for 17-year-olds to be included in the youth justice system was commenced after much advocacy by community groups including YAC.

2019

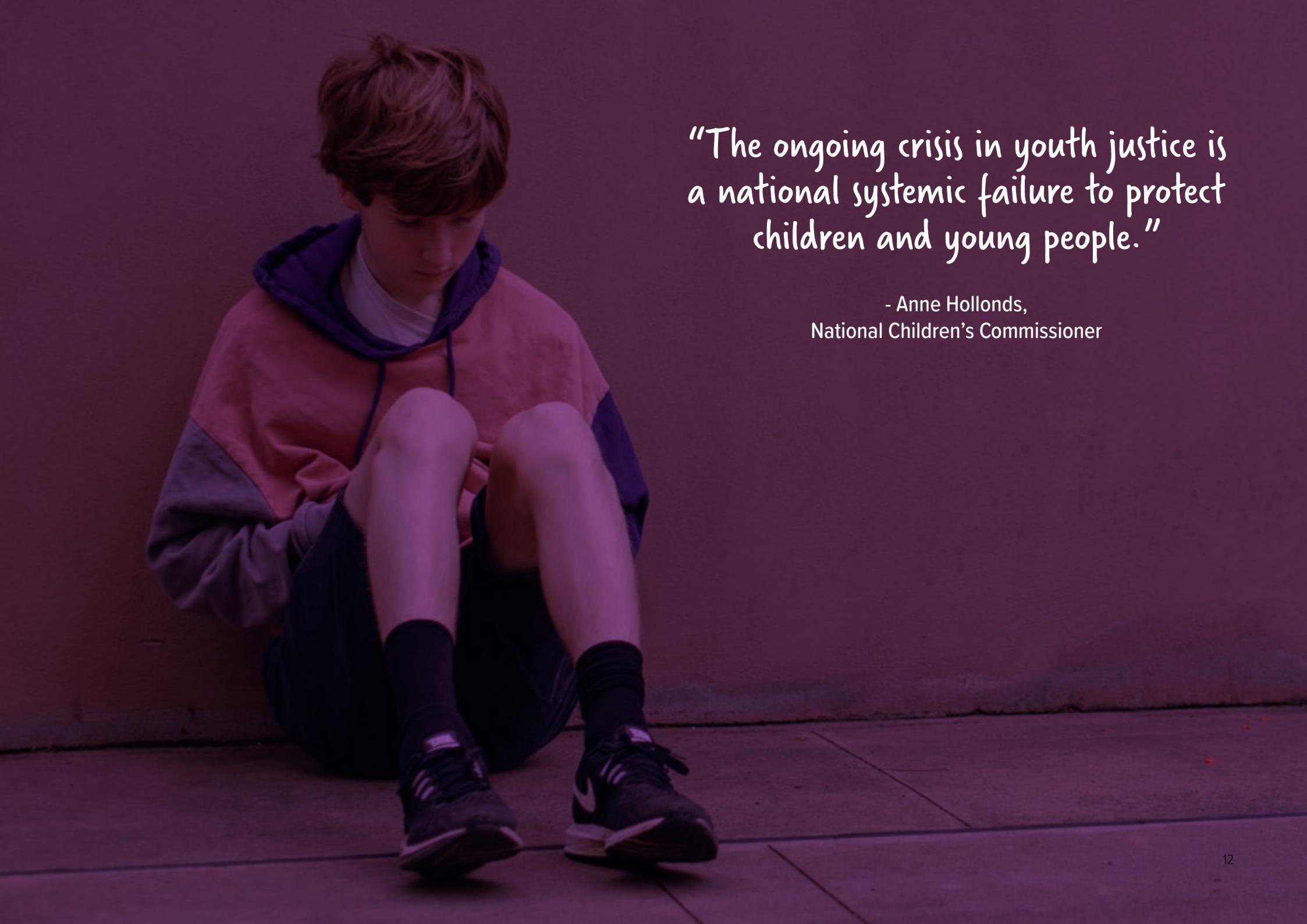
YAC released the first 'Orange Paper' report examining the continued use of watchhouses to detain children in contradiction to their rights and well-being.



Key Logic Assumption

Young People (YP) experiencing complex life issues (eg mental and behavioural disorders, homelessness risks, family conflict, child abuse, exclusion from school, etc) are at high risk of (ongoing) involvement in the youth justice and child protection systems and poor life outcomes. Addressing both personal life issues as well as their immediate legal advice /representation, concurrently where appropriate, will produce positive outcomes for YP in terms of reduced incidence and/or severity of involvement with legal systems and processes and enhanced overall wellbeing.

INPUTS	OUTPUTS		OUTCOMES		
	Programs	Activities	Short	Medium	Long (YAC + Others)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding Staff expertise in specialised areas (homelessness, family, law, advocacy) Students and volunteers Management Committee External networks, partnerships and collaborations Research and evidence on social, behavioural and legal issues for YP 	<p>Legal</p> <p>Court Support</p> <p>Bail Support</p> <p>Youth Support</p> <p>Family Support</p> <p>Community Legal Education</p>	<p>a) YP (10-18) receive legal information, advice, advocacy and representation b) referral to social welfare supports</p> <p>YP are assisted pre and post court with information about the process that day and brief intervention to link to services</p> <p>YP (10-18) particularly those at risk of being remanded in custody pending their court case being finalised, receive services to find and maintain appropriate accommodation and comply with their bail conditions.</p> <p>YP (15-25) including those transitioning from care or detention, receive services to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) address homelessness or risk of homelessness and associated issues, such as income, education/training, mental health, substance use etc b) support the development and maintenance of life skills c) support young victims of crime <p>YP (10-18) and particularly their families receive services to assist them with relationships and parenting styles and challenges</p> <p>a) YP (10-18) receive information and education services to better understand the law and legal processes b) Workers with YP receive information and training about legal issues relevant to their work and/or their clients</p>	<p>YP have relevant information and can make informed decisions about their legal matters; they better understand the law and court processes; they are properly heard in relation to their legal matters; and they feel dealt with fairly.</p> <p>YP are supported to enable them to be placed on bail and to maintain their bail.</p> <p>YP have access to safe and appropriate accommodation.</p> <p>YP have a plan agreed with them, which is being implemented to address social and welfare issues, particularly those contributing to involvement in legal and other formal systems and processes</p> <p>Parents and families better understand their young person; are more prepared and better able to support and advocate for them; and less likely to exclude them from family and the home.</p> <p>YP re-engage with learning and develop a plan to continue education and/or pursue an employment goal.</p> <p>YP have information to assist them to make more informed decisions about activities which may bring them into conflict with the law or to assert their rights as victims of the actions of others.</p> <p>Workers with YP better understand how the law impacts on them in their day to day work and decision making; and the YP they work with.</p> 	<p>Fairer and more appropriate outcomes of legal processes for YP and other stakeholders</p> <p>YP feel listened to and supported, encouraging greater engagement with those who can assist them with social welfare issues</p> <p>Reduced incidence and severity of involvement in legal and other processes by YP through access to appropriate accommodation; legitimate income and activities; and engagement with relevant services to address eg drugs and alcohol or mental health issue</p> <p>Families remain supportive of their YP and develop the ability to support/mentor other families and parents. YP continue to implement their learning/employment and have improved capacity to enter the workforce</p> <p>YP make better choices through having better information</p> <p>Workers have enhanced capacity to provide appropriate, skilled support to YP which supports reduced interaction with legal processes and systems</p>	<p>Demonstrated improvement in the YP's wellbeing</p> <p>Improvement in family and community wellbeing –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reduced financial and social burden on families and community through reduced contact with legal and other formal systems and processes improved relationships and increased ability to participate and engage positively as a family <p>Families and the community take greater responsibility for their YP</p> <p>YP are able to successfully apply for and maintain employment</p> <p>Workers with YP have higher levels of knowledge and skills to appropriately support YP earlier in their working careers</p>



"The ongoing crisis in youth justice is a national systemic failure to protect children and young people."

- Anne Hollonds,
National Children's Commissioner

Let's create change as a community.

We're calling on the Queensland community to commit to supporting children and young people through our holistic program with a long-term focus.

There is an ongoing need for youth support services in Queensland. Often there is not enough funding to provide the support that young people require.

The young people we work with are often victims of abuse or neglect and deserve an opportunity to turn a page in their life.

You can make an impact by donating to the Youth Advocacy Centre. Your donation will empower our youth workers to support young people through specialised services and financial support to achieve their goals. This support can change their life forever.

Donate now to help young people

Make an ongoing difference in children's lives with a monthly, tax deductible, donation.

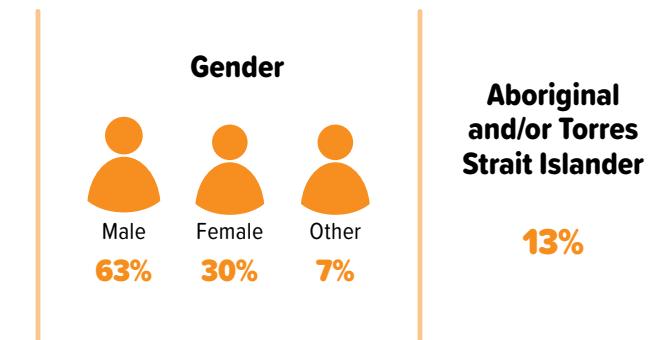


With Jean

Our Impact 2021/22

Legal Support

527 Young people represented in Duty lawyers service	84 Legal advice instances provided to young people
218 Legal case files completed	50 Duty lawyer sessions provided in Brisbane Childrens Court and the arrest court
129 Legal information instances provided	5 Young people assisted with dispute resolution process



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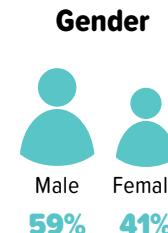
33 Education sessions delivered
1 New resource developed
All legal information sheets for young people reviewed

Most viewed information pages on website:

29,627 views	When can I...?
17,972 views	Moving out
13,460 views	Getting my stuff back

Family Support

27 Case managed clients
16 Casual clients



Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
15%

Bail Support

	Clients	Gender		Age						Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
		Male	Female	<9yrs	9-11yrs	12-14yrs	15-17yrs	18-20yrs	>20yrs	
Bail Support	127	77%	23%	1%	1%	8%	59%	30%	1%	40.9%
Community Co-Responder	54	76%	24%	0%	4%	49%	45%	2%	0%	27.8%
Intensive Family Partnership	11	55%	45%	0%	11%	56%	33%	0%	0%	45.5%

YASS Brisbane

45 Case managed clients

124 Short term clients

929 Casual court outreach clients



YASS Caboolture

46 Case managed clients

128 Short term clients

373 Casual court outreach clients

292 Bribie outreach attendees



YCAP

These are occasions when we attended court to assist any young people needing support on the day, broken down by funding stream.

YASS	Visits	Young People	BOSS	Visits	Young People	SWAP	Visits	Young People	CYYBSS (Cairns)	Visits	Young People
Court Outreach	76	929	Childrens Courts	108	775	Ipswich	84	714	Detention Centre	98	896
						Richlands	44	439	Watch House	212	560
						West Moreton YDC	33	304			

includes when other CYYBSS staff have done watch house visits.



Legal Support

About our Legal Support

YAC's specialist youth lawyers work with young people aged 10 to up to 18 years. They provide:

- legal information and advice about the law, legal and court processes, and young people's legal rights
- referrals to legal and other services where appropriate
- representation in court and tribunals for youth justice, domestic violence, child protection and other matters
- advocating for young people with the police and other authorities they may be in conflict with

As specialists in working with vulnerable and disadvantaged children, YAC's lawyers:

- are very knowledgeable in the law as it applies to children
- have the ability to engage with children, particularly those who are vulnerable
- have a good understanding about child/youth development and neuroscience and the impact of trauma and other challenges which underlie youth offending
- have good working relationships with the social welfare staff at YAC so they can work together as seamlessly as possible for the benefit of the young person.

YAC's lawyers attend all the Childrens Courts across the greater Brisbane area and deliver the Duty Lawyer service at Brisbane Childrens Court on alternate Tuesdays and Fridays.

Young people also seek help with child protection related matters and increasingly other issues such as domestic violence, estates, and risk of deportation when they turn 18.

Why Legal Support is critical

The inclusion of legal support in a multidisciplinary agency recognises that young people's legal issues generally result from or contribute to social welfare challenges or barriers.

Free and confidential legal support has been a core service since YAC's conception and is a crucial part of enabling young people to have a voice in their legal matters and bring fair representation to legal proceedings.

Partnerships

In October 2021 the Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) Project, enabled by the COVID-19 front-line legal assistance services funding, finished. The project was most ably undertaken by solicitor Megan Stewart. The project achieved its desired outcome to gain an understanding of how young people come into and interact with the DFV system, including the Queensland Police Service and Magistrates Courts, as well as legal and therapeutic support services and education providers.

Over a nine month period, the project provided legal advice and/or court representation to young people in DFV matters. Legal advice

was provided to young people across the three Youth Detention Centres in Queensland and to young people residing in the South East Queensland region. The project was open to clients of all genders and included aggrieved, respondent and named person parties and those involved in breach proceedings, as well as young people experiencing or perpetrating family violence. Court representation was provided to young people within the jurisdiction of South East Queensland Magistrates Courts, from Caboolture to Southport. The delivery of services to young people in Youth Detention Centres was facilitated by a partnership with Youth Justice.

Project service delivery statistics (approximate figures, rounded up):

- 49% of young people who accessed the project identified as male
- 51% of young people who accessed the project identified as female
- 25% of matters involved a young person who identified as Indigenous
- 17% of matters involved young people who had current involvement with Child Safety
- 11% of matters involved a young person in detention
- 43% of young people were referred to or received support from YAC or other youth service
- 66% of matters involved the provision of legal advice
- 34% of matters required court representation
- 39% of domestic violence (dating

violence) matters were aggrieved parties

- 61% of domestic violence (dating violence) matters were respondent parties

Project court outcomes (approximate figures, rounded up):

- 100% of completed court matters listed for hearing were finalised to the satisfaction of the young person
- 63% of court matters were finalised by way of Protection Order
- 19% of court matters were withdrawn and did not proceed

Many project learnings were incorporated in YAC's submission to the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce (the Taskforce) Discussion Paper 1. YAC was the only non-government submission to the task force which raised



Megan, Danielle, and Anna attended the Darumbal Community Youth Services Inc (DCYSI) Annual Youth Forum.

youth specific issues relating to DFV for young people under 18 years (ie. not including those submission dealing with children of adult parties as named persons).

The conclusion of the project meant there was no legal service designed specifically to provide advice to young people under 18 in relation to Domestic and Family Violence in South East Queensland. The YAC Chair and then-CEO met with the Queensland Attorney General in December 2021 to discuss that the absence of a service that provides holistic legal and welfare advice and support for young people in relation to DFV left young people without assistance to break the cycle of violence. YAC is very pleased the Queensland Attorney General has responded with two-year funding for a Domestic and Family Violence lawyer for the 22-24 financial years. YAC is delighted to welcome experienced criminal, child protection and domestic violence advocate Rika Wani to join undertake this valuable role.

Year in review

There continued to be challenges of COVID and its associated lockdown and adaption required to meet practice directions and requirements particularly for those unvaccinated clients and their families. Further challenges were presented by the flood and its effects on clients and their families including homelessness and the consequential inaccessibility of services including education

Sadly the team farewelled Megan Stewart at the conclusion of the Family and Domestic Violence project. We also said farewell to Daniel Grvbac, who having generously volunteered for YAC since 2019, did a locum as a part time advice lawyer for a few months in 2021 before leaving YAC in January 2022. YAC is very grateful for Daniel's contribution and congratulates Daniel on securing full time employment as solicitor in regional Queensland. Sadly for YAC Danielle Iliffe

also moved to the Youth Team at Legal Aid Queensland after over two years of outstanding work advocating for young people and achieving significant success in complex protracted trials. YAC is very fortunate to have recruited Divina Deleon, most recently from ATSILS, a highly capable and experienced practitioner to the legal team.

Ensuring cultural awareness remains strong within the team, in October 2021 both Megan and Danielle (along with Anna Emsilie from BOSS) attended the Darumbal Community Youth Services Inc (DCYSI) Annual Youth Forum. At the Dreamtime Cultural Centre in Rockhampton over 150 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people aged 10 to 25, from Rockhampton and Woorabinda, came together to identify the barriers they faced and the solutions that could help them reach their goals. As part of this immersive experience the YAC staff spent time on Darumbal Country and Ghungalu Country. YAC has recently been delighted to host Zhanae of DCYSI at our Peel premises to present the "Let Us Speak, Our Voices Matter" report outlining the findings of the forum and some of that information continues to inform our practice.

The legal team continued a high volume of clients, defending young people in trials, bail applications and sentences in the Childrens Court of Queensland and in the Childrens Courts constituted by Magistrates. Mental health, substances misuse, and family breakdown continued to present significant challenges. The legal team continue to combat the escalating number of young people held on remand since the changes to the bail laws and responding to the allocation of additional resources to police to review and appeal bail decisions without a corresponding increase of resources directed to defending those matters.

The legal staff continue to be confronted by the disturbing numbers and length of stays

of young people in the watch house and reports by young people of their time spent in lockdown whilst in detention due to staffing and related issues.

Goals for the future

In the forthcoming 12 months the legal team:

- is looking forward to the renewed DFV legal service and continuing the legacy of the completed 12 month project to enhance the representation and advice for young people in the DFV system;
- anticipates the review of the Atkinson report and the 12 month review of the bail law amendments including the use of electronic monitoring for children;
- will continue to advocate for young people in relation to recognition and understanding of neurodiversity and neurodevelopment of young people and its connection to offending;
- will continue to ensure cultural awareness both with-in the team and the youth justice system including in advocacy for a youth Murri court in Brisbane;
- will reinvigorate YAC's legal volunteer program to enhance service delivery and research capacity.
- will continue to review file management systems to ensure maximum efficiency in our delivery of service to clients.

"I got good service thank you so much"

"Very good, thank you (name) -cheers"

"They did good for me"

**"thankful & grateful for all the services (worker)
did & offered us".**



Legal Support Service Outcomes

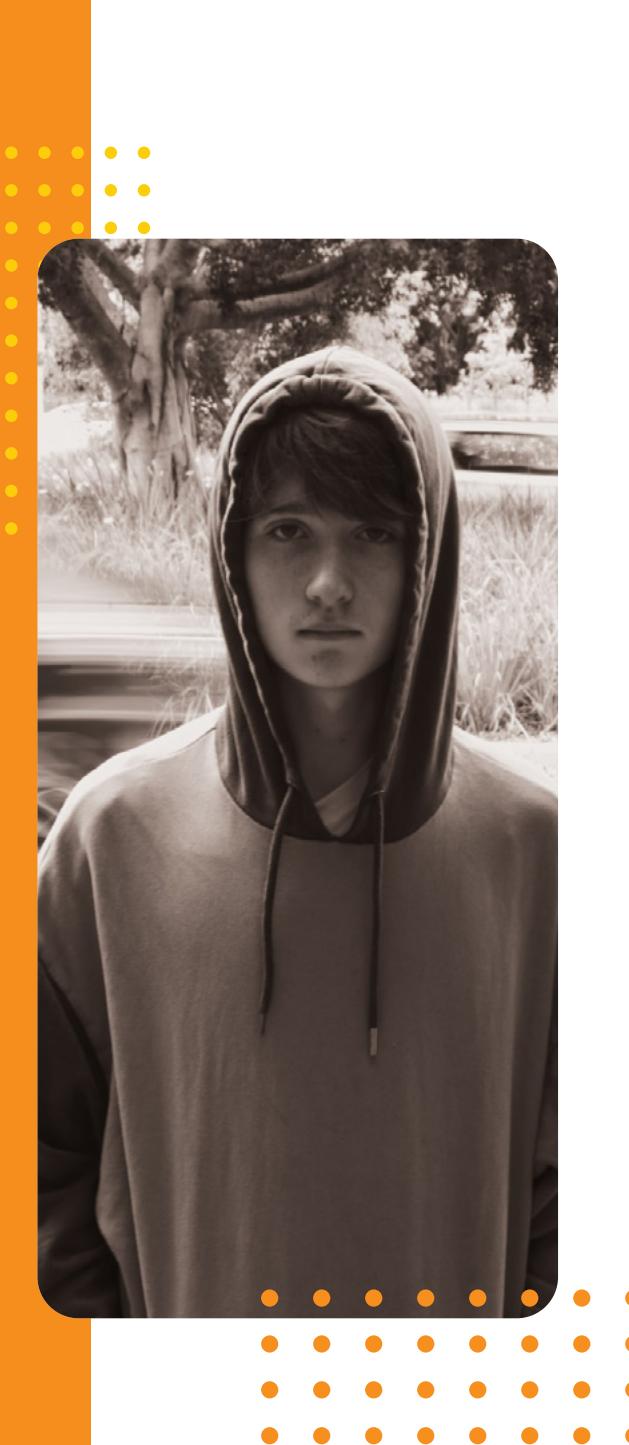
- 527** Young people represented in duty lawyers service
- 208** Referrals made to other services
- 218** Legal case files completed
- 129** Legal information instances provided
- 84** Legal advice instances provided to young people
- 50** Duty lawyer sessions provided in Brisbane Childrens Court and the arrest court
- 5** Young people assisted with dispute resolution process
- 13%** Over 13% identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

Client Survey

In accordance with our funding agreement, YAC undertook its annual legal client survey in May 2022.

Nearly 97% agreed or strongly agreed that:

- YAC Legal staff listened to their problem in a friendly and respectful manner;
- YAC legal staff helped the client to understand their legal matter;
- they were satisfied with the resolution of their matter.



Ryan's Story

A father contacted YAC with a request for Ryan who had been charged by police but had not been access to legal assistance and representation. He also wanted to access support for his son as he was concerned that he was not addressing the cause of his substance abuse.

YAC connected with Ryan directly to identify his issues and work with him to provide support for both his legal and family problem.

Ryan was able to identify he had a fractured relationship with his father. The difficult relationship with his father was a cause of trauma for the young person and triggered his substance misuse, which in turn resulted in his contact with police.

Initially, the young person was reluctant to address his relationship with his parents as it brought up feelings of abandonment and hurt.

However, with patience and open communication with YAC staff, the young person eventually accepted support.

YAC was not only able to provide access to legal assistance to solve the legal problem but also support through YAC's Family Support Service. YAC provided a holistic approach to address the young person's needs. He has now been able to acknowledge that his relationship with his father is an issue and seek appropriate assistance.

Jack's Story

YAC represented a young man, Jack, who was 16. Jack had autism and ADHD and was in the care of Child Safety Services ("Child Safety"). His 15-year-old girlfriend, Sally had mental health issues. Jack was self-placing at Sally's home with the knowledge of Child Safety.

As result of information by Sally's family, a police application was brought for a police protection order under the Domestic and Family Violence Act (including a condition prohibiting contact between Jack and Sally). The police application stated none of the informants wished to be identified.

The police application confirmed Sally did not support the order. Further, Sally had posted video messages on Instagram indicating she did not agree with any of the allegations and the order sought.

The application was served on Jack on the morning of the first mention, so Jack was unable to attend due to a lack of notice. The matter was adjourned with a no contact order made. Sally continued to invite Jack to her home.

Jack was charged 5 times for breaching the temporary order, for responding to an invitation by Sally to her home. On the last occasion Jack was invited to the home by Sally, he entered through the front door and spoke cordially with members of Sally's family. After going to bed the police attended and arrested Jack who was then taken to the watch house on a charge of breach of the temporary order. Jack appeared in court the following morning. Jack was represented by a duty lawyer at the arrest court. The police prepared an objection to bail, and Jack was remanded again overnight in the watch house pending further particulars sought by the magistrate.

A specialist Childrens Court prosecutor attended at court the following day to maintain the bail objection however a YAC duty lawyer appeared, and Jack pleaded guilty to the breach. Jack received a good behaviour order and was released from custody. YAC was able to advocate for Jack by contextualizing the breaches considering his complex personal circumstances.

YAC was able to secure a variation of the order permitting contact between Jack and Sally by consent in writing of Sally.

YAC was able to assist Jack in both his youth justice and DFV matters and ensure the attendance of Child Safety as well as his parents at court. YAC was able to advocate with Child Safety about the provision of services to assist in the understanding at the application and was able to highlight to the court the deficiencies in the DFV system to assist young people.

'it is a good service it meets my needs and does the best they can to get you out of bad situations and get good resolution and provide the help I need. They clearly told [me] about the evidence so I could understand what the possibilities are. No sugar coating. I didn't feel judged.'

- Young Person in client survey





Community Legal Education

About CLE

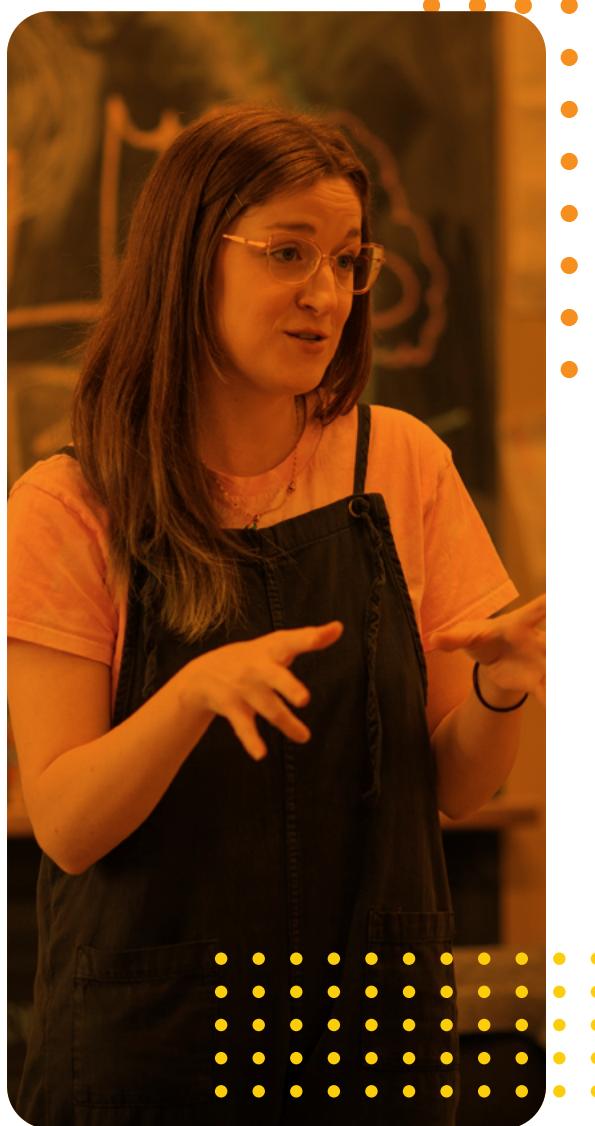
YAC is widely recognised in the sector as the go-to organisation to provide legal information to young people. YAC's resources, expertise and capability around youth work and the law are also seen as critical support for those working with young people.

YAC's community legal education (CLE) officer works with young people aged 10 to 18 years, while also providing training to youth workers. The CLE team can:

- attend schools, detention centres, youth agencies, and organisations across Brisbane to provide information so that young people better understand the law, and how it applies to them
- provide youth workers, teachers, school guidance officers, etc - with information and training about legal issues relevant to their work

In particular, the CLE officer delivers an in-depth 2-day workshop together with YAC's Youth and Court Support Coordinator.

Whether YAC is working with young people or youth workers, the message underpinning all CLE programs is simple: knowledge is power.



How CLE supports young people

YAC understands that it can be difficult to avoid getting into trouble with the law when you don't know what the law is. Making the law more accessible by educating young people about their legal rights and responsibilities is therefore a key priority for YAC.

Empowering young people with greater knowledge about the law allows them to make more informed decisions. It will also aid in their ability to engage more effectively with police and other law enforcement officials.

CLE also functions as a myth-busting exercise, helping to combat misinformation that may be present within the community, or passed on from friends and family.

Similarly, given how closely youth workers work with their young clients, it is essential for them to have a comprehensive understanding of the key laws and responsibilities that affect their work, allowing them to provide the best support possible.

Partnerships & projects

Our Community Legal Educator works with many youth services and centres in an ongoing capacity, including:

- Regular educational sessions delivered at the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre
- Weekly visits to the Clarence Street Mater Young Adult Health Centre
- Assisting the Blue Edge program in schools
- Regular school visits
- Regular talks with youth organisations
- Assisting youth workers who contact YAC for information

2021/22 CLE Services

33

Community Legal Education sessions delivered

29,627

Views on most popular legal information webpage

TikTok Project

In 2022 our CLE officer linked with the UQ Pro Bono Centre to undertake an educational project to be delivered on TikTok.

Given that TikTok is one of the biggest social media platforms among young people, it is important for YAC to reach out to young people through the medium they most prefer and trust as an information source.

A passionate group of UQ law students have been working with our CLE team to translate valuable legal information into engaging and accessible TikTok videos.

Due to the success of the project, we are hopeful to continue the partnership next year.



Looking ahead

With our current capacity, it is difficult to keep up with the demand from schools and youth agencies for visits from our CLE officer. Youth workers understand the importance of educating young people and request this service on an ongoing basis.

There is a definite need in the community for an increase, not only in physical education sessions, but also through other platforms such as social media, website content, and online training.

With additional funding for this service, we would be able to increase our educational interactions with young people and continue to inform them of laws, rights, and other information relevant and helpful to them.



YAC is on TikTok!

@youthadvocacycentre

Laying Down the Law - Online Youth Worker Training Platform

The Laying Down the Law program, run by the CLE officer, has been a valuable course for youth workers in Queensland for several years. An online learning version of this course has been developed and recently launched, making the course more accessible to workers across the state.

The course educates participants on the most important laws affecting youth workers and what their responsibilities are. Topics include consent, confidentiality, negligence, capacity/competency, the child protection system, police

powers, the Childrens Court, and participating in police interviews.

In the youth work space there are often times where the law is not black and white. This course will equip learners with a decision-making framework that will allow them to make decisions that are child centred, human rights compliant, and consistent with the law.

For more information:

visit www.yac.net.au



Bail Support

About Bail Support

Across the Bail Support, Community Co-Responder and Intensive Family Partnership services, the BoSS team worked with 192 young people in this financial year.

The Bail Support team is made up of two services. The first is the **Bail Support Service** which is delivered in partnership with 54 Reasons (previously Save The Children) and offers individualised support to young people to help them meet the conditions of their court orders or bail conditions and to reduce their offending and time spent in detention.

The second service is the **Intensive Bail Initiative (IBI)** which is a pilot initiative funded by the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs (DCYJMA) to enhance the support provided through the Bail Support Service. The IBI consists of the Community Co-Responder(CC-R) service and the Intensive Family Partnership (IFP) work. CC-R increases the availability of support for young people through extended hours in the evenings and on weekends, and is delivered in partnership with KYC. The IFP works intensively with young people and their families with the intention of helping those with significant involvement in the Youth Justice system to improve their stability, safety and family relationships.

Partnerships & Projects

We have ongoing partnerships with YJ Service centres in Brisbane North and Brisbane South, the Sunshine Coast and Redlands. Sadly due

to funding changes we ceased servicing some regions at the end of 2021 including Moreton region (Caboolture, Redcliffe) and Gold Coast. Our relationship with each service centre is unique and is largely grounded in the work done by case workers and youth workers from both organisations, our shared purpose and a mutual respect for the roles each of our organisations play in the lives of the young people we work with.

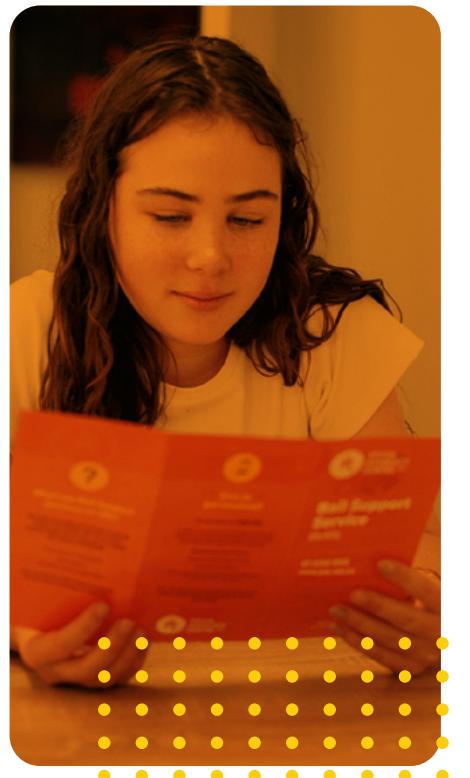
A new partnership developed with the Brisbane North Youth Co-Responder Team (CRT) has been invaluable in shaping the delivery of YAC's Community Co-Responder function of the IBI as a complimentary, responsive and reliable community based option for referral.

Despite all the challenges of operating a detention centre during COVID lockdowns and vaccine mandates in addition to their already complex function, the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre Casework Team kindly provided training for all relevant YAC team members to undertake Visits Beyond Visits (VBV) – resulting in invaluable opportunities to meet with young people while in detention and continue to develop our working relationship with them and capitalise on their often reflective state of mind to plan for a future without offending.

The team of officers from Investment and Commissioning have very much been our partners in the implementation of the IBI – assisting us as we all negotiated the new landscape of service delivery changes alongside law and policy reform.

We have also continued to develop our partnership with 54 Reasons in providing bail support to young people, which now includes the provision of the MYVan service and outreach at the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre.

YAC's existing relationship with KYC was expanded this year through our partnership with them in the implementation and delivery of the CC-R.



The Intensive Family Partnership (IFP) has secured a small pool of partners who have agreed to work with young people and their families within the model which delivers both practical and therapeutic support.

Year in review

BoSS has experienced a number of significant changes in the past 12 months. These have included:

- the removal of Gold Coast and Moreton Bay areas from our catchment areas, resulting in the need to some young people out of the Bail Support Service and to other support services while waiting for the establishment of the replacement Bail Support Services in those regions
- the loss of our valued worker Vacen Taylor as we ceased services to the Gold Coast.
- the expansion of our referral sources from only Youth Justice Service Centres to now receiving referrals from other support services, families and young people themselves.
- the enhancement of Bail Support Services with the implementation of the Community Co-responder and Intensive Family Partnership programs under the "Intensive Bail Initiative"
- significant recruitment to enable delivery of the CC-R and IFP enhancements, and the development of service delivery models and tools required to operationalize the services.

Goals for the future

The addition of Community Co-Responder and Intensive Family Partnerships to the Bail Support Service has allowed BoSS to provide both short term/brief and intensive family support in addition to the core individualised casework support to young people. We have been better able to match the needs of young people and their families with the appropriate responses having developed a continuum of care across the service areas.

We are committed to evidencing the value of the enhancements to the service and having them incorporated into the regular service delivery program.

2021/22 Bail Support

127 Bail Support Clients

54 Community Co-Responder Clients

11 Intensive Family Partnership Clients



A day in the life of a Bail Support Worker

BoSS starts their day bright and early with the first Community Co-Responder starting work at 7am. Before heading out of the office to transport young people to school or court, the Co-Responder will check the inbox for any new referrals and have a read of the handover from KYC noting the contact they had and support provided to our young people and their families over the weekend. The other Co-Responders start between 8am and 11am and working shifts up until 7pm.

This service has filled a long-standing gap in the system, early intervention for young people and their families who have just started to have contact with police, court or the youth justice system. The Co-Responders do amazing work in the North Brisbane region, with the main goal of the service being to divert young people away from the justice system.

After dropping a young person off to school the Co-Responder picks up another young person and takes them to court, by supporting this to occur the Co-Responder has reduced the likelihood of this young person being remanded in custody for failure to appear.

The Bail Support workers start their day in the office and after a brief check in they are on their way to support their young people. One of the case workers is supporting a young person in a meeting at their school, negotiating a plan that will support the young person to reengage in full-time education. The young person hasn't attended school full-time in three years but is feeling confident and empowered after having motivational conversations with their caseworker in the lead up to this meeting.

Another one of the case workers is supporting their young person who is homeless and has been couch surfing for a few months, first

they go to Centrelink where the caseworker advocates for their youth allowance to be approved despite the young person not having all of the required ID documents. After this they contact the Department of Housing to confirm their application for Housing Assistance was approved. The young person is incredibly relieved as when he receives his payment, he will be able to contribute to rent and food at the house he has been staying at.

On the Sunshine Coast the Bail Support worker is out with a young person purchasing some items the young person needs for the job they are starting tomorrow, after weeks of applying for work with the support of the Bail Support youth worker the young person is excited to have their first job.

The youth worker on the Sunshine Coast is with a first nations young person at the Department of Transport paying for their learner's permit after encouraging them to complete their Prep L. The Caseworker identified that this young person had already felt culturally unsafe and it impacted his ability to take in new information and learn new skills so she referred the young person to Murr on the Move for driving lessons where the young person can learn to drive while also feeling culturally safe.

Often young people referred to the Bail Support team have disengaged from family, school and other services and fall into peer relationships that lead to offending behaviour. The Bail Support team works hard to increase the protective factors in a young person's life. The team are flexible and will meet the young person where they are at. They are lead by the young person and the goals they identify for themselves. Working like this creates a space where the young person wants to work with the program, it creates opportunities to have the harder conversations, conversations they

might not be having with other people in their lives.

The Intensive Family Partnership (IFP) caseworker attends the home of a family to spend some time debriefing with the parents of the young person before transporting the young person to their appointment with their family therapist. The parents debrief about their struggles the past couple of days since the IFP Caseworker last checked in, the parents reflect on some of the new strategies they have been using that were discussed recently, they can see a slight shift in the dynamic, the Caseworker acknowledges their hard work in getting to this point.

When the young person is ready, the IFP worker transports them to their appointment with the family therapist. The therapist is a partner of the IFP program and their work with the young person and their care givers feeds into the case planning for the family and provides another safe space for the young person and family to identify and address the underlying issues that may have lead to the young persons offending behaviour. There is a substantial amount of evidence supporting the notion that rehabilitation for young people in the community is far more successful than time in detention centres. The IFP program provides intensive support resulting in lasting impacts for a small group of high-risk young people. Following this appointment the caseworker supports the young person with their reporting requirements for their Youth Justice Order.

Towards the end of the day, the office becomes busier as the team return from their various locations, debriefing with the Senior Caseworker or Coordinator and sharing their wins with the team. The team complete some case notes and update case plans before finishing for the day.



Youth Support

About our Youth Support

YAC delivers youth support programs (YASS) that focus on young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and/or have a legal issue. YASS provides centre-based and mobile support across Brisbane, Caboolture, Beenleigh, Ipswich and Moreton Bay. The programs provide tailored support to address young people's homelessness, legal and other support needs with a view to future positive pathways. YASS also delivers the Youth Court Assistance Program (YCAP) at Brisbane, Caboolture and Pine Rivers Childrens Courts, and, since January 2022, at Redcliffe Childrens Court, discussed further below.

YASS provides:

- Information to young people about their options, rights and obligations;
- Referrals to appropriate support services as required;
- Short-term intervention through supportive and flexible engagement at various outreach locations to young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness;
- Advocacy based casework to ensure young people are heard and their wishes taken into account when decisions are being made about them.
- Focused and proactive support for young people to develop the skills they need to live independently, access and sustain housing (particularly those who

are transitioning from homelessness, custody, youth justice and the child protection systems).

- Individual court support, including when young people are the victim of a crime, and responding to young people's court related social welfare matters.
- Community development, to provide opportunities to young people and workers for information and skill sharing, living skills workshops, which provide information specific to accommodation and tenancy issues and legal information and resources for young people.



Young people at the Bribie Island community outreach program practicing their didgeridoos. The program is run in conjunction with PIEEC.

Why Youth Support is critical

Research provides evidence of a clear link between homelessness and risk of interaction with the criminal justice system – both as cause and effect.

YASS' person-centred approach for working with young people operates within a human rights framework. This model of engagement works from the basis that homelessness is a human rights issue. YASS advocates for young people to access the support they need to improve their wellbeing, and transition to independence, and sustain safe and secure housing and become positive members of society.

Jasper's Story

Jasper, 16, was referred to YASS by his legal representative. Jasper was couch surfing with friends at the time and had pending legal matters at the Childrens Court. Jasper had no income and was unable to purchase the necessities of life such as food. Jasper was also associated with a negative peer group. He wanted support with his Restorative Justice Conference (RJ) and had limited family to help him with his legal matters. Jasper also requested assistance in accessing long- term accommodation and income, either through Centrelink or employment. Jasper wanted to obtain his learner's license to enhance his chances of finding employment and to promote his transition to independence.

With support from YASS, Jasper completed his Youth Justice Orders and has had no further legal matters. With weekly support visits, Jasper returned home and was supported to gain his license, find employment and develop a budgeting plan to save for a car where he saved over \$700. Jasper has been employed for over 6 months and has received the "Employee of the week" award several times.

The case study spans over a period of 12 months, whereas 66 hours of support were provided.

Partnerships and projects

YASS is very proud to provide continuing weekly outreach to young people and community on Bribie Island during school terms to engage young people, their parents and community. Workers provide a range of activities for young people including sport, craft and cultural activities at the Bribie Lions Hall and skate park.

Aboriginal Elders, parents/mentors and community members attend to connect and share. At this outreach, workers and mentors support young people, who are homeless or/ at risk of homelessness and provide information, support and facilitated referrals to them and/or their families to appropriate services.

YASS focuses on engaging young people with culture and community, while also connecting with educators from local schools who are wanting to improve their Indigenous programs. The program has linked with the Pumicestone Indigenous Education & Employment Council Inc (PIEEC) and the number of young people attending continues to grow each week.

As part of this outreach and community consultation with PIEEC, a NAIDOC event was held at Brennan Park, Bongaree again this year. A number of stakeholders attended or contributed including Save the Children (now 54 Reasons), Institute for Urban Indigenous Health, Headspace, Intercept Family & Youth Services, Better Together Health Van, Bribie Fire Service, Bribie Island Seaside Museum and Bribie Library. Cultural events included Murri Tukka (bush tucka food presentation); Indigenous Insights (children's music) and guest speakers from the community including an Indigenous Human Rights Lawyer. The event also included a space for Elders and Indigenous children in the flag-raising ceremony and dancing/performance.

This event was attended by Terry Young,

Federal Member for Longman and Ali King, State Member for Pumicestone, and representatives from Moreton Bay Regional Council. Approximately 350 people attended including approximately 100 young people who took part in the activities provided by the stakeholders.

Acknowledgments

Aunty Flo Watson
Uncle Ivan Pickering
Uncle Ron Powell
Uncle Phil Moxham
Uncle Ted Crockett
Aunty Karen Crockett
David Gibson

Julian Ellis
Uncle Ron Watson
Michelle Watson
Madonna Gibson
Aunty Fran Visini
This year we have also been visited by Cultural Facilitators -
Aunty Melinda Serico
Aunty Sharron Bell
Uncle Tais Muckan
Uncle Bob Robinson

This year we farewelled Anna Gambiroza who was a valued member of our team and a tireless advocate for the young people she worked with.



Some of the community Elders and leaders attending the Bribie Skate park outreach.

Sar's Story

Sar was 22 years of age, and when she connected with YASS when she was the subject of a QCAT order to vacate her community housing tenancy, requesting assistance and support to advocate to maintain her current housing and/or access other accommodation. Unfortunately, Sar was required to vacate the property and YASS supported Sar to explore another housing pathway (which included support to apply for Social Housing, other transitional housing options and private rental applications). With ongoing support, Sar secured a community housing studio apart-

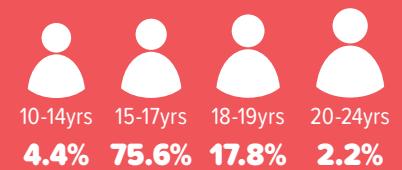
ment with Bric Housing. Sar was assisted with practical support, brokerage to secure and sustain her tenancy and information, referral and support (including court support) in fleeing a domestic and family violence situation. Sar has maintained safe, stable and affordable accommodation. Sar has also obtained a loan to purchase a vehicle.

This case spans a period of 10-months (137 contacts and 178 hours) where Sar accessed the YASS program.

2021/22 Youth Support

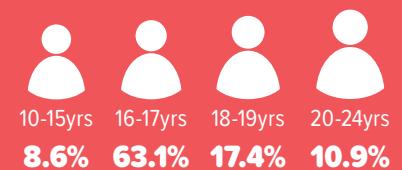
YASS Brisbane

45 Case managed clients
124 Short term clients
929 Casual court outreach clients



YASS Caboolture

46 Case managed clients
128 Short term clients
373 Casual court outreach clients
292 Bribie outreach attendees





Youth Court Assistance

About YCAP

YCAP (Youth Court Assistance Program) provides a specialised legal advocacy and court support worker on Childrens Court to assist young people and their families who attend court or are in custody, both before, during and after.

Due to the correlation of homelessness and other welfare-related barriers with increased contact with the youth justice system, the Childrens Court is a valuable location to engage with young people. Having a consistent presence at court provides an opportunity to engage, identify needs and undertake brief intervention and support. We also facilitate referrals to associated bail programs and/or other relevant agencies for longer term responses.

Court support workers attend as part of YAC's YASS youth support program response, or as a component of YAC's Bail and Order Support Service (BOSS), South West Brisbane Bail Support Service (SWAP) or Cairns and Yarrabah Bail Support Service (CYYBSS).

However funded, YCAP is seen as a specific program within YAC and it is coordinated under the Youth Support Coordinator to ensure that there is consistency in service delivery and peer support due to court support workers operating autonomously.

Unfortunately, BOSS court support ceased in June 2022 due to the lack of ongoing enhancement funding

About CYYBSS

Cairns and Yarrabah Bail Support Service (CYYBSS) is a collaborative partnership led by Youth Empowered Towards Independence (YETI) with YAC and Gindaja Treatment and Healing Centre. As well as providing information, referral and support pre and post court, the role also provides support to young people who may be in the Cairns watch house and has provided support to Cleveland Youth Detention Centre in Townsville when required.

CYYBSS enables seamless support to maintain connections with young people in a consistent and coordinated way by supporting young people at court or while in custody at the watch house.



In these settings, the YCAP worker can continue to provide short term assistance to young people to ensure they understand the court process and are maintaining contact with their lawyer, facilitate referrals to local support agencies, check on the young person's social and emotional well-being, support the young person with future goal setting and play a pivotal role in enabling the young person to remain connected to their family and community.

In the last year, Cairns has experienced high numbers of young people attending court and being processed through the watch house. Unfortunately, some young people have experienced significant periods of time in the watch house, while awaiting transfer to a youth detention centre.

It is well documented that lengthy periods of time in a watch house can be detrimental to a young person's mental and physical health. The YCAP role has played a pivotal part in providing support to young people within the watch house by:

- offering daily visits
- checking in with young people around their mental and physical health and referring to mental health services for additional support
- advocating for young people to have contact with family via phone calls and visits
- providing clothing and hygiene products
- providing books and playing cards

- referring young people to local support services
- liaising with external services on behalf of young people.

About SWAP

SWAP (South West Advocacy and Pathways) Bail Support Service is a collaborative partnership led by Inspire Youth Service with YAC, Inala Wangarra and In Community. SWAP services the Inala, Richland and Ipswich regions. SWAP provide the YCAP program at Ipswich and Richlands Childrens Courts.

The role includes providing information, supportive referrals and support before, during, and after court. As part of the collaborative response, the role provides advocacy and social welfare support at detention centres, watch houses, during police interviews, courts, and in the community.

Collaboration with BOSS

As a component of BOSS, YCAP undertook the court support component with court support enhancement funding for a period of 12 months.

During this 12-month period, there was a change in catchment areas, resulting in YCAP no longer being funded in two of the already long-established courts - Southport and Redcliffe Childrens Courts and replaced with Maroochydore and Brisbane (Tuesdays) Childrens Courts for the remainder of the enhancement funding - a 6-month period.

Taylor's Story

Taylor appeared at Southport Court without support and was anxious about his court matter. The YCAP worker explained the court process using a map and then explored some of his uncertainties, helping him to identify some of the questions he could ask the duty lawyer during his interview to alleviate his anxiety.

The YP disclosed that he struggles with anxiety, depression and substance use. The young person revealed that he had lost everything he owned while couch surfing, managing only to retain his phone. He disclosed he was on charges for fare evasion and was struggling to make his appointments and to buy food and had not eaten much over several days. He secured accommodation with a friend's family who had provided him a room. The YCAP worker explained that she could help him obtain a Go Card and link him up with some support services. The YCAP worker also offered the YP food. The YP acknowledged that he had been struggling with his mental health over the past few months.

The YCAP worker explained he could see the mental health worker while he was waiting to go into court. YCAP worker spoke to a psychologist and identified that the YP was happy to chat. The YP attended an appointment with the psychologist while at court.

The YCAP worker provided information and referral options about other support services and offered support to help the YP contact one of those services and organise an appointment. The YP agreed and an appointment with a local support service was made for that afternoon. After the YP court appearance, the YCAP worker accompanied the young person to purchase a Go Card and a grocery only card.





Family Support

About our Family Support

YAC's Family Support worker works with young people aged 10 to 18 and their family – but only with the agreement of the young person. They help:

- young people to re-build relationships within their families and communities
- put strategies in place to make things better at home for the young person, their parents and siblings
- parents to better understand, support, and advocate for, their young person
- at court, by going with the young person and their family and providing a report for the court where appropriate

YAC family support work is varied and responsive to the needs and situation of the young person. Often our young clients, and/or their parents, have experienced significant trauma, which is a significant factor in their presenting issues. Sometimes, after seeing how family support is working with their sibling, a sister or brother will self-refer.

"Family" can include a variety of situations and relationships, not uncommonly grandparents and sometimes older siblings. YAC works with the person or people who are willing and able to provide the young person with the home environment or support they need.

Family support funding only allows for one worker to cover the greater Brisbane region. Consequently, not all referrals from our legal team can be taken up. YAC is doing what it can to address this need by self-funding additional hours, increasing the capacity to 1.4 full-time equivalent.



Tracey's Story

When YAC FS started working with Tracey, she was already 17 years old. This shortened the window of support due to the program only being funded to support young people up to 18 years of age. However, Tracey and FS agreed there were some goals they could support her with in that time. Tracey was living in social housing with her mother who had significant and ongoing medical issues connected to a life-limiting condition. Additionally, Tracey has a 30 year old brother regularly staying with them. He has substance misuse issues and is frequently incarcerated.

Tracey also has two older sisters, who have no contact with their mum, therefore no contact with Tracey. Tracey had not seen or spoken to her sisters in more than 6 months since they supported Tracey to enter a crisis youth shelter after her mother had not allowed her to return home. Tracey missed them tremendously.

Tracey felt torn between family members as she would like a relationship with all her family members but did not know how to reach out to her sisters. She believed they felt Tracey betrayed them by returning to her mother after their considerable efforts to find Tracey accommodation.

FS connected with these sisters (with Tracey's consent) to work through previous family history. It was identified they were in a great deal of pain by not having communication

with their little sister. They were not angry at Tracey at all; they believed Tracey didn't want to have contact with them. Having this knowledge, FS were able to pass this on to Tracey. From here FS facilitated a meeting between the three sisters. It was a very emotional experience for all including FS who had been asked to attend as a support person for Tracey.

This reconnection with her sisters had a transformative effect on Tracey and she felt safe to disclose that she had been recently sexually assaulted. FS were aware of this and were supporting Tracey with this very traumatic experience. The outpouring of love and empathy from Tracey's sisters was one of FS's highlights for the past year. It had a dramatic impact on Tracey's recovery.

Tracey transitioned to adulthood several months ago. In closing, Tracey had stable mental health, was connected to a young adult youth service (referred and facilitated by FS), successfully completed Prep L and gained her Learners driving permit (another goal FS supported). Tracey has a more amicable relationship with her mother and some strong boundaries with her brother. She has also completed Department of Housing application for long-term housing, is in a stable relationship with her partner and has ongoing positive support from her two sisters.

Why we provide a Family Support Service

Family is important in young people's lives. The Preamble to the Convention on the Rights of the Child notes:

Convinced that the family, as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community.

However, families and family relationships can be problematic. 80% of young people in the youth justice system are known to Child Safety Services. Through family support YAC seeks to help parents to be better able to help and support their young person and re-establish positive relationships with them.

Year in review

Family Support had a change in coordinators. This saw the promotion of the existing FS support worker take on the coordinator role and the recruitment of a new FS support worker. The year saw a large increase in Casual Clients. FS also supported two families more than required.

Looking ahead

There continues to be an unmet demand for family support. The impact of isolation coupled with the pressure cooker of families being locked in spaces together during the pandemic has had a significant impact on families in the region, resulting in higher numbers of family breakdowns. Our goal is to expand the FS program to help meet the demand of vulnerable families needing support.

Feedback from a client

"YAC led by (FS worker) and her team have provided support to our son and family at a time of crisis and desperation. YAC provided information and support to our family that was practical and relevant by listening, responding with crisis intervention strategies and driving our son and supporting him at Court and health care appointments.

Connections were made with our son and family that have led to progress we never thought possible. Our son now lives at home and we have a family unit working together once again. We are so grateful and thankful for their support."



2021/22 Family Support

27

Case managed clients

16

Casual clients

"...without this amazing service our family would be lost.

Thankyou for everything you wonderful people have done for us."





Advocacy & Policy

About Our Advocacy

YAC has been advocating for change regarding youth justice issues for over 40 years.

YAC engages in discussions on issues affecting young people, and provides expert opinions and experiences of young people to Government and the community in order to bring about positive change.

Our research and policy work are informed by our casework, and by young people's experiences, and we actively encourage young people to provide feedback on the services and systems that affect them to help inform this work.

Raise the age

Ten-year-olds are in Grade 5 and still in primary school. Thirteen-year-olds are in Grade 8 and commencing the move to adolescence. Children should be at home, in school, and participating in family and community activities. They do not belong in police stations, courts, and detention centres.

The 'Raise the Age' campaign advocates for an increase in the minimum age of criminal responsibility (MACR) in Queensland and across Australia. The campaign is championed by many social support organisations including YAC.

In August we joined QCOSS and other services in handing over a petition, signed by over 26,000 Queenslanders, to Queensland's Attorney-General, the Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MP, calling on the Queensland Government to raise the age of criminal responsibility to at least 14.

A bill was debated in Queensland Parliament on 16 August 2022. The Labor, Liberal National, One Nation and Katter's Australian parties all voted against the Bill which ultimately did not pass.

The UN Committee for the Convention on the Rights of the Child has set the age of 14 years as the MACR and has criticised Australian jurisdictions for the use of 10 years.

Police watch houses

The use of police watch houses to detain children is an ongoing issue that requires urgent action in Queensland.

Adult watch houses are not a place for children, particularly those as young as 10. They do not have the capacity or facilities to adequately care for children and should not be used as an alternative to youth detention centres. Unfortunately, this is a prolonged issue that YAC and other community groups have been calling attention to for over 30 years.

The use of adult watch houses for detaining children breaches:

- the QPS Operations Manual;
- the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC); and
- the Principles of Youth Justice in the Schedule to the Act.

These facilities are severely inadequate for children to stay in – we are particularly concerned about:

- Very limited facilities and opportunities for visits by family;
- No facilities for exercise or age-appropriate activities;
- No access to health supports or education;
- Severe mental health impacts from confinement in a watch house cell;
- Children being held in close proximity to adult prisoners;
- QPS staff not being trained to deal with children in this situation; and
- Insufficient hygiene standards.

We are aware of children as young as ten being held in adult watch houses. Some children have been held there for up to 30 days at a time.

YAC was consulted as part of a report from ABC's 7:30 regarding the issue, which was broadcast nationally.

Unfortunately several months later there has been little to no action from governments to address the issue and end children suffering in police watch houses.

You can read more about these topics on our website.



YAC Chairman Damien Atkinson OAM KC, joined QCOSS CEO Aimee McVeigh, PeakCare Queensland Executive Director Lindsay Wegener, and 54 Reasons CEO Matt Gardiner in handing over the petition to raise the age to Queensland's Attorney-General, the Hon. Shannon Fentiman MP.

Our online advocacy

 **2000** followers

 **822** followers

 **430** followers

 **103, 567** website sessions



Community Projects & Events

Bribie Skate Park

In partnership with Pumicestone Indigenous Education and Employment Council Inc (PIEEC), our Moreton Bay Youth Support team have been hosting regular community events at the Bribie Skate Park. The events are an opportunity for young people in the area to come together and learn, play, and connect with Elders.

Homeless Connect

YAC attended the annual Homeless Connect event at the Brisbane Showgrounds which was an opportunity for those experiencing homelessness to connect with various services, including:

- volunteer medical and allied health care professionals
- housing support and community support
- haircuts by volunteer barbers and hairdressers
- council's immunisation team
- personal grooming items and food

NAIDOC Week at Bribie

In partnership with Pumicestone Indigenous Education and Employment Council Inc (PIEEC), our youth support team at Bribie Island organised a NAIDOC event to celebrate and recognise the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The event took place on Gubbi Gubbi/Kabi Kabi country, and included a superb array of speakers and performers that was enjoyed by many community members.



YASS Youth Support Worker Kristine Ellis (right) and Lucas Stibbard, Moreton Bay Regional Council Youth Development Officer.

YASS Youth Support Worker Bec Strong and Uncle Ron at the NAIDOC celebration.



Help us support young Queenslanders

Donate

There is an ongoing need for additional funding to allow us to continue and expand our support services to meet the demand.

Your donation will empower our youth workers to support young people through specialised services and financial support to achieve their goals.

You can donate on our website.

Partner

Partnering with YAC is a great way for your organisation to support young people in Queensland and provide a way for your stakeholders to come together around a common cause.

Opportunities include:

- Donating
- Fundraising
- Sponsoring a role or a program

Follow & engage

Follow us on social media or join our mailing list to stay up to date with the latest news and learn about opportunities to support important causes. You can join our mailing list via our website.



Partnerships & Supporters



Funders

YAC is grateful for our national and state government funding bodies and non-government supporters for the legal and social justice programs that deliver support and advocacy to young people and their families.

Government

National Legal Assistance Partnership 2020–25 (NLAP): a national partnership agreement between the Australian Government and all states and territories.

NLAP: COVID-19 frontline legal assistance services funding

The Queensland Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy (formerly the Department of Housing and Public Works)

Queensland Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs (formerly Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women)

Department of Justice & Attorney-General

Moreton Bay Regional Council

Non-government

Lady Bowen Trust

Queensland Presentation Sisters

Sponsors & Donors

Presentation Congregation Queensland (PCQ)

Colin Biggers Paisley

Private donors

Give Now

Queensland Container Refund Scheme - Containers for Change

Pro Bono Support

REDD

Herbert Smith Freehills

Gold Coast Project for Homeless Youth

WinBasic

Partners

Bond University

Kids Youth Community

54 Reasons

Inspire Youth Services

Inala Wangarra

Youth Empowerment Through Independence (YETI)

Pumicestone Indigenous Education and Employment Council Inc (PIEEC)

Networks

Community Legal Centres Queensland (CLCQ)

Community Legal Centres Australia (CLCA)

Community Legal Education Advocates meeting

Youth Justice Oversight meeting

Queensland Legal Service Children's Committee

Brisbane Childrens Court Stakeholder meeting

Childrens Court Committee

Child Protection Practitioners Association of Queensland

COVID-19 Discussions with the Profession

Inner Urban Youth Interagency

Queensland Youth Housing Coalition

Brisbane South Youth Interagency

GForce (Create Foundation)

Police Ethnic Advisory Group (PEAG)

Human Rights Lawyers Network

National Child Rights Taskforce

National Raise the Age Campaign

Queensland Youth Housing Coalition (QYHC)

QUT Centre for Justice (DV project)

Bond University (student placements)

QUT School of Justice (student placements)

Queensland Council of Social Services

Management Committee

Management Committee

The members of the Management Committee, who are listed below, volunteer their time and expertise in the governance of YAC and have overall responsibility for the organisation.

This is not a small responsibility and some members have undertaken this role for a significant period of time. YAC is fortunate to have the support of this group of dedicated and skilled people.

Damien Atkinson KC	Chairperson
Beth Toon	Deputy Chairperson
Nathan Robertson	Treasurer
Ruth Sharp	Secretary
Claire Marchesi	Committee Member
Tarryn McMullen	Committee Member
Ashleigh Larkin	Committee Member
Dr Terry Hutchinson	Committee Member
Elizabeth Howard	Staff Representative
Katherine Hayes	CEO



Volunteers & Students

YAC was very grateful to receive support for from a number of superb volunteers:

Volunteers

UQ Pro Bono Centre students: James, Ruby, Bell, Zoe, and Will.

Legal Support volunteers:

- Daniel Grvbac
- Tilley Thomas-Earle
- Nathalie Tyler
- Emily Conran

Bribie Island outreach volunteers:

- Aunty Flo Watson
- Uncle Ivan Pickering
- Uncle Ron Powell
- Uncle Phil Moxham
- Uncle Ted Crockett
- Aunty Karen Crockett
- David Gibson
- Julian Ellis
- Uncle Ron Watson
- Michelle Watson
- Madonna Gibson
- Aunty Fran Visini
- This year we have also been visited by Cultural Facilitators -
- Aunty Melinda Serico
- Aunty Sharron Bell
- Uncle Tais Muckan
- Uncle Bob Robinson

Students

We thank the following students for their time with us.

Bond University (Law):

- Timothy Middleton
- Eliza Wright
- Ruth Thomas
- Nathalie Tyler

Contact

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YOUTH
ADVOCACY
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Free, confidential
legal and social support
services for young people