

Bourke Shire Council

1. In your evidence you said:

A potential solution for young offenders is a diversionary centre for the youth of Bourke, built on country. This facility would allow magistrates an option other than juvenile detention centres.

Are there any existing facilities or programs elsewhere that you think are a good example of this type of diversionary centre?

There are two programs/facilities that have been previously operated they are BackTrack in Armidale, Brahminy Foundation operated out of Northern Territory I am not sure if this program is still operating. Also, Boys from the Bush operating out of Forbes have a diversionary program that works well, all that would be required for this program would be a facility.

2. You told the Committee that Council has discussed the idea for a diversionary centre a few times, and that Maranguka also supports it. What needs to happen to progress it further?

The program would require both capital and operating funding. The program would be lead by an aboriginal organisation and Aboriginal leadership would be important to the success of the Centre.

Maranguka have a proposal in the Maranguka Residential College. This may be a start to expand and develop a facility to work with the youth that are most at risk.

Ideally the facility would accept youth most at risk before entering the Justice system and those returning to community from the justice system that have dysfunctional families and would benefit from an introduction back into community.

3. What kind of youth mental health services would you like to see in your local government areas?

Mental health facilities for all youth of the community.

Face to face service is important for the community. Currently parents are taking their children to Brewarrina intermittently for appointments. Not all families have a vehicle or the funds available.

Ideally an on the ground early intervention program in the schools with a clinical psychologist living and working in Bourke to address the many issues our youth are exposed to in relation to trauma from family violence, Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, (FASD) and other traumas.

Appointments for child psychologist in the region have a long wait list or have closed their books to new clients. This is only impacting the mental health in our community.

There are not clinical services at Bourke when youth are released from custody on medication and there is no one to follow up on the good work they have received in the justice system all the good work is undone

Drug and Alcohol is a major concern.

To get a diagnosis of FASD cannot happen in Bourke there are not the clinicians available on the ground.

Mental health care is a void in the system.

Indigenous mental health workers are important also – on the ground opportunities to train Mental Health workers into the future to work with families and the youth would also assist.

4. Stakeholders in Broken Hill told the Committee about the need for local youth drug and alcohol rehabilitation services. Do you think something like that would be beneficial for your local government areas?

Yes there is system would benefit the Bourke LGA including communities of Bourke, Enngonia and Wanaaring.

I understand there is a significant issue in relation to the use of Drugs and Alcohol by the youth in the community. These children can be as young as 10 years of age I am told.

All of the above could be developed through the diversionary facility to provide support and direction for the youth that are living in dysfunctional families.