

Supplementary questions

Youth Action

The Committee heard that service providers in some communities are well-funded but operate independently, creating gaps in wraparound service provision. Are you aware of this issue, and how do you think it could be addressed?

Young people often talk about the difficulty in navigating support service pathways, particularly in relation to accessing government services. Particularly for young people doing it tough, having to access many different services simultaneously can feel overwhelming and challenging. This is often due to services not being linked or centrally coordinated.

An additional barrier for young people is accessing a physical service. For young people without access to transport (this may be due to cost or availability of public transport) attending services outside their immediate community, may be unattainable.

The youth hub model we spoke about during the hearing reduces the opportunity for gaps to exist as a hub would either directly provide the support service to the young person or when a support service is not available directly through the hub, the support workers at the hub would assist a young person to navigate the support pathways they require.

In addition, co-locating services is an economically efficient response as it minimises duplication and centralises resources.

- ***The Committee heard that younger children (9–12-year-olds) are involved in offending behaviour and there needs to be early intervention and diversion programs in place for children under the age of 12. What are your thoughts on this and are you aware of any existing programs that meet this need?***

While this question is outside the remit of Youth Action (Youth Action advocates for 12–24-year-olds), Youth Action supports greater investment in early intervention and prevention support services. Youth Action firmly believes that diversionary programs and initiatives are paramount for all children and young people. Diversionary programs are not only effective at reducing the numbers of young people in custody but are also beneficial for the broader community.

- ***You have recommended that the Bail Assistance Line is expanded to become an all-hours service (Recommendation 14a, p15). Can you tell us more about this?***

Young people that are placed by the Bail Assistance Line (BAL) are less likely to enter custody. ¹ BOSCAR data suggests that criminal activity increases after school and into the evening. We suggest extending the hours of the bail assistance line to be a 24-hour service to ensure that every opportunity is undertaken to deter young people from entering into custody.

¹ Suggested citation: Klauzner, I. (2021). An evaluation of the youth Bail Assistance Line (Crime and Justice Bulletin No. 237). Sydney: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

Questions on notice

You mentioned integrated youth hubs preferably operating near schools until 10.00 p.m. or preferably for 24 hours if possible. Do you know the cost involved or the number of people involved if you have to have integrated youth hubs?

While the work we are currently doing on hubs is ongoing, using information provided by existing hubs and other Youth Action's members including a recent consultation with the Youth Action hub working group, and noting that this figure is not incorporating any building costs, an amount of between \$600,000-\$700,000 would be required to operate a youth hub that operated into the evening. This includes 5 x FTE including Intensive support workers (core) x 3, Centre manager (core) x 1 and Activities Officer (core) x 1.

In relation to operating a 24/7 service model, additional funds would be needed to support the additional wage expenditure.

Youth Action is happy to provide the Committee with additional information regarding the development of the youth hub model(s) as it progresses.