

**Submission
No 83**

COMMUNITY SAFETY IN REGIONAL AND RURAL COMMUNITIES

Organisation: Byron Youth Service Inc.

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1 Gilmore Crescent | Byron Bay 2481 | P: 66857777 | E: info@bys.org.au

Rosalie Bryant
Grants & Development Manager
Byron Youth Service Inc.

RE: Parliamentary Inquiry into the causes of youth crime in regional NSW.

To Whom it May Concern,
Please accept this submission on behalf of Byron Youth Service Inc. (BYS).

BYS has been the primary provider of youth services in the Byron Bay area since 1987. BYS is a not-for-profit charitable community organisation working with over 2000 vulnerable youth each year. Our primary purpose is to develop and deliver activities that are responsive to the needs of young people and their families. Our programs are based on a sound understanding of the issues that impact the lives of youth and families.

The issue of youth crime in regional NSW is not new. What is new is the number of youth who have been disconnected from their education and communities following COVID 19 lockdowns and the 2022 floods that damaged many schools in our area. This is a generation of youth who will need targeted support and early intervention to assist them to thrive.

The only way that these interventions can occur is if Government commits to multi-year funding for grass-roots organisations such as BYS.

BYS has not seen any significant state-led funding to address or prevent youth crime through early intervention since the NSW Department of Justice - Round 4 - NSW Community Safety Fund in 2018.

The NSW Government lags behind the Commonwealth in this regard.

Across 2021-24 the Commonwealth Department of Industry Science Energy & Resources invested in locally-led Early Intervention and Crime Prevention Youth Programs through the Safer Communities Round 6 Grants. These programs are now concluding.

This leaves the youth sector with a looming funding cliff which will have significant implications for young people at-risk of offending or of re-offending.

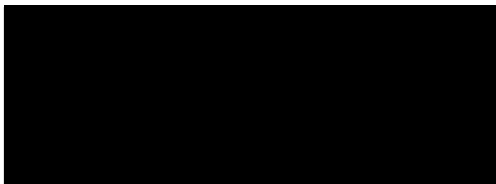
The NSW Government must act now to provide funding to youth organisations to ensure that this generation of youth do not fall through the cracks because there was nobody there to catch them.

It is widely understood that early intervention programs have measurable impact in the prevention of crime and recidivism in youth cohorts. What is less recognised is that young people are far more likely to be victims of crime than they are to be perpetrators.

As such, early intervention programs act to address young people's trauma and lived-experiences of violence, poverty, lack of opportunity and exposure to drugs and alcohol.

Yours sincerely

Rosalie Bryant



27/05/2024.