

**Submission
No 94**

COMMUNITY SAFETY IN REGIONAL AND RURAL COMMUNITIES

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introduction

My Name is Glen Crump i am a 40 year old Aboriginal male living in moree i have worked as a youth worker in moree for the past 17 years and worked with Many young people who have come in contact with the law i welcome this enquiry and hope it will bring better conditions and resources to reducing crime in rural areas in my submission i will give you a overview of some of the things i personally have been involved in

Youth Get Wise Program

Youth Get Wise Program is a diversionary program which connects young people who have offended or are at risk of offending with specialist service providers, including:

- drug and alcohol rehabilitation and counselling,
- mental health assistance,
- anger management programs,
- Indigenous culture, family history and identity education programs; and
- employment programs.

The Youth Get Wise Program works on a referral basis. Young people are referred to the program by Juvenile Justice, the Department of Families and Community Services, Magistrates and family members.

Young people undertaking the Youth Get Wise program attend 4 weeks of sessions with specialist providers. On completion outcomes are reported through Miyay Birray to the local court and Juvenile Justice. The program carries a multidisciplinary approach similar. This program was designed by myself in consultation with a former magistrate who felt there was not enough diversion programs for youth

Case Study – Youth Get Wise

A young person with a history of incarceration and contact with Juvenile Justice attended the four week Youth Get Wise program.

On completion of the course he self referred and continued with anger management (a significant contributor to his offending behaviour). He has completed a TAFE course, is looking for long term employment and has had no police contact.

Night patrol programs

Moree has a Street Beat program to drive young people home at night. The program aims to reduce the opportunities that young people have to commit crime and come into police contact. Street Beat was initially funded under the Safe Aboriginal Youth program to run 7 nights per week but unfortunately has been scaled back due to a lack of funding. This program for the last two years has been funded under the safer community's funding from the federal government sadly this program comes to a end at the end of june and also moree will lose two youth workers who have been working timelessly with the young people

policing

although our local police do a fantastic job there is very little opportunity's for the young people to have positive interaction with police. A former inspector in Moree had a great initiative working collectively with youth services to develop a Saturday night drop-in sessions where the police and volunteers would be on hand at the basketball stadium to provide activity's and a meal for kids to hang out to during this program we saw a reduction in youth crime and a positive relationship built between youth and police

referrals to youth justice

with the current laws a person can only be placed under once they have pleaded guilty there are a large number of youth that can months on end being unsupervised i think a way to overcome this is when the police give a young person bail or the magistrate a part of their bail conditions should be referd to a Non Government agency so as they can support the young person get them assistance in the areas they need help this also assists the family in getting the young people help in the areas of need prior to their final court appearance

culturally apprioate services running programs

in Moree we see a lot of funding target to Aboriginal youth crime being filted through to the main stream services. one example of this is the joint support program funded by youth justice this program is aimed at Aboriginal young people but is provided by best employment we all know that programs are delivered best when funding is giving to community controlled services these services have local staff who know the kids and know their family

court system

Moree has sadly seen a high turnover of magistrates when a service or community start to make progress on working on localised sololutions the magistrates time is up and their moved on. recently Moree has started a specialist childrens court list that runs over 2 days a month sadly with the rates of young people going through the court this isnt enough what i would like to see is 1 day a week just for kids as sometimes kids are sitting around the court house all day and being exposed to other issues in community when we really need kids in school getting a education.

Homeless

Homeless is a big issue in Moree just as domestic violence in Moree we have a womens refuge that caters for women and children up to the age of 14 this creates a problem for a lot of people as we know extended family exist and women wont leave without their children. On the other hand i want to highlight that men are quite often the victims to domestic violence and have no where to go to as there is no emergency accommodation available to men at short notice this often leaves men homeless and need to turn to crime to survive

Lack of cordenation and services working in silos

In Moree we have many services funded to work on the issues this enquirey is looking at. Sadly there is a lack of communication and willingness to colaberate services to work together. I belive we need to go back to the old place manegemnt system where there is a

employee of premiers dep employed to bring all these services together and report back to government on what is actually occurring on the ground.

education

Moree has a major issue of suspensions although i fully understand every person in the school system deserves to be safe we need a better way of managing suspensions i believe funding needs to be put into Non government agencies to run suspension centers quite regularly i have seen a increase in kids committing crimes while on suspension this is no fault to their parents as they still have to work and make money to feed and cloth their family and are unable to watch their kids while they are suspended

Bail conditions

I think they needs to be a common sence approach to bail conditions and working with local services to make sure these conditions are not going to set people up to fail. i had a client who was bailed to a address where he was living alone he was placed on a 24 hour curfew which means he cant leave his house now living alone not being able to leave home makes you think how did he get food and other essential supplys he had to break his bail to do this which resulted in him being breached

some of the things i would like to suggest this committee looks at recommending that could help reduce crime

- Policy changes to ensure that police (and especially Probationary Constables) administer the Young Offenders Act 1997 (NSW) and more positive programs to better the relationship between police and community
- An increase in positive police presence in the community;
- Greater flexibility around the referral process
- Education for new magistrates on local youth div
- Increase crisis accommodation or youth refuge services in Moree;
- Reinstatement of a place manager service
- school suspension programs to be developed and Non gov agencies funded to encourage student reengagement.
- More appropriate and considered bail conditions to avoid inevitable bail breaches. is as follows

I thank you for your time in reading my submission and welcome the committee to visit Moree as part of this enquiry and i would welcome the opportunity to speak to you i would finally recommend that on your tours the hearings are held in community facility's and not at a licensed premises as sadly we know that addiction to alcohol and gambling play a major part in crime in regional areas and by having these meetings there can be portrayed as endorsing the very things that we are trying to reduce

Many Thanks

Glen Crump

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