Koori Youth Justice Program
Best practice guidelines
Youth Services and Youth Justice Branch
November 2007
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Consultation to best practice document

The process of development of this document was inclusive of the Victorian Koori Youth Justice Program workers and the Department of Human Services.

Steps involved in the development of this best practice document included:

- Interviews with all the Koori Youth Justice Program workers throughout Victoria.
- Interviews with management of Aboriginal cooperatives throughout Victoria who are involved in the Koori Youth Justice Program.
- Consultation with Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Limited (VACSAL) and Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA).
- Consultation with the Department of Human Services Indigenous Initiatives Unit.
- Compilation of job/position descriptions and duty statements.

The Document includes:

- Mission statement and objectives.
- Best practice approach in metropolitan, rural and custody settings.

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Aboriginal cultural beliefs

- Our children are our present and our future.
- Our children should have access to good health, wellbeing and educational programs so that they will be empowered to achieve their full potential.
- Our children have the right to an education that strengthens their culture and identity.
- Our children have the right to live in communities that are safe and free from violence.
- Our children have the right to identify as Aboriginal Australians, to be proud of our history, cultural beliefs and practices.
- Our children have the right to maintain connection to their land and country.
- Our children have the right to maintain their strong kinship ties and social obligations.
- Our children have a strong contribution to make to enrich the Aboriginal community and as members of the wider community.
- Our children have a right to be taught our cultural heritage by our Elders.
- Our children should be taught to respect their Elders.

From the Aboriginal Best Start status report, Department of Human Services, 2004.
Introduction

The Koori Youth Justice Program (formally known as the Koori Juvenile Justice Program) was established in 1992 in response to the findings of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody inquiry (1991) which highlighted both the over-representation of Aboriginal people in youth and adult justice systems, and the rate of progress through the youth justice system experienced by many young Aboriginal people.

The Koori Youth Justice Program is a key initiative of the first and second phase of the Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement—a whole-of-government approach developed with the Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and the wider Aboriginal community.

A review of the Koori Youth Justice Program was completed in June 2002. The purpose of the review was to inform the Department of Human Services on program models, best practice issues and advice on the enhanced allocation of funds for service initiatives for young Aboriginal people in the youth justice system. The review identified a number of structural and external impediments to the Koori Youth Justice Program reaching its full potential and made recommendations in a number of key areas. The best practice document has been implemented as a result of the review.

Two Koori Youth Justice Forums were held at the Aborigines Advancement League on June 2003 and May 2004 and were hosted by the Juvenile Justice Section of the Department of Human Services.

A forum steering committee comprising the Department of Human Services staff, Koori Youth Justice Program workers, representatives of the Aboriginal community and of other government agencies assisted with the planning for the forum.

The theme of the Koori Youth Justice forum was ‘Creating a vision’. This theme was chosen as it was felt that there was now an opportunity to take stock and revisit or reconfirm the future direction for the Koori Youth Justice Program and identify priorities for action.

The Koori Juvenile Justice Program changed name to the Koori Youth Justice Program to reflect the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 which came into effect 23 April 2007.
**Vision statement**

Working in partnership with culturally appropriate mainstream and Koori specific services providers, Aboriginal co-operatives, communities and families, the Koori Youth Justice Program will adopt a proactive, preventive focus in reducing the number of young Aboriginal people in the Youth justice system.

The development of a Koori Youth Justice Program vision and strategies toward its achievement was a key task during the two day forum. Much discussion was generated, however there was general agreement that the collective vision included a focus on preventive work.

Partnership was a key theme at the forum, as was the importance of developing and nurturing strong relationships if we are to achieve the vision that was created. It was agreed that a holistic and whole of Government approach to the issues of youth offending should be pursued. Partners of the Department of Human Services in achieving good practice in relation to young Aboriginal people include the Aboriginal community and Elders, Aboriginal co-operatives, schools, the police, other Government agencies and community service agencies.

All partners should be working together for the early identification of Aboriginal children and young people who are at risk of entering the child protection, youth justice and adult correctional systems. It was highlighted at the forum that a system of information sharing needed to be developed, in line with all relevant privacy legislation, so Koori Youth Justice Program workers can undertake their role, identify high risk young Aboriginal people and implement appropriate interventions.

It was also noted that strong working relationships should be developed with other organisations that impact on the lives of young Aboriginal people. There was strong support for the involvement of Aboriginal families, Elders and communities. It was acknowledged that the system must do all it can to support and empower these key players as they work to maintain their responsibilities to young Aboriginal people.
Purpose of the best practice document

The purpose of the best practice document is to ensure an appropriate response within the youth justice program and Koori Youth Justice Program that enables quality outcomes for young Aboriginal people who are at risk of offending or re-offending.

The best practice document will guide practice and ensure consistency across the Koori Youth Justice Program, whilst articulating the roles and responsibilities of all Koori Youth Justice Program workers and guide their supervision and management. This document will also provide a common benchmark for practice and outcomes, the basis for ongoing monitoring and review for continual improvement and the establishment of a framework for the Koori Youth Justice Program.
Koori Youth Justice Program mission statement

To divert young Aboriginal people from the youth justice and the criminal justice systems by promoting a pro-social lifestyle within the context of their families, Aboriginal communities and the wider community.

To ensure culturally responsive quality service delivery to young Aboriginal people who are at risk of offending or have offended and/or are at risk of further offending.

To ensure that service delivery is based on a culturally appropriate service response that meets the needs of young Aboriginal people and includes holistic approaches, sound assessment, engagement of Aboriginal community supports, facilitation of linkage and unification/reunification to family and Aboriginal community, in order to minimise risk and reduce offending.

Youth justice program mission statement

To ensure care, custody and supervision for young offenders through the provision of programs that will assist them to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to arrange their lives effectively without further offending and to provide mechanisms, resources and direction to achieve this.

In the context of the legislation, and through the provision of community-based supervision and support programs, to promote the personal development of young offenders and contribute to the reduction of crime in the community.

Youth justice program objectives

- To maximise the appropriate diversion of the young people charged with an offence away from the formal criminal justice system.
- To minimise the progression of young people into the youth justice system and adult correctional system.
- To minimise the likelihood of re-offending by young people who enter the youth justice system, and maximise their chances of rehabilitation.
- To engender public support for the confidence in the youth justice program, by balancing community and security needs with programs that address the development needs of young people.
Koori Youth Justice Program

The Koori Youth Justice Program was implemented in response to the recommendations from the *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (1991)* and the over representation of young Aboriginal people at risk of entering/re-entering the youth justice and criminal justice systems.

The Koori Youth Justice Program commenced in 1992 with Koori Youth Justice Program workers placed in Aboriginal cooperatives in the following areas:

- Melbourne—Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Limited (VACSAL)—Bert Williams Centre (BWAYS)
- Windsor/Danenong – Ngwala Wilumbong/Southern Youth Justice Unit
- Healesville – Anglicare
- Shepparton – Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative
- Wodonga -
- Robinvale—Murray Valley Aboriginal Cooperative
- Shepparton—Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative
- Lake Tyers—Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust
- Morwell—Central Gippsland Aboriginal Cooperative
- Warrnambool—Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative.

In April 2007 the Koori Juvenile Justice Program had a name change to Koori Youth Justice Program. The name change was due to reflect the new legislation – *The Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* which came into effect on 23 April 2007.

The Koori Youth Justice Program has developed as a self-management model with funding provided to local community organisations who assume responsibility for the employment, supervision and support of their program worker. Over the years the program has expanded and now in 2007 has 16 community workers, 3 custodial workers and a program advisor. The program is now operating at the following locations:

- Melbourne—Thornbury—Bert Williams Aboriginal Youth Services (BWAYS)
- Melbourne—Windsor—Ngwala Willumbong
- Melbourne—Healesville—Anglicare Victoria
- Robinvale—Murray Valley Aboriginal Cooperative
- Shepparton—Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative
- Lakes Entrance—Lakes Entrance Community Health Service
- Morwell—Anglicare Victoria
• Bairnsdale—Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Cooperative.
• Warrnambool—Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative.
• Geelong—Wathaurong Aboriginal Cooperative
• Echuca—Njernda Aboriginal Cooperative.
• Mildura—Mildura Aboriginal Corporation
• Hamilton—Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Cooperative
• Ballarat—Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative
• Parkville—Parkville Youth Residential Centre
• Parkville—Melbourne Youth Justice Centre
• Malmsbury—Malmsbury Youth Justice Centre

The program review noted that there is a need to rationalise roles and responsibilities within the Koori Youth Justice Program, and this was reiterated at the forum. It has also been emphasised that the roles of the workers would need to maintain flexibility in order to meet the needs of their particular community.
Legislation

Best practice promotes that workers have a thorough understanding of the principles and philosophies underpinning relevant legislation in relation to young offenders and an understanding of compliance with the responsibilities of working within a statutory environment and with young people who are subject to statutory orders.

- *Children Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)*
- *Magistrates Court Act 1989 (Vic.)*
- *Sentencing Act 1991 (Vic.)*
- *Supreme Court Act 1986 (Vic.)*
- *Mental Health Act 1986 (Vic.)*
- *Intellectually Disabled Persons Services Act 1986 (Vic.)*
- *County Court Act 1958 (Vic.)*
- *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)*
- *Bail Act 1977 (Vic.)*
- *Information Privacy Act 2000 (Vic.)*
- *Health Records Act 2000 (Vic.)*
- *Public Records Act 1973 (Vic.)*
- *Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic.)*
- *Occupational Health & Safety Act (Vic.)*
- *Community Services Act 1970 (Vic.)*
- *Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (Vic.)*
- *Victorian Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2000 (Vic.)*
- *Human Services (Complex Needs) Act 2003 (Vic.)*.
Aboriginal identity

Identifying Aboriginality is often difficult and people define cultural identity in different ways. Where a young person identifies or believes they belong to the Aboriginal culture, the youth justice worker should be inclusive and work with them in a culturally appropriate manner. It is not the role of youth justice to identify or to challenge Aboriginality, as this is the role of Aboriginal community organisations. However, there is a legal definition in the Children Youth and Families Act 2005 as follows.

Legal definition of Aboriginal

Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander people are recognised as having the following three connections:

- To be descended from an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
- To identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
- To be accepted as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander by an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community.

All clients entering the youth justice program must be asked if they identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Clients identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander must be given the option of referral to the relevant Koori Youth Justice Program worker to have an Aboriginal cultural support plan implemented during the client assessment process.

The Aboriginal community welcome young non-Aboriginal people who belong to a blended Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal family to participate in the Koori Youth Justice Program, however the young non-Aboriginal people are not identified as Aboriginal.

Koori identity

The term Koori is used to identify Aboriginal people located in the southeast Australia. The use of Koori in these guidelines is to be inclusive of all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders residing in Victoria.
Roles

Koori Youth Justice Program—community based workers

The Koori Youth Justice Workers’ role is to provide a diversionary and rehabilitation service for young Aboriginal people on statutory youth justice orders or who are at risk of entering/re-entering the youth justice and criminal justice systems, by providing a culturally responsive service through:

**Diversionary strategies**

- Developing and initiating culturally appropriate programs and strategies designed to prevent young Aboriginal people from entering/re-entering the youth justice system.
- Providing support for young Aboriginal people and their families at court and to advocate to the court on their behalf.
- Providing secondary consultation to youth justice case managers for young Aboriginal people, to ensure that culturally relevant information is provided to the Children’s Court, Magistrates’ Court, County Court, Youth Parole Board and Youth Residential Board.
- Providing advice (written or verbal) to the court as required.
- Supporting or gaining support for young Aboriginal people detained by police and offer advice to police to ensure fair and reasonable outcomes for young Aboriginal people as required.

**Working with statutory clients**

- Attending client case planning and case management meetings as required.
- Developing and reviewing Aboriginal Cultural Support Plans as required.
- Providing cultural supervision, programs and support for young Aboriginal people on court orders as required.
- Providing support for young Aboriginal people and their families at the Youth Parole Board and Youth Residential and to provide advice (written or verbal) to the Board as required.
- Providing secondary consultation to case managers (government and non-government organisations) of young Aboriginal people to ensure that culturally relevant client assessment plans are implemented.
- Liaising with Koori Youth Justice Program custodial staff to ensure that culturally appropriate client assessment plans and exit plans are implemented for Young Aboriginal people.
- Visiting Young Aboriginal people in youth residential centres and youth justice centres to ensure that linkages with their Aboriginal community are established and/or re-established.
- Initiating handover communication between regional and custodial Koori Youth Justice Program worker.
Enhancing linkages to community

- Establishing Aboriginal and mainstream networks, locally and across the State, to ensure optimum outcomes for Young Aboriginal people.
- Advising on policy and cultural competencies
- Participating in the planning, operation and evaluation of youth justice policies, programs and practice relating to the Koori Youth Justice Program.
- Assisting with cultural induction, education and network meetings on a local level to ensure that Department of Human Services staff, police and other relevant services are culturally aware of need of Young Aboriginal people and of services provided by the Koori Youth Justice Program as required.

Administrative, supervision and professional development

- Attending supervision with youth justice and employer organisation on a regular basis.
- Attending staff meetings as required.
- Attending statewide support meetings.
- Attending training as required.
- Attending conferences and forums as requested.
- Maintaining records and statistics and ensuring reporting requirements are met.

When working with clients on statutory youth justice orders, workers must ensure that they work within the legislative requirements of the order and report to the youth justice caseworker any instances of non-compliance by the client.
Communication process—community workers

- Children’s Court appearance
- Court advice
- Plead guilty finding of guilt
- Supervised order
- Client assessment
- Case plan development
- Case management and plan implementation
- Plan review
- Exit planning
- Order complete case closed
- Non-supervised outcome
- Young Aboriginal people at risk of offending
- Koori Youth Justice Program
- Aboriginal Cultural Support Plan
- Community institutions, agencies and programs
Koori Youth Justice Program—custodial workers

The Koori Support Workers’ role is to provide support to Young Aboriginal people entering or in custody, to maintain or reconnect Young Aboriginal people with family and community and to develop culturally appropriate diversionary and rehabilitation program for Young Aboriginal people placed in custody by:

**Working with statutory clients**

- Providing and facilitating immediate and ongoing support for Young Aboriginal people in the custody centre as set out in the *Youth justice centre operational manual*.
- Developing and reviewing Aboriginal Cultural Support Plans as required.
- Initiating communication between regional and custodial Koori Youth Justice Program workers.
- Attending client case planning and case management meetings as required.
- Providing secondary consultation to case managers/keyworkers of Young Aboriginal people to ensure that culturally relevant client assessment plans and exit plans are implemented.
- Assessing the needs of Young Aboriginal people and identify issues on both an individual or collective basis.
- Providing secondary consultation to regional youth justice case managers and regional Koori Youth Justice Program workers regarding Young Aboriginal people to ensure that culturally relevant information is provided to the Children’s Court, Magistrates’ Court, County Court and the Youth Parole Board.
- Developing and initiating culturally appropriate programs and strategies designed to prevent Young Aboriginal people from re-entering the youth justice system in consultation with the centre management.
- Providing support for Young Aboriginal people and their families at court and to advocate to the court on their behalf in consultation with unit managers.
- Providing support for Young Aboriginal people and their families at the Youth Parole Board and Youth Residential Board and to provide advice (written or verbal) to the Board in consultation with unit managers.
- Assisting in accessing diversionary programs for Young Aboriginal peoples on remand.

**Enhancing linkages to community**

- Developing networks and liaising with internal and external agencies and professionals to ensure Young Aboriginal people have access to culturally supportive and responsive services, particularly when exiting the system.
- Developing protocols with culturally specific agencies with the support from the centre program manager/coordinator.
- Establishing Aboriginal and mainstream networks and linkages, locally and across the State, to ensure optimum outcomes for Young Aboriginal people.
Advising on policy and cultural competencies

- Participating in the planning, operation and evaluation of youth justice policies, programs and practice relating to the Koori Youth Justice Program.

- Working with Youth Justice and Youth Services Branch and the custodial centres to assist with the implementation and development of culturally appropriate material for the centres.

- Assisting with cultural induction, education and network meetings on a local level to ensure that Department of Human Services staff, police and other relevant services are culturally aware of the needs of Young Aboriginal people and of services provided by the Koori Youth Justice Program as required.

Administrative, supervision and professional development

- Attending supervision on a regular basis.

- Attending staff meeting as required.

- Attending training as required.

- Attending conferences and forums as requested.

- Maintaining statistics, records/case notes in client files.
Communication process—custodial workers

- Children’s Court appearance
- Court advice
- Plead guilty finding of guilt
- Custodial order
- Client assessment
- Case plan development
- Case management and plan
- Exit planning
- Parole
- Order complete case closed

- Remand
- Initial health assessment
- Aboriginal Cultural Support Plan
- Leave Release Remissions
- Koori Youth Justice Program—community workers
- Koori Youth Justice Program—custodial workers
- Community institutions, agencies and programs
Regional programs

The Department of Human Services recognises the diversity of the Aboriginal culture and the differences between operating the Koori Youth Justice Program in metropolitan Melbourne and in each rural community. The Department of Human Services recognises that the Koori Youth Justice Program must reflect the desires and aspirations of the local Aboriginal community. However, the common objective of the program is to strengthen cultural supports for Young Aboriginal people and to promote a pro-social lifestyle for them, thus diverting and re-diverting from the youth justice and the criminal justice system.

Consultation process

It is the role of the youth justice unit manager to keep communication lines open with managers of their local Aboriginal organisations/cooperatives and to provide advice and assist in developing a job description when Aboriginal organisations are employing a Koori Youth Justice Program workers.
Responsibilities and objectives

Standards for service delivery

The Koori Youth Justice Program requires that workers maintain professional standards and the duty of care responsibility required when working with vulnerable clients. All youth justice clients are considered vulnerable. Professional standards include:

- Impartiality
- Integrity
- Accountability
- Responsive service modeling pro-social behavior.

Professional boundaries apply to every contact with every person. Demonstration of professional boundaries ensures that all clients are treated fairly and with consistency. Sound professional boundaries include:

- Ensuring that responsibilities and obligations to oneself, other staff and clients are met.
- That ethical dilemmas and conflicts of interest are reported and dealt with satisfactorily.
- Encouraging clients to take responsibility for their behavior.
- Creating an environment where clients can understand expectations of them.
- Promoting a feeling of safety, consistency and fairness with clients and staff.

Develop and initiate cultural programs

The main objective of developing and initiating cultural programs include:

- Assisting Young Aboriginal people to develop an identity of self.
- Assisting Young Aboriginal people to understand that the Aboriginal culture is a living culture, past present and future with both community and family strengths.
- Assisting Young Aboriginal people develop a sense of future from positive role models and Elder participation.
- Assisting Young Aboriginal people to be proud of their Aboriginal culture and to understand their place and responsibility within it.
- Providing opportunities for Young Aboriginal people to increase their knowledge and skills to enable them access options for better life outcomes.
Casework
Casework should be undertaken within a framework of evidence based and strengths based practice. The main features in the case management/supervision of Young Aboriginal people include:

- Ensuring compliance with all legislative requirements of the order.
- Ensuring a wide knowledge of Aboriginal culture and kinship systems.
- Engaging the young person, family/extended family and the community with work being undertaken.
- Completing a clear and accurate assessment and plan for the client.
- Assisting young person to plan a culturally relevant rehabilitation program.
- Assisting the young person and family at court by providing sentencing advice to the client, youth justice worker, solicitor and court (when requested), support and advocacy with and on their behalf.
- Referring young person to Aboriginal agencies/services, government and non-government agencies/services to ensure that their needs are met.
- Empowering young person to manage their life effectively, through self-determination and increased community linkages and support.
- Exiting young person from the youth justice system ensuring their independency of the service.
- Identifying and building on client’s strengths assisting in working towards an offending free lifestyle.
- Building the social connectedness of clients in their community.

Secondary consultation
The main objective of secondary consultation is to:

- Assist the case manager/keyworker to understand cultural sensitivities in regard to Young Aboriginal people.
- Assist the case manager/keyworker to initiate culturally appropriate client assessment plans, pre-sentence reports, parole and exit plans.
- Developing and initiating protocols between case managers/keyworkers.
- Provide advocacy for clients to ensure that racism and discrimination are prevented.
Confidentiality and privacy
The Koori Youth Justice Program requires that all program workers adhere to current privacy legislation and maintain the Young Aboriginal person’s confidentiality. It is necessary for an Young Aboriginal person (and also by their parent/guardian if under the age of 16) to sign consent forms when engaging in the Koori Youth Justice Program.

Aboriginal youth support
The main objective of supporting Young Aboriginal people is to offer an outreach service to assist them to engage with services to optimise service delivery outcomes and to achieve positive social connection and life outcomes for Young Aboriginal people.

Court advice
The main objectives of court advice include:

- Providing assessments, information and advice to youth justice workers and/or Magistrates as required.
- Providing opportunities for diverting and minimising the involvement of the young person in the youth justice and criminal justice systems.
- Enhancing the young person’s prospect of rehabilitation by providing a culturally relevant program that best meets the young person’s needs.
- Minimising the offending risk and its impact on the young person, their family and community.

Networks
The main objectives of developing and maintaining networks include:

- Ensuring that the network extends to both Aboriginal and mainstream services, including government and non-government agencies and services.
- Ensuring that every option is discussed with Young Aboriginal person to enable them to make an informed decision regarding their future.

Police interviews
The Children’s and Young Persons Act requires that an adult be present during formal police questioning of a young person under 18 years.

Victoria Police operating procedures require police members to contact an Independent Third Person (ITP) when interviewing a person (regardless of age) with a cognitive disability or mental illness, to assist the person with any difficulties and ensure that the process is fair.
Advice received from Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS), Children’s After Hours Bail and Placement Service (CAHBPS) and Youth Referral and Independent Person Program (YRIPP) and ITP program is that the Koori Youth Justice Program worker sitting in on a police interview, and also supporting the young person on a supervised order or through a diversion program, can cause confusion for young person regarding the role of the worker.

There are a number of programs that can provide an appropriately trained volunteer independent person to attend police interviews for young people under 18 years:

- Aboriginal Community Justice Panels
- VALS—Client Service Officers
- ITP
- YRIPP.

It is the role of the Koori Youth Justice Program worker to offer secondary consultation to an independent person or independent third person to ensure that Young Aboriginal person’s cultural needs are met.

It is the role of the Koori Youth Justice Program worker to assist the young person’s parents to participate in supporting their child by attending the police station, as the police require that a young person’s parent/guardian be present if they are to caution the young person.

It is the role of the Koori Youth Justice Program worker to liaise with VALS to ensure that the Young Aboriginal person is aware of their legal status and legal options.

Normally it is not the role of the Koori Youth Justice Program worker to sit in on police interviews. However, the Koori Youth Justice Program worker may sit in on a police interview when it is in the best interest of the young person. In this case the Koori Youth Justice Program worker must be aware that they may be called to give evidence at court for the prosecution or the defence, and that this could cause a conflict of interest. All efforts must be taken for the Koori Youth Justice Program worker to allocate another service to participate in police interviews, as this can compromise the Koori Youth Justice Program and the role of the worker, especially if the worker sits in on interviews and is later allocated to the client.

**Staff recruitment and selection panels**

The selection panels must be comprised of at least two Aboriginal community members from the local community and at least one staff from the youth justice unit in the region where the position is located. The selection panel must assess the interviewee on a balance between their knowledge of the local culture, ability to engage with the Young Aboriginal people and an understanding of legislation that governs youth justice and working with statutory clients.

It is the role of the Aboriginal organisation to minimise the risk to Young Aboriginal people where there may exist an unacceptable level of risk by exposing them to inappropriate persons. It is necessary for the Koori Youth Justice Program workers and through the direct manager of these services, to be subject to rigorous assessment of their suitability (police
check). The police record should be assessed for suitability against the assessment criteria before a decision is made regarding employment. Individual applicants will be considered on their merits.

Referee checks for new employees are an essential part of the safety screening process. As part of referee checks, the applicant must be informed that referees will be asked whether they have knowledge or information concerning the applicant that would adversely affect the applicant from performing the job, including any relevant criminal offences.

Education and training
The role of the Koori Youth Justice Program worker is to provide a specialised service. The Koori Youth Justice Program requires that program workers have a wide range of knowledge of Aboriginal culture and kinship systems and that, where possible, an Aboriginal person fill the role. The Koori Youth Justice Program prefers the minimum qualification for the role of worker be a Certificate IV in a community development/welfare/youth justice or equivalent qualification. The worker will also be required to be familiar with the requirements of working with statutory clients and in provision of information towards assessment, case planning and casework.

The Department of Human Services will assist in training by offering the youth justice training calendar to all Koori Youth Justice Program workers to access training across all areas of client care including issues of risk assessment, family functioning, health and wellbeing, substance use/abuse, mental health, disabilities, education and recreation.

Supervision
The Koori Youth Justice Program requires employer organisations to offer regular and ongoing supervision to the program workers. This is seen as offering professional support and ensuring best possible outcomes for Koori Youth Justice Program workers and Young Aboriginal people. It is also essential that employer organisations adhere to codes of conduct and ethical standards to ensure that work boundaries are established and that the health and wellbeing of the Koori Youth Justice Program worker is a priority.

Koori Youth Justice Program workers are expected to attend case management supervision with youth justice when providing case management support to statutory youth justice clients. The Koori Youth Justice Program would expect that when the Department of Human Services is providing supervision to a program worker that the supervisor would have undertaken cultural awareness training and be sensitive to Aboriginal cultural issues. Koori Youth Justice Program workers are expected to attend regular supervision to be initiated by the employer organisation.

It is the employer organisation’s responsibility to ensure that Koori Youth Justice Program workers are not isolated in their role and that they are part of a team who meet regularly within the employer organisation to discuss issues that impact on Young Aboriginal people.

See attachment 3 for an example of a ‘Framework for Supervision’.
Worker wellbeing and safety

Koori Youth Justice Program workers are discouraged from placing themselves in risky situations and it is the employer organisation’s responsibility to ensure that the health and wellbeing of the program worker is not placed at risk by undue stress and workload.

The employer organisation will provide, as far as is practicable, a safe and healthy workplace for employees, clients, contactors and visitors. Employer obligations in the Occupational Health and Safety Act and other relevant occupational health and safety regulations are the basis on which employers build health, safety and wellbeing management practice.

It is the responsibility of the Department of Human Services to ensure that all Koori Youth Justice Program workers have the opportunity to attend bi-monthly meetings to enable them to debrief, attend ongoing training sessions, network and exchange information with all Koori Youth Justice Program participants.
Attachment 1: Job description—custodial sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job information</th>
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<td>Youth Justice Custodial Services / North &amp; West Metropolitan Region / Parkville Youth Residential Centre</td>
</tr>
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<td>Contact for information:</td>
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Core Departmental values

**Professional Integrity:** We treat all people with dignity and respect

**Quality:** We always strive to do our best and improve the way we do things

**Collaborative Relationships:** We work together to achieve better results

**Responsibility:** We commit to the actions we take to achieve the best possible outcomes for our clients

**Client Focus:** We work towards improving the health and well being of our clients and community

- The Department of Human Services values diversity, is an Equal Opportunity Employer and encourages applications from Indigenous people
- The Department of Human Services requires compliance with the Victorian Public Service Code of Conduct.
Work environment:
Victoria has a dual track system which provides residential custodial care for children and young people aged between 10 and 20 years who are on remand or sentence from either the Children’s or Adult courts. Parkville Youth Residential Centre (PYRC) is the sole facility providing custodial accommodation for girls and young women aged 10 to 20 years who have been sentenced by either the Children or an adult court. The centre also accommodates boys aged 10 to 14 years on remand or sentenced by the Children’s Court to a youth residential order. PYRC is located in the inner North Melbourne suburb of Parkville, approximately 5 kilometres from the central business district.

Purpose of the job:
The primary responsibility of the Koori Support worker is to develop a culturally responsive and competent best practice model for working with Young Aboriginal people that will provide better outcomes, and assist in addressing the overrepresentation of Young Aboriginal people on the Youth Justice system.

Key objectives:
- Provide and facilitate immediate and ongoing support for all Aboriginal children and young people in custody at PYRC.
- Provide a service sensitive to issues of Indigenous culture and heritage, disability, gender and age.
- Assess the needs of young Aboriginal people and identify issues either on an individual or collective basis.
- Assist in the development and provision of culturally appropriate rehabilitation programs for young Aboriginal people.
- Support a best practice model for centre staff working with young Aboriginal people in custody.
- Provide expert advice clearly targeting the needs of young Aboriginal people when developing individual client service plans.
- Develop networks and liaise with internal and external agencies and professionals to ensure Aboriginal children and young people have access to culturally supportive and responsive services, particularly when exiting custodial care.
- Participate in the planning, operation and evaluation of Youth Justice policies, programs and practices relating to this target group.
- Attend Statewide support meetings with workers who resource Victorian Aboriginal Communities.
- Provide advice in relation to bail, including alternative forms of accommodation, support and program availability.
- Provide support to PYRC and liaise with Aboriginal communities in regard to the centre’s Indigenous garden ‘Ngarra-Jarra’ and associated culturally specific programs.
- Cooperate with managers in consultative processes that improve health and safety by using the relevant tools and systems, such as procedures, guidelines and policies.
- Observe the safe working practices you have been trained in, and as far as you are able, protect your own and others’ health and safety.

**Selection capabilities:**
Selection will be based on the skills, knowledge and personal attributes that are required for achieving the key objectives listed above. Demonstrated conduct in line with departmental values, past performance and the potential for future development will also be considered.

**Mandatory qualifications:**
- Certificate IV in Community Services (Youth Work) or other equivalent qualification.

**Capabilities:**
1. Ability to work, motivate, support and communicate with young Aboriginal people.
2. Demonstrated ability and experience in assessment, intervention, and case management of young offenders. Demonstrated ability to write high quality reports.
3. Highly developed interpersonal and communication skills, including the ability to advise and negotiate effectively with a range of individuals, community sector, government and nongovernmental agencies and ethnic communities.
4. Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of legislation, trends and developments relevant to the Youth and Adult Justice systems.
5. Maintain consistent Statewide statistics and provide and analyse data and provide regular feedback to management regarding the trends and patterns.
6. Well-developed organisational skills, including the ability to plan and manage an effective work program.

**Attributes:**
- Building productive networks: are able to establish and maintain relationships with people at all levels, promote harmony and consensus through diplomatic handling of disagreements, are able to forge useful partnerships with people across business areas, functions and organisations.
- Flexibility: are adaptable, receptive to new ideas, respond and adjust easily to changing work demands and circumstances.
- Team Work: co-operate well and work well with others in the pursuit of team goals, share information, support others, show consideration, concern and respect for others feelings and ideas.

**Other relevant information:**

**Requirements**
- If you are successful in this job application and you are not currently a Department of Human Services employee, you will be required to fill out a Pre-existing Injury/Disease Declaration Form.
- You may/will be required to undergo a Pre-employment medical check.
- You must undergo a Criminal Records Check.
- You must have current Working With Children Check recitation.
• This job will be initially located at Parkville Youth Residential Centre, 930 Park Street, Parkville

• The department is committed to Wur-cum barra, the Victorian Government Indigenous Employment Strategy and has an internal Indigenous Staff Support Network.

**Benefits**

• Vic Super (superannuation scheme) 9% employer contribution, with employee salary sacrifice options.

• Novated Leasing available.

• Commuter Club – direct salary deduction for annual rail ticket at a discounted rate.

• Social Club – discounted movie and theatre tickets as well as other leisure activities.

• VPS Health Insurance Plan – direct salary deduction.

• Partially paid Study Leave and practical assistance available for approved courses.

• Departmental staff private mobile plan.

• Confidential, responsive counselling (Employee Assistance Program) available for time when personal and work related issued may affect your ability to perform at work.

• Flexible working arrangement options.

**How to apply:**

Your application should include:

• A completed ‘Application for Employment Form’ available from [www.dhs.vic.gov.au](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au). **Note:** Please ensure all sections are completed.

• A statement addressing each ‘Selection Capability’ clearly demonstrating your ability to meet the ‘Key Objectives’ of the role. **Note:** Read the Key Objectives carefully so you have a good understanding of what is required and remember to address what skills, knowledge and attributes you have.

• General resume.

• Copies of any formal qualifications. **Note:** Where a ‘Mandatory Qualification’ is required, ensure you complete the necessary section on your Application Form and enter year completed. If emailing your application, hard copies of your qualifications will need to be produced at interview.

• 2 nominated referees, including your current supervisor if you are currently working

• Indigenous applicants are invited to contact Co-ordinator, Indigenous Recruitment and Career Development for advice and support with your application.
Attachment 2: Job description—community sample

From the Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-operative

Position Title: Koori Youth Justice Worker

Location:

Responsible to:

Classification and Award: Based on Social and Community Services Award

Hours: Full time

Summary of position:

The position seeks to reduce the numbers of young Kooris in (location) coming into contact with the criminal justice system as a result of criminal activities. The target group consists of young Koori males and females aged 10 to 20 years who are subject to Children’s Court Youth Justice orders, adult Court Youth Justice orders or are who are at risk of being placed on Youth Justice orders.

1. Duties

1.1 Support and supervise Koori youth on Youth Justice orders

1.2 In conjunction with the local community, identify issues contributing to offending by Koori youth

1.3 Develop and implement a range of programs and activities for Koori youth

1.4 Provide advice to courts in regard to Koori youth attending the program

1.5 Identify Koori youth at risk of entering the criminal justice system and develop programs and support services for these young people

1.6 Liaise with and provide reports to the (name of employing Agency) and the Department of Human Services Youth Justice Unit

1.7 Liaise with Koori support services, Police, Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service, Koori HPOs, Community Justice Panels and other youth services

2: Key selection criteria

2.1 Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of local Aboriginal community

2.2 Well developed communication skills especially in regards to Koori young people

2.3 Capacity to develop and operate programs for young people
2.4 Understanding of issues contributing to young people offending
2.5 Ability to establish priorities and work with limited supervision
2.6 Understanding of government and non-government departments involved in Youth justice system

3: Other relevant information

3.1 Current Victorian drivers licence necessary.
3.2 After hours work may be required.
3.3 A Police check is required.
3.4 You must have current Working with children check recitation.
3.5 While the position is based at (location), the Koori Youth Justice worker may spend several days per week working with the Youth Justice Team at the Department of Human Services Unit office.

Applications in writing to:

Name and address:
Community example - Koori Youth Justice Program

Includes minimum standards and agreed monitoring requirements between Youth Justice and agency

1. Allocation

- Preliminary intake assessment to be completed by a Youth Justice staff member within 2 days of court.
- The Youth Justice Team Leader to allocate all Koori clients. The Youth Justice Team Leader will decide on the basis of the intake and any other available information if the client requires dual allocation to Youth Justice and Koori Youth Justice Worker or sole allocation to the Koori Youth Justice Worker (only if under agency or the Department of Human Services supervision). Discussion with Koori Youth Justice Worker supervisor will also inform decision of allocation.
- All high-risk young people will be allocated to Youth Justice staff member with support from the Koori Youth Justice Worker as negotiated via the client service planning process.

2. Assessments and client service plan

- The Youth Justice Team Leader will allocate completion of the Client Assessment Plan to the Youth Justice staff member with Koori portfolio who will complete the Client Assessment Plan with the input from the Koori Youth Justice Worker. If this is not possible then the Youth Justice team leader will allocate the Client Assessment Plan to another Youth Justice staff member who will complete Client Assessment Plan with input from the Koori Youth Justice Worker.
- The Koori Youth Justice Worker will complete the Aboriginal Cultural Support Plan in consultation with the allocated Youth Justice worker. The Aboriginal Cultural Support Plan will form a significant part of the Client Service Plan.
- For fine conversions Youth Justice will complete Youth Supervision Order/ Fine conversion and Client Assessment Plan paperwork unless negotiated otherwise.
- All client service plans are to be endorsed by the Youth Justice Team Leader

3. Ongoing supervision

- Youth Justice cannot delegate statutory responsibilities and duty of care requirements to other agencies so regular meetings are required to monitor progress of service delivery.
- Meetings are to be held at a minimum of monthly, the frequency to be determined by ongoing risk assessment.
- If the case is allocated to both Youth Justice and Koori Youth Justice worker the meeting will usually involve the Koori Youth Justice Worker and the Youth Justice staff member and both their supervisors.
Meetings are to provide a forum for ongoing client management, role clarification and identification of any program issues.

4. **Reviews of client service plans**
   - Regular review dates to be set by Youth Justice as per program standards.
   - On negotiation Reviews may be conducted by agency with sign off by Youth Justice team leader. If Youth Justice does review the Koori Youth Justice Worker is to be involved in the review however if not directly supervising the young person this will be in the capacity of secondary consultation.
   - Clients will be involved in reviews throughout the course of the order.
   - Review outcomes to be completed on pro forma provided.

5. **File notes**
   - Koori Youth Justice Worker to ensure file notes are submitted to Youth Justice at least fortnightly.
   - Information required re dates of contact, type of contact, key issues and actions.

6. **Contact sheet**
   - Youth Justice to provide contact sheet pro forma to Koori Youth Justice Worker.
   - Koori Youth Justice Worker to keep records of contacts, missed appointments etc – to be completed ongoing.
   - To be returned to Youth Justice worker at reviews and placed in file – new sheet to then commence.

7. **Critical points when contact needs to be made with Youth Justice Immediately**
   - Re offending – this includes instances where the client is charged or questioned in relation to offences.
   - Relocation - young person plans to move from the local area. Youth Justice with Koori Youth Justice Worker need to make an assessment of options and be responsible for transfer and ensure supports/supervision in new location. Written summary of key issues to date and actions/ recommendations would be required to accompany file on transfer.
   - Interstate travel- if young person wishes to travel interstate, even for a short period this requires a letter of permission from Youth Justice that young person takes with them.
   - Critical incidents as per guidelines.
   - Missed appointments - Young person misses more than two appointments.
8. **Provision of reports for court**
   - Youth Justice to complete all court reports with input from the Koori Youth Justice Worker.
   - Youth Justice Team Leader to sign off any written information to be submitted to the Court.
   - Koori Youth Justice Worker to be available to Children Court hearings for general support and advice to Koori young people, their families and the Court.
   - Koori Youth Justice Worker cannot make recommendations regarding dispositions to Court without prior discussion with Youth Justice.

9. **Professional supervision requirements**
   - Koori Youth Justice Worker are to receive at minimum fortnightly supervision that should be recorded in supervision notes. This provides evidence of shared decision making if critical incident occurs.

10. **Data gathering requirements**
    - Monthly data reports (on pro-forma provided) are to be provided by agency to Manager Youth Justice Unit by 15th on the follow month.
    - The Department of Human Services to initiate quarterly meetings with program supervisors to review program progress and any issues. Koori Youth Justice Worker will have provided information for monthly report to supervisor prior to meeting for consideration.
    - Youth Justice team leaders to keep monthly statistics re which young people are receiving services from Koori Youth Justice program, which are not and why.
    - Other data collection as required.
Hume Region – framework for supervision

Background
The Supervision Framework has been developed to establish minimum standards for supervision to all Hume Region Staff. The framework is provided to assist in the implementation of providing appropriate supervision to staff. The framework is based on the view that supervision is a positive two way relationship that assists in managing the technical and complex tasks/aspects of a position, as well as ensuring that staff are motivated, recognised and valued for their work.

Aims
Supervision will directly benefit the employee, the organization and services to our clients. These benefits can be seen in the following aims:

- To provide professional and, where appropriate personal support, which will maintain and develop job satisfaction for staff;
- To reward and recognize work performed by staff;
- To discuss and plan the current and future career and professional development of staff;
- To encourage a culture of best practice and innovation;
- To provide direction and clarity on the work role and responsibilities of staff members;
- To identify, develop and review individual work plans;
- To provide constructive performance feedback on a regular basis;
- To ensure accountability to clients through departmental policy, professional standards and ethics.

Principles
The key principles for supervision include:

- Supervision for staff will be uninterrupted and effective, which considers individual differences;
- Supervision will be confidential and demonstrate professional respect;
Supervision will be based on mutually defined expectations and guidelines;
Supervision will be planned, formalised and regular;
Supervision will be based on clear and open communication;
Supervision will be a responsibility shared between supervisor and staff;
Supervision will be tailored to the needs, developmental stage and individual learning style of the staff.

Functions

1. **The everyday work**
   - All employees are aware of, and adhere to the policies and procedures that assist in carrying out their day-to-day work.
   - Work is prioritised and allocated, with workloads being managed appropriately.
   - Clear work plans will be established for all staff. These work plans will include how the staff member can determine the effectiveness of their work.
   - Supervisors will allocate tasks to staff in a fair and equitable manner.

2. **The professional development of all employees**
   - The skills, knowledge, and experience of staff will be recognised and utilised.
   - Staff will be assisted in planning their professional development and future career.
   - Individual differences, needs and learning styles of staff will be incorporated into supervision.

3. **The personal support of all employees**
   - Supervisors will discuss and negotiate with staff the strategies and resources they require to enable them to do their job.
   - Support will be provided by the Supervisor to assist staff in developing strategies to improve their job satisfaction.
   - Supervisors will acknowledge the complex nature of the work, which can impact on the well being of staff.
   - Where appropriate staff will be encouraged to seek support services, e.g. CISM, EAP.

4. **Mediation**
   - Supervisors will identify and address issues.
Supervisor will regularly inform their line manager of key issues identified by staff.
Supervisors will advocate the needs of the department to staff.
Supervisors will be responsible to counsel staff on their performance.
Programs may want to establish a number of supervision formats that will assist in meeting the functions of supervision.

Formats for supervision
Supervision can be provided in a number of ways. Programs will have the responsibility to choose the most appropriate format to meet the needs of staff and the program:

- team meetings
- group sessions
- self-assessments
- peer groups
- cross program meetings.

Staff must receive regular, formal one to one supervision.
Attachment 4: Aboriginal cultural support plan—template

Aboriginal cultural support plan

Date: ---------------------------------------------------------------------------------

1. Young person’s details
Name: Male □ Female □ Date of Birth: Age:
Address prior to admission:
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------

2. Which Aboriginal community group does the young person identify with and belong to?
□ VIC □ NSW □ QLD □ TAS □ ACT □ NT
□ SA □ WA □ TSI

---------------------------------------------------------------------------------
Please specify eg: Sydney: Redfern, Melbourne, Dandenong

3. Aboriginal tribal group/family group (origin):
Is mother Aboriginal? Yes □ No □

Mother’s family (family name)

---------------------------------------------------------------------------------
Mother’s traditional group eg: Yorta Yorta
Is father Aboriginal? □ Yes □ No □

Father’s family (family name)

Father’s traditional group eg: Yorta Yorta

4. Contacts to support cultural links

Elder/significant person/extended family support

- Name:
  
  Contact:
  
  Relationship:
  
  □ Is prepared to provide support
  □ Willing to provide support when they can
  □ Would like to provide support but will experience difficulties

- Name:
  
  Contact:
  
  Relationship:
  
  □ Is prepared to provide support
  □ Willing to provide support when they can
  □ Would like to provide support but will experience difficulties
• Name:
  Contact:

  Relationship:
  □ Is prepared to provide support
  □ Willing to provide support when they can
  □ Would like to provide support but will experience difficulties

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• Name:
  Contact:

  Relationship:
  □ Is prepared to provide support
  □ Willing to provide support when they can
  □ Would like to provide support but will experience difficulties

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5. Contact plan for Aboriginal services

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Koori Youth Justice Program
Best practice guidelines
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6. Maintaining ongoing cultural links with the young person’s Aboriginal community.

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<th>Task</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timelines</th>
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7. Significant family information
*You may construct all or only one of the following; genogram, kinship circles or a brief report*