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# **Better Strategies to Respond to Youth Issues**

## **in Alice Springs**

### **Youth Sector Meeting (Non-Government agencies)**

#### **14 March 2011**

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#### **Introduction**

On 14 March 2011, representatives of non-Government agencies who deliver services to young people in Alice Springs attended a workshop facilitated by Penny Drysdale (consultant) funded by the Alice Springs Youth Hub to identify a shared view on the best way to respond to youth issues in Alice Springs.

The workshop began by brainstorming the question of '*What do we want for the young people of Alice Springs?*' and identifying a number of principles and assumptions which we believe underpin the most effective approaches to responding to young people. Summary of those conversations can be seen in Appendix 1 and 2 of this document.

It is recognised that the voices of the people who would be impacted by these strategies, in particular young people and Aboriginal community members, have not been captured in this process.

A key area for the youth sector to focus on therefore, is the inherent challenges of working in a cross cultural environment and the issue of how Aboriginal young people from urban, remote and town camp communities participate in activities and access public space in Alice Springs. It is critical then, that youth focused community development programs ensure that there is room for strong local Aboriginal input into the decision making process.

Furthermore the youth sector must develop meaningful strategies in terms of engaging Aboriginal community members as local consultants to ensure membership on key youth specific committees. The importance of building personalised and trusting relationships with young people and families to effectively address the ongoing issue for young people in Alice Springs relies on engaging in consistent, face to face and respectful consultation with Aboriginal community members.

It is hoped that the strategies outlined in this paper can be used as a starting point to openly and meaningfully engage with these groups, as we know from experience that only through truly inclusive approaches is lasting community change achieved. Below is a summary of the proposals developed from the workshop. It is hoped that this document will contribute to the current debate in Alice Springs about how best to respond to young people and to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

## **Proposals**

### **Summary of proposals:**

Proposal 1: Intensive case management and family support for at risk young people and their families

Proposal 2: Develop smarter ways of ensuring offenders take responsibility for their offending

Proposal 3: Build a culture of community service amongst young people in Alice Springs

Proposal 4: A single, sustainable calendar of structured activities for young people in Alice Springs all year round

Proposal 5: Strengthen youth camps by implementing recommendations of the recent evaluation

Proposal 6: Improve bail support and accommodation

Proposal 7: Better strategies to 'engage' young people in education and training

Proposal 8: Better accommodation options for young people

Proposal 9: Increase youth-specific alcohol and drug treatment and long term rehabilitation

Proposal 10: Improve youth-specific health services and programs

Proposal 11: Improve transport options for young people

Proposal 12: Improve support for ageing carers of young people and supports for young people with challenging behaviours.

## **Proposals in detail**

### **Proposal 1: Intensive case management and family support for at risk young people and their families**

Young people's lives are linked with what is happening in their families and communities. Responses to young people at risk will be more effective if their families are engaged and supported in finding solutions.

This proposal involves the provision of intensive case management and family support for young people and their families. It will be a voluntary early intervention program in that it will help prevent young people from entering the child protection and criminal justice systems and it will reduce the number of families who need family responsibility agreements/orders. It will help families provide an environment for young people to have positive futures.

There will be a number of pathways into this program, for example, through the Youth Hub, through youth services, through Centrelink, police and other agencies.

The provision of intensive support and case management will be provided a team of Indigenous Family Support Worker trained in youth work and a social worker. It will be reliant on the positive relationship formed between the workers and the young person and their family.

This program will build on a number of good but under-resourced programs already in operation in Alice Springs (for example, the Congress Targeted Family Support Service) and programs that have proved successful in WA and NSW.

What is needed to make a real difference in the lives of these young people is case management services including Multisystemic Therapy for those with the highest needs.

Multisystemic Therapy (MST) (Henggeler et al 2009, Day et al 2010) is an intensive family-and community-based treatment program that focuses on the entire world of chronic and violent juvenile offenders — their homes and families, schools and teachers, neighbourhoods and friends. MST works with the toughest offenders. They are adolescents, male and female, between the ages of 12 and 17 who have very long arrest histories

- MST clinicians go to where the child is and are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- They work intensively with parents and caregivers to put them in control
- The therapist works with the caregivers to keep the adolescent focused on school and gaining job skills
- The therapist and caregivers introduce the youth to sports and recreational activities as an alternative to hanging out

MST has been proven to work and produce positive results with the toughest kids. It blends the best clinical treatments—cognitive behavioural therapy, behaviour management training, family therapies and community psychology to reach this population.

After 30 years of research and 18 studies, MST repeatedly has been shown to:

- Keep kids in their home, reducing out-of-home placements up to 50 percent
- Keep kids in school
- Keep kids out of trouble, reducing re-arrest rates up to 70 percent
- Improve family relations and functioning
- Decrease adolescent psychiatric symptoms
- Decrease adolescent drug and alcohol use

Evidence has shown that this type of approach will not be effective unless it is sufficiently resourced to enable it to work quite intensively and long-term with young people and their families. However, it has the potential to make considerable savings for government by saving of police, court, corrections, child protection resources and a general reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour. It also has capacity to deal with trauma and violence within families to stop that cycle continuing. It is recommended that the program be independently evaluated and a cost-benefit analysis be undertaken.

Critical considerations for implementation include:

- that the work with young people and families be intensive and long term and based on a positive therapeutic relationship which takes trust and time
- the program should be delivered by agencies with a track record and with an emphasis on co-ordination and collaboration across agencies
- that the workers be qualified and experienced with access to professional development and regular professional supervision (recruitment and retention of staff is critical)
- that there is community ownership of the program in both the development and ongoing implementation phase through appropriate consultation and governance models involving Indigenous leaders and young people.

## **Proposal 2: Developing smarter ways of ensuring young people who offend take responsibility for their offending**

When someone commits a criminal offence it is important that he or she take responsibility for that offending. Restorative and therapeutic justice techniques can help ensure that this occurs and there are a number of different models for how these approaches can work in practice.

There is a need to strengthen and expand the options for restorative justice available for young people in the Northern Territory when they commit an offence.

If implemented effectively, the benefits of restorative and therapeutic justice approaches include:

- they can reduce reoffending and re-entry to the criminal justice system and so are cost effective
- by reducing reoffending they prevent crime and make the community safer
- they allow for the underlying causes of the offending to be addressed and help the offender to change their behaviour and lead a productive life
- they give the victim a voice and an opportunity to communicate directly to the offender how the crime impacted on them (victims often say this human element is missing from the criminal justice system).

### Example Model: Community Justice Group Conferencing

Brosnan Youth Services (Victoria) have run a program known as Community Justice Group Conferencing. The aim is to bring together the young person who has offended, their family, community members and the victim of the crime in order to discuss ways for the young person to make amends for the harm done by the current offending behaviour. It provides an alternative pre-sentencing option with the aim of diverting young people from further or more serious offending.

A Group Conference provides a safe environment for all people affected by an offence to come together and:

- talk about what happened
- discuss how they were affected
- decide how to make things better

The young person is provided with an opportunity to apologise. The young person, and their supports, prepare a proposed plan about what should happen to make amends for some of the harm to the victim and to prevent further offending.

The Brosnan program is for young people aged between 10 and 18 years, who have:

- Pleaded guilty or have been found guilty of offences that do *not* include homicide, manslaughter, sex offences or serious crimes of violence; and
- Committed offences serious enough to warrant a probation or youth supervision order to be considered by the court; and
- Consented to participate; and
- Been assessed as suitable by a Department of Human Services Youth Justice Officer.

This program was evaluated by KPMG in 2010 and it was found that the experience of Conferencing has a strong and lasting effect. The differential effect of Conferencing and of other interventions is clear after one year, and even clearer after two years. While 57% of young people involved in other interventions had not reoffended after two years, over 80% of young people involved in a Conference had not reoffended, more than *halving rates of reoffending*. The KPMG evaluation also noted the importance to the program of its highly skilled and competent convenors.

Further information, particularly around costing, can be made available. A number of programs following the same principles have been employed in other Australian states, to great success.

#### **Action required:**

- An appropriate victim offender conferencing program which is based on the Brosnan model to be funded in Alice Springs.
- The implementation of such a program would enable section 84 of the youth justice act to commence, which in turn will provide a viable pre-sentence option to the Court

Restorative justice approaches are potentially applicable in a wide range of other settings and can help young people take responsibility for behaviour which has impacted negatively on other people. Restorative justice practitioners require special skills and training and this role should not be left to police who are not trained in

that approach. Information and education should be made available to young people, schools and a wide range of services that may benefit from this approach. One example would be using restorative justice approaches in relation to the high number of driving offences for which young people in Alice Springs are charged.

### **Proposal 3: Build a culture of community service amongst young people in Alice Springs**

There is a significant focus in recent times on what young people do wrong. However, it is important that the community recognises that young people can and do make a valuable contribution to the community. Young people also need to feel useful and a sense of competence.

Strategies which provide an opportunity for young people to volunteer on projects that benefit the community and learn new skills and be recognised for their competence in the process can make an important contribution to the Alice Springs community. There is a need to ensure that research is conducted to gather evidence on what types of projects are successful in other jurisdiction with a similar demographic to Alice Springs.

Such initiatives form part of the Mt Theo Jaru Pirrjirdi (Strong Voices) program, which is a youth development and leadership program, as well as an aftercare program for 'at risk' youth. It works hand in hand with the Warra-Warra Kanyi Counselling and Mentoring Service to develop strong, empowered, skilled and dedicated young leaders for the community of Yuendumu. The Jaru Pirrjirdi Program creates meaningful and positive futures for young adults aged 16-25, as distinct from the 'diversionary' aims of the Youth Program. The program involves a wide range of activities including:

- Serving as youth workers for Yuendumu Youth Program
- Education (Jaru Night Club)
- Culture
- Project work eg: film making
- Mentoring

#### Future Pathways

The benefits of youth participatory projects would the community to focus on the following:

- Important community projects get completed
- Young people learn skills and build relationships with their supervisors and other community members to achieve a common goal
- Young people feel a sense of satisfaction of a job well done and feel useful and competent
- Young people are recognised for the positive contribution they make to the community
- This creates opportunities for young people that are genuinely beneficial and meaningful and help them get ready for work
- Young people can be involved in planning and organising the work and have a greater voice in the community.

Funding is required for:

- A manager to establish, co-ordinate and monitor this program
- Supervisors based in a range of organisations
- Funding for equipment and supplies needed to undertake the projects
- Transport, expenses, clothing for young people who participate

Examples of potential projects could focus on:

- Graffiti removal
- Building, repairs and maintenance
- Gardening
- Business skills
- Event management – including youth events
- Social enterprise
- Linking with training providers to attain credit for projects

#### **Proposal 4: A single, sustainable calendar of structured activities for young people in Alice Springs all year round**

Alice Springs already has a calendar of activities for school holiday periods prepared jointly by relevant agencies working co-operatively. Police, youth agencies, the council, arts organisations and others come together to prepare the calendar and ensure that activities are co-ordinated and scheduled to complement each other.

The difficulty is that this calendar currently only operates in school holidays and many of the activities are not fully funded or sustainable. Many organisations are stretched to deliver what they currently provide and do not have the staff or resources to expand the content of the program in terms of providing more interesting, meaningful options or to expand the reach of the program so more young people benefit. There must also be greater resources devoted to bringing young people into the program.

This proposal involves funding the development of a single sustainable calendar of activities that is bigger, better and more attractive to young people, and in which young people are more involved in planning, shaping the helping to deliver the activities that are provided. This proactive role will contribute to young people's sense of usefulness and competence in the community.

Like the current school holiday calendar it is envisaged that this calendar would be developed jointly across a range of existing agencies in Alice Springs with the involvement of young people.

The funding is needed for the following elements:

- a full time co-ordinator of the calendar, based at the Youth Hub
- resources for agencies delivering activities to cover
  - staff time
  - expenses associated with running the activities
  - transport costs
- upgrade of existing facilities to ensure they are suitable and safe for the provision of activities to young people

- brokerage funding to assist young people with special interests to follow more unique passions and interests
- marketing and communications to ensure young people and their families are aware of the activities.

Co-ordination of the all the activities across agencies and the proactive involvement of young people in planning, shaping and delivering the activities is crucial to the success of this initiative. Young people are not just passive recipients of these programs but play a role in running them and making them work. The emphasis is on young people getting involved in an ongoing way rather than as a series of one-off activities that are not linked.

### **Proposal 5: Strengthen youth camps by implementing recommendations of the recent evaluation**

Youth camps in the Northern Territory are a unique way of engaging disadvantaged young people. Youth camps have recently being evaluated [by Ivan Raymond and Sean Lappin, (from 'Connected Self') Stakeholder Briefing - Summary) and been found to have had an impact on their target audience. The evaluation has provided strong support that individual youth camps have the capacity to engage youth-at-risk (including Aboriginal young people) who are at high risk of future or offending behaviour, within a therapeutically conducive environment that translates to both attitudinal and behavioural outcomes, at least in the short term.

It is proposed that youth camps be strengthened by implementing the recommendations of the evaluation, which are due to be released by the Department of Children and Families in the near future. We are also aware that the Youth Justice Advisory Committee will be endorsing the recommendations made in that report.

The recent evaluation drew the following conclusions about the youth camps

- The replication of the analysis with a suitably matched control group
- A robust evaluation methodology should be embedded within the future funding and application of the youth camp model
- It is only through the provision of large-scale, longitudinal (and therefore expensive) and multifactorial research that the direct impact of youth camp interventions, as it relates to other interventions, can be adequately quantified
- The results provide optimism for the efficacy of the youth camp model, in particular for *high risk* young people – as well as well as the efficacy of the broader NT Justice Strategy, and its different components, with the youth camps being one component of that strategy

In addition the Evaluation noted that program outcomes can be maximised if the following occurs:

- The providers develop conceptual models to guide their practice which examines program inputs (intervention processes) as it related to purported outcomes (e.g. develop a clear "program logic").
- Cognitive-behavioural models (e.g., problem solving skills training, anger management training) guide the skill-development intervention process;

- A participant's skill and reflective learning occurs intensively enough, and for long enough, to support the young persons' capacity to observe the skill, practice the skill, receive adult feedback on the skill and then rehearse the skill to the point of consolidation:
- The skill, attitudinal and insight outcomes are embedded within the young person's after program environment, and supported through multi-systemic interventions.

To facilitate better integration of services, matching of young people and interventions, and future evaluation, it is suggested that strong consideration be given to dividing the current youth camp model into two separate models of intervention which reflect the length of the intervention – i.e. Therapeutic Camp Programs (TCP) and Therapeutic Residential Programs (TRP)

The authors of the evaluation also made the comment that future work should focus on the development of strong follow up support to assist in maintaining change.

While the above evaluated camps have been run as part of the NT Justice Strategy, at the same time other Youth Camps have been in existence, and have been evaluated previously, such as Bushmob's Adventure Therapy Camps (Horse/culture Treks evaluated in 2009/2010),. Further programs run by other agencies and remote communities include Mt Theo/Barry Abbotts and other Oustation programs. It would be helpful to have a matrix of what is available and who funds them – to ensure that all stakeholders have a clear picture of all of the programs happening in this area.

### **Proposal 6: Improve bail support and accommodation**

To effectively prevent crime in the long term it is necessary to break the cycle of reoffending that may occur. Interventions which help young people charged or convicted of a crime to get their lives back on track (by providing accommodation, support, employment, education, behaviour change) therefore play a critical role in reducing the risk of further offending by that young person.

Programs which help young people get their lives back on track make the whole community safer. They are not soft options but smart and cost-effective ways of preventing reoffending. If we don't address the underlying causes of crime reoffending is likely to occur.

The proposed review of the youth justice is likely to recommend changes to improve bail support and accommodation. It is proposed that this be given priority as a means of helping reduce reoffending and helping young people get their lives back on track.

#### *Example Model: Youth Bail Accommodation and Support Service*

The Youth Bail Accommodation and Support Service (YBASS) in Queensland provides an intensive bail support program for young people while they are on bail. YBASS targets young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and provides referrals and financial support for the young person to secure appropriate accommodation. This program works on a brokerage style funding model, giving it the flexibility to respond to individual needs and requirements. This program has

been evaluated and has demonstrated success in diverting a significant number of young people from remand. Data shows that between 2004 – 2008, only 16% of participants breached bail during this time, and 84% had accommodation needs met by YBASS.

**What it is:**

- Provides accommodation support to young people on bail
- Provides support directly or indirectly related to accommodation stability
- Does not directly provide accommodation
- Does not deal directly with offending behaviour

**Success factors:**

- Voluntary involvement – improves engagement of young people
- Two worker staffing model – complementary skills, age and experience – allows for effective engagement with young people and their families
- Not a crisis service – uses planned, case management approach
- Dedicated brokerage budget that can be used in to enable a flexible individualised response to of young people
- Reputation for quality service delivery
- Positive sector relationships – Gov't staff, legal professionals, youth accommodation services

**Funding is required for:**

- Two full-time qualified youth workers to case manage participants
- Administrative resources to support program model
- Dedicated brokerage budget to respond appropriately to participant needs

Further information, particularly around costing, can be made available.

**Other Action required:**

A number of other key areas and proposals were identified as essential for addressing youth issues in Alice Springs, but will require further work and engagement with other stakeholders to develop specific concrete solutions:

**Proposal 7: Better strategies to 'engage' young people in education and training** - A focus on reducing truancy and improving school attendance is not enough. There needs to be an emphasis on how to 'engage' disengaged young people.

**Proposal 8: Better accommodation options for young people -**

Having safe, appropriate housing with their families or after they leave home is critical to young people's sense of security and well-being. Many young people are out and about at unusual hours due to over-crowding, family violence, alcohol use and other challenges at their place of residence.

**Proposal 9: Increase youth-specific alcohol and drug treatment and long term rehabilitation** - Evidence suggests that many young people in the criminal justice system have never had access to appropriate alcohol and drug treatment programs. It is critical that young people with alcohol and drug problems have access to treatment and rehabilitation options that focus on young people's unique needs and supports young people to re-engage with life and learn new life skills.

Recent evaluations of AOD services have taken place such as the NTG AOD Audits, and NTG Review of AOD Services, and Bushmob's AOD National Minimum Data Set Reporting. The NTG Review of AOD Services recommended the Bushmob service (which provides an AOD residential service and adventure therapy) be further supported and expanded. We therefore welcome the additional funding for the Bushmob expansion from 5 to 20 beds at old C.A.T. facility (Priest Street) which is in progress via funding from the NT and the Commonwealth Governments.

It is essential that all youth specific alcohol and drug service providers have built in monitoring and evaluation processes to ensure that key stakeholders (including client participation feedback) is analysed to assist in influencing the service practice and directions to meeting the needs of young people with AOD issues.

**Proposal 10: Improve youth-specific health services and programs –**

Innovative health programs for young people are needed which have a preventative and early intervention focus (i.e. looking at predispositions to various health problems and seeking to prevent them developing). In addition the need for an outreach component to health services has been raised. Further information can be made available on this issue.

**Proposal 11: Improve transport options for young people -** Young people are usually without an independent means of transport. A lack of public transport options therefore has a larger impact on young people than other members of the community. Extended public transport options are need, including services at night and on the weekends.

Other after hours transport options are critical and consideration should be given to expanding youth patrol services and staffing them with more Indigenous workers and qualified youth workers working side-by-side as a team to increase the capacity to proactively engage young people who may be having difficulties.

**Proposal 12: Improve support for ageing carers of young people and supports for young people with challenging behaviours.**

There are many grandparents and other carers in Alice Springs who care for young people with high support needs. The task of managing children often becomes increasingly complex and challenging the older the children get. Many carers are aging and under significant pressure and have few options for respite care and assistance.

The Alice Springs Transformation Plan Family Support Services Action Group conducted a survey to collect data on issues with regards to the care of Indigenous children by ageing carers. This survey of 59 carers, caring for a total of 138 children, revealed that the need for further respite care, other support services, case management and transport was an issue for the overwhelming majority of ageing carers, to help address issues which include ongoing behavioural challenges, and physical and emotional abuse.

The expansion of support to carers and increased respite care options will significantly improve the lives of young people who have been placed with family members – whether formally through the Department of Families and Children or through informal channels.

In addition, there are calls to further support the current pilot trial involving NT Aged & Disability, Adult Guardianship and Bushmob with Individual Support Program (ISP) support of clients with high behavioural needs client (generally in the 16-25 year age bracket). There are a growing number of young people with such needs, and increasing demand for placement of these YP. This kind of support allows agencies to work long term with challenging clients who have been causing significant problems in the community, and assist them to access a range of services. Consideration should be given to further supporting this type of approach

## **Conclusion**

The above proposals, if funded and supported, will significantly improve community safety and well-being in Alice Springs by engaging young people in the public life of the town more positively and helping young people and their families to find durable solutions to the problems they face.

However, addressing the youth issues in Alice Springs requires more than funding specific programs. It requires more than extra police on the streets or harsher sentences. It requires the community to rally behind young people. It requires the community to be vocal and active in supporting young people. It requires the community to seek out young people's contribution.

This requires moving beyond an approach in which young people are only visible when they are in trouble, when they fail to attend school, when they commit an offence, or when they are out on the streets in a group.

We want our young people to be 'engaged'. But engagement is a two-way process. We must make more space for young people in the public life of Alice Springs rather than trying to get them off the streets. Each person in Alice Springs must make an effort to engage young people if we want them to be engaged.

Youth issues should not be relegated to the youth sector, schools or police in isolation from the rest of the community. Every single person in Alice Springs must play a role if we are to make a real difference in young people's lives and give them hope for the future.

**The writing of this report has been by a combined effort of non-Government youth organisations and programs.**

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## **Appendix 1**

### **What do we want for young people in Alice Springs?**

Youth sector representatives articulated that there are a number of things which should be in place for all of the young people in Alice Springs. We recognise that many of these services or initiatives are already in place – but felt it was important to document some of the ideals which underpin broad service delivery to young people. (Refer to Matrix of Youth Services developed under the Youth Action Plan in 2009)

#### **Safety**

1. Young people to be safe and to feel safe - At home, on the streets, in their communities.

#### **Meaningful activities and opportunities to engage**

2. Young people to have access to a neutral, welcoming and safe space supervised by qualified youth workers with meaningful (and free) activities that they can get involved in
3. Young people to have real opportunities to follow their passions and interests, to learn, to succeed and to have their competence valued by others.
4. Young people to have more organised activities and to take responsibility for helping to plan, organise and run them.

#### **Ensure access for young people to receive help to deal with pain, trauma and problems**

5. Young people to get assistance to be able to deal with their pain.
6. Troubled young people and their families to have access to intensive support 24 hours a day.
7. Young people to have access to sustainable, ongoing programs that work.
8. For more professionals in town and people in positions of authority (e.g. police, courts, health, education, community services, youth services) to be skilled in engaging with young people in a meaningful way.

#### **Access to public transport**

9. Public transport in Alice Springs to be expanded to seven days a week and extended hours (because young people are more disadvantaged than other sectors of the community by a lack of public transport).

#### **Family and community support**

10. Young people to have support from their families and good, healthy relationships with their families.
11. For disengaged young people and families to have intensive individual support to help them reengage.
12. For families and communities to be empowered to support young people to go to school, to learn and to follow their interests and passions.
13. Young people to have safe appropriate housing.

#### **Opportunities to learn and work**

14. For education to be engaging and exciting for young people so that they want to learn.

15. Young people to have career support and opportunities to work in Alice Springs (and for employers to have proactive positive work experience and employment programs that give young people a fair go).

**To be treated fairly and without discrimination**

16. Young people to get a fair go.
17. Young people to live in a community in which there is a high level of respect, mutual learning and engagement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and where both Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge is valued.
18. Young people to live in a community in which there is no racial segregation regarding where people live, services provided and how they use public space.
19. Young people to live in a community where rules, laws and policies are applied equally and fairly to everyone and where there is equal access to services and life opportunities.

**To have a voice and make a contribution**

20. Young people to have a voice in the issues that affect them and for them to actively help solve community problems.
21. For community members and decision-makers to seek out young people's views on important decisions in the town and its organisations.
22. Young people to be treated with respect and to be valued and listened to.
23. Young people to make a contribution to the community and for that contribution to be acknowledged by the community.
24. Young people to feel a sense of belonging in the community and meaning in their lives.
25. For the Government to plan and consult with young people before funding new programs.

## Appendix 2

### Principles and assumptions

Youth services identified a number of principles and assumptions which we believe underpin the most effective approaches to responding to young people are:

1. **Safety and security** – Safety and security at home and in public spaces is fundamental to young people’s well-being and must be a key priority.
2. **Belonging** - Young people are part of the community, perhaps the heart of the community, and need to feel a sense of belonging.
3. **Usefulness, competence and meaningfulness** - Young people can and do make a positive meaningful contribution to the community and need more opportunities to be and feel useful and competent.
4. **Good relationships** – Good relationships are critical to young people’s lives. Young people need good relationships within and beyond their families. Building a positive relationship with young people (which takes time and trust) is fundamental to the success of any programs targeting young people.
5. **Complexity** - Responses to young people must acknowledge the complexity and uniqueness of young people’s lives in central Australia. Young people must navigate complex cultural, family and social issues and programs which ignore those elements are less likely to be successful.
6. **Beyond labelling and stereotypes** - Young people are individuals and need to be dealt with as such. Community attitudes and responses to young people must move beyond stereotypes (including racial stereotypes) and labelling.
7. **How we do things is as important as what we do** - Programs must be well-implemented by trained people who know what they are doing and who have good local knowledge and understand cultural issues.
8. **Young people deserve the best programs and services** - Programs targeting young people must have good governance and management and be based on evidence. They should be closely monitored and the agencies should be prepared to change what they do in response to the evidence, where necessary.

## Appendix 3

### Matrix of Youth Services developed under the Youth Action Plan in 2009 (refer to separate attachment)