

# Youth Justice Custodial workforce plan

The 2020-21 State Budget invests **\$7.006 million** in the Youth Justice workforce

Our vision for Youth Justice in Victoria is for a leading youth justice system that:

- reduces offending by children and young people and improves community safety
- works with others to provide genuine opportunities for children and young people to turn their lives around.

To achieve this we are focusing on four key reform directions:

1. Improving diversion and supporting early intervention and crime prevention.
2. Reducing reoffending and promoting community safety by supporting children and young people to turn their lives around.
3. Strengthening partnerships with children and young people, families and all services and professionals who support their rehabilitation and positive development.
4. Investing in a skilled, safe and stable Youth Justice system and safe systems of work.

This workforce plan supports these reform directions by providing a clear plan for how we will invest in the Youth Justice custodial workforce.

A capable and high performing workforce will mean that young people in Youth Justice are in the best position to turn their lives around and not reoffend.

We will recognise, value and invest in our workforce as the key drivers of change for children and young people. This workforce plan will comprehensively address each part of the employee life cycle to build a capable and high performing Youth Justice custodial workforce.



## Measuring Success:

**Attraction and foundational learning**  
Increase quality applications received for Youth Justice Workers

**Retention**  
Increase length of service

**Quality practice and skill development**  
80% attendance at professional development training

**OH&S**  
Decrease in Category 1 incidents, including assaults  
Decrease number of WorkSafe claims and staff on WorkCover  
Speedier resolution of OHS incidents reported in the Justice Incident Management System (JIMS)

## How will we work with staff to implement the plan?

- The plan is informed by consultations with custodial staff.
- We will work with staff so initiatives are implemented effectively, and to get their views on whether initiatives are having the right impact.
- Further staff consultations on progress will be held during 2021.

**Critical enabler**

- The workforce plan will build on and support critical operational reform projects, as captured in the 2021 Custodial Workplan.
- This includes key operational commitments such as the implementation of the communities in custody model, the Intensive Intervention Unit, and the fully structured day for young people.

# Youth Justice Custodial workforce plan

Skilled, safe  
and stable  
workforce



## Attraction and foundational learning

We will give all new and existing YJW1 staff the skills they need to work with young people by implementing a new Certificate IV in Youth Justice.

We will build a stable and permanent workforce base by reducing the use of agency staff in custody, and giving suitable and highly qualified agency staff the opportunity to transition to casual employment (with pathways to ongoing employment).

**We will recruit enough high quality staff by:**

- using cutting edge selection processes
- pro-actively targeting new talent pipelines

- using comprehensive attraction materials
- focussing on recruiting a diverse workforce.

**We will give greater work-life balance and improved career opportunities to youth justice workers by:**

- offering part-time shifts to eligible ongoing staff (where operationally feasible)
- transferring eligible and suitable casual staff to part time roles
- reviewing rosters to identify opportunities for shorter custodial shifts
- reviewing the classification structure over the life of the EBA to identify opportunities for improved career progression.

## Retention

We will recognise the hard work and dedication of DJCS employed staff in custody by paying them a \$900 bonus.

**We will regularly communicate with staff, including by:**

- holding regular town hall meetings in custody
- consulting with the Custodial Reform Committee on operational directions and reforms
- establishing a dedicated Cherry Creek consultation staff forum.

**We will improve working conditions by:**

- providing custodial staff with a meal service when working on units

- giving staff pleasant spaces to break from work, including refurbished break out rooms and subsidised coffee at the Parkville STREAT café
- providing opportunities for growth and career progression, including by streamlining the higher duties process.

**We will expand our staff support program by:**

- establishing a reward and recognition program
- running social clubs at Parkville and Malmsbury
- exploring a staff shadowing exchange program between community and custody.

## Quality practice and skill development

We will improve multi-disciplinary professional practice support for staff by recruiting Behaviour Support Specialists to build staff capacity to support young people with extremely complex needs. The Behaviour Support Specialists will support staff to deliver every young person's behaviour support approach based on their case plan.

**We will improve foundational training for YJW1 staff by:**

- delivering a new Certificate IV in Youth Justice for all YJW1 staff, with Recognition of Prior Learning available for staff with experience and previous training
- supporting new starters with squad leaders and staff mentors.

**We will deliver a comprehensive calendar of professional development on:**

- a new operational safety package, which will include situational awareness training that uses cutting edge virtual reality technology

- working with young people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities (delivered with the Centre for Multicultural Youth)
- supporting young people at risk of suicide and self-harm
- supporting young people with mental health concerns
- working with young people with disabilities
- the ACE model and behaviour support
- key worker training in case management and the fully-structured day.

**We will provide a comprehensive professional support program for our staff, including by:**

- delivering leadership training and unit practice sessions
- holding leadership forums between custodial and community staff to build system-wide connections.

## Occupational health and safety

We are implementing significant evidence-based reforms to make our custodial centres safer. This includes introducing communities in custody, the Intensive Intervention Unit, improving the fully structured day and consulting on a new Security and Emergency Response Team model. The specific workforce initiatives below support and complement these broader initiatives to improve occupational health and safety.

**We will prevent occupational violence and implement safe systems of work by:**

- delivering restorative practice training in partnership with Jesuit Social Services, and embedding restorative practices such as mediations and community meetings where this is appropriate and safe
- employing dedicated senior OH&S specialists at both Parkville and Malmsbury, contributing to timely follow up on OHS issues
- introducing a new online health and safety reporting system which all staff can access
- improving and refreshing Director's Instructions and Practice Instructions in line with the Custodial Operating Philosophy.

**We will provide more comprehensive OH&S support for staff by:**

- improving post-incident supports with operational de-briefs and improved dynamic risk assessments and analysis
- improving options and pathways for employees returning to work after a violent incident
- providing a peer support program for all custodial staff
- providing a dedicated health and wellbeing team for psychological health and crisis support, stress management and individual counselling
- providing an onsite clinician for staff who seek individual psychological support at each centre
- making payments for mental health treatment available prior to the determination of a WorkCover claim through the Provisional Payments Pilot.

**We will support staff to respond to COVID-19 by:**

- delivering PPE training for all custodial staff
- consulting with an Infection Control Specialist to continually improve infection control standards, as well as consulting with staff to get their views
- acknowledging staff who work with young people in custody who have tested positive for COVID-19 by paying them a higher duties allowance of 15%.