

Acknowledgment & Intros



SESSION OBJECTIVES

A bit about Westjustice

What is the Youth Crime
Prevention & Early
Intervention Project (YCPEIP)?

What are some possible
learnings your team could take
from the YCPEIP initiative?

Questions?

ABOUT WESTJUSTICE

- Community Legal Centre (CLC) in Melbourne's West
- Funded to cover 3 of the 5 LGA's but offer services in the other 2 as well, along with Brimbank Melton
- Meaning we cover an area of nearly a million people (*cf* 144,036 for Darwin)
- Our clients and broader community experience high rates of socio-economic and health inequities in Melbourne's west
- High rates of youth alleged offending & remand
- The Youth Law Program , is one of our 4 legal program areas (Economic Justice, Family Violence and Family Law, Employment and Equality Law)



Youth Crime Prevention & Early Intervention Project (YCPEIP)



WHAT IS YCPEIP?

Youth crime prevention
pilot being run in
Melbourne's West –
started 2021

Co-led project with
Westjustice & Victoria
Police - key partners
Victoria Legal Aid, local
youth support services,
Courts, Department of
Justice & Community
Safety

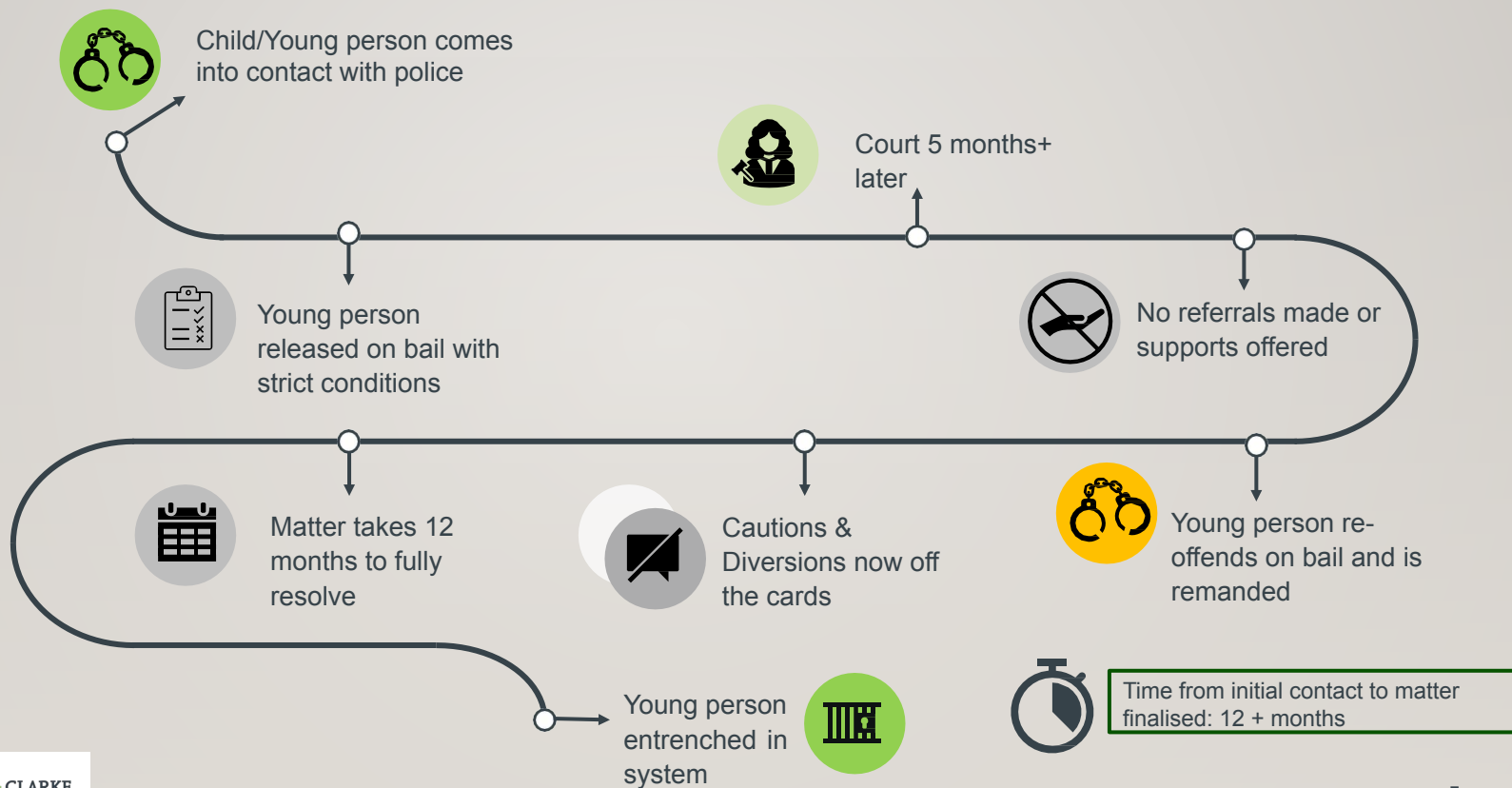
Aims to divert children
and young people away
from criminal justice
system (reduce crime)

Unique level of
collaboration between
police and legal sector

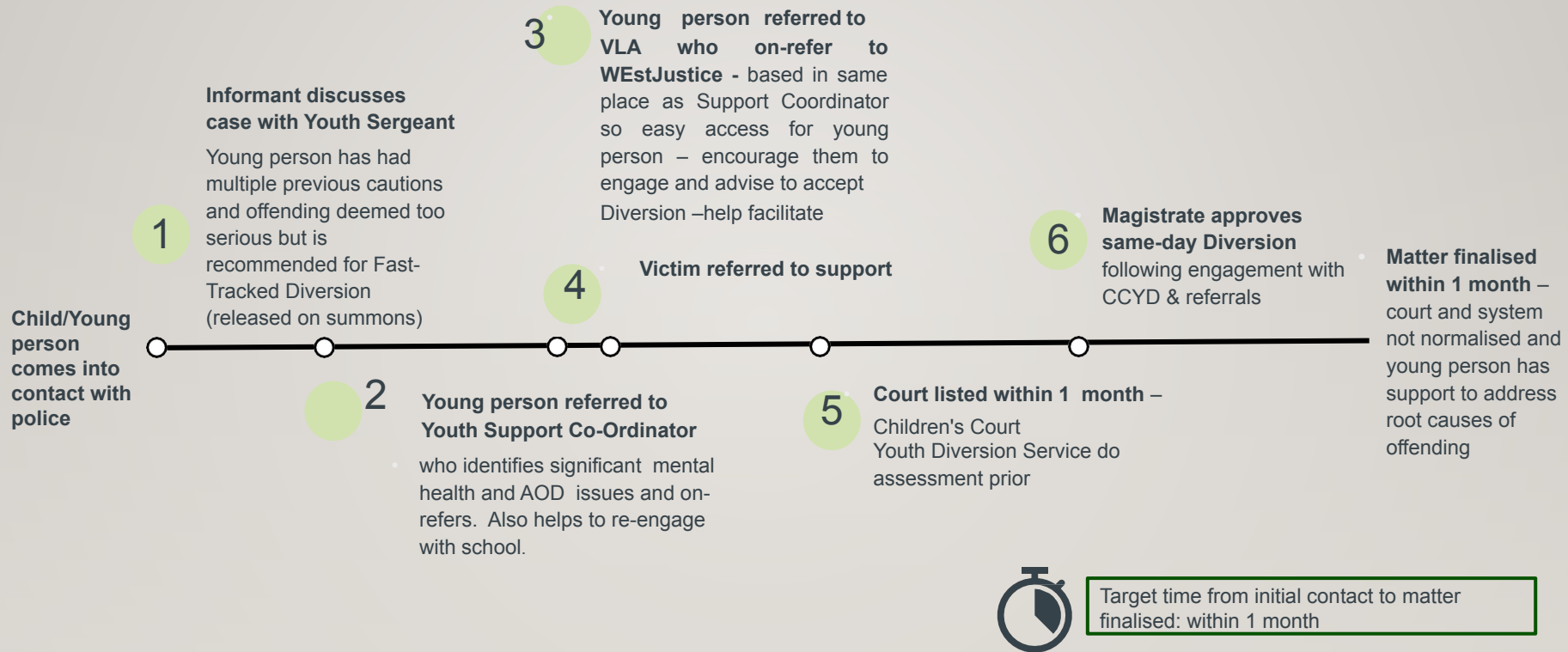
HOW DOES IT WORK?

- Eligibility: 10-24 year olds in the Wyndham or Brimbank charged with criminal matters;
- Referrals:
 - To our Youth Support Co-Ordinator for social/psychological support
 - To Victoria Legal Aid & Westjustice for legal support
 - For victims - to Victim Support Services
- Revised caution/diversion framework: New clear framework and support for consideration of cautions and diversions for children and young people. Removed previous barriers to cautions (e.g. 'do not deny', need for parents to be present, limited circs for 18-24).
- Youth Sergeant Portfolio position – Consistency of outcomes, oversight, step-removed/separation from members who arrest, local champion/advocate
- Training: to Police about the project including making appropriate referrals, new guidelines for considerations of cautions and diversions, cultural awareness training, and training on policing and supporting at-risk young people.
- Fast-tracked Diversion List: Urgent listings for Children's Court Diversion matters to reduce delay (parenting 101)!
- Education: sessions to young people, their families and the community about what a legal problem is, what help is available & when to get in touch to prevent bigger legal problems.

A POSSIBLE PATHWAY FOR A CHILD/YOUNG PERSON UNDER STATUS QUO (WITHOUT YCPEIP)



A POSSIBLE PATHWAY FOR A CHILD/YOUNG PERSON UNDER THE YCPEIP MODEL



HEAR FROM OUR YOUTH SERGEANT & SUPPORT CO-ORDINATOR



For Sergeant Steven Turner, studying each individual's historic catalogue of photos has had a profound effect. "You'll see a 17-year-old come through and they've already been in custody 15 times," he tells *Crikey*. "You look at their photos and see the progression over five years, and see the light start fading from their eyes...we needed to try something different," Turner says. "All the studies coming out over the last few years point to less contact with the justice system leading to better outcomes for kids."

Crikey article

469 referrals, 151 take up - %32

Serour also works out of the Visy Cares Hub in Sunshine, and says the young people she speaks to are not aware of services to support them: "I have the ability to not only refer them to [mental health service provider] headspace, but we also talk to employers daily, housing assistance, résumé writing classes and more. But ultimately a majority of my referrals have been for mental health."

She believes most of the young people she engages with are motivated to turn their lives around: "They actually do realise the severity of the situation."

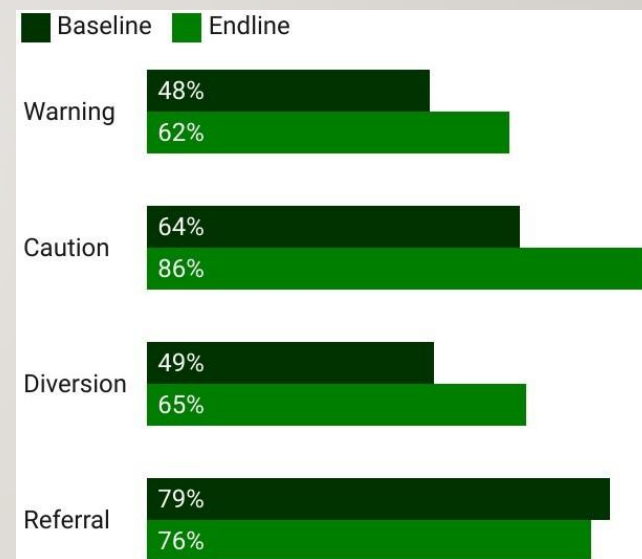


POLICE CONFIDENCE IN APPLYING DIVERSIONARY RESPONSES

Police members were asked via survey to assess their confidence in knowing when to issue a warning, caution, diversion and referral. The baseline survey was run between January and February 2022 and the endline survey was run between September and October 2023.

Survey data indicates police confidence in knowing when to issue a warning, caution and diversion had increased since the commencement of the YCPEIP police training. Police were slightly less confident in knowing when to issue a youth referral potentially reflecting some uncertainty around recent changes to referral practices.

Police confidence in knowing when to issue a warning, caution, diversion and referral



Data source: Survey of police attitudes towards youth policing. (NB: Baseline n=116. Endline n=63)

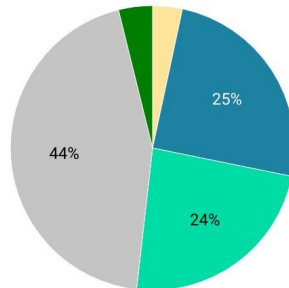
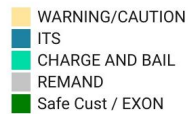
POLICING OUTCOMES: BRIMBANK

Analysis of policing trend pre and post program indicate the proportion of alleged youth crimes resulting in a warning or caution has increased significantly. Warnings and cautions accounted for around 3.4% of policing outcomes in the 12 months prior to the program commenced and rose to 52% following the introduction of the program.

At 13-24 months post-program, warning and caution accounted for 77% of alleged offender youth incidents.

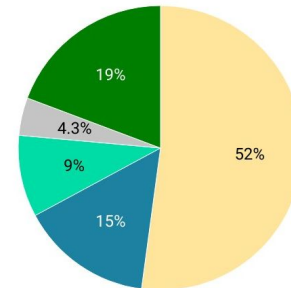
Figure 4 Policing outcomes 12 months pre-program and at 12- and 24-months post program (uniform branch)

Uniform



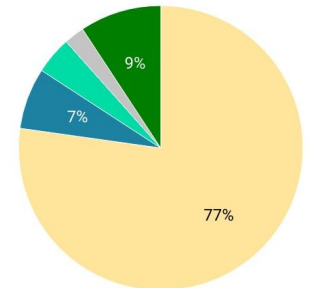
Pre-Program (Sept 20-Aug 21)

Total:
415



Post-Program (Sept 201 - Aug 22)

Total:
140



Post-Post (Sept 22 - Aug 23)

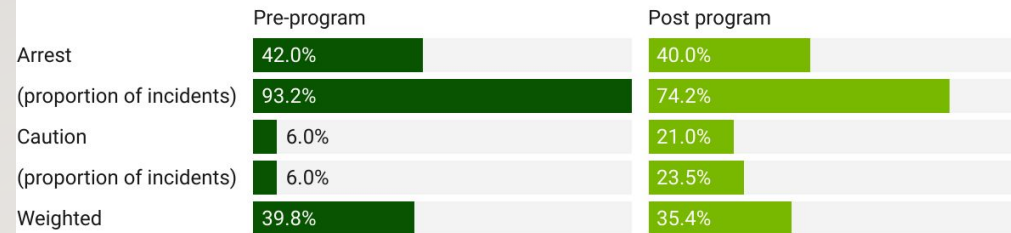
Total:
259

YOUTH REOFFENDING

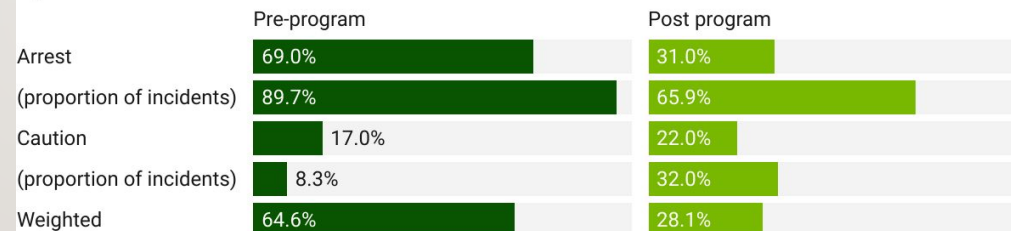
When examining cautioning statistics, the proportion of first-time offenders who re-offend within 12 months of their first offence appears to increase from 6% to 21% in Brimbank and from 17% to 22% in Wyndham. However, when combining arrests and cautions, the data shows that re-offending by first-time youth offenders declined in Brimbank from 39.8% before the program to 35.4% with the program. In Wyndham, re-offending decreased from 64.6% to 28.1%. **Overall, across both police districts, the program led to a reduction in re-offending from 54.7% to 30.5% (using adjusted weighting).**

Proportion of first time offenders who re-offend within 12 months

Brimbank



Wyndham



Brimbank and Wyndham



Possible learnings from YCPEIP?

- Develop together so everyone invested and has ownership = reputation/skin in the game
- Come from bottom & top – grassroots practical knowledge and high-level support for efficient decision-making
- Don't accept a 'it can't be done' – get creative and propose different solutions
- Have back-stops – e.g. if gets missed here, addressed here
- Start with small wins then expand – (e.g. phase 1 kids, phase 2 young adults)
- Make it less work for people = incentive!
- Legal sector in unique position to mediate & encourage better collaboration b/w other services competing for funding

QUESTIONS

