UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA

External Process and Outcome Evaluation of the Canberra Police Community Youth Club Project P180.

Contract Milestone and Deliverable 3.

Final Evaluation Report Incorporating:

Deliverable 1: With updated Project Evaluation Plan (as of 27.03.2026)

Deliverable 2: Desktop Evidence-Based Review, Process and Outcome Evaluation of the P180, with the Evaluation Booklet Overview.

Deliverable 3: Final report with qualitative analysis results from the Semester 1 and 2 P180 follow-ups, analysis of external stakeholder insights, and key findings from the P180 evaluation with program enhancement recommendations

20th August 2026

Dr Sally Kelty
Dr. Caroline Ng Tseung-Wong
Dr. Phoebe Joshua

Discipline of Psychology,
University of Canberra
Building 12, 12D2
11 Kirinari Street, Bruce,
Australian Capital Territory, 2617
Email: caroline.ng@canberra.edu.au

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The evaluation was undertaken by a small team from the University of Canberra. We would particularly like to acknowledge Dr Nicole Vlahovich and her team for their invaluable expertise on project management and data management required to undertake this project. This project was funded by the ACT Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JACS).

Acronyms

ACT, Australian Capital Territory
AEIPD, The Early Intervention/Diversion Program Delivery Checklist
AMC, Alexander Maconochie Centre, Australian Capital Territory [ACT]
AOD, alcohol or other drugs
Bimberi, Bimberi Youth Justice Centre in the ACT
CPCYC, Canberra Police Community Youth Club
CYPS, Child and Youth Protection Services
GLM, The Good Lives Model
JACS, The ACT Justice and Community Safety Directorate
MACR, Minimum age of criminal responsibility
P180, CPCYC Project P180
RNR, Risk-Need-Responsivity model underpinning effective antisocial behaviour/justice programs
UC, University of Canberra

Evaluation Project Team

Lead CI: Dr. Sally Kelty is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Canberra. She is a Criminologist and applied psychologist with a background in rehabilitation project development and evaluation within criminal justice agencies. Her program development and evaluation work include designing evaluation tools for assessing the effectiveness of community based and prison-based young offender programs; developing prison-based rehabilitation programs for domestic violence, substance use and generalist offending programs for adult men and women; independent community living programs for adults with cognitive impairments. Sally has worked on longitudinal projects including a 3-year study exploring experiences and outcomes for 160 at high-risk adolescent mothers and their children and headed up the adolescent program within an environmental health promotion research centre exploring industry collaborations in designing and evaluating safer urban residential spaces that decrease juvenile delinquency and decrease teenage obesity. Sally currently sits as an expert member of the offender program accreditation panel for Forensic Intervention Services. Corrections Victoria.

CI and Data Analyst: Dr. Caroline Ng Tseung-Wong is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Canberra, joining the University in 2018. She is a social psychologist with research experience in social and cultural identities and their associations with intergroup relations and well-being in mainly minority groups. Caroline has worked on several projects with culturally and linguistically diverse adolescents and emerging adults looking at how they negotiate their cultural identities and outcomes in terms of engaging in risky behaviour, such as alcohol and other drug use (AOD). She has extensive statistical expertise in the management and analysis of project data sets.

Project Research Associate: Dr. Phoebe Joshua is a Clinical Psychologist and researcher in the Discipline of Psychology at UC. While the bulk of her work focuses on improving the range of appropriate and targeted therapies in eating disorders for young people, she also holds a strong interest in forensic and organisational psychology. This dates from her Honours thesis investigating juror perceptions of intimate partner homicide. Since then, Phoebe has collaborated with Sally on several peer-reviewed publications about the well-being of forensic employees and conducted an evaluation of programs targeting dangerous youth drivers with Sally and Caroline from UC.

External Process and Outcome Evaluation of the Canberra Police Community Youth Club Project P180

Project Team	
Project Lead CI	Dr. Sally Kelty (University of Canberra)
Project CI and Data Analyst	Dr. Caroline Ng Tseung-Wong (University of Canberra)
Project Research Associate	Dr. Phoebe Joshua (University of Canberra)
Industry Project Executive	Ms Cheryl O'Donnell (CEO, CPCYC)

Early Intervention and Diversion Programs for At-Risk Youth in Australia and Internationally

Whilst several approaches have been used to tackle youth antisocial behaviour and crime, most Western jurisdictions employ a modified justice model (Wilson & Hoge, 2013) where rehabilitative actions are taken, with one avenue being early intervention and/or court diversion programs. Diversion and early intervention are viewed as the most effective and fiscally responsible strategies to reduce youth crime (Victoria Justice and Community Safety, 2022).

Research has shown that the most promising early intervention programs are those that: are grounded in a clear developmental and cognitive-behavioural theory; focus on high-risk youth (at risk of antisocial behaviour and school dropout); target changeable criminogenic needs in family, school, and peer friendships; deliver adequate dosage (program length) with high fidelity (good program structure); are culturally responsive; foster strong practitioner-youth relationships; and are monitored and refined through ongoing evaluation (Pooley, 2020). Such programs, when combined with structural reforms such as raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility (MACR) and diverting young people away from formal justice processes, offer the best prospect of reducing the burden of youth crime while enhancing the wellbeing and life chances of vulnerable children and adolescents.

The Canberra Police Community Youth Club (CPCYC) P180 Program

Project 180 (P180) is an evidence-based 20-week intensive diversion program/early intervention program for young people to reduce antisocial behaviour, reduce recidivism, build community connections, and foster positive development. The project facilitators and case managers provide intensive face-to-face contact with participants four days per week, in addition to ongoing case management provided for the whole family. The aim of P180 is that holistic interactions with the young participants and their families will assist in creating a supportive environment to help users to achieve their goals. A full overview of the Project P180 developed by the CPCYC is provided in a separate document, referred to as Appendix A.

The CPCYC P180 is classified as a tertiary crime prevention program and engages in diversionary therapeutic practices. P180 includes programs such as NAPCAN's Live Bites, Certificate II Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways through Tallebudgera Outdoor and Environmental Centre, and Chifley Health Hubs' FEED program. CPCYC also delivers an emotional regulation program "Project New Leaf". The service users are engaged in community connections with service visits and police engagement and take part in therapeutic risk-taking activities.

External Process and Outcome Evaluation of the P180: Evaluation Aims

(Amendments to original draft evaluation plan as of 27.03.2026 noted in blue italics)

The P180 evaluation project has five aims and related outputs, as follows:

1. Undertake an evidence-based literature review on the risk and protective factors for young people at-risk of offending and identify factors of effective early intervention and diversion programs for at-risk youth.
2. Undertake interviews with P180 stakeholders in Canberra to assess their views on the efficacy of the P180 as an early intervention and/or youth diversion program.
3. Carry out an output evaluation of the CPCYC P180 Project. The evaluation will assess change across a range of social attitudes, offending and substance use, family functioning and school attendance using CPCYC entry and exit surveys *over three years (2023, 2024 and 2025).*
4. Carry out a longitudinal follow-up of *2024 P180 participants using case-study methods and outcome analysis of participants post P180 at two periods (12 and 18 months*) to explore longer term outcomes of P180 in terms of how the program impacted young people's future pathways and goals.
5. Use the findings from the review, to develop an evidence-based checklist using good practice elements for effective early intervention and youth diversion programs. This checklist will be used to evaluate how the P180 *program delivery* compares with good practice, and to provide future recommendations (*Process evaluation*).

Project Milestones and Outputs

Contract Milestone and Deliverable 1

1. An overview of P180, goals and target population.
2. Pre-planning and progress updates on discussions with various agencies for access to data and interviews with people connected to the CPCYC P180. This includes liaising with the CPCYC and ACT Policing around attaining recidivism data, permissions, and consent to follow current P180 participants.
3. Progress update on the ethics application development for the P180 stakeholder interviews.
4. Draft evaluation plan of the P180 including details of proposed evaluation methodology and measurable variables pre-and post-program.

Contract Milestone and Deliverable 2

1. Outcome evaluation and effectiveness of the P180 from pre-and post-survey findings for P180 participants and carers over a three-year period (2023 to 2025).
2. Desktop review of risk and protective factors and best-practice outcomes in offending early intervention and youth diversion programs, and how P180 compares to best-practice.
3. *Development of an evidence-based checklist for best-practice elements for at-risk and youth diversion programs AND process evaluation of the P180 using the evidence-based checklist for best-practice elements for at risk and youth diversion programs.*

Contract Milestone and Deliverable 3

1. Qualitative analysis of the 2024 Semester 1 and 2 P180 cohorts. Exploration of long-term outcomes in terms of how the program impacted young people's future pathways, drawing on interviews, focus groups, case studies, *and changes in recidivism data pre and post program (if available).*
2. *Analysis of stakeholder interviews with CPCYC staff, ACT Policing and other stakeholders (such as lawyers, senior legal practitioners, youth justice agencies) regarding recidivism and division program for at-risk young people.*
3. Effectiveness of the P180 program and recommendations for program enhancement using the full evaluation data and 12-month follow up data.

Proposed Research Timelines and End Dates for Stage Completions

May to June 2025	Pre-evaluation planning meetings to confirm the key evaluation questions, the range of pre-post measures and program years that can be included in the evaluation dataset, finalise evaluation methods, establish secure data storage at the University of Canberra for duration of the project, and dissemination of the results. **(Completed June 2025)**
28th June 2025	Contract milestone and deliverable 1 provided to JACS and CPCYC. (**Completed June 2025**)
24th March 2026	Contract milestone and deliverable 2 provided to JACS and CPCYC. **(Completed March 2026)**
30th September 2026	Contract milestone and deliverable 3 provided to JACS and CPCYC. **(Final report emailed 20th August 2026)**
31st December 2026	Evaluation contract closure date

Contracted Research Budget

Research assistant salaries, research articles and reference books for the evaluation, Software licences, incidentals and dissemination costs.	**$75,000**
University of Canberra Infrastructure Research Costs 25% of project budget	$25,000
Total excluding GST (CPCYC GST exempt registered charity).	$100,000

For further information please contact

Dr. Sally Kelty
sally.fiona.kelty@gmail.com

Dr. Caroline Ng Tseung-Wong-
caroline.ng@canberra.edu.au





Sally Fiona Kelty

Caroline Ng Tseung-Wong

Contract Milestone

Deliverable 1

Deliverable 1: Due date 28th June 2025

The purpose of Contract Milestone and Deliverable 1 is to report on the evaluation progress and present the following:

Section 1: An overview and rationale of P180, goals and target population.

Section 2: Overview of pre-planning meetings between UC, JACS and the CPCYC. This section includes the pre-planning and progress updates on discussions with various agencies for access to data and interviews with people connected to the CPCYC P180. This included liaising with the CPCYC and ACT Policing around attaining recidivism data, permissions, and following current P180 participants.

Section 3: Ethical approvals for stakeholder interviews, including progress update on the ethics application development for the P180 stakeholder interviews (overleaf).

Section 4: Draft evaluation plan. This section will be amended as required as the evaluation continues.

1. P180 Draft Evaluation Plan and Pre-Planning

1.1 Overview of the CPCYC Project P180, Rational for Diversion and Early Intervention Program and Target Audience

Project 180 (P180) is an evidence-based 20-week intensive diversion program/early intervention program (currently run by Canberra Police Community Youth Club (CPCYC)) for young people to reduce antisocial behaviour and/or recidivism (for youth aged over the minimum age of criminal responsibility), to build community connections, and foster positive development. The project facilitators and case managers provide intensive face-to face contact with participants four days per week, in addition to ongoing case management provided for the whole family. The aim of P180 is that holistic interactions with the young participants and their families will aid in creating a supportive environment to assist users to achieve their goals. A full overview of the Project P180 developed by the CPCYC is provided in a separate document, referred to as Appendix A.

The CPCYC P180 is classified as a tertiary crime prevention program and engages in diversionary therapeutic practices. P180 includes programs such as NAPCAN's Live Bites, Certificate II Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways through Tallebudgera Outdoor and Environmental Centre, and Chifley Health Hubs' FEED program. CPCYC also delivers an emotional regulation program "Project New Leaf'. The service users are engaged in community connections with service visits and police engagement and take part in therapeutic risk-taking activities.

1.2 Rationale and Theoretical Underpinnings for the Efficacy of Juvenile Justice Diversion and At-Risk Early Intervention Services

Whilst several approaches have been used to tackle youth crime, most Western jurisdictions employ a modified justice model (Wilson & Hoge, 2013) where rehabilitative actions are taken, with one avenue being early intervention/court diversion programs. Diversion and early intervention are viewed as the most effective and fiscally responsible strategies to reduce youth crime (Victoria Justice and Community Safety, 2022). Two main theoretical underpinnings for the efficacy of diversion program for at-risk youth are labelling theory and differential association social learning theory.

Labelling theory (Becker, 1963) describes the negative consequence of labelling a youth as delinquent (such as through arrest, court appearances and convictions, or ongoing involvement with juvenile justice agencies). Labelling theory proposes that being labelled 'a juvenile offender' will set a young person on a pathway to continued antisocial and criminal behaviour. This was demonstrated by McAra and McVie (2007) who compared two samples of youth matched on criminal history and other

variables. The recidivism rates were significantly higher the following year for the group that was drawn furthest into the juvenile justice system.

*Differential association social learning theory (*Archer & Flexon, 2021; Opp, 2020) proposes that engaging in anti-social behaviour is learned, not inherited, with the learning process occurring within close personal groups such as school and neighbourhood peers, or family members. Differential association postulates several key aspects for how and why the learning occurs: (1) criminal conduct is learnt behaviour through communication with others; (2) the learning involves observing peers, family, or others engaging in anti-social behaviour, their techniques and subsequent justification for the behaviour, and (3) people become delinquent when they spend more time with pro-criminal or anti-social peers and become isolated from pro-social peers, and where anti-social peers provide social support, encouragement, and reinforcement for engaging in further anti-social behaviour. Young people are suggested to be especially open to the influence of either pro- or anti-social peers, family, and social environments. This is supported by the longitudinal Cambridge Study (Farrington, 2020) where 411 boys from London were followed from ages 8 to 50. Findings from the Cambridge study found that key childhood risk factors (ages 8–10) for later adolescent and adult offending included high level of family criminality, high levels of personal daring and risk-taking behaviour, anti-social peers, low academic achievement and truancy, family poverty, and evidence of neglect or poor parenting in the family home. Contemporary research has also shown that online peers provide social support and swap tips and knowledge on how to commit crime between online delinquent members. Further a direct relationship was found between engaging in online delinquent peer groups and later self-reported crime and violent behaviour (McCuddy et al., 2024).

1.3 Target Audience for the P180 Program

Young people are referred to the program through a referral form and must be enrolled in the ACT education system and/or live in the ACT. From 2019 to December 2024, the P180 program provided services to young people aged 12 to 18 at risk of offending, involved in the youth justice system, disengaged from education, or facing adversities themselves or within their families. The program acts as either an early intervention/referral program or a diversion program with the aim of assisting young people to choose a non-offending future, build community connections, and make positive choices and growth through school engagement and attendance or employment options.

2. Pre-planning Meetings Overview Between UC, JACS and CPCYC

A pre-evaluation meeting was held to discuss the range of pre-post measures that can be used in the quantitative analysis of the P180 evaluation, the program years to be used in the outcome evaluation, and provision of secure data storage at the University of Canberra for the project data during the duration of the project. Also discussed was the requirement for police contact and recidivism data to be collected for P180 participants.

The pre-planning meeting was held on 13th May 2025 at the CPCYC. Present were the P180 evaluation project team (University of Canberra), with the CEO (CPCYC), and program facilitators and Case Managers at CPCYC. The following outcomes were agreed upon and are included in section 3 (the draft evaluation plan description) presented overleaf.

3. Ethical Approvals for Stakeholder Interviews

3.1 Submission Dates and Approval Notification (Ethics ID 14623)

Ethics approval for the external stakeholders' interviews and focus groups on their views of the P180 program was submitted to the University of Canberra Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) on 5th June 2025 under the title "To understand Stakeholders views of the Canberra Police Community Youth Club Project 180 Program".

The application was reviewed by the Ethics Chair on 6th June 2025 who requested minor amendments. These amendments were addressed and the revised application submitted on 11th June 2025.

3.2 Ethics Approval Update

Project ethic number "14623" - To understand Stakeholders views of the Canberra Police Community Youth Club Project 180 Program", was approved on 25.08.2025.

4. Draft Evaluation Plan (*Amendments in Italics, updated as of 27.03.2026*)

The evaluation will provide a rigorous and evidence-based assessment of the P180 effectiveness, considering the qualitative and quantitative outcomes and benefits of the program. The plan, detailed below, outlines the range of methods and tools that will be used to measure outcomes, develop an evidence-based checklist for best-practice in early intervention and diversion programs, and identify areas for improvement of the P180. The evaluation process will follow established guidelines for outcome evaluations set by the Australian Public Service Commission (2022), the evaluation planning strategy set by the UK's National Council for Voluntary Organisations (2024), and process and outcome evaluations for criminal justice programs (Kelty, 2017; Vito & Higgins, 2014).

4.1 Methodology and Data Analysis Plan to be Used in the Full Evaluation

The evaluation will use both quantitative and qualitative methods to assess the outcomes of the P180. The quantitative pre- and post- assessments of program outcomes (*years 2023 to 2025*) will follow established social science methodology of Kite and Whitley (2020). Data will be provided by the CPCYC, and outcomes will be analysed by t-tests, correlational and regression analyses (depending on the type of data provided) using IBM SPSS (2023). The statistical analyses will follow the guidelines set out in Field (2024) and Tabachnick and Fidell (2019) to ensure that robust methods are used during the data analysis.

Qualitative data (open-ended responses from pre-and post-program surveys *years 2023 to 2025)* will be analysed using the data coding methods of Braun and Clarke (2021). The stakeholder interviews will follow the procedures and analysis methods outlined in Miles et al (2019) and Smith (2024). The qualitative data collected for the P180 follow up (year 2024) will use case-study methodology using a phenomenological approach, where researchers are interested in understanding the experiences of participants and their pathways following the program. The methods to guide the case studies will include Braun and Clarke (2021) and Smith et al. (2021).

Program years to be included in the P180 outcome evaluation

Quantitative and qualitative outcome data for the years 2022 to 2025 (participant ages 12 to 18)

The four years of 2022 to 2025 were originally selected for the pre-post outcome evaluation. The rationale for selecting these years followed a discussion between the UC evaluation team and the P180 Program manager at the CPCYC and were as follows.

(1) From 2017 to 2020 the P180 program was in development and evolving. Program content, including pre-and-post program data, participants surveys, and family information, was adapted and revised to enhance program delivery and outcomes. Therefore, the data available to be analysed is

not consistent across years and data analysis may not give an accurate picture of program effectiveness.

(2) In 2021, due to Covid-19 disruptions and community lock-down requirements, the delivery of the program was amended to reflect the prevailing social conditions. These amendments include P180 participants starting but not able to complete the program, or the utilisation of hybrid methods of program delivery. Consequently, the decision was made to not include 2021 data.

As data for the 2022 year has been archived and is not in a form that could be included in the P180 evaluation data set, the output evaluation will be completed on the three years 2023 to 2025. This was agreed with the CPCYC. The change in years will still provide three years of data to analyse.

Longitudinal follow-up of P180 (participants aged 12 to 18; Updated 27.3.2026)

Initially, the Semester 1 2025 P180 cohort was considered for the longitudinal follow-up for past P180 participants. *Following in-depth discussions with senior staff from the CPCYC, it was considered that the 2024 semester 1 and 2 cohorts, would be the best participants for this follow-up as CPCYC has current contact information for the 2024 participants and their families/carers. This will provide the evaluation team with the opportunity to carry out a 12- and 18-month follow-up post program and give a clearer pattern of pathways for participants post P180 completion.*

The 12- to 18-month follow-up will use qualitative case-study methods using the 2024 semester 1 and 2 P180 participants. The case studies will explore longer term outcomes and benefits of P180 participation. Attention will be paid to how the program impacted young people's future pathways, choices, and goals. The 12- to 18-month follow-up planning stage will be completed by April 2026.

Pre-and-post program outcome evaluation data to be included

Three types of data will be used to measure the effectiveness of the P180. These are (1) demographic variables, (2) pre-post program assessments measuring social skills, behaviours, and attitudinal factors, and (3*) recidivism data looking at charges and convictions (if available).*

Demographic variables on program participants

These will be used to understand the participants and selected information about their family and residential situations from *2023 to 2025*. Demographic data collected pre-post P180 that can be reported includes age, gender, indigeneity, household composition, siblings, disability status.

Measurement tools for the P180 program

Two different assessments are given to all P180 participants at pre-program (Time 1) and post-program (Time 2). The family and carers of P180 Participants are also given a post-program survey (Time 2). The surveys measure a range of attitudinal, health and social skills factors. These pre-post assessments will be used to measure change in a range of social, behavioural and attitudinal factors, as follows.

Participant time 1 (one measure)

The P180 Participant Entry Survey was developed by the CPCYC to measure pre-program participant baseline data on attitudes toward the police, type of offending and anti-social behaviour, drug and alcohol use (AOD), school attendance, employment type, mental wellbeing, anger management and coping skills.

Participant time 2 (two measures)

The P180 Participant Exit Survey was developed by the CPCYC to measure post-program participant across a range of social, behavioural, and attitudinal variables. These are used to identify changes in respect for the police and law, changes in levels of offending and anti-social behaviour, AOD, school or vocational training attendance, employment type if applicable, mental wellbeing, anger management and coping skills.

The P180 Parent/Carer/Stakeholder Exit Survey was developed by the CPCYC to measure observations by parents or carers on changes in the participants range of skills, attitudes, and behaviours that they observed after completion of the P180 program. These include changes in social and coping skills, anger management, physical, mental health and nutrition, education and/or vocational attendance, life skills, engagement in case management and family relationships. Parents or carers are asked to comment on the beneficial aspects of the program that they observed in the participant following program completion.

Data analysis plan for the outcome evaluation to assess pre-post differences in social, behavioural, and attitudinal factors between times 1 and 2

Differences in pre-post scores will be assessed using IBM SPSS (2023). Where possible, demographics will be used in these analyses to determine if change is related to age and gender or other variables. This will provide nuanced evidence on the efficacy of the P180 by demographics factors.

Hypothesis 1: *It is predicted that post-program participants will display increases in pro-social attitudes toward the police and law, and higher levels of social skills and anger management, lower levels of anti-social behaviour, along with more positive health outcomes, and higher high school or vocational training and/or employment attendance.*

Recidivism data including arrest, charges and contact with police or courts

The evaluation team (via CPCYC) will be given de-identified arrest, charge, and recidivism data for P180 participants. The CPCYC will keep the names and identifiable information for participants at the CPCYC onsite. This will offer the opportunity to explore patterns in behaviour change post-program in overall offending, change in type of offending or severity of offending. The evaluation team will receive arrest, charges, and conviction records at three time points: pre-program, 6 months upon P180 completion, and 12-months post-program. *This analysis will be carried out as part of the follow up of the 2024 P180 Cohort and reported in deliverable 3 (if data is available).*

Hypothesis 2: *It is predicted that at completion of the program and 12 months post-program there will be decreases in the rates of charges, arrests and convictions compared to pre-program.*

External stakeholder interviews on the benefits of the P180 Program

The evaluation will use qualitative methods to assess the benefits of the P180 for program stakeholders.

Semi-structured interviews and/or focus groups will be carried out by the UC program evaluation team during 2025 (August to November) to assess the benefits of the P180. The interview procedure will use the methods outlined in Smith (2024). The project information sheet and interview questions can be seen in Appendixes B and C. Ethical approval for these interviews will be obtained from the University of Canberra's ethical committee prior to stakeholder interviews commencing.

Data analysis plan for the stakeholder interviews

The semi-structured interviews and focus groups will be analysed using a qualitative sequential thematic approach following the guidelines set out in Smith et al. (2021) and Miles et al. (2019).

Following data analysis, it is anticipated that several themes may emerge from the interview and/or focus group data. These themes will likely detail the types of value and benefit of the P180 for police, courts and justice agencies, explore the feasibility of the P180 program as a justice referral or diversion program for young offenders aged 14 years or over, or those below 14 years who have committed serious offences that disqualify them from interventions associated with the minimum age of criminal responsibility.

Contract Milestone

Deliverable 2

Deliverable 2: Due date 27th March 2026

The purpose of Contract Milestone and Deliverable 2 is to report on the evaluation progress and to deliver the following four outputs, as follows:

Section 5: Overview of minor amendments to the original evaluation plan and output deliverables.

Section 6: Evaluation Aim 1: Desktop review of best-practice outcomes in early intervention and youth diversion programs, and risk and proactive factors for antisocial behaviour in youth.

Section 7: Evaluation Aim 5: Development of the evidence-based process evaluation checklist that can assess how well at-risk and youth diversion programs compare to best-practice.

Section 8: Evaluation Aim 5: Process evaluation outcomes, using the checklist to explore how P180 compares to best practice.

Section 9: Evaluation Aim 3: Outcome evaluation: Effectiveness of the P180 from pre- and post-survey findings for P180 participants and carers over a three-year period (2023 to 2025).

5. Overview of Minor Amendments to the Original Evaluation Plan and Output Deliverables

An original pre-evaluation planning meeting was held on 13th May 2025, present were the P180 evaluation project team (University of Canberra), with the CEO (CPCYC), and P180 Case Managers (CPCYC). The draft evaluation plan was sent to JACS and the CPCYC and approved on 9th July 2025.

Amendments to draft evaluation plan as of 27th March 2026

From December 2025 to February 2026, following onsite data collection and evaluation meetings between the UC team and the CPCYC personnel including the Operations Manager and P180 Team Leader, minor amendments were required to be made to the original draft plan and schedule for output deliverables. All amendments are highlighted in section 4 (in blue italics for visibility) and presented below.

Changes to quantitative pre-post data being used in the P180 evaluation

Originally, the four years from 2022 to 2025 were selected for the pre-post outcome evaluation for this evaluation. The rationale for selecting these years was that firstly, from 2022 onwards there had been no amendments or updates to the P180, therefore, the program content delivered and the pre-post survey data was consistent across years which can give a more accurate picture of the program effectiveness. Second, as the 2021 was run during covid lockdowns with the content being delivered online and sporadically it was decided not to include the 2021 data.

Initially the four-year period from 2022 to 2025 would comprise the data to be used in the output evaluation. On data collection, the Operation Manager noted that the 2022 data had been archived and was not in a format that that the P180 evaluation team could use. On discussion with senior staff at PCYC, the output evaluation will be completed on the three years 2023 to 2025. The UC evaluation team were provided the full data set for these three years during January and February 2026. The change in years still provides us with three years of data to analyse.

Changes to program years to be included in longitudinal follow-up pf P180 (participants aged 12 to 18)

Initially, the Semester 1 2025 P180 cohort was considered for the longitudinal follow-up for past P180 participants. Following further planning and in-depth discussions with the CEO and P180 Team Leader at CPCYC, it was considered that the 2024 cohort, from both semesters 1 and 2, would be the best participants for this follow-up. CPCYC has current contact information for the 2024 participants and their families/carers. This will provide the evaluation team with the opportunity to carry out a 12- and 18-month follow-up post program that will give a much clearer picture of

pathways post the P180, any issues participants and their families/carers faced, and what assistance they found useful post P180.

Changes to evaluation deliverable dates

The P180 evaluation findings are set to be provided in three deliverables. Following planning meetings held at the CPCYC during 2025 and 2026, especially in relation to the longitudinal follow-up, the planned dates of various parts of the evaluation were changed to fit in with the follow-up.

Of note, as of 27.03.2026, **there are no changes to what will be delivered, just the dates are amended.**

Changes to contract milestone and deliverable 2 (March 2026)

Item 1 and 2, no changes to original plan.

Item 3 was due to be delivered in September 2026; the checklist and process evaluation will now be delivered earlier in March 2026.

1. Outcome evaluation and effectiveness of the P180 from pre-and -post survey findings for P180 participants and carers over a three-year period (*2023 to 2025*).
2. Desktop review of risk and protective factors and best-practice outcomes in offending early intervention and youth diversion programs, and how P180 compares to best-practice.
3. Development of an evidence-based checklist for best-practice elements for at-risk and youth diversion programs AND process evaluation of the P180 using the evidence-based checklist for best-practice elements for at risk and youth diversion programs.

Changes to contract milestone and deliverable 3 (September 2026)

Minor change to item 1, use of the 2024 P180 cohort to be included in the follow-up (as noted in 5.2).

No change to item 2.

Item 3, due to be delivered in March 2026, will now be delivered in September 2026. The change occurred as the Stakeholder interviews will now be more closely tied to the longer-term impacts of the P180 for young people. The follow-up study will commence March to September 2026.

1. Qualitative analysis of *Semester 1 and 2 P180 cohort (cohort commencing February and July 2024).* Exploration of long-term follow-up in terms of how the P180 program impacted young people's future pathways, drawing on interviews, focus groups, case studies and exploration of change in recidivism for the 2024 cohort.
2. Effectiveness of the P180 program and recommendations for program enhancement using the full evaluation data and 12-month follow up data.
3. Analysis of stakeholder interviews with CPCYC staff, ACT Policing and other stakeholders (such as lawyers, senior legal practitioners, youth justice agencies) regarding recidivism and division program for at-risk young people.

6. Evaluation Aim 1: Desktop Review of Best-Practice Outcomes in Early Intervention and Youth Diversion Programs, and Risk and Proactive Factors for Antisocial Behaviour in Young People.

Aim 1 of the P180 Process and Outcome Evaluation project was to undertake an evidence-based desktop literature review on the risk and protective factors for young people at risk of offending and identify factors of effective early intervention and diversion programs for at-risk youth.

The desktop evidence-based review is presented in three sections, as follows.

Section 6.1: We present the current evidence base for the risk and protective factors that underpin antisocial behaviour in young people. This section concludes with a comprehensive risk and protective factors table.

Section 6.2: We present the evidence base for best-practice intervention outcomes for at-risk and youth diversion programs. This section of the review explores raising the age of criminal responsibility as a structural prevention measure, outcomes from school and community-based early intervention programs, the use of Goldstein's Aggression Replacement Training (ART), including evidence and application in Australia, applications of the Good Lives Model (GLM) as a strength-based approach to increasing protective factors for at-risk youth.

Section 6.3: We overview Australian and international meta-reviews of the key program content and delivery styles that underpin best-practice for effective programs for reducing antisocial behaviour risk. This includes the theoretical underpinning of programs, program length (dosage), program content, program staff training and responsiveness to program participants.

6.1 Risk and Protective Factors for Anti-Social Behaviour in Young People: The Evidence

6.1.1 Introduction

In this section, the evidence base for what are the risk and protective factors influencing antisocial behaviour in young people is explored, concluding with a risk and protective factors table.

Of note, while the primary term used is "antisocial behaviour," the research encompasses a range of ages of young people from ages 10 to 24 who, depending on where the international research was carried out, may or may not be over the minimum age of criminal responsibility (MACR). Further, a range of terms are used in the international literature including "offending," "criminal behaviour," and "delinquency." When referring directly to research results, the terminology published will be used. Moreover, no single behaviour is consistently criminal (e.g., the act of killing a human can be considered non-criminal in certain circumstances or at specific ages).

Identifying risk and protective factors for engaging in antisocial behaviour is guided by the risk framework developed by the research team led by Bonta, Wormith and Andrews commencing in the late 1970s (Bonta & Andrews, 2023). *Risk factors* increase a young person's probability of negative outcomes (Farrington et al., 2021). *Protective factors* are buffers that moderate, or reduce, the impact of existing risk factors (Lösel & Farrington, 2012). Farrington's work on risk factors for youth antisocial behaviour highlights family disruption, peer antisociality, and low school attachment as key predictors, emphasising the cumulative impact of multiple risk domains on the likelihood of offending during adolescence (Farrington, 2020). Conversely, protective factors are variables that decrease this probability (Hall et al., 2012; Lösel & Farrington et al., 2021).

Risk is a key element underpinning the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model of antisocial behaviour intervention programming, this will be discussed in detail in section 6.2 and 6.3.

Risk and Protective Factors for At-Risk Young People

Individual and Psychological Risk and Protective Factors

Individual factors are central to explaining stable differences in young peoples' risk of antisocial behaviour. Traits such as impulsivity, low empathy and sensation-seeking interact with cognitive deficits and emotional dysregulation, heightening the likelihood of rule-breaking and aggression (Burt, 2022; Nasaescu et al., 2023; Otto et al., 2021; van Goozen et al., 2021).

Risk factors:

High levels of impulsivity, hyperactivity, and sensation-seeking are consistently identified as robust predictors of youth antisocial behaviour (Herrenkohl et al., 2000; Loeber & Farrington, 2012; Moore et al., 2024). These traits often amplify the influence of adverse family or peer contexts (Osher et al., 2020), making early identification and targeted behavioural interventions essential for mitigating future antisocial behaviour trajectories. Poor impulse control is particularly high among prolific offenders, such as those categorised with a Contemporaneous Mixed Style (CMS) of offending (Ashton et al., 2020). These individuals display diverse patterns of antisocial behaviour, making targeted interventions that address impulsivity and situational triggers essential for reducing repeated antisocial behaviour.

Cognitive deficiencies linked to antisocial behaviour in young people include low verbal ability, low nonverbal intelligence, and poor problem-solving skills (Lösel et al., 2025; Moffitt, 2018; Sallybanks, 2003). Furthermore, the presence of antisocial cognitions such as positive attitudes towards breaking the law, rejection of rules (rule non-compliance), and attributing hostile intent to others are strong risk factors for antisocial behaviour (Archer & Flexon, 2021; Molinedo-Quilez, 2020). High risk-taking traits also significantly predict youth antisocial behaviour (Farrington & Malvaso, 2023; Herrenkohl et al., 2000). The early onset of antisocial behaviour (before age 14) is perhaps the most significant individual risk factor, establishing a trajectory linked to persistent and chronic antisocial behaviour patterns (Farrington et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2021; Moffitt, 2018). Consequently, early intervention programmes that enhance self-regulation, foster prosocial skills, and strengthen family support are crucial to disrupt this pathway and reduce long-term antisocial behaviour.

Protective factors:

Above-average intelligence and sound cognitive competencies demonstrate a direct protective function against youth antisocial behaviour (Lösel et al., 2025). Protective traits include low impulsivity, an “easy” temperament, and high self-control (Archer & Flexon, 2021). Youth exhibiting resilience often demonstrate strong self-efficacy, high self-esteem, and effective communication and problem-solving skills (Barnes-Lee & Petkus, 2023; Werner, 1997). Positive prosocial attitudes and values also function protectively against antisocial behaviour (Farrington et al., 2016; Walters, 2020).

Family, and Parental Carer Factors

The home and family environment is a primary framework for socialisation, with parenting practices determining risks or protective factors present (Molinedo-Quílez, 2020).

Risk factors:

Two of the strongest childhood predictors for a long criminal career are harsh parental discipline and poor parental supervision or monitoring (Farrington & Malvaso, 2023). Poor parental knowledge of the child's activities exacerbates the risk of unstructured socialising with peers, discussed below (Archer et al., 2022; Hoeben & Weerman, 2016). Consequently, youths are more likely to adopt antisocial behaviour norms, highlighting the need for parental monitoring programmes that promote structured activities and open communication.

Exposure to parental conflict and violence at home is harmful (Farrington & Malvaso, 2023; Herrenkohl et al., 2000; Molinedo-Quílez, 2020). Experiencing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), including neglect, physical and emotional abuse, is strongly linked to serious, violent, and chronic antisocial behaviour (Craig et al., 2023; Kim et al., 2021).

Parental criminality is also a key predictor of youth antisocial behaviour, indicating intergenerational transmission of risk (Farrington, 2020; Farrington & Malvaso, 2023). Interventions that enhance parenting skills and disrupt cycles of abuse are therefore essential components of preventative strategies aimed at reducing intergenerational antisocial behaviour trajectories.

Protective factors:

A core protective factor is the presence of a close, emotionally positive relationship with at least one competent and stable caregiver (Lösel & Farrington, 2012; Werner, 1997). Effective parental management, which is defined by consistent discipline, clear rules, and high involvement, reduces violence odds for all youth groups (Kim et al., 2016; Lösel & Farrington, 2012). Strong parental supervision and monitoring are crucial protective barriers against antisocial peer influence and substance use (Archer et al., 2022; Hoeben et al., 2016; Maness et al., 2024). Higher socioeconomic status (SES) of the family and low parental stress are also supportive protective factors (Farrington et al., 2021; Herrenkohl et al., 2000).

School and Educational Factors

School experiences function as critical "turning points" in adolescence (Halls & Edwards, 2025; Sprott et al., 2005). They can reinforce prosocial pathways via supportive relationships and academic achievement, or exacerbate risk when schools are disengaging, unsafe or punitive, highlighting the need for inclusive curricula and positive school climates.

Risk factors:

Low academic performance and low commitment or allegiance to school are risk factors across developmental stages (Kim et al., 2016; Sallybanks, 2003). Absenteeism and negative attitudes toward school are significant unique predictors of later violence (Herrenkohl et al., 2000). Exclusionary discipline, such as suspension or expulsion, also increases the risk of developing antisocial behaviour trajectories (Halls & Edwards, 2025). Therefore, schools should prioritise restorative practices and targeted support over punitive measures to mitigate these adverse outcomes.

Protective factors:

Higher academic achievement, student motivation, and study skills are associated with lower violent behaviour across genders and ethnic groups (Herrenkohl et al., 2000; Losel & Farrington, 2012). A strong school bond acts as a significant protective factor, substantially decreasing violent antisocial behaviour for children with high cumulative risk (Kim et al., 2016). Positive student-teacher relationships can counterbalance the risks associated with behavioural disengagement, such as absenteeism (Halls & Edwards, 2025; Sprott et al., 2005; Werner, 1997).

Peers, Friendships and Social Network Factors

Peer influence is repeatedly cited as one of the strongest predictors of adolescent antisocial behaviour (Herrenkohl et al., 2000; Maness et al., 2024). Positive peer groups provide normative support, fostering prosocial behaviour and reducing aggression. Programs that promote structured, supervised activities and mentor relationships can redirect youths toward constructive social networks, mitigating antisocial peer pressure.

Risk factors:

Association with antisocial peers is a primary mechanism for learning and maintaining antisocial behaviour (Archer & Flexon, 2021; Bonta & Andrews, 2023; Development Services Group, 2015; Herrenkohl et al., 2000; Opp, 2020; Wikström & Loeber, 2000). This association enables differential reinforcement and endorses values favourable to crime and antisocial behaviour (Archer & Flexon, 2021; Bonta & Andrews, 2023). Unstructured socialising with peers, defined as time spent with friends away from adult authority, creates opportunities for deviance and is a significant predictor of antisocial behaviour and substance use (Archer et al., 2022; Archer & Flexon, 2021). Exposure to antisocial peers significantly amplifies the likelihood that a young person with early onset antisocial behaviour will later engage in violent antisocial behaviour (Kim et al., 2021). Interventions that foster positive peer relationships, such as mentorship and supervised extracurricular clubs, are vital to counteract the influence of antisocial peers and steer young people toward more prosocial trajectories.

Protective factors:

As expected, association with prosocial peers reduces the likelihood of youth violence (Losel & Farrington, 2012; Walters, 2020). Positive peer associations can actively buffer the impact of negative peer influence on the development of low empathy, which often mediates the path to antisocial behaviour (Bonta & Andrews, 2023).

Community Factors

The macro-level context provides the environment in which individual and social risks manifest (Werner, 1997). Community cohesion, access to services and safe public spaces act as protective buffers, whereas concentrated poverty, crime hotspots and social disorganisation amplify youth risk of antisocial behaviour.

Risk factors:

Socioeconomic disadvantage and living in deprived communities are linked to increased offending rates in young people (Herrenkohl et al., 2000; Losel & Farrington, 2012; Wikström & Loeber, 2000). Community disorganisation, which is characterised by weak informal social control, high residential turnover, and poverty, increases risk for violence (Development Services Group, 2015; Herrenkohl et al., 2000). As may be expected, the availability of drugs or crime in the neighbourhood is a consistent predictor of antisocial behaviour across ages (Herrenkohl et al., 2000).

Living in urban areas was also found to be associated with higher recidivism in some studies (Bergseth & Bouffard, 2007; Farrington, 2020). This suggests that targeted community interventions and improved urban support services are essential to mitigate persistent and severe antisocial behaviour in young people. However, the influence of community context is often less impactful for youth who already possess a high level of individual risk factors, whose antisocial behaviour is likely to manifest regardless of location (Wikström & Loeber, 2000). Crucially, community disadvantage predominantly influences the late onset of serious offending among youth who were initially well-adjusted (high protective scores or balanced risk/protection profiles; Wikström & Loeber, 2000).

Protective factors:

Conversely, living in a nondeprived, cohesive community with strong informal social control and access to positive community adults or mentors protects young people against antisocial behaviour (Development Services Group, 2015; Lösel & Farrington, 2012).

Section 6.1.2 Summary of Risk and Protective Factors

In this section, we overviewed the evidence base for known risk and protective factors that underpin antisocial behaviour in young people. Because different countries have different legal ages of responsibility, the same behaviour might be criminal in one place or at one age but not in another. In summary, risk and protective factors for young people come from five main sources, individual and psychological factors, family and parents/careers, school and educational factors, friendship groups including online social networks, and community and neighbourhood factors.

Of note, *the information provided in section 6.1 is used to inform the development of the P180 Process Evaluation Checklist, which will then be used to access how the P180 compares to best practice.*

Presented in Table 1 overleaf is a comprehensive overview of risk and protective factors for at-risk youth.

Table 1. Overview of Risk and Protective Factors for Inclusion in Programs Aiming to Reduce Antisocial Behaviour in Young People

Risk	Protective
Individual Factors	
High impulsivity, hyperactivity and sensation seeking; low self-control	Above-average intelligence or verbal ability
Low IQ, verbal ability, poor academic skills	Low impulsivity/ "easy" temperament
Early-onset of antisocial behaviour	High self-esteem, self-efficacy, and responsible attitudes
Antisocial attitudes (e.g., norms favourable to crime, rule non-compliance)	Prosocial values and good social skills
AOD use and preadolescent nonviolent antisocial behaviour.	Sound planning ability and strong personal responsibility.
	Religiosity
Family Factors	
Poor parental supervision, monitoring and oversight	Close, emotionally positive parent-child bond and attachment
Harsh, erratic or inconsistent parental discipline	High parental supervision and monitoring
Parental conflict, aggression or exposure to family violence	Parental disapproval of antisocial behaviour
Parental criminality	High family socioeconomic status
Adverse childhood experiences	Low parental stress
	Intact family unit
Educational Factors	
Low academic performance and school commitment	Sound academic achievement.
Negative attitude toward school	Good study skills
Non-attendance and school refusal	Strong school bonding, commitment, and engagement
School suspension and expulsion	Positive student-teacher relationships
Peer Factors	
Association with antisocial peers	Association with prosocial peers
Unstructured socialising with peers	Low sensitivity to peer pressure
Peer approval and reinforcement of antisocial behaviour	
Community Factors	
Low socioeconomic status and deprived neighbourhood	Cohesive, low-crime neighbourhood
Community disorganisation and low collective efficacy	Access to positive adults and mentors in the community
Availability of drugs in community	Informal social control (social trust and cohesion)
High crime rates in community	
Urban residence	

Note 1: Risk and protective factors identified and referenced through comprehensive literature review.

Note 2: Factors in Table 1 are drawn from studies across various longitudinal designs, including prospective research focusing on predictors measured in childhood (ages 8-10) that predict youth and adult outcomes, and studies focused specifically on the 12-18 age range.

6.2 Types of Community-Based Intervention Programs Aiming to Reduce Anti-Social Behaviour

6.2.1 Introduction

In this section we present the evidence base for best-practice intervention outcomes for at-risk and youth diversion programs. This section of the review explores raising the age of criminal responsibility as a structural prevention measure, outcomes from school and community-based early intervention programs, the use of Goldstein's Aggression Replacement Training (ART), including evidence and application in Australia, applications of the Good Lives Model (GLM) as a strength-based approach to increasing protective factors for at-risk youth.

Early intervention for antisocial behaviour in young people is grounded in developmental and life course criminology, which shows that early emerging conduct problems and early onset antisocial behaviour predict more persistent, serious antisocial behaviour, and criminal careers for older adolescents, especially when coupled with cumulative social disadvantage (Farrington & Malvaso, 2023; Herrenkohl et al., 2000; Jolliffe et al., 2017; Welsh et al., 2024). Developmental prevention aims to "prevent the development of criminal potential" by targeting malleable risk factors and strengthening protective factors in childhood and adolescence (Welsh et al., 2024). This approach is supported by systematic reviews showing that well designed early interventions can reduce later antisocial behaviours and improve long term outcomes in education, employment, physical and mental health (Farrington & Malvaso, 2023; Welsh et al., 2024).

Raising the Age of Criminal Responsibility as Early Intervention

Developmental and neuropsychological evidence

Raising the MACR is influenced by developmental psychology and neuroscience. Studies show that younger people have immature psychosocial capacities: more impulsive, more susceptible to peer influence, less able to consider behavioural consequences, slower to integrate moral and legal norms into their decision making (Crofts, 2023). For example, research cited in Australian advocacy documents indicates that many children who offend show delayed development in capacities relevant to criminal responsibility, such as consequential thinking, moral reasoning and affect regulation, and that these capacities vary markedly between individuals of the same chronological age (Crofts, 2023). Such developmental immaturity undermines the assumption that children in the 10–13 age range can fairly be held to adult like standards of criminal accountability. Brain development and mental health data from youth justice systems further show the mismatch between children's needs and punitive responses. One New South Wales study found 83% of children in custody met criteria for at least one psychological disorder and 17% had evidence of intellectual disability, suggesting a substantial

number of children involved in the justice system are highly vulnerable (Ransley et al., 2024). This highlights the need for therapeutic and not punitive responses that address mental health and developmental needs.

Criminogenic impact of early system contact

Longitudinal research shows that early contact with the justice system is a risk factor for later offending. A US study of incarcerated youth found children arrested before age 14 were three times more likely to offend as adults (Alltucker et al., 2006). This is consistent with broader findings that criminal justice involvement can be "criminogenic", via labelling, disrupted education, and exposure to entrenched offenders (McAra & McVie, 2023; Trevitt & Browne, 2020). The Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime was influential in the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act being passed. The study by McAra and McVie (2023) showed that young people subject to early intensive system contact, especially at a young age, were the most likely to offend into adulthood, they were also the poorest and most socially disadvantaged participants. These findings led the Scottish Government to conclude that "responding to childhood behaviour in a criminalising, stigmatising manner serves only to further harm," and that Scotland has other approaches not requiring criminal justice response (McAra & McVie, 2023).

These findings mirror approaches internationally, where evidence supports benefits of processing older adolescents in the juvenile rather than adult systems. When Connecticut raised its age of criminal responsibility from 16 to 17, a study found that the 17-year-olds handled in juvenile court had substantially lower odds of rearrest (odds of rearrest 0.37–0.54 times compared to youth processed in adult court over a two year follow up; Fowler & Kurlychek, 2018).

Policy implications of MACR

The evidence suggests that for children in early adolescence, early criminalisation can be ineffective and potentially harmful. Raising the MACR (and raising the upper age of juvenile jurisdiction) can be considered a structural early intervention, keeping young people out of systems that cause harm and creates space for health, education, child protection and youth services to provide beneficial responses (McAra & McVie, 2023; Ransley et al., 2024). However, as Pooley emphasises, improving outcomes for youth at risk of antisocial behaviour requires more than simply avoiding court; it requires programs that explicitly target criminogenic needs, use adequate dosage and high fidelity, build engagement with prosocial behaviours, and are delivered in culturally safe, relationship rich ways (Pooley, 2020). Hence, raising the MACR should be paired with evidence-based family, school and community interventions of the kind reviewed below.

School and Community Based Early Intervention Programs for At-Risk Youth

Schools can be sites for early behaviour problems, where low achievement and weak school bonding are powerful predictors of later antisocial behaviour and violence (Sallybanks, 2003; Werner, 1997). Social competence, cognitive-behavioural intervention, and multi-component school and/or family-based programs are effective in reducing aggression and later offending (Sallybanks, 2003). Social competence programs typically use cognitive behavioural methods to teach emotion recognition, anger management, perspective taking and social problem solving through modelling, rehearsal, feedback, and homework (Bor, 2004; Sallybanks, 2003).

Research into school based social competence and problem-solving programs show small but consistent reductions in aggression and broader antisocial outcomes (Bor, 2004; Sallybanks, 2003). Beelmann and Lösel's (2021) meta-analysis of 113 randomised trials (over 31,000 participants) reported a modest effect size (d = 0.25) of these programs on antisocial behaviour, with somewhat larger effects for high-risk samples and older children and adolescents.

Preschool and primary school programs

The Fast Track project, led by the Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group (CPPRG, 1992), used the Promoting Alternative THinking Strategies (PATHS) social-emotional curriculum. This curriculum includes explicit emotion labelling, self-regulation strategies, and peer-mediated problem-solving activities (Greenberg & Kusché, 1993). While the PATHS intervention was originally designed to reinforce prosocial skills and reduce aggression in deaf children (Greenberg & Kusché, 1993), in the Fast Track project it was targeted to high-risk children aged 6-7 years in classroom settings and supplemented with parent training, peer coaching and academic tutoring (CPPRG, 1992). Randomised trials showed reduced aggression through primary school, lower self-reported antisocial behaviour in high school, and fewer juvenile and adult arrests up to age 21, with sustained benefits in mental health, crime, and wellbeing at age 25 and 31 (Bierman et al., 2020). These results illustrate the effectiveness of long-duration, multi-system interventions that begin in the early school years – a finding echoed in broader developmental prevention reviews (Pooley, 2020; Welsh et al., 2024).

In Australia, the Pathways to Prevention project ran for 10 years in a disadvantaged Brisbane area, integrating preschool communication, social skills programs, family support, and school-family partnerships (Homel et al., 2006). Children in Pathways preschool classes showed greater gains in oral language, planning and problem solving, reductions in behavioural difficulties and improvements in prosocial behaviour than comparison classes, with lower Year 1 academic difficulties among Pathways participants (Homel et al., 2006). More recent analyses show this program halved the proportion of children appearing in court for antisocial behaviour by age 17 (Allen et al., 2024). No

children offended when they engaged in both communication programs, family support, with youth offending in the Pathways region 20% lower than in comparable low SES areas, suggesting a community level impact (Allen et al., 2024). These findings demonstrate early school-linked interventions can alter trajectories into adolescence, particularly when parent support is integrated.

Efficacy of secondary school and community justice and prevention interventions

Evidence for school based early intervention in adolescence is mixed. For example, the Secondary Schools Demonstration Project in Ontario used a multicomponent model comprised of cooperative learning, classroom management, peer tutoring, mentoring and peer mediation in four high schools (Wright et al., 2007). A matched comparison design found similar improvements for low- and high-risk students, with stronger gains among low-risk youth (Wright et al., 2007). The authors concluded that while school and classroom strategies can improve behaviour and engagement, high-risk youth require more intensive longer-term support, including structured parental involvement for meaningful reductions in antisocial behaviour (Wright et al., 2007). Further, universal school programs, especially in secondary school, show modest effects, whereas targeted, cognitive-behavioural and family-inclusive interventions tend to produce larger reductions in behavioural problems and later offending (Bor, 2004). This resonates with Pooley's (2000) conclusion that programs are most effective when they selectively target higher-risk youth, conduct structured RNR assessments, and tailor dosage and content to individual needs, while avoiding over-servicing low-risk adolescents which can be counter-productive.

The ReBoot program in South Australia, is an intensive community-based early intervention for adolescents between the ages of 14 and 18 who are at high risk of entering, or who are already involved in, the youth-justice system (Lyneham et al., 2018). It integrates cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) with vocational training along with case management and family engagement to build prosocial thinking alongside education and work-readiness skills (Lyneham et al., 2018). ReBoot has a clear program theory grounded in CBT and skill development and is explicitly targeted at higher-risk youth, which is consistent with RNR principles and the call to match program length and intensity (dosage) to the level of participant risk. Early trial data indicating reduced reoffending and improved school attendance suggest that the model has promise, but the evidence base does not yet meet Pooley's (2020) standard for strong outcome monitoring and rigorous, independent evaluation over the life-course. Reporting to date provides little information about implementation fidelity (e.g., staff training, supervision, adherence to manuals), which Pooley (2020) identifies as critical to avoiding program drift and explaining variable effects, and there is similarly scant documentation of cultural adaptation or co-design with Aboriginal communities, despite her emphasis on cultural responsiveness and trauma-aware practice. Despite this, the ReBoot Program models how

interventions can incorporate evidence-based interventions with wrap-around family and vocational support to reduce antisocial behaviour in adolescents (Lyneham et al., 2018).

Aggression Replacement Training (ART)

Aggression Replacement Training program model

Aggression Replacement Training (ART), developed by Goldstein and colleagues, is a manualised cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) program originally designed for antisocial behaviour in young people in custodial settings (Goldstein et al., 1986). It comprises three coordinated components delivered in small groups:

1. Structured Learning Training (SLT): Explicit teaching and rehearsal of prosocial skills (e.g., dealing with criticism, negotiation) using modelling, role play, feedback, and homework across a curriculum of approximately 50 skills.
2. Anger Control Training: Cognitive self-control strategies (cue recognition, self-instruction, alternative thinking, self-monitoring) to reduce impulsive, anger driven responses.
3. Moral Reasoning and Education: Group discussion of moral dilemmas to promote more mature moral reasoning and challenge cognitive distortions that justify aggression.

ART was designed as a multimodal package targeting behavioural, emotional, and cognitive dimensions of aggression, with explicit attention to the generalisation of these via homework and coordination with staff and families (Goldstein et al., 1986).

Theoretical programming framework underpinning ART: The RNR model

ART is underpinned by elements of the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model, which emphasises that effective interventions target changeable risk factors, known as criminogenic needs (Bonta & Andrews, 2023; Hoge, 2016; Simourd & Olver, 2019; Wilson & Hoge, 2013). Criminogenic refers to factors and variables directly related to why people engage in antisocial behaviour and choose antisocial over prosocial friends. Social support from peers and thinking that is favourable to criminal behaviour are central factors for both at-risk young people and adult offenders, as are a range of personality factors (e.g., impulsiveness, thrill-seeking, problem-solving, emotional regulation). Other factors include family functioning, substance abuse, and indicators of social achievement (e.g., staying in education and/or learning employment skills; Farrington, 2020).

International evidence for ART

ART has been widely adopted and is often cited in broader CBT meta-analyses as an example of an effective cognitive-behavioural intervention. For instance, Lipsey and colleagues reported relatively large effects for ART within the broader class of CBT programs for offenders (Lipsey et al., 2001). Brännström et al. (2016) reviewed 16 ART studies with youth and adults and found substantial clinical and methodological heterogeneity, frequent high risk of bias and limited independent replication. Almost half the trials were developers or affiliates, trials were randomised but most were not well matched to control groups and long follow up periods were rare (Brännström et al., 2016). Although studies reported post program improvements in anger, social skills or institutional behaviour, there was insufficient evidence to support ART's effectiveness in reducing recidivism, improving self-control, social skills, or moral development (Brännström et al., 2016). A review of post 2000s studies (including ART variants and partial delivery) found that small-scale evaluations reported reductions in aggression, improvements in anger control and social skills (Ensafdaran et al., 2019). However, these studies were limited by small samples and weak designs (mostly uncontrolled pre–post), constraining causal inference (Ensafdaran et al., 2019). This evidence suggests that ART's theory and content are plausible and skill-focused, but that fidelity, evaluation design and independence have often been inadequate, undermining strong claims about recidivism effects.

ART in Australia

In Australia, Currie and colleagues (2009) piloted ART in a Victorian youth justice custodial centre with five 17- to 18-year-old males over 10 weeks. Participants self-reported significant reductions in overall aggression and improved social skills, however there was no change in antisocial cognitive distortions. The authors noted the absence of a comparison group and the very small sample. They recommended further research with larger, controlled designs (Currie et al., 2009). A subsequent two-year longitudinal study involved 20 aggressive young men (mean age = 19.6) in the same setting (Currie et al., 2012). Participants reported significant reductions in aggression, hostile cognitions and impulsivity and some improvement in social problem solving, maintained at 24 month follow up, but case worker ratings of antisocial behaviour did not show significant change. The study lacked a robust control group despite attempts to establish a wait list comparison. The authors concluded that ART had initial support for clinical usefulness and cultural applicability in an Australian youth justice context but again stressed the need for randomised controlled trials and independent measures.

ART has also been embedded in community based early intervention for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth in Queensland. A program review of four Indigenous crime prevention and diversion programs found that one used ART as its core model, aiming to teach alternatives to aggression, improve anger control and strengthen family and community relationships (Stewart et al., 2014).

Short term outcomes such as improved anger control and better peer/family relations were identified and suggested to lead to reduced adverse youth justice contact and increased community safety (Stewart et al., 2014). Formal outcome evaluations of these Queensland programs have not been published, and implementation occurred amid high levels of disadvantage and trauma. Both Pooley (2020) and Steward et al. (2014) stress that effective programs for Indigenous youth must be culturally grounded and co designed, with community ownership and attention to identity and healing. Applying ART in Indigenous contexts requires substantial partnership to avoid cultural mismatch and fidelity to both core mechanisms and local priorities.

These Australian studies illustrate promise and limitations of ART (Currie et al., 2009; 2012). Overall, ART remains a prominent structured program for aggressive youth, particularly in justice settings, but current evidence supports cautious, context sensitive adoption embedded within broader multi system strategies and strong evaluation designs, rather than promotion as a stand-alone solution.

The Good Lives Model (GLM) and Strength-Based Prevention

The Good Lives Model (GLM) is suggested to be a complementary strength-based approach emphasising helping individuals secure a better life (referred to as "primary goods"; e.g., relatedness, autonomy, inner peace, knowledge, mastery) through prosocial ways, thereby boosting protective factors (Ward & Brown, 2004). Rather than viewing young people as risk carriers, GLM theory proposes that most people aspire for a good or better life (Fortune, 2018; Ward & Brown, 2004). From a Pooley (2020) standpoint, GLM enriches program theory by enhancing protective factors (e.g., personal strengths, resilience, social support, quality of life), and aligns with her emphasis on positive practitioner-client relationships, cultural responsiveness, and flexibility.

GLM has been delivered to young people, showing reductions in recidivism and improved wellbeing **when integrated** with RNR principles (such as reducing antisocial beliefs and reducing anti-social peer friendships). Van Damme et al. (2021) applied GLM to a cohort of formerly detained female adolescents (mean age = 20.8) followed up four years post youth detention. They examined internal resources (personal resilience) and external resources (interpersonal support) as GLM "goods" and their associations with quality of life (QoL) and post release offending. Hierarchical regressions showed that higher personal resilience was significantly associated with higher QoL and lower offending, while greater interpersonal support predicted higher QoL (but not offending) after controlling for background factors (Van Damme et al., 2021). The relationship between resilience and QoL/offending did not depend on the level of support; rather, resilience emerged as a key protective factor, with social support contributing mainly to subjective wellbeing.

GLM implications for early intervention

Although Van Damme and colleagues' study (2021) concerns post detention young women, its implications apply broadly: early interventions that systematically cultivate resilience, emotion regulation, prosocial goals and supportive relationships may prevent the consolidation of antisocial identities and trajectories that later require tertiary GLM informed rehabilitation (Farrington & Malvaso, 2023; Fortune, 2018; Molinedo-Quílez, 2020). Regardless of whether it is used as the primary methodology, GLM principles can thus inform early intervention by:

- Framing program theory around helping young people achieve developmentally appropriate "goods" (belonging, mastery at school, safety, cultural identity), not only suppressing risk (Van Damme et al., 2021).
- Emphasising practitioner-client relationships and collaborative goal setting, which Pooley (2020) identifies as central to effectiveness.
- Encouraging flexibility and cultural tailoring, so that "good lives" are defined with families and communities rather than imposed.

Section 6.2 Summary

The broader literature, reviewed above suggests that early intervention for antisocial and delinquent behaviour is most promising when:

- Structural reforms such as raising the MACR prevent criminogenic early system contact and are complemented by robust family, school, and community interventions (Fowler & Kurlychek, 2018; McAra & McVie, 2023; Trevitt & Browne, 2020).
- School linked programs (e.g., PATHS, Fast Track, Pathways) are used to build social emotional skills, strengthen parenting, and improve school engagement, especially for high-risk children in disadvantaged communities, with adequate dosage and strong fidelity (Bor, 2004; Welsh et al., 2024; Sallybanks, 2003).
- Targeted CBT packages such as ART and ReBoot are used judiciously with moderate- to high-risk adolescents and most effective when embedded in multi system strategies and subject to rigorous, independent evaluation (Brännström et al., 2016; Currie et al., 2012; Ensfdaran et al., 2019; Lyneham et al., 2018; Stewart et al., 2014).
- Strength based frameworks like GLM inform the design of early interventions that cultivate resilience, positive life goals and supportive relationships, complementing RNR's focus on risk reduction (Fortune, 2018; Van Damme et al., 2021).

6.3 Best-practice Elements to Include in Community Based Programs Aiming to Reduce Antisocial Behaviour in Young People

6.3.1 Introduction

In this section we discuss the key elements embedded in youth program content and delivery that has been effective in reducing antisocial behaviour risk and risk of reoffending/recidivism in young people over MACR. We commence by overviewing two recent Australian and world-wide meta-analytical studies that synthesised the current evidence-based for what content to include and delivery style elements for effective youth justice programs (Pappas & Dent, 2021; Pooley, 2020).

Pooley's nine components for effective youth justice programs

In a recent Australian Institute of Criminology review examining effectiveness of youth justice programs, 44 study findings were synthesised. Pooley identified nine common components were associated with higher likelihood of effective program delivery and reduced antisocial behaviour (Pooley, 2020). **Of note**, Pooley's work expanded the earlier work of Sallybanks (2003, upon which the P180 was originally developed).

These nine program development and delivery principles are equally relevant to early intervention programs that target antisocial behaviour before a stable behaviour pattern becomes entrenched. Pooley's (2020) nine components are as follows:

1. A clear, evidence-based program theory (including program manuals)
2. Uses the RNR framework for risk and needs assessment for participant selection
3. Appropriate dosage matched to risk (does the program run for enough time to results in behaviour change matched with the level of risk each participant has)
4. Implementation fidelity (the degree to which the program is delivered as developed)
5. Cultural responsiveness towards program participants, program stakeholders and staff
6. Has strong practitioner-client relationships
7. Has multi-agency coordination and connections for referrals
8. Outcome monitoring and evaluation of results
9. Responsiveness and flexibility of program to adapt to the learning styles and risk factors for program participants and group over time

We refer to Pooley's components in more detail when we look at optimal program development theory and how effective programs are developed/delivered (using RNR and GLM) below.

Pappas and Dent's review on what works elements in effective youth justice programs

The international meta-review of Pappas and Dent (2021) synthesised 48 meta-analyses and systematic reviews covering the results from 3000 studies between 1980 to 2021. This review is the most comprehensive evidence-based for what works to reduce antisocial behaviour in younger youth and offending behaviours for young people over MACR.

Key findings were that intervention programs can reduce antisocial behaviour and recidivism risk for youth over MACR. Effective programs were able to show a significant reduction in recidivism ($r = -0.087$) which is a 17.4% decrease in criminal or antisocial behaviour compared with youth who do not receive any intervention. The authors note that although 17.4% appears modest, this is a meaningful impact for enhancing community safety that is consistent with other adult findings.

Further findings suggested that where the program is delivered makes a difference. In this review, programs delivered in institutional settings (e.g., juvenile justice detention centres) were more likely to achieve better outcomes, up to 25% reduction in recidivism, compared with community-based service providers (e.g., youth NGOs) who achieve up to a 9% reduction in antisocial behaviour, or criminal involvement for those above MACR. The authors note the differences in recidivism for justice agencies compared with community-based service providers were likely due to justice agencies being better-resourced, with higher numbers of qualified staff and more program facilities, such as program rooms. Further, that better resourced agencies are more likely to be able to run more intensive programs, use licensed and expensive structured pre- and post-program measures and risk assessment methods that underpin the RNR framework ***(RNR is discussed below, see 6.3.3).*** Pappas and Dent (2021) advocate that community programs can be strengthened to ensure program reliability and provide adequate program length (***dosage is discussed below, see 6.3.4***).

The most beneficial delivery modalities included multisystemic therapy (MST; showing the highest effectiveness rate), family-based treatments, and used Cognitive Behavioural Therapy techniques (CBT) to create attitudes changes and skills development, restorative justice programming, and lastly engaged youth in a wilderness program. These models reflected the rehabilitative, behaviour-change orientation that address criminogenic needs, using cognitive-behavioural strategies, involved families, and tailored interventions to responsivity factors. The findings also showed that the most effective programs were those which used dual-model approaches, i.e., used different types of modalities in one overarching program, and this provided the program accountability and support and produced the strongest behavioural change (Pappas & Dent, 2021).

The Risk-Need-Responsivity model of optimal program development and delivery

The most widely researched theoretical model of attitude and/or behaviour change in criminal justice and community crime prevention is the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model. The RNR has a growing number of extensive meta-analyses and reviews using pooled samples of 100,000 at-risk youth and adult offenders from Canada, the US, England and Australasia, finding that rehabilitation programs can significantly reduce antisocial behaviour, and recidivism rates for people over the age of criminal responsibility by 5 to 20% (refer Bonta & Andrews, 2023; Howells & Day, 1999).

The RNR model states that effective interventions are programs that directly target changeable needs, known as criminogenic needs (Bonta & Andrews, 2023). Criminogenic refers to risk variables directly related to why people engage in antisocial behaviour and choose antisocial over prosocial friends. Social support from peers and attitudes and beliefs that support criminal behaviour are central factors for both at-risk young people and adult offenders, as are a range of personality factors (e.g., impulsiveness, thrill-seeking, problem-solving, emotional regulation). Other factors include family functioning, substance abuse, and indicators of social achievement (e.g., staying in education and/or learning employment skills) (Farrington, 2020).

The model has three main principles, risk, needs and responsivity, which describe how and what to target in the content of a program which aims to reduce antisocial behaviour (Bonta & Andrews, 2023). These interrelated principles are as follows:

Risk principle (how to develop what the program will target)

This principal holds that agencies and community organisations need to consider the type of intervention programs they offer based on a young person's level of risk, with the most intensive services offered to young people with the highest level of risk for antisocial behaviour.

For at-risk young people this means that more program participation and follow-up post program work should be given to youth with more risk factors in their lives. Research suggests that five or more risk factors present in a young person's life increases the odds of them engaging in violent behaviour by up to 11 times (Herrenkohl et al., 2000; Lösel & Farrington, 2012).

A higher number of risk factors in a young person's life correlate with a higher risk for antisocial and or/criminal behaviour, especially violence, and being violent in company of others (Herrenkohl et al., 2000; Lösel & Farrington, 2012).

The risk principle requires two aspects be understood and adhered to for a program to be effective. *Firstly,* the number and types of risk factors in a young person's life need to be clearly identified,

measured, and understood. This is in line in Pooley's (2020) findings in components 1 and 2. In Table 1 in section 6.1, we have provided a comprehensive overview of risk factors for at-risk young people. *Secondly,* after understanding the types of risk factors present in a persons' life, this understanding then needs to be matched with the level of antisocial behaviour the person engages in, and the degree of their antisocial peer network involvement. Following this, the agency needs to look at the type of program, and the length of program (called dosage) the participant will gain the most benefit from. In general terms, the higher the number of risk factors in a person's life, combined with the higher their involvement in antisocial behaviour and antisocial peer networks, the higher their risk of future antisocial behaviour, and the longer and more intensive the program and after-program follow through is required (Bonta & Andrews, 2023; Herrenkohl et al., 2000; Lipsey, 1999; Lösel & Farrington, 2012).

Need principle (What factors to target)

This principle refers to program content and what the factors in a person's life that the program, and program staff, aim to change. Research notes that effective programs target only criminogenic needs *during the initial treatment* phase (Pooley, 2020).

Criminogenic needs comprise two distinct types, static and dynamic factors. Static factors are past risk factors that cannot be changed, such as a violent upbringing, foetal alcohol syndrome, past criminal history, past school problems, past mental health problems that are resolved. Dynamic factors are the range of personal needs and variables directly related to why people engage in antisocial behaviour (such as antisocial attitudes, high levels of risk and thrill seeking, egocentric outlook, low empathy for others, poor school attendance, high levels of substance use, poor anger/impulse control, more antisocial than pro-social friends).

Dynamic criminogenic needs are the factors that are directly targeted in successful programs that have been shown to reduce antisocial behaviour risk (Bonta & Andrews, 2023) and therefore should represent the types of risk factors in a person's life as the primary target for program content and modules of a program that aims to achieve attitude and/or behaviour change (Pooley, 2020).

Embedding GLM into follow-up programming of the need principle

In order to offer young people more holistic interventions that aim to firstly reduce dynamic criminogenic factors for young people (Needs principle), and secondly to provide young people with the opportunity to build protective factors and strengths (GLM approach, such as self-efficacy, coping skills, and resilience), there is the possibility to expand the Needs Principle to offer post program follow up using GLM principles. This approach underpins Pooley's principles. Researchers argue

this expansion should not just be optional, but central to reducing antisocial behaviour risk, and then to offer pathways to enhance life skills and a positive future (Van Damme et al., 2021). Similarly, external supports (family, peers, mentors) are crucial for quality of life and facilitate the cessation of antisocial behaviours. Finally, future evaluations should include QoL and wellbeing alongside recidivism and risk scores, which is consistent with Pooley's call for broader outcome monitoring (2020).

Responsivity principle (How to target and deliver programs)

This principle provides that program delivery is responsive to the learning styles of young participants to ensure they can benefit from their participation. This does not mean that programs' content is rewritten, but it is more about the skills of program facilitators to change how the content is delivered. This requires that staff are knowledgeable about the program, the theories that underpin the program, about the RNR (Bonta & Andrews, 2023), and GLM principles (Van Damme et al, 2021).

The seminal work on responsivity and successful program outcomes was the meta-analysis findings of Dowden and Andrews (2004) who identified key characteristics, skills and training of staff that underpinned core practice for successful program outcomes. Success was measured in terms of the ability to lower antisocial behaviour risk. These key characteristics included the use of cognitive behavioural therapeutic approaches, the effective use of authority in asking for requests, demonstrated pro-social attitude modelling, effective and pro-social problem solving, the ability to engage with other agencies to plan for a range of community resources useful for each program participant post program, and the ability to develop quality interpersonal relationships with participants. The final characteristic of good program facilitators was their ability to create and maintain open, warm and enthusiastic communication, and develop mutual respect and liking between participants and program staff (Dowden & Andrews, 2004, Lipsey, 2018).

Several of Pooley's (2020) nine components support the earlier seminal work of Dowden and Andrews (2004) for effective programs. This includes the responsivity principle, cultural approachability and sensitivity towards program participants, their families, program stakeholders and other staff, along with engagement with multi-agency connections and outreach to ensure participants have the supports they need during and after the program. Furthermore, that being responsive to how each young person learns will provide greater opportunities to foster strong working relationships between facilitators and their participants (Pooley, 2020).

Required length of a program to reduce risk of antisocial behaviour (Dosage)

As noted above, an integral part of RNR's Risk principle is that making sure people receive the correct program length (dosage) is vital (Bonta & Andrews, 2023; Simourd & Olver, 2019). The seminal research exploring program dosage for at-risk youth was the large meta-analytic study of intervention outcomes by Lipsey (1999). The main findings were when community-based programs were underpinned by RNR principles, and with a clear focus on reducing criminogenic needs, the intervention outcome showed a significant lower estimated rate of reoffending (35%). In contrast, in programs with vague program content that did not target criminogenic needs, the reoffending rates were higher at 46%. For high-risk youth who were only provided routine service with youth workers or probation officers their likelihood of reoffending was chance, with a 50% reoffending rate (Lipsey, 1999; Pappas & Dent, 2021).

In Lipsey's (2009) later work they found that program dosage was significantly associated with program success. For young people with a high risk of antisocial behaviour, the best intervention outcomes occurred when combining adherence to the three RNR principles and with a minimal duration of 6 months program dosage. With RNR and duration of 6 months or more, reoffending rates dropped by another 3%, from 35% to 32%. Reoffending rates could be reduced further to only 21% when programs combined RNR principles and 6+ months dosage and where the program was delivered by well-established community NGOs/private sector agencies, rather than a juvenile criminal justice agency.

Of note, findings by Pappas & Dent (2021) show that community-based agencies with vague program aims, unstructured programs and lower adherence to RNR principles achieve around 9% or lower change in reduced antisocial and/or criminal behaviour. Pappas and Dent (2021) advocate that community programs must be strengthened to ensure program reliability and provide adequate program length (*dosage, is discussed below, see 6.3.4*).

These results have been replicated by later research showing that higher and more intensive dosage, in terms of weeks and hours, can influence program effectiveness and reduce antisocial behaviour risk for young people who are at medium to high-risk (with a larger number of risk factors present in their lives pre-program; see Calleja et al. 2016; de Vries et al. 2015; McGuinness et al., 2017).

It is vital to stress that high dosage high intensity programs do not benefit all young people. In Pooley's (2020) review, although it is noted there is strong research support for higher risk youth being given more intensive higher intervention dosage, it is also noted that high dosage can make young people at low-risk worse. In other words, low-risk young people given high-risk dosage can result in them engaging in more antisocial behaviour after the program. For example, de Vries et al.

(2015) found that low-risk youth do better with a lower dose of intervention and this was more effective at reducing actual reoffending among low-risk offenders. This shows that higher dosages for low-risk young people can be counterproductive, even after controlling for static factors, such as age, gender, cultural background, past antisocial behaviour, or type of program, whether one-on-one, group programs, family or multimodal interventions (de Vries et al, 2015; Pappas & Dent, 2021).

The optimal level of dosage that assists lower risk young people has been found to be more a strengths-based approach, such as that described in the GLM model, that build self-esteem, confidence, pathways back to education, over an intensive 6+ months antisocial behaviour reduction program. For example, low-risk youth have been found to gain more from higher dosages of individual therapeutic interventions, such as quality mentoring programs and on-going social supports and/or therapy as required (James et al., 2021; Pooley, 2020).

Can you mix low-risk with medium- and high-risk young people in intensive programs?

Does it matter if you mix people with low, medium and high antisocial behaviour risk together in a program? ***The answer from the research to this question is that mixing risk levels can be harmful.***

The literature overviewed in 6.3.4 showed that young people at high risk of antisocial behaviour are more likely to benefit most from intensive 6+ months group antisocial behaviour reduction programs that employ RNR principles and are run by community-based organisations. Conversely, young people with a low risk of antisocial behaviour can become more antisocial if attending an intensive antisocial behaviour reduction program with young people who are at higher risk than them.

Research shows there can be adverse outcomes associated with programs that mix young people at low risk (those who have very limited involvement with antisocial behaviour and have less than five risk factors in their lives) with higher risk youth (history of involvement in antisocial and/or criminal behaviour, possible use of violence, antisocial conduct with friends/family, combined with five or more criminogenic risk factors; Herrenkohl et al., 2000; Pappas & Dent, 2021; Pooley, 2020).

It is suggested this occurs because when we take young people with fewer of the risk factors noted in Table 1 in their lives, they are by definition fairly prosocial (if they were not prosocial they would not be low-risk), and then if placed in an intensive 6+ month program with higher-risk youth, we disrupt the social factors that make them low-risk. Take the example of a young person who is experiencing difficulties at home but has no history of violence, very low antisocial behaviour, no antisocial friends but is playing out, skipping school, and shoplifting. If their main risk is a family problem and truancy, then risk will not be lowered by allocating them to a 6+ month program with

high-risk youth, rather a strengths-based approach has been shown to be more effective compared to introducing them to high-risk young people (Archer & Flexon, 2021; Opp, 2020).

The meta-review findings of Pappas & Dent (2021) also support that mixing high with low-risk youth can be detrimental. Based on social learning theory, when interventions place youth into the same program without considering risk levels, the lower risk youth may adopt behaviours, attitudes, or networks from higher risk peers, thereby elevating (rather than reducing) recidivism risk (Archer & Flexon, 2021; Opp. 2020). Therefore, the most effective programs are those that allocate young people into interventions based on their criminogenic needs and level of antisocial behaviour risk, rather than program allocation based on whether there is space in a program. Mixing groups means low-risk young people receive interventions that are not developed or suitable for them, further reducing potential benefits.

In sum, a one-size-fits-all allocation to program is not the most optimal. For young people at high risk of antisocial behaviour, research shows that participating in an intensive antisocial behaviour reduction program employing RNR principles is effective (de Vries et al. 2015; Pooley, 2020). For lower-risk young people, a strengths-based/GLM approach, such as after-hours programs, mentoring or group adventure programs are most appropriate. However, these strengths-based/GLM approaches can also be beneficial for high-risk youth as a post-program supplement to the intensive program, with the aim to provide support for maintenance of the intensive program gains and provide pathways to a positive future (James et al., 2021; Van Damme et al., 2021; Pooley, 2020).

Measuring pre intervention risk level before program allocation risk assessment

As discussed in section 6.3.5, low-risk youth should be identified and then excluded, as a general rule, from higher intensity antisocial behaviour reduction programs. This is because more intensive group programs can be more detrimental than helpful to this population.

Risk assessment is the method used to understand the types of risk and protective factors that a young person has in their lives. Depending on the risk assessment used, the results from an evidence-based assessment can help to (a) understand the program areas and the strengths a young person brings before a program commences, and (b) assign an antisocial behaviour risk level, often low, moderate/medium, or high risk (Bonta & Andrews, 2023; Vincent, Guy & Grisso, 2012). The results from a risk assessment are completed at a minimum of two time points. Time 1, pre-program (to assign a risk level, understand the types of risk present and assign participants to the appropriate intervention) and Time 2, post-program (to measure change in risk factors with the aim of having a reduced risk level post intervention). Risk assessment is an integral and key aspect of ensuing that

RNR principles are adhered to. The types of variables measured in risk assessments can be seen below in Figure 1.

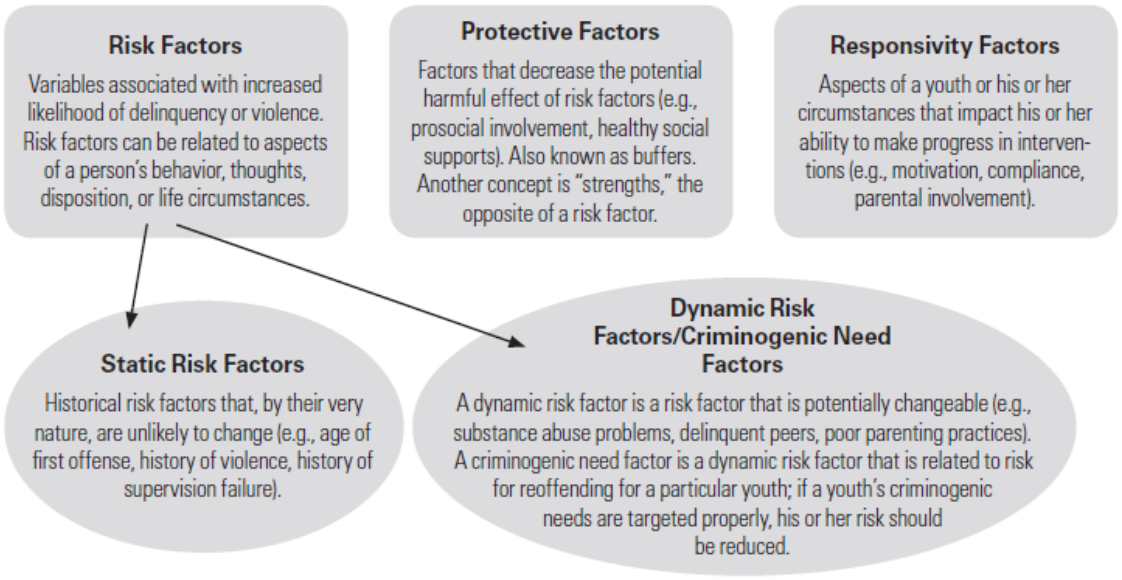


Figure 1. Framework for understanding types of factors measured in a holistic risk assessment, including dynamic and static risk factors, protective factors, resilience/responsibility/strengths factors (Vincent, Guy & Grisso, 2012, p. 31).

An example of a commonly used risk assessment in Australia

Common risk assessments for young people include the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory 2.0 (YLS/CMI 2.0), (Hoge, 2021). An Australian version, The YLS/CMI-AA, has been developed and validated and used in NSW justice agencies since 2001 (McGrath et al., 2018). This validated assessment tool used to predict general reoffending in young people aged 12 to 18. It can be used in justice and community-based settings. Although it originally designed to measure juvenile offending it can still be used for youth aged under the MACR. The scale measures eight areas: prior and current offenses (five items; e.g., "Number of prior convictions"), education (six items; e.g., "Low academic achievement"), leisure and recreation (three items; e.g., "No interests or hobbies"), peer relationships (four items; e.g., "Association with delinquent peers"), substance use (five items; e.g., "Chronic drug use"), family and parenting (six items; e.g., "Poor relationship with mother"), attitudes (five items; e.g., "Actively rejecting help"), and personality (seven items; e.g., "Physically aggressive"). The assessment is completed through a semi-structured interview. Each item is scored as either 0 (no risk) or 1 (risk present). The scores are added together to form a total score, which is then used to classify the young person as low (0–8), moderate/medium (9–22), or high (23–42) risk. The YLS/CMI-AA requires case managers to receive training on scoring and application. The assessment is licenced and a fee is payable for the manuals.

Recidivism as a problematic or misleading outcome measure

Recidivism has long been considered the primary outcome measure to assess the effectiveness of antisocial behaviour or juvenile offending programs. Despite the widespread use, it is not always the most optimal measure of program success (Kennedy et al., 2024).

Variations in how recidivism is measured creates inconsistencies in success outcomes. For example, adopting new arrests as the recidivism outcome measure will result in higher recidivism rates than using return to detention, or breach of orders, as the recidivism measure. Second, the length of follow-up can be critical. For most young people involved in juvenile justice, a two-or three-year follow-up is sufficient; however, for some juveniles, such as violent or sex juvenile offenders, a much longer follow-up is needed to adequately gauge recidivism. Third, recidivism rates can be influenced by both internal and external factors. For example, juvenile justice and /or community justice agencies can change policies, such as increasing drug testing, which in turn can result in breach of court orders (internal), or breach of orders due to skipping justice agency meetings, even if no offences or antisocial behaviour has been engaged in (technical breach), or police departments focusing on specific types of crimes such as random breath tests (external; Spiranovic et al., 2015).

Given the problems with using a quantitative approach taking recidivism alone as the measure of program success, contemporary researchers are taking a mixed methods approaches to outcomes for at-risk young people (Kennedy et al., 2024; Spiranovic et al, 2015). These approaches use quantitative data (arrests, reconviction, imprisonments, substance testing, psychometric test results) combined with qualitative data to add richness and understanding to how and why programs can have successful intermediate and long-term outcomes.

Recommendations for other outcome measures can include a range of options, presented overleaf (Kennedy et al., 2024; Spiranovic et al, 2015). General outcome measures can include:

- Reductions in dynamic risk/need assessment scores on actuarial risk measures
- Changes in pre-/post-measures, such as improvement in psychometric assessment test scores measuring attitudes, state anger, problem-solving, behaviours, etc
- Changes in problem areas (e.g. drug test results)
- Completion of behavioural objectives (meeting treatment plan)
- Substance abuse reduction and days of abstinence

Strengths based outcome measures can include:

- Educational outcomes, such as return to school, improvement in teachers reports and school-based achievement tests, completion of certificates or courses
- Improvements in mental and physical health: self-report (coping, anger, feelings, reactions, general distress, energy, activity level, sleep), carer/parents report,
- Short reports from health care providers
- Cognitive risk/protective factors: perspective taking, problem-solving, tool-belt for coping with disrespect/wrongdoing (attitudes of "hitting them is all they'll understand" vs "not worth my time and effort", tolerance of violence as a strategy, retributive punitive justice attitudes)
- Participants in some form of paid work, or actively looking for work, or actively engaged/looking for training places/apprenticeships.
- Participants maintaining stable accommodation or stable living arrangements with family/carers
- Number of program participants with improving family relationships
- Number of participants meeting any legal requirements (meeting with lawyers, appearing in court, reporting to community corrections officers, meeting program conditions)

This is supplemented by qualitative and survey data about the program:

- Interviews/focus groups with program participants and Program facilitators
- Interviews/focus groups with community justice agencies (as required)
- Interviews with program participants families, career, partners where possible
- Interviews/focus group with providers connected to the program who also offer strengths-based aspects of the program, such as education, training, wilderness/sporting providers.
- Surveys with stakeholders such as police, justice, legal practitioners.

Please note this list is not exhaustive but offers an initial focus for developing and considering the methods that can be used to evaluate the success of program like the CPCYC P180.

Section 6.3.2 Summary of Key Best-Practice Elements

This section outlined the key elements of effective youth programs designed to reduce antisocial behaviour and reoffending among young people above the Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility (MACR). Two major reviews, Pooley (2020) in Australia and the international meta-review by Pappas and Dent (2021), provide strong evidence for key elements in program content and delivery.

Pooley (2020) identified nine components associated with improved outcomes, including having a clear program theory, using validated risk-need assessment tools, ensuring appropriate program dosage, maintaining implementation fidelity, cultural responsiveness, strong practitioner-client relationships, multi-agency coordination, outcome monitoring, and responsivity to learning styles. These principles apply to both justice programs and early-intervention settings.

Pappas and Dent's (2021) meta-review found that youth interventions can reduce antisocial behaviour and recidivism by around 17%. Institutional programs showed stronger effects than community programs, partly because they work with higher-risk youth, use structured Risk-Need-Responsivity approaches (Bonta & Andrews, 2023). Effective modalities are multisystemic therapy (MST), family-based programs, cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT), restorative justice, and wilderness programs, with dual-model approaches producing the most effective results.

The RNR model emphasises matching program intensity to risk, and targeting dynamic criminogenic needs such as attitudes, peer associations, impulsivity, and substance use (Bonta & Andrews, 2023; Simourd & Olver, 2019). Responsivity requires skilled facilitators who model prosocial behaviour and engage youth effectively (Dowden & Andrews, 2004).

Program dosage is critical: high-risk youth benefit from intensive 6-month plus programs (Lipsey, 2009), while high doses can increase antisocial behaviour among low-risk participants (de Vries et al., 2015; Pooley, 2020). Mixing low- and high-risk youth can lead to negative peer influence and worse outcomes (Pappas & Dent, 2021; Archer & Flexon, 2021).

Accurate risk assessment tools such as the YLS/CMI-AA support appropriate program allocation (Hoge, 2021; Thompson et al., 2013).

Finally, recidivism can be an incomplete outcome measure. Contemporary evaluation incorporates changes in dynamic risk, education, wellbeing, and qualitative feedback (Kennedy et al., 2024; Spiranovic et al., 2015).

Evaluation Aim 5: Process Evaluation Part 1

7. Evaluation Aim 5: Part 1 – Development of an Evidence-Based Checklist to Measure Best-Practice Elements for At-Risk and Youth Diversion Program content and Delivery (To be Used as a Tool for Process evaluation)

Evaluation Aim 5 was to use the findings from the desktop review (presented in section 6) to develop an evidence-based checklist that could measure best-practice program content and delivery elements that underpin effective early intervention and youth diversion programs.

This checklist will be used to evaluate how the P180 program content and delivery compare with best-practice, and to provide future recommendations for any program enhancements identified.

The development of the process evaluation checklist is presented below. The full blank checklist can be seen in Appendix D. The findings from the process evaluation using the checklist are presented in section 8.

7.1 The Rationale for and Development of An Early Intervention/Diversion Program Delivery (AEIPD) Checklist

The AEIPD is a specifically developed 20-item checklist that can assess how closely an early intervention and/or diversion program for at-risk young people is delivered in line with evidence of best-practice.

The rationale for developing the AEIPD Checklist was to provide an evidence-based and a standardised method and scoring framework to assess whether at-risk early intervention/diversion programs for young people follow best-practice elements in their content and delivery methods. For example, whether the program was developed using a sound theoretical framework, targets criminogenic risk and needs principles (RNR model), has adequate program length (dosage), provides program facilitator training where facilitators can built strong working relationships with participants, and provides a strength based/GLM approach to develop holistic wellbeing and skills in participants, and has concrete post-program assistance to assist participants in pursuing prosocial future pathways.

7.2 Why Carry Out a Process Evaluation?

A robust and comprehensive internal or external process evaluation is an essential component of any new initiative or existing program (Kelty, 2017). Assessment of program content and delivery is key for quality management in community based and public sector agencies (Vito & Higgins, 2014).

A *process evaluation* is a robust analysis of the effectiveness of program operations and service delivery (Goldsworthy, 2021). This type of evaluation asks a range of questions as follows:

- Was the program content delivered as intended?
- Does the program have an underlying behaviour change theory to drive the content?
- Were all the program sessions delivered as per the program manual?
- How were participants selected and drawn from the population group the program was designed for?
- Does staff training align with the program requirements?

It is widely recommended that a process evaluation be undertaken by independent and external assessors, preferably with expertise in the field, to ensure the appropriate level of objectivity (Vito & Higgins, 2014). Although it is recommended that the evaluation be carried out by external experts, this may not always be possible due to confidentiality, privacy issues, and cost. Where this arises, an internal process evaluation by the organisation running the program or initiative is warranted and can be robust, provided that a good methodology is used based on evidence-based best practice (Conley-Tyler, 2005; Kelty, 2017).

7.3 Summary of The Evidence Used in the AEIPD Questions

This summary overviews key findings on what works in reducing antisocial behaviour for at-risk youth, and reoffending for young people above the MACR. It draws on two major systematic reviews (Pappas & Dent, 2021; Pooley, 2020), and is situated within the RNR intervention framework, with the complementary GLM extension. It also outlines evidence on program dosage, mixing young people at different risk, risk assessment, and the limitations of recidivism as an outcome measure.

Overall, the evidence base strongly supports structured, RNR-aligned, culturally responsive, risk-matched, well-delivered programs, complemented by strengths-based follow-up. These elements, when combined with high-quality assessment and evaluation, offer the most reliable approach for reducing antisocial behaviour among youth.

Evidence reviews: What works

Pooley's (2020) Australian Institute of Criminology review synthesised 44 studies and identified nine key components linked to effective youth justice and early intervention programs. These include; (1) clear, evidence-based program theory (including program manuals), (2) uses RNR assessment and targeting of appropriate participants, (3), appropriate dosage matched to risk, (4) implementation fidelity (the degree to which the program is delivered as developed), (5) cultural responsiveness towards program participants, program stakeholders and staff, (6) has strong practitioner-client relationships, (7) multi-agency coordination and connections for referrals, (8) has outcome monitoring and evaluation of results, (9) flexibility of program to adapt to the learning styles and risk factors for program participants and group over time.

Pappas and Dent (2021) conducted an international meta-review covering approximately 3,000 studies. They found that youth interventions reduce antisocial behaviour and recidivism by about 17%, which is a meaningful reduction consistent with adult rehabilitation findings. Programs delivered in institutional settings showed stronger effects (up to 25% reductions) than community programs (around 9%), largely due to justice agencies working with higher-risk youth, with better staffing and resources for longer programs, access to risk assessment methods, allowing for adherence to the structured RNR framework.

Effective modalities and program types identified include Multisystemic Therapy (MST), family-based interventions, cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT), restorative justice, strengths-based approaches, and wilderness/adventure programs. Dual-modality approaches were found to achieve the strongest behavioural change for at-risk young people.

The RNR model for effective intervention programs

The RNR model is the most researched and validated approach for reducing criminal and antisocial behaviour among youth and adults (Bonta & Andrews, 2023). Its three principles are risk, needs, and responsivity.

The risk principle emphasises that program intensity should match a young person's level of antisocial behaviour risk. Youth with multiple co-occurring risk factors, such as antisocial peers, substance use, impulsivity, family dysfunction, or poor school connection, are at significantly increased risk of chronic antisocial behaviour, especially risk of using violence (Herrenkohl et al., 2000; Lösel & Farrington, 2012). Effective programs identify these risks through systematic assessment and match program length and intensity to the young person's criminogenic needs (Bonta & Andrews, 2023; Lipsey, 1999).

The needs principle focuses on addressing dynamic (aka, changeable) criminogenic needs that influence and /or contribute directly to antisocial behaviour. These include antisocial attitudes, poor emotional regulation, impulsivity, egocentrism, thrill-seeking, substance use, and anti-social peer friendships and networks. Targeting these factors is associated with meaningful reductions in antisocial behaviour (Bonta & Andrews, 2023; Simourd & Olver, 2019).

The responsivity principle emphasises delivery approaches tailored to young people's learning styles. Effective facilitators demonstrate strong interpersonal skills, prosocial modelling, problem-solving, and the effective use of authority (Dowden & Andrews, 2004). Cultural responsiveness is essential, as is the ability to engage participants in warm, respectful, and motivational ways (Pooley, 2020).

Integrating the GLM

While RNR focuses on reducing risk, the Good Lives Model (GLM) provides a strengths-based extension that supports wellbeing, resilience, and long-term desistance from antisocial behaviour (Van Damme et al., 2021). GLM-oriented follow-up as a component of RNR-based programs can help youth build positive identities, improve coping, reconnect with education, and develop prosocial relationships. Including wellbeing and quality-of-life measures in program evaluation is in line with Pooley (2020).

Dosage: Matching program length to risk

Evidence consistently shows that program length (dosage) is a key factor in program success. Lipsey's (1999) meta-analysis found that community programs aligned with RNR principles reduced reoffending to 35%, compared with 46% for unstructured programs and 50% for routine services. Lipsey (2009) later demonstrated that for high-risk youth, programs lasting six months or longer significantly improve outcomes. Further reductions occur when such programs are delivered by well-established community organisations.

However, high-dosage programs are not effective for all youth. Research shows that high doses can harm low-risk participants, increasing antisocial behaviour through negative peer influence and inappropriate intervention intensity (de Vries et al., 2015; Pooley, 2020). High-risk young people benefit from 6+ months of intensive programs aiming to reduce criminogenic risk, followed by structured GLM supports to assist in pathways towards a prosocial future. Low-risk youth benefit more from more strengths-based, GLM-informed supports such as mentoring, coaching, and targeted individual therapeutic interventions (James et al., 2021).

Risk Group Mixing: Why It Should Be Avoided

Evidence shows that mixing low-risk and high-risk youth in intensive programs is usually counterproductive. Low-risk youth may be negatively influenced by higher-risk peers, consistent with social learning theory (Archer & Flexon, 2021; Opp, 2020). High-risk youth benefit from intensive RNR-aligned programs, but low-risk youth typically require supportive, strengths-based, lower-intensity interventions (Pappas & Dent, 2021; Herrenkohl et al., 2000).

Risk Assessment for Allocation and Evaluation

Evidence-based risk assessments are essential for ensuring appropriate program allocation. Tools such as the Australian YLS/CMI-AA assess static and dynamic risk factors across domains including prior offences, peer relationships, family functioning, attitudes, school performance, and substance use (Hoge, 2021; Thompson et al., 2013). Assessments should be completed pre-program for allocation and post-program to track changes in risk and attitudes/behaviour change (Bonta & Andrews, 2023; Vincent, Guy, & Grisso, 2012).

Evaluating Success: Beyond Recidivism data

Recidivism is widely used but is a limited outcome measure due to inconsistencies in definitions, follow-up timeframes, and variability driven by policing or policy practices rather than actual behaviour (Kennedy et al., 2024; Spiranovic et al., 2015). Contemporary evaluation uses mixed methods, combining quantitative measures (risk score reductions, substance use testing, psychometric changes) with qualitative data (interviews, focus groups, facilitator observations). Broader strengths-based outcomes include education engagement, employment, wellbeing, stable housing, improved family relationships, and legal compliance for youth over the MACR and as required.

Summary of risk and protective factors for at-risk young people

This summary outlines the main risk factors contributing to antisocial behaviour and the protective factors that buffer against antisocial behaviour (Bonta & Andrews, 2023; Farrington, 2020).

Individual level factors

At an individual level, impulsivity, sensation-seeking, low empathy and difficulties with emotional regulation make antisocial behaviour more likely (Burt, 2022; van Goozen et al., 2021; Nasaescu et al., 2023). Problems with thinking skills, including low verbal ability and poor problem-solving, also increase risk (Lösel et al., 2025; Moffitt, 2018). Young people who start engaging in antisocial behaviour early, especially before age 14, are at the highest risk of continuing long-term (Farrington, 2020; Moffitt, 2018; Kim et al., 2021). In contrast, strong cognitive skills, good self-control, an easy temperament and positive attitudes act as protective factors (Archer & Flexon, 2021; Werner, 1997).

Family level factors

Family environments strongly influence behaviour. Harsh or inconsistent discipline, low parental supervision and high levels of conflict or violence in the home significantly increased risk (Farrington, 2020; Molinedo-Quílez, 2020). Adverse Childhood Experiences such as neglect or abuse are closely linked to more serious and persistent antisocial behaviour (Craig et al., 2023; Kim et al., 2021). Parental criminal behaviour also increases risk across generations (Farrington & Malvaso, 2023). Protective family factors include warm, stable relationships with caregivers, consistent and fair parenting, strong supervision and lower parental stress (Herrenkohl et al., 2000; Kim et al., 2016).

School level factors

School experiences play an important role as well. Low academic performance, poor school connection and frequent absenteeism increase the likelihood of later antisocial behaviour (Herrenkohl et al., 2000; Sallybanks, 2003). Exclusionary discipline, such as suspension, can worsen outcomes (Halls & Edwards, 2025; Sprott et al., 2005). On the positive side, academic achievement, motivation, strong study skills and supportive relationships with teachers help protect against harmful behaviour (Losel & Farrington, 2012; Halls & Edwards, 2025). A strong bond with school is particularly protective for young people facing many other risks (Kim et al., 2016).

Peers network level factors

Peer influence is one of the strongest predictors of adolescent antisocial behaviour (Maness et al., 2024). Spending time with antisocial peers reinforces harmful behaviour, especially when young people socialise without adult supervision (Archer et al., 2022; Hoeben & Weerman, 2016). This influence is even stronger for young people who began offending early (Kim et al., 2021). At the same time, friendships with prosocial peers can reduce the likelihood of violence and help counteract negative peer pressure (Walters, 2020; Losel & Farrington, 2012).

Community level factors

Community environments also shape risk. Living in disadvantaged or disorganised neighbourhoods, with high crime, weak social control or limited resources, raises the likelihood of antisocial behaviour (Farrington, 2020; Herrenkohl et al., 2000). Easy access to drugs or local crime increases risk further (Herrenkohl et al., 2000). In some studies, urban living is linked with more severe or repeated offending (Bergseth & Bouffard, 2007). However, community disadvantage tends to affect young people with otherwise low risk more strongly, while those with high individual risk often offend regardless of environment (Wikström & Loeber, 2000). Supportive, cohesive communities with positive adult role models and available services help protect young people and encourage prosocial pathways (Development Services Group, 2015; Lösel & Farrington, 2012).

Evaluation Aim 5: Findings from the Process Evaluation

8. Evaluation Aim 5: Part 2: Using the AEIPD Checklist to Explore How the P180 Compares to Best Practice Content and Program Delivery

Evaluation Aim 5, Part 2, involves using the developed checklist outlined in section 7, to assess how the P180 program run by the CPCYC compares with best practice in the content and delivery methods of early intervention and diversion programs for at-risk young people.

A blank copy of the AEIPD Checklist can be seen in Appendix D.

Completion of the AEIPD was carried out on Monday 16th March 2026 at the CPCYC. The AEIPD comprises the method used to carry out the process evaluation of the CPCYC P180 Program.

The completed checklist with notes for each question is presented in section 8.2 overleaf. To highlight the scoring and notes taken for each of the 20 questions, the responses are presented in blue font for ease of reading.

A summary of the process evaluation findings is presented in section 8.3, and how these findings align with the six focus areas of the draft Youth Justice Strategic Plan for 2026-2031 in the ACT is presented in section 8.4

8.1 Process Evaluation Findings Using the AEIPD Checklist.

8.1.1 Layout and Scoring of the AEIPD Checklist.

The AEIPD uses a mixed method approach to review, assess and measure optimal features of community-based at-risk early intervention/youth diversion programs.

Within the checklist are 20 quantitative questions with space under each question for qualitative notes on specific aspects or features of the program or the program facilitators. These notes provide space for excellence in service delivery and/or possible areas for amendments or program enhancements. Questions are scored by ticking or numbering the most suitable answer for each item. Once the quantitative items have been ticked there is an option to calculate a total process evaluation score.

Space is also provided at the end of the checklist for an overall summary notation and can be useful for recording future directions to enhance program delivery.

Scoring the quantitative items of the AEIPD.

	Feature not met score= 0	Feature partially met = 1	Feature fully met score = 2
1. Does the program provide a comprehensive theory manual (for fully met, the manual must be current using current literature)?			
2. Are program goals and aims clearly stated in the manual?			

Each quantitative item/question, as shown in the above example is scored by placing a tick or number inside one of three boxes provided according to the scoring key below.

Scoring key

Feature not met (no system/method in place to meet this feature) …….. (Score = 0)
Feature partially met (key elements present but requires improvement) …….. (Score = 1)
Feature almost or fully met (key elements present, at least 80% present) …….. (Score = 2)
(Not applicable items are not scored or counted in the final total score)

At the end of the questions is the section for calculating the total score and with space for a summary and additional notes and program future recommendations.

Descriptions of the scoring key

Some items on first consideration may appear yes/no; however, each item can be scored as follows:

Feature not met refers to the aspect being measured not yet being implemented or not having been established. For example, when scoring item 2, it is possible that although there is a comprehensive theory manual, inside the manual the aims and goals are not clearly stated. In this case the score would be 'Feature not met'. **Of note**, when a 'feature not met' is ticked this can raise a possible future direction for a community-based organisation to consider. The reasons may be due to operational or budget constraints that prevented this feature being implemented at the present time. Please use the notes section under each item to detail why. These notes can be useful when writing up your report, or they can be useful later if further audits or program evaluations are carried out.

Feature partially met is ticked when a feature is present, but the full elements of the feature are not present. For example, in item 2, it is possible that the program theory manual was developed for the program, however on closer inspection the program itself may only be 2 years old, but the manual is using an evidence base that is 15 years old. As evidence can change over time, you cannot be confident that the manual is accurate or that the program is based on current knowledge. ***As above, when a 'feature partially met' is ticked*** this can raise awareness of future directions for program enhancements in the future.

Ticks in this box can also raise awareness of where a community-based organisation can discuss enhancements with external organisations to help develop new measures or program tools. A tick in this box does not imply improvement MAY be possible in the foreseeable future; the key is to raise the issue and note possible solutions for future enhancements.

Feature almost/fully met is ticked when most of the elements being measured are present and the aspect is close or very close to being delivered according to 'best-practice' as outlined in the 2026 desktop review of current best-practice in this area. Scores in this box can be 2 points for fully met, and 1.5 points for almost met.

Bonta and Andrews (2023) argue that many evaluation assessment tools measure the 'ideal program delivery' and that achieving around a score of 80% of best-practice features being met is considered as adherence to 'good practice'.

A score of 80% on the AEIPD is 32 out of the 40 available points. This score would show that the program has many features of good service delivery and good program content and demonstrates adherence to good practice.

8.2 AEIPD Questions with Notes Completed as Part of the Process Evaluation

Evaluator, facilitator, and supervisor details

The following details are to be completed by the program assessor

Name of person completing the AEIDP. Dr Sally Kelty

Name of program being assessed Project P180, CPCYC.

Program type/ category At-risk early intervention/diversionary program for youth aged 12 to 18

Program delivery dates in this evaluation (commencing) 01/01/2023 (ending) 31/12/2025

Date/s AEIPD checklist completed 16/03/2026

Program clinical/professional counsellor and /or supervision

Gender of clinical/professional supervisor (please circle or placed inside A box) Male AND Female

Occupation of clinical/professional supervisor (circle OR box) psychologist / counsellor/ social worker / other – if other please state_____

Qualifications of supervisor (circle or box) TAFE or VET / undergraduate / post-grad diploma / post-grad master's / PhD

Notes

Clinical Master's students on practicum placement from the University of Canberra (UC) and Dr of Counselling students from the Australian National University

_____

Notes

Current professional registration of supervisor (inc. name of professional registration board)

Provisionally registered Clinical Psychologist with the Psychology Board of Australia through The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA).

_____

Detail any training in this program the supervisor has undertaken

Clinical psychology students from UC also complete their placements at CPCYC are aware and understand the aims of the programs that run.

_____

Years of and experience supervising this, or other, at-risk youth programs

_Not Sure_____

Type of supervision/debrief provided to program facilitators during program delivery to date (e.g., distance, face to face)

Daily in the afternoon for session de-briefs, one-on-one sessions provided for all staff members

AEIPD Program Delivery Questions

Pooley's components, RNR principles and participant selection and dosage elements for best-practice	Feature not met = 0	Feature partially met = 1	Feature is fully or almost met Score range 1.5 to 2
1. Is the program underpinned by a clear evidence-based theory with a current comprehensive theory manual?			**2**

Item 1. Notes

The program is underpinned by evidence-based research from the Australian Institute of Criminology exploring what works for the development and delivery of effective youth justice programs. The program theory adheres to the work of Sallybanks (2003) and Pooley (2020) and confirms with most of the principles of the RNR model by Bonta and Andrews (2023) combined with GLM aspects (Van Damme et al., 2021; Ward & Brown, 2004).

This feature is fully met.

2. Are program goals and aims clearly stated in the manual?			**2**

Item 2. Notes

The aims of the P180 are clearly stated in the Project Guidelines (attached to this report as Appendix A). The P180 has three main aims, they are stated as:

- To support young people living in the ACT, who are at risk of offending, involved in the youth justice system, or disengaged from education, or are facing adversities solely or within the family setting.
- P180 aims to reduce recidivist offending behaviour and increase community connections in vulnerable young people.
- The program seeks to improve the lives of participants in the short-term and long-term by minimizing the risk of future offending, poverty, and other vulnerabilities. The program aims to reduce the likelihood of future offenses, poverty, and other vulnerabilities to enhance participants' lives over the long run.

This feature is fully met.

3. Uses the RNR framework for risk and needs assessment for participant selection to program?		**1**	

Item 3. Notes

The program facilitators and case managers at the CPCYC do not use a standardised framework to measure the risk levels of participants, such as Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory 2.0, although noted this is a licensed pay by use test that involves considerable costs associated with pay per use forms and staff training.

The staff use a mix of police reports, an intake assessment form, and case notes from participant interviews prior to placing a young person in the P180.

This feature is partially met.

The use of police reports and intake assessments is useful for gaining an understanding of participants, but the intake assessment could be enhanced by minor revision. This will form one of the evaluation future recommendations.

4. Are participants assessed for risk level before being included in the program? How is risk measured, how many factors and protective factors are measured?		**1**	

Item 4. Notes

As noted in question 3, although standardised risk assessments are not completed, the CPCYC have in-house practices that look at some of the risk factors in a young person's life, the intake assessments cover some risk factors.

This feature is partially met.

Enhancements could be made with a more in-depth risk assessment methods, such as using the Table 1, in section 6, to explore a fuller set of risks and protective factors in a young person's life.

5. Program time has appropriate dosage matched to risk. Does the program run for enough time to result in behaviour change? Is behaviour change measured in detail?			**2**

Item 5. Notes

The dosage of P180 is intensive face-to-face time with program facilitators and case managers, 4 days each week, over a 20-week period. At the end of the 20 weeks, case managers assist participants to develop relapse prevention plans. Where P180 participants have ongoing needs, they are provided with access to mentoring and outreach from CPCYC staff and are assisted with referrals to health, education, training, and other social services programs (refer questions 12 for a full overview). Although evidence states programs should be 6+ months, the throughcare and relapse prevention and outreach at the end of the P180 provides for the additional month in terms of programming.

This feature is fully met.

6. Are low- and high-risk young people included in the same program?			**2**

Item 4. Notes

The CPCYC have in-house procedures to allocate low risk youth into mentoring and outreach, and only higher risk youth are placed into P180. **This allocation is in line with evidence-based practice**. Youth with fewer risk factors and less entrench antisocial behaviour patterns are placed into GLM strengths-based options and youths with higher number of risks and more entrenched behavioural problems are placed in P180.

This feature is fully or almost met.

7. What criminogenic needs are targeted in the program (e.g., antisocial attitudes, risk and thrill seeking, egocentric outlook, empathy for others, poor school attendance, substance use, anger/impulse control, antisocial friendships)?			**1.5**

Item 7. Notes

Several risk factors are targeted in the P180, anger management, emotional understanding, self-control, health relationships and family functioning, domestic and family violence, anti-social/pro-offending attitudes and beliefs, values and respectful choices/empathy, and relapse prevention planning, and AOD use and prevention. Post-program outreach to pathways back to school and education.

This feature is almost met.

Enhancements could be specific in targeting sensation seeking, impulsivity and thrill-seeking behaviour management, and exploring the role of antisocial friendship in future risk taking. This could possibly be an aspect of the relapse prevention module.

8. What type of protective factors/GLM strengths-based actors are targeted in the program?			**2**

Item 8. Notes

The CPCYC has a strong focus on increasing protective factors, with GLM and holistic strengths-based approaches used within the P180 and post-program in their through-case case management, either mentioning, referrals, or outreach/case management. Of note, the outreach follow-through is available to participants whether they complete or drop out of the P180.

The protective factors targeted include the completion of the Cert II which provides access to TAFE and pathways into trade occupations. Other pathways include access to training in gardening and barista skills, training back to school. Participants are given resources and/or booking to health and allied agencies, such as GP referrals, AOD services, mental health referrals, pro-social youth centres and a range of First Nations outreach and community services.

This feature is fully met.

9. Is the primary focus of the program a combination targeting criminogenic needs and building strengths/based/GLM protective factors?			**2**

Item 9. Notes

The P180 has a focus on both reducing risk factors and building strengths. Many of the young people who attend P180 are not engaged in school, with poor or challenging family relationships and family situations, with few hobbies. Before and during the day, each young person is provided with transport to the CPCYC and driven home afterwards, given breakfast and food (which can be missing within the home), and provided with structure and a pro-social environment.

During the 4 days per week, participants complete modules that focus on reducing risks and increase protective factors in their lives. Participants are also provided with access to sports or pro-social recreation, and weekend adventure trips, such as camping.

This feature is fully met.

10. Implementation fidelity (the degree to which the program is delivered as developed).			**1.5**

The P180 is delivered following a set structure with core modules that focus on reducing risk factors and enhancing strengths. The structure of P180 program and modules across domains includes.

- **Education:** Certificate II Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways through Tallebudgera Outdoor and Environmental Centre,
- **Social and emotional learning**: National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN)'s Live Bites covering healthy relationships, Project New Leaf to improve emotion regulation, Daily 'check ins' to reflect on emotional wellbeing and practice empathy to others.
- **Independent living skills and support**: Chifley Health Hubs' FEED cooking program, engagement with CPCYC's Behind the Wheel program on road safety, safe driving practices and possible dangers, and the ACT Road Ready course to get Learners' driving licences, support to access trainings for trade work, including White Card, support gaining their own bank account and Medicare card, and resume development and job applications.
- **Daily physical activity** and weekly outdoor physical engagement.
- **Daily transport to support** access to the program and food while at the program and food provisions to young peoples' families as needed.
- **Case management** for the young person and their families and community sector engagement to connect participants to youth-specific services and supports and community volunteer options within the Canberra region.
- **Police engagement** via ACT Policing youth liaison officers.

This feature is almost met.

Enhancements could be explored by introducing a module on holistic wellbeing and quality of life, how to gain it and structured relapse prevention, such as that provided in the Stages of Change (possible useful resource could be Prochaska, O., & Prochaska, J.M. (2016). Changing to thrive: Using the stages of change to overcome the top threats to your health and happiness. Center City, MN: Hazelden. ISBN 978-1-61649-629-6. OCLC 956501910).

11. Cultural responsiveness towards program participants, program stakeholders and staff?			**2**

Item 11. Notes

Program staff at the CPCYC provide a culture of inclusiveness and cultural responsiveness towards participants, families and staff. For example, food and amenities are provided in keeping with each of the participants cultural and religious beliefs, such as providing strict Halal and Kosher food servings. Staff and participants are taught First Nations history, stories and cultural beliefs. First Nations education to the CPCYC, and youth support and advocacy work is carried out by staff from the Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation, Wanniassa. ACT.

This feature is fully met.

12. Are there strong practitioner-client relationships and multi-agency coordination and connections for referrals?			**2**

Item 12. Notes

The P180 has a focus on both reducing risk factors and building strengths. Many of the young people who attend P180 are not engaged in school, with poor or challenging family relationships and family situations, with few hobbies. Before and during the day, each young person is provided with transport to the CPCYC and driven home afterwards, given breakfast and food (which can be missing within the home), and provided with structure and a pro-social environment.

During the 4 days per week, participants complete modules that focus on reducing risks and increase protective factors in their lives. Participants are also provided with access to sports or pro-social recreation, and weekend adventure trips, such as camping.

This feature is fully met.

13. Which post-program supports are the most often used?			**2**

Item 13. Notes

Supports for participants during and post completion of the P180 depend upon the individual needs of each participant and detailed in their CPCYC support plan.

Common supports include; Ongoing support from outreach case managers at the CPCYC, such as access to referrals, training discussions, access to facilities provided at the CPCYC, Youth GP referrals (access to bulk billed medical appointments), Ted Noffs Foundation, The Street University Program referrals for AOD use, Referrals and access to various youth engagement teams and youth centres across the ACT dependent on where the young person is living, and Referrals to the supports offered at the Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation, Wanniassa.

This feature is fully met.

14. Responsiveness and flexibility of program and facilitators to adapt to the learning styles and risk factors for program participants and group over time?			**2**

Item 14. Notes

Program delivery is adapted to suit participants. Where possible, all modules of the program are included, however where participants need module to be adapted this often relates to literacy and educational level. For example, if participants are not able to complete the Cert II Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways due to literacy problems, they are instead provided with reading and writing assistance to improve their literacy level. The program aims remain the same, but content can be adjusted as required to suit participants needs.

This feature is fully met.

15. Have staff received training in group facilitation, pro-social modelling and managing group dynamics?			**2**

Item 15. Notes

All program delivery staff, including the Operations Manager, Team Leaders, Group Facilitators and Case Managers all have a background education in youth work, counselling, community service, or social sciences. All staff complete the Diploma in Counselling, which covers group work, managing groups, pro-social modelling, and counselling skills. The Diploma is offered by an external accredited training provider.

This feature is fully met.

16. If the program is being modified during delivery, is there a structured method to record and assess changes?			**2**

Item 16. Notes

Changes to the program modules rarely occurs during program delivery. Minor changes to the program are recorded in the program plan, such as modifications provided to a participant who was not able to complete one or more of the modules, or where an external provider was not able to come, such as when ACT Policing cannot attend.

Any changes to the P180 program content, such as a new module amended or inserted, or where a module has become outdated, are recorded in the program plan. For example, in 2025 and 2026, the relapse prevention module was enhanced from a clinical psychology intern working at the CPCYC, this enhancement was recorded in 2025 and enhanced in 2026.

This feature is fully met.

17. Are clinical debriefing sessions offered to the program facilitators?			**2**

Item 17. Notes

All program staff debrief after each program delivery day to run over any issues encountered. All staff have access to meeting and sessions with one of the UC clinical psychology interns based onsite at the CPCYC, or from the Dr of Counselling interns from the Australian National University.

This feature is fully met.

18. How do program case managers and/or facilitators document and ensure the program is run in accordance with the manual/avoids program drift?			**2**

Item 18. Notes

To avoid program drift, the P180 program Operations manager and the P180 Team Leaders sit in on sessions to observe delivery style and whether content is delivered in line with the program aims.

This feature is fully met.

19. Is there the opportunity to collect any effectiveness data on program outcomes for youth over MACR (e.g., recidivism, rearrest, technical or offence parole breaches)?		1	

Item 19. Notes

At present P180 effectiveness is assessed by self-reported antisocial or offences committed in a pre-program survey by participants. Pre-covid, ACT Policing provided detailed on recidivism, charges, police involvement for all P180 participants pre-and post-program. Post-covid, it has become difficult to obtain this information and despite requests, ACT Policing have not provided the detailed reports.

This feature is partially met.

Enhancements could be for the CPCYC and/or JACS to continue to request that recidivism data is provided for young people over the MACR.

However, as noted in section 6.3 of this report, recidivism data pre-and post-program can be an incomplete outcome measure, providing a single and narrow outcome measure of program effectiveness. Contemporary outcome measures can look at measuring changes in dynamic risk, recommencing education, wellbeing, and qualitative feedback (Kennedy et al., 2024; Spiranovic et al., 2015). This will be covered in Question 20 overleaf.

20. Is there the opportunity to collect any effectiveness data on program participants' behaviour post-program (e.g., work placements, education attendance)?			**1.5**

Item 20. Notes

A large number of effectiveness outcome measures for P180 are collected by the CPCYC.
1). At the end of the Program, P180 participants who graduate and complete the program complete a post-program survey containing questions about behaviour, AOD use, wellbeing and coping, education/work, family functioning. The questionnaire gathers some important variables, however as the pre-program and post-program questionnaire do not ask the same questions at both time points, behaviour change is not fully measured at present.
2). For P180 program graduates who stay connected to the CPCYC and take part in outreach support, a lot of information on wellbeing, physical and mental health, family functioning and the pathways to returning to education, becoming employed, or undertaking training from the CPCYC social enterprises in gardening and Barista training, are collected. Most of this information is gathered in the participant outreach support plan documentation. The information gathered in the support plan can provide a holistic overview of the benefits of P180 for participants and could provide a key opportunity to analyse longitudinal effectiveness of the program.
3). For P180 program participants who either do not finish the program, or do not take up the post-program outreach supports after graduating, there is limited data on the benefits of the P180 on behaviour, wellbeing, or future pathways post-program.

This feature is almost met.

There are three avenues to enhance the collection and reporting of longer-term effectiveness of the P180 is discussed as follows.
1). At the end of the Program, P180 participants who graduate and complete the program complete a post-program survey containing questions about behaviour, AOD use, wellbeing and coping, education/work, family functioning. The questionnaire gathers some important variables, however as the pre-program and post-program questionnaire do not ask the same questions at both time points, behaviour change is not fully measured at present.
2). For P180 program graduates who stay connected to the CPCYC and take part in outreach support, a lot of information on wellbeing, physical and mental health, family functioning and the pathways to returning to education, becoming employed, or undertaking training from the CPCYC social enterprises in gardening and Barista training, are collected. Most of this information is gathered in the participant outreach support plan documentation. The information gathered in the support plan can provide a holistic overview of the benefits of P180 for participants and could provide a key opportunity to analyse longitudinal effectiveness of the program.
3). For P180 program participants who either do not finish the program, or do not take up the post-program outreach supports after graduating, there is limited data on the benefits of the P180 on behaviour, wellbeing, or future pathways post-program. This could be achieved by reaching out to these young people on an annual basis, such as a short telephone call or text with two or three specific questions about how they are doing, if they are suing or needing any support and their pathways (either education, training, or employment, or other).

TOTAL SCORES FOR THE AEIPD Assessment Items

TOTAL SCORE (Sum of items 1 to 20) **35.5. (88%)**

Highest score is 40.

The higher the score overall the higher the likelihood the program is empirically based and is being delivered according to the program parameters.

Information Used to Perform the Checklist

Information used to carry out the checklist

The information used to carry out this process evaluation was based upon interviews with the CPCYC CEO, Operations Manager and the P180 Team Leader. Additional information came from various documents provide to Dr Kelty including the program logic overview, program manual overview with background and aims of the P180, the pre-and post-survey completed by P180 participants and their families/carers between 2023 to 2025, and P180 session plans and module overviews.

8.3 Process Evaluation Conclusion: How the P180 Program Content and Delivery Aligns with Best Practice.

Evaluation Aim 5, involved developing and using an evidence-based checklist to carry out a process evaluation to assess how the P180 program run by the CPCYC compares with best-practice in the content and delivery methods of early intervention and diversion programs for at-risk young people.

Summary of main findings

Overall, the P180 program demonstrates a strong evidence base and high alignment with contemporary best practice. The total score was 35.5 points out of a possible 40 points. This score shows that the program has many features of good service delivery and program content and demonstrates adherence to best-practice principles. The percentage achieved for the P180 at 88% is above a score of 80%, the point at which Bonta and Andrews (2023) note that a program adheres to the elements of 'good practice'.

The P180 program is underpinned by Australian Institute of Criminology research and aligns closely with the Risk–Need–Responsivity (RNR) framework and is supplemented by Good Lives Model (GLM) principles. The program aims are clearly stated within formal documentation and are appropriate for the target cohort of vulnerable at-risk young people. The program assignment is appropriate for the target cohort, with internal procedures ensuring that higher-risk young people are allocated to P180, while lower-risk participants are supported through mentoring and outreach pathways. This allocation reflects evidence-based practice and avoids potential negative outcomes for lower-risk youth.

The program dosage is intensive and appropriate for at-risk young people of moderate to high risk, operating four days per week over 20 weeks including relapse prevention planning, with post-program throughcare provided which together meet established guidelines for best practice. Program delivery is structured, consistently implemented, and supported by well-trained staff, strong practitioner–client relationships, cultural responsiveness, with regular clinical debriefing and supervision for program facilitators. **Of note,** the high intensity of the P180 may not be suitable for low-risk young people, and they would benefit more from mentoring or community supports.

P180 addresses a broad range of criminogenic needs, including emotion regulation, antisocial attitudes, family functioning, domestic and family violence, and AOD use. At the same time, it places a strong emphasis on protective and strengths-based factors, including education and training pathways, employment readiness, health and wellbeing, pro-social recreation, and community connection.

The primary limitation identified relates to better matching of pre-and post-program participant surveys, risk assessment, longitudinal tracking of outcomes for participants who disengage from the program or do not use outreach supports, and issues with access to objective recidivism data after COVID-19 disruptions ceased.

Recommended program enhancements

To strengthen alignment with evidence-based practice, enhancements are recommended to the program's intake and assessment documentation and processes. While current in-house assessments provide useful contextual information, introducing a more structured approach to assessing dynamic risk and protective factors would be beneficial. This would enhance the ability to measure change in risk, behaviour change, and the development of individual participants case formulations.

A more involved risk and protective factors intake and post-program assessment can be developed using the information provided in Table 1 (Section 6) of this. Aligning the questions in the pre-and post-program surveys would enable meaningful measurement of change over time. This can be achieved without necessarily requiring costly licensed tools, and this will be included in the final project recommendations.

Further refinement of program content would also strengthen outcomes. There is scope to more explicitly address risk- and thrill-seeking behaviours and the influence of antisocial peer networks on risk-taking and involvement in offending. In addition, enhancements could be made to the relapse prevention planning documentation, and a method to better measure and capture the holistic nature of thriving, quality of life and physical and mental wellbeing.

The third enhancement area remains longer term outcome measurement. More use could be made of the information in the outreach support plan data which could support longitudinal analysis and reporting of wellbeing and education and/or employment pathways for P180 graduates. Developing strategies to capture post-program outcomes for participants who disengage early, or do not access outreach supports, would further strengthen the evidence base. This could be partially achieved by annual telephone calls or texts to participants who disengaged but will still discuss their pathways.

Finally, continued efforts are recommended to re-establish access to recidivism and police contact data, through ACT Policing and/or JACS. While recognising the limitations of recidivism as a sole outcome measure, access to this data would provide another measure P180's long-term effectiveness.

8.4 Alignment of the findings from the process evaluation of the P180 Program with key focus areas of the ACT draft Youth Justice Strategic Plan for 2026-2031

The process evaluation findings indicate that Project 180 (P180) is highly consistent with the strategic directions outlined in the ACT Draft Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2026-2031. The evaluation found that the program achieved 88 per cent alignment with recognised evidence-based practice standards and demonstrated strong adherence to contemporary principles for early intervention, diversion, rehabilitation, and youth development. These findings suggest that the program is not only achieving positive participant outcomes but is being delivered in a manner that reflects the priorities and reforms identified within the ACT youth justice system (ACT Government, 2026).

We assessed how the findings from the P180 process evaluation align with each of the six key focus areas of the 2026-2031 Draft Strategic Plan. The six focus areas are; earlier support, divert young people from the justice system, promote equity, eliminate discrimination and address over-representation, use a caring and healing approach, respect young people's rights, and help young people return to the community (ACT Government, 2026).

Focus Area 1: Earlier Support

The process evaluation demonstrates strong alignment with the Strategic Plan's focus on earlier support. A central finding was that P180 is specifically designed for vulnerable and at-risk young people and is underpinned by evidence-based approaches that seek to intervene before entrenched offending behaviour occurs. The evaluation found that referral and allocation processes are structured to ensure that higher-risk young people receive intensive intervention through P180, while lower-risk young people are directed to more appropriate mentoring and outreach supports.

The program's intensive delivery model, operating four days per week over 20 weeks with post-program support, reflects the Strategic Plan's emphasis on providing timely and targeted support to young people experiencing multiple risk factors. Furthermore, the program's focus on education, training, health, wellbeing, family functioning, and social connectedness addresses many of the issues that place young people at risk of future justice system involvement (ACT Government, 2026).

Focus Area 2: Divert Young People from the Justice System

P180 demonstrates particularly strong alignment with the Strategic Plan's diversion objectives. The process evaluation found that the program is explicitly informed by the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) framework and Good Lives Model principles, both of which are designed to reduce offending risk and support prosocial pathways. The program addresses a broad range of criminogenic needs, including antisocial attitudes, emotion regulation difficulties, alcohol and other drug use, family dysfunction, and exposure to domestic and family violence.

The process evaluation found that program content is intentionally structured to address factors associated with antisocial behaviour and/or criminal behaviour while building protective factors such as employment readiness, educational engagement, community participation, and positive recreation. This reflects the Strategic Plan's commitment to diverting young people away from justice system involvement through therapeutic and community-based responses rather than punitive interventions (ACT Government, 2026).

Focus Area 3: Promote Equity, Eliminate Discrimination and Address Over-Representation

The process evaluation provides moderate evidence of alignment with this focus area. The evaluation identified cultural responsiveness as a strength of program delivery and noted the importance of strong practitioner-client relationships supported by trained staff and reflective supervision processes. The program's strengths-based approach and focus on individual needs are also consistent with equity-focused practice.

However, while the findings from the process evaluation does not specifically assess outcomes relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, or the reduction of over-representation within the youth justice system. The findings do show that program staff ensure cultural safety by incorporating inclusive and culturally responsive practices, stronger evidence of alignment with this focus area would be demonstrated through specific measures and reporting relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation, outcomes, and culturally informed service delivery. This would support the Strategic Plan's emphasis on addressing systemic disadvantage and advancing Closing the Gap commitments (ACT Government, 2026).

Focus Area 4: Use a Caring and Healing Approach

The process evaluation demonstrates very strong alignment with the Strategic Plan's focus on therapeutic and healing-centred responses. The evaluation found that program delivery is supported by well-trained staff, strong practitioner-client relationships, regular clinical supervision, and structured approaches to participant support. These features are consistent with contemporary trauma-informed and therapeutic practice models.

The program's emphasis on addressing emotional regulation, family functioning, wellbeing, substance use, and exposure to domestic and family violence reflects a holistic understanding of young people's needs and circumstances. Furthermore, the integration of Good Lives Model principles demonstrates a focus on strengths, personal development, and positive identity formation rather than solely managing risk. Collectively, these elements strongly align with the Strategic Plan's objective of delivering youth justice responses that support healing, rehabilitation, and long-term wellbeing (ACT Government, 2026).

Focus Area 5: Respect Young People's Rights

P180 also aligns closely with the Strategic Plan's commitment to respecting young people's rights, dignity, and participation. The evaluation highlighted the importance of strong relationships between participants and program staff, as well as a service model that responds to individual strengths, needs, and aspirations. The Good Lives Model underpinning the program promotes self-determination, personal agency, and goal attainment, which are consistent with rights-based approaches to youth development.

The evaluation also found that program enhancements are focused on improving assessment processes, individual case formulation, and tailoring support to participants' risks and protective factors. These recommendations reflect a commitment to understanding each young person's circumstances and ensuring that interventions remain responsive to their needs. Such practices are consistent with the Strategic Plan's objective of ensuring young people are treated fairly and supported to actively participate in decisions affecting their lives (ACT Government, 2026).

Focus Area 6: Help Young People Return to the Community

Strong alignment is evident between P180 and the Strategic Plan's focus on supporting successful community participation and long-term reintegration. The process evaluation identified education and training pathways, employment readiness, pro-social recreation, community connection, and throughcare support as core components of the program. The availability of post-program outreach and relapse prevention planning further reflects a commitment to maintaining positive outcomes beyond program completion.

The evaluation also recognised the importance of strengthening longer-term outcome measurement, including tracking education, employment, and wellbeing pathways after participants complete the program. This focus on sustained engagement and ongoing support is consistent with the Strategic Plan's emphasis on helping young people transition successfully into education, employment, family life, and broader community participation (ACT Government, 2026).

Overall Assessment

The process evaluation provides strong evidence that P180 is highly aligned with the ACT Draft Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2026-2031. The strongest alignment is evident in the areas of earlier support, diversion from the justice system, therapeutic and healing-centred practice, and supporting young people's successful participation in their communities. The program's strong evidence base, intensive intervention model, structured delivery, strengths-based philosophy, and focus on addressing criminogenic needs while building protective factors closely mirror the policy directions outlined in the Strategic Plan.

While the evaluation provides less direct evidence regarding the Strategic Plan's objective of reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, the program's commitment to cultural responsiveness, individualised support, and equitable access to services provides a foundation upon which this alignment could be further demonstrated in future evaluations. Overall, the process evaluation indicates that P180 represents a mature, evidence-informed program that is delivering services in a manner highly consistent with the ACT Government's vision for a therapeutic, inclusive, and rehabilitative youth justice system (ACT Government, 2026).

Evaluation Aim 3: Findings from the Outcome Evaluation

9. Evaluation Aim 3: Outcome Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the P180 Using the pre-and-post Survey Findings for Participants and Parents/Carers Over a Three-Year Period (2023 to 2025)

Evaluation Aim 3 of the P180 evaluation project is to carry out an output evaluation of the CPCYC P180 Project. The output evaluation will assess change across a range of social attitudes, offending and substance use, family functioning and school attendance as measured using CPCYC entry and exit surveys *over three years (2023, 2024 and 2025).*

The findings from the output evaluation are presented below.

9.1 Why carry Out an Outcome Evaluation?

A robust outcome external outcome evaluation is an essential component of any existing program (Bonta & Andrews, 2023; Kelty, 2017). Assessment of program outcomes is important for quality management in both community base and public sector agencies (Vito & Higgins, 2014).

9.2 Background

Early intervention for antisocial behaviour in youth is grounded in developmental and life-course criminology, which shows early-emerging conduct problems and early onset antisocial behaviour predict more persistent, serious antisocial behaviour and criminal careers, particularly when combined with cumulative social disadvantage (Lösel et al., 2025; Welsh et al., 2024). Longitudinal studies indicate that childhood aggression, disruptive behaviour and association with peers with antisocial behaviour are robust predictors of later violence, substance misuse and chronic offending, underscoring the need to prevent the development of criminal potential by targeting malleable risk and protective factors in childhood and adolescence (Farrington & Malvaso, 2023; Lösel et al., 2025; Welsh et al., 2024). Most Western jurisdictions now employ a modified justice model in which rehabilitative responses sit alongside punitive measures, with one key avenue being early intervention and court diversion for young offenders (Farrington et al., 2022). In this context, diversion and early intervention are increasingly seen as effective and fiscally responsible strategies to reduce youth

antisocial behaviour, by avoiding the criminogenic effects of early and intensive system contact and enabling community-based therapeutic responses (Wilson & Hoge, 2012).

The emerging consensus is that the most promising early intervention programs for antisocial youth are those that: are grounded in clear developmental and cognitive-behavioural theories of change; focus on higher-risk children and adolescents (e.g., those with early conduct problems or at risk of school dropout); target changeable criminogenic needs in family, school and peer domains; deliver adequate dosage with high fidelity; are culturally safe and co-designed; foster strong, respectful practitioner-youth relationships; and are continually monitored and refined through rigorous evaluation (Farrington & Malvaso, 2023; Pooley et al., 2020; Welsh et al., 2024). When such programs are implemented within a broader reform agenda that includes raising the MACR and diverting young people away from formal justice processes wherever possible, they offer the best prospect of reducing antisocial behaviour and/or youth crime while enhancing the wellbeing and life chances of vulnerable young people (McAra & McVie, 2023; Pooley et al., 2020).

9.3 Overview of Project P180

Project context

The youth justice system in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) is currently governed by statutory services, including ACT Policing and Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS). In response to youth antisocial behaviour, there can be primary, secondary, or tertiary crime prevention responses.

Project 180 (P180) is a tertiary crime prevention program that engages in diversionary and therapeutic practices. Diversion programs are designed to prevent young people from entering or continuing in the formal justice system. This is crucial in reducing antisocial behaviour or recidivism rates for youth over the MACR, as youth are more likely to develop a pattern of offending and engage in more serious offences once they enter the youth justice system and gain a criminal record (Bonta & Andrews, 2023). Youth detention appears to correlate with higher rates of recidivism (31%) than community-based orders (24%; ACT Government, 2021). Canberra Police Community Youth Club (CPCYC) developed P180 to counteract the short-term and long-term individual and social problems associated with youth antisocial behaviour. The program provides a holistic, person-centred, and strengths-based approach that works with families and the young person's support network to effectively ensure positive outcomes for the young person. P180 has been built upon recent research emphasising the effectiveness of holistic approaches that respond to the social determinants and vulnerabilities of the young person, their family, and social structures (refer Sallybanks, 2003; Pooley, 2020).

Program description

The aim of the CPCYC P180 program is to reduce youth antisocial behaviour, increase community connections in young people living in the ACT aged 12 to 18, who are at risk of offending, or at-risk of becoming involved in the youth justice system, disengaged from education, or are facing adversities solely or within the family setting. The P180 program is an evidence-based 20-week intensive diversion/early intervention program. The project facilitators and case managers provide intensive face-to face contact with participants four days per week, in addition to ongoing case management provided for the whole family. A full overview of the Project P180 developed by the CPCYC is provided in a separate document, referred to as Appendix A.

Participants are predominantly referred to the program by ACT Policing, CYPS, other community services (including ACT Education Department and schools) and CPCYC staff. The P180 program is delivered through a three-tiered service delivery model: pre-program (including 'active holding' on waitlists to support young people awaiting engagement with the next program intake), program engagement, and post-program support. Within these stages, staff collaborate to facilitate successful referrals to engage meaningfully with the program and any subsequent supports that may be engaged.

P180 encompasses a variety of targets and program elements across the below domains.

- Education:
    - Certificate II Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways through Tallebudgera Outdoor and Environmental Centre.
- Social and emotional learning:
    - National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN)'s Live Bites to learn about healthy relationships,
    - Project New Leaf to improve emotion regulation, and
    - Daily 'check ins' to reflect on emotional wellbeing and practice empathy towards others.
- Independent living skills and support:
    - Chifley Health Hubs' FEED cooking program,
    - Engagement with CPCYC's Behind the Wheel program on road safety, safe driving practices and possible dangers, and the ACT Road Ready course to get Learners' driving licences,
    - Support to access trainings for trade work, including White Card, Silica and Asbestos training
    - Support gaining their own bank account and Medicare card, and
    - Resume development and job applications.
- Daily physical activity and weekly outdoor physical engagement.
- Daily transport to support access to the program.
- Food while at the program and food provisions to young peoples' families as needed.
- Case management for the young person and their families.
- Police engagement via ACT Policing youth liaison officers.
- Community sector engagement to connect participants to youth-specific services and supports and community volunteer options within the Canberra region.

9.4 Hypothesis 1

It is predicted that post-program participants will display increases in pro-social attitudes toward the police and law, and higher levels of social skills and anger management, lower levels of anti-social behaviour, along with more positive health outcomes, and higher high school or vocational training and/or employment attendance.

9.5 Data collection and analysis

Data was collected using a self-report survey designed in house by CPCYC. Participants completed a pre-questionnaire before the start of the program and a post-questionnaire at the end of the program. The program runs twice per year in semester 1 and semester 2. The data for cohort 2023, 2024, and 2025 (S1) are presented here. Survey items differ by year and pre-P180 and post-P180.

Time 1 (one survey) The P180 Participant Entry Survey was developed by the CPCYC to measure pre-program participant baseline data on attitudes toward the police, type of offending and anti-social behaviour, AOD use, school attendance, employment type, mental wellbeing, relationships with carers, anger management and perceived ability to cope with challenges.

Time 2 (two surveys) The P180 Participant Exit Survey was developed by CPCYC to measure post-program participants across a range of social, behavioural, and attitudinal variables that reflects the programs delivered to participants in P180. These items are used to identify changes in respect to the police and law, changes in anger management, relationships with carers, coping skills and mental wellbeing. The P180 Exit survey also measures participants evaluation of the different programs they undertook during P180.

The P180 Parent/Carer Exit Survey was developed to measure observations by parents/carers on participants range of skills, attitudes, and behaviours after completion of the P180 program. These include changes in anger management, coping skills, and the benefits of the P180 Program. Parents/carers are asked to comment on the beneficial aspects of the program for their young people.

Data analysis

Data was analysed on Excel and SPSS version 30. Descriptive analyses were conducted to summarise key demographic characteristics by cohort. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for categorical variables providing a detailed breakdown of the sample composition. For the items measured on a continuous scale, means, medians, standard deviations and ranges were computed. Where items were asked both in the pre- and post- survey, a matched sample t-test was carried out. For items that were asked pre-P180 and post-P180 across cohorts, the data was combined and an overall matched sample-t test was carried out. This has the benefit of a larger sample size and assessing dimensions across years given that the P180 delivery content is the same across iterations.

9.6 Results from the Outcome Evaluation

9.6.1 Overall Findings Years 2023 to 2025 Combined

Two sets of questions were asked across the cohorts (2023-2025) in the pre- and post-P180 questionnaires: (i) participants anger management, coping ability and wellbeing, and (ii) relationship with their male and female caregiver. Participants rated their mental wellbeing on a five-point scale ranging from '1' *very low* to '5' *excellent*. Participants also rated their capacity to cope with challenges on a five-point scale ranging from '1' *I really struggle, I shut down or blow* up to '5' *I can cope with anything that happens and I know where to get the right support*. There were three items assessing participants anger management in terms of frequency, type, and controllability. These items were measured on a five point-scale. For the item on frequency of getting angry, '1' represented *I rarely get angry* and '5' represented *I often get angry*. For the question what does your anger look like, '1' represented *small outbursts* and '5' *blackout rage, property damage, violence*. Finally, for the item measuring how well participants control their anger, this was assessed on a scale from '1' *I have no control* to '5' *I can control my anger well*. Participants were also asked to rate their relationship both Pre 180 and Post 180, with their (i) mother, (ii) father, and (iii) siblings (mostly pre-180), on a five-point Likert type scale ranging from '1' *no relationship* to '5' *best it can be*.

We combined the data across these cohorts and statistically compared the pre- and post-scores (see Tables 2 and 3). Across the dimensions measured, participants scored significantly higher on the measures post P180. This means that participants reported significantly higher (i) well-being and (ii) perceived coping ability to deal with challenges. They also reported significantly better anger management and better relationships with their father/male carer. The only non-significant difference was the reported relationship with their mother/female carer at pre- and post-P180 program.

Therefore, overall, across cohorts, there is a significant change in participants perceived ability to manage their anger, to cope with challenges, in their wellbeing, and relationship with the father/male caregiver following the P180 program.

Table 2

Participants' perceptions of their anger management (Pre- and Post-P180, Combined cohorts)

Variable	Pre-P180 Mean (SD)	Post-P180 Mean (SD)	Paired t-test (df)	p-value
How often do you get angry	3.71(1.10)	2.77(1.14)	5.515 (34)	<.001
What does your anger look like	3.89(.92)	3.19(1.28)	3.090(35)	.004
When you get angry, how well do you control your anger?	2.83(1.06)	3.31(.89)	-2.92(35)	.006

Table 3

Participants' perceptions of their wellbeing, ability to cope, and relationship with carers (Pre- and Post-P180, Combined cohorts)

Variable	Pre-P180 Mean (SD)	Post-P180 Mean (SD)	Paired t-test (df)	p-value
Relationship with mother	3.63(1.165)	3.86(1.29)	-1.214(34)	.233
Relationship with father	3.06(1.33)	3.71(1.20)	-2.64(34)	.013
Ability to cope with challenges	2.89(.90)	3.71(.93)	-4.170(34)	<.001
Perceived wellbeing	2.86(1.20)	3.61(.90)	-3.31(35)	.002

Note that in Semester 1 2025 no demographic variables on participants were measured, therefore gender analyses are only carried out on the combined datasets for 2023 and 2024. We performed a General Linear Model Repeated Measures on the pre- and post-P180 scores for matched items and investigated gender as the between-subject factor. Across the dimensions, there were no significant factor x gender interactions. This means that the significant differences found on the pre- and post-P180 scores applied for all participants.

In other words, the P180 program had the same effect on the difference in reported scores for perceived (i) mental wellbeing, (ii) ability to cope with challenges, (iii) anger management, and (iv) relationship with father/male carer for male and female participants. The only significant (p = .025) gender difference was on mental wellbeing where male participants (estimated marginal M = 3.55, SE = .156) reported significantly higher level than female participants (estimated marginal M= 2.90, SE = .226). Whilst there was no significant change in participants perceived relationship with their mother/female carer pre- and post-P180, male participants (estimated marginal M = 4.119, SE = .195) reported significantly better relationship (p = .036) with their mother/female carer than female participants (estimated marginal M = 3.333, SE = .298).

Therefore, overall, the hypothesis for positive reported change post P180 in wellbeing, ability to cope with challenges, anger management, and relationship with father/male carer is supported. However, there was no significant change in reported relationship with mother/female carer.

Completion Rates By Cohort Year

In **Table 4**, we report the completion rates for the P180 program based on the Pre (entry) and Post (exit) survey counts across cohorts.

Table 4
Completion rates across cohorts (2023-2025)

	2023		**2024**		**2025**
	Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 1
Entry (Pre-P180) Survey (*n*)	8	16	10	10	9
Exit (Post-P180) Survey (*n*)	7	12	7	5	5
Completion Rate (%)	87.5	75	70	50	55.56

In what follows, we present the detailed descriptive results by year and semester on participants' pre- and post-P180 surveys. **Of note**, is that there are variations across pre-and post-P180 surveys across the years and semesters. Furthermore, questions are not identically worded and rated in the pre-and post-P180 surveys except for Semester 1 2025 where there is a better match.

9.6.2 Findings by Each Cohort Year

Semester 1 2025

Demographic characteristics

There were nine participants who took part in the pre-survey of which five completed the post-survey. This indicates a completion rate for the program of 55.56%. No demographic questions on age, gender and area of residence in the ACT were asked.

Engagement with the police

In terms of police history, eight out of the nine (88.89%) participants reported having had negative interactions with the police, ranging from 2 to 50 times. Pre-P180, most participants (6 out of 9 or 66.67%) reported having no respect for the police. Post-P180, two participants reported having more respect for the police since engaging with P180, two reported continuing to lack respect for the police and one reported having lost some of their respect for the police. Eighty percent of participants reported having had negative interactions with the police since engaging with P180.

Seven participants have been arrested pre-P180 and none stated to have been arrested since taking part in P180. The number of times arrests occurred pre-P180 were 1, 2, 3, and 10. However, two participants reported engaging in offending behaviours post-P180 although they were not arrested. The list of self-reported offences or offending behaviours are provided in Table 5 overleaf.

Therefore, for the Semester 1 2025 cohort, there is a decrease in self-reported arrest and number of type of offenses.

Table 5

Self-reported offences or offending behaviour that the participant has been involved in (Semester 1 2025 cohort)

Type of offence	Pre-P180 (*n*)	Post-P180 (*n*)
Assault	6	2
Burglary	3	
Drug offences	2	1
Firearms and Weapons Offence	3	1
Property damage	4	
Robbery	2	
Stolen motor vehicle	3	
Theft (non-motor vehicle)	7	

Engagement with school

All nine participants reported having attended school in the last 12 months pre-P180, and all five post-P180 participants reported having engaged with their enrolled school. Three participants reported attending school every day, one participant reported attending school for three days, two participants reported going less than one day a week, but they would still go now and then, one participant reported going for two to three days but they would get sent back home, and one reported not going for months. Five participants reported having been suspended one to three times in the previous six months, one participant more than 15 times and three participants not at all. All nine participants reported having been bullied at school.

Participants' reported capacity to do schoolwork was assessed on a five-point scale from '1' *I really struggle with schoolwork* to '5' *School work is no problem.* A paired sample t-test showed that there was no significant difference between participants' Pre- (M = 2.40, SD = 1.14) and Post-P180 (M = 3.00, SD = 1.00) ratings on their capacity to do schoolwork, $t(4) = .885$, $p = .43$.

Participants' health and habits

Substance use was assessed in terms of context of use and frequency. Participants demonstrated a reduced use in substance based on self-report (see Table 6a and Table 6b overleaf), except for use of vapes which was almost the same in pre- and post-P 180 surveys. There seems to be a decrease in alcohol use given that participants either reported quitting or reducing the amount of alcohol consumed. *Given that different dimensions of substance use were asked pre- and post-P180, it is not possible to compare scores directly.*

Table 6a

Self-reported substance use and context of use (Pre-P180, Semester 1 2025 cohort)

Context of use	Cigarettes (n)	Vapes (n)	Alcohol (n)	Other (n)
Only socially			5	1
When I'm alone	1			1
Both	1	4		3
No use			2	2

Table 6b

Self-reported substance use and frequency of use (Post-P180, Semester 1 2025 cohort)

Substance	I have quit (n)	I have reduced (n)	I still use the same amount (n)	Not applicable (n)
Vapes		2	2	1
Cigarettes		1	1	3
Marijuana	1	2	1	1
Alcohol	1	3		1
Other	1	2		2

Participants reported health behaviours are in Table 7. Most participants (66.67%) reported engaging in moderate activity pre-P180 and most participants (60%) reported being regularly very active post-P180. The same trend is observed for health eating habits and access to healthy food, where post-P180, 80% of participants who completed the program reported eating healthy food.

Table 7

Self-reported physical activity and access to healthy food (Pre- and Post-P180, Semester 1 2025 cohort)

Variables	Categories	Pre-P180		Post-P 180	
		Count	%	Count	%
How would you describe your physical activity?	Light-Little or no exercise	1	11.11	1	20
	Moderately active-weekly activities	6	66.67	1	20
	Very active-vigorous activity regularly	2	22.22	3	60
Do you eat healthy food, and regularly get access to healthy food?	Yes	4	44.44	4	80
	Sometimes	3	33.33	1	20
	No	1	11.11		
	Other	1	11.11		

Participants' emotions and ability to cope

Participants rated their mental wellbeing and there was no statistical difference between their pre-P180 rating ($M = 2.20$, $SD = 1.304$) and post- P180 rating ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 1.00$), $t(4) = -1.21$, $p = .29$, although their post P180 score suggested an improvement in their perceived mental wellbeing. Participants also rated their capacity to cope with challenges and there was no significant difference

between their pre- (M = 3.00, SD = 1.225) and post- (M=3.80, SD = .45) P180 ratings, $t(4) = -1.63$, $p = .18$.

As shown in **Table 8,** there were three items assessing participants anger management in terms of frequency, type, and controllability. Participants reported positive change post P180 with a statistically significant decrease in how often they reported getting angry, $t(4) = 3.162$, $p = .034$ (see Table 6).

Table 8

Participants' perceptions of their anger management (Pre and Post P180, Semester 1 2025)

Variable	Pre-P180 (Mean(SD)	Post-P180 (Mean(SD)	Paired- t test	p-value
How often do you get angry	**4.20(1.30)**	**3.20(1.48)**	**3.162**	**.034**
What does your anger look like	4.00(.71)	2.80(1.48)	2.45	.07
When you get angry, how well do you control your anger?	2.40(1.14)	3.80(.84)	-2.33	.08

On the question of whether they have had instances of being so upset that their actions have led to negative consequences such as overdose, self-harm, blackout drinking, physical violence, abuse or a relationship breakdown, eight out of nine participants reported '*yes*' pre- P180. And only one reported '*no, I haven't'*. Of those who reported '*yes*' pre-P180, two kept the same rating in the post-P180, two changed to 'somewhat' and one participant changed to 'no, I haven't'.

Pre-P180, six out of nine participants reported not engaging with any mental health support such as counselling, two reported that they had in the past, and one participant reported that they are engaged currently in mental health support. Post-P180, three participants reported that they see a counsellor and pre-P180, they were not. One participant reported having accessed counselling services since engaging with P180 whilst one participant reported having accessed counselling services in the past.

Participants' relationships with their family

Participants relationships ratings are presented in **Table 9.** There were no statistically significant changes in reported relationship with family members.

Table 9

Participants' rating of their family relationships (Pre- and Post- P180, Semester 1 2025)

Variable	Pre-P180 Mean(SD)	Post-P180 Mean(SD)	Paired- t test	p-value
Relationship with mother	3.20 (1.79)	2.60 (1.52)	1.500	.21
Relationship with father	2.00 (1.22)	3.40 (1.52)	-1.871	.135
Relationship with siblings	3.80(1.79)	3.20(.84)	1.177	.305

Three participants post- P180 stated that they wanted to have better relationships with their carers or siblings, of which two reported “no, they are fine as is” in the pre-P180 survey and one reported "no, I don’t wish to improve them”. One participant shifted their views from wishing to improve relationships pre-P180 to’ no, they are fine as is’ post-P180 whilst for another their views changed to ‘no, I don’t want to improve them’ post-P180 from ‘no, they are fine as is’ pre-P180.

Three out of nine participants reported having experienced physical violence in their family home pre-P180, but these participants did not fill in the post-P180 survey. 88.89% of participants reported some non-physical conflict (yelling, arguing, and fighting) from time to time and 11.11% reported that there is arguing and yelling all the time. Post-P180, sixty percent reported conflict from time to time and 40% reported no conflict. Five out of nine participants reported having used violence against family members in the home. Out of which three reported not using violence against family post-P180. 44.44% of participants reported having been humiliated or controlled by a parent or carer before participating in P180 and after P180, it was 40% of participants. Three out of nine participants reported having been hit, slapped or hurt by their parent or carer or a family member before joining P180. Post-P180, no participants reported having been hit or slapped by a carer or family member. One out of nine participants reported that they are frightened by their parent, carer or family member and one participant out of nine preferred not to say pre-P180. Post-P180, the participant frightened by their family member remained so.

Participants perceived life skills post-P180

All five participants reported that P180 has supported them for the following life skills:

- Certificate II in Skills for Work and Vocational Pathways
- Email Account
- TFN
- I’m Alert Food Safety
- Hospitality Skills
- Referees
- Cleaning skills

Four out of five participants reported that P180 has supported them except for one participant who reported being somewhat supported for the following life skills:

- Identification
- Work experience
- Money handling skills
- Interviewing

Four out of five participants reported that P180 has supported them for the following:

- Construction cards (white card, asbestos, silica)
- Resume
- Applying for a job

One participant reported that P180 has not supported them for the following life skills:

- Construction cards (white card, asbestos, silica), Work experience and Applying for a job

Summary of Findings- Semester 1 2025

From the descriptive frequencies, it seems that participants (i) perceived life skills support from P180 and (ii) reported a decrease in alcohol use given that they either reported quitting or reducing the amount of alcohol consumed. However, there were no significant change on measures that were assessed pre- and post-P180, that is, ability to cope with challenges, reported capacity for schoolwork, anger management, and relationships with family. Engagement with the police was mostly negative whether pre- and post-P180, although the number of reported arrests decreased post-P180.

Year 2024- Semester 1 and Semester 2 findings

Semester 1 2024

Demographic characteristics

There were ten participants who took part in the pre-P180 survey, of which seven completed the post-P180 survey. This indicates a completion rate for the program of 70%. Three parents/carers answered the exit survey for parents/carers.

Of the ten participants who filled in the pre-P180 survey, eight reported their gender as male and two as female. The age range was 13-16 years, mode was 14 years, and the mean was 14.40. Two participants identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and three participants reported that they are considered Culturally and Linguistically Diverse. Three participants reported having a disability, while seven reported having no disability.

Participants came from the following regions: Inner North/Gungahlin (n = 3); Belconnen (n = 2); Inner South/Weston (n = 2) and Tuggeranong (n = 2). Only one participant did not have a sibling, with all others reporting that they had between one and four siblings with having two siblings (n = 4) the most reported. In terms of housing tenure, four participants reported living in public housing; four in private rental housing; and two lived in houses owned by their carers with a mortgage. The main source of income reported for the household was full-time work (n = 6), followed by Centrelink income (n = 3) and part-time work (n = 1). Half of the participants reported that their household has an ACT services card (Health card or Centrelink card; n = 5).

Seven participants were referred to CPCYC by Education, one by a grandparent, one reported their referral source as the CPCYC, and one participant did not know their referral source. Six participants reported their primary reason for getting support from CPCYC was for education enhancement, two for mental health, one for trauma/abuse, and one for bullying. Two participants reported AOD use as a secondary reason for seeking support, one reported education enhancement, one reported family violence, one reported financial/low-income reasons, one reported mental health, one reported relationship breakdown, one reported bullying, and two reported their reason as other ('criminal activity' n = 1, 'social skills' n = 1). On the question 'what do you hope to get out of CPCYC?' participants reported a variety of goals for attending ranging from education/getting back into school (n = 7), getting White cards and trade certifications (n = 8), wanting a job (n = 7) or driving licence (n = 5), wanting to improve mental health, habits, social engagement and cease AOD use (n = 5).

Engagement with the police

In terms of police history, 70% of participants reported having had negative interactions with the police, ranging from 1 to 50 interactions. Pre-P180, most participants (7 out of 10 or 70%) reported having respect for the police. Post-P180, four of seven participants reported having more respect for the police since engaging with P180 (57.14%) and three reported having somewhat more respect for the police (42.86%). Of the three parents/carers to respond to the post-P180 survey, two reported that their young person now thinks that the law should be respected (66.66%) and thought that their young person has more respect for the police after P180 (66.66%). The third parent/carer to respond reported that their young person has the same attitude to the law and respect for police as they did pre-P180.

Five participants reported having been arrested before P180. The number of times arrest occurred range from 1 to 20. The list of self-reported offences or offending behaviours are provided in **Table 10**. In the post-P180 survey, the items were worded differently, and participants were asked 'what best describes your offending before receiving CPCYC support'. Two participants responded 1- 'No offending' (28.57%) and five participants reported 3- 'Some offending' (71.43%). On the question 'what best describes your offending while receiving CPCYC intensive support', two participants reported 1- 'No offending' (28.57%), four participants reported 2 (No given label; 57.14%) and one participant reported 3- 'Some offending' (14.29%). Therefore, there seems to be a decrease in reported offending post-P180.

The parent/carers were asked the same post-P180 questions for their young person. One parent/carer described their young persons' offending before the program as 3- '*Some offending'* which dropped to 1- '*No offending'* after the program. One responded with 4- (No given label) to describe their young person's offending pre-program and 2- (No given label) afterwards. One parent/carer reported that

prior to the program their young person had 1- '*No offending'* and this rose to 2- (*No given label*) during the program.

Table 10
Self-reported offences or offending behaviour that the participant has been involved in (Semester 1 2024 cohort)

Type of offence	Pre-P180 (*n*)
Assault	1
Burglary	1
Drug offences	1
Firearms and Weapons Offence	1
Fraud	1
Property damage	3
Robbery	1
Stolen motor vehicle	2
Theft (non-motor vehicle)	3
Traffic offence	1
Other – Not detailed	1

Engagement with school

Questions on participants' engagement with school were only asked in the pre-P180 survey. Half of the ten participants reported attending school: one participant attended four days a week, two attended for three days, one participant attended for two days per week, and one attended one day a week. One participant reported attending school for one hour per day but not attending class, with the other attending school some days each week but not going to class either. Three participants reported that they have not been to school for months. When asked if they have been suspended from school in the past 12 months, five participants reported not having been suspended at all; two participants have been suspended 1-3 times in the previous 12 months, one participant 4-6 times, and two participants 7-9 times. Six participants (60%) reported having been bullied at school.

Participants' reported capacity to do schoolwork and job readiness

The question on reported capacity to do schoolwork was assessed on a five-point scale from 1- '*I really struggle with schoolwork'* to 5- '*School work is no problem*'. This item was only measured in the pre-P180 survey, and the mean score was 2.80 and standard deviation was 1.40. Participants were asked on a five-point scale how job ready they thought they were on a similar scale from 1- '*Not at all work ready, no skills or experience*, *or CV*' to 5- '*Very ready, I have a resume and I am currently applying for jobs*'. This item was also only measured in the pre-P180 survey, and the mean score was 3.80, SD = .42.

Therefore, we cannot assess change in reported school attendance and capacity for schoolwork and job readiness because these questions were only asked pre-P180.

Post-P180

Items for assessing education/vocation in the post-P180 survey were worded specifically to the CPCYC content sessions on formal education and job-ready skills. Below are the items asked and the rating on which they were assessed. A five-point scale was used from 1- '*No impact: It did not help me change my thinking about education or my engagement'* to 5- '*Significant intervention: It helped change my thinking about education and helped with outcomes*'. The centre point, 3- was defined as '*Some impact: it helped change some thinking about education and got some outcomes'*. Note that scores 2 and 4 were not defined for the participants. The number count for each of the ratings on the items asked are in **Table 11** below. In response to the open-ended question 'Did the program help achieve the goals in this area/get any significant outcomes from the education/vocation support provided?', one parent reported *"I noticed a significant improvement in my young person's confidence and their willingness to leave the house each day".*

Based on the results shown in Table 11 overleaf, the two areas where P180 was perceived to have made an impact are individual tutoring and obtaining a formal qualification.

Table 11

Participants' perceptions of P180's impact on their education/vocation. Parent/carer views are in brackets (Semester 1 2024). Frequency of response for each rating.

Variable	No Impact	2	Some Impact	4	Significant Intervention	N/A
Individual tutoring during education			2	1	5(3)	
Formal qualification: Able to finish a Cert 2 while at CPCYC			3(1)		4(2)	
Self-belief in education setting			2(2)		5(1)	
Engagement with formal education system: transitioned back to school	(2)		2(1)		5	
Getting a CV: Job ready through CPCYC	(1)		3(1)		3(1)	1
Mock interviews: Get job ready	(1)		4(2)		3	
They were helped to get a job	(2)		1(1)		5	1

CPCYC P180 also conducts life skill sessions with the young persons. On the same five-point scale as above, participants rated the impact of CPCYC P180 program on their life skills. **Table 12** overleaf

below present the number count for each of the life skills. However, parent/carer views were asked on a different scale with three options: '*yes*', '*no'* and '*non applicable'*.

Table 12

Participants' perceptions of P180's impact on their life skills (Semester 1 2024). Frequency of response for each rating.

Variable	No Impact	2	Some Impact	4	Significant Intervention	N/A
Washing clothes			3		4	
Personal body hygiene			5		2	
Obtained a Medicare card	1		2		3	1
Obtained a photo ID card	1		2		3	1
Obtained a bank account	2				3	2
Budgeting: CPCYC taught me how to budget	2		4			1
Shopping on a budget	2		4			1
Making personal appointments	1		4		2	
Obtain a tax file number	4		2			1
Obtain a driver's licence	2		2		1	2
I was helped to get Centrelink	3		1		1	2

Participants' health and habits

Items given to assess health habits were differently worded and measured in the pre- and post-P180 surveys. We therefore present participants rating pre-P180 first and then for post-P180.

Pre-P180

Ninety percent of participants reported smoking or vaping. Thirty percent reported not using AOD. Of the seven who reported using AOD, two reported regular use and three reported using but only sometimes. Despite this, all ten participants reported having used weed, one participant reported use of MDMA, two participants reported use of inhalants, and nine participants reported use of alcohol. Four participants (40%) reported having abuse substances (e.g. considered themselves addicted, brought harm to their lifestyle, or overdosed).

In terms of physical exercises, five participants reported getting regular exercise, three participants reported getting some exercise and two participants reported getting no exercise. Sixty percent of participants reported eating healthy food, and regularly get access to healthy foods, twenty percent reported 'sometimes', and twenty percent reported 'no'.

Post-P180

The CPCYC P180 program delivers sessions on health, sexual health, and AOD awareness. These sessions are complemented by physical education activities such as outdoor and gym activities to improve fitness and choosing better healthy lifestyles. The following eight questions were assessed on the same five-point scale from '*No Impact'* to '*Significant Intervention'* with a description for '2' and '4' not provided to the respondent. The frequency of rating choice by question is computerised below in **Table 13**. Parent/carer views are in brackets. From Table 13, the two areas reported by participants where P180 had some impact or more are access to doctors and referral to health services.

Table 13

Participants' perceptions of P180's impact on their health lifestyle. Parent/carer view in bracket (Semester 1 2024). Frequency of response for each rating.

Variable	No Impact 2	Some Impact 4	Significant Intervention	N/A
Use of tobacco/cigarettes	3(3)	1	3	
Knowledge of sexual health/safe sex practices	2	3(2)	2(1)	
Healthy eating	2	2(2)	3(1)	
Physical activity: outdoor sessions	1	2(1)	4(1)	
Access to doctors	(1)	7	(1)	(1)
Referral to Health Services	(1)	6	1(1)	(1)
Drug use/abuse	2(2)	2(1)	2	1
Alcohol use/abuse	2(1)	3(1)	1(1)	1

Participants emotions and ability to cope

Participants rated their mental wellbeing on a five-point scale ranging from 1- 'Very low' to 5- 'Excellent'. For the six participants who completed this question in both time-points there was no statistical difference between their pre-P180 rating (M = 3.17, SD = 0.98) and post-P180 rating (M = 3.50, SD = 0.55), $t(5) = -0.79$, p =.465. Participants also rated their capacity to cope with challenges and there was no significant difference between their pre-P180 (M = 3.14, SD = .90) and post-P180 (M=3.86, SD = .90) ratings, $t(6) = -1.37$, p = .220.

Table 14 report participants anger management Pre and Post P180. There were general improvements in their anger management responses Post P180 but none of these changes were statistically significant (see **Table 14**). Parents/carers reported higher frequency of anger, more intensity, and less controlled anger management than their young person.

Table 14

Participant and parent/carer perceptions of their anger management (Pre- and Post- P180, Semester 1 2024)

Variable	Pre-P180 Mean(SD)	Post-P180 Mean(SD)	Parent/carer Mean(SD)	Paired t-test (Participant)	p-value
How often do you get angry	3.33(1.21)	2.67(0.52)	4.00(1.00)	1.35	.235
What does your anger look like	3.57(.98)	3.43(1.81)	3.67(.58)	.24	.818
When you get angry, how well do you control your anger?	2.71(1.50)	3.71(.95)	2.33(.58)	-1.22	.267

In the post-P180 survey, participants were asked to rate how the P180 formal sessions about mental health improved their mental health. A five-point scale was used from 1- '*No Impact: It did not help me change my thinking, behaviour and/or outcomes'* to 5- '*Significant intervention: It helped change my thinking, behaviours and helped with my outcome*s'. 3- stood for '*Some impact: It helped change some thinking, some of my behaviours, and got some outcomes*'. Note that scores 2- and 4- were not defined for the participants. **Table 15 overleaf,** contains participant and parent/carer ratings of the impact of the P180 program on their mental health. *For all the indicators, participants reported some or higher impact of P180 on their mental health.*

Table 15

Participants' perceptions of the impact of P180 program on their mental health. Parent/carer perception in brackets (Semester 1 2024)

Variable	No Impact	2	Some Impact	4	Significant Intervention	N/A
The relationship with the workers made me feel valued			1		6(3)	
The CPCYC workers and group of peers made me feel included			1	1	5(3)	
Trying new activities and pushing myself taught me I could accomplish whatever I tried			2(2)		5(1)	
I feel better about myself after CPCYC's support.			1(1)		6(2)	
The program helped work through mental health issues in a supported environment.			2(2)		5(1)	
I was able to get access to professional help through CPCYC and through external support	(1)		1		5(1)	1(1)
Physical activity helped with my mental state			2(1)		5(2)	
Daily check-ins helped me identify where I was at and how I should act			2	1	4	

Participants reported on the social skills learned during the P180 program. CPCYC conducts social skills training, personal development and cognitive skills training while the participants are in the P180 program. Below are the items asked on social skills and the rating on which they were assessed. A five-point scale was used from 1- '*No Impact: It did not help me change my thinking, behaviour and/or outcome*s' to 5- '*Significant intervention: It helped change my thinking, behaviours and helped with my outcome*s'. 3- stood for '*Some impact: It helped change some thinking, some of my behaviours, and got some outcomes*'. Note that scores 2- and 4- were not defined for the participants. **Table 16** overleaf shows participant and parent/carer ratings of the impact of P180 on their social skills.

Table 16

Participants' perceptions of P180 program on their social skills. Parent/Carer ratings in brackets (Semester 1 2024).

Variable	No Impact 2	Some Impact 4	Significant Intervention N/A
Conflict resolution		1(3)	6
An understanding of healthy relationships		4(2)	3(1)
Ability to manage emotions	1	3(2)	3(1)
Goal setting	(1)	2(2)	5
Face your anger (New Leaf)		4	3
Live Bites		2	5

Participants' relationships with their family

Participants rated their relationship both pre- and post-P180, with their (i) mother/female carer, (ii) father/male carer, and (iii) siblings (only pre-P180) on a five-point Likert type scale ranging from 1- '*No relationship*' to 5- '*Best it can be*'. Participants' ratings are presented in **Table 17**. On a matched pairs t-test, there was no significant difference between the pre- and post-P180 participant ratings for their relationship with their mother. The mean and medians for both pre- and post-P180 ratings of paternal relationships were the same ($M = 3.43$, $Md = 4.00$) so no matched paired t-test was conducted.

Table 17

Participants' rating of their family relationships (pre- and post-P180, Semester 1 2024)

Variable	Pre-P180 Mean(SD)	Post-P180 Mean(SD)	Paired- t test	p-value
Relationship with mother	4.00(.82)	4.29(1.25)	-.68	.522
Relationship with father	3.43(1.51)	3.42(1.40)		
Relationship with siblings	3.67(1.32)			

In the pre-P180 survey, half the participants stated that they wanted to improve relationships with their carers or siblings ($n = 5$), four participants reported 'No, they are fine as is' and one reported 'No, I don't wish to improve them'. The question was not asked again in the post-P180 survey.

Half of the participants reported having experienced physical violence in their family home pre-P180 ($n = 5$). Three participants reported having been hit, slapped or hurt by their parent or carer or a family member before joining P180 and seven participants did not answer or specify. Two participants reported that there was regular non-physical conflict within their home in the form of arguing and yelling all the time, forty percent of participants reported some conflict from time to time and forty percent of participants reported no conflict. Twenty percent of participants reported having used violence against a family member at home. These questions were not asked post-P180.

In the post-P180 survey, participants were asked questions on family cohesion. P180 addresses positive relationships and teamwork, encourages healthy conflict resolution and strained relationships within the family unit. Below are the items asked and the rating on which they were assessed. A five-point scale was used from 1- '*No Impact: It did not help me change my thinking, behaviour and/or outcomes'* to 5- '*Significant intervention: It helped change my thinking, behaviours and helped with my outcomes*'. 3- stood for '*Some impact: It helped change some thinking, some of my behaviours, and got some outcome*s'. Note that scores 2- and 4- were not defined for the participants. **Table 18** contains participant ratings of the impact of the P180 program on family cohesion.

Table 18

Participants' perceptions on the role of P180 program on family cohesion (Semester 1 2024).

Variable	No Impact	2	Some Impact	4	Significant Intervention	N/A
We were able to address family issues that were negatively impacting us	2		3		2	
Parents/carers got direct support	1		2		4	
My parents/carers were able to address issues that were negatively impacting themselves			3		4	
I realised where my own behaviour was negatively impacting our home			1		6	
Family cohesion improved			2		4	1
The family were able to get access to professional help through CPCYC	3		1		2	1
Domestic violence was present but reduced or stopped entirely	2		2		2	1
We now can solve issues without high conflict			4		3	
The housing situation was secured due to reduction in conflict	3		1		1	2

Evaluation of the P180 program

In the post-P180 survey, participants were asked to rate the case management support provided by CPCYC in terms of support plans in identified areas as needing support outside of the program. Below are the items asked and the rating on which they were assessed. A five-point scale was used from 1- '*No Impact: It did not help me change my thinking, behaviour and/or outcomes'* to 5- '*Significant intervention: It helped change my thinking, behaviours and helped with my outcomes*'. 3- stood for '*Some impact: It helped change some thinking, some of my behaviours, and got some outcomes'*. Note that scores 2- and 4- were not defined for the participants. **Table 19** contains participant ratings of the impact of the P180 program on their lives.

Table 19

Participants' perceptions on the case management elements of the P180 program (Semester 1 2024).

Variable	No Impact	2	Some Impact	4	Significant Intervention	N/A
Family support: CPCYC helped the immediate family	2		4		1	
Housing: CPCYC helped secure housing	3		2			2
Basic needs: CPCYC helped with food for the family, or clothing for me	1		3		3	
Legal: CPCYC helped with legal issues			3		3	1
Cultural connections: CPCYC helped with cultural connections			4		3	
Links to community: CPCYC helped made links to clubs, sports			3		4	
Financial: CPCYC helped with financial issues	1	3	2		1	
Transition to other services: CPCYC helped find the right services for support outside of the P180 program.			2		5	

Participants were asked what their favourite part of the program was and what had the most significance for them. In **Table 20** below, the options provided and the number of participants who chose the option is reported. Parent/carer perspectives are included.

Table 20

Participants reported favourite part of the program. Parent/carer rating in brackets. (Semester 1 2024)

Favourite part of the program	Count (n)
The activities we did	5(2)
Checking in and feeling like I could be heard	4(2)
The food	1(1)
The staff and their working relationships	6(3)
Engaging with other CPCYC participants	4(1)
The belonging I felt	4(1)
The themes/personal development/content I learned each week	1(0)
Having the police on programs	1(0)
Professionalism of staff and their ability to get me the right support	4(0)
Family engagement	1(0)

All seven respondents to the post-P180 survey (100%) felt they received adequate support from CPCYC with regards to the reasons they were referred and rated the CPCYC program and support as 'Excellent' (highest rating). Two of the three parent/carers felt they received adequate support from CPCYC (66.67%) while one reported that they 'Somewhat' received adequate support. The average rating from parent/carer was 4.33 out of a maximum of five.

Two parents/carers provided written feedback. One felt that their young person developed: *"The ability to form relationships outside of social media. Willingness to want to try new things & limiting gaming time. Overall self-esteem building."* Another parent/carer reported: *"The staff were incredibly supportive and also knew when and how to point out when behaviours weren't ok. My young person has become more hopeful and positive about their future. They have also been able to speak about their past and current challenges with the staff and problem solve. They have greater levels of empathy and are much better with impact control"* and later, *"I cannot thank the CPCYC staff enough for the support, care and energy they have provided my young person and their peers. They were able to quickly and easily build rapport and trust (which is no small feat) and this created the opportunity for connection and guidance. The acceptance and patience they had for the young people (especially when they were being hard work) was admirable. The program has helped my young person immensely in so many aspects of their life. They have been supported to step out of their comfort zone, learn how to engage in healthy risk-taking behaviours and have belief in themselves and their future."*

Summary of Findings- Semester 1 2024

Participants and their parents evaluated the P180 program positively and felt they received adequate support. From the descriptive frequencies, it seems that participants (i) perceived support of P180 on their mental health, (ii) reported impact on their access to doctors and referral to health services, (iii) reported a better understanding of health relationships. However, there were no significant change on measures that were assessed pre- and post-P180, that is, ability to cope with challenges, reported capacity for schoolwork, anger management, and relationships with family. Reported respect for the Police was high pre-P180 and stayed high post-P180.

Semester 2 2024

Demographic characteristics

There were ten participants who took part in the Entry survey of which five completed the Exit survey. This indicates a completion rate for the program of 50%. Three parents/carers answered the exit survey for parents/carers. Of the ten participants who filled in the pre-P180 survey, seven reported their gender as male and three as female. The age range was 13-16 years, mode was 14, mean was 14.60. Two participants identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and one participant reported that they are considered Culturally and Linguistically Diverse. Six participants reported having no disability, two reported having a disability and two reported 'unknown'.

Participants came from the following regions: Inner North/Gungahlin (n =2); Belconnen (n = 3); Inner South/Weston (n = 1) and Tuggeranong (n = 4). All participants had siblings ranging from one sibling to four siblings with having one sibling (n =5) the most reported. In terms of housing tenure, three participants reported living in public housing; three in rental housing; two were in houses owned by their carers with a mortgage, one was in a house owned outright by carers and one participant did not know. The main source of income reported for the household was full-time work (n = 4), part-time/casual work (n =3); Centrelink (n =1), and other income (n=1). Nine participants reported that their household has an ACT services card (Health card or Centrelink card).

Three participants were referred to CPCYC by Education, three by Court/Juvenile Justice, one by the Australian Federal Police Supportlink, one by CYPS, and two participants reported 'Other'. Four participants reported the primary reason for getting CPCYC support was for education enhancement, one for AOD, one for trauma/abuse, one for safety (self-harm), one for family violence and one for parenting. Three participants reported AOD use as a secondary reason for getting support from CPCYC, one reported loneliness/isolation, and one reported bullying, and two reported education enhancement. On the question 'what do you hope to get out of CPCYC', three participants referred to education/getting back into school, one participant wanted to get a White card, two participants

reported wanting a job, one participant reported wanting support and help, and one participant reported 'nothing'.

Engagement with the police

In terms of police history, 50% of participants reported having had negative interactions with the police, ranging from 3 to 8 interactions. Pre-P180, most participants (8 out of 10 or 80%) reported having respect for the police. Post-P180, three participants reported having more respect for the police since engaging with P180, one reported having somewhat more respect and one reported that 'no, my views haven't changed, I do not respect Police'. The three parents/carers reported that their young person think that the law should be respected and two third of the parents/carers thought that their young person has more respect for the Police after P180. One parent put in a comment and reported that "*Having contact with the police youth workers, in particular* [redacted]*, has made a huge difference to how young person views the police-* [redacted] *now sees them as people not just as police.* [redacted] *feels they are kind of like supportive friends not the enemy*".

Eight participants reported having been arrested pre- P180. The number of times arrest occurred range from 0 to 17. The list of self-reported offences or offending behaviours are provided in **Table 21**. In the post-P180 survey, the items were worded differently, and participants were asked 'what best describes your offending before receiving CPCYC support'. Two participants responded 1- *no offending*, two participants reported 3-*some offending* and one participant reported '4'. On the question 'what best describes your offending while receiving CPCYC intensive support', four participants reported 1-*No offending* and one participant reported 3-*some offending*. The parent/carer were asked the same question for their young person and two parents/carers answered, '*no offending'* and one answered '2'.

Table 21

Self-reported offences or offending behaviour that the participant has been involved in (Semester 2 2024 cohort)

Type of offence	Pre-P180 (*n*)
Assault	3
Burglary	2
Drug offences	2
Firearms and Weapons Offence	1
Property damage	4
Robbery	2
Stolen motor vehicle	3
Theft (non-motor vehicle)	7
Sexual offences	1
Offence against public order	3
Traffic offence	1

Engagement with school

Questions on participants' engagement with school were only asked in the pre-P180 survey. Four out of the ten participants reported attending school: one participant attended four days a week, another for three days, one participant for less than one a day week but they still go now and then, and one participant reported that they have not been to school for months. Of those who did not attend school, five participants reported that they have not been to school for months. When asked if they have ever been suspended from school, five participants reported not having been suspended at all; two participants have been suspended 1-3 times in the previous 12 months, one participant 7-9 times, and two participants more than 15 times. Six participants (60%) reported having been bullied at school.

Participants' reported capacity to do schoolwork and job readiness

The question on reported capacity to do schoolwork was assessed only in the Pre P180 survey, and the mean score was 2.80 and standard deviation = .79. Participants were asked on a five-point scale how job ready they thought they were where '1' -*Not at all work ready, no skills or experience, or CV* to '5'= *very ready, I have a resume and I am currently applying for jobs'*. This item was also only measured in the pre-P180 survey and the mean score was 3.50, SD = .85.

Post-P180

Items for assessing education/vocation in the post-P180 survey were worded specifically to the CPCYC content sessions on formal education and job-ready skills. Below are the items asked and the rating on which they were assessed. The same five-point scale as used in Semester 1 was applied for Semester 2. The number count for each of the ratings on the items asked are in **Table 22** overleaf. The areas where there was more reported impact by participants were obtaining a formal qualification, self-belief and engagement in education settings, and getting a CV.

Table 22

Participants' perceptions of P180's impact on their education/vocation. Parent/carer views are in brackets (Post-P180, Semester 2 2024). Frequency of response for each rating.

Variable	No, Impact	2	Some impact	4	Significant Intervention	N/A
Individual tutoring during education	1		2(1)	1	1(2)	
Formal qualification: Able to finish a Cert 2 while at CPCYC					4(3)	1
Self-belief in education setting			1(1)		3(2)	1
Engagement with formal education system: transitioned back to school			2(1)	1	1(1)	1(1)
Getting a CV: Job ready through CPCYC			2(2)		2(1)	1
Mock interviews: Get job ready		1	2(1)		1(1)	1(1)
They were helped to get a job	1(1)		3(1)		1	(1)

CPCYC P180 also conducts life skill sessions with the young persons. On the same five-point scale as above, participants rated the impact of CPCYC P180 program on their life skills. **Table 23** overleaf present the number count for each of the life skills. However, parent/carer views were asked on a different scale with three options: 'yes', 'no' and 'non applicable'.

Table 23

Participants' perceptions of P180's impact on their life skills. (Post-P180, Semester 2 2024). Frequency of response for each rating.

Variable	No, Impact	2	Some impact	4	Significant Intervention	N/A
Washing clothes	1	1	2			1
Personal body hygiene	1	1		1	1	1
Obtained a Medicare card	1				1	2
Obtained a photo ID card		1			2	2
Obtained a bank account	2		2			1
Budgeting: CPCYC taught me how to budget	1		3			1
Shopping on a budget	1		2	1		1
Making personal appointments	1		3			1
Obtain a tax file number	1	1	1		2	
Obtain a driver's licence			3		1	1
I was helped to get Centrelink	1		1		1	2

Participants' health and habits

Items given to assess health habits were differently worded and measured in the Pre and Post P180 surveys. We therefore present participants rating pre-P180 first and then for post-P180.

Pre-P180

Eighty percent of participants reported smoking or vaping. Fifty percent reported not using AOD. Of those who reported using AOD, four reported regular use and one reported using but only sometimes. Five participants reported having used weed, two participants reported use of MDMA, one participant reported use of inhalants, and five participants reported use of alcohol. Three participants (30%) reported having abuse substances (e.g. considered themselves addicted, brought harm to their lifestyle, or overdosed). In terms of physical exercises, four participants reported getting regular exercise, three participants reported getting some exercise and three participants reported getting no exercise. Sixty percent of participants reported eating healthy food, and regularly get access to healthy foods, thirty percent reported 'sometimes', and 10% reported 'no'.

Post-P180

The CPCYC P180 program delivers sessions on health, sexual health, and AOD awareness. These sessions are complemented by physical education activities such as outdoor and gym activities to improve fitness and choosing better healthy lifestyles. The following eight questions were assessed on the same five-point scale as above with a description for '2' and '4' not provided to the respondent. The frequency of rating choice by question is computerised below in **Table 24**. Parent/carer views are in brackets.

Table 24

Participants' perceptions of P180's impact on their health lifestyle. Parent/carer view in bracket (Post-P180, Semester 2 2024). Frequency of response for each rating.

Variable	No, Impact	2	Some impact	4	Significant Intervention	N/A
Use of tobacco/cigarettes		1	2(1)		(1)	2(1)
Knowledge of sexual health/safe sex practices	1(1)		(2)	1	2	1
Healthy eating			1(3)		4	
Physical activity: outdoor sessions			(2)		4(1)	1
Access to doctors	(1)		1(1)	2	(1)	2
Referral to Health Services	(1)		1(2)	2	1	1
Drug use/abuse	1		1(2)	1	1(1)	1
Alcohol use/abuse	1(1)	1	2		1(1)	(1)

Participants emotions and ability to cope

Participants rated their mental wellbeing pre-and post-P180. There was no statistical difference between their pre-P180 rating (M = 3.00, SD = 1.225) and post-P180 rating (M = 3.60, SD = 0.89), $t(4)$ = -1.177, p =.305. Participants also rated their capacity to cope with challenges and there was significant difference between their pre- (M = 2.20, SD = .84) and post- (M=3.40, SD = .55) P180 ratings, $t(4)$ = -2.45, p = .07.

As shown in **Table 25**, there was no statistically significant change in their anger management response Post P180. Parents/carer reported lower frequency of anger, less intensity, and more controlled than their young person (see **Table 25**) but none of these differences were statistically significant.

Table 25

Participants' perceptions of their anger management (Pre- and Post- P180, Semester 2 2024)

Variable	Pre-P180 Mean(SD)	Post-P180 Mean(SD)	Parent/carer Mean(SD)	Paired-t test(Participant)	p-value
How often do you get angry	4.00(.71)	3.00(1.00)	2.67(1.53)	2.236	.089
What does your anger look like	4.20(1.095)	4.00(1.00)	2.33(1.15)	.408	.70
When you get angry, how well do you control your anger?	2.60(.89)	2.80(.45)	3.33(1.528)	-.53	.62

In the post-P180 survey, participants were asked to rate how the P180 program helped with their mental health. P180 program carries out formal sessions around mental health. The same five-point scale as used in Semester 1 was applied for Semester 2 (see **Table 26**).

Table 26

Participants' perceptions of the impact of P180 program on their mental health. Parent/carer perception in brackets (Semester 2 2024)

Variable	No, Impact	2	Some impact	4	Significant Intervention	N/A
The relationship with the workers made me feel valued		1	1		3(3)	
The CPCYC workers and group of peers made me feel included			1	1	3(2)	
Trying new activities and pushing myself taught me I could accomplish whatever I tried			2	(1)	3(2)	
I feel better about myself after CPCYC's support.			1		4(3)	
The program helped work through mental health issues in a supported environment.	2				3(2)	
I was able to get access to professional help through CPCYC and through external support	1	1		(1)	3(2)	
Physical activity helped with my mental state		1(1)	2	(1)	2(1)	
Daily check-ins helped me identify where I was at and how I should act		1	2		2	

Participants reported on social skills learned during the P180. CPCYC conducts social skills training, personal development, cognitive skills training while the participants are in the P180 program. Below are the items asked on social skills and the rating on which they were assessed (**Table 27).**

Table 27

Participants' perceptions of P180 program on their social skills. Parent/Carer ratings in brackets. (Semester 2 2024)

Variable	No, Impact	2	Some impact	4	Significant Intervention	N/A
Conflict resolution			2(2)	1	1(1)	1
An understanding of healthy relationships			3(2)		1(1)	1
Ability to manage emotions	1		2(2)	1	1(1)	
Goal setting			2(1)		3(2)	
Face your anger (New Leaf)	1		2	2		
Live Bites		1	2		1	1

Participants' relationships with their family

Participants were asked to rate their relationship both Pre 180 and Post 180, with their (i) mother, (ii) father, and (iii) siblings (only Pre P180) on a five-point Likert type scale ranging from '1'- *no relationship'* to '5' – *best it can be*. Participants' ratings are presented in **Table 28**. On a matched paired t-test, there was no significant difference between the pre and post P180 participant rating for their relationship with their mother. For relationship with their father, a non-parametric test was performed given that the standard error of difference was zero. Median scores were significantly higher post-P 180 (Md = 4.00) than pre-P180 (Md = 3.00), Z = 10.0, p = .046.

Table 28

Participants' rating of their family relationships (Pre and Post P180, Semester2 2024)

Variable	Pre-P180 Mean(SD)	Post-P180 Mean(SD)	Paired- t test	P-value
Relationship with mother	3.60 (.55)	4.40 (.89)	-2.138	.099
Relationship with father	3.00 (.82)	4.00 (.082)		
Relationship with siblings	3.22(.83)			

In the pre-P180 survey, four participants stated that they wanted to improve relationships with their carers or siblings, four participants reported "no, they are fine as is" and two reported "no, I don't wish to improve them". The question was not asked again in the Post P180 survey. One out of ten participants reported having experienced physical violence in their family home pre-P180. One participant reported that there was regular non-physical conflict within their home in the form of arguing and yelling all the time. Seventy percent of participants reported some conflict from time to time and twenty percent of participants reported no conflict. This question was not asked post-P180. Forty percent of participants reported having used violence against a family member at home. Two participants reported having been hit, slapped or hurt by their parent or carer or a family member

before joining P180 and eight participants did not answer. One participant reported that they are frightened by their parent, carer or family member and one participant reported that they are not frightened. These questions were not asked post-P180. In the post-P180 survey, participants were asked questions on family cohesion. The P180 program addresses positive relationships and teamwork, encourages healthy conflict resolution and address strained relationships within the family unit (**Table 29**). Below are the items asked and the rating on which they were assessed. The same five point scale ranging from 'no impact' to 'significant intervention' was used.

Table 29

Participants' perceptions on the role of P180 program on family cohesion (Semester 2 2024)

Variable	No, Impact	2	Some impact	4	Significant Intervention	N/A
We were able to address family issues that were negatively impacting us	1			2	1	1
Parents/carers got direct support	1		1		3	
My parents/carers were able to address issues that were negatively impacting themselves	1			2	2	
I realised where my own behaviour was negatively impacting our home		2		1	2	
Family cohesion improved	1		1	2	1	
The family were able to get access to professional help through CPCYC			2	2	1	
Domestic violence was present but reduced or stopped entirely	1				2	2
We now can solve issues without high conflict	1			1	2	1
The housing situation was secured due to reduction in conflict			1		2	2

Evaluation of the P180 program

In the post-P180 survey, participants were asked to rate the support provided by CPCYC (case management) in terms of support plans in identified areas as needing support outside of the program. Below are the items asked and the rating on which they were assessed.

Table 30

Participants evaluation of the P180 program (Semester 2 2024)

Variable	No, Impact	2	Some impact	4	Significant Intervention	N/A
Family support: CPCYC helped the immediate family			3		1	1
Housing: CPCYC helped secure housing	1		1			3
Basic needs: CPCYC helped with food for the family, or clothing for me	1		1		1	2
Legal: CPCYC helped with legal issues	2				1	2
Cultural connections: CPCYC helped with cultural connections	2				1	2
Links to community: CPCYC helped made links to clubs, sports		1	2		1	1
Financial: CPCYC helped with financial issues	2	2				1
Transition to other services: CPCYC helped find the right services for support outside of the P180 program.	1			1	2	1

Participants were asked what their favourite part of the program was and what had the most significance for them. In **Table 31** below, the options provided and the number of participants who chose the option is reported.

Table 31

Participants reported favourite part of the program. Parent/carer rating in brackets. (Semester 2 2024)

Favourite part of the program	Count (n)
The activities we did	3(2)
Checking in and feeling like I could be heard	0(3)
The food	2(1)
The staff and their working relationships	2(3)
Engaging with other CPCYC participants	3(1)
The belonging I felt	2(2)
The themes/personal development/content I learned each week	1(2)
Having the police on programs	0(2)
Professionalism of staff and their ability to get me the right support	3(3)
Family engagement	0(2)

All five participants (100%) felt they received adequate support from CPCYC with regards to the reasons they were referred and rated the CPCYC program and support as 'Excellent' (highest rating). Parent/carer also felt they received adequate support from CPCYC. The average rating from parent/carer was 4.67 out of a maximum of five. As one parent/carer reported about CPCYC staff: "*I think they are doing the most important job in the world, and they are fabulous at it!"*

Two parents/carers provided written feedback. One felt that their young person had "huge improvement in self-esteem, self-worth, felt valued and important. Felt safe to be vulnerable with staff. And another parent/carer wrote "personal growth".

Summary of findings- Semester 2 2024

The completion rate based on percentage of Exit surveys was the lowest in Semester 2, 2024 (50%) and therefore any general summary of findings is made with caution. All the five participants who completed the Exit survey reported that the CPCYC provided excellent support for the reasons they were referred to. Participants reported some to significant impact of P180 on their understanding of healthy relationships, conflict resolutions and managing their emotions. They rated P180 highly for obtaining an education qualification. This is important because one of the aims of the P180 is help the young person (re)engage in school or work in a sustainable way.

Year 2023- Semester 1 and Semester 2 findings

Semester 1 2023

Demographic characteristics

Of the eight participants took part in the Entry (Pre) survey, seven completed the Exit (post) survey. This indicates a completion rate for the program of 87.5%. There were six parents/carers who answered the parent/carer exit survey. Of the eight participants who filled in the pre-P180 survey, five reported their gender as male and three as female. The age range was 14-16 years, mode was 14, mean was 14.625. Four participants identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and no participant reported that they are considered Culturally and Linguistically Diverse. Two participants reported having a disability. All participants had siblings ranging from one sibling to four siblings.

Participants came from the following regions: Inner North/Gungahlin (*n* =4); Belconnen (*n* = 3); and Tuggeranong (*n* = 1). In terms of housing, five reported living in public housing; two in rental housing; and one participant did not know. The main source of income reported for the household was full-time work (*n* = 2), part-time/casual work (*n* =1), Centrelink and government cash pensions and allowances (*n* =4), and self-employed/small business (*n*=1). Two participants were referred to CPCYC by Education, one by Court/Juvenile Justice, one by The Australian Federal Police Supportlink, and four by CYPS.

Six participants reported their primary reason for getting support from CPCYC was for education enhancement, one for AOD use, one for trauma/abuse, one for safety (self-harm), one for family violence and one to finish Certification 2. Two participants reported mental health as their secondary reason for getting support from CPCYC, two reported workplaces, one reported for family violence, one because of high conflict and one to 'be good'. On the question 'what do you hope to get out of CPCYC', six participants referred to education/getting back into school/completing their certificate 2, one participant wanted to get 'out of trouble' and two reported wanting to improve their routine.

Engagement with the police

In terms of police history, 87.5% of participants reported having had negative interactions with the police. Pre-P180, most participants (6 out of 8 or 75%) reported having respect for the police. Post-P180, three participants reported having more respect for the police since engaging with P180, three reported having somewhat more respect and one reported that 'no, my views haven't changed, I do not respect Police'. Matched parent views on their young person's respect for the Police showed that of the three participants who said they somewhat have more respect, their parent/carer thought that 'yes, after meeting the Police in the program, they now have more respect for them', one parent/carer

had the same view as their young person, i.e., that their views of the police have not changed, and they do not respect the Police, and two parents had matched views about more respect for the Police. Post-P180 three participants reported that their views are the same as before and that laws should be respected, three participants reported that their views have changed, and they now think that laws should be respected. One participant reported that their views are the same as before and they think law should not be respected. Matched parent views on their young person's showed that for three participants, their parent/carer view matched their views. Across the participants and parents, there is the belief that laws should be respected.

Five participants reported having been arrested pre-P180 of which one participant reported one time and one participant reported five times. In the post-P180 survey, the items were worded differently, and participants were asked 'what best describes your offending before receiving CPCYC support'. Two participants responded 1- no offending, one participant reported '2', three participants reported 3-some offending and one participant reported '5-significant offending'. Three parents/carers reported less offending of their young person than the participants, two parents/carers reported the same level of offending as the participants did, and one parents/carer reported a higher level of offending that their young person. On the question 'what best describes your offending while receiving CPCYC intensive support', six participants reported 1-No offending and one participant reported '2'. Three parents/carers matched their young person's rating of 'no offending' and three parents reported a higher level of offending than the corresponding participant. *Therefore, participants and their parents/carers reported reduced offending while on the P180 program*.

In the post-P180 survey, participants were asked if they have experienced negative interactions with Police due to issues in the home, since being on the program. Participants were provided options and the frequency of response were as followed:

Options	**Frequency (count)**
There was police interaction before but now there has been no police intervention required since CPCYC support	3
Yes, but a reduction since receiving CPCYC support	1
Yes, an increase in need for police interactions in the home	0
No, but there was no police interaction before	3

Engagement with school

Questions on participants' engagement with school were only asked in the pre-P180 survey. One participant reported going to school every day, three participants for three days a week, one participant for four days, two participants reported not having been to school in months and one

participant reported going now and then. All the participants reported having been suspended from school ranging from three to fifty times.

Four participants (50%) reported having been bullied at school.

Participants' reported capacity to do schoolwork and job readiness

The question on reported capacity to do schoolwork was assessed on a five-point scale from 1 "*I really struggle with schoolwork*" to 5, "*School work is no problem*". This item was only measured in the Pre P180 survey, and the mean score was 2.625 and standard deviation = 1.06. Participants were asked on a five-point scale how job ready they thought they were where '1' -Not at all work ready, no skills or experience, or CV to '5'= very ready, I have a resume and I am currently applying for jobs. This item was also only measured in the Pre P180 survey and the mean score was 3.625, SD = 1.60.

Post-P180

Items for assessing education/vocation in the post P180 survey were worded specifically to the CPCYC content sessions on formal education and job-ready skills. Same ratings scale was used as for the year 2024. The number count for the participants for each of the ratings on the items asked are in **Table 32** below. Parents/carers' ratings are in brackets.

Table 32

Participants' perceptions of P180's impact on their education/vocation and Parent's views in brackets (Post-P180 Semester 1 2023). Frequency of response for each rating.

Variable	No, Impact	2	Some impact	4	Significant Intervention	N/A
Individual tutoring during education				1(1)	6 (3)	(1)
Formal qualification: Able to finish a Cert 2 while at CPCYC					7(5)	
Self-belief in education setting			2(1)	(2)	5(2)	
Engagement with formal education system: transitioned back to school		1	1(1)	1(2)	4(1)	(1)
Getting a CV: Job ready through CPCYC			1(1)	1(2)	4(1)	1(1)
Mock interviews: Get job ready			1(1)	(2)	5	1(2)
They were helped to get a job		2	1(1)	1(1)	2(1)	1(2)

Three parents/carers answered the open-ended question: Did the program help achieve the goals in this area /get any significant outcomes from the education / vocation support provided? If not, why do you think that is? Their positive answers (anonymised) are as below:

-It is and has been a slow process. CPCYC has helped a lot with trying to find a suitable employer for them it is a slow process and hopefully we will get somewhere. I appreciate all the hard work put in.

-[redacted] needed it all, to keep giving the opportunity for [redacted] to receive the certificates in construction and hopefully my [redacted] can get work out of this or still hopefully gain more education.

-While young person's attendance at program towards the end dropped off due to self-confidence and other issues, I believe the program provided them with the confidence to eventually meet with [redacted] and will now be enrolling there to complete a [redacted] certificate and it is their hope to attend college from next year.

CPCYC P180 also conducts life skill sessions with the young persons. On the same five-point scale as above, participants and their parents/carers rated the impact of CPCYC P180 program on their life skills. **Table 33** below present the number count for each of the life skills.

Table 33

Participants' perceptions of P180's impact on their life skills and Parent's views in brackets (Post-P180, Semester 1 2023). Frequency of response for each rating.

Variable	No, Impact	2	Some impact	4	Significant Intervention	N/A
Washing clothes			4(4)	1	1(1)	1(1)
Personal body hygiene		1	(4)	2	4(1)	(1)
Obtained a Medicare card			(1)	(1)	2(1)	5(3)
Obtained a photo ID card	(1)		(1)		4(1)	3(3)
Obtained a bank account			1(1)		2(2)	4(3)
Budgeting: CPCYC taught me how to budget	1	1	1(3)	1	3	(3)
Shopping on a budget	1	2	2(3)	1		1(3)
Making personal appointments		1	1(2)	(1)	5(1)	(1)
Obtain a tax file number				1(1)	6(2)	(3)
Obtain a driver's licence				(1)	4(2)	3(3)
I was helped to get Centrelink	2					5(6)

Participants' health and habits

Items given to assess health habits were differently worded and measured in the Pre- and Post-P180 surveys. We therefore present participants rating pre-P180 first and then those post-P180.

Pre-P180

Seven out of eight participants reported smoking cigarettes or vaping. Fifty percent of participants reported using AOD regularly and 50% reported using AOD only sometimes. In terms of the type of drugs they have used before the CPCYC program, all participants reported having used weed, seven out of eight participants reported having used alcohol, five reported MDMA and three reported inhalants. Three participants reported using the drugs every day, one reported most of the time. And two participants specified the frequency by drug type. For one participant: weed (x3 per month), alcohol (x1 per month), inhalant (x5 per month). Another participant reported taking weed a couple times per week, alcohol twice a week and MDMA once a month. Fifty percent of participants reported having abused substances.

Post-P180

The CPCYC P180 program delivers sessions on health, sexual health, and AOD awareness. Their answers are in brackets in the Table below. The following eight questions were assessed on the same five-point scale. The frequency of rating choice by question is computer below in **Table 34.**

Table 34.

Participants' perceptions of P180's impact on their health lifestyle and their Parents/Carers' views are in bracket (Post-P180, Semester 1 2023). Frequency of response for each rating.

Variable	No, Impact	2	Some impact	4	Significant Intervention	N/A
Use of tobacco/cigarettes			2(3)	1(1)	2	2(2)
Knowledge of sexual health/safe sex practices	2		3(1)	1(2)	1	(2)
Healthy eating	(1)	1(1)	2(2)	1(1)	3(1)	
Physical activity: outdoor sessions	1(2)		1	1(2)	4(2)	
Access to doctors	(1)		(2)	1(1)	5(2)	1
Referral to Health Services	(1)	(1)	1(1)	(2)	5(1)	1
Drug use/abuse	1(2)	(1)	3(2)	1	3(1)	
Alcohol use/abuse	(1)	(1)	2(2)		2	3(2)

Participants' emotions and ability to cope

Participants rated their mental wellbeing on a five-point scale ranging from '1' very low to '5' excellent. There was no statistical difference between their pre-P180 rating (M = 3.43, SD = 1.272)

and post-P180 rating (M = 4.14, SD = 0.69), $t(6)$ = -1.369, p =.22. There was also no significant different between the participants post P180 rating and their parent/carers' rating (M = 3.33, SD = 1.211), $t(5)$ = 2.076, p = .09.

Participants also rated their capacity to cope with challenges and there was no significant difference between their pre-(M = 2.86, SD = .69) and post-(M=3.43, SD = 1.134) P180 ratings, $t(6)$ = -1.333, p = .23. Parent/carer matched ratings on their young person's capacity to cope with challenges (M = 3.17, SD = 1.835) did not significantly differ from participants post-P180 rating, $t(5)$ = .210, p = .84.

Participants also rated their self-esteem on a five-point scale ranging from '1' I struggle to see myself in a positive way to '5' I am very happy with who I am. There was no statistically significant difference between their pre-P180 rating (M = 3.29, SD = 1.380) and post-P180 rating (M = 3.57, SD = 1.512), $t(6)$ = -.679, p = .52. There was also no statistically significant difference between the parent/carer rating (M = 3.17, SD = 1.169) and that of their young person post-P180, $t(5)$ = -.349, p = .74.

As shown in **Table 35**, there were three items assessing participants anger management in terms of frequency, type, and controllability. These items were measured on a five point-scale. Participants significantly reported getting angry less often post-P180 compared to pre-P180 (see Table 35). They also significantly reported less intensity in terms of their anger post-P180 compared to pre-P180. *Therefore, following P180 program, the participants reported getting angry less frequently and with lower intensity.* We carried out a paired-sampled t-test to compare participants' post-P180 score with that reported by their respective parent. There were no statistically significant differences between participant and parent scores on the frequency of getting angry, $t(5)$ = .415, p = .695; nature of their anger, $t(5)$ = .889, p = .415, and control of their anger, $t(5)$ = .000, p = 1.00 (see Table 35).

Four parents/carers provided answers to the open-ended question "did the program help achieve the behavioural goals? If not why do you think this is? The answers are all positive, showing that parents/carers appreciate the P180 program and saw change in their young person.

- At first when Participant was engaging everything was working. They has been struggling a lot a few months ago but since they has got rid of some negative people in their life they has been a lot better

- It has made a difference within Participant, especially having CPCYC giving them a chance and a spot in the program, otherwise I don't know what could of happened, if it wasn't for you mob, it would of been more of a struggle for me.

- Prior to the program Participant was very disengaged and involved in risk taking behaviour. Since commencing the program, I am not aware of Participant being involved in any risk taking behaviour however as they does not live at home, this may not be the case.

-Definitely improved.

Table 35

Participants' perceptions of their anger management (Pre- and Post- P180, Semester 1 2023)

Variable	Pre-P180 Mean(SD)	Post-P180 Mean(SD)	Parent Mean(SD)	Paired- t test(Participant)	P-value
How often do you get angry	**2.86(1.345)**	**1.86(.69)**	1.67(.816)	**3.240**	**.018**
What does your anger look like	**3.86(1.069(**	**2.86(1.215)**	2.50(1.517)	**2.646**	**.038**
When you get angry, how well do you control your anger?	2.71(1.113)	3.14(1.215)	3.00(1.673)	-2.121	.078

In the post-P180 survey, participants were asked to rate how the P180 program helped with their mental health. P180 program carries out formal sessions around mental health (see **Table 36** overleaf).

Table 36

Participants' perceptions of the impact of P180 program on their mental health and Parental/Carer rating in brackets (Semester 1 2023)

Variable	No, Impact	2	Some impact	4	Significant Intervention	N/A
The relationship with the workers made me feel valued			(1)	3	4(4)	(1)
The CPCYC workers and group of peers made me feel included			(1)	2	5(3)	(2)
Trying new activities and pushing myself taught me I could accomplish whatever I tried			2	2(2)	3(1)	(2)
I feel better about myself after CPCYC's support.			2(1)	(1)	4(2)	(2)
The program helped work through mental health issues in a supported environment.			2(2)	1(1)	4(2)	(1)
I was able to get access to professional help through CPCYC and through external support			1(2)	(1)	5(3)	1
Physical activity helped with my mental state		1	1(1)	2(2)	3(2)	(2)
Daily check-ins helped me identify where I was at and how I should act			3		4	

Participants reported on the social skills learned during the P180 program. CPCYC conducts social skills training, personal development, cognitive skills training while the participants are in the P180 program. Below are the items asked on social skills and the rating on which they were assessed. Participants reported significant intervention on specific program such as Live Bites and New Leaf (see **Table 37** overleaf).

Table 37

Participants' perceptions of P180 program on their social skills. Parental/carer ratings in brackets. (Semester 1 2023)

Variable	No, Impact	2	Some impact	4	Significant Intervention	N/A
Conflict resolution	1		1(5)	2	2(1)	
An understanding of healthy relationships			1(4)	4(1)	2(1)	
Ability to manage emotions		1(1)	2(3)	3(1)	1	
Goal setting		2	(3)	1(1)	4(2)	
Face your anger (New Leaf)			3	1	3	
Live Bites			1	1	5	
Step Up	1		2	1	3	

Participants' relationships with their family

Participants were asked to rate their relationship both pre-180 and post-180, with their (i) mother, (ii) father, and (iii) siblings (only pre-P180) on a five-point Likert type scale ranging from '1'- no relationship to '5' – best it can be. Participants' ratings are presented in Table 5. On a matched paired-test, there was no significant difference between the pre and post P180 participant rating for their relationship with their female carer. However, there was a significant improvement in relationship with their male carer, $t(6) = -3.057$, $p = .022$ (see **Table 38**)

Table 38

Participants' rating of their family relationships (Pre- and Post- P180, Semester 1 2023)

Variable	Pre-P180 Mean(SD)	Post-P180 Mean(SD)	Paired- t test	P-value
Relationship with mother	3.83(.983)	3.50(1.643)	.791	.465
Relationship with father	**2.71(1.254)**	**4.00(1.000)**	**-3.057**	**.022**
Relationship with siblings	3.75(1.581)			

In the pre-P180 survey, four participants stated that they wanted to improve relationships with their carers or siblings, two participants answered 'yes', two participants said 'no', two participants reported not staying with their parents. The question was not asked again in the Post P180 survey.

Two participants (25%) reported there is currently or previously there was physical domestic violence in their family home. Two participants reported that there was regular non-physical conflict within their home in the form of arguing and yelling all the time. Five out of eight participants (62.5%) reported some conflict from time to time, and one participant reported no conflict. These questions were not asked post-P180. One quarter of participants reported having used violence against a family member at home. This question was not asked post P180.

In the post-P180 survey, participants were asked questions on family cohesion (**Table 39**). The P180 program addresses positive relationships and teamwork, encourages healthy conflict resolution and address strained relationships within the family unit. Below are the items asked and the rating on which they were assessed.

Table 39

Participants' perceptions on the role of P180 program on family cohesion. Parental Views in bracket (Semester 1 2023)

Variable	No, Impact	2	Some impact	4	Significant Intervention	N/A
We were able to address family issues that were negatively impacting us	1		(1)	1(1)	3(2)	1(1)
Parents/carers got direct support			4(1)	1	1(2)	(3)
My parents/carers were able to address issues that were negatively impacting themselves	2	(1)	(1)	2	1(2)	1(2)
I realised where my own behaviour was negatively impacting our home			3(1)	1	3(2)	(3)
Family cohesion improved	1		1(1)	2(1)	3(2)	(2)
The family were able to get access to professional help through CPCYC	3		2(2)	(1)	1(1)	1(2)
Domestic violence was present but reduced or stopped entirely	1		(1)		1	5(5)
We now can solve issues without high conflict	1		(3)	3	3	(3)
The housing situation was secured due to reduction in conflict	1		(1)		3	3(5)

Evaluation of the P180 program

In the post-P180 survey, participants were asked to rate the support provided by CPCYC (case management) in terms of support plans in identified areas as needing support outside of the program (**Table 40** overleaf).

Table 40

Participants' perceptions on support provided by CPCYC. Parental Views in bracket (Semester 1 2023)

Variable	No, Impact	2	Some impact	4	Significant Intervention	N/A
Family support: CPCYC helped the immediate family		1	3(1)	2	1(1)	(4)
Housing: CPCYC helped secure housing			1			6(6)
Basic needs: CPCYC helped with food for the family, or clothing for me			1(1)	1	3(1)	2(4)
Legal: CPCYC helped with legal issues				1	(1)	6(5)
Cultural connections: CPCYC helped with cultural connections	1		2(2)		1	3(2)
Links to community: CPCYC helped made links to clubs, sports		1	2(3)		1(1)	1(2)
Financial: CPCYC helped with financial issues	1	2	(1)		3	1(5)
Transition to other services: CPCYC helped find the right services for support outside of the P180 program.			1(2)	1	5(3)	(1)

Participants were asked what their favourite part of the program was and what had the most significance for them. In **Table 41** overleaf, the options provided and the number of participants who chose the option is reported.

Table 41

Participants reported favourite part of the program. Parental/Carer view in brackets (Semester 1 2023)

Favourite part of the program	Count (n)
The activities we did	6(4)
Checking in and feeling like I could be heard	5(3)
The food	7(2)
The staff and their working relationships	7(6)
Engaging with other CPCYC participants	6(3)
The belonging I felt	6(2)
The themes/personal development/content I learned each week	6(3)
Having the police on programs	3(0)
Professionalism of staff and their ability to get me the right support	6(1)
Family engagement	5(0)

On the open-ended question about the perceived outcomes from the CPCYC, six participants responded. Four participants reported about the benefits in terms of skills: obtaining a Certificate II, white card, learner driving licence, opening a bank account, and getting a tax file number. The program helped one participant find a routine and two participants reported that the activities were fun.

Parents/carers were asked the same question, and their answers are below (redacted for confidentiality):

- *Participant* achieved a lot of support but *they* could of achieved a lot more if *they* tried
- Well [redacted] organisations haven't helped me, as much as you mob, you saved my [redacted] thankfully
- Participant had a positive relationship with worker [redacted]
- *Participant* is more receptive to services and referrals. *Participant* opens up and articulate *their* needs and mental health well.

All seven participants (100%) felt they received adequate support from CPCYC with regards to the reasons they were referred and the mean rating of the CPCYC program out of five was 4.43. All the parents/carers felt that they received adequate support from CPCYC. The mean rating of the program out of five by the parents/carers was 4.67. Two parents left comments about the program and were full of praise for the CPCYC staff and the program.

Summary of Findings- Semester 1 2023

Post-P180, most participants reported that the laws should be respected and participants and their parents/carers reported reduced offending while on the P180 program. Participants found that P180

made a significant impact on their ability to obtain a formal qualification and some to significant impact on their self-belief in education. Participants' ratings of the impact of the P180 program on their engagement in risky behaviour, i.e., AOD and knowledge of sexual health was on average neutral. The exception where P180 was viewed to have more of an impact was on access to doctors and referral to health services. Participants reported statistically significant better anger management post-P180 compared to pre-P180 with less frequency of anger outburst and milder expression of anger. P180 had some impact to significant impact on mental health outputs such as feeling valued and included and reported highly on the programs Live Bites and New Leaf. All post-P180 participants reported receiving adequate support from P180 and rating the program positively.

Semester 2, 2023

Demographic characteristics

There were sixteen participants who took part in the Entry (Pre) survey of which twelve completed the Exit (Post) survey. This indicates a completion rate for the program of 75%.

Of the sixteen participants who filled in the Pre P180 survey, thirteen reported their gender as male and three as female. The age range was 12-16 years, mode was 15, mean was 13.75. Four participants identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and three participants reported that they are considered Culturally and Linguistically Diverse. Three participants reported having a disability and two reported 'unknown'. Participants came from the following regions: Inner North/Gungahlin (*n* =1); Belconnen (*n* = 4); Tuggeranong (*n* = 8); South (Woden/Weston Creek) (n = 3). All participants had siblings ranging from one sibling to four siblings.

Eight participants reported coming from a household with a single parent, three from a household with couple and children, three from a household with other family members and one in grouped house. In terms of housing tenure, three participants reported living in public housing; four in rental housing; four participants reported owner with mortgage, and five participants did not know. The main source of income reported for the household was full-time work (*n* = 7), part-time/casual work (*n* =1), Centrelink and government cash pensions and allowances (*n* =6), other income (n =1), and self-employed/small business (*n*=1). Only two participants reported that their household did not hold an ACT services card. Seven participants were referred by Education department, three by CYPS, five by 'other'.

Four participants reported their primary reason for getting support from CPCYC was for education enhancement, one participant reported for AOD use, three for bullying, two participants reported for high conflict, one participant for trauma and abuse, and one participant for family violence and four

reported ‘other’. Three participants reported mental health as their secondary reason for getting support from CPCYC, four reported education enhancement, two for trauma and abuse, three for AOD, one for safety and one for loneliness/isolation. On the question ‘what do you hope to get out of CPCYC’, nine participants noted education/getting back into school/completing certificate 2, two participants wanted to get ‘back on track’ and two reported wanting to improve and be a better person.

Engagement with the police

In terms of police history, 81.25% of participants reported having had negative interactions with the police and the frequency of negative interactions for those who reported ‘yes’ range from 1 to 25. Pre-P180, most participants (10 out of 16 or 62.5%) reported having respect for the police on a Yes/No scale. Post P180, seven participants reported that ‘yes, after meeting Police on the program, they now have more respect for them’ and five reported that ‘I have somewhat more respect’. *Therefore, all participants post-P180 reported having some level of respect for the Police.*

Pre-P180, participants were asked ‘do you think the law should be respected’ on a five-point Likert scale from ‘5’ strongly agree to ‘1’ strongly disagree and ‘3’ neither agree nor disagree. The mean score was 3.3125, SD = 1.25, mode = ‘3-neither agree nor disagree’.

Post-P180 four participants (36.35%) reported that their views are the same as before and that laws should be respected, five participants (45.45%) reported that their views have changed, and they now think that laws should be respected. One participant neither agreed or disagreed that laws should be respected and another participant reported ‘that their views have changed and now think that laws should not be respected’.

Pre-P180, seven participants (43.75%) reported having been arrested before. Two participants three times and one participant reported having been arrested two times. The list of self-reported offences or offending behaviours are provided in **Table 42**.

Table 42

Self-reported offences or offending behaviour that the participant has been involved in (Semester 2 2023 cohort)

Type of offence	**Pre-P180 (*n*)**
Assault	8
Burglary	3
Drug offences	3
Firearms and Weapons Offence	1
Property damage	4
Robbery	6
Stolen motor vehicle	2
Theft (non-motor vehicle)	4

In the post-P180 survey, the items were worded differently, and participants were asked 'what best describes your offending before receiving CPCYC support'. Two participants responded 1- no offending, three participants reported '2', four participants reported 3-some offending and three participants reported '4'. On the question 'what best describes your offending while receiving CPCYC intensive support', five participants reported 1-No offending and five participants reported '2' and two participants answered '3-some offending'.

In the post-P180 survey, participants were asked if they have experienced negative interactions with Police due to issues in the home, since being on the program. Participants were provided options and the frequency of response were as followed:

Options	**Frequency (count)**
There was police interaction before but now there has been no police intervention required since CPCYC support	3
Yes, but a reduction since receiving CPCYC support	3
Yes, an increase in need for police interactions in the home	0
No, but there was no police interaction before	6

Engagement with school

Fifty percent of participants reported attending school and 50% reported not attending school. Questions on participants' engagement with school were only asked in the pre-P180 survey (as shown below). All the participants reported having been suspended from school ranging from 1-3 times to more than fifteen times. 68.75 percent of participants (11 out of 16) reported having been bullied at school.

Frequency of attendance at school	**Frequency (count)**
5 days	2
4 days	1
3 days	3
2 days	1
1 day a week	2
Less than one day a week but I still go every now and then	3
I haven't been to school in months	2
Other	1

Participants' reported capacity to do schoolwork and job readiness

The question on reported capacity to do schoolwork was assessed on a five-point scale from 1 "*I really struggle with schoolwork*" to 5, "*School work is no problem*". This item was only measured in the pre-P180 survey, and the mean score was 2.125 and standard deviation = 1.02. Participants were asked on a five-point scale how job ready they thought they were where '1' -Not at all work ready, no skills or experience, or CV to '5'= very ready, I have a resume and I am currently applying for jobs. This item was only measured in the pre-P180 survey and the mean score was 2.125, *SD* = 1.04.

Post-P180

Items for assessing education/vocation in the post-P180 survey were worded specifically to the CPCYC content sessions on formal education and job-ready skills. Below are the items asked and the rating on which they were assessed. The number count for the participants for each of the ratings on the items asked are in **Table 43** below.

Table 43

Participants' perceptions of P180's impact on their education/vocation (Post-P180, Semester 2 2023). Frequency of response for each rating.

Variable	No, Impact	2	Some impact	4	Significant Intervention	N/A
Individual tutoring during education			4	2	6	
Formal qualification: Able to finish a Cert 2 while at CPCYC		1		2	9	
Self-belief in education setting			2	3	7	
Engagement with formal education system: transitioned back to school			3	5	3	
Getting a CV: Job ready through CPCYC	1	1	3	3	4	
Mock interviews: Get job ready	1	2	2	2	4	1
They were helped to get a job	1	2	4	2	2	1

Ten participants answered the open-ended question: Did the program help achieve the goals in this area /get any significant outcomes from the education / vocation support provided? If not, why do you think that is? Their positive answers (anonymised) are as below:

-Yes (n = 3)

-Yes it helped me because I've been doing better at school since attending the program and have been going to class more

-Yes getting back to school

-Yes, I got off weed

-I feel more professional with important things

-education support was better

CPCYC P180 also conducts life skill sessions with the young persons. On the same five-point scale as above, participants rated the impact of CPCYC P180 program on their life skills. **Table 44** overleaf present the number count for each of the life skills.

Table 44

Participants' perceptions of P180's impact on their life skills (Post-P180, Semester 2 2023). Frequency of response for each rating.

Variable	No, Impact	2	Some impact	4	Significant Intervention	N/A
Washing clothes	1		1	3	4	3
Personal body hygiene		1	1	1	6	3
Obtained a Medicare card	1		1		4	5
Obtained a photo ID card		1		2	3	5
Obtained a bank account	2				3	7
Budgeting: CPCYC taught me how to budget	1	4	1	1	1	1
Shopping on a budget	1	3	1	2	2	3
Making personal appointments	2	1	1	2	5	1
Obtain a tax file number	4	1	0	1	1	5
Obtain a driver's licence	3			1	2	6
I was helped to get Centrelink	4	1				7

Participants' health and habits

Items given to assess health habits were differently worded and measured in the pre- and post-P180 surveys. We therefore present participants rating pre-P180 first and then those post-P180.

Pre-P180

Ten out of sixteen participants reported smoking cigarettes or vaping. Five out of sixteen used AOD regularly, five out of sixteen used drugs but only sometimes, and five participants reported not using AOD. As shown below, the type of drugs participants reported to have used before the CPCYC program. Five out of sixteen (31.25%) participants reported having abused substances.

Type of drugs	Number of Participants (*n*)
Weed	11
Ice	0
MDMA	3
Inhalants	2
Alcohol	9
How often did you use the selected drug?	Time to time Not often

Participants were asked to report about their exercise and healthy eating habits. In the table below, the frequency of their response is reported.

Variables	Categories	Pre-P180 Count	%
Do you get regular exercise	Yes	7	43.75
	Some exercise	6	37.5
	No	3	18.75
Do you eat healthy food, and regularly get access to healthy food	Yes	7	43.75
	Sometimes	7	43.75
	No	2	12.5
	Other	0	

Post-P180

The CPCYC P180 program delivers sessions on health, sexual health, and AOD awareness. These sessions are complemented by physical education activities such as outdoor and gym activities to improve fitness and choosing better healthy lifestyles.

The following eight questions were assessed on the same five-point scale. The frequency of rating choice by question is computer below in **Table 45.**

Table 45

Participants' perceptions of P180's impact on their health lifestyle (Post-P180, Semester2 2023). Frequency of response for each rating.

Variable	No, Impact	2	Some impact	4	Significant Intervention	N/A
Use of tobacco/cigarettes	3	2	2		4	
Knowledge of sexual health/safe sex practices		1	3	2	6	
Healthy eating			6	1	5	
Physical activity: outdoor sessions		1	2	2	7	
Access to doctors		1	3	1	6	1
Referral to Health Services	1		4	2	5	1
Drug use/abuse	2	3	1	1	3	2
Alcohol use/abuse	3	2	3	1	2	1

Participants' emotions and ability to cope

Participants rated their mental wellbeing on a five-point scale ranging from '1' very low to '5' excellent. Participant significantly reported higher wellbeing post-P180 training ($M = 3.58$, $SD = .90$) than pre-P180 rating ($M = 2.58$, $SD = 1.084$), $t(11) = 2.872$, $p=.015$.

Participants also rated their capacity to cope with challenges and there was no significant difference between their pre- (M = 3.00, SD = .89) and post- (M=3.82, SD = 1.168) P180 ratings, $t(10) = -1.936$, $p = .082$.

As shown in Table 46, there were three items assessing participants anger management in terms of frequency, type, and controllability. These items were measured on a five point-scale. Participants significantly reported getting angry less often post-P180 compared to pre-P180 (see **Table 46**). They also significantly reported less intensity in terms of their anger post-P180 compared to pre-P180.

Table 46

Participants' perceptions of their anger management (Pre- and Post -P180, Semester 2 2023)

Variable	Pre-P180 Mean(SD)	Post-P180 Mean(SD)	Paired- t test	P-value
How often do you get angry	**4.09(.701)**	**2.91 (1.221)**	**2.951**	**.014**
What does your anger look like	**4.00(.74)**	**3.17(1.115)**	**2.419**	**.034**
When you get angry, how well do you control your anger?	2.75(1.055)	3.17(.718)	-1.603	.137

In the post-P180 survey, participants were asked to rate how the P180 program helped with their mental health. P180 program carries out formal sessions around mental health (see **Table 47** overleaf).

Table 47

Participants' perceptions of the impact of P180 program on their mental health (Semester 2 2023)

Variable	No, Impact	2	Some impact	4	Significant Intervention	N/A
The relationship with the workers made me feel valued		1	1	2	8	
The CPCYC workers and group of peers made me feel included		1		3	8	
Trying new activities and pushing myself taught me I could accomplish whatever I tried		1	2	1	8	
I feel better about myself after CPCYC's support.		2	1	3	6	
The program helped work through mental health issues in a supported environment.	2		1	2	5	2
I was able to get access to professional help through CPCYC and through external support	1		4		6	1
Physical activity helped with my mental state		2	2	1	7	
Daily check-ins helped me identify where I was at and how I should act		1	3		8	

Participants reported on the social skills learned during the P180 program. CPCYC conducts social skills training, personal development, cognitive skills training while the participants are in the P180 program. Below are the items asked on social skills and the rating on which they were assessed (see **Table 48** overleaf).

Table 48

Participants' perceptions of P180 program on their social skills. (Post-P180, Semester 2 2023)

Variable	No, Impact 2	Some impact 4	Significant Intervention	N/A
Conflict resolution	1	5	2	4
An understanding of healthy relationships		4	3	5
Ability to manage emotions	1	1	6	4
Goal setting		3	3	6
Face your anger (New Leaf)		4	4	4
Live Bites	1	1	2	8

Participants' relationships with their family

Participants were asked to rate their relationship both pre-P180 and post-P180, with their (i) mother, (ii) father, and (iii) siblings (only pre-P180) on a five-point Likert type scale ranging from '1'- no relationship to '5' – best it can be. Participants' ratings are presented in Table 49. On a matched paired-test, there was no significant difference between the pre- and post-P180 participant rating for their relationship with their male carer. However, there was a significant improvement in relationship with their female carer, $t(6) = -2.462$, $p = .032$ (see **Table 49**).

Table 49

Participants' rating of their family relationships (Pre- and Post -P180, Semester 2 2023)

Variable	Pre-P180 Mean(SD)	Post-P180 Mean(SD)	Paired- t test	p-value
Relationship with mother	**3.50(1.382)**	**4.25(.866)**	**.791**	**.032**
Relationship with father	3.50 (1.314)	3.75(1.288)	-.672	.515
Relationship with siblings	3.20(1.265)			

In the pre-P180 survey, six participants stated 'no, they are fine as is' and ten participants stated 'yes, I would like to improve relationships' to the question 'do you wish you had better relationships with your carers, or your siblings?' The question was not asked again in the Post P180 survey.

Four participants (25%) reported there is currently or previously there was physical domestic violence in their family home. Five participants reported that there was regular non-physical conflict within their home in the form of arguing and yelling all the time. Seven out of sixteen participants (43.75%) reported some conflict from time to time, and three participants (18.75%) reported no conflict. This question was not asked post-P180.

Three quarters of participants reported having used violence against a family member at home. These questions were not asked post-P180.

In the post-P180 survey, participants were asked questions on family cohesion. The P180 program addresses positive relationships and teamwork, encourages healthy conflict resolution and address strained relationships within the family unit. Below are the items asked and the rating on which they were assessed (**Table 50**).

Table 50

Participants' perceptions on the role of P180 program on family cohesion. (Semester 2 2023)

Variable	No, Impact	2	Some impact	4	Significant Intervention	N/A
We were able to address family issues that were negatively impacting us	2		3	1	3	3
Parents/carers got direct support	4		4		3	1
My parents/carers were able to address issues that were negatively impacting themselves	4		4		2	2
I realised where my own behaviour was negatively impacting our home	1		2	3	6	
Family cohesion improved	1	1	1	3	6	
The family were able to get access to professional help through CPCYC	3	2	3	1	2	1
Domestic violence was present but reduced or stopped entirely	2	2	2	2	1	3
We now can solve issues without high conflict	2	1	3	5	1	
The housing situation was secured due to reduction in conflict	3		1		2	6

Evaluation of the P180 program

In the post-P180 survey, participants were asked to rate the support provided by CPCYC (case management) in terms of support plans in identified areas as needing support outside of the program (**Table 51** overleaf). Below are the items asked and the rating on which they were assessed.

Table 51

Participants' perceptions on support provided by CPCYC. (Semester 2 2023)

Variable	No, Impact	2	Some impact	4	Significant Intervention	N/A
Family support: CPCYC helped the immediate family	1	1	4	1	5	
Housing: CPCYC helped secure housing	4		1		1	6
Basic needs: CPCYC helped with food for the family, or clothing for me	2	1	3		2	4
Legal: CPCYC helped with legal issues	1	1	2	2	3	3
Cultural connections: CPCYC helped with cultural connections	3	1	1		1	6
Links to community: CPCYC helped made links to clubs, sports		1	3	1	2	5
Financial: CPCYC helped with financial issues	2				2	8
Transition to other services: CPCYC helped find the right services for support outside of the P180 program.	1	1	1	2	6	1

Participants were asked what their favourite part of the program was and what had the most significance for them. In **Table 52** overleaf, the options provided and the number of participants who chose the option is reported.

Table 52

Participants reported favourite part of the program. Parental/Carer view in brackets (Semester 2 2023)

Favourite part of the program	Count (n)
The activities we did	9
Checking in and feeling like I could be heard	4
The food	5
The staff and their working relationships	10
Engaging with other CPCYC participants	6
The belonging I felt	5
The themes/personal development/content I learned each week	6
Having the police on programs	5
Professionalism of staff and their ability to get me the right support	4
Family engagement	5

Ten participants (83.33%) felt they received adequate support from CPCYC with regards to the reasons they were referred and two participants felt that they somewhat received support. On a five-point rating scale of the CPCYC programs and support, the mean rating was 4.58 out of five.

Summary of Findings, Semester 2 2023

Post-P180, all the participants reported having some level of respect for the Police and reported less offending while receiving CPCYC support. Participants reported that P180 was significant in obtaining a formal qualification and had a significant impact on their self-belief in educational settings and transitioning back to school. Participants reported significantly higher wellbeing post-P180 than pre-P180 and significantly better anger management. The participants reported getting angry less frequently and having less anger outburst post- P180 than pre-P180. P180 had some to significant impact on participants' social skills such as understanding of healthy relationships and goal setting. The program Live Bites was highly regarded. Participants reported significant improvement with their mother post-P180.

9.7 Conclusion on the Effectiveness of the P180 from the Combined Output Evaluation Findings (years 2023, 2024 and 2025).

Evaluation Aim 3 of the P180 evaluation project is to carry out an output evaluation of the CCPCYC P180 Project. The output evaluation has assessed where possible change across a range of social attitudes, offending and substance use, family functioning and school attendance as measured using CCPCYC entry and exit surveys over three years *(2023, 2024 and 2025)*.

Across three years of data (2023–2025), involving multiple cohorts, the evaluation shows that P180 consistently produces positive and meaningful changes in young people's lives. Although results vary by semester and sample sizes are small, the overall patterns across all cohorts are highly consistent and demonstrate program effectiveness.

Overall, across cohorts, we found a significant change in participants perceived ability to manage their anger, to cope with challenges, increases in their wellbeing, and better relationships with the father/male caregiver following the P180 program.

Because most of the items in the pre- and post-P180 surveys were worded differently or assessed related but not identical constructs, we cannot make statistical analyses and conclusions. However, as shown in the breakdown descriptive analysis for each cohort from 2023-2025, we found a general pattern of reported some- to significant- impact of P180 on participants' ability to obtain a formal qualification, on feeling valued and included, and a positive evaluation of the P180 program. Participants tended to report negative interactions with the Police but average to high respect for the Police and the law. Post-P180, the items were not matched but in general participants self-reported less offending and/or antisocial behaviour while at the CPCYC.

Key Findings

Significant improvements in wellbeing and coping

Across all cohorts combined, participants reported statistically significant increases in:

- Overall mental wellbeing
- Ability to cope with challenges

These improvements were observed regardless of gender, indicating consistent benefits for all participants.

Improvements in anger management

Participants across years demonstrated:

- Reduced frequency of anger
- Reduced intensity of anger outbursts
- Improved ability to control anger

These were among the most consistent and robust findings, with several cohorts showing statistically significant pre–post improvements.

Better family relationships, particularly with fathers/male carers

When all years were combined:

- Relationships with fathers or male carers improved significantly
- Relationships with mothers/female carers did not show a significant overall change, though some individual cohorts reported improvement

These findings suggest P180 may help repair or strengthen relationships that were previously strained, particularly with male carers.

Reduced self-reported offending and improved attitudes toward police

Across years, participants reported:

- Reduced offending while on the program
- Decreases in arrests
- Greater understanding of the consequences of offending
- Improved respect for the law and police officers

Engagement with ACT Policing youth liaison officers was identified by a few participants as a positive factor influencing young people's perceptions.

Increased engagement in education and training

While school attendance data were not always directly comparable, young people consistently reported:

- Increased confidence in their ability to learn
- Successful completion of Certificate II qualifications
- Higher job-readiness (e.g., résumés, mock interviews, work skills)
- Greater motivation to return to school or alternative education

Parents frequently noticed improvements in their young person's confidence and willingness to participate in learning.

Healthier habits and reduced substance use

Young people frequently reported:

- Increased physical activity
- Healthier eating habits
- Reduction in alcohol and some drug use (vaping remained more resistant to change)

Several cohorts reported greater access to doctors or health services through P180's referrals.

Mental health benefits supported by strong staff-participant relationships

Participants consistently highlighted:

- Feeling valued, included, and supported by staff
- Being willing to try new activities and step outside their comfort zone
- Feeling better about themselves and their future

Daily check-ins, group support, and the safety created by staff were among the most appreciated program components.

Growth in social and emotional skills

Participants described improvements in:

- Conflict resolution
- Understanding healthy relationships
- Emotion regulation
- Goal-setting

Structured programs such as Live Bites and New Leaf were frequently rated as having strong impact.

Strong satisfaction from participants and parents

Across all cohorts:

- Nearly all young people rated the program as excellent
- Parents/carers overwhelmingly expressed appreciation for staff support, engagement, and the positive changes seen in their young person

Many families described the program as transformative.

9.8 Effectiveness of the P180 Based Upon the Output Evaluation Results.

Evaluation Aim 3 of the P180 evaluation project was to carry out an output evaluation of the CPCYC P180 Project. The output evaluation assessed changes across a range of social attitudes, offending behaviour, AOD use, family functioning and school attendance using CPCYC entry and exit surveys over three years (2023, 2024 and 2025).

A hypothesis was set to test the effectiveness of the P180 program to reduce risk factors and increase protective factors in young people lives (as based upon responses from the pre-and post-surveys).

Hypothesis 1: *It is predicted that post-program participants will display increases in pro-social attitudes toward the police and law, and higher levels of social skills and anger management, lower levels of anti-social behaviour, along with more positive health outcomes, and higher high school or vocational training and/or employment attendance.*

The data from this evaluation supports the hypothesis.
Across three years of evaluation, P180 consistently demonstrates that it is an effective, holistic early-intervention program that:

- Improves emotional regulation and wellbeing
- Strengthens family relationships
- Builds essential life, employment, and education skills
- Enhances young people's access to health and social supports
- Increases confidence, resilience, and hope for the future

Despite small cohort sizes and variable questionnaire formats across years, the overarching evidence suggests: P180 delivers meaningful, positive, and wide-ranging benefits to young people with complex needs in the ACT.

We recommend that for a better evaluation of the P180 program, that the Pre- and Post-P180 surveys ask the same questions on the same rating scale. This will ensure that a direct statistical comparison can be made within a cohort and across cohorts.

9.9 Alignment of the P180 Output Evaluation with The ACT Youth Justice Strategic Plan (2026-2031)

Overall, the findings from the output evaluation of the CPCYC P180 program demonstrates strong alignment and high consistency with the ACT's evolving youth justice reform agenda following the conclusion of the Blueprint for Youth Justice (2012–2022) and the current ACT Youth Justice Strategic Plan (ACT Government, 2026). While the 2012-2022 Blueprint has formally ended, its principles have been carried forward and strengthened through subsequent reforms emphasising raising the MACR to 14 years and with six key focus areas, including earlier support, divert young people from the justice system, promote equity, eliminate discrimination and address over-representation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, use a caring and healing approach, respect young people's rights, and help young people return to the community.

Presented below is how the findings from the output evaluation align with the six key focus areas of The ACT Youth Justice Strategic Plan (ACT Government. 2026).

Focus Area 1: Earlier Support

The findings show strong alignment with the first key focus area of providing earlier support to children and young people before problems escalate and result in justice system involvement (ACT Government, 2026). The evaluation results showed significant improvements in participants' wellbeing, ability to cope with challenges, anger management, emotional regulation, family relationships, educational engagement, and access to health supports.

These outcomes demonstrate that P180 is addressing a range of known risk factors associated with offending behaviour while strengthening protective factors that support positive development. Consistent with the Strategic Plan's objectives, the program provides intensive early intervention that helps young people build resilience, improve social functioning, and develop the skills needed to navigate challenges more effectively.

Focus Area 2: Divert Young People from the Justice System

The evaluation findings showed strong alignment with the second focus area, meeting the objectives of the draft plan (ACT Government, 2026). Across the three-year evaluation period, participants self-reported reductions in offending behaviour and arrests, alongside increased understanding of the consequences of offending. Young people also self-reported improved attitudes towards police and the law, greater respect for authority, and enhanced conflict resolution skills. These outcomes suggest that P180 contributes to reducing criminogenic risk factors and supports young people to make positive behavioural choices that decrease the likelihood of further involvement in the youth justice

system. The program's focus on developing pro-social attitudes and behaviours closely reflects the Strategic Plan's commitment to keeping young people out of the justice system wherever possible.
Of note, these findings look promising, however, for young people over the MACR, these results would be strengthened by the inclusion of ACT Policing recidivism data at the individual level at three time points. Pre-program, post-program, and 6 or 12 months post-program.

Focus Area 3: Promote Equity, Eliminate Discrimination and Address Over-Representation

P180 demonstrates partial alignment with the third focus area. The evaluation showed that participants consistently reported feeling valued, included, and supported within the program environment. Furthermore, the program facilitated access to education, vocational training, health services, and social supports for young people experiencing multiple and complex needs. These outcomes contribute to greater social inclusion and equity, consistent with the Strategic Plan's aim of reducing barriers to participation and improving outcomes for vulnerable young people (ACT Government, 2026).

However, while the program clearly promotes inclusion and support, the evaluation did not specifically examine outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people or assess the program's contribution to reducing over-representation in the youth justice system. Consequently, although alignment is evident at a broad level, future evaluations could strengthen the evidence base through the inclusion of culturally specific outcome measures and reporting aligned with Closing the Gap priorities.

Focus Area 4: Use a Caring and Healing Approach

The strongest alignment between P180 and the draft Strategic Plan is evident in the fourth focus area relating to therapeutic, trauma-informed, and healing-centred approaches (ACT Government, 2026). The evaluation identified significant improvements in mental wellbeing, coping skills, anger management, emotional regulation, and self-confidence. Participants highlighted the importance of supportive relationships with staff, daily check-ins, group support, and the safe and encouraging environment created by the program.

The output evaluation results found that young people experienced improvements in their relationships with family members, particularly fathers and male carers, while reporting increased confidence, resilience, and hope for their future. These outcomes reflect the core principles of therapeutic practice by focusing on healing, relationship building, personal growth, and wellbeing rather than punishment. As such, P180 closely aligns with the Strategic Plan's commitment to supporting positive developmental outcomes through caring and healing responses.

Focus Area 5: Respect Young People's Rights

The P180 results also align well with the Strategic Plan's commitment to respecting the rights, dignity, and participation of young people (ACT Government, 2026). Participants consistently reported feeling respected, valued, included, and supported throughout their involvement in the program. The program actively encourages young people's participation in setting goals, developing new skills, and engaging in educational and vocational opportunities.

High levels of satisfaction were noted by participants and parents indicating that P180 creates an environment where young people feel safe, heard, and empowered. The emphasis on personal choice, capability development, and supportive relationships is consistent with a rights-based approach that promotes young people's agency and participation in decisions affecting their lives.

Focus Area 6: Help Young People Return to the Community

The output evaluation findings demonstrate strong alignment with the Strategic Plan's focus on supporting successful participation in education, employment, and community life (ACT Government, 2026). Young people reported increased confidence in learning, successful completion of Certificate II qualifications, improved job-readiness skills, greater motivation to engage in education, and enhanced goal-setting capabilities. Parents also observed increased confidence and willingness to participate in learning and training opportunities.

Furthermore, improvements in social skills, emotional regulation, family relationships, and overall wellbeing provide an important foundation for positive community engagement and long-term desistance from offending. These outcomes support the Strategic Plan's objective of helping young people develop the skills, connections, and opportunities necessary to build positive futures and participate fully in their communities.

Overall Assessment

Overall, the results from the P180 output evaluation provides strong evidence that the program is delivering outcomes that directly support the objectives of the ACT Draft Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2026-2031. The strongest areas of alignment relate to earlier intervention, diversion from the justice system, therapeutic and healing-centred practice, and strengthening young people's capacity to participate successfully in education, employment, family life, and the broader community. While there is less direct evidence relating to reducing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander over-representation, the program's demonstrated effectiveness in improving wellbeing, strengthening family relationships, increasing educational engagement, reducing offending behaviours, and building resilience indicates that P180 is making a substantial contribution to the ACT Government's broader youth justice reform agenda (ACT Government, 2026).

Contract Milestone
Deliverable 3: Project Final Report

Due date 20th September 2026
(Delivered 20th August 2026)

The purpose of Contract Milestone and Deliverable 3 is to provide the final three outputs from the P180 evaluation project. The outputs provided are the results from Aims 2 and 4 of the projects as follows:

Section 10: Present the Combined Findings from Aims 2 and 4

Evaluation Aim 2: Analysis of external stakeholder interviews with ACT Policing and other stakeholders (such as CPCYC program staff, senior legal practitioners, and ACT youth justice agencies and school representatives) regarding their experience and perspectives on early intervention and division programs for at-risk young people and benefits of the P180 program.

Evaluation Aim 4: Qualitative analysis of Semester 1 and 2 P180 cohorts (two cohorts commencing in either February or July 2024). This analysis will report on an exploration of longer-term outcomes in terms of how participating in the CPCYC P180 program impacted these young people's future pathways. This analysis will draw on interviews and focus groups, case studies, and changes in recidivism data pre and post program (if available).

Within Section 10, the combined qualitative results from Aim 2 and 4 are aligned with the ACT Draft Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2026-2031.

Section 11: Key Insights, Program Enhancements and Funding Recommendations

This section commences with how the full evaluation data using the results from the process, outcome and qualitative insights and follow-up case studies aligns with pest practice in youth justice interventions and concludes with the five key insights from the full P180 evaluation, program enhancement recommendations, suggested strategies to implement the program enhancements and funding recommendations.

10. Evaluation Aims 2 and 4: Participant, Family, Staff and Stakeholder Insights into the Utility and Benefits of the P180 Program.

10.1 Aims and Scope

Evaluation Aim 2 and Aim 4 of the P180 Evaluation Project are to interview and analyse stakeholder perspectives based upon interviews with CPCYC staff, parents/carers of past P180 participants, ACT Policing and other stakeholders (such as senior legal practitioners and juvenile justice) regarding their experience and perspectives on the benefits of the P180 and benefits and utility of early intervention and diversion programs for at-risk young people in the ACT.

The two aims were addressed through a combined qualitative evaluation.

Aim 2 examined the experiences and perspectives of CPCYC staff, parents and carers, and external stakeholders regarding the benefits of P180 and insights into using like the P180 for intensive early intervention and diversion programs.

Aim 4 followed young people from the 2024 P180 cohorts to explore longer-term outcomes, including education, employment, training, wellbeing, family relationships, service use and future pathways. The incorporation of both semesters from 2024 allowed for 12- and 18-month follow-ups with young people and their parents.

10.2 Method and Procedures

10.2.1 Design, Data Collection and Analysis

The evaluation used semi-structured qualitative interviews and retrospective case-study interviews. The format for the interviews followed Smith and colleagues interview procedure for applied research using a phenomenological approach (2021). A phenomenological approach is valuable for program evaluation as the aim of these interviews is to gain an in-depth understanding of the professional experiences of each stakeholder. This provided an evidence-based method when asking experts their perspectives of how a program performs, how the program is beneficial to them, beneficial for the program participants and how the program can be enhanced given their professional expertise (Marshall & Rossman, 2014).

The interviews and focus group ranged from 20 to 60 minutes. The digital medium chosen for the online interviews was Microsoft. All participants consented to interviews being recorded using either an Apple voice recorder, a mobile phone recorder, or online in Microsoft Teams. Following transcription from digital medium to a word document, the digital recordings were permanently

deleted, and the word documents uploaded and stored in a password protected high security server at the University of Canberra.

The interview analyses were informed by planned outcome domains including education, training, employment, mental health, coping, emotional regulation, family relationships, stable living arrangements, legal requirements and post-program service use. The analysis followed a sequential thematic process using the data coding methods of Braun and Clarke (2021). Each transcript was read in full, key insights were identified and coded, similarities and differences were compared across interviews, and related codes were grouped into themes with descriptive titles. The analysis operated at two levels: within-case analysis of each young person's experience and post-P180 pathway, and cross-interview analysis comparing young people, parents, CPCYC staff and stakeholders. The analysis also considered qualifying and negative evidence, including post-program transition difficulties, participant disengagement, missed follow-up opportunities, staff capacity constraints, inconsistent access to specialist services and potential risks associated with mixed-risk groups. This approach was important because qualitative evaluation should not treat positive accounts as evidence that every participant experienced the same outcome (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

10.2.2 Interview Questions

All interviews and the focus group were carried out by Dr. Sally Kelty or Dr. Phoebe Joshua who are trained in qualitative interviews, analysis and program evaluation. The interviews commenced with a general open discussion about the day, the weather, and other general chats, before moving to the specific focus and questions developed for this study.

The focus of the Interview topics addressed varied by participant type but included participants' experiences of P180, observed changes, education and employment pathways, post-program service use, family relationships, program strengths, areas for improvement, resource needs and the management of young people with different levels of risk. For the external stakeholders, they were asked questions on the benefits they have seen of the P180 for the young people and their families/guardians. Further to explore the benefits of the P180 as an intensive at-risk youth justice early intervention/diversion program from the experience and perspectives of external stakeholders including ACT Policing, ACT Childrens Court, and ACT Inspector Custodial Services managers. Further to discuss the feasibility and logistics of P180 becoming a youth justice diversion option for youth over the MACR.

10.2.3 Ethical Approvals and Participant Confidentiality

Consent to participate was freely obtained before interviews or focus groups commenced. No rewards or incentives were offered or provided. All procedures followed and complied with the National

Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) guidelines for ethical research conducted in Australia. Ethical approval was obtained from the Human Research Ethic Committee at the University of Canberra (ID 14477). Participants were provided with the opportunity to withdraw at any time, however no participants elected to do so.

To ensure confidentiality, all stakeholder, past participants, or their families, CPCYC staff names, location of work, and gender, were removed from the interview word document transcripts (Kite & Whitley, 2020). For example, this report uses study labels rather than names: YP1 to YP4 for young people, Parent 1 to Parent 3 for parents or carers, Staff 1 to Staff 5 for CPCYC staff, Stakeholder 1 to Stakeholder 4 for individual stakeholders, and Social Enterprise Stakeholders for the group interview. Quotes have been lightly shortened where necessary using ellipses. Minor punctuation has been adjusted for readability, whilst retaining the meaning of the original statements.

10.2.4 Participants

The present qualitative analysis includes data from 20 participants. The qualitative data from the four P180 participants, three parents, five CPCYC employees, and eight stakeholders were collected either during online one-on-one in-depth interviews (n = 4 interviews), one-on-one in-depth interviews face-to-face (n = 3), two focus group face-to-face interviews (n = 5) or by individual phone calls (n = 8). All participants who completed P180 during 2024 were invited to take part. Three of the nine participants who completed P180 in Semester 1 2024 and one of the six participants who completed Semester 2 2024 were interviewed. Of the 11 participants who were not interviewed, two initially declined, four were not contactable, three initially agreed and then did not respond to further calls from the UC researchers and two initially agreed and later declined due to scheduling conflicts. Of the participants interviewed, three were female, one was male, and all were under the age of 18. All three parents interviewed were the participants' mothers.

All staff and stakeholders were adults who had knowledge and experience of the P180 program and were able to provide insight into the value of the program for participants and the community. The five CPCYC staff who participated were adults who had worked at CPCYC for a minimum of six years. The eight external stakeholders came from a range of professions and different agencies or organisations including three adults from social enterprise organisations providing work experience and training to young people after completing P180 participants, a school-based youth worker from Galilee School, two youth liaison officers from ACT Policing, a senior legal practitioner from the ACT Childrens Court, and a senior representative from the ACT Inspector of Custodial Services.

10.2.5 Limitations of the Sampling Method and Inability to Analyse Recidivism Data

The findings are based on a small qualitative sample and cannot establish that P180 alone caused the reported changes. Several accounts were retrospective and may be affected by recall bias. Staff and external stakeholder accounts provide valuable observations, but they are not independent outcome measures.

Of note, one of the objectives of the evaluation was to examine whether participation in the P180 program was associated with reduction in offending behaviour over time. The evaluation team sought access to recidivism data such as information on arrests, charges and court interactions. The information provided was however heavily deidentified and only a list of offences was provided across the whole cohort. Recidivism data was not provided for each participant at the individual level.

This means that the evaluation team cannot link the type or severity of offending to any individual participant. Therefore, we cannot determine if the offending behaviour was carried out by older or younger participants, or whether by a male or female. Furthermore, we cannot determine if the people committing these offences started the P180, yet only partially completed, or finished the P180 or completed any other youth programs at the CPCYC. This means the list of offences cannot be linked back to any demographic information, or to program completion. Due to the deidentified nature of the data in the form of a list of offences, we do not have the ability to separate offences by individual and then link back to program participation records. Therefore, the data received is not in a useable form for evaluation purposes.

10.3 Qualitative Findings From the Participant and Family Case Studies, and Interviews with CPCYC Program Staff and Key External Stakeholder Insights into the Benefits of the P180

10.3.1 Young-Person Case Studies (Former P180 Participants from 2024)

The young person's case study results are presented below sequentially for each of the four past P180 participants who consented to be interviewed.

YP1 described P180 as a highly positive experience, particularly because of relationships with workers and other participants: "*I just felt recognised and seen, and I didn't feel alone because they'd always be talking to me*." The young person valued staff who encouraged learning, new experiences and participation beyond what had previously felt possible. A central change was increased openness and willingness to seek help. YP1 described becoming less afraid to ask for assistance at school: "*It made me less afraid to ask for help... it made me feel as if I could ask for help when I needed help*". This reflects the literature's emphasis on self-efficacy, communication and supportive relationships as protective developmental resources (Barnes-Lee & Petkus, 2023; Masten, 2001).

YP1 reported returning to school, becoming more respectful and mindful in interactions, and continuing to use emotional check-ins learned during P180. The young person also described changing peer relationships and distancing themselves from peers whose behaviour no longer aligned with their values. This is consistent with evidence that prosocial peer associations can buffer harmful peer influence (Walters, 2020).

YP1 also provided an important qualification. Staff encouragement could sometimes move too quickly towards positivity when the young person was having a difficult day. This suggests that emotional support requires validation of sadness, anger or fear as well as encouragement and problem-solving. The account illustrates that responsivity involves adapting the emotional pace of the interaction as well as the activity or pathway.

YP2 described P180 as supporting a return to education after approximately one to two years of absence. At follow-up, the young person reported attending Year 10 and going to school each day. The transition to Galilee School was particularly important for YP2 because the school provided proactive support rather than requiring the young person to ask successfully before help was offered. The account also included work, mentoring and practical pathways. YP2 described engaging in consistent work, mentoring younger children at CPCYC and using work experience gained through the Social Enterprise pathway to develop resume content and later employment opportunities. These experiences provided concrete opportunities to practise punctuality, communication, responsibility and help-seeking in settings that were meaningful to the young person.

YP2's case reflects the literature on school bonding and positive relationships with trusted adults. Supportive relationships can counteract the effects of previous school non-attendance and disengagement, particularly when the receiving education environment is flexible and responsive (Halls & Edwards, 2025; Sprott et al., 2005).

YP3 described P180 as enjoyable and valued being cared about, having friends and participating in activities outside the classroom. The young person returned to P180 during a later difficult period and described the second experience as more helpful, illustrating that engagement may change over time: "*I was just going through another little rough patch in my life... I was like, I'll take it, see how it goes. It helped a lot*." Like the other young people, trusted staff were central to the YP3's ability to remain connected during interpersonal conflict. YP3 described an incident that nearly became physical and identified a trusted worker as important in helping them calm down and continue participating.

At follow-up, YP3 was not engaged in education or employment and acknowledged that earlier offers of assistance had not been taken up because they were distressed or resistant at the time. This is an important consideration when interpreting program outcomes. Positive engagement with P180 does not guarantee immediate school or employment participation, particularly where readiness changes and external stressors and barriers remain active.

YP3 nevertheless retained positive relationships with CPCYC workers and had encouraged peers to access CPCYC services. The account supports a longer-term model in which young people can reconnect when they are more ready to use education, employment or other supports.

YP4 described P180 as better suited than mainstream school: "*It was so much better than school because school was just not for me*". The young person attributed changes in behaviour and identity to the program, including improved communication with mentors and greater ability to reflect on the effects of behaviour. The structure of P180 was important. YP4 preferred shorter periods of learning followed by activities rather than a full day in a classroom. This illustrates responsivity in practice: the young person was not rejecting learning itself, but required a different combination of pacing, relationship and activity to remain engaged.

At follow-up, YP4 was attending school and preparing to begin further study in veterinary nursing. Café work experience through CPCYC provided practical skills, resume content and a basis for later employment. Continued staff contact supported resume preparation, school re-engagement and the routines required for education.

Key Insights from Former P180 Participant Case Studies (2024 Cohort)

1. Relationships were a key facilitator of change and growth. Participants described feeling cared about, understood, recognised and supported by trusted adults.

2. P180 broadened young people's sense of possible futures. Accounts included school, alternative education, TAFE, work, mentoring, driving and vocational pathways.
3. Practical activities translated confidence into action. Work experience, licences, outdoor activities and structured routines created tangible evidence of competence.
4. Outcomes remained dependent on timing and readiness. A young person could have benefitted greatly from P180 but still be unable to take up education, employment or mentoring immediately.
5. Emotional support should include validation, not only optimism. Encouragement is most useful when young people are also given space to acknowledge difficult emotions.

10.3.2 Parent and Carer Findings

The parent and career case study results are presented below sequentially for each of the three participants who consented to be interviewed.

Parent 1 described P180 as highly beneficial for a young person who had experienced bullying, school difficulties and anxiety about leaving the house. The parent reported improvements in confidence, mental health and access to trusted adults outside the family. The young person's improved mood and participation also reduced tension at home: "*It made our home life a lot easier... while he was in the program, he was a lot happier.*"

The young person initially returned to Year 11 and had goals involving employment, driving and further education. A later legal difficulty, where the young person was eventually found not guilty, disrupted this pathway by causing a mental health crisis. The parent distinguished the crisis from P180 and described it as an external event that substantially affected the young person's trajectory. This account demonstrates why follow-up evaluation should record intervening events rather than attribute every later outcome to program participation.

Parent 2 strongly valued the relationship between the young person and CPCYC staff: "*I loved the connection that the workers had with the children*". The parent described a trusted adult relationship in which the young person could communicate comfortably, as well as friendships formed through P180.

The parent also described CPCYC as a safety net for children and caregivers, providing emotional support, accountability, practical help and access to wider activities. A missed mentoring opportunity highlighted the importance of follow-through. The young person had been encouraged to become a mentor, but the opportunity was not progressed. The parent believed that mentoring could have strengthened the young person's resume, people skills and employment prospects.

The parent also raised staff continuity as a concern: "*One day they might move on and then who's going to replace them?*". This aligns with the literature's emphasis on stable practitioner relationships and with CPCYC staff concerns about turnover and burnout (Lyneham et al., 2018; Pooley, 2020).

Parent 3 reported a substantial improvement in engagement during P180: "*Her attendance while she was at P180 was about 90%, and prior to that... 30 to 40%*". The parent also observed improved confidence, motivation and family relationships because daily conflict about school attendance was reduced.

The major difficulty occurred when the young person returned to mainstream education. The parent felt that the school had not worked collaboratively with P180 and had not developed a sufficiently supportive re-entry plan: "*What was tricky was her reengaging back to school... the school didn't really work in partnership with P180*." The young person had regained momentum and confidence, but these gains were weakened when the receiving school environment did not provide continuity or appropriate flexibility: "*She had this momentum going, and her confidence was back... and then it just kind of, once school went back... she disengaged again*."

This account is consistent with the literature identifying school attachment, supportive relationships and positive student-teacher interactions as protective factors. It also supports the literature's caution that intervention effects depend on implementation and context (Lösel & Farrington, 2012; Pooley, 2020), not only on what occurs within the program itself.

Key Insights from Parent and Carer Interviews

1. P180 reduced family stress as well as supporting the young person. Parents described fewer school-related arguments, improved mood and more manageable family routines.
2. Parents valued trusted adults outside the family. Several accounts indicated that young people could disclose information or accept guidance more readily from CPCYC staff than from parents or teachers.
3. Family support is best when it is flexible. Some families required case management, counselling referrals or practical assistance, whilst others already had strong clinical or informal supports.
4. Transition planning to other supports was a weakness, although this is not the fault of P180. The conclusion of a P180 semester could expose young people to a less flexible environment that did not recognise or sustain progress.
5. Continuity of staff is crucial to the ongoing success of the program. Turnover missed communication and unavailable workers can weaken the safety and connection developed during the program.

10.3.3 CPCYC Staff Findings

The CPCYC staff case study results are presented below sequentially for each of the five participants who consented to be interviewed.

Staff 1: Program evolution, intensive contact and through-care

Staff 1 described P180 as having evolved from a more unstructured model towards a program incorporating social and emotional learning, values education, anger and emotion regulation, healthy relationships, drug and alcohol education, driver safety, practical qualifications, service visits, vocational learning and social enterprise pathways.

Frequent contact enabled staff to observe changes that questionnaires might not capture, including increased eye contact, communication, pride, participation and willingness to complete tasks. The staff member contrasted a young person who arrived with a hood up and did not engage with the later "*bright, happy, engaging, communicating kid*" he became.

Staff 1 acknowledged that the 20-week program is too short to resolve lifetimes of trauma or disadvantage. The model required staff to build trust, transport young people, provide informal counselling, manage family issues, facilitate education, respond to crises and maintain relationships with external services. The staff member therefore supported more extensive post-P180 case management, noting that "*their lives don't just get resolved in 20 weeks*".

Staff 2: Program development, family work and burnout

Staff 2 also described P180 as moving from an unstructured model towards one with educational content, goals, consequences, thematic sessions, external specialist input and family case management. Family work addressed domestic violence, safety, drug and alcohol issues, mental health and practical needs.

Social enterprise was described as an important pathway where school was not available or suitable. Young people could trial hospitality or lawn maintenance, develop work habits, receive feedback and potentially transition into employment.

Staff 2 was direct about the emotional demands placed on workers: "*You can look in the staff's eyes, and you can see they're just about burned out within the first week*". The staff member connected burnout with turnover and expressed concern about the risk of burnout within the team: "*There's this huge turnover of staff... because of burnout. I'm always concerned about the risk of burnout with the team*." The account suggests that burnout is not only a workforce issue and may affect continuity of care because P180 depends on workers remaining emotionally available, patient and consistent.

Staff 3: Voluntary engagement, structure and specialist support

Staff 3 viewed voluntary engagement as one of the most important developments in P180's evolution. "*We can't work with someone that doesn't want to be here because that just makes it 20 times harder*". The program was understood as an opportunity to change instead of a process that could create change without the young person's participation. The program structure was also important. Certificate II learning, shorter periods of education, practical activities and reward days helped maintain engagement. Staff 3 described the strongest changes among young people who developed buy-in and worked towards their goals.

The staff member identified mental health and drug use as significant gaps. Psychology and counselling were not always consistently available, despite the value of specialist workers being present within the program environment rather than relying only on external referrals. This aligns with the literature's emphasis on responsivity and multi-agency coordination (Pooley, 2020).

Mixed-risk groups were described as having both positive and negative effects. Some high-risk young people could influence others towards risk-taking, whilst positive peer norms could encourage participants to reject offending behaviour and focus on their goals.

Staff 4: Education, confidence and additional staffing needs

Staff 4 described P180 as challenging because many participants had substantial gaps in reading, writing and mathematics. Completing a Certificate II was therefore regarded as a major achievement. The staff member observed increased confidence, self-awareness and understanding of how behaviour affects other people: "*Achieving that was a big deal for those young people... they were just so proud and happy to be part of that*."

Adventure activities were described as opportunities to confront fear, persist through discomfort and experience achievement. These observations fit the literature's emphasis on self-efficacy, social competence and problem-solving as protective developmental resources (Barnes-Lee & Petkus, 2023;

Staff 4 identified a need for additional staffing and educational expertise. Certificate II work could be particularly difficult when participants had learning gaps or became distressed by mathematics and written tasks. The staff member also described case managers as overloaded. Additional workers could support education, individual attention, parent contact, rapport-building and immediate responses to challenging behaviour.

The interview provided a clear account of the difficulty of mixing participants with different levels of need. Positive peer influence was possible, but high-risk behaviour or a dominant participant could affect the whole group. Where group participation became unsafe or unproductive, staff sometimes moved the young person into individual case management or outreach.

Staff 5: Case management, emotional development and service connections

Staff 5 described P180 as a four-day-per-week program combining structured learning, service visits, practical qualifications, emotional education and physical activity. The program was viewed as particularly useful for young people who were socially isolated or disconnected from education.

Staff 5 described the volume and complexity of issues presented by participants: "*We see so much... unresolved trauma, bad habits... ill education on specific matters come through the door in week one. And then there is just a mountain of work to help these young people overcome those potential barriers*".

Post-program case management was viewed as essential because young people often disclosed more significant goals or needs as trust developed. Family outcomes varied. Some relationships deteriorated for reasons outside the program, whilst others improved through ongoing family counselling and case management.

The main improvement priorities were funding, more consistent police engagement, greater access to psychology, increased support for alcohol and other drug issues and more collaborative sessions with external services. Staff described substance use as difficult to manage in a group setting, particularly when specialist workers were not consistently available.

Key Insights from CPCYC P180 Staff

1. The program intensity allows for the development of trust. Four days per week of contact is demanding, but it allows staff to observe changes, respond quickly, develop trust and identify progress that occasional contact could miss.
2. P180 is most effective as a coordinated package. Change is understood as emerging from the interaction between relationships, emotional learning, practical activities, education, service visits, family work, police engagement, case management and vocational pathways.
3. Change is conditional on readiness and participation. Voluntary commitment, attendance and buy-in are important conditions. When young people are not ready or do not want to participate, outreach, case management or alternative services may be more suitable than the group model.
4. The major measurable outcomes may be intermediate outcomes. Confidence, self-awareness, emotional regulation, positive identity, pride, help-seeking, communication and willingness to participate should be measured explicitly because they may precede later pathway outcomes.
5. P180's capacity is constrained by demand. Waitlists, limited staffing, specialist access, transport costs, activity funding and staff burnout create tension between providing intensive support to current participants and responding to young people waiting for a place.

6. Mixed-risk groups require active selection and management. Positive peer influence is possible, but risks increase when high-risk behaviour is led by a dominant participant or when staffing is inadequate. Cohort composition, screening, group size and available support are therefore central implementation issues.

10.3.4 P180 Key External Stakeholder Findings

The external P180 stakeholders case study insights and perspectives are presented below sequentially for each of the participants who consented to be interviewed.

Stakeholder 1: Education and Youth-Support Perspective

Stakeholder 1 described P180 as an important response for young people who could not function within mainstream education but still required learning, structure and future pathways. Trust was identified as the basis of effective intervention: "*So how do we get them to maintain success? How do we get outcomes? Well, the first thing we have to do is build trust. Because if they don't trust us and their trust, you know, it's been shattered by many people over many times. If we can't truly get that trust, then we can't have a relationship. The relationship has to be built on trust. It has to be reciprocal*."

The stakeholder emphasised that P180 cannot resolve every issue affecting a young person. Its contribution was described as creating opportunities to learn outside the traditional classroom through life skills, cooking, emotional regulation, role-modelling and youth-worker relationships.
A major transition mechanism was a warm referral, understood as a gradual handover in which the young person and family meet the receiving service, understand what will happen and experience continuity between trusted adults. The stakeholder described this as "*passing of the baton slowly with the young person and the family's knowledge*".

The stakeholder recommended stronger partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, multicultural youth organisations, health specialists and family case-management providers, alongside more funding, expanded places, stronger post-care support and milestone-based transitions.

Stakeholders 2, 3 and 4: Social Enterprise Stakeholders (Three Participant Group)

The social enterprise stakeholders were interviewed together in a focus group. The findings below are presented as combined findings.

One of the social enterprise stakeholders was a former P180 participant who had progressed through alternative education and employment after graduating from CPCYC to become a social enterprise team leader. The former participant described young people moving from low confidence towards

openness and future orientation: "*A couple of weeks down the track, they start to open up. You can see their confidence start building up*" and described their own pathway from P180 to Galilee School and later employment within CPCYC.

Social enterprise stakeholders described work experience as an opportunity to learn at a pace suited to each young person: "*We're there to give them that opportunity to learn at a pace that actually does suit them... let's at least prove that you can do it*.". Practical employment settings enabled participants to practise communication, follow processes, receive feedback, manage emotions and recover when plans changed. They emphasised that the young people sent to the social enterprises had generally reached a level of stability and engagement that allowed them to work safely and well. "*To be able to go from really not engaging well to having us on your resume and us willing to go, 'Yes, I'll vouch for you to get a job'... that's what we like to see*."

The team also described the limits of their role. Social enterprise staff could teach practical skills and provide references but did not have the same capacity for longer-term mentoring and case management as the core P180 team. Administrative capacity also limited the number of young people who could be scheduled and supported.

Stakeholders 5, 6, 7 and 8: Key External Legal and Law Enforcement Stakeholders.

The four external legal and law enforcement stakeholders were two ACT Policing youth liaison officers, a senior legal practitioner in the ACT Childrens Court and a senior representative of the ACT Inspector Custodial Services.

The two police youth liaison officers were interviewed together in a focus group. The senior legal practitioner in the ACT Childrens Court and senior representative of the ACT Inspector Custodial Services took part in two separate in-depth one-on-one interviews. All four stakeholders were asked the same questions focusing on their experience and insights into the benefits of the P180, program enhancement, and the feasibility and logistics of programs such as P180 to be used as early intervention, or diversion, and deferral/suspending sentencing options for young people over the MACR for young people who come to the attention of police, youth justice or the courts. The findings from these interviews are discussed below.

All four external justice professional stakeholders were highly supportive of providing programs that assist young people at risk of developing a criminal career be given the opportunity to undertake programs that can assist them to move towards a more prosocial trajectory. For at-risk young people, aged 10 to 18, who may have been exposed to, or directly involved, in antisocial behaviour, including dangerous/risky driving, property and aggressive behaviour being provided programs that can give them insight into behavioural choices and the consequences of an early antisocial pathway was positively viewed.

Although the senior legal practitioner in the ACT Childrens Court and senior representative of the ACT Inspector Custodial Services and both police youth liaison officers were in favour of early intervention and diversion program, all discussed a service provision gap within the ACT region. These stakeholders stated the issue they face is limited program referral options when responding to matters involving young people, such as group based adolescent violence, breaking and entering, stealing cars, and joyriding at high speed (often filming the dangerous driving on a mobile, then uploading to social media or group chats, such as Signal).

The senior legal practitioner in the ACT Childrens Court was highly supportive of the work of the CPCYC and would welcome the ability to use the P180, or other longer-term programs at the CPCYC, for bail deferral options or community sentencing options for young people (aged over the MACR) who are attending court for dangerous driving, violent and/or property matters. Both the senior legal practitioner in the ACT Childrens Court and senior representative of the ACT Inspector Custodial Services would welcome the ability to avoid the main sentencing option for young people convicted of driving, criminal and/or property matters to be only detention at Bimberi.

All four stakeholders were highly supportive of being able to refer young people aged under or over the MACR but wanted to see that the P180 program was adequately funded so that places for at-risk, charged, or convicted young people were available when needed. The stakeholders noted the main problem they have with referring young people to the P180 is the waitlist time, which can mean a place cannot be secured until several months later.

It was noted by the senior legal practitioner in the ACT Childrens Court that they would welcome a trial of the CPCYC P180 program to explore it's use as a viable voluntary bail deferral, or suspended community sentence option. However, with current funding levels, places on P180 are limited, and in high demand, resulting in at-risk young people being waitlisted for a space. Community justice options, especially bail options, require places to be available as needed.

In terms of what types of programs would benefit young people involved/exposed to risk taking and antisocial behaviour or criminal involvement for those over the MACR, the evidence suggests that holistic interventions that aim to provide young people with the skills, knowledge, and educational resources to be able to follow a pro-social pathway from early adolescence into adulthood are beneficial (Pooley, 2020). A holistic and generalist anti-social program for at-risk young people is based on the evidence that on the whole young people (aged 10 to 18) engage in a range of behaviours from high level speeding, drink/drug driving, minor assaults, aggravated and non-aggravated burglary, public disorder, drug related crimes, theft from employers, fraud, false identity papers, and weapons offences. Further, that young males are more likely to drive dangerously and be involved in repeat antisocial, or criminal behaviour compared with at-risk young females (Bates, et al., 2022; Farrington, 2020; Werner, 2014). However, the senior legal practitioner in the ACT

Childrens Court noted in the courts they have seen over the past two years a rise in the use of actual violence, or online threats of violence, by young females, including those under or over the MACR. For these young women being exposed to, and using violence, there are currently limited program options, and the courts would welcome more program places for young females involved in more serious violent offending.

The following comments illustrate the issues faced by the P180 external legal and law enforcement stakeholders.

Stakeholders 5 and 6, *"We need more programmes. I know an issue we face, is we might deal with a young person, referred to us, and then we might go out [and see them the] next day, or however longer it takes us to see them. We tell them, hey this programme we might be able to get you into, but it's not straight away. Which is Challenging, is because we feel like we should be able to say [to the young person] we can pick you up tomorrow and we'll drive you there [sic, to the CPCYC]. Introduce you to the staff because we obviously know them and we can just get you in. Then, get you started. But a lot of the time, there is long waitlist, and then [two months later] the kid doesn't care anymore".*

Stakeholder 6, *"Some kids like they're really keen [*to attend a program*]. We can't obviously do anything straight away, and then a week later they're in stolen cars. And we kind of need to strike when the iron's hot and support, and they're ready, and they want to do it is it's just they can't wait, because they just get, yeah, distracted. Yeah, there's just nothing out there that we can just drop kids too. CPCYC was the like, place, like with being able to get some kids in and short notice. But that depends on their availability and space. It's truly challenging".*

Stakeholder 7, *"I have a very positive view of the CPCYC. I think what they do is great basically, but they just don't have enough money to do enough of it, so it must be very difficult for them selecting who it is that gets the benefit. I think that they're underfunded, I had originally hoped when I started this role, I would be able to use their programmes, as a bail condition, but they're so oversubscribed that that was never a possibility. With youth justice, you really want to be moving people through the system rather than having hang around for 12 months, waiting for a program… A condition of bail, that they attend a PCYC programme, would be fantastic. I don't have a single option other than community-based supervision, or a voluntary drug rehabilitation. The only 2 options that I've got. But we just have so few resources in the act. We don't have anything in terms of bail options for young people. It could be part of a good behaviour option, or a suspended sentence order. It definitely could be an option [*sic a CPCYC program*]. Um, and is, you know, if, for example, if someone's at risk of re-offending, and alcohol or drugs are not really the primary cause of offending. Then, released to a formal programme in a structured programme. It could be a way of managing risk".*

Stakeholder 8, *"The national children's commissioner, at a national level, her review of justice, and we saw exactly the same thing here. These pilot programmes start [rehabilitation programs], they show great positive potential. Organisations then have to fight tooth and nail to try and maintain their funding. That's where the focus becomes, on keeping funding, then they lose the funding. So, the pilot finishes, trumps it, finishes, shows positive results, but it's not funded on the long-term basis, and have to start again, yeah. A lot of pilots. Also, I guess it's just the funding nature of government that there's some apparently, some trepidation about committing to things long-term. But as a result, things show promise, and then they disappear in whatever the issue was. Keeping young people out of Bimberi is probably the ultimate goal".*

Stakeholder 5, "*When we talk about the programme to parents of these young people. We've had a few comments from the parents saying they're reluctant to put their child into P180, because of the connections they're forming with other kids, and some young people have come out of that programme. These friendships with other kids, they've probably shouldn't be hanging out with….. I don't know how to avoid that. But yeah, we get comments from parents that they're a bit more, I don't want my family daughter going there because I know the types of kids. So we've got that challenge as well".*

Key Insights From the P180 External Stakeholder Interviews

1. P180 fills a gap between mainstream education, youth work and formal justice responses.
2. A value of the P180 is the links with education, health, family support, social enterprise, youth services and, where appropriate, police and justice systems.
3. Referrals to other services post P180 is more effective when carried out through introductions, sharing of information, family involvement and service continuity that supports successful transitions than just providing a service name alone.
4. Social enterprise provides a credible bridge into adulthood. It develops intermediate skills that facilitate effective employment, including punctuality, communication, self-reliance and responding to feedback.
5. External partner capacity affects transition quality. A strong P180 intervention may lose momentum if the receiving service lacks staff, flexibility or a shared understanding of the young person's needs.
6. All legal and law enforcement stakeholders noted that P180 provides valuable support for young people at risk of antisocial behaviour and/or offending. With P180 helping young people make better choices, avoid further involvement in crime, and build positive futures.
7. There are not enough program places available and a big challenge for external stakeholders is the lack of available space in programs like P180 combined with long waiting lists. Delays can mean young people lose interest or become more involved in antisocial behaviour. The CPCYC would require more funding and resources to be able to increase program capacity.
8. P180 could be used more within the justice system, both the senior legal practitioner in the ACT Childrens Court and the senior representative of the ACT Inspector Custodial Services saw P180 as a useful alternative to detention for some young people, and could be used as part of bail, community-based orders, or suspended sentences, if enough places were available when needed.
9. Some parents are concerned that young people may form friendships with other participants who are also involved in risky or antisocial behaviour. Stakeholders recognised this as an ongoing challenge for group-based programs.

10.4 Summary of P180 Past Participant Case Studies, Parent and Carer and External Stakeholder Combined Findings

The qualitative findings indicate that P180 is a valued intensive intervention for at-risk young people experiencing multiple interconnected challenges, including educational disengagement, family stress, peer influences, emotional and behavioural difficulties, trauma, substance use, and limited access to stable support. The findings suggest that the program's multi-component design is well suited to addressing these complex needs through a combination of education, emotional development, practical learning, family support, case management and service coordination (Pooley, 2020).

Across all participant groups, trusted relationships emerged as the most significant factor contributing to positive outcomes. Young people, parents, staff and external stakeholders consistently identified relationships with P180 staff as central to engagement, confidence building, emotional development, help-seeking and future planning. Participants described feeling supported, respected and understood, with many reporting that these relationships helped them re-engage with education, training, employment and other positive pathways. This finding is consistent with research highlighting the importance of positive practitioner-client relationships in supporting youth outcomes (Masten, 2001; Pooley, 2020).

Young people reported improvements in confidence, self-awareness, emotional regulation, communication and decision-making. Many described increased willingness to seek help, improved relationships with peers and family members, and greater optimism about their future. Practical activities, qualifications, work experience and social enterprise opportunities were viewed as particularly valuable in building skills, responsibility and pathways into employment and further education. These outcomes align with strengths-based and developmental approaches that emphasise self-efficacy, resilience and social competence as important outcomes in their own right (Barnes-Lee & Petkus, 2023; Beelmann & Lösel, 2021; Fortune, 2018).

Parents and carers reported improvements in young people's mood, behaviour, confidence and educational engagement, alongside reduced family conflict and more positive home environments. However, outcomes were not uniform and were often influenced by external factors beyond the program's control. The findings suggest that family outcomes should be understood as individual and evolving rather than assumed to improve consistently across all participants.

CPCYC staff and stakeholders described P180 as a holistic intervention that combines therapeutic, educational and practical elements. The program's four-day-per-week model enables intensive engagement and allows staff to build trust, identify issues early and respond flexibly to individual

needs. Participants and stakeholders emphasised that outcomes are generated through the interaction of multiple program components rather than any single activity, including emotional learning, education, family support, vocational opportunities, case management and connections to external services. This reflects evidence supporting multi-agency, tailored and intensive interventions for young people with complex needs (Pooley, 2020).

External stakeholders, including education, social enterprise, law enforcement and justice representatives, viewed P180 as filling an important gap between mainstream education, youth services and formal justice responses. Stakeholders highlighted the program's potential to support early intervention, diversion and rehabilitation and noted that it may provide an alternative pathway to detention for some young people where sufficient capacity exists. This is consistent with contemporary youth justice approaches that emphasise prevention, diversion and community-based responses to offending (Pooley, 2020; Ward & Brown, 2004).

A consistent finding across interviews was the importance of transition planning and ongoing support. While many participants reported significant gains during P180, these gains could be difficult to maintain when young people returned to mainstream education, employment or community settings that lacked flexibility or appropriate support. The findings suggest that transition planning should begin during program participation and involve coordinated support between P180, families and receiving services. Research indicates that program outcomes are influenced not only by the intervention itself but also by the quality of implementation, service integration and post-program supports (Lösel & Farrington, 2012; Pooley, 2020).

Several implementation challenges were identified. Demand for the program exceeds available capacity, resulting in long waiting lists and missed opportunities to engage young people when they are ready to participate. Staff also identified workforce pressures, burnout, turnover and limited access to specialist services, particularly mental health and alcohol and other drug supports, as risks to program quality and sustainability. These findings suggest that maintaining program effectiveness requires adequate staffing, specialist support and sustainable funding arrangements (Lyneham et al., 2018; Pooley, 2020).

The findings also highlighted challenges associated with mixed-risk participant groups. While positive peer influences can encourage engagement and prosocial behaviour, there is also potential for higher-risk participants to negatively influence others. The evidence suggests that effective participant assessment, cohort management, appropriate staffing and access to alternative supports are important in managing these risks. This is consistent with research cautioning against grouping

higher-risk young people together without adequate structure and supervision (Pooley, 2020; Schwalbe et al., 2012).

Of note, while participants reported meaningful positive changes, the findings do not establish a direct causal impact on offending or recidivism. The qualitative evidence describes positive change and identifies important developmental and positive pathway outcomes for young people; however, the absence of linked recidivism data means conclusions should be limited to self-reported changes in engagement, wellbeing, relationships and future pathways rather than verified reductions in reoffending (Pooley, 2020). Future evaluations could look to incorporating recidivism data that can be analysed at the individual level at multiple time point, name, pre-program, post-program and 6 or 12 months post program.

Overall, the findings are consistent with contemporary evidence on strengths-based, developmental and relationship-based approaches to working with vulnerable young people. The evidence suggests that P180 contributes to positive developmental outcomes, including increased confidence, emotional regulation, help-seeking, engagement and positive identity formation. These outcomes may support longer-term educational, vocational and social pathways and are consistent with the Good Lives Model, which emphasises building strengths, capabilities and meaningful life opportunities alongside reducing risk (Fortune, 2018; Ward & Brown, 2004).

10.5 Alignment of the P180 Case Studies and Stakeholder Combined Interview Findings with The ACT Government Draft Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2026-2031

The combined findings from the P180 case study and stakeholder interview data demonstrates strong alignment with the priorities outlined in the ACT Government's Draft Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2026-2031. The draft plan suggests six focus areas for youth justice over a five-year period, these are: earlier support, divert young people from the justice system, promote equity, eliminate discrimination and address over-representation, a caring healing approach, respect and protection of young people's rights, and help young people return to the community (ACT Government, 2026).

Focus Area 1: Earlier Support

The qualitative findings demonstrate strong alignment with the Strategic Plan's focus on earlier support. Stakeholders described P180 as filling an important gap between mainstream education, youth services and formal justice responses. Young people were supported to engage in education, vocational training, work experience, mentoring and future planning, while parents reported reduced family stress, improved behaviour and more manageable family routines. Staff also highlighted the program's capacity to identify issues early and respond flexibly through intensive engagement and coordinated support (ACT Government, 2026).

Focus Area 2: Divert Young People from the Justice System

The findings align strongly with the Strategic Plan's diversion objectives. External stakeholders, including law enforcement and justice representatives, identified P180 as providing valuable support for young people at risk of antisocial behaviour and offending. Stakeholders reported that the program helps young people make better choices, avoid further involvement in crime, and build positive futures. Both the senior legal practitioner in the ACT Childrens Court and the senior representative of the ACT Inspector Custodial Services identified P180 as having potential as an alternative to detention and as a support mechanism for young people on bail or community-based orders (ACT Government, 2026).

Focus Area 3: Promote Equity, Eliminate Discrimination and Address Over-Representation

The qualitative findings provide limited direct alignment with this focus area. Participants consistently described feeling supported, respected and understood, while staff emphasised cultural responsiveness and tailored support. However, the interviewees did not specifically comment on how outcomes from participating in the P180 related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people equity initiatives or reducing over-representation in the youth justice system (ACT Government, 2026).

Focus Area 4: Use a Caring and Healing Approach

The strongest alignment is evident in this focus area. Young people, parents, staff and stakeholders consistently identified trusted relationships as central to positive change. Participants reported improvements in emotional regulation, confidence, self-awareness, communication, help-seeking and decision-making. Parents described improvements in mood and family functioning, while staff highlighted the importance of trust, emotional learning, individualised support and therapeutic engagement. The program was consistently described as holistic, relationship-based and responsive to complex needs (ACT Government, 2026).

Focus Area 5: Respect Young People's Rights

The findings demonstrate strong alignment with a rights-based approach. Young people reported feeling cared for, recognised, respected, understood and supported. Participants highlighted the value of having trusted adults who listened and provided guidance, while staff described a model that responds to individual needs, readiness and participation. The emphasis on personal goals, future aspirations and young people's active engagement in their own pathways reflects the Strategic Plan's commitment to respecting young people's dignity, participation and voice (ACT Government, 2026).

Focus Area 6: Help Young People Return to the Community

The qualitative findings align strongly with the Strategic Plan's focus on successful community participation. Young people described increased engagement in education, TAFE, work, vocational pathways and mentoring. Practical activities, work experience, licences and social enterprise opportunities were identified as building competence and readiness for adulthood. Stakeholders emphasised the importance of transition planning, service coordination and ongoing support to sustain gains achieved through the program. The findings also highlighted the role of community connections, employment readiness and educational engagement in supporting positive longer-term outcomes (ACT Government, 2026).

Overall Assessment

The qualitative findings show strongest alignment with Focus Areas 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6, demonstrating P180's contribution to early intervention, diversion, therapeutic support and community participation. There is only limited direct evidence relating to Focus Area 3, as the interviewees did not specifically address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander over-representation, cultural safety or equity outcomes (ACT Government, 2026).

11. Key Insights, Program Enhancements and Funding Recommendations Using the Full P180 Evaluation Data:

In this section we overview the overall findings from the P180 evaluation project. These key findings are based on the results from the process evaluation, the output evaluation, and with the key insights from the follow-up of past P180 participants and the P180 Stakeholders.

In 11.1 we assess how closely the outcomes from the full P180 evaluation data aligns with best-practice youth intervention delivery and practice.

In 11.2 we provide the five key insights and recommendations.

11.1 Alignment of the P180 Program with Current Best-Practice Youth Intervention Practice Elements using the Full P180 Evaluation Data:

In section 6.3 of this report, we overviewed current best-practice elements to include in community-based programs aiming to reduce risky, antisocial behaviour and or criminal involvement in young people. These five elements are; (1) Pooley's (2020) nine evidence-based principles for effective youth programs, (2) Pappas and Dent's (2021) international review of what works findings, (3) Andrews and Bontas (2023) Risk-Need-Responsivity framework, (4) program dosage and participant allocation, and (5) outcome measurement and evaluation.

We assessed how the full P180 evaluation finding aligns with the five best-practice elements.

Element 1. Pooley's (2020) Nine Evidence-Based Principles for Effective Youth Programs

The findings indicate that P180 demonstrates good alignment with most of Pooley's (2020) nine principles for effective youth programs. The P180 evaluation found that P180 has a clear evidence-based program model informed by Australian Institute of Criminology research, the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) framework and Good Lives Model (GLM) principles. The program is delivered consistently, has clearly defined aims, and is supported by trained staff, clinical supervision and reflective practice. The evaluation also identified strong practitioner-participant relationships as one of the program's greatest strengths, with young people, families and stakeholders consistently identifying staff relationships as central to engagement and positive outcomes.

P180 also demonstrates alignment through its multi-agency partnerships, including connections with education providers, ACT Policing, social enterprises and community support services. Participants, parents and stakeholders described the program as holistic and responsive to the complex needs of young people.

Areas for Program Enhancement: While P180 collects outcome data and undertakes participant assessments, alignment with Pooley's outcome monitoring principle could be

strengthened. The evaluation identified limitations in the use of structured risk and protective factor assessments, longitudinal follow-up processes, and the ability to track outcomes for participants who disengage from the program. Enhancing assessment and outcome monitoring systems would further strengthen alignment with this principle.

Element 2. Pappas and Dent's (2021) International Review of What Works

P180 aligns well with the key findings from Pappas and Dent's (2021) review of effective youth intervention programs. The program adopts a multi-component approach that combines education, emotional development, family support, practical skill development, case management, health referrals and vocational opportunities. This reflects the evidence suggesting that programs using multiple intervention approaches are more effective than those relying on a single modality. The evaluation also found evidence of improvements in emotional regulation, family functioning, social skills, wellbeing, educational engagement and employment readiness, all of which are consistent with outcomes identified in the broader literature. The program's intensive, four-day-per-week model also aligns with evidence that structured and intensive interventions are more likely to produce positive behavioural outcomes for young people with complex needs.

Areas for Program Enhancement: The evaluation identified opportunities to strengthen program content relating to risk-taking behaviour, antisocial peer influences and relapse prevention. These areas are recognised within the literature as important contributors to antisocial behaviour and may further enhance the program's effectiveness.

Element 3. Andrews and Bonta's (2023) Risk-Need-Responsivity Framework

Overall, P180 demonstrates strong alignment with the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) framework.

Risk Principle: The evaluation found that P180 is generally targeted towards moderate- and high-risk young people, while lower-risk young people are more commonly directed to outreach and mentoring supports. This reflects best-practice evidence suggesting intensive interventions should be reserved for those most likely to benefit.

Need Principle: Program content addresses a broad range of dynamic risk factors associated with antisocial behaviour, including emotional regulation, family functioning, antisocial attitudes, alcohol and other drug use, education engagement and social skills. The program also incorporates strengths-based components that support longer-term positive development.

Responsivity Principle: The findings show strong evidence of responsive and individualised support. Young people consistently described staff as supportive, flexible and able to adapt to their needs and learning styles. The program's combination of therapeutic, practical and educational components further support this principle.

Areas for Program Enhancement: The evaluation identified that participant risk levels are not currently measured using a structured, validated risk assessment process pre and post program. This prevents that program outcomes are not measured in a way to show change in risk over time.

Element 4. Program Dosage and Participant Allocation

P180 shows strong alignment with the evidence relating to program intensity and dosage. The program operates four days per week over approximately 20 weeks, incorporates relapse prevention planning and provides post-program outreach support. This level of intensity is consistent with recommendations for medium- and high-risk young people and was identified in the process evaluation as appropriate for the target cohort. The program also demonstrates good alignment with evidence regarding participant allocation. Internal processes seek to ensure that higher-risk young people are allocated to P180, while lower-risk young people are supported through alternative pathways such as mentoring and outreach services.

Areas for improvement: Consistent with the literature, the findings highlighted mixing low with higher risk young people requires ongoing consideration. Stakeholders identified challenges associated with mixed-risk groups and the potential for negative peer influences. Although there was no evidence that inappropriate allocation was occurring systematically, strengthening intake processes, readiness assessments and cohort management would further reduce this risk and improve consistency with best practice.

Element 5. Outcome Measurement and Evaluation

P180 demonstrates a strong commitment to evaluation, with data collected from participant surveys, parent feedback, staff observations and qualitative interviews conducted over three years. The evaluation identified significant improvements in wellbeing, coping skills, anger management and family relationships, alongside positive changes in education, employment readiness and self-reported offending behaviours. Importantly, the evaluation also measured many strengths-based outcomes recommended in the literature, including confidence, resilience, wellbeing and future orientation.

Areas for Program Enhancement: This was the area where the main misalignment with best practice was identified. Several limitations reduced the strength of the evidence base. Pre- and post-program surveys often used different questions and rating scales, limiting direct statistical comparisons. Structured risk and protective factors were not consistently measured at multiple time points. Outcomes for participants who disengaged early or did not continue with outreach support were difficult to capture. Longitudinal follow-up data were limited. Access to recidivism and police contact data was unavailable, meaning offending-related outcomes relied largely on self-report

measures. Measures of quality of life, thriving and broader wellbeing outcomes could be strengthened.

Overall Assessment

The evaluation findings indicate that P180 aligns strongly with contemporary evidence on effective youth intervention programs. The program demonstrates strengths in program design, intervention intensity, practitioner-participant relationships, responsiveness to participant needs, multi-agency collaboration and its focus on both risk reduction and strengths development.

The primary areas requiring enhancement relate to assessment and evaluation systems rather than program delivery. Specifically, strengthening structured risk assessment, improving outcome measurement, reducing challenges associated with mixed-risk cohorts, and expanding long-term outcome tracking would further increase alignment with best-practice principles and strengthen the evidence base for program effectiveness.

11.2 The Six Key Findings, Program Enhancements, Implementation Strategies and Funding Recommendations Using the full P180 Evaluation Results.

There are six key findings from the process, output and qualitative evaluation of the P180 program. Each finding is discussed below with future program enhancement suggestions, strategies to achieve these enhancements and funding recommendations.

Key Finding #1: P180 is a Well-Designed and Evidence-Based Program

The evaluation found that P180 is strongly aligned with recognised best practice, achieving a score of 88%, which exceeds the benchmark for good practice identified by Andrews and Bonta (2023). The program is clearly targeted to vulnerable and at-risk young people, uses an intensive intervention model, and combines risk reduction with strengths-based approaches.

Program enhancement recommendation

Strengthen pre-program and assessment processes by introducing a more structured approach to assessing risk and protective factors at program entry and completion. Built in follow up survey and checking in by CPCYC staff post completion of the P180 Program (e.g. at 6 months and 12 months post completion) as part of the overall P180 program participation. This ensures that participants are more likely and willing to provide updates, especially when these are collected by CPCYC staff with whom they have already build rapport rather than an external person, for instance an evaluator or a researcher.

Implementation strategy suggestion for program enhancement

Develop a more comprehensive intake and exit assessment framework using the risk and protective factor domains already identified within the program review. Align these assessments with participant case planning and outcome reporting.

Funding recommendation for key finding #1

Future funding should include resources for assessment development, staff training and ongoing evaluation activities. Strengthening assessment systems will help demonstrate program effectiveness and support future funding applications.

Key Finding #2: Positive Relationships With Staff are Central to Participant Outcomes

Across the evaluation findings, relationships with P180 staff emerged as one of the strongest contributors to positive outcomes. Young people consistently reported feeling respected, supported and valued, while parents and stakeholders highlighted the importance of staff in promoting engagement, confidence and future planning. One negative finding was that staff reported feeling that workplace stress and burn-out was a risk for them.

Program enhancement

Protect and strengthen the relationship-based model by supporting workforce sustainability and staff wellbeing.

Implementation strategy suggestion for program enhancement

Maintain regular supervision, reflective practice and debriefing opportunities. Monitor workload, turnover and workforce wellbeing to ensure staff can continue providing intensive support.

Funding recommendation for key finding #2

Funding should support safe staffing ratios, professional supervision, workforce development and staff wellbeing initiatives. Given that relationships were consistently identified as a key mechanism of change, workforce investment should be considered a core program requirement.

Key Finding #3: The Program Improves Wellbeing, Emotional Regulation and Confidence for At-Risk Young People

Participants reported significant improvements in wellbeing, coping skills, anger management and emotional regulation. Young people also described increased confidence, self-awareness, communication skills and optimism about their future. These findings were among the most consistent across all evaluation components (Barnes-Lee & Petkus, 2023; Beelmann & Lösel, 2021).

Program enhancement

Further strengthen content relating to risk-taking behaviours, antisocial peer influences and relapse prevention.

Implementation strategy suggestion for program enhancement

Review existing program content and incorporate additional material focused on peer influences, risk-taking and maintaining positive change following program completion. Strengthen relapse prevention planning documentation.

Funding recommendation for key finding #3

Funding should support ongoing program refinement, curriculum development and the review of existing program resources to ensure content remains responsive to participant needs and emerging evidence.

Key Finding #4: P180 Provides Positive Outcomes Across Multiple Areas for At-Risk Young People

The evaluation found improvements in family relationships, educational engagement, employment readiness, health and wellbeing, social skills and community connection. Participants, families and stakeholders consistently described the program as holistic, with outcomes occurring through the

combined effects of education, practical learning, family support, case management and service coordination.

Program enhancement

Strengthen transition planning and ongoing support for participants leaving the program.

Implementation strategy suggestion for program enhancement

Develop transition plans before program completion that identify education, training, employment and support pathways. Utilise warm referrals and continue outreach support for participants requiring ongoing assistance.

Funding recommendation for key finding #4

Funding should support the broader service model, including case management, family engagement, outreach support, transition activities and partnerships with education, employment and specialist services. These activities are integral to sustaining participant outcomes rather than additional program features.

Key Finding #5: Demand for P180 Places Highlights the Need to Increase Program Delivery and Additional Support Pathways for At-Risk Young People

Stakeholders consistently reported that demand for P180 exceeds available capacity, resulting in waitlists and missed opportunities to engage young people when they are ready for support. The evaluation also highlighted the importance of ensuring that participants are appropriately matched to interventions based on their level of need and readiness.

Program enhancement

Expand capacity through a tiered support pathway that includes pre-program outreach, alternative support options and post-program case management.

Implementation strategy suggestion for program enhancement

Develop structured pathways that provide outreach and case management for young people waiting to commence the program, offer alternatives for those unsuitable for the intensive group model, and provide ongoing support following program completion.

Funding recommendation for key finding #5

Additional funding could support increased service capacity, outreach services, interim supports and post-program engagement. This would help reduce waitlists while maintaining the integrity of the intensive P180 model.

Key Finding #6: Stronger Program Outcome Measurement Will Strengthen the P180 Evidence Base

Although the evaluation found strong evidence of positive change, limitations in data collection reduced the ability to measure outcomes over time. Pre- and post-program surveys were often not directly comparable, long-term follow-up data were limited, and access to recidivism and police contact data was unavailable. Outcomes for participants who disengaged early were also difficult to track.

Program enhancement

Strengthen outcome measurement, long-term follow-up and access to administrative data.

Implementation strategy suggestion for program enhancement

Align pre- and post-program survey questions and rating scales, make greater use of outreach data for longitudinal reporting, and establish follow-up processes for participants after program completion, including those who disengage early. Continue efforts to establish data-sharing arrangements with relevant agencies.

Funding recommendation for key finding #6

Dedicated evaluation funding should be built into future program budgets. This should support data collection, participant follow-up, outcome reporting and administrative data linkage processes. Improved evidence on long-term outcomes will strengthen program accountability and future funding opportunities.

11.2.1 Overall P180 Evaluation Conclusion

The evaluation demonstrates that P180 is an effective and highly valued early intervention program for vulnerable and at-risk young people. Its strongest features are its evidence-based design, intensive support model, strong staff-participant relationships and holistic approach to addressing both risk factors and strengths. The key opportunities for future development relate to strengthening assessment processes, expanding service capacity, enhancing transition planning, supporting workforce sustainability and improving long-term outcome measurement. Continued investment in these areas will help sustain program quality while strengthening the evidence base for future funding and growth (Andrews & Bonta, 2023; Pooley, 2020; Ward & Brown, 2004).

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Appendix A: Project 180 Program Guidelines

This appendix is provided as a separate PDF file and emailed together with this report.

Appendix B: Stakeholder Information and Consent Form

Information sheet and Consent Form (Interview: in person or on Teams, or self-completion word document format)

Project Title: Your Opinions of the Benefit of the Canberra PCYC Intensive Early Intervention/Youth Diversion Program (Project P180).

Principal researchers and contact information
Dr. Sally Kelty, University of Canberra, Ph: (061) 406 983 397, Email: sally.kelty@canberra.edu.au
Dr. Caroline Ng Tseung-Wong, University of Canberra, Email: caroline.ng@canberra.edu.au

With respect to this project:

We are a research team working with the Canberra Police Community Youth Club (CPCYC) and with the Act Government Justice and Community Safety Directorate to carry out an evaluation of the CPCYC's "Project P180" program.

The P180 is an evidence-based 20-week intensive diversion program/early intervention program (currently run by CPCYC for young people to reduce recidivism, build community connections, and foster positive growth and pro-social pathways. The project facilitators and case managers provide intensive face-to face contact with participants delivered 4 days per-week over a 20-week period. Case management during the P180 is also offered to the whole family or young person's guardians.

We would value your expertise and experience in aiding our understanding of the benefits of the P180 intensive diversion program/early intervention program. We would like to understand your opinions and experiences of the program in terms of the benefits you have observed. Whether there are program improvements you would like to see. Whether you think a dedicated follow-up program or maintenance program for participants when they finish P180 would be feasible and/or useful. Finally, whether you would like to programs like the P180 become a sentencing option which diverts young people out of the juvenile justice system, and the feasibility of this.

We would like to invite you to take part in an interview which will be to discuss your opinions and experience around risks for young people and juvenile offending (youth aged 12 to 18 years).

The interview can be either face to face, or via Microsoft Teams or Zoom, at a time convenient to you, and will take 30 to 60 minutes. The interview will not pose any risks to you and is voluntary.

If at your location of work, there are other colleagues who consent to take part, we can arrange for a single group interview to take place if that is more convenient, rather than individual interviews.

Details about the interview and the interview data collected can be seen overleaf.

About the interview and data collected:

You can withdraw before or during the interview without any issues arising.

If you take part in an interview, we would like to record the interview, with your permission. The recording is for Drs, Kelty and Ng only, and will ensure we have an accurate record of what we discussed.

After the interview the recording will be uploaded into a word document, and the physical recording taken at the time of the interview will be erased. The word document will be stored on a highly secure on-campus server (not in the cloud) at the University of Canberra, only Drs Kelty and Ng, will have password access to these transcripts.

If after the interview you wish to withdraw your interview data for any reason, this is possible by emailing Drs, Kelty or Ng (details below), but only up to a certain date.

Within two months of the interview taking place the research team will make all transcripts de—identifiable. This is where your name, gender, or location of your work, or any other identifying information about you, or your colleagues, is removed from the transcript. Once this has been completed no-one, even the researchers, will be able to identify you and we will not be able to locate any specific data to erase it.

We would like to be able to include your valuable experience and opinions in the reports we write, which will detail how the program is working, what benefits people see stemming from the program and any future recommendations for the P180. **Of note**, of the project reports will under any circumstance, contain your name, gender or any identifying characteristics and that all information you provide is confidential.

In the consent form we will ask you to tick your approval for us to use your information in the evaluation report. The evaluation report will be presented to the Act Government Justice and Community Safety Directorate and the CEO of the Canberra Police Community Youth Club.

Ethics Committee Clearance

The project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Canberra (HREC – ID no: 14623).

Queries and Concerns

Queries or concerns regarding the research can be directed to the researchers (Dr Kelty on 0406 983 397 or Dr Ng on 0474 221 877).

If you have any concerns or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the University of Canberra's Research Ethics & Integrity Unit team via telephone 02 6206 3916 or email humanethicscommittee@canberra.edu.au or researchethicsandintegrity@canberra.edu.au

I agree to take part in the research project specified above. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the information sheet, which I keep for my records. I now agree to:

Consent Form (Interview: in person or on Teams/Zoom)

Project Title: Your Opinions of the Benefit of the Canberra PCYC Intensive Early Intervention/Youth Diversion Program (Project P180).

Your consent to take part (please tick all appropriate according to your wishes)

I agree to take part in an interview with the researcher ☐ Yes ☐ No

I agree that the interview can be recorded ☐ Yes ☐ No

I agree to allow the interview data to be used in final evaluation report ☐ Yes ☐ No

I would be happy to take part in future research on this topic ☐ Yes ☐ No

I would like to receive a summary of the results of the interviews ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you would like a summary, and/or research papers, from this project, can you please enter your email contact details so we can send them to you as we they become available

(i.e. your email)

_____

Name……

…

Signature……

Date …….

Appendix C: Stakeholder Interview Questions

Stakeholder research questions

Project Title: Your Opinions of the Benefit of the Canberra PCYC Intensive Early Intervention/Youth Diversion Program (Project P180).

1. From your experience and observations of the CPCYC Project P180, what are the benefits of the P180 for the young people and their families/guardians?

2. From your experience of the CPCYC Project P180, what are the benefits of intensive at-risk youth justice early intervention/diversion programs like the P180 for you in your work?

3. At present the CPCYC P180 is a single program lasting 20 weeks. From your experience of the P180 program, would you be keen to see a maintenance program, or follow-up intervention?
   Please explain your thoughts on why you would or would not support this?
   (prompt: For example, do you think this is good for the community, or how feasible would this be?)

4. From your experience working with at-risk youth, would you like to see programs like the P180 become a youth justice diversion sentencing option (for youth above the age of criminal responsibility), if yes why, and how would you like this to run?
   (prompt: For example, do you think this is good for the community, or how feasible would this be?)

5. Is there anything we haven't covered that you see as important for us to know?

Appendix D: Early Intervention/Diversion Program Delivery (AEIPD) Checklist

Assessment of Early Intervention/Diversion Program Delivery (AEIPD): Theory and Checklist Booklet for Completing Process Evaluations of Youth Antisocial Behaviour Programs

27.03.2026

Dr Sally Kelty
University of Canberra, Centre for Applied Psychology,
University Drive, Bruce, ACT, 2617
Telephone: 02 6201 2569
Email: Sally.Kelty@canberra.edu.au

Assessment of Early Intervention Program Delivery (AEIPD)

Overview

Rationale for an Early Intervention/Diversion Program Delivery (AEIPD) Checklist

The AEIPD is a specifically developed 20-item checklist that can assess how closely an early intervention and/or diversion program for at-risk young people is delivered in line with evidence of best-practice.

The rationale for developing the AEIPD Checklist was to provide an evidence-based and a standardised method and scoring framework to assess whether at-risk early intervention/diversion programs for young people follow best-practice elements in their content and delivery methods. For example, whether the program was developed using a sound theoretical framework, targets criminogenic risk and needs principles (RNR model), has adequate program length (dosage), provides program facilitator training where facilitators can built strong working relationships with participants, and provides a strength based/GLM approach to develop holistic wellbeing and skills in participants, and has concrete post-program assistance to assist participants in pursuing prosocial future pathways.

Why carry out a process evaluation?

A robust and comprehensive internal or external process evaluation is an essential component of any new initiative or existing program (Kelty, 2017). Assessment of program content and delivery is key for quality management in community based and public sector agencies (Vito & Higgins, 2014).

A process evaluation is a robust analysis of the effectiveness of program operations and service delivery. (Goldsworthy, 2021). This type of evaluation asks a range of questions as follows:

- Was the program content delivered as intended?
- Does the program have an underlying behaviour-change theory to drive the content?
- Were all the program sessions delivered as per the program manual?
- How were participants selected from the population group the program was designed for?
- Does staff training align with the program requirements?

It is widely recommended that a process evaluation be undertaken by an independent and external assessors, preferably with expertise in the field, to ensure the appropriate level of objectivity (Vito & Higgins, 2014). Although recommended that the evaluation be carried out by external experts, this may not always be possible due to confidentiality, privacy issues and cost. Where this arises, an internal process evaluation by the organisation running the program or initiative is warranted and can be robust, provided that a good methodology is used based on evidence-based best-practice (Conley-Tyler, 2005, Kelty, 2017).

Overview of the evidence used to develop the AEIPD questions

This summary overviews key findings on what works in reducing antisocial behaviour for at-risk youth, and reoffending for young people above the MACR. It draws evidence-based findings from major systematic reviews into what works in youth intervention programs, is situated within the Risk Needs Responsivity program intervention framework, and with the complementary GLM extension for strengths-based approaches. Questions also assess the evidence around optimal levels of program dosage (length), whether to mix young people at different risk levels, how to measure risk and protective factors, and the limitations of using recidivism as the only outcome measure.

Overall, the evidence base strongly supports structured, RNR-aligned, culturally responsive, risk-matched, well-delivered programs, complemented by strengths-based follow-up. These elements, when combined with high-quality assessment and evaluation, offer the most reliable approach for reducing antisocial behaviour among youth (Pappas & Dent, 2021; Pooley, 2020).

Evidence from large review: What works for at-risk youth

Pooley's (2020) Australian Institute of Criminology review synthesised 44 studies and identified nine key components linked to effective youth justice and early intervention programs. These include; (1) clear, evidence-based program theory (including program manuals), (2) uses RNR assessment and targeting of appropriate participants, (3) appropriate dosage matched to risk, (4) implementation fidelity (the degree to which the program is delivered as developed), (5) cultural responsiveness towards program participants, program stakeholders and staff, (6) has strong practitioner-client relationships, (7) multi-agency coordination and connections for referrals, (8) has outcome monitoring and evaluation of results, (9) flexibility of program to adapt to the learning styles and risk factors for program participants and group over time.

Pappas and Dent (2021) conducted an international meta-review covering approximately 3,000 studies spanning 30 years. They found that youth interventions can reduce antisocial behaviour and recidivism by around 17%, which is a meaningful reduction consistent with adult rehabilitation findings. Programs delivered in institutional settings showed stronger effects (up to 25% reductions) than community programs (around 9%). This was considered to occur due to justice agencies primarily working with higher-risk youth and offering a range of longer programs due to being better resourced with more program staff and infrastructure and access to licensed (and often expensive) risk assessment tools, therefore providing that justice agencies with better resources can follow strict adherence to the structured RNR framework.

Effective program types identified include Multisystemic Therapy (MST), family-based interventions, cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT), restorative justice, and wilderness programs. Overall, dual-model approaches achieved the strongest behavioural changes for at-risk young people.

The RNR model for effective intervention programs

The RNR model is the most validated approach for reducing criminal and antisocial behaviour among youth and adults (Bonta & Andrews, 2023). It has three principles: risk, needs, and responsivity.

The risk principle emphasises that program intensity should match a young person's level of antisocial behaviour risk. Youth with multiple co-occurring risk factors, such as antisocial peers, substance use, impulsivity, family dysfunction, or poor school connection, are at significantly increased risk of chronic antisocial behaviour, especially risk of using violence (Herrenkohl et al.,

2000; Lösel & Farrington, 2012). Effective programs identify these risks through systematic assessment and match program length and intensity to the young person's criminogenic needs (Bonta & Andrews, 2023; Lipsey, 1999).

The needs principle focuses on addressing dynamic criminogenic needs that influence and /or contribute directly to antisocial behaviour. These include antisocial attitudes, poor emotional regulation, impulsivity, thrill-seeking, substance use, and delinquent peer networks. Targeting these factors is associated with meaningful reductions in antisocial behaviour (Simourd & Olver, 2019; Pooley, 2020).

The responsivity principle emphasises delivery approaches tailored to young people's learning styles. Effective facilitators demonstrate strong interpersonal skills, prosocial modelling, problem-solving, and the effective use of authority (Dowden & Andrews, 2004). Cultural responsiveness is essential, as is the ability to engage participants in warm, respectful, and motivational ways (Pooley, 2020).

Integrating the GLM and strengths-based approaches

While RNR focuses on reducing risk, the Good Lives Model (GLM) provides a strengths-based extension that supports wellbeing, resilience, and long-term desistance (Van Damme et al., 2021). GLM-oriented follow-up after RNR-based programs helps young people build positive identities, improve coping, reconnect with education, and develop prosocial relationships. Including wellbeing and quality-of-life measures in program evaluation supports Pooley's (2020) call for broader outcome monitoring.

Dosage: Matching program length to risk

Evidence consistently shows that program length (dosage) is a key factor in program success. Lipsey's (1999) meta-analysis found that community programs aligned with RNR principles reduced reoffending to 35%, compared with 46% for unstructured programs and 50% for routine services. Lipsey (2009) later demonstrated that for high-risk youth, programs lasting six months or longer significantly improve outcomes. Further reductions occur when such programs are delivered by well-established community organisations.

However, high-dosage programs are not effective for all youth. Research shows that high doses can harm low-risk participants, increasing antisocial behaviour through negative peer influence and inappropriate intervention intensity (de Vries et al., 2015; Pooley, 2020).

High risk young people benefit from 6+ months of intensive programs aiming to reduce criminogenic risk, followed by structured GLM supports to assist in pathways towards a prosocial future. Low-risk youth benefit more from more strengths-based, GLM-informed supports such as mentoring, coaching, and targeted individual therapeutic interventions (James et al., 2021).

Risk Group Mixing: Why It Should Be Avoided

Evidence overwhelmingly shows that mixing low-risk and high-risk youth in intensive programs is counterproductive. Low-risk youth may be negatively influenced by higher-risk peers, consistent with social learning theory (Archer & Flexon, 2021; Opp, 2020). High-risk youth benefit from intensive RNR-aligned programs, but low-risk youth typically require supportive, strengths-based, lower-intensity interventions (Pappas & Dent, 2021; Herrenkohl et al., 2000; Pooley, 2020).

Risk Assessment for Allocation and Evaluation

Evidence-based risk assessments are essential for ensuring appropriate program allocation. Tools such as the Australian YLS/CMI-AA assess static and dynamic risk factors across domains including prior offences, peer relationships, family functioning, attitudes, school performance, and substance use (Hoge, 2021; Thompson et al., 2013). Assessments should be completed pre-program for allocation and post-program to track changes in risk (Vincent, Guy, & Grisso, 2012).

Evaluating Success: Beyond Recidivism data

Recidivism is widely used but is a limited outcome measure due to inconsistencies in definitions, follow-up timeframes, and variability driven by policing or policy practices rather than actual behaviour (Kennedy et al., 2024; Spiranovic et al., 2015). Contemporary evaluation uses mixed methods, combining quantitative measures (risk score reductions, substance use testing, psychometric changes) with qualitative data (interviews, focus groups, facilitator observations). Broader strengths-based outcomes include education engagement, employment, wellbeing, stable housing, improved family relationships, and legal compliance.

Overview of risk and proactive factors for at-risk young people

This summary outlines the main risk factors contributing to antisocial behaviour and the protective factors that buffer against antisocial behaviour (Bonta & Andrews, 2023; Farrington, 2020). In this summary, international empirical research is drawn upon which uses terms like antisocial behaviour, delinquency, offending and criminal behaviour for youth aged roughly 10 to 24 (Bonta & Andrews, 2023; Farrington, 2020; Lösel & Farrington, 2012). Because the studies come from countries with different MACR, the same behaviour may be considered criminal in one setting and not in another.

Individual level factors

At an individual level, certain traits such as impulsivity, sensation seeking, low empathy and difficulties with emotional regulation make antisocial behaviour more likely (Burt, 2022; van Goozen et al., 2021; Nasaescu et al., 2023). Problems with thinking skills, including low verbal ability and poor problem solving, also increase risk (Lösel et al., 2025; Moffitt, 2018). Young people who start engaging in antisocial behaviour early, especially before age 14, are at the highest risk of continuing long term (Farrington, 2020; Moffitt, 2018; Kim et al., 2021). In contrast, strong cognitive skills, good self-control, an easy temperament and positive attitudes act as protective factors (Archer & Flexon, 2021; Werner, 1997).

Family level factors

Family environments strongly influence behaviour. Harsh or inconsistent discipline, low parental supervision and high levels of conflict or violence in the home significantly increased risk (Farrington, 2020; Molinedo Quílez, 2020). Adverse Childhood Experiences such as neglect or abuse are closely linked to more serious and persistent antisocial behaviour (Craig et al., 2023; Kim et al., 2021). Parental criminal behaviour also increases risk across generations (Farrington & Malvaso, 2023). Protective family factors include warm, stable relationships with caregivers, consistent and fair parenting, strong supervision and lower parental stress (Herrenkohl et al., 2000; Kim et al., 2016; Lösel & Farrington, 2012).

School level factors

School experiences play an important role as well. Low academic performance, poor school connection and frequent absenteeism increase the likelihood of later antisocial behaviour (Herrenkohl et al., 2000; Sallybanks, 2003). Exclusionary discipline, such as suspension, can worsen outcomes (Halls & Edwards, 2025; Sprott et al., 2005). On the positive side, academic achievement, motivation, strong study skills and supportive relationships with teachers help protect against harmful behaviour (Losel & Farrington, 2012; Halls & Edwards, 2025). A strong bond with school is particularly protective for young people facing many other risks (Kim et al., 2016).

Peers network level factors

Peer influence is one of the strongest predictors of adolescent antisocial behaviour (Maness et al., 2024). Spending time with antisocial peers reinforces harmful behaviour, especially when young people socialise without adult supervision (Archer et al., 2022; Hoeben & Weerman, 2016). This influence is even stronger for young people who began offending early (Kim et al., 2021). At the same time, friendships with prosocial peers can reduce the likelihood of violence and help counteract negative peer pressure (Walters, 2020; Losel & Farrington, 2012).

Community level factors

Community environments also shape risk. Living in disadvantaged or disorganised neighbourhoods, with high crime, weak social control or limited resources, raises the likelihood of antisocial behaviour (Farrington, 2020; Herrenkohl et al., 2000). Easy access to drugs or local crime increases risk further (Herrenkohl et al., 2000). In some studies, urban living is linked with more severe or repeated offending (Bergseth & Bouffard, 2007). However, community disadvantage tends to affect young people with otherwise low risk more strongly, while those with high individual risk often offend regardless of environment (Wikström & Loeber, 2000). Supportive, cohesive communities with positive adult role models and available services help protect young people and encourage prosocial pathways (Development Services Group, 2015; Lösel & Farrington, 2012).

Risk and protective factors table and developing individual case planning.

A comprehensive risk and protective factors can be seen overleaf in table 1.

This table can assist in exploring how many risks and protective strengths are in a young person's life. Further to understand the types of risks and strengths present. This information can then then be used to assist in individual case planning for each young person pre-program and following on into aftercare.

Table 1. Overview of Risk and Protective Factors for Inclusion in Programs Aiming to Reduce Antisocial Behaviour in Young People

Risk	Protective
Individual Factors	
High impulsivity, hyperactivity and sensation seeking; low self-control	Above-average intelligence or verbal ability
Low IQ, verbal ability, poor academic skills	Low impulsivity/ "easy" temperament
Early-onset of antisocial behaviour	High self-esteem, self-efficacy, and responsible attitudes
Antisocial attitudes (e.g., norms favourable to crime, rule non-compliance)	Prosocial values and good social skills
AOD use and preadolescent nonviolent antisocial behaviour	Sound planning ability and strong personal responsibility
	Religiosity
Family Factors	
Poor parental supervision, monitoring and oversight	Close, emotionally positive parent-child bond and attachment
Harsh, erratic or inconsistent parental discipline	High parental supervision and monitoring
Parental conflict, aggression or exposure to family violence	Parental disapproval of antisocial behaviour
Parental criminality	High family socioeconomic status
Adverse childhood experiences	Low parental stress
	Intact family unit
Educational Factors	
Low academic performance and school commitment	Sound academic achievement
Negative attitude toward school	Good study skills
Non-attendance and school refusal	Strong school bonding, commitment, and engagement
School suspension and expulsion	Positive student-teacher relationships
Peer Factors	
Association with antisocial peers	Association with prosocial peers
Unstructured socialising with peers	Low sensitivity to peer pressure
Peer approval and reinforcement of antisocial behaviour	
Community Factors	
Low socioeconomic status and deprived neighbourhood	Cohesive, low-crime neighbourhood
Community disorganisation and low collective efficacy	Access to positive adults and mentors in the community
Availability of drugs in community	Informal social control (social trust and cohesion)
High crime rates in community	
Urban residence	

Note 1: Risk and protective factors identified and referenced through comprehensive literature review.

Note 2: Factors in this table are drawn from studies across various longitudinal designs, including prospective research focusing on predictors measured in childhood (ages 8-10) that predict youth and adult outcomes, and studies focused specifically on the 12-18 age range.

Layout and scoring of the AEIPD.

The AEIPD uses a mixed method approach to review, assess and measure optimal features of community-based at-risk early intervention/youth diversion programs.

Within the checklist are 20 quantitative questions with space under each question for qualitative notes on specific aspects or features of the program or the program facilitators. These notes provide space for excellence in service delivery and/or possible areas for amendments or program enhancements. Questions are scored by ticking or numbering the most suitable answer for each item. Once the quantitative items have been ticked there is an option to calculate a total process evaluation score.

Space is also provided at the end of the checklist for an overall summary notation and can be useful for recording future directions to enhance program delivery.

Scoring the quantitative items of the AEIPD.

	Feature not met score= 0	Feature partially met = 1	Feature fully or almost met score = 1.5 or 2
3. Does the program provide a comprehensive theory manual (for fully met, the manual must be current using current literature)?			
4. Are program goals and aims clearly stated in the manual?			

Each quantitative item/question, as shown in the above example is scored by placing a tick or number inside one of three boxes provided according to the scoring key below.

Scoring key

Feature not met (no system/method in place to meet this feature) …….. (Score = 0)
Feature partially met (key elements present but requires improvement) …….. (Score = 1)
Feature almost met …….. (Score = 1.5)
Feature fully met (key elements present, at least 80% present) …….. (Score = 2)
(Not applicable items are not scored or counted in the final total score)

At the end of the questions is the section for calculating the total score and with space for a summary and additional notes and program future recommendations.

Descriptions of the scoring key

Some items on first consideration may appear yes/no; however, each item can be scored as follows:

Feature not met refers to the aspect being measured not yet being implemented or not having been established. For example, when scoring item 2, it is possible that although there is a comprehensive theory manual, inside the manual the aims and goals are not clearly stated. In this case the score would be 'Feature not met'. **Of note**, when a 'feature not met' is ticked this can raise a possible future direction for a community-based organisation to consider. The reasons may be due to operational or budget constraints that prevented this feature being implemented at the present time. Please use the notes section under each item to detail why. These notes can be useful when writing up your report, or they can be useful later if further audits or program evaluations are carried out.

Feature partially met is ticked when a feature is present, but the full elements of the feature are not present. For example, in item 2, it is possible that the program theory manual was developed for the program, however on closer inspection the program itself may only be 2 years old, but the manual is using an evidence base that is 15 years old. As evidence can change over time, you cannot be confident that the manual is accurate or that the program is based on current knowledge. ***As above, when a 'feature partially met' is ticked*** this can raise awareness of future directions for program enhancements in the future.

Ticks in this box can also raise awareness of where a community-based organisation can discuss enhancements with external organisations to help develop new measures or program tools. A tick in this box does not imply improvement MAY be possible in the foreseeable future; the key is to raise the issue and note possible solutions for future enhancements.

Feature almost/fully met is ticked when most of the elements being measured are present and the aspect is close or very close to being delivered according to 'best-practice' as outlined in the 2026 desktop review of current best-practice in this area. Scores in this box can be 2 points for fully met, and 1.5 points for almost met.

Bonta and Andrews (2023) argue that many evaluation assessment tools measure the 'ideal program delivery' and that achieving around a score of 80% of best-practice features being met is considered as adherence to 'good practice'.

A score of 80% on the AEIPD is 32 out of the 40 available points. This score would show that the program has many features of good service delivery and good program content and demonstrates adherence to good practice.

AEIDP Background Questions

Evaluator, facilitator and supervisor details

The following details are to be completed by the program assessor

Name of person completing the AEIDP_____

Name of program being assessed _____

Program type/ category_____

Program delivery dates in this evaluation (commencing) __/__/____ (ending) __/__/_____

Date/s AEIPD checklist completed __/___/____

Program clinical/professional counsellor and /or supervision

Gender of clinical/professional supervisor (please circle) Male Female

Occupation of clinical/professional supervisor (circle) psychologist / counsellor/ social worker / other – if other please state_____

Qualifications of supervisor (circle) TAFE or VET / undergraduate / post-grad diploma

_____

Current professional registration of supervisor (inc. name of professional registration board)

_____

Detail any training **in this program** the supervisor has undertaken_____

_____

Years of and experience supervising this or other at-risk youth programs

_____

_____

_____

Type of supervision/debrief provided to program facilitators during program delivery to date (e.g., distance, face to face)

_____

_____

Frequency of supervision/debrief provided to date (e.g., weekly, number of hours in total)

_____

_____

AEIDP Program Delivery Questions

Pooley's components, RNR principles and participant selection and dosage elements for best-practice	Feature not met = 0	Feature partially met = 1	Feature fully or almost met = 2
1. Is the program underpinned by a clear evidence-based theory with a current comprehensive theory manual?			
Item 1. Notes			
2. Are program goals and aims clearly stated in the manual?			
Item 2. Notes			
3. Uses the RNR framework for risk and needs assessment for participant selection to program?			
Item 3. Notes			
4. Are participants assessed for risk level before being included in the program? How is risk measured, how many factors and protective factors are measured?			
Item 4. Notes			
5. Program time has appropriate dosage matched to risk. Does the program run for enough time to result in behaviour change? Is behaviour change measured in detail?			
Item 5. Notes			
6. Are low- and high-risk young people included in the same program?			
Item 6. Notes			

7. What criminogenic needs are targeted in the program (e.g., antisocial attitudes, risk and thrill seeking, egocentric outlook, empathy for others, poor school attendance, substance use, anger/impulse control, antisocial friendships)?			
Item 7. Notes			
8. What type of protective factors/GLM strengths-based factors are targeted in the program?			
Item 8. Notes			
9. Is the primary focus of the program a combination targeting criminogenic needs and building strengths/based/GLM protective factors?			
Item 9. Notes			
10. Implementation fidelity (the degree to which the program is delivered as developed).			
Item 10. Notes			
11. Cultural responsiveness towards program participants, program stakeholders and staff?			
Item 11. Notes			
12. Are there strong practitioner-client relationships and multi-agency coordination and connections for referrals?			
Item 12. Notes			
13. Which post-program supports are the most often used?			

14. Responsiveness and flexibility of program and facilitators to adapt to the learning styles and risk factors for program participants and group over time?			
Item 14. Notes			
15. Have staff received training in group facilitation, pro-social modelling and managing group dynamics?			
Item 15. Notes			
16. If the program is being modified during delivery, is there a structured method to record and assess changes?			
Item 16. Notes			
17. Are clinical debriefing sessions offered to the program facilitators?			
Item 17. Notes			
18. How do program case managers and/or facilitators document and ensure the program is run in accordance with the manual/avoids program drift?			
Item 18. Notes			
19. Is there the opportunity to collect any effectiveness data on program outcomes for youth over MACR (e.g., recidivism, rearrest, technical or offence parole breaches)?Are clinical debriefing sessions offered to the program facilitators?			
Item 19. Notes			
20. Is there the opportunity to collect any effectiveness data on program participants' behaviour post-program (e.g., work placements, education attendance)?			
Item 20. Notes			

TOTAL SCORES FOR THE AEIPD assessment items

TOTAL SCORE (Sum of items 1 to 20) _____ (score and % noted)

Highest score is 40.

The higher the score overall the higher the likelihood the program is empirically based and is being delivered according to the program parameters.

Information Used to Perform the Checklist, overall summary and future directions

Information used to carry out the checklist

_____

_____

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Overall summary and future directions

_____

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