

# Youthlaw Election Platform 2018

## **Justice Reinvestment:**

1. Adopt, implement and pilot a justice reinvestment approach, in partnership with Victorian communities, to tackle disadvantage, reduce crime and imprisonment rates in Victoria.

## **Early intervention to support young people:**

2. Introduce a cross portfolio and integrated Government response to the needs of vulnerable & marginalised young people and their families
3. Adequate funding & access to professional therapeutic services for young people with experiences of childhood neglect & abuse.
4. Funding of services and programs to respond to family violence and sexual abuse (including all youth related recommendations of the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence).
5. Significant investment in the youth mental health system to provide free comprehensive mental health services to all young people under 25.
6. Increase funding of youth mental health, substance abuse and homeless support services
7. Significant investment in public education & pathways, programs and supports for young people at risk of or disengaging with mainstream education.
8. Increased funding for legal services that assist the most vulnerable to protect & assert their legal rights.

## **Prevent young people entering the criminal justice system:**

9. Fund early intervention programs that target at risk young people
10. Increased funding of youth diversion programs that are flexible, trauma-informed, culturally relevant and available to all young people
11. Invest substantially in the child protection system with aim of providing therapeutic environments for children to be protected & healed and have the same future opportunities as children not in this system.
12. Invest in addressing the disadvantage, exclusion and lack of opportunity experienced by the Koori community
13. Invest in addressing the disadvantage and exclusion being experienced by Maori & Pacific Islander & East African communities
14. Take a well-being and restorative approach to young people in child protection residential and out of home care including practices that reduce police involvement
15. Raise the age of criminal responsibility from 10 years to 14 years.
16. Introduce Spent convictions legislation to reduce life long impacts of having a criminal record.

## **Fines reform to keep young people out of the fines system**

17. The early exit of young people, with special circumstances and without capacity to pay, from the infringements system.
18. The Victorian infringements system for children (CAYPINS) to be abolished or reformed to prevent children from contact with the court or criminal justice systems.

## **Bail, Sentencing & Youth detention**

19. Monitor any increase in young people under 25 imprisoned as a result of recently legislated mandatory sentencing for those convicted of injuring an emergency worker.
20. Monitor the introduction of Youth Control Orders for negative, discriminatory and net widening impacts.
21. Monitor the impacts of recently legislated reverse onus bail, on youth remand numbers
22. Reduce the high number of young people on remand by reviewing bail and remand practices and funding more bail support services
23. Ensure the treatment of children in youth justice centres is independently monitored and scrutinised.
24. Ban harsh & cruel treatment of detainees including solitary confinement, adult justice style critical response teams, OC spray, batons & restraint belts.
25. Urgently & substantially increase training of youth detention staff & require staff to have qualifications and experience commensurate with working with complex and traumatized young people.
26. Require all young people entering remand and detention have a comprehensive assessment by qualified experts.
27. Current or new youth justice facilities to have an operating model that has rehabilitation as the central focus.
28. Adopt targets to reduce the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children and young people in detention and ensure those in detention are connected to their culture and community.
29. Invest in initiatives to reduce the high proportion of young people from Maori & Pacific Islander & East African communities in the criminal justice system.
30. Fund adequate post detention services for young people exiting youth detention, including mental health support particularly for those with serious diagnosed conditions, closely supervised supported transitional accommodation, access to drug rehabilitation programs particularly residential & timely detoxification facilities.

## **Young people in the adult prison system receive appropriate youth specific sentences and rehabilitation programs**

31. Fully reinstate the dual track sentencing alternative for vulnerable 18 to 20 year olds & extend eligibility to 24 years old
32. Adequately fund youth specific services and facilities in adult prison for young people under 25.
33. Reduce the high number of young people on remand in adult prisons.
34. Reduce the imprisonment of young male and female prisoners under 25 (162.2% increase in Victoria between 2008 & 2013) through diversion options & more resources for rehabilitation.
35. Effective & tailored rehabilitation for young prisoners under 25 to address their specific need and the long-term harm of imprisonment and ineffective programs ( see findings of the Victorian Ombudsman's report: *Investigation into the rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners in Victoria* )

## **Police members & PSOs are accountable and professional in how they interact with young people**

36. Fully fund a new Police Corruption and Misconduct Division within IBAC to independently investigate all complaints about serious misconduct by police as recommended by the IBAC parliamentary Committee 2018 *Inquiry into the external oversight of police corruption and misconduct in Victoria*.
37. Independent evaluation of police training covering critical and life-threatening confrontations with vulnerable people including young people.
38. The deployment of PSOs at high crime stations only and provision of extensive training in regard to professional & non-confrontational interactions with young people.