

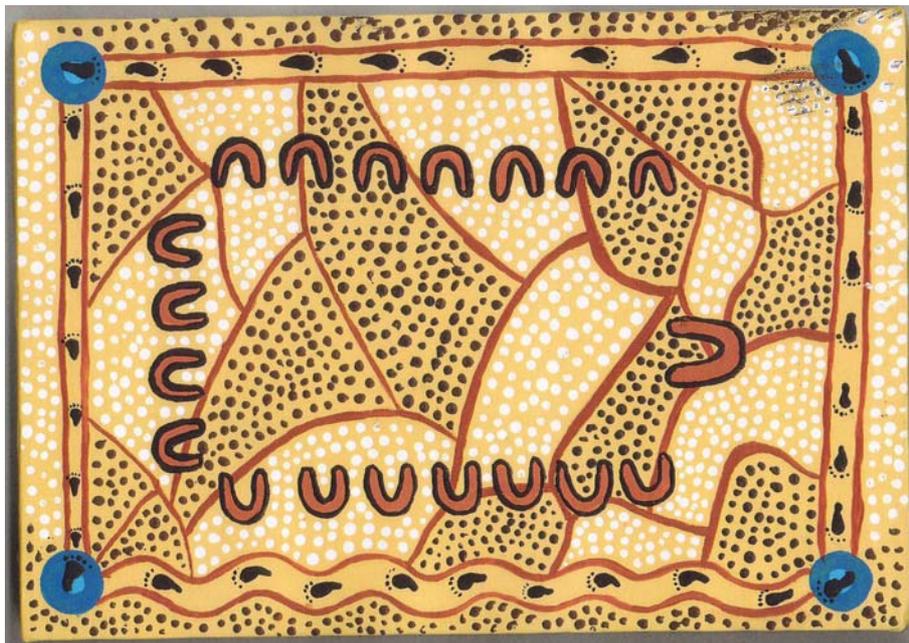


Australian Government

Department of Education, Science and Training

Increasing vocational learning opportunities for Indigenous students in juvenile detention: A national research project

July 2006



Undertaken as a partnership between
Youth Education Centre and The Unaipon School, University of South Australia



University of South Australia



Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
INTRODUCTION	4
Vocational learning and Indigenous students in juvenile detention.....	4
Indigenous young people, educational engagement and attainment	4
Indigenous young people, juvenile detention and education	5
Purpose of the research	6
METHODOLOGY	7
Research design.....	7
Action research.....	7
Research methods	8
Research stages and steps	11
Research participants	15
Limitations.....	16
LITERATURE REVIEW	18
Definitions in vocational learning	18
What we already know	19
What we need to know – what we need to do	20
PROGRAMME MAPPING OUTCOMES	22
Number attending juvenile detention education centres.....	22
Vocational learning programmes	23
Frequency and type	23
Primary focus of content	24
Time spent on vocational learning programmes	26
Who delivers the programmes? Cultural identity and location.....	26
Assessment strategies	29
Accreditation	30
Reasons for students participating in programmes.....	30
Funding source.....	31
Employability skills.....	32
Additional programme aspects to consider	35
Contributions to family and community through programmes.....	35
Access to programmes through day release.....	36
Indigenous community member involvement	36
Pathways to continue vocational learning in the community	37

YOUNG PEOPLE'S INTERVIEW OUTCOMES	38
Area 1: Young people's experiences of programmes at their centres	38
Programme ratings	38
Experience and value of programmes	39
Ideas about change and improvement	42
Getting into programmes and ease of taking part	43
Area 2: Jobs in the future	44
Area 3: Personal goals	46
Area 4: Contributions to community	47
Area 5: Building your skills up	48
Area 6: Learning experiences before the centre	49
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY MEMBER CONSULTATIONS	52
Family and community in the lives of Indigenous young people	52
Perspectives from the family and community member consultations	53
Familiarity with vocational learning programmes	53
Active involvement with vocational learning programmes	54
Observations within the centres	54
The 'culture of the space'	54
Community presence	55
Making a difference: Indigenous people's presence and roles within partnerships	55
PUTTING THE PICTURE TOGETHER	57
What did we learn?	57
Relevance and value of vocational learning	57
Representation and needs of Indigenous young people in detention	59
Indigenous staff, facilitators and family/community involvement	59
Limited access to mentoring	60
Access to and focus of transition programmes	61
Strengthening capacity for partnership work	62
The impact of departmental structures and policies	63
The value of listening directly to young people	63
Links between the literature and research outcomes	64
What needs to happen now?	65
RECOMMENDATIONS	67
REFERENCES	69
APPENDICES	72

Appendix 1: Programme mapping survey-----	72
Appendix 2: Interview/focus group with young people process – Guide for interviewers-----	77
Appendix 3: Consultation with family and community members – Guide for facilitators-----	79

FIGURES

Figure 1: Participants in the project	7
Figure 2: The action research loop	8
Figure 3: A snapshot of the research design: Activities and timeline.....	14
Figure 4: Age and distribution of young people interviewed	15
Figure 5: Distribution of students attending daily, based on cultural identity and, for Indigenous students, gender	22
Figure 6: Availability of vocational learning options in centres.....	23
Figure 7: Distribution of programmes across vocational learning type	24
Figure 8: Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff involvement in delivery	27
Figure 9: Centre staff and external provider involvement in delivery	28
Figure 10: With whom programmes were accredited.....	30
Figure 11: Reasons for students participating in programmes.....	31
Figure 12: Percentage of programmes rated as ‘good’ or ‘deadly’	39
Figure 13: Responses to ‘What do you think your job prospects are?’	44

TABLES

Table 1: Primary focus of vocational learning programmes	25
Table 2: Frequency of assessment strategies	29
Table 3: Points for employability skills distribution, OVERALL average	32
Table 4: Points for employability skills distribution by programme TYPE.....	33
Table 5: Points for employability skills distribution by programme FOCUS.....	34
Table 6: Responses to ‘What does having a job mean to you?’	45
Table 7: Young people’s personal goals for their lives.....	47

Acknowledgements

The main research team that undertook this project represented a collaboration between the Unaipon School, University of South Australia and Youth Education Centre, with additional support from *beyond...*(Kathleen Stacey & Associates) Pty Ltd. The seven team members were:

Sharon Gollan: Unaipon School
Kathleen Stacey: *beyond...*
Natalie Harkin: Unaipon School
Tangi Steen: Unaipon School
Syd Sparrow: Unaipon School
Gerri Walker: Youth Education Centre
Jo Whillier: Youth Education Centre

We thank the following people for their support and involvement:

- ✧ Greg Bryant from DEST who provided encouragement, guidance and support throughout the project - his interest and assistance was greatly appreciated.
- ✧ The Indigenous young people who agreed to participate in interviews for sharing their perspectives on vocational learning in detention centres.
- ✧ The Indigenous family and community members who agreed to participate in consultations, for sharing their perspectives on their young people and vocational learning options in detention centres.
- ✧ The staff of all involved juvenile detention education centres across Australia who contributed information to the project, undertook interviews with young people and participated in the two national conferences. The conference participants who assisted in the review and analysis of the research outcomes were:

Fiona MacGregor and Jenny Dries: Hindmarsh Education Centre, ACT
Lisa Coon, Braydon Williams and Kristian Leach: Don Dale Education Centre, NT
Shane Stanton and Michael Currie: Ashley Youth Detention Centre, Tas
Glenys Mulvany and Anne Jackamarra: Banksia Hill Education Centre, WA
John Brew and Tina-Marie Bonner: Brisbane Youth Education & Training Centre, Qld
Christine Dawe and Alison Cooper: Cleveland Education & Training Centre, Qld
Gerri Walker, Jo Whillier, Paul Altschwager, Peter Harvey and Phil Allen: Youth Education Centre, SA
Kaylene Preston and Helen Archibald: Kangan Institute of TAFE, Melbourne and Parkville Juvenile Justice Centres, Vic

Wendy Hulls and Lionel Ambler: Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE, Malmsbury Juvenile Justice Centre Campus, Vic

Bill Alexander: Girrakool Education & Training Unit, Frank Baxter Juvenile Justice Centre, NSW

Barry Glyde and Tanya Flanders: Induna Education & Training Unit, Acmena Juvenile Justice Centre, NSW

James Opie and Clarrie Gibbs: John Richardson Education & Training Unit, Keelong Juvenile Justice Centre, NSW

Ted Foster: George Anderson Walpole Education & Training Unit, Kariiong Juvenile Corrections Centre, NSW

Marcia Vallance and Kim McDonald: Sunning Hill Education & Training Unit, Juniperina Juvenile Justice Centre, NSW

Greg Bryant, Natalie Malcolmson and Craig McIver: DEST

The artwork on the front cover combines the talents of Clarrie Gibbs, an Aboriginal Education Worker, and a student from the Youth Education Centre, Scarlet – we thank them both for the donation of their creative work. Clarrie did the original drawing and gave permission for it to be replicated in paint following his instructions. He approved the final version that Scarlet created. Both artists gave permission for the artwork to be used and their names to be acknowledged in this report. The drawing represents the coming together of Education Centre staff from detention centres across the country to address the shared and diverse needs of Indigenous young people from their areas more effectively. It was produced during the 2nd National Conference held in June 2006.

Recommended reference

The Unaipon School, University of South Australia and Youth Education Centre, 2006, *Increasing vocational learning opportunities for Indigenous students in juvenile detention: a national research project*. Department of Education, Science and Training, Canberra.

Executive Summary

The context

Over the last decade the Australian and State/Territory Governments have shown increased interest in vocational learning, particularly vocational education and training (VET), as an important educational pathway for young people, including Indigenous young people. This is reflected in a variety of frameworks, policies and strategies to support young people's engagement with vocational learning and vocational pathways.

During this period, Indigenous young people have been actively involved in adopting vocational learning options, with their participation increasing at a rate above their representation in the Australian youth population (Dusseldorp Skills Forum 2005). Despite this positive outcome, there are many issues that Indigenous young people have to confront as they embark on or seek to successfully complete programmes or courses. For example, they face a risk of disconnection from learning and work **three times greater** than non-Indigenous young people, and continue to be highly over-represented in the criminal justice system.

The purpose of this national research project was to identify current vocational learning options in juvenile detention education centres for Indigenous young people, and develop greater understanding of how these young people can best relate to vocational information, develop vocational skills and experience the world of work. The project directly sought Indigenous young people's opinions of their experiences of vocational learning programmes, in terms of their value and relevance – thus exploring what constitutes 'good learning' for this group of young people. Further, it gained their opinions on how these programmes contributed to future employment and life outcomes. The intention was to set a solid foundation for the further development of effective approaches to vocational learning for Indigenous students in juvenile detention.

Approach to this research

An action research approach was adopted. It involved education staff and their secure care colleagues in juvenile detention centres across Australia, and was led by a core research team who facilitated the project. The following outlines the five research methods used and the extent of participation:

- ✧ a literature review
- ✧ an online programme mapping survey of vocational learning programmes in nine juvenile detention centres
- ✧ interviews and/or focus groups with Indigenous young people aged 13 to 18 years from seven juvenile detention centres
- ✧ consultations with Indigenous family and community members in two juvenile detention centres in different states

- ✳ two national conferences, with participation by staff from all involved detention centres, to review the research outcomes and contribute to analysis and recommendations.

All activities contributed useful perspectives and targeted information to address the research purpose. However, it proved to be difficult to gain a comprehensive national picture across all 18 juvenile detention centres, as ethics approval was not provided for programme mapping in eight centres, or interviews with young people in 10 centres.

What did we learn?

Relevance and value of vocational learning: The young people participating in interviews indicated that they value and like many of the vocational learning programmes currently available, with over 70% of programmes rated positively. The most appreciated aspects of vocational learning included having an opportunity to:

- ✳ gain qualifications and prepare for future work
- ✳ get valuable experiences and skills that may or may not relate to work and focus on everyday life or generic skills
- ✳ participate in 'hands-on' learning and 'real life' activities
- ✳ undertake activities that were relaxing, enjoyable, had a sense of freedom and occurred outside
- ✳ participate in activities with a cultural focus
- ✳ participate in activities they perceived as fun.

Representation and needs of Indigenous young people in detention: Indigenous young people remain highly over-represented; therefore the needs of Indigenous young people should be prominent in the educational strategies employed in centres.

Indigenous staff, facilitators and family/community involvement: Few Indigenous staff are involved with the education component of juvenile detention centres in teacher, education assistant or programme facilitator roles, and only a limited number of programmes support Indigenous family and community member involvement.

Limited access to mentoring: Indigenous young people's access to dedicated mentoring programmes once they are in detention appears to be either limited or non-existent.

Access to and focus of transition programmes: Over 72% of the young people interviewed were positive and/or hopeful about their future job prospects, and they frequently commented on the links between their vocational learning experiences in the centres and hopes of future employment. Yet it was also evident that many did not have much experience of the world of work and programmes to enable this were either limited or scarce, e.g. day-release and community-based vocational learning. This raises strong concern about addressing the importance of, and need for effective transition programmes, particularly for Indigenous young people.

Strengthening capacity for partnership work: The multiplicity of Indigenous young people's needs demands the involvement and combined efforts of colleagues in health, mental health and community services, as well as secure care staff. Although young people have access to some or many of these services, it was not clear that they worked effectively in partnership to address the young people's rehabilitative, educational and personal support needs.

The impact of departmental structures and policies: There seem to be a number of inconsistencies between states and territories at policy and structural levels. This may interfere with the environments and educational opportunities that lead to good learning experiences and outcomes for young people, as well as impacting on the degree of involvement that family and community members can have with Indigenous young people in detention.

The value of listening directly to young people: Indigenous young people have clear and valuable ideas about what works for them in vocational learning programmes, yet they are given few opportunities to actively participate in the development, delivery and evaluation of programmes so that their interests and choices are taken into account.

What needs to happen now?

The research outcomes provide evidence that investing in vocational learning is an important strategy, particularly for young Indigenous people in juvenile detention. Although vocational learning opportunities exist, there is room to strengthen and extend them so that they are more effective, culturally relevant and result in 'real' outcomes for young people during and beyond detention. Changes and enhancements at both the policy and programme level are required. The following areas for action and specific attention are outlined in detail in the Recommendations section on pages 67-68:

- ✱ developing a coordinated and systematic national approach to the documentation and evaluation of good practice across areas that show promise, as well as areas of concern, to guide policy development and programme implementation;
- ✱ introducing stronger representation of Indigenous people across a range of roles within juvenile detention education centres;
- ✱ strengthening partnerships within juvenile detention centres, between juvenile detention education centres and external agencies or groups, and between juvenile detention education centres and industry groups;
- ✱ increasing the availability of transition pathways and programmes;
- ✱ providing mentoring options internal and external to juvenile detention centres;
- ✱ conducting a review of policy and its impact on vocational learning outcomes for Indigenous young people;
- ✱ greater active participation of Indigenous young people in the development, delivery and evaluation of vocational learning programmes; and
- ✱ facilitating a national network for juvenile detention education centres.

Introduction

Vocational learning and Indigenous students in juvenile detention

Indigenous young people, educational engagement and attainment

In recent years, access to vocational learning has been seen as an increasingly important option for all young people, including Indigenous young people.¹ A recent review of young people's education, training and employment participation rates, indicates that Indigenous young people's participation in vocational learning, particularly vocational education and training (VET), has been above average since 1999 (Dusseldorp Skills Forum 2005). Approximately 3.9% of Indigenous young people enrol in VET compared with their 3.4% representation in Australia's youth population.

However, Indigenous young people are more likely to be enrolled in the non-Australian Qualifications Framework and Certificate I and II courses compared with non-Indigenous young people. Although overall rates have increased in recent years, Indigenous young people are still under-represented in New Apprenticeships schemes and university courses and they also have lower completion rates (Dusseldorp Skills Forum 2005).

On average, Indigenous young people across Australia face a risk of disconnection from learning and work **three times greater** than non-Indigenous young people. There are some variations based on urban, regional or remote locations, but in all instances the risks are far greater than for non-Indigenous students. For example, the figure for non-Indigenous 15 to 19-year-olds in full-time study or full-time work was 85% in both 2003 and 2004. However, for Indigenous Australians the figure was only 51% (Dusseldorp Skills Forum 2004, 2005).

Early school leaving rates for young people are highest for Indigenous young people, especially Indigenous young males: "in almost all available data on Indigenous education, young Indigenous males have the worst retention and participation rates ... a decrease in participation in education correlates with an increase in juvenile crime among Indigenous males" (Teese et al. 2000, p. 5). This translates into very different educational attainment rates for Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people aged 15–24 years. Using the two standard points for determining educational attainment, not including university education, in 2001 the figures were as follows (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2003):

- **Age 19 – still at school or completed Year 12:** The figures were 29% of Indigenous males and 38% of Indigenous females, compared with 68% of non-

¹ The term 'Indigenous' is used in this research to refer to people of Aboriginal descent, people of Torres Strait Islander descent, and people of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent.

Indigenous males and 78% of non-Indigenous females. On average, non-Indigenous young people were more than twice as likely to have achieved this level of education.

- **Age 24 – gained skilled vocational training:** The figures were 16% of Indigenous males and 12% of Indigenous females, compared with 45% of non-Indigenous males and 43% of non-Indigenous females. On average, non-Indigenous young people were between 3 and 3.5 times as likely to have achieved this level of education.

Indigenous young people, juvenile detention and education

Aboriginal young people continue to be over-represented in the criminal justice system. A recent report indicated that “Indigenous persons aged 10 to 17 years still 25 times more likely to be in detention than non-Indigenous persons of the same age group” (Veld & Taylor 2005, p. 22). According to Earle and Fopp (1999) this over-representation is more than likely the result of how society constructs deviance and deals with it accordingly. But once the Indigenous young person enters detention – what is being done to construct their re-entry into society? Are they being re-engaged with education in a positive way, or do they simply bide their time until their sentence is finished and they return to their communities? What happens when they return? Do they feel hopeful and supported or do they re-enter a world that, in Giroux’s (1996) words, offers them dwindling resources, dead-end jobs, and diminished hopes for the future?

The participation, experience of and pathways to and from vocational education and training for Indigenous Australians has been of interest for some time in Australia. For example, it is reflected in *Shaping our future - The National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training 2004-2010*, where one of four objectives identified was that “Indigenous Australians will have skills for viable jobs and their learning culture will be shared” (Australian National Training Authority 2004, p. 2).

In the National Centre for Vocational Education and Training’s (NCVER 2004a) strategic-driven research programme, the second of two main areas to be explored under this objective was the “effective education and training pathways for Indigenous Australians” (p. 41). However, within the description of key topics of interest, the situation for Indigenous young people in detention was not identified. Nor was it present in the NCVER (2004b) document on the national research strategies for Indigenous Australians in VET 2003–2006.

This national project, which commenced in 2005, provides a response to the gaps in knowledge about vocational learning for Indigenous young people in juvenile detention that can offer direction for policy and programme-based responses. It also addresses recent recommendations about Indigenous educational research. For example, based on a review of contemporary Indigenous educational research, Mellor and Corrigan (2004) from the Australian Council for Educational Research stated that:

A better approach to research in Indigenous education would be to focus more on what the research tells us about the foundations of good teaching and learning generally. These can be described as two key goals of an education, which apply

to all students. These are: to support the moral and emotional development in the context of citizenship; to be explicitly related to employment and life outcomes. (p. 4)

This project directly sought the opinions of Indigenous young people in juvenile detention about their experiences of vocational learning programmes in terms of their value and relevance, i.e. it explored what constituted 'good learning' for this group of young people. Further, it gained their opinions on how these programmes contributed to future employment and life outcomes. The project is also congruent with the outcomes of the National Indigenous Youth Leadership Group's national survey of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people about issues of greatest concern to them and ideas for addressing them (National Indigenous Youth Leadership Group 2005). Crime and justice (over 50%) and education (over 40%) were second and third on the list of issues of concern – a related area, substance use, was the first concern with 100% of survey participants naming it.

Mellor and Corrigan (2004) suggested that several other factors support these two key goals for education, such as:

- good health, both as infants and while at school
- ensuring students' cognitive and social readiness for each developmental task and transition
- good teachers supported by extensive and ongoing professional development
- regular school attendance, so learning can be managed by students, teachers and parents or caregivers
- the development of productive and supportive relationships between schools and their communities. (p. 4)

Indigenous young people who enter juvenile detention centres do not fare well on several of these factors and, in general, Indigenous young people do not have consistently good experiences with mainstream schooling.

Purpose of the research

In this context, the purpose of this national research project was to set a solid foundation for further developing and strengthening effective approaches and support that will increase vocational learning opportunities for Indigenous students in juvenile detention. The project sought to develop greater understanding of how Indigenous young people in juvenile detention can best relate to vocational information, develop vocational skills and experience the world of work. Based on this foundation, the project then sought to identify effective approaches to vocational learning for Indigenous students in juvenile detention, along with greater understanding of what is good practice in vocational learning programmes. It was anticipated that the outcomes would have both policy and programme implications.

Methodology

Research design

Action research

Action research is the study of a social situation carried out by those involved, in order to improve both their practice and the quality of their understanding. Community-based action research has been described as:

... a collaborative approach to **inquiry** or **investigation** that provides people with the means to take systematic action to resolve specific problems. This approach to research favours consensual and participatory procedures that enable people (a) to investigate systematically their problems and issues, (b) to formulate powerful and sophisticated accounts of their situations, and (c) to devise plans to deal with the problems at hand. (Stringer 1999, p. 17).

Action research was chosen because it emphasises a participatory process that involves key stakeholders and encourages critical inquiry into current circumstances in order to identify areas for change, and options to trial and evaluate. In order for this project to work, staff in involved detention centres needed to be active participants who were directly engaged in the data gathering and critical inquiry process. The stakeholders in the project are illustrated in Figure 1, and included the inner circle of the main research team members, and the outer circle of education staff and partners involved in juvenile detention centres, Indigenous young people in juvenile detention centres, and Indigenous family and community members.

Figure 1: Participants in the project

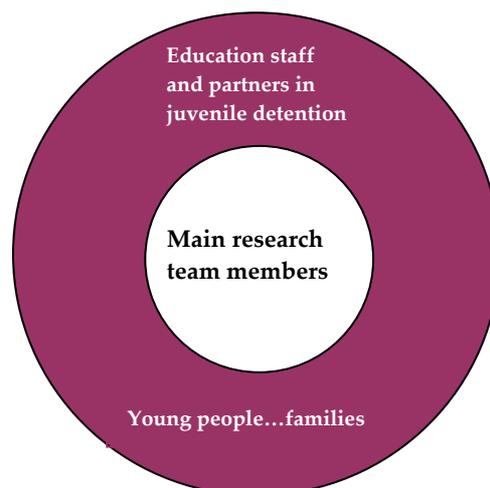
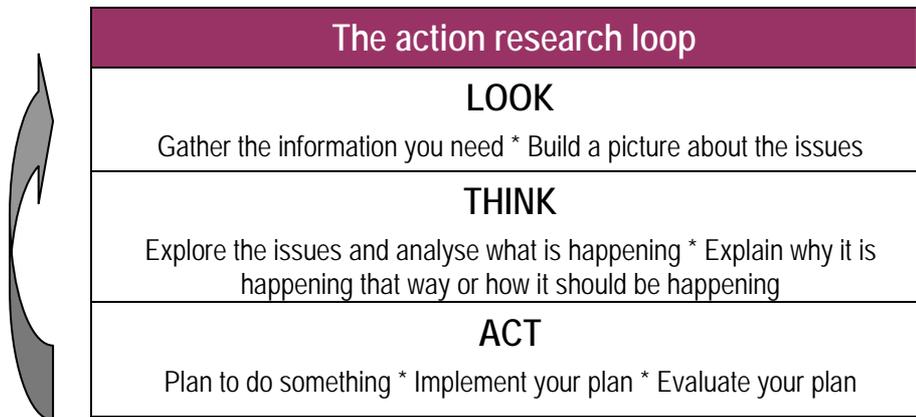


Figure 2 below outlines the action research loop. Several action research loops occurred throughout both stages (described below), some involving the inner circle and others the outer circle. All participants engaged in **critical reflection** to identify, reflect on and critique what was currently happening in centres, how well it was working, and if it was achieving the research purpose (Dick 2000).

Figure 2: The action research loop



Research methods

Several research methods were used to undertake the action research – each one is described in detail below:

- ✧ a literature review
- ✧ an online programme mapping survey of vocational learning programmes in juvenile detention centres
- ✧ interviews and/or focus groups with Indigenous young people in juvenile detention centres
- ✧ consultations with Indigenous family and community members of young people in juvenile detention centres
- ✧ two national conferences with all involved detention centres reviewing the research outcomes, known as ‘member checking’ (Erlandson et al. 1993) and contributing to analysis and recommendations.

Programme mapping survey

Through the programme mapping, the number, range, focus and characteristics of currently available vocational learning programmes were identified in juvenile detention centres across Australia. Centres were asked to focus on vocational learning programmes they had provided in their centre over the last two years in which Indigenous young people had participated. The complete survey is included in Appendix 1, but in summary it had three parts:

Part 1: Centre and student numbers – this was basic demographic information on the students attending the education centre.

- ✳ **Part 2: Vocational learning options** – centres identified programmes that fell into any of the four categories of vocational learning programmes: career education, enterprise education, work-based learning and community-based learning. They responded to questions in nine different areas on the characteristics of programmes.
- ✳ **Part 3: General issues** – this inquired into a range of issues for vocational learning such as contributions to family and community, day release, involvement of community members, pathways and transitions.

Interviews with young people

Interviewers: Interviews were undertaken by a person chosen by each centre's Principal. It was recommended that wherever possible this was an Indigenous person who could engage well with young people, would be accepted by young people and their family/community members, and had an existing relationship with young people at the centre, but was not a secure care staff member.

Interview process: Given the context of this research, and the processes Indigenous young people in juvenile detention centres have experienced, it was vital to avoid an interview approach that replicated interrogation. Therefore, an open-ended and conversational interview style was employed, which is a familiar cultural approach to personal exploration and knowledge generation. Fun/visual activities around rating items were built into the process to help young people express their opinions. The specific process followed during interviews is outlined in Appendix 2. It reflects culturally appropriate ways of engaging with Indigenous young people. The questions asked under each area listed may have been asked in slightly different language that was familiar and understandable to the young people to ensure they could participate as fully as possible. Where required, interviewers or other young people in the interview translated for young people for whom English was not a first language.

Interview outcomes: These were documented by the interviewers with support from the centre contact person in a format agreed with the research team, and sent for thematic and discourse analysis. Thematic/content analysis focuses on the detailed meanings conveyed, while discourse analysis explores the broader cultural stories or explanations through which people interpret their experiences and develop specific meanings.

Informed consent: Young people and parents/caregivers (where applicable, as some young people were under the guardianship of the Minister in their state) received a 'plain language statement' and the consent form for young people's participation. As some participants would find the literacy level of the plain language statement difficult, the Principal, Student Services Coordinator or centre representative in each centre discussed the research project with potential participants and covered all the areas outlined on the plain language statement. Centres were asked to consider:

- ✳ who needed to be aware of the project, and to brief them so they could support it and respond to any of the young people's questions, e.g. centre staff, youth workers, family/community

- ✳ approaching young people who are seen as leaders at the centre, and making sure they understood the project, as others may follow their lead in participating.

Confidentiality: No names were recorded in interview write-ups sent to the research team, just age and gender and whether the young person came from a metropolitan, rural or remote area (if known), i.e. general location, to assist with understanding the context of their commentary. If relevant, direct quotes have indicated age, gender and general location, but **not** centre/state/territory.

Participant wellbeing and support mechanisms: Interviews occurred within school time but during non-core subject lesson-time. Each centre identified a suitable person to be available to young people following the interview for support and debriefing if any sensitive or difficult topics emerged during the interview; young people could ask to see this person or the interviewer could recommend that they did.

Family and community member consultations

The perspectives of family and community members regarding their young person's experience of vocational learning and its impact on the young person during and following a period of detention were missing from the original research proposal. Following detention the young person will, however, return to their care and receive support to re-engage with learning and education. The opportunities provided during detention could detract from or support this task; therefore, their knowledge of what would be effective for their young person is critical.

To address this within the budget resources and timeline, the Unaipon members of the team recommended that consultations should be undertaken in two centres to develop an indicative picture of family and community member perspectives of juvenile detention and vocational learning. DEST approved this extension as they recognised that it would enrich the learning gained through the research, strengthen understanding about the effectiveness and appropriateness of current vocational learning opportunities, and improve the final recommendations regarding effective and culturally relevant approaches. Further, it would ensure that the research was conducted in a manner that acknowledged and respected cultural protocols, specifically regarding the meaning and place of family and community in the lives of Indigenous young people (this is described in detail in the 'Family and community member consultations' section of this report).

Participants and locations: Consultations were conducted with Indigenous family and community members who were familiar with young people who were currently, or had been in detention in two juvenile detention centres located in different states. Each centre had young people who came from metropolitan, rural and remote regions. The consultations were undertaken by Indigenous members of the existing team (Unaipon staff) who had an understanding of cultural protocols relating to consultation and the capacity to develop a good rapport with informants which would elicit relevant information.

Consultation process: The consultations were designed to obtain information about family and community members' views of vocational training opportunities for young

Indigenous people in detention and opportunities beyond detention. As this was a small group of people, the researchers relied on referrals from research team members who had connections to Indigenous people in agencies and organisations working with Indigenous young people in detention centres. The specific process followed during interviews is outlined in Appendix 3.

Informed consent: Interested community members were given a 'plain language statement' and consent form prior to their participation: it outlined their right to take part and/or withdraw from any stage of the study, as well as the research team's commitment to provide feedback on the overall outcomes.

Confidentiality: In the consent form, one of the conditions specified for those taking part was that an individual's information would be kept confidential and that no identifying information would be used in the reporting of research data, nor in any intended publication of any sort, be it electronic or print media.

Participant wellbeing and support mechanisms: In order to make it safe and comfortable to speak about these issues, attention was paid to the location and timing of the interviews, and transportation support and a meal was provided, as was assistance from qualified youth workers in caring for children. This ensured that the process reflected a cultural way of doing business.

Research stages and steps

To achieve the research purpose within an action research framework, the project was designed with two stages, each involving several steps, as detailed below and summarised in a diagram in Figure 3 on page 14.

Stage 1: October 2005 – March 2006

Stage 1 focused upon exploring and documenting what is currently happening nationally for vocational learning in juvenile detention centres and devising a method for encapsulating Indigenous young people's voices about their vocational learning experiences in juvenile detention centres. Stage 1 also focused on setting up the activities that occurred in Stage 2, through the following steps:

Ethics approvals: Ethics approvals were sought from the relevant departments in each state and territory across Australia. In many states, approval was required from two departments, e.g. education and family/community services, human services or correctional services. In addition, ethics approval was gained from a fully constituted Aboriginal ethics committee, the Aboriginal Health Research Ethics Committee in South Australia, and approval for the family and community member consultations was gained from the University of South Australia, as only Unaipon School staff were involved in this aspect of the work. Approvals were obtained in all states and territories except for NSW.

Oct 2005 –
Mar 2006

Trial national programme mapping: A hard copy and online version of a programme mapping survey was developed, piloted then trialled. It aimed to identify relevant programme elements in order to

Oct 2005 –
Feb 2006

create a national picture of current vocational learning options and delivery in juvenile detention centres. Almost all centres completed their surveys online, with their data entered into an associated and secure database. The trial programme mapping data was analysed for presentation at the 1st National Conference.

Literature review: A targeted literature review was undertaken that focused upon 'vocational learning and Indigenous young people in juvenile detention/the juvenile justice system' and 'education and Indigenous young people in juvenile detention/the juvenile justice system'.

Oct 2005 –
Mar 2006

1st National Conference: The 1st National Conference was held in Sydney on 27–28 February, 2006. It was attended by the Principal or delegate of the education centre in each involved detention centre and, wherever possible, the person undertaking the interviews with young people. The conference agenda included presentation and discussion of:

Jan – Feb
2006

- ✧ the trial programme mapping and initial literature outcomes
- ✧ an overview of action research and how it was being applied in the project
- ✧ the approach to interviewing young people, focusing on skills from both research and cultural perspectives, and refinements to respond to local needs
- ✧ the reporting process for interview outcomes.

Stage 2: April – July 2006

Stage 2 focused upon finding out what Indigenous young people in juvenile detention centres, and their family and community members, thought about vocational learning, and analysing their responses against current practices to identify elements of good practice. This information was gained to determine the next steps for building on the research and strengthening culturally relevant and effective outcomes. It involved the following steps and strategies:

Final national programme mapping: Participating centres had the opportunity to revise or add further information to the programme mapping database following the national conference, based on agreements about the basis on which programmes would be included and further discussion of key terms.

Mar – April
2006

Interviews with young people: These were undertaken individually or in small groups, depending on young people's preference, at a local level by the chosen interviewer.

Mar – May
2006

Literature review: Further work was undertaken to complete the literature review, including the addition of references recommended by staff of participating detention centres.

Mar – May
2006

Interviews with family and community members: Connections were established with family and community members in two centres in different states, to provide an opportunity for them to share their

Apr – June
2006

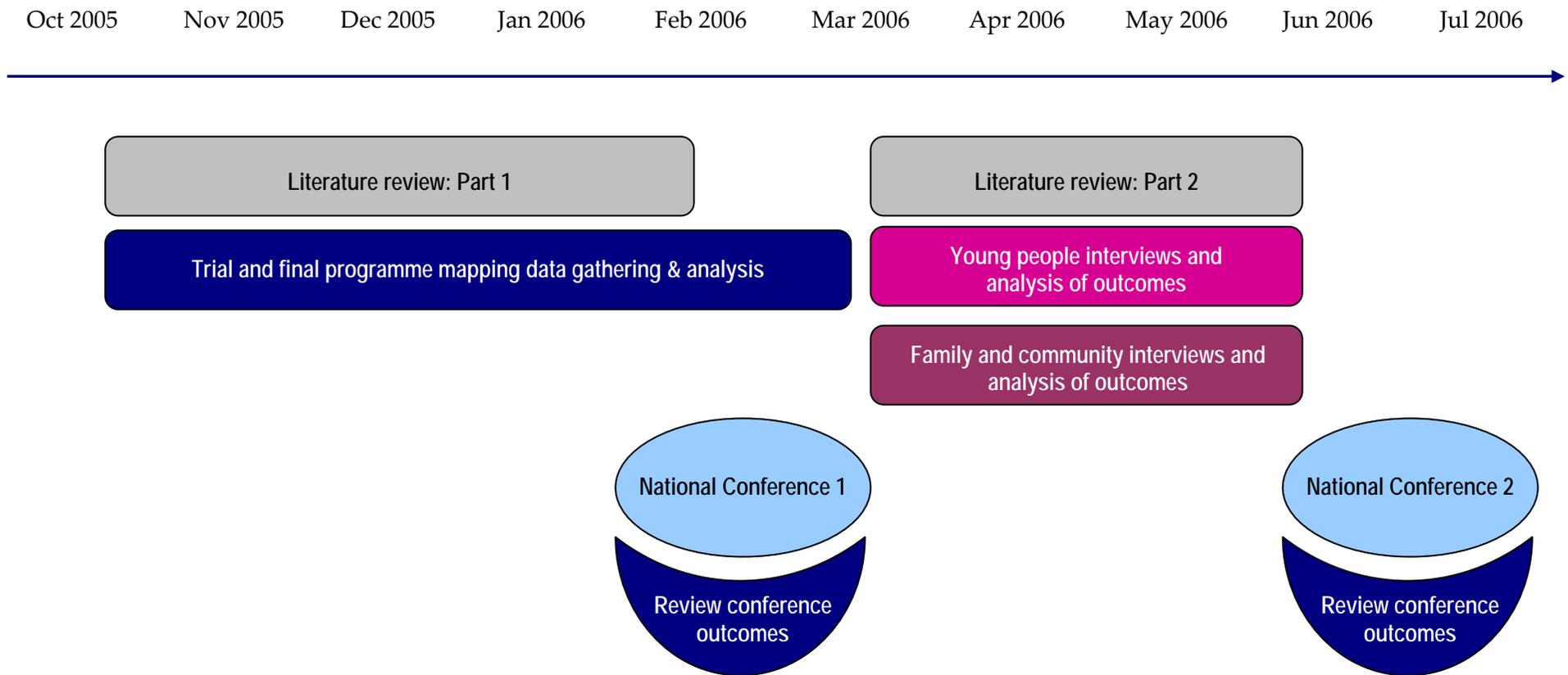
experiences and opinions of vocational learning for their young people. The consultation guide is included in Appendix 3. This component of the research was not part of the original proposal, but was developed following a recommendation from the Unaipon School staff. DEST agreed to consider and approve funding for this component in January 2006. Interviews could not commence until April 2006 following the university ethics approval process.

2nd National Conference: The 2nd National Conference was held in Melbourne on 1–2 June, 2006. It was attended by the same group of people, with a strong emphasis on ensuring that the people who undertook the young people’s interviews would be present. The conference agenda included presentation and discussion of:

June 2006

- ✧ the final programme mapping and literature outcomes
- ✧ the outcomes of the young people’s interviews
- ✧ preliminary findings on the family and community member consultations
- ✧ analysis of the outcomes in terms of the characteristics of vocational learning programmes
- ✧ implications of the outcomes for future policy and programme initiatives
- ✧ recommendations for future policy and programme initiatives.

Figure 3: A snapshot of the research design: Activities and timeline



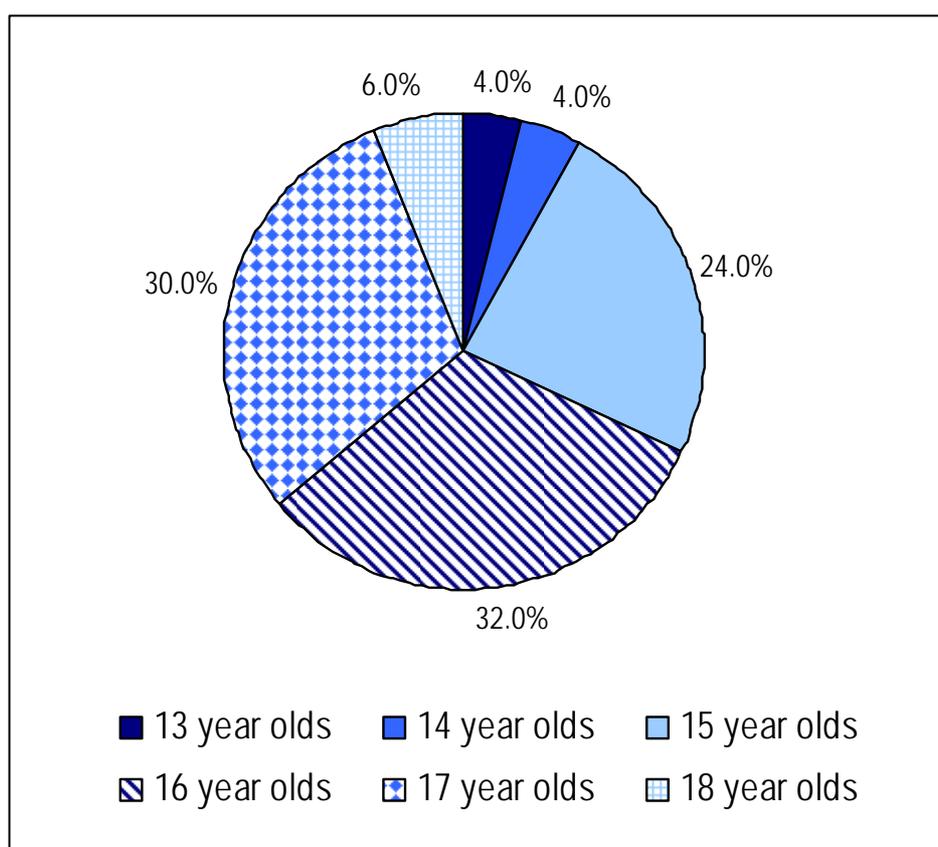
Research participants

Participants representing different stakeholder groups were involved in one or more of the main research methods.

Programme mapping: Participants in the programme mapping were the education staff of nine juvenile detention centres based in Western Australia, South Australia, Northern Territory, Queensland (two), Australian Capital Territory, Victoria (two) and Tasmania.² As noted in the limitations section, the eight NSW centres were not given approval to participate. One person in each centre took responsibility for coordinating all information, while several staff may have been involved in providing information.

Interviews with young people: Fifty young people agreed to participate, representing seven centres in Western Australia, South Australia, Northern Territory, Queensland (two), Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania. Their distribution across age is shown in Figure 4. The majority of the participants were between 15 and 17 years old (86%), and 94% were young men.

Figure 4: Age and distribution of young people interviewed



² In South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia there is one education centre that services two detention centre locations. Those two detention centres have been counted as one for each of these states for the purposes of the research.

Consultations with family and community members: Consultations with family and community members were undertaken in the two detention centres, each in a different state. Where possible, on-site observations were made of interactions between community members and young people in detention. There were 17 participants in total, with 15 identifying as Aboriginal and two non-Aboriginal family members. The participants had a long-term connection (i.e. two years or longer) with young people in the detention centres, some on a personal and others on both a personal and a professional level.

National conferences: There were 28 people in attendance at the 1st National Conference representing 13 centres, and 22 people at the 2nd National Conference, representing 11 centres. All participants contributed to discussion and analysis components of each conference. There were more than 10 centres represented, because NSW centre representatives were able to attend as observers and offer reflections on the outcomes.

Limitations

This project was intended to be inclusive of all 18 juvenile detention centres across Australia. The final data set represents 10 centres for programme mapping and 7 centres for the young people's interviews. Complications in obtaining ethics approval in Victoria prevented their interviews occurring within the project timeframe. The 8 centres in NSW could not participate in either stage as the NSW Department of Education and Training and the NSW Department of Juvenile Justice did not provide approval for the research to be conducted in NSW. This means that the research outcomes present a partial rather than a national picture. However, as representatives from the Education and Training Units within NSW juvenile detention centres were able to participate in the National Conferences, they offered some reflections to indicate that, in the main, the outcomes were relevant to Indigenous students in detention in NSW and the directions and recommendations from the research would be valuable, relevant and beneficial for their centres to consider.

The interviews with young people were purposely designed to allow young people to identify the areas of most interest and concern to them in reflecting on their vocational learning experiences. Although some specific areas were targeted – such as connections with community, how they wished to build up their skills, and previous experiences of vocational learning – they were not directed or led to focus on specific aspects of their experience. This means that in some instances it is not possible to comment in any detail, or make assumptions about young people's opinions of specific areas.

For example, while few young people commented on what they thought of their teachers/facilitators, it is important to bear in mind that they were not directly asked about this. Therefore, it is not certain that young people had no concerns about teaching practice or that all the teaching practice they experienced was of high quality. The recommendations later in the report address the need to look more

closely at quality, satisfaction with and impact of teaching practice as this is relevant to good practice in vocational learning.

Literature review

The literature search focused on three main areas: vocational education/learning, juvenile justice or detention, and Indigenous students. The databases searched were:

- ✧ Australian Institute of Criminology
- ✧ Informit (University database)
- ✧ AIATSIS (Australian Institute for ATSI studies)
- ✧ CAEPR (Centre for Aboriginal Economic and Policy Research)
- ✧ NCVER (National Centre of Vocational Education Research)
- ✧ VOCED (Vocational Education database of NCVER)

Definitions in vocational learning

The Australian Ministerial Council on Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (2000), known as MCEETYA, has defined vocational learning as ‘general learning that has a vocational perspective. It includes elements such as: generic employability skills, enterprise education, career education and community and work based learning’ (p. 21). Two sets of definitions are important in vocational learning. The first set describes the four types of vocational education identified by MCEETYA:

- ✧ **Career education** supports students in learning about themselves in relation to work, learning about the world of work, developing and implementing career plans and decisions, and managing work transitions.
- ✧ **Enterprise education** supports students to evaluate achievements and develop enterprising attributes that equip them to identify, create, initiate and successfully manage personal, business, work and community opportunities.
- ✧ **Work-based learning** involves understanding the changing nature of work, workplaces and patterns of employment; undertaking self-managed employment and enterprise initiatives; acquiring generic work preparation skills; and having structured and targeted learning experiences in real or simulated workplace environments.
- ✧ **Community-based learning** involves learning from individuals other than teachers, connecting meaningful community activity with classroom experience, and addressing specific problems issues or practices that have been negotiated with the community, and that affect them.

The second set of definitions relate to ‘employability skills’, which are defined as ‘skills required not only to gain employment, but also to progress within an enterprise so as to achieve one’s potential and contribute successfully to enterprise strategic directions’ (Department of Education, Science & Training 2002, p. 3). MCEETYA has endorsed 8 employability skills, which are as follows:

- **Communication skills** that contribute to productive and harmonious relations across employees and customers.
- **Teamwork skills** that contribute to productive working relationships and outcomes.
- **Problem solving skills** that contribute to productive outcomes.
- **Initiative and enterprise skills** that contribute to innovative outcomes.
- **Planning and organising skills** that contribute to long- and short-term strategic planning.
- **Self-management skills** that contribute to employee satisfaction and growth.
- **Learning skills** that contribute to ongoing improvement and expansion in employee and company operations and outcomes, and
- **Technology skills** that contribute to effective execution of tasks (Department of Education, Science & Training 2002, p. 7).

What we already know

There is limited research that directly addresses the vocational learning experiences of young Indigenous people in juvenile detention - most authors identified it as an under-researched area. An earlier report 'Working together to break the cycle' (Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander People Training Advisory Council 1998), named the issues, needs and desires of Indigenous young people in detention as: literacy and numeracy, health, social and emotional wellbeing, family and community links, and community isolation. It was also recognised that there is a broad diversity of Indigenous communities with varying needs, interests, decision-making, cultural and historical influences.

Significantly, this report identified that VET is critical as **both** a preventive measure in the community and a rehabilitative measure for people in custody/detention. In order to improve the provision of VET to young people in juvenile detention, it highlighted the need to:

- ✧ involve Indigenous people in developing and delivering targeted VET programmes
- ✧ employ suitably qualified Indigenous staff to assist in programmes
- ✧ link VET programmes to community-based VET programmes
- ✧ link VET programmes to support services.

There are many accounts of best or good practice 'models' of education in juvenile detention that identify key principles of what works at the local level and provide some indication of their outcomes (Baikie 1997; Bryant, Altschwager & Walker 2003; Campbell & Duggan 2003; Cunneen & McDonald 1999; Fitzgerald, Manners & Hunter 1999; Hubble & Goodlet 1992; Keys Young 1997; McPherson & O'Grady 1999). For example, a NSW report found that vocational skills learnt by students were beneficial

to isolated communities in remote NSW (McPherson & O'Grady 1999). It stated that VET programmes in detention had the capacity to provide:

- ✧ improved culture within and across the detention centre
- ✧ improved student self-esteem and behavioural changes
- ✧ positive staff and student experiences
- ✧ measurable outcomes, i.e. increased skills, accreditation, further training and employment opportunities.

Good practice is described at both the organisational and individual practice level. At the organisational level, governance structure models emphasise the importance of partnerships between the youth education centres and Government, non-Government, industry, and community organisations, i.e. a multi-agency approach (Bryant, Altschwager & Walker 2003). At the individual level, 'integrated casework' is considered a successful model for breaking the crime cycle (Baikie 1997). This requires a coordinated, integrated and holistic approach involving both the government departments responsible for education and juvenile justice **and** case worker coordinators, psychologists, educators, drug and alcohol counsellors, health and/or housing agencies, along with members of the Aboriginal community (Baikie 1997).

What we need to know – what we need to do

Although some good practice models have been identified, further research and evaluation of vocational education in youth detention centres is still much needed over a decade after it was named as an important matter (Wilson 1993). Some of the areas that require action and exploration include: multi-agency work; meeting the needs of students on short-term stays; strengthening links between detention centres, external learning locations and employer groups; the role of Indigenous families and communities; and determining what constitutes 'success' in vocational learning.

We need better information on what constitutes effective institutional planning, policy and interventions. The current 'silo' approach of agencies involved in policy, practices, training and funding can prove to be a barrier to the success of students in detention. The sharing of information across agencies while maintaining confidentiality needs to be addressed, consequently, examples of good practice in multi-agency approaches needs to be documented and evaluated.

The concept of 'best practice' also needs to be explored beyond the narrow, technical aspects of governance, policy and management, and framed within principles of self-determination and human rights (Cunneen & McDonald 1999). Therefore, it is critical to build on and strengthen the opportunities for, and capacity of Indigenous families and community members to play a role in supporting young people in detention. This involves identifying values and principles that Indigenous people advocate as important in providing successful vocational learning for young people in detention (Social Inclusion Unit 2004; Cunneen & McDonald 1999).

This 'social inclusion' discourse promotes a community development/community participation approach that highlights the critical role of families and communities in decision-making about policy, planning, resources and delivery at the local level (Campbell & Duggan 2003; Cunneen & McDonald 1999). If culturally inclusive, relevant and flexible delivery is developed, we need better documentation and evaluation of how this is done, who is involved, and the impact of these practices on young people during and beyond their time in detention. This project has identified some examples of programmes that could be evaluated and used as a model for programmes in other centres.

In many, although not all instances, students who are on short-term stays do not access VET programmes as often. Regardless of the length of a student's stay, they need to access vocational learning, which has an impact on the manner and methodology of delivery of programmes. The delivery of vocational learning programmes for Indigenous students needs to be flexible in general. Links between juvenile detention centres, learning spaces external to detention and employer groups need to be developed to support success on the young person's release. This is particularly pertinent to young people on short-term stays where there is a risk that they may quickly return, if nothing occurs, to break the pattern of offending that has begun to develop. We need more knowledge about how this has occurred and what can be done to prevent re-offending: this will require support to evaluate any existing programmes, as well as trial and evaluate others.

Some research questioned the definition of 'success' (Keys Young 1997). When is a programme successful? What constitutes a successful program? Is it when the student completes the program? Is it if the student enjoys the program? Is it the award of the certificate? Or is it when the student gains employment? This definition needs to be explored and become consistent across the nation. Keys Young (1997) noted that compiling a list of available programmes is relatively easy, but assessing their accessibility, appropriateness and quality is much harder. Therefore, a national and systematic approach to the evaluation of vocational learning programmes needs to be undertaken to address these and the other questions identified through the literature review.

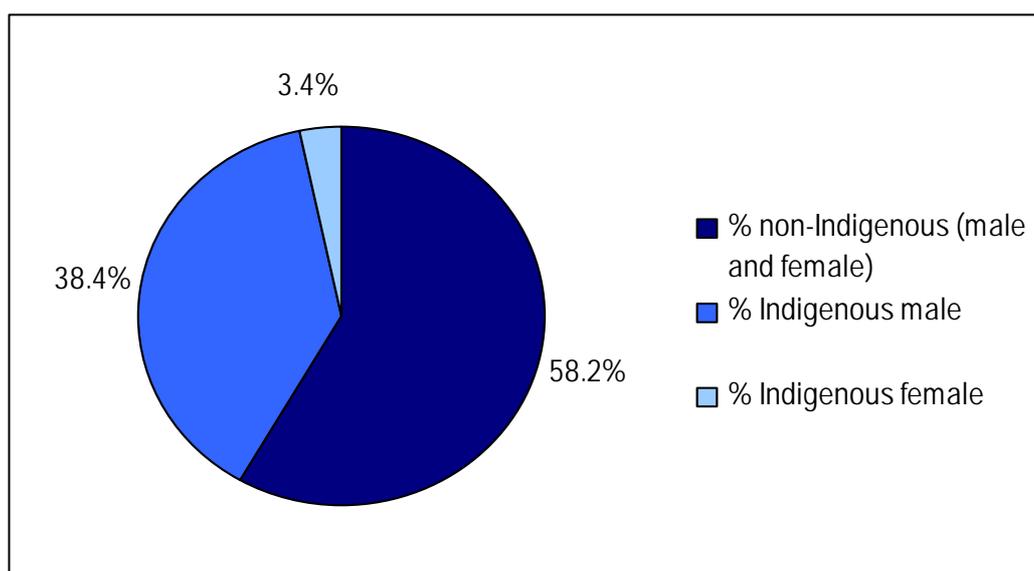
Programme mapping outcomes

Number attending juvenile detention education centres

Collating the figures from the 10 participating centres, it appears that on any day there are almost 500 students in these 10 juvenile detention centres. If NSW had been included, the number of students across Australia could be as high as 700 students on any single day. Based on these figures, almost 42% of these students are Indigenous young people, predominantly young men. Averages and ranges were calculated for these daily figures, but it is important to emphasise the **wide variation** due to differences in centre sizes; some centres have as few as 14 students in attendance on any one day, while others average 123 students.

- ✧ The average total number of students attending each education centre on any day is 55 (range is 14 to 123 students).
- ✧ The average number of Indigenous young people attending education centres is 23 or 42%. The range is 4 to 65 Indigenous young people and 10% (12 out of 123 students) to 93% (13 out of 14 students).
- ✧ The average number of Indigenous young men attending education centres is 21 or 38.4%. The range is 2 to 65 Indigenous young men and 6.5% (8 out of 123 students) to 93% (13 out of 14 students).
- ✧ The average number of Indigenous young women attending education centres is 2 or 3.4%. The range is 0 to 5 Indigenous young women and 0% to 14% (2 out of 14 students).

Figure 5: Distribution of students attending daily, based on cultural identity and, for Indigenous students, gender



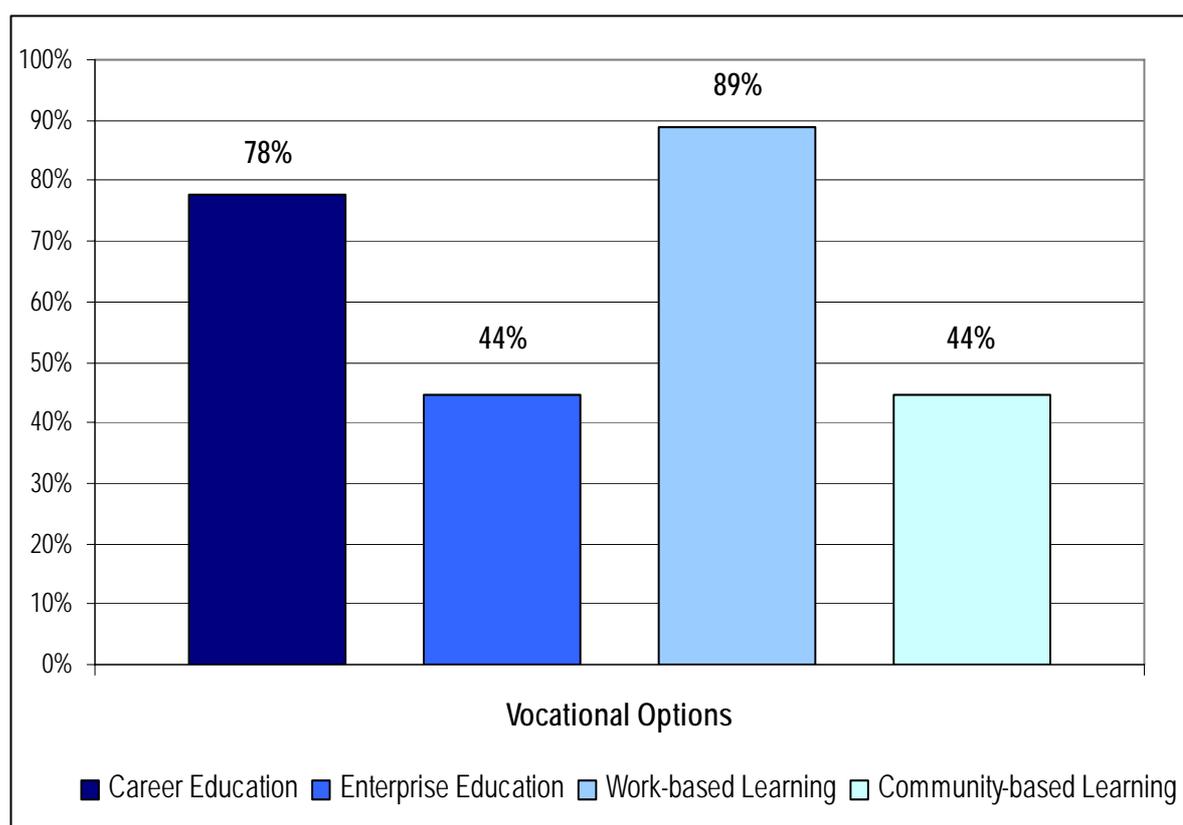
All centres reported that they had students from metropolitan locations, 89% indicated they had students from rural locations and 56% from remote locations. Some states/territories do not have any 'remote' areas, e.g. ACT, Tasmania and Victoria, so the 56% figure for remote locations is likely to be misleading.

Vocational learning programmes

Frequency and type

Centres indicated if they offered programmes in one or more of the four different vocational learning options: career education, enterprise education, work-based learning and community-based learning. Figure 6 shows the availability of these options in centres. Work-based learning and career education were the most common, available in 78% and 89% of centres respectively. Enterprise education and community-based learning occurred less often, being available in 44% of centres. Only two centres offered all options, while three centres offered three of the four options.

Figure 6: Availability of vocational learning options in centres



Reasons given for not offering some types of programmes, particularly enterprise education and community-based learning, included:

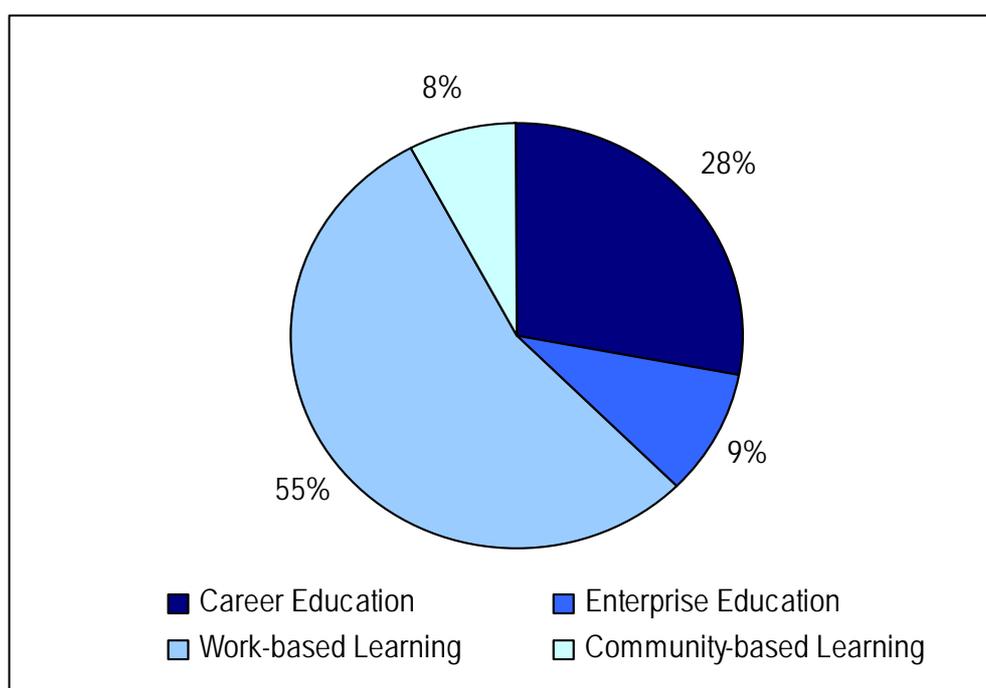
- ✳ enterprise education was embedded across the curriculum rather than being a discreet programme

- ✧ lack of opportunity or difficulty in doing things in the community due to being a secure centre
- ✧ enterprise education was a previous centre focus and other areas were the current focus.

One centre explained that young people’s needs are determined by the relevant government departments through a consultative process. It appeared that this process may enable or prevent some options, e.g. community-based learning.

Each centre with one or more types of vocational learning provided specific information on these programmes. Figure 7 shows the distribution across each type of vocational learning programme for the 64 programmes entered into the database.

Figure 7: Distribution of programmes across vocational learning type



Not only were work-based learning and career education options more frequently available in centres, but there were more programmes available to choose from for these types of vocational learning options. Work-based learning accounted for 55% of all programmes nationally (35 programmes) while 28% (18 programmes) were career education options. There were few specific enterprise education programmes, i.e. six or 9%, or community-based learning programmes, i.e. five or 8%. It appears that the same reasons centres gave for why they offered these programme types influenced the number of programmes available in total.

Primary focus of content

An analysis of the names of programmes and the activities undertaken within them led to classifying programmes on their primary focus. Almost all programmes were

coded in a single area, although the content focus of many of the vocationally oriented programmes in specific industry areas could also have been categorised in one or both of the two general categories of employment/workplace or literacy/numeracy. This was not done as most of the employment/workplace programmes had a generic focus on employability or job application skills that would be needed across a range of vocations. Also, literacy and numeracy was often integrated into programmes through the assessment requirements that students needed to meet, so only programmes that had a **dedicated** literacy/ numeracy focus were put in that category. The outcomes are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Primary focus of vocational learning programmes

Focus of vocational learning programme	Percentage (no.)
Employment or workplace related	26.6 (17)
Art, craft, music and culture	10.9 (7)
Literacy and numeracy	9.4 (6)
Personal care – self or industry focus	9.4 (6)
Food/hospitality	9.4 (6)
Automotive and engineering	9.4 (6)
Agriculture/horticulture	9.4 (6)
Building and construction	9.4 (6)
Community services (volunteer or career)	4.7 (3)
Information technology (dedicated focus)	3.1 (2)
Outdoor recreation	1.6 (1)

When the 64 programmes were broken down into vocational learning programme **type** the following patterns emerged:

- ✳ Of the 18 career education programmes, 12 (67%) were in the ‘workplace/ employment’ related category, while one focused on literacy/numeracy and the remaining five programmes were spread across a range of different specific industry areas.
- ✳ Of the six enterprise education programmes, three had a general focus and three were connected to specific industry areas.

- ✧ Across the 35 work-based learning programmes, there were six focused on literacy and numeracy, and two on workplace/employment, with the remainder relating to various industry areas (almost 80%).
- ✧ All five community-based learning programmes were connected to a specific industry area.

Time spent on vocational learning programmes

For each programme submitted, centres provided information on how many hours/day, days/week and weeks/year it was offered, as well as how many times per year the programme was run. When an average was calculated, the amount of time spent per programme was 3.7 hours/day, 3.2 days/week, 27.2 weeks per year. However, there was **wide variation** in the number of hours, days and weeks according to the nature of the programme. For example, an Interpersonal Skills programme may run for one hour, three days a week over three weeks (9 hours in total), while a Certificate I in Furniture Making may run for six hours, two days a week over 42 weeks (504 hours in total). Programmes were run one or more times each year: 78% (50 programmes) were run continuously, with 15% (10 programmes) run three to four times per year, 2% (one program) run twice and 5% (three programmes) run once per year.

In terms of programme **type**, all programmes offered once per year were career education programmes, while all those offered twice per year were enterprise education programmes. A significant difference ($p=0.003$ in a 2-sided X^2 test) was found for programme frequency. Not only were career education and work-based learning programmes offered more frequently overall, they were also offered **continuously** more frequently. In terms of programme **focus**, all dedicated literacy/numeracy programmes were offered continuously, as were 76% of the generic employment/workplace related programmes, with all but one of the rest being offered 3–4 times per year.

The total number of hours per year of vocational learning was estimated at almost 24,000 for the 10 centres combined. This is an estimate only because of the way in which the question was asked, and centres answered. This varied between centres from 156 hours/year in one centre through to 9,618 in another. However, this latter centre only had the older age groups and almost all programmes offered were vocational learning whereas most other centres also provided many non-vocational school curriculum programmes.

In short, it appears that a sizeable portion of the available curriculum hours per year in centres have a vocational learning focus with some centres adopting vocational learning as their priority option.

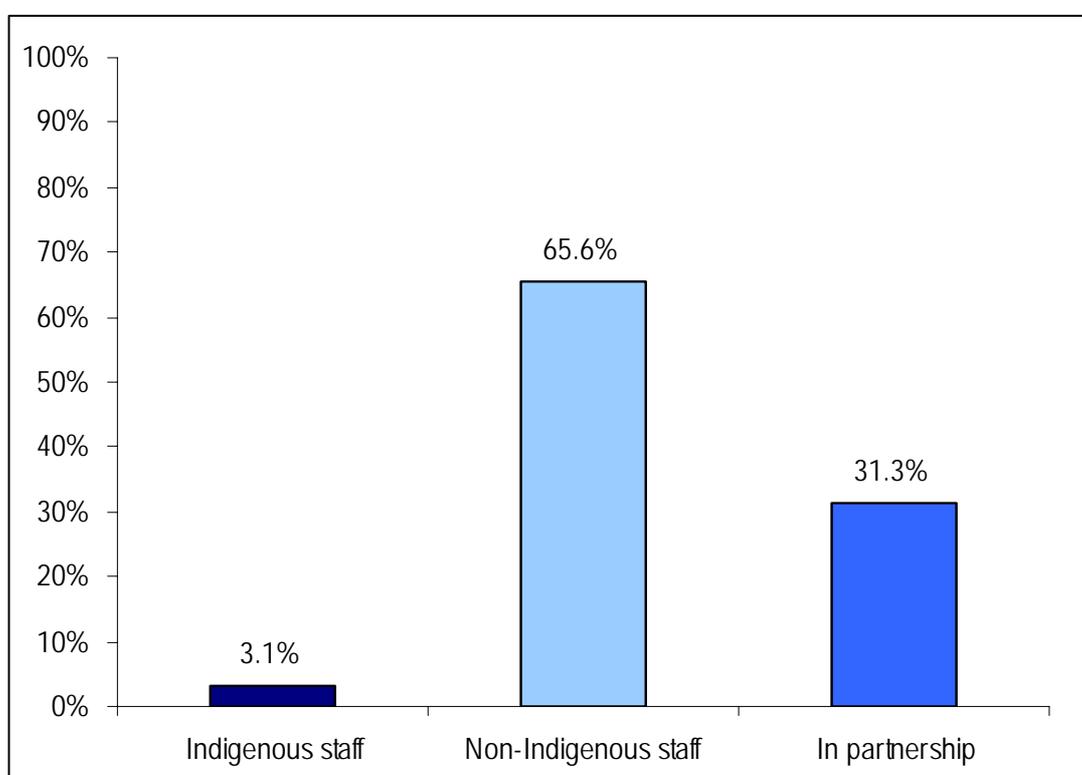
Who delivers the programmes? Cultural identity and location

We asked about who delivers the programme in two ways. First, we asked about **cultural identity**. The results are shown in Figure 8. It appears that almost two-thirds

of the programmes were delivered by non-Indigenous staff, with Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff working together almost a third of the time, while non-Indigenous staff working alone was rare. This occurred on two occasions; one programme had a strong Indigenous focus and the other was a generic employability/workplace focused programme delivered by Indigenous staff.

It is not clear whether Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff working together were doing this in an equitable partnership, or with one or the other person taking leadership. How the 'working-in-partnership' process operates may have an effect on programme quality and the experience of Indigenous students, as well as the role modelling to which Indigenous students are exposed.

Figure 8: Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff involvement in delivery



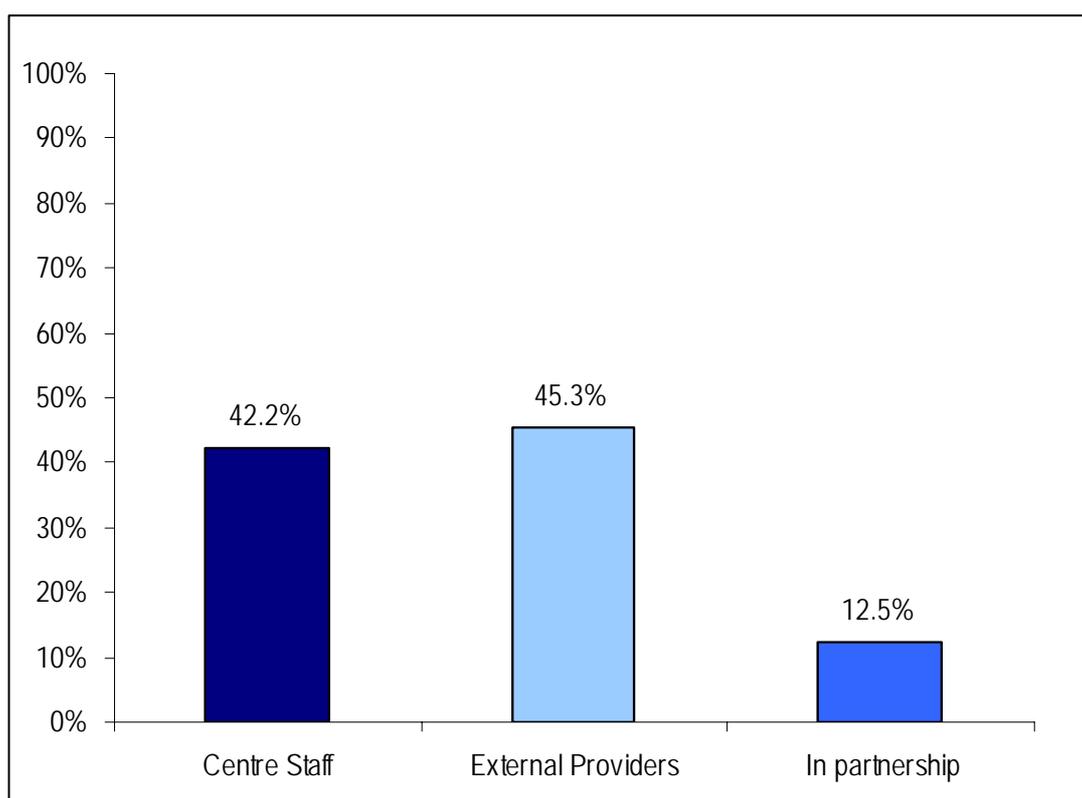
Secondly, we asked about the location of staff—were they **insiders**—centre staff, or **outsiders**—external providers. The results are shown in Figure 9. Just over 42% of programmes were delivered by centre staff, with external providers delivering 45% of programmes, and the remaining 13% being jointly delivered. However, in a couple of instances external providers were contracted to deliver programmes in the centre, but were included as internal staff because they participated in joint planning and reinforcement work done in other programmes.

Of the external providers, 72% are TAFE/VET and 28% are industry or specialist community organisations. They were chosen because:

- ✧ they offered accreditation (38%)

- ✧ it was a department requirement because their services were contracted at a state or regional level (49%)
- ✧ they had relevant skills and expertise, often not available from centre staff (28%)
- ✧ they had a good relationship with the centre and/or empathy for the young people involved so were willing to work with them (8%).

Figure 9: Centre staff and external provider involvement in delivery



Programmes with external provider involvement were analysed according to their **primary focus**. Internal staff were more likely to be highly involved in programmes focused on literacy/numeracy, employment/workplace related skills, i.e. generic skills, personal care areas, and the building/construction industry programmes. On average, they delivered 67–83% of these programmes alone or occasionally in partnership with external providers.

External providers were usually highly involved in the industry-related areas, across all industry areas previously listed. On average, they delivered 67–83% of the industry-related programmes alone, or sometimes in partnership with internal staff.

We also looked at the statistical relationship between cultural identity or location of provider with **type** of vocational learning programme, but there were no patterns that showed statistical significance. However, two trends were observable that support the above results:

- ✳ Internal staff were more likely to be more involved in career-based education programmes, while external providers were more likely to be involved in work-based programmes.
- ✳ Indigenous staff were more likely to be more involved with career-based education programmes, but almost always in partnership with non-Indigenous staff.

Assessment strategies

The number of assessment strategies that centres used for each programme ranged from one through to nine, with almost 80% of programmes using two or more forms of assessment. For example, using a portfolio, logbook, workbook or checklist approach is common to the competency-based assessment that is characteristic of vocational learning – it occurred over 70% of the time. However, a number of different assessment strategies need to be used in order to check off whether a skill has been achieved. Therefore, the figures in Table 2 do not add up to 100, but represent the percentage of programmes that drew on these forms of assessment.

Table 2: Frequency of assessment strategies

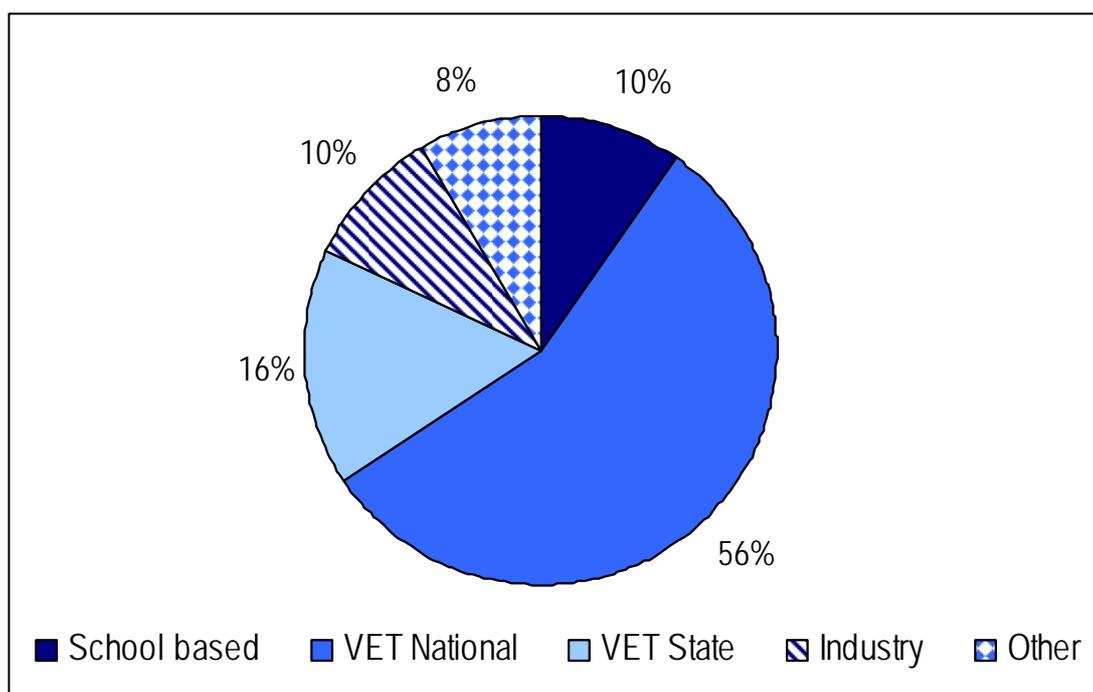
Types of assessment strategies	Percentage
Portfolio, logbook, workbook or checklist	70.5
Demonstrate practical skills	60.7
Observation	59.0
Oral or written test or questionnaire	44.3
Student presentation or real/simulated project	32.8
Participation and discussion	27.9
Written assignments	23.0
Self-assessment	13.1
Work experience	6.6

Demonstrating practical skills and observation were the most commonly used specific assessment strategies. Written options, such as tests, questionnaires and assignments were relatively frequent, and in almost a third of programmes students were able to give direct presentations or work on a real or simulated project to demonstrate their skills. Self-assessment was infrequent and work experience rare, usually due to the restrictions of the secure care environment where day release is infrequent or simply not available.

Accreditation

Overall, 84% of the programmes were accredited. On occasion, programmes were accredited with two or three entities. When there was no answer to the question on accreditation, it appeared that programmes were not accredited with any particular entity, but developed because they were useful or appropriate. Figure 10 shows the distribution of types of accreditation options.

Figure 10: With whom programmes were accredited



VET national or state options represented almost three-quarters of the total, with the remainder made up of school-based, industry and other options. In most instances, the other category referred to a variety of options, with no clear pattern, e.g. RECAP, the Motor Vehicle Department or hours on the programme being credited to another certificate. No statistically significant association was found between programme types and whether they were accredited or not, although work-based and career based education were more likely to be accredited.

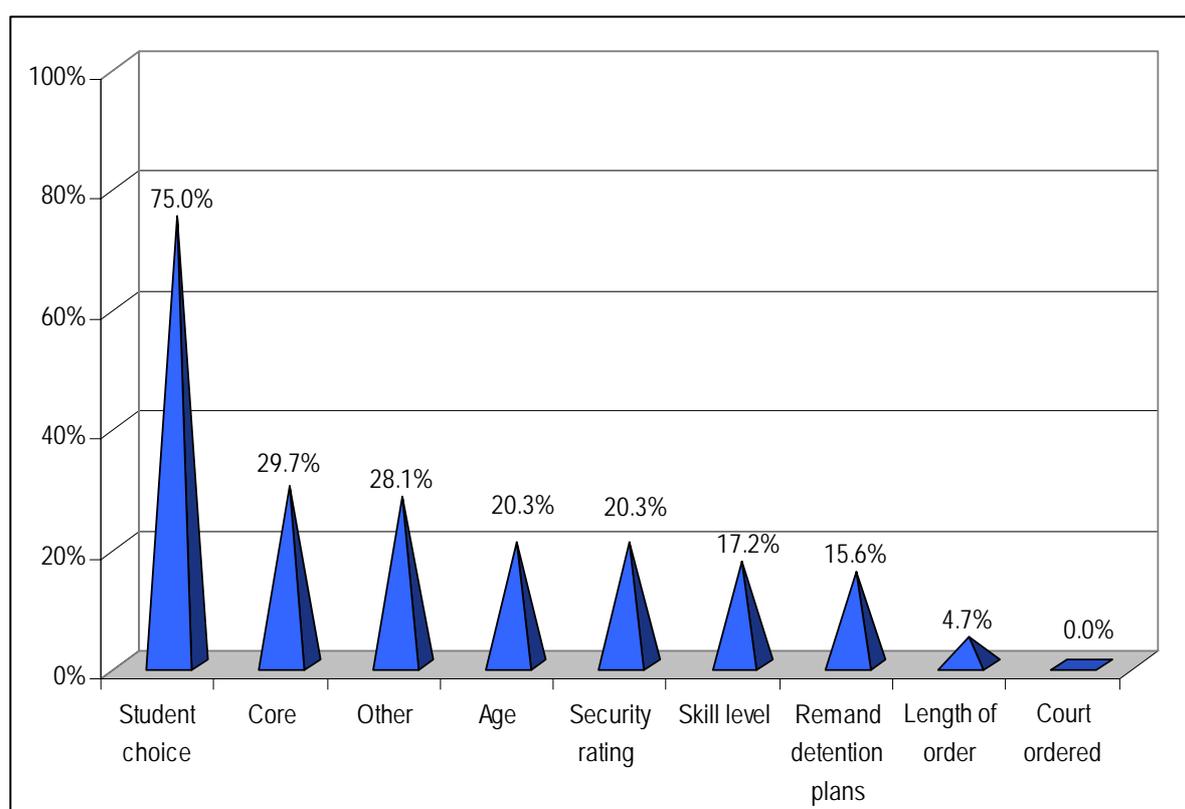
Reasons for students participating in programmes

There was usually more than one reason for students participating in a particular programme, with the number of reasons ranging from one through to five, an average of two overall. The range and frequency of these reasons are illustrated in Figure 11. Student choice was, overwhelmingly, the most common reason given for participation and was cited for 48 programmes. Where only one reason was given (for 19 or 30% of the programmes?), almost two-thirds of the time it was student choice (63%) and about a third of the time it was because the programme was a core subject (37%). Criteria such as age, security level and skill level only applied to a few

programmes, indicating that on the whole, most programmes offered were open to the majority of students. If a complete national picture had been gained these outcomes may have been different, e.g. security rating may have been a more frequent reason for students' access to programmes.

The reasons given by those who selected 'other' were diverse, with no obvious patterns, although one centre frequently indicated that they offered some programme options as a reward within the case management system, i.e. students could do them as a reward for a proven track record of good behaviour. Although two centres commented that participation could be court-ordered, this was in isolated individual cases, not common practice, so it was not included below as a standard reason.

Figure 11: Reasons for students participating in programmes



Funding source

The majority of programmes had one funding source, but on occasion two were cited. Most centres provided their programme options from within their curriculum budgets; this was the case for 52 programmes or 81.3% of the total. Several centres accessed state grants (for nine programmes or 14.1%) and a handful gained federal grants (for four programmes or 6.3%). In four instances (6.3%) centres gained funding through an alternative source, as well as one of the above options. These 'other' sources were varied. Once again, if a complete national picture had been gained the funding picture may have altered, e.g. a greater number of state grants to support programmes.

Employability skills

For each programme, centres indicated how strongly the eight employability skills were reflected. They did this by taking 20 points and then allocating them across the eight employability skills on a proportional basis. For example, if only three employability skills were reflected in a programme, but one had a much stronger focus, it could be given 10 points and the other two skills 5 points each; alternatively, one skill may be allocated 9 points, the second skill 6 points and the third skill 5 points. However, if seven employability skills were reflected in a programme, then the distribution could be one skill at 5 points, four skills at 3 points, one skill at 2 points and one skill at 1 point. The total distribution needed to add up to 20 points.

The points distribution was used to indicate which employability skills featured most strongly in the vocational learning programmes they provided. The data was organised in several ways: as an **overall** average, according to programme **type** and according to programme **focus**.

As an overall average: As shown in Table 3, on average the highest number of points was allocated to communication (shown in **bold**). The middle cluster of skills was problem solving, planning and organising, learning, self-management and teamwork (shown in regular text). The lowest points were allocated to initiative and enterprise, and technology skills (shown in *italics*).

Table 3: Points for employability skills distribution, OVERALL average

Employability skills distribution in programmes	Average points
Communication	3.8
Problem solving	2.9
Planning and organising	2.7
Learning	2.4
Self-management	2.3
Teamwork	2.2
<i>Initiative and enterprise</i>	<i>1.9</i>
<i>Technology</i>	<i>1.8</i>

According to programme type: Table 4 has organised the data in the same employability skills order as the overall average to assist with comparisons against that average. There is a column for each of the four types of vocational learning programme, listing average points allocated for each skill area. Once again the skills

with the highest number of points are shown in **bold**, the middle cluster of skills is shown in regular text, and the skills with the lowest points are shown in *italics*.³

Table 4: Points for employability skills distribution by programme TYPE

Employability skills – order for overall average	Career education	Enterprise education	Work-based learning	Community-based learning
Communication - 3.8	5.2	3.2	3.1	4.0
Problem solving – 2.9	3.2	1.5	3.1	2.6
Planning and organising – 2.7	2.9	2.2	2.9	1.4
Learning – 2.4	1.6	2.3	2.5	4.2
Self-management – 2.3	2.4	3.2	2.3	1.0
Teamwork – 2.2	1.9	2.3	2.1	4.4
<i>Initiative and enterprise – 1.9</i>	1.5	4.2	1.7	1.0
<i>Technology – 1.8</i>	1.3	1.2	2.3	1.4

When the points allocated to employability skills are compared on the basis of programme **type**, as shown in Table 4, the following patterns emerge:

- ✳ **Career education** followed the pattern for the overall average, with the exception of learning and to some degree teamwork, both of which dropped in priority.
- ✳ **Enterprise education** demonstrated a different pattern that reflected its orientation to initiative and enterprise, self-management and communication. Surprisingly, problem-solving was a lesser priority.
- ✳ **Work-based learning** also followed the pattern for the overall average, just with a more even pattern for the top three rated skills. Technology was elevated for this programme type.
- ✳ **Community-based learning** had a very different pattern, with teamwork being the strongest priority, followed by learning and communication. Planning and organising, and self-management dropped away, and both initiative and enterprise and technology were even lower priorities than in the overall average.

³ It was important to analyse according to programme type due to the uneven distribution of the programmes across type, with the majority of programmes being work-based learning and career education, so it is not surprising that these two programme types shaped the overall pattern.

According to programme focus: Table 5 has organised the data in the same order of employability skills as the overall average to assist with comparisons against that average. There are columns for the three groups of vocational learning programmes based on focus: literacy and numeracy programmes, generic employment/workplace programmes, and programmes focused on specific industries (see Table 1). The table lists average points allocated for each skill area for that programme focus, with bold text used again for skills with the highest number of points, regular text for the middle cluster of skills and *italics* for those with the lowest points.⁴

Table 5: Points for employability skills distribution by programme FOCUS

Employability skills – order for overall average	Literacy and numeracy	Employment/workplace	Specific industries
Communication - 3.8	4.3	5.4	3.0
Problem solving – 2.9	3.2	2.6	3.0
Planning and organising – 2.7	3.3	2.5	2.7
Learning – 2.4	3.2	1.2	2.7
Self-management – 2.3	1.8	2.8	2.2
Teamwork – 2.2	0.7	1.7	2.7
<i>Initiative and enterprise – 1.9</i>	1.3	2.4	1.7
<i>Technology – 1.8</i>	2.2	1.4	2.0

When the points allocated to employability skills are compared on the basis of programme **focus**, as shown in Table 5, the following patterns emerge:

- ✳ **Literacy and numeracy** programmes followed the pattern for the overall average, but with a higher loading on communication, problem solving and planning and organising. The exception was teamwork being a very low priority, while technology was stronger, possibly related to the use of computers in these programmes.
- ✳ **Generic employment/workplace** programmes had a different pattern – they were strongly concerned with communication and to a lesser degree self-management, problem-solving and planning and organising. Learning and teamwork, along with technology, were lesser priorities.

⁴ It was also important to analyse according to programme focus as the majority of programmes (41) were related to specific industries, while 17 had a generic employment/workplace focus, and six had a literacy and numeracy focus.

- ✳ **Specific industry** programmes had a more even spread across the employability skills, with communication and problem-solving, followed by teamwork, planning/organising and learning fairly equally addressed. Initiative and enterprise was a low priority.

Participants at the 2nd National Conference explained that communication, problem-solving, planning and organising, and teamwork were the skills that their young people needed the most, and were also those in which employers were most interested. They reported that employers would teach the technology skills directly, and foster self-management and initiative/enterprise skills as young people were ready. This concurs with other research into young people and vocational learning (Stokes, Stacey & Lake 2006).

Additional programme aspects to consider

Contributions to family and community through programmes

Examples of the way that vocational learning programmes contribute to Indigenous young people's family and community members were reported in six of the nine centres participating in the research. Student learning meant that they:

- ✳ gain literacy and employability skills that can assist them to gain a job and provide support for their family and community, or take up roles in the community
- ✳ grow socially and emotionally, which can assist them to interact more effectively with family and community
- ✳ could continue with programmes on release if they occur in partnership with Indigenous community agencies—this supports the work of these agencies and creates ongoing links between young people and the community (although this only appears to occur in one centre)
- ✳ learn about negative influences on their family and community, i.e. alcohol and other drug use, and how to deal with them differently or gain support
- ✳ have opportunities to strengthen their cultural awareness, knowledge and pride (if programmes have a cultural focus).

In summary, most of these contributions are about 'potential' rather than current contributions, as only two centres appeared to be actively involved in making direct links between vocational programmes and students' family and community members. Another centre, in partnership with the secure care staff, provides a range of social and cultural programmes that draw on, or bring in Indigenous community members, but they are not formally linked to vocational learning, although they are well received by young people and community members. The leadership for this work has come from the secure care staff, and education staff have supported and collaborated with this work.

Access to programmes through day release

Access to vocational learning opportunities through day release is only possible in three of the nine centres participating in the research. The other six centres do not have policies or approval processes that support this occurring, and one reported having no request from students for this option. In those centres where access is possible, it is determined by:

- ✱ individual need
- ✱ behaviour and social skills
- ✱ security level
- ✱ pre-release plans and opportunities available from education providers working with centres.

Ultimate decisions regarding day release are made by Detention Centre Directors and educational staff can only make recommendations. It appears that access is planned and monitored through case management where liaison with other providers and support services occurs as needed.

In one centre, a six-week pre-release programme is available to young people who have had a six month or longer sentence. They can be placed in the community with a job and/or education, a safe place to live and support while still officially under custody.

Indigenous community member involvement

Indigenous community member involvement in vocational learning programmes occurs in seven of the nine centres participating in the research and is in the planning stages in another centre. Involved Indigenous community members included: elders; teachers; hourly paid instructors; VET programme providers; artists in residence; and people with vocations or skills such as chefs, hairdressers, footballers and fitness trainers.

The involvement of elders was named for three centres, Indigenous teachers or VET programme providers for four centres, and one centre had an Aboriginal Liaison Officer who could employ community members to run specific short-term programmes. There was a mix of both paid and volunteer time, e.g. teachers and programme providers were paid, but elders or other community members frequently volunteered their time.

In terms of the type of involvement, six centres indicated that Indigenous community members were involved in cultural knowledge and awareness programmes, while one centre also identified community projects or celebrations, and two others listed several or many vocational learning programmes that they offer. In most centres community members attend as the teacher or facilitator of specific programmes (with one centre seeking out accreditation options for this teaching wherever possible if the

person is not a regular member of staff). In some situations they are involved as mentors.

The main reasons that centres gave for organising Indigenous community member involvement included the following (most centres provided at least two reasons):

- ✧ supporting or re-establishing links with home communities (three centres)
- ✧ following centre policy (three centres)
- ✧ providing role models and mentors for the Indigenous young people (three centres)
- ✧ increasing cultural relevance (three centres)

Centres also mentioned that involvement provided financial remuneration for the community member and was based on a general interest in and commitment to helping young people.

Pathways to continue vocational learning in the community

Clear pathways to continue vocational learning in the community exist in seven centres, but one centre reported that pathways are complicated for remote communities by access barriers. Most centres have transition programmes and plans. Some have specific centre or community Transition Officers, case workers or an Aboriginal Liaison Officer, while others draw on Aboriginal Education Officers, Job Placement, Employment and Training workers (JPET), TAFE Vocational Officers or Indigenous student support centres. Four centres specifically mentioned the involvement of mentors and one centre identified 'wrap around' case management as the approach.

Despite Indigenous young people being 42% of the juvenile detention centre population on average, and much higher for some centres, in most instances these pathways are the same as those available to non-Indigenous young people. The three main pathways identified were as follows, while Indigenous-specific education providers were only mentioned on one occasion:

- ✧ direct to employers/industry
- ✧ through employment brokers, including JPET
- ✧ via a range of other registered training organisations or secondary school providers, including TAFE and community education groups.

The work to support young people's transition back to the community occurs prior to release and may involve some or extensive liaison with family/community members and the receiving organisations. In some instances this may include regional youth workers who provide ongoing support to young people once back in the community. In order to improve the outcomes of their existing transition options, one centre reported that it was developing a more intensively supported transitions programme.

Young people's interview outcomes

The interview guide for young people addressed six areas that were named in the following way:

- ✱ **Area 1:** Young people's experiences of programmes at their centres
- ✱ **Area 2:** Jobs in the future
- ✱ **Area 3:** Personal goals
- ✱ **Area 4:** Contributions to community
- ✱ **Area 5:** Building your skills up
- ✱ **Area 6:** Learning experiences before the centre

Area 1: Young people's experiences of programmes at their centres

In total, young people named 84 vocational learning programmes, or components of programmes, available across seven centres and eight locations (SA had two locations). They were asked to do three things in relation to each programme named:

1. Rate what they thought of these programmes on a four point scale with the following options: Terrible, OK, Good and Deadly.
2. Explain why they rated the programme in this way.
3. Describe what they got out of these programmes.

Programme ratings

When the ratings on all programmes are combined, the average outcomes were:

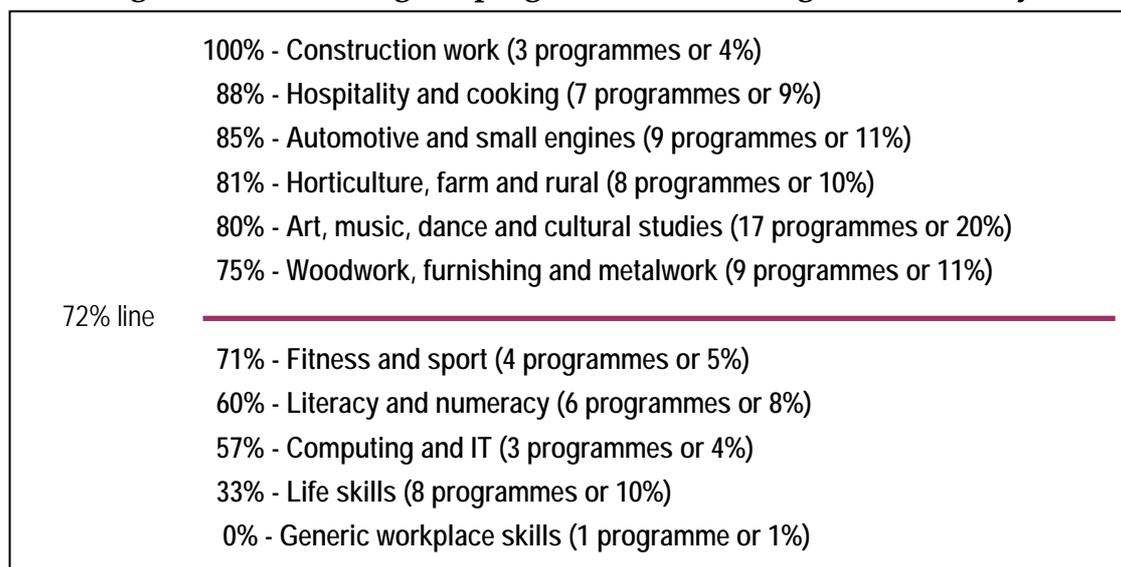
- ✱ Terrible – 5%
- ✱ OK – 23%
- ✱ Good – 40%
- ✱ Deadly – 32%

Therefore, programmes that young people considered 'good' or 'deadly' totalled 72%. This provided a benchmark against which programmes could be compared when they were grouped according to the primary focus of the programme content. Figure 12 indicates which programmes fell above and below the 72% benchmark—68% of all available programmes were above the line

It appears that young people thought more highly of programmes with specific vocational content (56 of the programmes or 67%) compared to those with more general content (19 or 23%). Nine (11%) were not easily grouped but they were evenly

distributed either side of the benchmark. The next section on young people's descriptions of the experience and value of programmes provides a better understanding of the reasons the specific vocational programmes were held in higher esteem.

Figure 12: Percentage of programmes rated as 'good' or 'deadly'



Experience and value of programmes

Eight themes stood out when young people described their experiences of programmes and what they gained from them—the first six for their presence and the last two for their relative absence:

- ✧ **Theme 1:** Gain qualifications and prepare for future work
- ✧ **Theme 2:** Get valuable experiences and skills
- ✧ **Theme 3:** Doing hands-on and real activities that may create real products
- ✧ **Theme 4:** Activities involve relaxation, enjoyment, freedom and/or being outside
- ✧ **Theme 5:** Activities have a cultural focus
- ✧ **Theme 6:** Activities are fun
- ✧ **Theme 7:** Good teaching experience
- ✧ **Theme 8:** Activities facilitate a connection to family and community

Although the young people did say different things about the reason for the rating and what they got out of programmes, they were often similar or related, so their answers to these two questions are addressed together under the eight themes.

Theme 1: Gain qualifications and prepare for future work

This theme emerged across 26 programmes (31%); most were industry-related while three were focused on literacy and one focused on general employment/workplace

skills. Young people explained how activities they undertook in the programme would help them to get a job or assist them in the workplace, and identified specific skills that related to a job or vocation. However, this was not always confined to the industry-specific skills or programmes, as they also commented on learning about OH&S to keep them “safe in the workplace”, or that they “need to read and write for work”. They commonly stated that they would gain certificates that are recognised in the workplace, and this was perceived as valuable: “[we need to] get as many certificates as we can”.

On occasions young people made more definite statements about how they would or could go into the vocational area when they left the detention centre, and that they believed they could make money through doing this, for example:

“I will do woodwork when I get out.”

“If I get good I could make a living, [it’s an] opportunity to make money from digital [art] stuff.”

“I want to be a mechanic”

“I like getting involved in that type of work (metal and woodwork)”

Another aspect of this theme was young people’s comments about being exposed to different things, which could “help you choose jobs” or be “good for when we get out” as an option to consider as you could “do it on the outside”.

Theme 2: Get valuable experiences and skills

This theme emerged across 19 programmes (23%); again, most were industry-related, three were literacy/numeracy programmes and one focused on general employment/workplace skills. Young people were generally very interested in doing activities that gave them useful experiences and skills for their future life, although not necessarily because it contributed to a qualification or future work opportunity. The emphasis in this theme was on the idea that they were being **exposed** to different things, and it was “good to learn things” and try activities they had not experienced before. There were comments about:

- ✳ **everyday life skills** such as learning how to cook and/or clean, work in teams, budget and save, read and write, and about hygiene and fitness—the focus of programmes mentioned was usually food/hospitality, literacy, art or horticulture, or hands-on or outside activities
- ✳ **generic skills** that could apply across work and personal life, such as using computers, different garden or mechanical tools, and measuring
- ✳ **specific skills** in a vocational or personal hobby area, such as drawing and painting.

One young person described this as developing “pride in self, [knowing you are] not a deadbeat”. Another young person stated that doing art “fills your personality out”, suggesting that it made you a more rounded person who was open to things in life. In

general, young people either stated or were inferring that activities focused on useful experiences and skills helped them develop “independence” and “confidence”.

Theme 3: Doing hands-on and real activities that may create real products

This theme emerged across 16 programmes (19%), all of which were industry-related, including a cultural studies programme. Although this theme was linked to the first two, and often related to similar programmes, it was distinguished by the focus on practical activities with concrete outcomes. It was clear that popular and valued programmes were those in which young people undertook practical activities and produced tangible or “useful” products. These were predominantly industry-related programmes.

Young people commented on the range of specific products they made, which varied from milkshakes, to pots, furniture, CDs or songs, and clothes. They specifically identified products they could take with them, or how they developed skills to undertake useful tasks that were relevant to their lives beyond the detention centre in either work or leisure, e.g. “learn how to fix a motor, strip and put parts back together”; “learnt to write and play our own songs”.

Theme 4: Activities involve relaxation, enjoyment, freedom and/or being outside

This theme emerged across 11 programmes (13%), all of which were industry-related, including a cultural studies programme. They mostly related to art/culture, cooking and horticulture or outside activities where young people were “out in the fresh air”. This theme occurred less frequently, but programmes that created opportunities for young people to be relaxed and experience a sense of freedom were clearly valued. These programmes may be related to the young people enjoying them or having the opportunity to be outside with some freedom of movement.

Theme 5: Activities have a cultural focus

A few programmes (8 or 10%) had a specific cultural focus for Indigenous young people. Young people’s comments on these programmes included being proud of their culture or of doing cultural things, being “encouraged to learn about their culture”, and general enjoyment: “Its good to do cultural things”; “I just like being part of and doing stuff when it’s these weeks [NAIDOC and Reconciliation weeks]”. It is these programmes that are most likely to involve Indigenous staff (internal or external), so it is also an opportunity for young people to have direct connection with community members.

Theme 6: Activities are fun

An obvious, yet highly important element of programmes was whether they were perceived as fun. Young people referred to programmes being their “favourite”, “good fun” or “I just like it”. A few were more descriptive, e.g. “I love writing songs, rap music. I like performing”. This theme emerged across a variety of industry-related

programmes, including art and music (15 in total or 18%); no literacy, numeracy or generic employment/workplace programmes were described as fun. This indicates that there is a fit with young people's personal interests or possibly that the staff who taught them created fun within them (although this was not explicitly stated).

Theme 7: Good teaching experience

This was a small theme that only emerged on four occasions in relation to four different programmes that were mostly rated as good or deadly. For example, a music teacher was described as a "good teacher". A young person in a literacy/numeracy programme commented that the teacher "encourages me" and another in a metalwork programme said "it encourages me ... it helps me to get a job". A different young person from another centre explained that they were "approached by the teacher to become involved" in an IT programme, and they appreciated this. Another group of young men doing a small engines course reported that the "teacher always asks what we want to do".

This theme is significant in its absence from young people's commentary. However, as young people were asked a very general question—why did you rate the programme that way—they were not specifically directed to comment on the teacher or facilitator's approach or their relationship with them. The interest was in seeing what young people would name without being led in this research—this would need to be specifically targeted in any programme evaluation that occurs.

Theme 8: Activities facilitate a connection to family and community

This theme is also significant for its absence, which may be for the same reasons as Theme 7, as it only occurred once when a young person said they were able to "make things for my family" in a furniture course. However, in Area 4, young people were specifically asked about the opportunities programmes provided for them to contribute to their family and community, or what they hoped they could contribute in the future, so this theme is discussed in more detail there.

Ideas about change and improvement

Although young people appeared to be generally positive about programmes, they identified several areas that would improve the programmes and their experience of them, which can be grouped as follows:

- ✳ **Teacher approach:** In one centre there were comments that "teachers need to lay off and be honest". They need to "give us some space and be fair", although this was not elaborated on.
- ✳ **Appropriateness:** This came up in relation to programmes with a cultural studies or life skills focus. In one centre they wanted an Aboriginal teacher who could "teach us some spiritual stuff about paintings". Another young person from the same centre said he "would like to learn more about my culture though...my lingo and dances and all that", meaning where his region was rather than the

areas surrounding or close to the detention centre. In life skills programmes, young people commented on the lack of relevance and contemporary nature of the content and resources/videos. One group explained that they needed to learn how to fill out forms, which linked to literacy and numeracy in a practical way.

- ✳ **Student/teacher ratios:** In one centre, young people expressed frustration at needing to wait for help from teachers, so they wanted better teacher/student ratios or additional support staff available in the room.
- ✳ **Greater variety within programmes:** This related to the tasks undertaken, the type of equipment young people could use or the range of skills learned. It also referred to avoiding very repetitive activities. It came up across a number of different programmes: music, horticulture, automotive/small engines and rural studies.
- ✳ **Different locations:** Two other suggestions were about where young people did programmes, e.g. doing art outside of the classroom, or taking music they record back into “section” to help with writing songs.
- ✳ **More practical opportunities:** It appeared that young people wanted more opportunities to do active and hands-on programmes, such as sport, arts/culture, music and a number of the industry-related programmes, e.g. woodwork, farm work, automotive/mechanics, and programmes leading to licences for operating machinery.

Getting into programmes and ease of taking part

The majority of young people (78%) reported that it was easy to get into programmes, although a few also noted that there was a proviso—“if you behave yourself”. In three centres it was stated that it was easy to get into programmes they wanted. The 22% who indicated it was hard, experienced some frustration at having to wait to access their chosen programme, although they appeared to understand why this occurred, e.g. it was already full or they needed to wait until someone was “kicked out” of the programme.

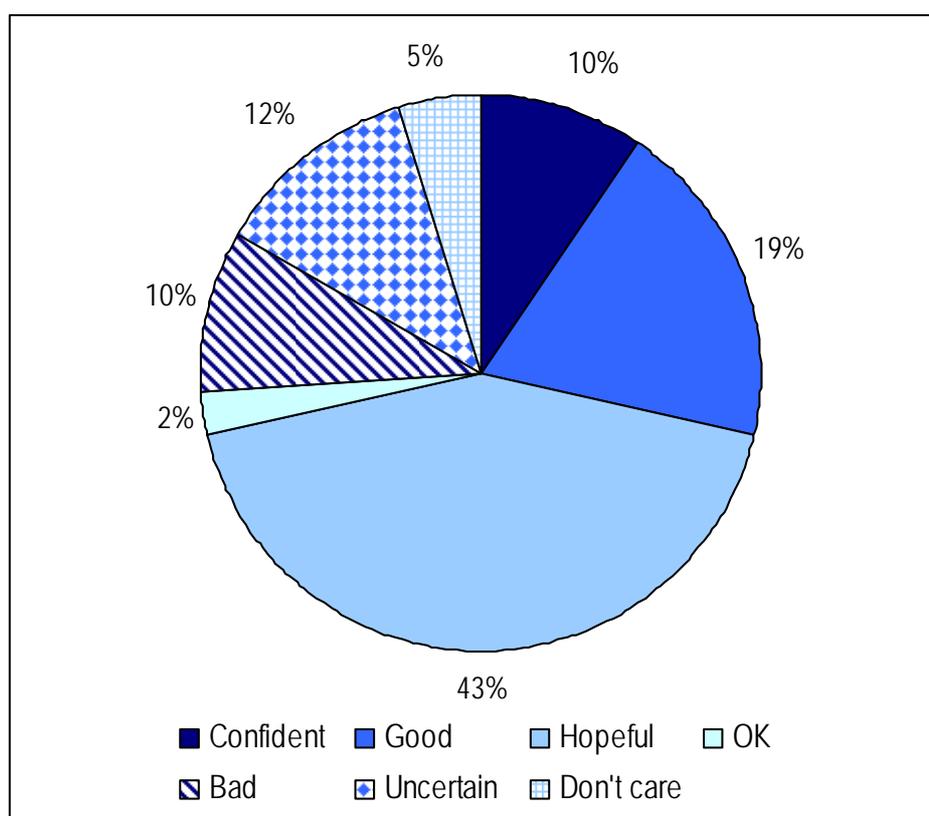
Over 93% of the young people indicated that it was also easy to take part in programmes once they accessed them, which could be read as an indication of how young people were included by teachers/facilitators. It appeared that some programmes were perceived as easier to participate in, such as sport/gym, cultural studies and programmes run outside.

One young person spoke to the irony of these young people’s educational experiences: “I like them all [the programmes at the centre], good facilities. You only get these facilities at school on the outside but I wouldn't attend school on the outside”.

Area 2: Jobs in the future

Young people were asked about their job prospects, and what having a job meant to them. When asked about their job prospects, the majority of young people interviewed (72%) were positive—see Figure 13. A handful (10%) were confident, in part because they reported that they already had a job, while 19% believed their prospects were good and 43% were hopeful and positive about job prospects. Only 10% were sure that their prospects were bad (they were all from the one centre) with 12% being uncertain and just 5% reporting that they did not care.

Figure 13: Responses to ‘What do you think your job prospects are?’



Most of the jobs that young people wanted or believed they would get were skilled trades requiring an apprenticeship, e.g. hospitality, horticulture, landscaping, carpentry, diesel fitter, mechanic, panel beating or hairstyling. Alternatively, they were labouring and hands-on industry jobs that may or may not require qualifications, e.g. fishing, cattle station work (ringer), local government work, bricklaying, working in the mines or painting (artistically). On rare occasions, human and community service jobs were named, e.g. youth worker, working with old people.

The young people provided a variety of meanings for having a job, with the eight highest ranked meanings listed in Table 6. At times young people described more than one meaning, so the percentages represented the number of times the meaning emerged in responses, rather than a percentage of the total meanings.

The most consistent and frequent meaning was having the capacity to provide for themselves and/or their families as they would earn money to buy things they needed or wanted. Several young people simply stated it was “important” to them or they wanted to get “work that I really want or like to do”. A few mentioned that it would help keep them out of trouble, enable them to look after their family or be “something to do”. Very few young people said that they did not care about being employed, while the idea of pride and reputation emerged occasionally. Five other meanings were identified on one occasion each, including: being able to care for myself, saving money, meeting new friends, being a good role model, and being on CDEP.

Table 6: Responses to ‘What does having a job mean to you?’

Meaning	Ranking (%)
Being able to provide for myself and/or have money to buy things, e.g. a car, a house, a mobile phone, clothes	1 (43%)
It’s important/It means a lot/do something I want to do	2 (21%)
Keeps me out of trouble	3 (14%)
Looking after family	4 (10%)
It’s something to do	5 (7%)
It’s good for my reputation	6 (5%)
Pride of self or family being proud of them	6 (5%)
Don’t care	6 (5%)

Here are several anecdotes from different young people about how they felt about getting a job and what being employed meant to them.

A ‘good’ story: A 16-year-old young man from a remote community thought he had a good chance of getting work. He had repeatedly offended, bringing him into the centre on several short-term stays. He believed that “if I’m working I’ll keep out of trouble”. It meant that he would be “saving for a car” and enable his three friends (or relatives), all young men, “to get a unit together”.

A ‘hopeful’ story: A group of three young men aged 17–18 years from a rural area were interviewed together and said “We want a job”, suggesting that they may work in the abattoirs, fishing, plumbing or with Shires/local government. These options reflected their local industrial or work connections, although they were not sure how to access opportunities in these areas. These young men suggested that if they were employed it meant they could “show my family what I could do”, “be a good Father role [model]” and “have money - not have to steal to get drugs”. The interviewer commented that all young men were keen to find work. One had actively been job hunting and although unsuccessful was still positive about finding a job. They all confirmed that stealing to obtain money to

purchase drugs had been a big part of their lives in recent years, but believed that employment would most probably break this cycle of offending.

A 'hopeful' story: Two young men aged 16–17 years from an urban area gave these responses: "I'd like to be cabinet maker, mechanic or work in mines" and "I can get a job". They thought that being employed would "be really good", as they would "be able to go to the pub and pay bills". It also meant they would "have more responsibility and keep out of trouble". The interviewer commented that these young men were responding to the training at the centre quite positively but had limited knowledge on how to go about finding work in the 'big city'. They appeared to have higher expectations about possible jobs than young people from rural areas and think more about trades or mining industries, however, were unsure how to make this happen.

An 'uncertain' story: A 15-year-old young man from an urban area said "Yeah! I don't know ... bricklaying". Being employed "meant a lot". It was about "money", "pride" and "getting on" in life. He had experienced two weeks of work at a restaurant chain where he was paid a very small wage, and had previously worked with a relative "helping out" painting. He definitely wanted a job but "I don't want to be a dish pig". He said he would take "pride in having a job – never thought I'd make it roaming the streets, doing stupid stuff". He showed some confidence in himself, as he described himself as "multi-talented" and also suggested he "would like to do hairstyling" or "maybe a youth worker". Being employed also meant "I do my own stuff outside, pride instead of thinking I'm a dead beat. Fix things for your family. Sell shit at the markets".

A 'bad' story: Another group of 16–17-year-old young men thought their prospects were "bad". They explained that a "criminal record stops you" and there is "high unemployment" in their home areas. Despite this, they believed that having a job helped you "learn how to support yourself", provided a number of essential items such as "security, food, power, and rent money". They also suggested it was a way to "meet new friends", it "stops boredom" because you are "doing something" and that can "stop you from doing crime".

These stories indicate that a high proportion of the young people had hopes and intentions of being employed, even if they were not sure of the process of making that happen. Despite what they thought of their prospects, employment was meaningful in their lives—they wanted the opportunity to experience it. On most occasions Indigenous young people were starting from a positive place, although the reality is that they are likely to experience racism in their efforts to obtain work. Therefore, transition and post-release programmes are important vehicles through which education centres in juvenile detention centres can help improve Indigenous young people's pathway to further training, and help circumvent the racism prevalent in the employment marketplace.

Area 3: Personal goals

Young people were also invited to talk about personal goals for their lives. This was an open question that was not tied to vocations or jobs. The top six ranked goals are listed in Table 7. Having a job, trade or career was the most common, occurring 76%

of the time. Looking after family and children, as well as playing sports were also both popular goals. Fewer young people identified that they wanted to continue or finish their education, and a handful identified the importance of staying out of trouble and being able to provide for themselves. It is important to note that although keeping out of trouble was not explicitly or frequently named by the young people, the goals that young people did have implied that they would need to keep away from trouble in order to pursue them.

Several other goals were named two or three times, and included: having a house/good accommodation, quitting drugs, getting a driver's licence, getting seriously involved in arts or music, being able to travel and saving money. One young person wanted to help others and another wanted to have a good relationship. Only two young people said that they had no goals.

Table 7: Young people's personal goals for their lives

Personal goal	Ranking (%)
Have a job, trade or a career	1 (76%)
Look after family/children/parents	2 (29%)
Play sports	2 (29%)
Continue/finish my education	3 (21%)
Stay out of trouble	4 (10%)
Provide for myself–have money to buy things	4 (10%)

One centre noted a sharp difference between the responses based on gender, as they interviewed three young women (the only ones in the sample) and 11 young men. All of the young women indicated that they wanted to work and get training, and provided a broad range of personal goals that covered many of the areas listed above. The interviewers reported, "The girls' responses were noticeably different to the boys. They saw a bigger picture across their own lives, their families and their own children. They saw professional careers, travel, social work and material things. The girls' needs and aspirations were very different to the boys". They were strong on the importance of having and looking after a family.

Area 4: Contributions to community

The young people were asked if the vocational programmes at the centre enabled them to contribute to their community. Young people in three centres (28 or 56% of those interviewed) reported that they were able to maintain a connection to community through vocational learning programmes.

These young people described how this happened, which included through day release programmes, and involved: sport; CDEP; working at a local drop-in centre or youth centre, as well as day care and nursing homes; assisting in local schools; mowing lawns and chopping firewood for community members; making things for the centre that benefited other young people there; catering for functions; and participating in art exhibitions. In one detention centre young people are able to maintain a connection to community through structured programmes that involve family, elders and other community members.

Where this was not possible, young people were asked how they would like to contribute to their community. Those young people who already made some contribution also talked about the ways they hoped to contribute in the future. The majority of young people aspired to contribute positively to family and community through utilising their skills gained through the vocational learning programmes. They particularly identified an interest in voluntary work, using their new skills to create, construct and fix things, and to undertake community service work within their own community, e.g. "I could go out and trim trees for people, especially elderly people in the community". Playing sport was also identified as a way of contributing in a positive manner.

Some young people aspired to formally and informally pass on their new vocational skills to other young people in the community, e.g. initiate a course and teach the same skills to family members and the community (such as art), or assist people to work on and fix lawn mowers, cars and other equipment. On a few occasions, young people identified the direct link between levels of crime and community safety, and talked about creating a "safe place" to help and contribute to the community. They also identified the importance of connecting with other young people in the community as a role model to assist them in accessing help, counselling and support where needed. In relation to safety, they specifically highlighted the need to:

- ✱ stop crime
- ✱ "stay out of trouble"
- ✱ personally stop stealing and help others not to steal
- ✱ look out for family
- ✱ help young people get away from drugs
- ✱ "keep all young fellas off the street ... especially at night time".

Area 5: Building your skills up

Young people were asked what skills they had and how they wanted to strengthen them, i.e. through vocational learning. The majority of young people identified the inter-connection between personal skills and abilities, education and employment. In response to this more specific question about education, they articulated a desire to continue to learn and gain further vocational skills, education and training that was not strongly apparent in their response to the personal goals question.

The young people recognised the importance of having good personal communication skills, particularly listening and speaking, as well as organisational skills and demonstrating personal commitment. Their descriptions can be categorised as follows:

- ✦ **Work ethic principles:** attend classes, be punctual, practice every day, strive for improvement and engage with safe work practices.
- ✦ **Personal values:** show initiative, be responsible, have patience, show and gain respect, gain trust, pay attention and observe others, particularly elders.

Some young people highlighted the importance of doing more of the certificate level work both inside and outside detention centres, particularly to improve on literacy and maintain the skills gained in vocational learning programmes. A few indicated that they wanted access to more Certificate II and III courses and specified skills development in art and sport. Others identified that their skills would be strengthened by continuing their formal education, particularly secondary school, to improve on literacy and numeracy skills. A few others aspired to contribute to the community with a desire to help others and be more co-operative—this linked with their responses to questions in Area 4.

There was also acknowledgment of skills learned through the vocational learning programmes which would enhance their ability to gain employment if they had the opportunity to practice them more often and strengthen them. A variety of practical, vocation-based skills were identified that linked to many of their existing options, including: irrigation, tiling, bricking, plumbing, cleaning, animal husbandry, mechanics, bike maintenance, welding, art, carpentry, horticulture, gardening, landscaping, food and hospitality, building and construction, computing, woodwork, sport, music, reading and writing.

Area 6: Learning experiences before the centre

As some of the young people may have experienced vocational learning prior to being at the detention centre, they were asked about their experiences. Those who did not have any previous experience with vocational learning were asked if they would have appreciated this and what difference it may have made to them. For young people who were 14 years or younger, any vocational learning they did would not have been credited toward a certificate, so the focus was not on accreditation but, rather, on the learning experience.

Twenty-two young people (44%) had done some form of vocational learning in the period before their current detention, or before their earlier detentions if they had been at the centre several times. The programmes varied greatly from woodwork, metalwork, home economics, art or horticulture undertaken through schools, or school-TAFE collaborations, through to workplace-based mechanic programmes, community centre art programmes, bricklaying schools and work experience or paid work opportunities.

Over 73% reported that they thought these programmes were good and/or enjoyable, others noted that they gained specific skills, while there were only two reports of the programme being boring or unsatisfactory. On occasions young people commented on the better student/teacher ratio in the vocational learning programmes at the centre, e.g. “I enjoyed it [the previous program] ... [but] in [this centre] you get more of the teacher to yourself”; The previous programme was “alright, lots of children in the class”.

Most programmes were available through school (32%), some through workplaces (27%) and a few directly at TAFE (14%) or through a community organisation (14%). Reasons for getting involved varied significantly, from being a personal choice, possibly with encouragement from friends or family (32%), through to a subject choice at school (23%). Other reasons included the following: it was a core school subject, it contributed toward a VET course, it was a court-ordered requirement, it happened through work experience, or one young person was approached by the employer and offered a job.

Of those young people who did not have these experiences, 61% clearly indicated that they would have liked an opportunity to do these types of programmes (some young people did not answer this question). A couple of young people who did some vocational learning wanted further opportunities or access to different programmes. However, they were not all certain that this would have influenced whether they went to a detention centre. Seven were confident it would have kept them out of trouble, as they would have stayed with the course, got work through it and it would have given them something to focus upon. Another seven were not sure, or answered “maybe”, while six believed it probably would not have made a difference.

The following two stories illustrate the different opinions of young people on this matter.

‘No difference’ story: A 15-year-old young man who didn’t have the opportunity to do any vocational learning in his previous schooling, but would have liked to, was not convinced it would have stopped him from ending up in detention: “Nah... not really... probably not do crime when I get out though...when I get out I will just go for my goals”. The interviewer said he was really interested in the interview and realises from the experience of being in detention that he needs to set goals and get a job – he wants to continue on with the Certificate I in Engineering.

‘Would make a difference’ story: A 16-year-old young man reported that “at school we had TAFE courses there. I did Art...it was a good Art program”. This opportunity was available because “we had some people from TAFE come in. I signed up with them. You didn’t have to go to the TAFE, could do it at school”. However, despite having this opportunity and enjoying it, he explained that “the course I wanted to go to [DJ course] wasn’t offered because it wasn’t done in my area. If they had it I would have done it. If I had a chance to do it, I wouldn’t end up in here...would have kept me busy, a hobby sort of thing”.

There are many things that shape whether Indigenous young people go to a detention centre, of which their educational experience is one. However, these outcomes lend

some support to thinking that more appropriate vocational learning options within mainstream schooling could make a positive contribution to preventing or reducing young people's involvement in offending behaviour. Further, combined with the outcomes in the above areas, they also suggest that vocational learning opportunities within detention could circumvent an entrenched pattern of offending and detention.

Family and community member consultations

The Indigenous members of the main research team undertook the family and community member consultations and personally visited the two centres involved. This occurred as ‘insiders’ due to familiarity with the process and experience of detention, having witnessed family members’ involvement with juvenile justice, and having personally and professionally supported young people in detention and their family members. In choosing to support this research project, we had stated that:

“We have a personal and professional commitment to addressing this area by supporting our Indigenous young people to believe in themselves and their people, to take up their family and cultural responsibilities, and to manage the challenge of living in both their own cultures and the dominant cultures. We understand that it is this challenge that has contributed to Indigenous young people ending up in detention – a positive experience with culturally relevant education can significantly contribute to creating a sense of future and alternative possibilities for them.

Therefore, this project is one that we take on as a personal commitment to our young people. For some they are our nephews, nieces, cousins, brothers and sisters. They are more than subjects to us because some of them will become leaders within our communities.”

In writing up this section of the report we will draw on the discussions we held with the ‘participants’ in the family and community member consultations, and our observations of the two centres, combined with our experience over time as members of the families and communities whose young people have been in detention.

Family and community in the lives of Indigenous young people

Aboriginal cultures and Torres Strait Islander cultures are complex and diverse, but there is a shared belief that the family is the core unit that reflects the wider beliefs of the community. To provide culturally sensitive services or undertake culturally appropriate research, activities must reflect the same values and beliefs as the culture itself, and therefore be built on the foundation that family is core business.

In Indigenous families, members depend on one another for emotional, psychological and financial support. Indigenous family structure is built on cultural values that reflect a system of cooperation, support and request that members depend on for a sense of identity and belonging. Kinship and extended family relationships are highly valued and regarded as family. Grandparents, aunts and uncles are highly respected as having authority over and support for family members, playing specific roles in children’s lives. Therefore, the advice of grandparents, uncles or aunts is considered valuable, they are often consulted on important family matters, and assist in taking financial care of family responsibilities. Indigenous family members place a high

priority on dependence on, loyalty to, and solidarity with the family and kin group. This continues to be practiced while a young person is in detention.

Perspectives from the family and community member consultations

All participants were generally very positive about the programmes and staff involved with the education centres. Participants who had involvement with education centre staff and students through their work roles reported good working relationships at two levels:

- ✧ between themselves as workers and education staff
- ✧ between education staff and young people, as they felt that the young people were respected and valued.

Through the consultations, it was possible to determine how familiar participants were with vocational learning programmes, whether and how they were actively involved in them, and their opinions of them.

Familiarity with vocational learning programmes

Regardless of their level of involvement with the education centre, as family members and/or workers, participants knew very little about the specific vocational learning programmes that were available to young people. Some people who were, or had been workers knew about a few of the options. There was a stronger focus on noticing relationships, people and products. This related to questions such as: How is my young person going to be treated? Who is looking out for them? What have they created that I can show other family and community members?

Family members talked about how their young person was 'feeling' about what they were doing while in detention and what they had achieved through the programmes, i.e. things they had built or created, or gifts they had made for family members. They knew about young people's experiences and achievements through their direct relationships and conversations with their young people, not through dialogue with education staff. 'Products' were important because they shared the feelings of pride and achievement with their young people, and could show other family and community members what they had achieved.

Family members were keen for their young people to have the opportunity to continue with these activities beyond detention, but were not clear on what the realistic options were for this to occur. They were well aware that one of the major challenges to this was all the invitations that young people would face to return to the situations that had taken them into detention. The priority conversation when young people leave detention is how they might stay out of trouble, not how they may continue any education/vocational learning programmes that they had done while in detention. Education was not viewed as an obvious part of a rehabilitation pathway.

Active involvement with vocational learning programmes

There was little evidence that participants had direct and active involvement in vocational learning programmes or were conscious that this was what they were being invited to, or needed to do. Where involvement occurs, it was usually with the detention centre as a whole, not the education centre specifically. There were three main ways this involvement occurred.

One way was through invitations to participate in culturally focused annual events such as Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week.

The second way was through invitations to participate in other cultural events and activities facilitated by the centres, which may occur as a partnership between the detention and education staff or facilitated by one or the other. For example, one centre had a dedicated detention centre employee whose role was to facilitate connections between communities and young people through a range of culturally focused activities, or community events that occur in the centre, e.g. fortnightly barbeques, monthly visits from different elders groups around the state, and art exhibitions.

The third way was through requests to assist in responding to crisis situations within the detention centre, e.g. mediation, conflict resolution and advice.

There were a few examples of elders being invited to sit in on education centre classes, which had a positive effect on young people's behaviour. It brought a calming influence into the room as the young people treated the elders with respect.

Observations within the centres

The 'culture of the space'

Education centres within juvenile detention centres do not always have control over the space in which they are required to operate – they usually inherit it. A handful of detention centres in Australia have been more recently built and the place of education has been considered. The contrast between these two scenarios in terms of the 'culture of the space' was observed in the education centres involved in this aspect of the research.

The culture of the detention centre appeared to be reflected in the nature of the space within these detention centres. Both education centres offered a range of relevant and interesting vocational learning programmes coupled with standard school curriculum directed to young people's educational levels.

One did this in a space that reflected restriction and mustiness because it was closed in, cramped, poorly maintained, lacked adequate internal or external open spaces, had few trees and plants, had dark or dull colours and the air of an 'old institution'. Detention staff were generally disengaged from the educational programmes, remaining within their security, surveillance and control role. The culture of this

space reinforced an over-arching deficit-based model with a focus on punishment. This environment is not conducive to learning in general, or vocational learning in particular, which focuses on strengthening and rewarding skills, attitudes, efforts and achievements that lead to specific competencies. It creates additional barriers for staff to overcome in trying to engage young people with vocational learning and build positive relationships.

The other centre offered programmes in a space that reflected openness and movement through the availability of open spaces, buildings that resembled a high school organisation rather than a prison, access to a gym, a large courtyard and grassed areas, trees and plants, light pleasant colours, and a well-kept environment. Although for security reasons, detention staff always accompanied young people as they moved between the spread-out locations, they appeared to be more engaged and interactive in the education programmes with teachers and students, while still monitoring and managing behaviour. The culture of this space reinforced a rehabilitation model with a focus on acknowledging positive behaviour and new skills. It was more conducive and complementary to the vocational learning programmes being offered, and the efforts of education staff to engage young people with them.

Community presence

It was obvious from the other aspects of this research that the presence of community members was important as a strategy for improving vocational learning programmes and outcomes for young people. The centre visits and observations reinforced that this is vital for young people's general wellbeing and connection to cultural identity, family and community, not just their engagement with education. For example, young people at the centre with the regular elder visiting programme were visibly excited and happy. They were animated and respectful in their interactions with elders. The elders involved reported feeling welcomed and looked after by detention and education centre staff, as well as young people.

In fact, Indigenous young people who did not know the Indigenous members of the research team responded positively to their presence and sought out an opportunity to interact with them. It is hard to fully describe the responses of the young people when community members were present and the exchanges that took place—verbal and non-verbal, but it reflected a lifting of their spirit and an acknowledgement of their identity.

Making a difference: Indigenous people's presence and roles within partnerships

This aspect of the research highlighted that partnerships are being under-utilised or are being talked about more than being lived, particularly in relation to the presence and role of Indigenous people within them. It is important to acknowledge that direct relationships between education staff and young people's family and community members is complicated by the detention system's requirements about how contact is

made, with whom and on what basis. Yet, there are also ways to overcome this through a community development approach that is based on creating a strong partnership between detention and education centre staff at all levels of the hierarchy, and supported by dedicated positions within the centre.

There is an opportunity for education centres to facilitate partnerships within their departments with units which have a mandate or dedicated focus on Indigenous young people's education, but this is also under-utilised. This missed opportunity may assist education centres to develop partnership with agencies or groups beyond the education department which are linked with the Indigenous education unit.

Finally, although partnerships between agencies and the Indigenous community have not always been straightforward, there have been some significant developments in this area. Partnerships are more effective if they involve Indigenous community members—who are not workers within the specific agencies—in planning, design, implementation, delivery and evaluation of services to Indigenous young people. These partnerships move the focus away from working in silos and from agency policies, to what makes a 'lived difference' to young people and their family members, both within and beyond detention. This focus should be the glue that binds agencies together and result in better outcomes for Indigenous young people.

Putting the picture together

This project aimed to develop greater understanding about how Indigenous young people in juvenile detention can best relate to vocational information, develop vocational skills, and experience the world of work. This needed to be based on a mapping of the vocational learning options currently available to them, young people's experiences of them, and the views of significant people in their lives, including family and community members, and the staff of education centres and partner agencies who participated in the national conferences.

The outcomes of all research activities were reviewed and analysed by the main research team, and the participants at the national conferences. Through this process we have identified areas of learning and areas for potential and recommended action. This section first outlines what has been learnt, then describes the possible areas of action. Specific recommendations based on the research are provided in the next section.

What did we learn?

Relevance and value of vocational learning

Many Indigenous young people willingly took this unique opportunity to express personal opinions about their educational experiences by engaging in the research interviews. They represented over 26% of the population of Indigenous young people in the seven participating juvenile detention centres at the time. Their responses indicated that they value and like many of the vocational learning programmes currently available to them, with 72% rating these programmes as 'good' or 'deadly.'

There were several aspects of vocational learning that young people appreciated and that assisted them to engage positively in education while in detention. Those interviewed appreciated the opportunity to:

- ✳ gain qualifications and prepare for future work, as young people spontaneously commented on the links between vocational learning and future employment options. The design advantage of vocational learning is that it allows young people to gain certificates and acknowledgement for achievements in competencies along the way, which are transferable and contribute to a larger accredited certificate
- ✳ get valuable experiences and skills that: 1) may or may not relate to work, and 2) focus on everyday life skills or generic skills that are useful in both work and personal life, as well as specific skills in a vocational or personal hobby area
- ✳ have a stronger focus on 'hands-on' learning and 'real life' activities that occurred in vocational learning programmes related to industry areas, rather than literacy and numeracy or generic employment/ workplace skills

- ✱ undertake activities provided by some vocational learning programmes that were relaxing, enjoyable, had a sense of freedom and occurred outside
- ✱ participate in activities with a cultural focus when this is possible, which is relatively limited at present
- ✱ participate in activities they perceived as fun.

The programmes that were most successful at incorporating two or more of these aspects of learning were the industry-related programmes (see Figure 12). It appeared that literacy and numeracy tasks, along with generic employment/workplace knowledge and skills were incorporated into these programmes, e.g. occupational health and safety, and were better received as they occurred 'in context' and had real world applications. This suggests that it would be wise to increasingly embed these areas within industry-related programmes.

Further, the programme mapping indicated that these programmes had a more even focus on the eight employability skills, with slightly stronger emphases on teamwork, problem-solving, communication, and planning and organising. These are areas that employers particularly value and seek out in young employees. Therefore, involvement in these programmes meets a number of needs or priorities for young people, educational staff and future employers.

Positive learning experiences are both a need and a priority for Indigenous young people to develop to their full potential, particularly given their frequently poor educational experiences prior to detention. The International Youth Foundation defined desired outcomes for effective youth development programmes in their '5 C's' model as confidence, character, connection, competence and contribution (Golombek 2002):

- ✱ **Confidence** involves the development of a sense of self worth, mastery and progress towards a future.
- ✱ **Character** involves responsibility, autonomy, leadership and self-awareness.
- ✱ **Connection** is having a sense of safety and structure, membership and belonging.
- ✱ **Competence** involves the development of ability and motivation in key areas of life: civic and social competence, cultural competence, physical and emotional competence, intellectual competence and vocational competence.
- ✱ **Contribution** means that young people develop their ability to be civically minded and learn how they can contribute their time, ideas, and talents to better their communities.

The experiences and opinions that the young people shared during their interviews reflected these five outcomes. In order for these outcomes to be achieved, we must provide the enabling conditions, i.e. attitudes/cultural beliefs, structures, resources, training, opportunities and integrated systems. The research indicated that vocational learning within detention centres can contribute to these capacities being developed among Indigenous young people who have not previously experienced all of these enabling conditions in their lives.

Representation and needs of Indigenous young people in detention

It is well known that Indigenous young people are over-represented in juvenile detention centres, i.e. at 25 times the rate of non-Indigenous young people. With such a high representation, the needs of Indigenous young people should be prominent in the educational strategies employed in centres.

There is a commitment from juvenile detention education centres to address the needs of Indigenous young people more effectively; this research and its recommendations are an example of this commitment. However, the current educational options and strategies present a mixed picture in responding to these needs, with both positive signs and clear areas for improvement.

Indigenous staff, facilitators and family/community involvement

Compared with the high proportion of Indigenous young people, there are few Indigenous staff involved with the education component of juvenile detention centres in a teacher, education assistant or programme facilitator role. Those that are involved appear to be mainly in assistant or hourly-paid instructor roles. They often work in partnership with non-Indigenous people, an appropriate option, but it is not clear whether they have a leadership role in this work or, again, are mainly in an assistant position with a decreased influence over programme content and process.

Centres report some difficulty in recruiting and retaining Indigenous staff. Given the historical experience of detention, restriction and prison in the lives of many Indigenous people and the limited access to a good education and employment options, this is not a surprise (Behrendt 2003; Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody 1991). There is also a general shortage of Indigenous staff in a range of health and community service areas (AHMAC-SCATSIH 2002).

Further, Indigenous people are called upon to volunteer their time on many health, education and community services Boards or programmes, so elders or people in leadership roles who could be involved with detention centres are often over-committed. Therefore, other pathways through specific programmes for involving Indigenous family and community members in centre activities are critical and need to be negotiated directly with Indigenous people, as well as be led by them through the creation of dedicated positions to support this work.

These specific programmes are run in a number of centres, and appear to have a strong focus on cultural programmes and role-modelling in other vocational programmes. The culturally-focused vocational programmes that young people had experienced and commented upon in the interviews were less than 8% of the total number discussed and available in three centres. This was evident in the programme mapping where these vocational programmes were also fewer than 8% of all listed programmes and available in three centres. The programme mapping also identified that elders are actively involved in three centres with centre support, although not necessarily in vocational learning programmes, while other centres bring in

Indigenous people with a variety of vocations and skills for hourly-paid instruction or as role models.

This existing work is vital and centres identified that such programmes need to expand in both availability and scope. Yet this does not represent the only contribution that Indigenous family and community members can make. In addition to increasing the number of programmes with culturally-focused content, they could also be more involved on social, personal support or mentoring bases (i.e. through ongoing or extended relationships rather than one-off or brief visits), and as direct teachers/facilitators in ongoing or regularly scheduled programmes.

A focus on leadership and conflict management, with links to existing Indigenous programmes and services, particularly community-controlled services, could also be considered. Such links are not evident at present, with only one centre reporting they were involved with a community-based Indigenous organisation to assist young people to continue their vocational learning once they leave detention (also see the section on transition programmes below). This could provide meaningful links for young people back into their communities and offer them alternative roles, responsibilities and aspirations for contributing to their communities, which is something that most young people in the interviews indicated they were interested in being able to do.

Importantly, the involvement of Indigenous people in this broader range of roles, which need to be remunerated, would provide a stronger connection between Indigenous young people and their family and community members than is currently available to them. Young people were interested in having stronger connections to community. This context presents an opportunity for Education Departments to step in and make this possible through their vocational learning options, with the support from the other agencies involved with the detention centre (see the section on partnership below).

Limited access to mentoring

Indigenous young people's access to dedicated mentoring programmes once they are in detention appears to be limited or non-existent. A few Indigenous young people may have access to mentoring upon leaving detention as part of a transition programme, or may continue a pre-existing mentoring relationship. There were also isolated examples of industry mentoring in the workplace. Most of the currently available mentoring programmes with a juvenile justice/young offender focus operate in community settings but there are few of these programmes across Australia (Wilczynski et al. 2003).

The outcomes that the community mentoring programmes can achieve for Indigenous young people are encouraging in terms of re-engagement with education (including vocational learning) and reduced offending behaviour, particularly if they are intensive, integrated with other youth and family programmes, have a family-focused/family-inclusive approach and provide a long-term commitment to support

(*beyond...*[Kathleen Stacey & Associates] 2004). This gap is also linked to the learning gained regarding the need for an increased focus on transition programmes.

Access to and focus of transition programmes

Over 72% of the young people interviewed were positive and/or hopeful about their future job prospects, and there was substantial commentary about the links between their vocational learning experiences in the centres and future employment. Yet it was also evident that many did not have much experience of the world of work. Day release programmes were limited and community-based vocational learning was rare. Well conceived and effective transition programmes are a critical part of the 'glue' required to assist young people leaving detention to make a positive re-entry into community life and follow pathways into further education, training or employment.

There was considerable concern about the importance of and need for such transition programmes amongst centres, and it is clearly on the agenda of several centres to address. Those centres with considerable external provider involvement in their vocational learning programmes, particularly from industry or community-based providers, have a sound base on which to build or strengthen transition programmes.

However, there was not strong evidence to indicate that existing transition programmes had the capacity to both appreciate and respond to the multiplicity of needs that Indigenous young people face upon release from detention. These needs include health, mental health, substance use and misuse, accommodation, income, responsibilities to children and partners or other family members, and personal support (family, community, peer and social) that would assist them to step back from engaging in further offending behaviour. Many of these needs preceded their time in detention and are not necessarily resolved through their detention period.

Despite Indigenous young people being at least 42% of the juvenile detention centre population, most of the pathways that would support Indigenous young people to continue their vocational learning are mainstream pathways and programmes. These pathways and transition programmes may respond to some of their needs, but will be limited in effectiveness without a full appreciation of the different situation for Indigenous young people, i.e. in both cultural terms and the additional social-political challenges they face as members of a marginalised group, such as racism, poverty and, for some, geographical isolation. Conference participants believed that Indigenous young people did not have good pathways from detention, and supports, such as transition houses or other supported community placements while young people re-establish themselves in the community, were only rarely available. The lack of mentoring programmes was noted above.

The outcomes indicate that there is an urgent need to look closely at transition pathways from at least two perspectives. Any existing programmes need to be identified and evaluated to identify what is and is not effective, relevant and culturally appropriate about them; some evaluation may already be or soon become available. Based on what we already know about good practice, and supported by these evaluation outcomes when available, new or extended transition programmes

need to be developed, trialled and evaluated. These programmes must learn about and respond to the context to which young people are returning; work closely with community-based services and groups, particularly Indigenous groups and services in order to strengthen connections with Indigenous community members; and integrate or link with mentoring programmes. Critically, these programmes need to provide a successful model of integrated casework within a holistic model that demonstrates and champions effective interagency collaboration, including the core partnership between education and the government department responsible for secure care (see the section on partnership below).

Further, these programmes need to consider the needs of a broader range of young people, not just those who have had longer sentences and may be further down the pathway of offending; some current programmes may only be available to young people who have sentences of six months or longer. This would create a stronger link with early intervention efforts, as they would focus on young people with short sentences who are at an earlier stage in their involvement with juvenile justice and, thus, make a more comprehensive effort to minimise the likelihood that they will return to detention.

Strengthening capacity for partnership work

The research outcomes lend some weight to the belief that vocational learning contributes to rehabilitation for Indigenous young people in juvenile detention through opportunities to have skills and talents recognised, be supported and encouraged to try new things and, importantly, experience educational success. However, it cannot stand alone. The multiplicity of these young people's needs demands the involvement and combined efforts of colleagues in health, mental health and community services, as well as secure care staff. It was apparent that young people have access to some or many of these services, but the degree to which they worked in partnership in addressing the young people's rehabilitative, educational and personal support needs was not always strong or clear.

Educational staff sought to develop their relationship with their secure care/detention centre colleagues, although the strength of this partnership work varied between centres and between different levels of the same centre. For example, local management partnerships may be strong while more senior departmental partnerships may be limited or absent: alternatively, partnerships between on-the-ground education and secure care staff may be fractured or volatile.

Misunderstandings about roles and responsibilities, and the different priorities that guide their respective work could interfere in partnership efforts. Whenever such mismatches between different levels in a centre occurred, options for Indigenous young people were closed down and outcomes compromised. Where shared concerns and goals were articulated, and staff from both sides had active involvement in deciding how to address them, greater mutual respect was evident and more programme possibilities and supportive partnerships emerged.

In order to provide a range of vocational learning programmes, almost every centre had developed or contributed to partnerships with other government departments, external education providers and, in some instances, industry groups. As noted above, the area in which partnership work was most limited was with Indigenous agencies, and directly with Indigenous family and community members.

The impact of departmental structures and policies

Through each step of this research project it became apparent that there are a number of inconsistencies between states and territories at policy and structural levels. These include:

- ✧ who is responsible for education programmes
- ✧ how, and by whom they are delivered
- ✧ what level of cooperation or partnership occurs between the departments involved in the education and secure care aspects of detention centres
- ✧ how the policies of these respective departments shape what is possible in the education component of detention, e.g. access to workplaces through day release
- ✧ what drives these policies—is it, for example, risk management or the educational and rehabilitative interests of young people.

Structures and policies have the potential to facilitate or interfere with environments and educational opportunities that lead to good learning experiences and outcomes for young people, as well as influencing the degree of involvement that family and community members can have with Indigenous young people in detention. The move to policies that are driven predominantly by risk management, which has occurred or is occurring in some states and territories, may subsequently create a risk that educational and rehabilitative goals become a low priority and the ability to implement good practice in education is compromised. Greater exchange and opportunities for learning across states and territories about good practice and achieving an appropriate balance between risk management and educational/rehabilitative goals is an urgent need for detention education centres.

Prior to this research project there has been limited ability and support for detention education centres to come together as a forum to share resources and good practice. Although two or three centres have linked together through their involvement in other national education projects, this is the first project designed to bring educational staff in detention centres together on a national basis to consider their collective approach to good and better practice for Indigenous young people in detention.

The value of listening directly to young people

A stand-out comment from the 2nd National Conference was that “We should be doing more of this **with** our kids rather than to the kids”. Indigenous young people had clear and valuable ideas about what works for them in vocational learning

programmes. They provided specific direction on ways to improve programmes to further increase their relevance, attractiveness and meaningfulness. This included:

- ✱ a positive teacher approach
- ✱ reviewing the appropriateness of programme content, as well as programme facilitators
- ✱ better student/teacher ratios
- ✱ greater variety within programmes in terms of tasks undertaken, equipment they could use and the range of skills learned
- ✱ different locations for undertaking learning, e.g. outside
- ✱ more opportunities to do active and hands-on activities.

A strong body of work exists on the value of youth participation in educational, human and community service environments. Among other things it enables: better relationships between young people and adults, stronger ownership and commitment among young people to activities that we want young people to engage in, more opportunities for success, and the expansion of young people's range of skills (Ausyouth 2003; Golombek 2002; Holdsworth 2004, 2005; Mokwena 2003; Stacey 2001; Wierenga et al. 2003).

Despite the restrictions within the juvenile detention environment, vocational learning programmes can provide a place for youth participation practices that contribute to the linked goals of education and rehabilitation. Indigenous young people can and need to have active participation in the development, delivery and evaluation of programmes so their interests and choices are taken into account by juvenile detention education centres.

Links between the literature and research outcomes

There is clear symmetry between the literature and the project outcomes. All the areas identified in the literature that require greater attention emerged as matters of concern in the outcomes. For example, there was reference in the literature to integrated case management. The research highlighted that the whole transition process needs to be more seamless and gradual, with integrated case management a vital aspect of this process. Another shared concern is providing genuine pathways from secure care for Indigenous young people so that their aspirations for employment can be realised. This has implications for partnerships with industry, Indigenous training groups and community organisations, and Indigenous employee mentors.

The lack of detailed information on Indigenous young people in juvenile detention and vocational learning in the literature highlighted the value and importance of sharing good practice in vocational learning opportunities at a national level. Currently there is no existing forum or mechanism for this to occur. If this existed it would also form a consultative group that state, territory and national government

could access for advice, and joint planning, problem-solving, project development, implementation and review.

This research has begun responding to these areas but it is only a first step in gaining better understanding and direction in addressing them.

What needs to happen now?

This research project and its outcomes have direct relevance for two of the indicative outcomes that have been identified to boost productivity and participation as part of the Council Of Australian Governments' human capita agenda:

Increase the proportion of young people meeting basic literacy and numeracy standards, and improve overall levels of achievement ...

Increase the proportion of young people making a smooth transition from school to work or further study (Council of Australian Governments Meeting Outcomes, 10 Feb 2006, p. 5)

The research outcomes provide evidence that investing in vocational learning is an important strategy for achieving these indicative outcomes, particularly for young Indigenous people in juvenile detention. Although vocational learning opportunities are available, there is room to strengthen and extend them so that they are more effective, culturally relevant and result in 'real' outcomes for young people during and beyond detention. This will require a focus on both policy and programme levels. The areas for specific attention include:

- ✱ developing a coordinated and systematic national approach to the documentation and evaluation of good practice across areas that show promise, as well as areas of concern, to guide policy development and programme implementation;
- ✱ introducing stronger representation of Indigenous people across a range of roles within juvenile detention education centres;
- ✱ strengthening partnerships within juvenile detention centres, between juvenile detention education centres and external agencies or groups, and between juvenile detention education centres and industry groups;
- ✱ increasing the availability of transition pathways and programmes;
- ✱ providing mentoring options internal and external to juvenile detention centres;
- ✱ conducting a review of policy and its impact on vocational learning outcomes for Indigenous young people;
- ✱ greater active participation of Indigenous young people in the development, delivery and evaluation of vocational learning programmes; and
- ✱ facilitating a national network for juvenile detention education centres.

Mellor and Corrigan (2004) recently reported that:

Our review of the research concludes that, while there have been some improvements over the past decade, the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous educational outcomes remains unacceptably large and we should not be satisfied with recent levels of improvement. (p. 5)

Nowhere is this more starkly evident than in relation to the educational status of Indigenous young people in detention centres. Depending on government's responses to the project outcomes, this work could – through systemic and local change – make a concrete difference for Indigenous young people's educational experiences and opportunities within, and upon release from youth detention centres. Ultimately, this could expand their hopes for the future.

Recommendations

Six recommendations have been identified based on the research outcomes. It is recommended that:

Recommendation 1: This report is tabled with:

- ✧ the Department for Education, Science and Training,
- ✧ each relevant state and/or territory department involved in juvenile justice and the education of young people in detention, and
- ✧ the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA)

to ensure that the vocational learning needs of Indigenous young people in detention remain on the agenda of all jurisdictions and the recommendations outlined below are addressed.

Recommendation 2: A coordinated and systemic national approach to funding, documenting and evaluating good practice is developed and supported. Areas to address include:

- ✧ effective partnerships within juvenile detention centres between education and secure care
- ✧ effective partnerships between juvenile detention education centres and external agencies or groups including, in particular, Indigenous units within government departments, Indigenous agencies and community groups
- ✧ effective partnerships between juvenile detention education centres and industry groups
- ✧ the involvement of Indigenous facilitators/education workers, mentors, support personnel and community members in the development, delivery and evaluation of vocational learning
- ✧ the employment of Indigenous people across a range of roles within juvenile detention education centres, including Indigenous Programme Officers and Transition Officers
- ✧ active participation of Indigenous young people in the development, delivery and evaluation of vocational learning programmes.

Recommendation 3: Because Indigenous young people represent a high proportion of the juvenile detention population:

- ✧ the effectiveness, relevance and cultural appropriateness of existing mainstream transition programmes and pathways planning for young people in detention should be reviewed and strengthened so they have a clear focus on the specific needs of Indigenous young people

- ✳ new or extended transition programmes and pathways planning that are developed, trialled and evaluated should:
 - be based on a multi-agency case management approach
 - work closely with community-based services and groups, particularly Indigenous groups and services
 - be available to a broader range of Indigenous young people in juvenile detention.

Recommendation 4: The Department for Education, Science and Training develop, trial and evaluate mentoring programmes for Indigenous young people that are available **during** and extend beyond juvenile detention. This would include education, community-based and industry programmes.

Recommendation 5: The impact of organisational and department policies on successful vocational learning outcomes for Indigenous young people should be reviewed by relevant state and territory departments involved in juvenile justice and the education of Indigenous young people. Areas to address could include:

- ✳ exchange of information across agencies to allow continuity of service provision
- ✳ day release for education/work experience or employment opportunities
- ✳ risk management
- ✳ mainstreaming of effective vocational learning programmes and practices that exist within juvenile detention, e.g. small groups, embedding literacy and numeracy into specific vocational content, flexible delivery modes
- ✳ finding ways to ensure that the Indigenous youth voice is heard, valued and acted upon in all aspects of the education and transition processes involved in vocational learning.

Recommendation 6: Education centres in juvenile detention centres identify strategies to maintain a national network and enable it to become a recognised body.

References

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Training Advisory Council (ATSIPTAC) 1998, *Working together to break the cycle: the development of a national vocational education and training strategy for adult correctional facilities and juvenile justice centres in Australia – a position paper from ATSIPTAC*, ATSIPTAC, Broadmeadows, Victoria.
- Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council's Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Working Party (AHMAC-SCATSIH) 2002, *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce national strategic framework*, AHMAC, Department of Health & Ageing, Canberra.
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2003, *Australia's young people: their health and wellbeing 2003*, AIHW, Canberra.
- Australian National Training Authority 2004, *Shaping our future: the national strategy for vocational education and training 2004-2010*, Australian National Training Authority, Brisbane.
- Ausyouth 2003, *Learning from what young people say: young people talk about their youth development experiences and expectations*, Ausyouth, Adelaide, viewed 11 June 2006, <<http://www.thesource.gov.au/ausyouth>> (choose the 'Publications' link).
- Baikie, B 1997, 'Programming for Aboriginal youth in custody: what works and barriers to success', presented at the Australian Institute of Criminology Conference, Juvenile Crime and Juvenile Justice: Towards 2000 and Beyond, Adelaide.
- Bryant, G, Altschwager, P & Walker, G 2003, 'Partnerships for learning, preservation and opportunity through the Partnership Outreach Education Model (POEM) Initiative', presented at the Australian Institute of Criminology Conference, Juvenile Justice: From Lessons of the Past to a Road Map for the Future, Sydney.
- Behrendt, L 2003, *Achieving social justice: Indigenous rights and Australia's future*, The Federation Press, Leichhardt, NSW.
- beyond...(Kathleen Stacey & Associates) Pty Ltd 2004, *Panyappi Indigenous Youth Mentoring Program: external evaluation report*, Panyappi, Metropolitan Aboriginal Youth Team, SA Department of Human Services, Adelaide, viewed 14 June 2006, <www.cpu.sa.gov.au/Panyappi%20Evaluation%20Report%20June%202004.pdf>.
- Campbell, S & Duggan, F 2003, 'The development of a learning culture in a youth detention centre and its effects on staff and clients', presented at the Australian Institute of Criminology Conference, Juvenile Justice: From Lessons of the Past to a Road Map for the Future, Sydney.
- Cunneen, C & McDonald, D 1999, 'Diversion and best practice for Indigenous people: a non-Indigenous view', presented at the Australian Institute of Criminology Conference, Best Practice Interventions in Corrections for Indigenous People, Adelaide.
- Council of Australian Governments 2006, *Council of Australian Governments Meeting Outcomes*, 10 February 2006.

- Department of Education, Science and Training 2002, *Employability skills for the future*, Department of Education, Science and Training, Canberra.
- Dick, B 2000, *A beginner's guide to action research*, viewed 25 August 2005, <<http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/arp/guide.html>>.
- Dusseldorp Skills Forum 2004, *How young people are faring: key indicators 2004 – an update about the learning and work situation of young Australians*, Dusseldorp Skills Forum, Glebe, NSW, viewed 8 June 2006, <<http://www.dsf.org.au/>>.
- 2005, *How young people are faring: key indicators 2005 – an update about the learning and work situation of young Australians*, Dusseldorp Skills Forum, Glebe, NSW, viewed 8 June 2006, <<http://www.dsf.org.au/>>.
- Earle, L & Fopp, R 1999, *Introduction to Australian society: a sociological overview*, 3rd edn, Harcourt Brace, Sydney.
- Erlandson, D, Harris, E, Skipper, B & Allen, S 1993, *Doing naturalistic inquiry: a guide to methods*, Sage, Newbury Park, CA.
- Fitzgerald, C, Manners, C et al. 1999, 'Vocational education and training in Northern Territory correctional centres', presented at the Australian Institute of Criminology Conference, Best Practice Interventions in Corrections for Indigenous People, Adelaide.
- Giroux, H 1996, *Fugitive cultures: race, violence and youth*, Routledge, New York.
- Golombek, S 2002, *What works in youth participation? Case studies from around the world*, International Youth Foundation, Baltimore, Maryland, viewed 6 June 2006, <http://www.iyfnet.org/uploads/what_works_in_youth_par.pdf>.
- Holdsworth, R 2004, 'Good practice in learning alternatives', paper presented at the Dusseldorp Skills Forum Learning Choices Expo, Sydney, June 2004.
- Holdsworth, R 2005, *Student councils and beyond: students as effective participants in educational decision-making*, Connect, Northcote, Vic.
- Hubble, D & Goodlet R 1992, 'A training plan concept for "Yesterday's Tomorrows": towards a coordinated and integrated model of vocational education and training in juvenile detention centres', proceedings of a conference held 22–24 September, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra.
- Keys Young Pty Ltd 1997, *Juvenile justice services and transition arrangements*, National Youth Affairs Research Scheme, Hobart.
- McPherson, W & O'Grady, D 1999, 'Aboriginal rural training in juvenile justice', presented at The International Forum of Education in Penal Systems 4th National Conference, Creating New Learning Cultures, Fremantle, WA.
- Mellor, S. & Corrigan, M 2004, 'New effort needed to improve Indigenous education,' *Research developments: Australian Council for Educational Research*, 11 (Winter), 3-5.
- Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training & Youth Affairs 2000, *New framework for vocational education in schools (2001–2004): implementation*, Curriculum Corporation, Melbourne.

- Mokwena, S 2003, 'Youth participation: taking the idea to the next level – a challenge to youth ministers', *Commonwealth Youth and Development*, 1(2), pp. 87–107.
- National Centre for Vocational Education and Training 2004a, *National VET research and evaluation program: information kit – funding round April 2004*, NCVER, Adelaide.
- 2004b, *Indigenous Australians in vocational education and training: national research strategy for 2003-2006*, NCVER and the Australian National Training Authority, Adelaide.
- National Indigenous Youth Leadership Group 2005, '*Having our voices heard*': Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth perspectives, Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra.
- Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC) 1991, *National report: overview and recommendations*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.
- Social Inclusion Unit 2004, *Young offenders, breaking the cycle: a preliminary issues paper*, SA Department of Premier and Cabinet, Adelaide.
- Stacey, K 2001, 'Achieving praxis in youth partnership accountability', *Journal of Youth Studies*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 209–231.
- Stokes, H, Stacey K & Lake, M 2006, *Schools, VET and partnerships: capacity building in rural and regional communities*, NCVER, Adelaide.
- Stringer, E 1999, *Action research*, 2nd edn, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Teese, R, Polesel, J, O'Brien, K, Jones, B, Davies, M, Walstab, A & Maughan, M 2000, *Early school leaving: a review of the literature*, Australian National Training Authority, Brisbane.
- Veld, M & Taylor, N 2005, *Statistics on juvenile detention 1981 – 2004: technical and background paper no. 18*, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra.
- Wierenga, A with Wood, A, Trenbath, G, Kelly, J & Vidakovic, O 2003, *Sharing a new story: young people in decision-making*, Australian Youth Research Centre, University of Melbourne, viewed 9 June 2005, <[Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.](#)>.
- Wilczynski, A, Culvenor, C, Cunneen, C, Schwartzkoff, J & Reed-Gilbert, K 2003, *Early Intervention: Youth Mentoring Programmes – an overview of mentoring programmes for young people at risk of offending*, Attorney-General's Department, Canberra.
- Wilson, R 1993, 'Vocational education and training in Victoria's youth training centres', presented at the Australian Institute of Criminology National Conference on Juvenile Detention, Canberra.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Programme mapping survey

For practical reasons, only the instructions, definitions and questions are included but not in their actual form i.e. as they appeared in hard copy or online for completion.

Instructions

For any question in this survey, you must focus on what programmes you have done in the vocational learning area in your centre **over the last two years** in which **Indigenous young people have participated**. There are three parts to this survey.

Part 1 identifies your centre and the average number of Indigenous students who attend.

Part 2 describes the detail of activities or programmes you offer to Indigenous young people who are in your centre. It starts by defining areas in vocational learning - please **read each definition first** before moving on to answer the questions in Part 1. There is a section on four of the vocational learning areas that all begin by asking whether you offer programmes for this area in your centre. It is OK if you have no programmes in an area. Please indicate "NO", provide a reason for why it is not occurring in your centre, and then use the link to jump to the next vocational learning area. If something is happening, then please indicate "YES" and follow the instructions so you provide additional detail about each of these programmes using a "pop up" form for each programme.

Part 3 focuses on some general issues for vocational learning with your Indigenous students.

PART 1: Centre and student numbers

- 1: Which juvenile detention centre/school are you from?
- 2: On average, how many students attend your education centre each day?
- 3: On average, how many of these students are Indigenous?
- 4: Of the Indigenous students:
 - How many are male/female?
 - Which part of the state or territory are the Indigenous students from, i.e. metropolitan, rural, remote? Choose all that apply.
- 5: In total, how many individual students attend your centre in a year (financial or calendar), i.e. if a young person has been in and out twice, they only count once?
- 6: Of this total, how many of these students are Indigenous?

PART 2: Vocational learning options

The following areas are part of vocational learning and are commonly defined as:

A: Career education supports students in learning about themselves in relation to work, learning about the world of work; developing and implementing career plans and decisions; and managing work transitions.

B: Enterprise education supports students to evaluate achievements and develop enterprising attributes that equip them to identify, create, initiate and successfully manage personal, business, work and community opportunities.

C: Work-based learning involves understanding the changing nature of work, workplaces and patterns of employment; undertaking self-managed employment and enterprise initiatives; acquiring generic work preparation skills; and having structured and targeted learning experiences in real or simulated workplace environments.

D: Community-based learning involves learning from individuals other than teachers; connecting meaningful community activity with classroom experience; and addressing specific problems, issues or practices that have been negotiated with the community that affect them.

In addition, it is important to include **employability skills** as part of vocational learning. The eight employability skills that have been endorsed by Education Ministers in each state/territory government and the Australian Government (through MCEETYA) are:

- ✳ **Communication skills** that contribute to productive and harmonious relations across employees and customers;
- ✳ **Teamwork skills** that contribute to productive working relationships and outcomes;
- ✳ **Problem solving skills** that contribute to productive outcomes;
- ✳ **Initiative and enterprise skills** that contribute to innovative outcomes;
- ✳ **Planning and organising skills** that contribute to long and short term strategic planning;
- ✳ **Self-management skills** that contribute to employee satisfaction and growth;
- ✳ **Learning skills** that contribute to ongoing improvement and expansion in employee and company operations and outcomes; and
- ✳ **Technology skills** that contribute to effective execution of tasks.

Based on these definitions, please answer the questions in each of the following four areas in Part 2.

A: Career education - In the last two years did you offer programmes in **Career Education** in which Indigenous students participated?

- If yes, complete a 'pop up form' for every programme.
- If no, why have you decided this?

B: Enterprise education - In the last two years did you offer programmes in **Enterprise Education** in which Indigenous students participated?

- If yes, complete a 'pop up form' for every programme.
- If no, why have you decided this?

C: Work-based learning - In the last two years did you offer programmes in **Work-based Learning** in which Indigenous students participated?

- If yes, complete a 'pop up form' for every programme.
- If no, why have you decided this?

D: Community-based learning - In the last two years did you offer programmes in **Community-based Learning** in which Indigenous students participated?

- If yes, complete a 'pop up form' for every programme.
- If no, why have you decided this?

'Pop up' form completed for each program

1: What is the **name** of this program?

2: What sorts of **activities** do students do in this program?

3: How much **time is spent** on this programme in terms of hours/day, days/week and number of weeks? For example, the programme may involve 2 hrs/day on 2 days/week for 5 weeks = total of 20 hours.

- How many times is this programme run during the year - once, twice, 3 to 4 times or continuously?

4: Who **delivers** the program?

- Are they Indigenous staff, non-Indigenous staff or both?
- Are they centre staff, and external provider or both?
- If you chose **external provider** please also explain who is this provider and why do you use them?

5: What are the main **assessment** strategies you use in this program?

6: Is this programme **accredited**?

- If yes, with **whom** is it accredited: school-based curriculum, VET National, VET state, state Education curriculum, industry, other (please explain)? Tick all that apply.

7: On what **basis** do students get to do this program: core curriculum, student choice, remand detention plans, court-ordered, age, length of order, security rating, skill level, other (please explain)? Tick all that apply.

8: How is this programme funded - within curriculum budget, state grant, federal grant, other (please explain)? Tick all that apply.

9: You have **20 points to allocate** across the eight **employability skills** to show which skills are reflected in this programme and how strongly. *Make sure your points add up to 20! For example:*

- If three employability skills are reflected in your programme, but one is a much stronger focus, you may give it 10 points and the other two skills 5 points each, or one skill 9 points, the second skill 6 points and the third skill 5 points.
- If seven employability skills are reflected in your programme, then your distribution could be 1 skill at 5 points, 4 skills at 3 points, 1 skill at 2 points and 1 skill at 1 point.

PART 3: General Issues

1: Do the activity outcomes in vocational learning programmes **contribute to Indigenous student's family or community**?

✳ If yes, please describe:

- What outcomes contribute?
- How does it contribute?

✳ If no, please explain why not?

2: Do Indigenous students access vocational learning opportunities through **day release**?

✳ If yes, please describe:

- What are the opportunities?
- How are they organised?
- How do you decide who goes on day release?

✳ If no, please explain why not?

3: Are **Indigenous community members involved** in any of the vocational learning programmes you offer?

- ✧ If yes, please describe:
 - Who has become involved?
 - Why have they become involved?
 - Which activities/programmes are they involved in?
 - How are they involved?
- ✧ If no, please explain why not?

4: Do **pathways** exist for Indigenous students to continue their vocational learning in the community?

- ✧ If yes, please describe:
 - What pathways are available?
 - How do students access these pathways?
 - What mechanisms are available to support Indigenous students in these pathways?
- ✧ If no, please explain why not?

Appendix 2: Interview/focus group with young people process – Guide for interviewers

Step 1: If the young person/people are not familiar with you, spend some time introducing yourself and getting to know them in terms of where they come from and who their family connections are.

Step 2: Confirm that each young person is clear about the purpose of the conversation, have signed their consent form and know what will happen with the information.

Step 3: You will be provided with a list of the different vocational learning programme or subject options at the centre. Identify which ones each young person has been involved with – record this information.

Step 4: Ask young people what ‘vocational learning’ means to them and facilitate a conversation that covers the following areas. Allow these questions to emerge through the conversation at appropriate times linked to what the young people talk about. Rephrase the questions as needed, you do not have to stay with this exact wording if it not suitable for your young people:

1: Personal experiences of programmes at the centre

- ✳ What are their experiences in the vocational learning programmes at the centre?
 - Do you like the programmes you do at the centre? This will be rated as: Terrible, OK, Good, Deadly
 - Why did you say that/choose that rating?
 - What do you get out of these programmes?
 - Is it hard for you to **get into** these programmes – why or why not?
 - Is it hard for you to **take part** in these programmes – why or why not?
 - What would you like to change about these programmes – why or why not?

2: Jobs in the future

- ✳ What do you think your job prospects are?
- ✳ What does being employed mean to you?

3: Personal goals

- ✳ What personal goals do you have for your life?

4: Contributions to community

- ✳ Do you contribute to your community through the programmes?

- If yes, how does this happen?
- If no, how would you like to contribute to your community?

5: Building your skills up

- ✳ What skills do you have and how do you want to strengthen them (e.g. through vocational learning)?

6: Experiences before the centre

- ✳ What were your experiences in any vocational learning programmes prior to being in the centre? Only ask the next questions if they did experience vocational learning:
 - What were the programmes like?
 - Where did you do them?
 - How did you get involved in them?
- ✳ If you weren't involved in any vocational learning programmes **before** being in the centre, would you have liked that opportunity?
 - Would that have made any difference to you ending up at the centre?

We will provide you with a format that you can use with butcher's paper or whiteboards where you record the ideas and stories that young people share collaboratively so they can see what you are taking away from the conversation. Where there are rating or choice questions, young people can use drawings or stickers to indicate their choice. Please feel free to take additional notes during or soon after the interviews to add to the information you write up with the young people about how the interviews went and anything you observed about the young people that helps in understanding their responses. You will use all of these records for entering information into a word document that we will provide to you and you will email back to the main research team.

Step 5: Thank the young people for participating and sharing their experiences so that we can improve vocational learning for them.

Step 6: As soon as possible after each interview/focus group, enter the interview information into the Word document as instructed at the training programme and email it to the main research team.

Appendix 3: Consultation with family and community members – Guide for facilitators

Use the following questions to guide the content of your consultations. You do not have to ask the questions in this exact order, as the flow of the conversation will depend on how participants engage in the discussion.

1: What connection do you have (if any) with any of the Educational Centres (EC) within the detention centres? How long have you had this connection?

2: Are you aware of the role of the EC within the detention centre?

3: Have you been involved directly with the EC?

- Are you aware of the reasons young people like going to the EC?
- Why/why not?

4: What is the relationship between young people and the EC staff?

5: How much support do you feel young people get from the EC staff?

6: What are the sorts of things young people do in the EC?

7: What do you like about the things young people do in EC?

8: What do you think might happen after young people's involvement in the EC ends?

9: What training opportunities do young people have after detention?

- What do you think of them?
- Are they sufficient?
- Why/why not?

10: Do you think that young people would go to any of these training opportunities on release?