

Extract: New beginnings Report

of consultation with young people at the new Goldsborough Campus of the Adelaide Youth Training Centre



February 2014

The Council for the
Care of Children



 Government of
South Australia

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Extract:

New beginnings report¹

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the Adelaide Youth Training Centre

Crying Inside

I'll tell you a little story I'll begin at the start
'bout how doin' crime tore my whole life apart.
Went from stealing cars for the adrenalin buzz
To doing house breaks and robbin' kids on the bus.
I learnt from my mistakes and being deceitful,
I need to get a good job and meet a new group of people.
From choosing this pathway I lost my son,
Then a few months later I lost his mum.
But I brought it on myself, from doing things dumb
Stealin' and taking drugs and goin' on the run.
'Cause when they took my son it gave me a fright
I miss changing nappies in the middle of the night.
The whinges and whines, the kicks screams and cries,
And every time I think of him it brings tears to my eyes.
I think about him every night, I can feel my heart and it's cryin' inside.
No matter what happens I will die with pride
Even though I have that eaten away feeling inside.
When I get him back I'm gonna hold him so tight,
And never let him go right out of my sight.
I want everyone to know I've rearranged my ways
That I've put my mind to writing, I've changed these days.
So stand up and feel the shiver down your spine
As this sophisticated master mind start spittin' out the rhymes.
And feel the vibe through the crowd that I send,
When I rap so in sequence and keep goin' to the end.
Its flowin' so sequential with high hopes is essential.

¹ The confidential *New beginnings* report has been provided to the Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion, the Chief Executive, Department for Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI) and the Director Youth Justice, DCSI.

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Background to the consultation

The government in South Australia (SA) established the Council for the Care of Children (the Council) in 2006 under the *Children's Protection Act 1993*. The Council advocates for, and, promotes, the rights, interests and social inclusion of children and young people in SA. The Council has a legislative mandate in children and young people who are of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent and/or who live with disability and/or who are under the care and custody of the Minister.

The Council's mandate is informed by the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability* and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. In supporting the *South Australia's Strategic Plan* and the *Seven Strategic Priorities* especially *Every chance for every child*, the Council works to improve the lives of children and young people by providing informed advice to the government and other key stakeholders.

In 2010, the government in SA commenced the building of a new secure youth training facility to replace the Magill Youth Training Centre (MYTC) and the Cavan Youth Training Centre (CYTC) for young people over 15 years. As part of the process to inform the building and service model, young people living in the two existing youth training centres were provided with the opportunity to voice their opinions.

In mid-2011, the Council and Youth Justice of the then Department for Families and Communities (DFC) agreed that the Council would hear from young people in the CYTC and the MYTC. Twenty young people participated; 12 at the CYTC and eight at the MYTC. Eighteen of them were male and two were female and their ages ranged from 14 – 20 years. Their opinions about their living conditions, the challenges they faced, and areas for improvement were documented in a confidential report in September 2011, the *Voices from Within*² report. The report was well received by Youth Justice, DFC, and assisted DFC with the development of a contemporary paradigm of service delivery for a new training centre.

² The New beginnings report is not publicly available; however, an excerpt of the report is available on the Council's website http://www.childrensa.sa.gov.au/assets/documents/Voices%20from%20Within%20extract_Sept2011.pdf.

Introduction

The new Goldsborough Campus of the Adelaide Youth Training Centre ('AYTC' or 'Centre') opened in August 2012. It consists of distinct buildings including administrative offices, a health centre, educational and recreational facilities and five 12-bed units (60 beds in total). The buildings are within spacious grounds with perimeter security. The well-kept gardens that include quiet spaces and a vegetable garden are maintained by residents who are undertaking horticulture studies

In 2013, the construction company Hansen Yuncken was awarded the Australian Institute of Building SA professional Excellence Award (in the Research, Development and Technology category) for its leadership in the design of the Centre. Hansen Yuncken received a High Commendation Award from the Master Builders Association SA for Excellence in a Commercial/Industrial Building over \$50 million for its ability to meet project objectives relating to time, quality and cost.

In 2013, six YEC students who entered the National Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Competition were chosen as the winners of the competition from hundreds of entries from Australian schools. Excerpts from several of the poems are included in this report and the Council is deeply indebted to the generosity of the young people in allowing their work to be featured anonymously.

Light Fades Gradually

These walls cover criminals...Changing individuals?
Lost souls, Flying outta bullet holes.
Counting down the minutes as the sun sets. Darkness creeps.
Quickly, take your last breath and chuck on a skivvy.
Lost in these mind games with the law
Felony acts taking control.

Stuck in the shadows, haunted by darkness.
Struggling for light, like a soul outta sight.

Just ordinary routines, tryin' to get my life clean.
Killing off this drug fiend that's burning off my self-esteem.
This is pure essence to ya standard reference.
Others call this magic medicine, like ya bible to a reverend.
Blessin', not second guessin',
or questions - class is in session

Stuck in the shadows, haunted by darkness
Stuggling for light, like a soul outta sight.

Dropping shadows, pin pointing fingers
Crime rates go up as the cash lingers.
Frozen reality...So dark...So cold.
Light fades gradually...

What young people said in 2011 and in 2013

The Aboriginal words 'Kurlana Tapa' at the entrance to the new Goldsborough Campus of the AYTC mean 'new path'. The words correspond well with statements in December 2013 from 18 young people (15 male and three female) who participated in the consultation (participants) about their experiences of life there.

In 2011, participants at the CYTC and the MYTC talked about unclothed searches and the use of physical restraint. In December 2013, the former barely raised a mention and the latter appeared to be viewed as being used as a last resort to keep residents safe.

As in 2011, the matter of education took centre stage in December 2013 with 83% of participants recognising the importance of acquiring knowledge, gaining qualifications and of learning being enjoyable. One young person eloquently said: 'Being here has whetted my appetite to learn. It has been a journey of self-discovery. I have grown into my own skin'.

Participants in December 2013 said male residents can request to move from one unit to another to avoid conflict or to be with friends or family members. The female residents do not have this option as there is only one 12-bed unit for female residents and the female participants spoke of some frustration associated with this.

Aboriginal participants spoke of being housed together when possible and this enables them to feel more settled. Some older participants saw themselves as positive mentors and role models to the younger male residents. Male and female participants said they would like to have more interaction between all residents.

An extract of the consultation process, information provided by the AYTC management team and recommendations is provided at appendix 1.

Not What He Seems

You see his love for her, now and from afar
But from years gone by she wears a scar.

The man you see, he ain't no prize
His actions past, you should despise.

For what he saw accumulated,
In later life he duplicated.

Did your love continue, or was it fear?
How did you bear to have him near?

Household brutality, it kills the soul
Of wife and kids, the family whole.

He saw the pain he caused and created,
Your trust in him, he violated.

Despite the slaps, kicks and shoves
In her eyes he still saw love.

He remembers well the day it came
When guilt and dishonour, he was to blame
The promise he made her, remains unbroken
No longer anger is done or spoken.

Each day is fresh in every way
Except the debt that he must pay.

Don't offer your hand for his recognition
Or feel he's strong by this admission.

Listen for those who suffer in silence
Speak up and protect them to end the violence.

Summary of key recommendations

The recommendations in the *New beginnings* report were informed by the comments and opinions of the participants in December 2013. However, the report to DCSI also makes recommendations relevant to the AYTC practices and processes. The report acknowledged that the AYTC management team might be instigating changes relating to some of the recommendations and the Council stated a commitment to working with the key stakeholders who have responsibility for young people in the AYTC.

Information provided before and during admission to the Centre

As in 2011, the December 2013 consultation identified a lack of information for young people entering the AYTC. An information package can provide essential and useful information for a young person arriving at the AYTC. The Council recommended that an orientation and information booklet in an easy to read format is developed.

Day to day life at the Centre

Many participants valued the organised activities that allowed for socialising between residents. The Council recommended strategies to build on the existing programs that foster the development of residents' social skills through shared activities. The Council recommended that solutions are considered to reduce the reported impact of a high turnover of short-term female residents on the longer term residents.

Cultural status and cultural needs

Aboriginal participants said they were reasonably satisfied with issues relating to their culture, particularly in being permitted to reside with other Aboriginal residents where possible. They indicated they would like to hold more cultural events.

The Council recommended opportunities for Aboriginal residents to come together and to celebrate their culture through art and culturally appropriate events.

Education

Most participants spoke of the education programs with a high level of satisfaction. The main discontent was a reported lack of follow through in providing a hairdressing course. The absence of internet access for research caused frustration.

The Council recommended that the curriculum continues to be developed to expand the learning options of all residents, especially those aged 17 years or older and consideration is given to the limited use of the internet to enable residents whose study requires personal research to develop such skills.

Youth Advisory Council and complaints

Complaints management via use of the complaints system was an area of dissatisfaction for more than three-quarters of participants. They rated the Youth Advisory Council (YAC) more positively.

The Council recommended that strategies are developed to strengthen residents' confidence in the AYTC complaints handling processes.

Staffing matters

At the time of the interviews, it was apparent that no specific training relating to disability or autism had been included in the staff training. It is well established that children and young people with cognitive disability, including intellectual disability, learning difficulties, acquired brain injury, foetal alcohol syndrome and autism spectrum disorders are over-represented in the juvenile justice system. The 2009 Young People in Custody Health Survey undertaken by Juvenile Justice and Juvenile Health (NSW) found of those in juvenile detention, 14% had a possible intellectual disability (IQ of 69 and under) and 32% scored in the borderline intellectual disability range (IQ of 70 – 79). The report is available at: www.justicehealth.nsw.gov.au.

Exit planning

Participants who were due to leave were aware that some planning was taking place but seemed uncertain about the process. The Council recommended that:

- an exit plan with identifiable milestones and goals is developed with each eligible resident when they enter the AYTC and that the plan is regularly reviewed and updated with the resident.
- early connection is made with external agencies regarding a resident's transition into the community to clarify the roles of any agencies who will be involved in supporting the young person in the community.
- an exit planning booklet is developed to help residents understand the exit planning process and timelines and that it contains helpful hints regarding transition to the community.

Conclusion

‘Many people, over years, have contributed to this work and have been committed to DCSI’s vision for a new approach to Youth Justice in South Australia.’

Director, Business Affairs, DCSI

Young people who are detained may themselves be victims of abuse and neglect, family dysfunction and social disadvantage. There is a fine balance between providing a nurturing environment that enables and supports personal growth and development and being a custodial caretaker overseeing a group of young people who have committed offences that require their incarceration.

The consultation indicated that the AYTC management team did not take the detention of young people lightly and viewed their confinement as an opportunity to help them to gain new skills and to encourage positive change in their lives.

It cannot be presumed that the recommendations in the *Voices from Within* report in September 2011 was the primary influence in the changes observed at the AYTC. However, the voices of young people at the CYTC and the MYTC influenced the development and execution of programs and services and contributed to the creation of a more therapeutic environment at the new Centre.

The Council is hopeful that the recommendations in the New Beginnings report will contribute to good outcomes for the young people who spend time at the AYTC.

References

Justice Health and Juvenile Justice (2011), *2009 Young People in Custody Health Survey*. Justice Health Statewide Services NSW

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2013), *Youth detention population in Australia 2013*. Juvenile Justice Series Number 13. Cat. no. JUV 31. Canberra: AIHW

Appendix 1

The consultation process and extracts of information provided by the AYTC management team and the Guardian for Children and Young People

Prior to the commencement of the consultation, a questionnaire was developed by the Council and staff from the Youth Justice, Community Engagement and Organisational Support Division, DCSI. The questionnaire is similar to one used in the consultation in 2011 with minor differences.

The questionnaire focussed on eight concepts defined as:

- Information provided before and during admission to the Centre
- Day to day life at the Centre
- Education
- Contact with family (and significant others)
- Health
- Providing feedback
- Staff
- Exit planning

Residents aged 15 years and above who were in the AYTC at Goldsborough Road in December 2013, were invited to take part in the consultation.³ Letters informing residents about the proposed consultation as well as consent forms were distributed via staff to the four male and one female 12-bed units. Eighteen residents agreed to be interviewed (three female and 15 male, aged 16 – 21 years). This represented about 36% of the population of residents.

Two participants chose to be interviewed together while the remainder elected to be interviewed individually. The interviews ranged from 45 minutes to two hours and took place after school and over one weekend over seven calendar days. Seventeen interviews were held at the community centre (where visits take place) and one in a unit. The community centre overlooks recreational areas and gardens of native vegetation and there are rooms down one side (where the consultations were held). Although security staff escorted participants to and from the community centre, during the interviews they remained outside of the interview room.

Before each interview, the interviewer established that participants were aware that they had a choice about being involved. The interviewer explained the background to the consultation and confirmed consent to participate.

Participants were reminded that:

- the process was confidential

³ All residents at the AYTC are 15 years or older.

- no personal information or identifying markers would be included in any report that was generated following the completion of the interviews and
- their participation was voluntary and that they could choose not to answer a particular question(s) and/or to stop the interview at any time.

All participants were willing to answer all of the questions. Three interviews were interrupted due to scheduled sporting activities or family meetings however, all three participants returned to complete the interview at a new time.

The AYTC management team provided an overview of the Centre's operations and the changes that have taken place since the Centre replaced the CYTC & the MYTC in August 2012 for young people 15 years and older.

Admission and assessment

On admission, the Assessment and Case Coordination Team undertakes a thorough evaluation of the young person's circumstances. The multidisciplinary Assessment and Case Coordination Team consists of case coordinators (including two Aboriginal case coordinators), senior practitioners, cultural consultants, program coordination staff and specialist administration staff that support the team.

During assessment information is collected from the young person and from other sources including SAPOL, schools, family members, case managers, social workers (if applicable), behaviour support staff, accommodation staff and health workers. The young person's cultural status is recorded and if there are specific orders such as Guardianship orders in place these are also recorded. An individualised plan is developed for each young person whose term of detention will be longer than four weeks and he or she is assigned a custodial case manager.

Medical, mental health and allied health services

The Health Centre operates from Monday to Friday and locums and agency nurses are used out of hours if required. A doctor's clinic occurs weekly on each campus. CAMHS staff have a daily presence and interact with unit staff and teams. Psychologists attend unit meetings. Psychiatric services operate fortnightly. A Dental clinic operates weekly. Drug and Alcohol Services SA (DASSA) provides drug and alcohol assessment and intervention services and offers a specifically designed 10-week drug and alcohol group program at the Centre. Medical, CAMHS and allied health services staff facilitate access to external specialist medical services for residents as required.

Critical incidents

Bi-monthly, Advocates from the Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People (GYCP) visit the Centre to meet with residents and to review incident reports. The Council sought information from the GCYP about formal processes for the visits

including any Memoranda of Agreement and about what occurs during a typical visit. In February 2014, the GCYP advised of agreed, written processes between the GCYP and the Centre for formal and informal visits. During a typical bi-monthly visit, the Advocates review records, interview the delegated Manager⁴ about safety issues and talk with residents in accordance with the following agreed process:

- interview the manager of the Centre about recent changes, care concern investigations, training provided and other issues notified in advance
- review records for the preceding month (including critical incident reports, written records of complaints and use of safe room logs)
- obtain the comments of the residents during an informal visit to two of the units
- clarify identified problems with the on-duty manager
- interview other staff as required
- report observations to the GCYP and the General Manager AYTC and the Director Youth Justice and
- discuss persistent issues with the Director Youth Justice on a quarterly basis.

An extract of the GCYP's response to three questions about critical incidents is:

What constitutes a critical incident?

A critical incident involves a serious breach of procedures for a safe environment and may consist of physical assault, threats of violence, smuggling in of banned products, drug use or deliberate property damage.

What are the options for responding to incidents eg restraint or counselling?

The AYTC staff undertake training in behaviour management which emphasises de-escalation (of tension) and non-physical intervention. Undoubtedly incidents are avoided because of the use of de-escalation techniques. Physical restraint is to be used a last resort only to prevent harm and in accordance with the *Family and Community Services Regulations 2009 (SA)*.

How were incidents reported, managed and concluded?

Over time the incident reports have improved in detail and review. Most now include comments from the young person about the incident.

Education

The AYTC management stated the YEC focuses on accreditation of learning using the national curriculum in the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE), Technical and Further Education (TAFE) and Vocational Education and Training (VET). Sewing is also taken up by many of the female and male students.

⁴ The GCYP advised in February 2014 that prior to the commencement of monitoring activities at the new Centre, the General Manager had advised the GCYP that the responsibility for preparing for and participating in visits from the GCYP was to be delegated to the two Accommodation Managers.

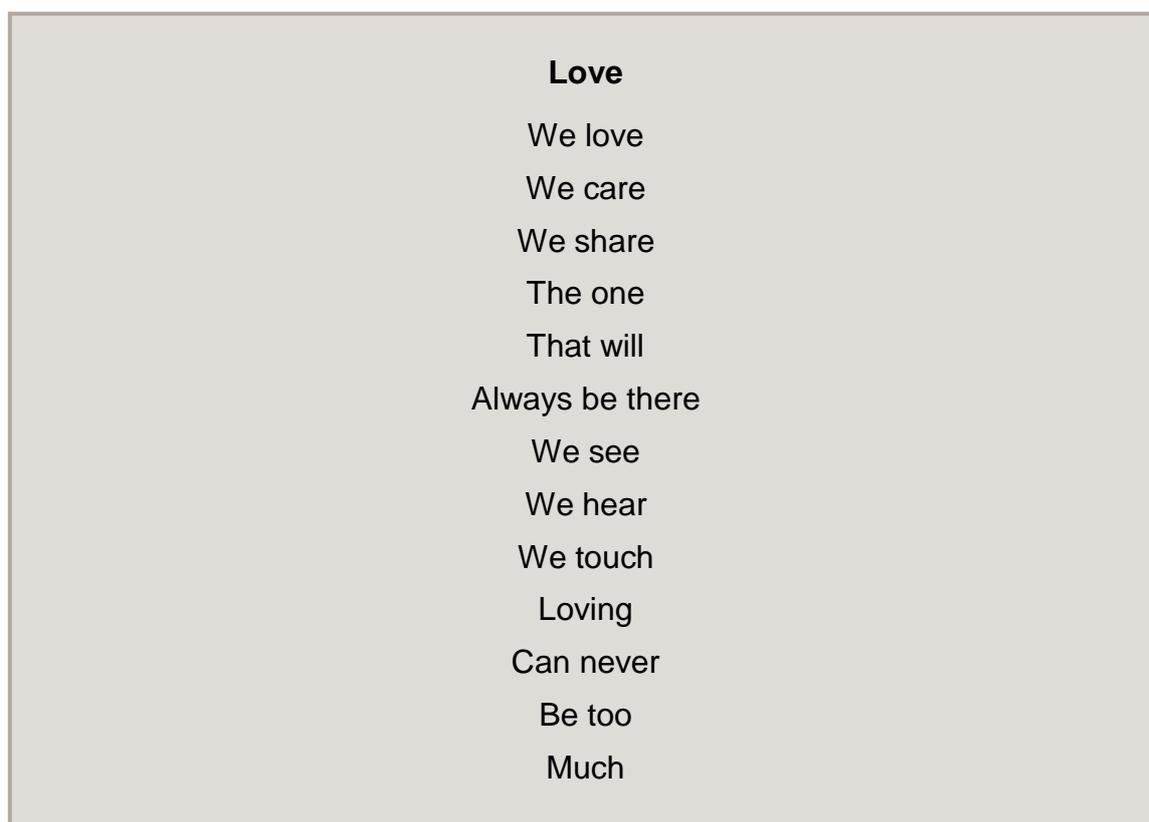
In December 2013, the YEC offered the following certificate courses:

- Food handling and hospitality
- Woodwork
- Horticulture
- Building Links program
- Building and Construction
- Community services
- Business studies
- Youth work.

Contact with family and significant others

Telephone calls

Calls are permitted to people on a pre-approved list of individuals or couples. The pre-approved list can be altered on request.



Visits

Residents are permitted to receive visitors twice a week with one visit taking place during the week and the other over the weekend. Special visits can and do occur and are generally approved for visits with a resident's child(ren). The visits are held in the main part of the community centre which can accommodate larger groups.

Love

I'm locked
You're my key
Promise to never set me free
I got you
You got me
We are whole
Soul meets soul
Let love
Take control

Youth Advisory Council and complaints

Youth Advisory Council (YAC)

The YAC was established in August 2013 and meets on a monthly basis. The election of representatives is by peer selection (or a resident can volunteer to represent his or her unit.⁵ The YAC membership includes management staff from accommodation, administration and case coordination and the catering manager. There is a set agenda for meetings and representatives can add items three to four days before a meeting.

Complaints

Complaints boxes have been installed in units and residents can lodge issues, complaints and feedback on a feedback/suggestion form in the complaints box. All submissions are dealt with in the same way, the only difference being that a personal response cannot be given to a resident who has anonymously raised an issue or made a complaint. Reportedly the nature of issues and complaints is varied.

In February 2014, the Council asked the GCYP to respond to the following questions about complaints reviewed by GCYP Advocates during their last visit:

What was the nature of the complaints?

The issues raised by residents were commonly about personal hygiene products, the quality of the food, staff conduct and misunderstanding of the 'phases' used for behaviour and clothing.

⁵ Only residents who have reached Phase Two or higher can take up the YAC roles.

In talking to unit residents do they raise matters that are similar or dissimilar to the written complaints? Can you give an example please?

The discussion invariably covers some of the same topics as the written complaints and new topics or more detail about the issues. At the last visit residents talked more about post-release anxiety, education and rehabilitation programs, contact with support staff and their comments about the complaint process itself.

Were responses to complaints deemed satisfactory?

All written responses were respectful. When the Centre first opened, responses were inconsistent with some being appropriate and informative and others being stock replies with a lack of detail. Following a meeting between the GCYP Senior Advocate and the General Manager AYTC in August 2013, there have been significant improvements. In the GCYP report on August and September 2013, the Advocates reported that the responses were appropriate, informative and respectful.

Staffing matters

Staff Training

The AYTC management team indicated that the Centre has a dedicated training team consisting of a supervisor and two staff members. They undertake the staff training programs and work closely with the DCSI College for Learning and Development on conducting and developing programs including Certificate IV in Youth Justice. Eighty per cent of all training programs are managed internally and all unit staff are required to have, or attain, this qualification within a 12 - 24 month period.

Accommodation unit staff

The AYTC management team stated the accommodation unit staff have the responsibility of ensuring each unit runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. They aim to provide the residents under their care with exemplars of positive role modelling relating to conflict resolution, building healthy and respectful relationships, and being mindful of how one's behaviour, both negative and positive, can impact on others' wellbeing.

Exit planning

Amongst other things, an exit planning booklet that contains helpful hints regarding transition to the community and to help residents understand the exit planning process and timelines would be useful.

Appendix 2



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Consultation with Young People at Adelaide Youth Training Centre *Information for Participants*

Background

In 2011, the Council for the Care of Children spoke with many young people who lived at Magill and Cavan Training Centres about what it is like to live there. Young people were also asked about how the new centre, now known as the Adelaide Training Centre, could improve support and services and with preparing any young person who was about to return back into the community. Their thoughts and ideas were very important and helped to shape the way the Adelaide Training Centre provides support and services to young people who live there.

The Council said that it would return to talk with young people once the new centre had been opened for 12 months.

The Council and the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion – Youth Justice is interested in hearing from young people about their experiences in living at the centre.

What does it mean if I agree to take part in the consultation?

You will be interviewed individually about your ideas about the support, services and activities provided at the centre.

What will be asked?

The interviewer will ask you about:

- The information you received when you first arrived at the centre
- Your day-to-day life at the centre
- What school / activities / programs are provided at the Education Centre
- What services are provided to improve your health and wellbeing
- The staff at the centre

- What help is provided to help you return to the community – *if you are about to leave the centre*
- What works and what doesn't

Confidentiality

The ideas and views that you and other young people give us will be put together into a report, but no names will be used anywhere in it – so who said what will remain confidential to the interview, and will not be told to staff or anyone else.

If we are concerned about your safety or wellbeing, we are obliged to tell someone who is responsible for you.

Results of the consultation

The results from the interviews will be put together in a report which will be shared with staff of the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion. No names will be used in the report anywhere or ever told to other people.

Agreement

If you decide you would like to take part, you will be asked to sign at the bottom of this form.

By signing it, you are telling us that:

- You understand what you have read and been told about the consultation;
- You agree to take part;
- You agree to the use of your views in a report as described above.

You will be given a copy of this Information Form to keep.

I would like to be interviewed

Signed: _____ **Witness:** _____

Date: _____

Appendix 3



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Questionnaire for Adelaide Youth Training Centre Participants

Information provided to young people

1. When you were told you were going to spend time at the Adelaide Youth Training Centre (AYTC) did you know anything about the place? If yes, what did you know and who told you? If no, what sort of place did you think you were going to?
2. Before you arrived here, did anyone explain to you what was going to happen once you got here?
3. What information was given to you when you arrived at here at the AYTC? (*prompts – about rules, your rights, what happened when things went wrong (behaviour management), services in the centre*)
4. Were you given any written information when you arrived? (*prompts - a booklet about the rules and your rights*)
5. What information was given to you about living in your unit here at the AYTC? Can you tell me what your first day was like?
6. Was there anything you would have liked to have been told about the AYTC or about living here and had to find out for yourself? (*prompt – how did you find out what you wanted to know*)

Day to day life

7. Can you tell me what you do on a normal day during the week (Mon – Fri) starting from when you get up, until when you go to bed?
8. Can you tell me what you do on the weekends starting from when you get up until when you go to bed?
9. How do you have a say in the activities you are involved in during the week and on weekends? (*prompt – if so when and what*).
10. Are there other young people in the centre that you share activities with or like to spend time with?
11. Can you tell me how young peoples' behaviour is managed in the centre? (*prompt = when young people are doing well, when things go wrong, when there are problems between young people*)
12. If you are from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background, or from another culture that is not Australian, how are your cultural needs taken into account? (*prompt – how does this happen*)

Education

13. With the schooling/education provided at the centre:
 - a) What has been most helpful to you?
 - b) What has been the least helpful?
 - c) What courses are you doing now? (*prompt – high school or TAFE certificate course*)
14. What opportunities are there here at the AYTC for you to be involved in job related learning experiences or activities? Can you tell me about them?
15. Are there activities/courses you would like to be involved in that are currently not being offered at the education centre?

Visit by family / Significant others

16. How often are you able to contact your family by telephone?
17. What does the centre do to support or help you have contact with your family?

Health

18. What supports and services are available in the centre with your health and wellbeing?
19. Do you think these supports and services at the centre have helped you? (*prompt – if not, do you have any suggestions how these could be changed so that your needs are met*)

Providing feedback

20. How do young people share their views, ideas and make suggestions about activities and day-to-day life at the centre? (*prompt – if so, what are they*)

Staff

21. Who has been the most helpful person while you have been at the centre? (*prompt – unit staff, teacher, psychologist, social worker, youth worker*)

22. Why do you say this person(s) has been the most helpful?

Exit planning – for young people who will be leaving AYTC

23. As time draws near to when you leave AYTC, what has happened here to help you prepare for the move back into the community?

24. Who has helped you to prepare for the move?

25. During your time at the centre, what activities, support and services have helped you increase your confidence about returning to the community?

26. Can you name three things that would make (or would have made) your time at the centre a more positive experience?