

Report: Learnings From the Hedland House Youth Facility and Implications for a Carnarvon Youth Overnight Safety Service

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Date: January 2026




Introduction

This report provides a detailed overview of the operational model, strengths, and outcomes of the Hedland House Youth Facility in South Hedland, with the purpose of informing the development of a similar Youth Overnight Safety Service in Carnarvon. Drawing directly from consultation with staff and observations during the site visit on 22–23 January 2026, this report outlines the pressing needs addressed by Hedland House and demonstrates how an equivalent service would be beneficial—and urgently necessary—for children and young people in Carnarvon.

Background: Why Hedland House Exists

Hedland House was established in response to a significant number of children—predominantly Aboriginal—who had no safe place to sleep due to unsafe, antisocial, illegal, or violent behaviour within their homes. Many children had no access to food, hygiene facilities, clean clothes, or appropriate supervision.

Before the facility opened, the only support available was a basic bus service providing food and water. The need for a staffed, safe, overnight environment became critical as youth homelessness and complex family crises escalated.

 **The Carnarvon context mirrors these issues closely.** Carnarvon experiences consistent youth roaming late at night, young people escaping harmful environments, children experiencing food insecurity, family violence, overcrowding, and limited access to 24/7 safety services. A purpose-built overnight safety service would fill a systemic gap not currently addressed by any agency.

Governance and Community Control

The Hedland House model is run by Juliyardi, an Aboriginal-led organisation governed by Traditional Owners and Elders, employing nearly 60 staff across multiple service domains.

This governance model provides:

- Cultural authority and legitimacy
- Community trust
- Strong engagement with children and families
- Better alignment with cultural protocols
- An environment where children feel safe and understood

More Details on Julyardi and the wrap around services can be found in Appendix 2

For Carnarvon

Where cultural leadership and genuine community partnership are essential, a similar model led by local Aboriginal organisations (or in partnership with them) would ensure that the service is culturally safe, accepted, and effective.

Location, Operating Hours, and Service Model

Strategic Location

Hedland House is strategically located close to the Department for Communities (Child Protection) and near the local police station—an intentional placement that supports integrated service responses.

Operating Hours

Although the need exists seven nights a week, the service currently operates Thursday–Saturday, 9:30 pm to 5:30 am, with an aspiration to expand to 7 days pending funding.

Carnarvon Application

This mirrors Carnarvon's pattern of weekend escalations in youth safety risks, youth roaming, and antisocial behaviour. In Carnarvon, a seven-night service would be even more beneficial due to limited alternative supports and the unique challenges associated with transience, poverty, and housing shortages.

Entry, Consent, and Legal Considerations

Significant legal work and consultation informed the Hedland House model due to the vulnerability of very young children accessing the service—including children as young as four years old.



Key legal features include:

- Children enter by their own consent
- Children can leave at any time
- Police or Crisis Care become involved if unsafe or high-risk situations arise

This consent-based model respects the autonomy of young people while providing a legally defensible framework for their safety. Carnarvon would benefit from adopting this same approach, particularly due to the large number of unsupervised children who currently roam the streets at night without safe alternatives.

Partnerships and Interagency Collaboration

Hedland House succeeds because of its strong working relationships with:



South Hedland Police

Direct CAD line access to police, providing immediate responses during critical incidents



Department for Communities

Child Protection services with coordinated case management



Hospital and Emergency Services

Medical support and crisis intervention when needed



Crisis Accommodation

Local crisis accommodation services for ongoing support

Notably, the service has direct CAD line access to police, providing immediate responses during critical incidents. This high-trust, integrated model ensures fast, safe, and appropriate escalation.

- ❑ In Carnarvon, where multi-agency coordination is essential and already improving through the Justice Reinvestment group, a dedicated youth overnight facility would strengthen these partnerships and allow agencies to respond proactively rather than reactively.

Staffing Model, Safety Checks, and Data Systems

The Hedland House staffing model includes:

- A multicultural workforce (with Aboriginal representation)
- A minimum adult-to-child ratio of 1:4
- Staff who remain awake all night, with no dozing permitted

Every child undergoes:

- A vulnerability check upon entry
- A rapid safety screen
- Repeated checks each time they re-enter during the same night

Consistent daily follow-up occurs for every child.

This rigor and accountability would significantly strengthen Carnarvon's current capabilities, as no existing service undertakes this level of systematic safety screening and follow-up with vulnerable children who are roaming or homeless.



For Carnarvon, implementing a system like APRICOT from the outset would provide the infrastructure needed to demonstrate impact, ensure quality service delivery, and build a strong evidence base for ongoing funding and service expansion.

APRICOT Data System

This is supported by the APRICOT data system, which allows:

- Real-time information capture
- Data-driven decision-making
- Comprehensive follow-up
- Mapping of trends and risk factors

See attached Appendix 1 for a more detailed overview of the APRICOT system.

Food, Health, and Basic Needs Provision

Hot Meals

Provided by the Sobering Up Shelter and local hotels

Nutritious Snacks

Available throughout the night

Clean Clothing

Donated and purchased from KMart

Laundry and Shower Facilities

Full hygiene support available

Hygiene Products

Access to essential personal care items

Dietitian Support

A local dietitian regularly supports the service due to the high levels of nutritional neglect experienced by many children

Carnarvon children experience comparable food insecurity and poor nutrition, particularly those living in overcrowded homes or escaping family violence. A service providing reliable access to these essentials would produce immediate health and wellbeing benefits.

Youth Presenting Under the Influence or in Crisis

Children who arrive intoxicated or under the influence are admitted, with police support if behaviour escalates.

For Carnarvon, where alcohol and drug impacts on children and young people are significant, this inclusive approach prevents further harm, exploitation, and risk exposure on the streets.

Community Context: Transient and Abandoned Children

Hedland House frequently supports:

- Children left behind when families leave town
- Children from outlying communities
- Children with no safe home or place to stay

This is a direct parallel to Carnarvon, where:

- Children are often couch-surfing
- Families are highly mobile
- Some children are left unsupervised when adults travel between communities

A local service would reduce hidden homelessness and provide structured support.

Impact on Youth Crime and Community Safety

"Since opening the data has been mapped and a clear and definitive decrease in youth crime and antisocial behaviour has been recorded on the nights Hedland House operates."

This is crucial.

A similar facility in Carnarvon would:

- Reduce youth crime
- Reduce antisocial behaviour
- Reduce harm to children
- Support police and child protection agencies
- Improve community safety
- Prevent children from entering the justice system

This is the strongest possible justification for GDC investment.



Appendix 1: Juliyardi Organisation

Juliyardi Aboriginal Corporation is a South Hedland-based Aboriginal organisation committed to empowering Aboriginal families and communities through culturally informed programs, leadership, and support services.

Overview

Juliyardi Aboriginal Corporation, established on **March 22, 2018**, is registered as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC)(ABN 78 525 401 907) and operates primarily in **Western Australia**, particularly South Hedland and the Pilbara region.

It functions under the guidance of Hedland Aboriginal Strong Leaders, focusing on community leadership, cultural preservation, and social support.

Mission and Values

The corporation emphasizes:

- **Cultural empowerment:** Aboriginal voices guide programs, ensuring services are culturally safe and informed.
- **Inspiration:** Leadership initiatives aim to encourage positive change within the community.
- **Empowerment:** Elders, youth, and communities are supported to drive self-determined outcomes.

Programs and Services

Juliyardi provides a range of programs aimed at supporting Aboriginal families and children:

- **Kumaparniku:** Supports families with children under 5 years using a holistically informed approach to improve health, education, and family wellbeing.
- **Mara Yunguma:** Offers wrap-around support to isolated families, assisting them with housing, education, employment, and recreational opportunities.
- **Karlyarti (Target-120 Program):** Supports young people aged 10–14 who have had contact with police, helping them engage in positive activities and reducing reoffending through family-inclusive services.
- **Julu Kuma Ngarlijuru:** Focuses on early childhood empowerment, inclusivity, and integrated services for children.
- **Kanyjaru Ngarnarna Wapa:** A partnership with MacKillop Family Services providing intensive support to women and families experiencing domestic violence, enabling safer family environments.

Community Engagement

Julyardi actively contributes to cultural preservation, education, and community-building initiatives including **NAIDOC Week Awards**, concerts, bush meetings, and sports events in partnership with organizations such as BHP, FMG, and local trusts. The corporation also emphasizes strong relationships with Elders and Aboriginal communities to pass on cultural knowledge and leadership skills to younger generations.

Leadership

The organisation benefits from a diverse leadership team including Kariyarra-Yindjibarndi-Palyku Elders and other Aboriginal leaders who provide guidance on cultural heritage, land management, and community programs. Founder Raylene Button and other board members ensure alignment with Aboriginal cultural values and community needs.

[Julyardi Aboriginal Corporation Port Hedland](#)

Appendix 2: APRICOT Data System

APRICOT (now known as Bonterra Apricot) is a comprehensive case management software platform designed specifically for nonprofit organizations and social service providers. It serves as the data backbone for Hedland House, enabling systematic tracking, reporting, and follow-up for every child who accesses the service.

What is APRICOT?

APRICOT is an all-in-one database platform that can track and manage any data set, with custom reporting capabilities, dashboards, and role-based security permissions. It is specifically designed for small to mid-sized nonprofit organizations working in social services, youth services, case management, and community support programs.

Key Features and Capabilities

- **Real-time data capture:** Staff can record information immediately as children enter and exit the service
- **Comprehensive participant tracking:** Detailed records of every interaction, vulnerability assessment, and safety screen
- **Custom reporting and dashboards:** Generate reports on trends, demographics, risk factors, and service utilization
- **Workflow automation:** Streamlined processes for intake, assessment, and follow-up
- **Secure data management:** Role-based permissions ensure confidentiality and compliance
- **Integration capabilities:** Can connect with other systems and databases for coordinated service delivery

Advantages for a Carnarvon Youth Overnight Safety Service

- **Evidence-based decision making:** Data reveals patterns in youth roaming, peak times, and recurring safety concerns
- **Accountability and transparency:** Clear documentation of every child served and outcomes achieved
- **Improved follow-up:** Systematic tracking ensures no child falls through the cracks
- **Funding justification:** Robust data demonstrates impact and supports grant applications and government funding requests
- **Interagency coordination:** Shareable data (with appropriate permissions) enables better collaboration with police, child protection, and other services
- **Continuous improvement:** Trend analysis identifies what's working and where service gaps exist

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