

The Case for an Overnight Youth Safety Facility in Carnarvon

A Justice Reinvestment–Aligned, Community–Led, Wrap–Around Model.

Prepared for Gascoyne Development Commission

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1. Introduction

Carnarvon is a vibrant regional community with strong family, cultural, and community ties. At the same time, it faces persistent and well-documented challenges relating to youth vulnerability, family stress, intergenerational trauma, disengagement from education, and over-representation of First Nations young people in child protection and youth justice systems.

An overnight youth facility in Carnarvon is not a punitive response. It is a protective, preventative, and restorative intervention—one that prioritises safety, family connection, cultural continuity, and human rights. Properly designed, governed, and resourced, such a facility would reduce harm, strengthen families, and provide a stable pathway for young people who are currently falling through service gaps, particularly at night.

This report outlines why an overnight youth facility is needed, what it should look like, how it should operate, and how it would support young people, including those returning from detention, in ways that improve outcomes for children, families, and the wider Carnarvon community.

2. What Young People in Carnarvon Are Telling Us

- We want safe places to go and people we trust
- Mental health support needs to be local and culturally safe
- School and life stress is high – understanding helps
- Housing stability matters for our wellbeing
- We want a future with real opportunities here in Carnarvon



3. Disadvantage

Carnarvon Ranks Among the Most Disadvantaged in WA

The DOTE 2021 Western Australia fact sheet lists Carnarvon as one of the top disadvantaged locations in the state, persisting across multiple iterations of the report (including earlier editions). This means Carnarvon ranks in the highest quintile of disadvantage on multiple socioeconomic and wellbeing indicators, even when other areas are measured.

Persistent, Multilayered Disadvantage in Regional Towns Like Carnarvon

The report emphasises that disadvantage in some regional and remote communities is persistent and multilayered, often rooted in a complex interplay of factors such as:

- low income and unemployment,
- family and intergenerational disadvantage,
- poor education and training outcomes,
- social and community safety issues (including youth justice indicators, juvenile convictions and prison admissions),
- limited access to services.

These intersecting factors create environments where young people are more vulnerable to harm, disengagement and contact with the justice system – precisely the conditions that underscore the need for early-intervention and supportive services.

Place-Based and Community-Led Responses Are Central to Addressing Disadvantage

A core position/implication of the DOTE 2021 report is that place-based approaches are most likely to achieve sustained change in communities experiencing complex disadvantage. The report argues that tailored solutions developed within and for specific local contexts – rather than generic, off-the-shelf services – have the best chance of success.

Although this is not phrased as a specific prescription for an overnight youth facility, it strongly supports the logic of creating locally tailored interventions like an overnight stay facility in Carnarvon – especially where:

- youth disadvantage, disengagement and risk are evident,
- services are limited or inaccessible in evenings and nights,
- traditional service responses (e.g. police) do not align with therapeutic or preventative goals, and
- community and youth voices call for culturally safe, supportive alternatives.

Summary

The persistent and multilayered disadvantage in Carnarvon, as highlighted by the DOTE 2021 report, underscores the critical need for early-intervention and supportive services. Place-based, community-led responses, such as a locally tailored overnight youth facility, are essential to address these complex challenges and provide a safe, protective, and restorative pathway for young people in the community.

1, Local Evidence, as Highlighted by DOTE, Strengthens the Case for Targeted Youth Supports

The DOTE report's broad indicator analysis (including measures of youth not in employment, education or training, and other markers of disadvantage) aligns with the lived experience in Carnarvon outlined in local survey data. Taken together, this evidence base justifies not only enhanced youth services but also a safe overnight stay option that functions as an early-intervention, trauma-informed resource – not just crisis care.

In summary, while DOTE 2021 does not explicitly recommend an overnight stay facility for Carnarvon, it:

categorises Carnarvon as deeply disadvantaged across multiple indicators,

highlights the persistence of youth-related disadvantage,

advocates for place-based tailored responses, and

reinforces the rationale for community-driven, locally anchored services designed to improve life opportunities for young people.

This makes the DOTE findings a powerful supporting reference for any argument aimed at securing investment in structured supports – including overnight stay options – for children and young people in Carnarvon. **Carnarvon is ranked in the top tier of disadvantage (the most disadvantaged locations) in Western Australia** according to the Dropping Off the Edge index, which assesses communities on over 37 indicators of disadvantage, including employment, education, health, housing, income, crime and social participation.

- This ranking places Carnarvon alongside other remote and regional towns facing entrenched social and economic challenges – signalling that disadvantage is not mild or isolated, but **deep and persistent**.

Source: Dropping Off The Edge Index 2021 / https://www.dote.org.au/western-australia?utm_source=chatgpt.com

4. What This Means for Young People

High Rates of Youth Disengagement

One of the strongest drivers of locational disadvantage in WA is "youth not in employment, education or training" (NEET) – meaning young people who are neither working nor studying.

In communities like Carnarvon, this reflects limited local jobs, few training pathways, and barriers to sustained education – all of which erode young people's life chances early.

Persistent Intergenerational Disadvantage

DOTE's index reflects complex, overlapping forms of disadvantage that can be passed from one generation to the next – including unemployment, low income, poor educational outcomes, crime contact and health issues.

For Aboriginal young people, whose families have often borne centuries of structural disadvantage, this entanglement makes progress harder without place-based investment.

High Index Presence of Social and Economic Barriers

While the detailed indicator scores for Carnarvon itself are not publicly broken out in summary fact sheets, the broader WA findings show:

- Unemployment, low income and jobless parents are among the most common indicators where disadvantaged communities score poorly.
- These same indicators are strongly reflected in broader WA disadvantage areas and are known predictors of poor youth outcomes such as school disengagement, early school leaving, behavioural issues and involvement with the justice system.

Compounded Disadvantage Often Includes Service Gaps

Common features of highly disadvantaged areas include limited local access to services, such as mental health, post-school training, career guidance, housing support, and early childhood and family services – all essential for improving young people's futures.

Remote and regional areas like Carnarvon often have even fewer services than other parts of WA, adding an access barrier that makes addressing disadvantage more difficult.

5. Impact on Aboriginal Young People in Carnarvon

Drawing on broader research and DOTE insights:

Educational and Employment Pathways

Young Indigenous people are more likely to experience lower school completion rates and face barriers to training and employment – which in disadvantaged locations leads to higher NEET rates and fewer local pathways.

Health and Wellbeing

Areas with concentrated disadvantage show increased health vulnerabilities, including mental health concerns, which are exacerbated by limited local services and the intergenerational stress experienced by many Aboriginal families.

Housing and Economic Stress

Low income and housing stress factor into locational disadvantage, affecting young people's stability, safety and opportunities for further education or work.

6. Voices of Aboriginal People in Regional WA /Carnarvon -

Insights informed by the Mission Australia Youth Survey 2023 /<https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/what-we-do/evidence-impact-and-advocacy/research/youth-survey>.

Introduction

This information provides a tailored overview of key issues affecting Aboriginal young people in Carnarvon. While informed by national Youth Survey data, the findings strongly reflect lived experiences in regional and remote Western Australia.

Key Challenges for Aboriginal Young People

Aboriginal young people experience compounded challenges related to schooling, mental health, family stress, housing instability and limited access to culturally safe services. Many young people report high levels of stress, anxiety and loneliness, often exacerbated by distance from services and lack of transport.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Mental health concerns remain a major issue. Young people report difficulty accessing timely and culturally appropriate mental health support. Trust, confidentiality and continuity of care are essential for Aboriginal young people seeking help.

Education, Employment and Future Pathways

Most Aboriginal young people aspire to finish school, gain employment or continue training. However, barriers such as financial stress, housing instability and limited local pathways reduce confidence in achieving these goals.

Connection to Community and Culture

Strong connection to community, culture and Country is a protective factor. Youth spaces, mentoring programs and on-Country activities support identity, belonging and resilience among Aboriginal young people.

What This Means for Services and Decision-Makers

- Invest in culturally safe, locally delivered youth and mental health services
- Support youth hubs and safe spaces open after hours
- Fund outreach and early-intervention programs
- Include Aboriginal young people in decision-making
- Strengthen pathways into training, employment and housing stability

7. The Local Context: Why Carnarvon Is Uniquely Impacted

Geographic and Service Access Challenges

Carnarvon's regional location limits access to crisis accommodation, youth-specific supports, and after-hours services. When issues escalate at night—family conflict, homelessness, emotional distress, or risk-taking behaviour—there are few safe, youth-appropriate options available locally, in some instances if any!

Without an overnight facility:

- Young people may remain on the streets overnight
- Police become the default "after-hours" response
- Children are placed in inappropriate environments (e.g. watch houses, adult crisis settings)
- Families experience escalating stress and breakdown

8. Over-Representation of First Nations Young People

First Nations children and young people in Carnarvon experience disproportionate contact with child protection, youth justice, and out-of-home care systems. This reflects systemic failure, not individual wrongdoing. The absence of culturally safe, community-led alternatives compounds harm and increases the likelihood of detention, relocation away from Country, and disconnection from family.

9. Human Rights, Youth Justice, and the National Context

Human Rights Day has sharpened national attention on youth justice practices that place children at greater risk rather than protecting them. Organisations such as Children's Ground have raised serious concerns about punitive reforms across Australia, including:

Criminal Responsibility Criminal responsibility for children as young as ten	Increased Detention Increased use of detention, watch houses, and restraints	Family Separation Children being moved far from family and Country	Punitive Policies Policies that prioritise punishment over prevention
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These approaches breach international human rights principles and have failed repeatedly to improve community safety. Children's Ground, alongside legal and child-focused experts, has called for community-designed, culturally grounded systems of care that keep children safe, connected, and supported—exactly the role an overnight youth facility in Carnarvon could fulfil.

Source: [First Nations Not-for-profit Organisation | Children's Ground](#)

10. Why an Overnight Youth Facility Is a Critical Gap-Filler

The Night-Time Risk Window

Evidence consistently shows that risk escalates after hours:

- Substance and Alcohol abuse increases
- Family conflict intensifies
- Youth homelessness becomes visible
- Emotional distress peaks
- Risk-taking behaviour increases

11. Parent-Permission-Based Model

This facility would operate with the child's consent however it is preferable if parental or caregiver consent is provided, reinforcing:

Family Authority

Family authority and involvement

Trust Building

Trust between families and the service

Non-Punitive Approach

A non-punitive, voluntary approach

Parents would see the facility as supportive, not punitive—a place to keep their child safe when things feel overwhelming.

12. Supporting Children & Young People Who Cannot Be at Home

Many children and young people in Carnarvon not all of which are aboriginal experience their homes as unsafe environments due to alcohol and drug misuse, frequent conflict between adults, and exposure to family violence. In these circumstances, heightened emotional volatility, unpredictable behaviour, and impaired caregiving capacity can create an atmosphere of fear and instability. For some children, this includes direct exposure to abuse or neglect, while for others it is the constant anticipation of harm that drives distress. Home, which should provide safety and protection, instead becomes a source of anxiety, leading children to seek distance from situations they perceive as dangerous or overwhelming.

When the home environment feels unsafe, some children choose to leave the house in the evening or late at night as a self-protective response. Roaming the streets, congregating in public spaces, or staying on the move can feel safer than remaining indoors where conflict, substance misuse, or abusive behaviour may escalate. While these behaviours are often interpreted as antisocial or problematic, they are more accurately understood as survival strategies adopted by children attempting to regulate fear, avoid harm, and maintain a sense of control in circumstances where they have limited power.

Children commonly report that they do not return home until the early hours of the morning, often between 3:00 and 4:00 am, when the adults in the household have fallen asleep and the environment becomes quieter and more predictable. At this point, the perceived risk of confrontation, violence, or harm is reduced, allowing children to feel safe enough to return. This pattern highlights a critical safeguarding concern: children are not choosing the streets over home by preference, but because home does not consistently feel safe. Without accessible, safe, and supportive alternatives—particularly after hours—children are left navigating risk alone, increasing their vulnerability to further harm and contact with emergency or justice systems.

12. Unmet Needs

How a Youth Overnight Safety Facility Responds to Children Who Cannot Be Safely at Home

A Youth Overnight Safety Facility provides a critical protective alternative for children and young people who cannot safely remain at home due to alcohol and drug misuse, family violence, chronic conflict, or unpredictable caregiving environments. Where home is experienced as emotionally or physically unsafe, the facility offers a calm, supervised, and trauma-informed space designed specifically to meet children's immediate safety needs after hours. Rather than forcing children to choose between unsafe homes and unsafe streets, the facility ensures that safety is available at the point when risk is highest.

Importantly, the facility recognises and responds to children's behaviour as a survival strategy, not misconduct. Children who leave home at night are often attempting to regulate fear, avoid escalation, and maintain personal safety. A youth overnight safety facility acknowledges this reality and provides an environment that reduces hyper-vigilance, emotional distress, and the need for constant self-protection. Trained staff offer predictable routines, reassurance, and emotional regulation support, allowing children to rest, sleep, and stabilise without fear of confrontation, punishment, or escalation.

The timing of children's return home—often between 3:00 and 4:00 am, once adults have fallen asleep—highlights a profound safeguarding gap. Children are effectively managing their own risk until the environment becomes quiet enough to feel safe. A youth overnight safety facility directly addresses this gap by providing safety throughout the night, rather than leaving children exposed during the most vulnerable hours. This reduces the likelihood of harm, exploitation, injury, or unnecessary contact with police or emergency services, all of which are heightened when children are unsupervised overnight.

Crucially, the facility does not replace family, nor does it operate as a punitive or removal-based response. It functions as a temporary, voluntary, and protective intervention, supporting children until it is safe to return home or appropriate next-day supports can be engaged. Every overnight stay is paired with planned follow-up the following day, including family support, youth work, school engagement, and referrals to specialist services where needed. In this way, the facility responds not only to the immediate safety risk but also to the underlying drivers of harm, ensuring children are no longer left to manage unsafe environments alone.

13. Supporting Children Returning from Detention

The Critical Transition Period

Children leaving detention face an extremely high risk of:

- Re-offending
- Family breakdown
- Homelessness
- Mental health crisis
- Rapid re-incarceration

An overnight youth facility can act as a soft landing, providing:

- Immediate stability on return to community
- Safe accommodation close to family and Country
- Support to reconnect with caregivers
- Structured routines and expectations

14. Impact on Families

For families, the return of a child from detention can be emotionally complex. An overnight facility:



This approach aligns with the words of Children's Ground Chair William Tilmouth, who emphasises that children deserve to grow up with family, language, identity, and opportunity, not isolation and punishment. P.11

15. A True Wrap-Around Service Model

An overnight youth facility must not operate in isolation. It should function as a hub, co-locating or coordinating with services such as:

Core On-Site or Linked Services

- Youth work and case management – Using APRICOT platform or similar
- Cultural mentoring and Elders' involvement
- Mental health and wellbeing support
- Alcohol and other drug services
- Disability and neurodiversity support and understanding
- Education re-engagement services
- Employment and training pathways

16. Child Protection and Justice Interface

Coordinated Support Systems

- Youth Justice case coordination
- Bail and remand support
- Family reunification services
- Legal advocacy and referral

Health and Healing

- Trauma-informed counselling
- Social and emotional wellbeing programs
- Access to primary health care

This integrated model reduces duplication, prevents service fatigue, and ensures young people are surrounded by consistent, reinforcing supports.

17. Cultural Safety and Community Governance

Community-Led Design

The facility must be:



Community Designed

Designed with the Carnarvon community, not for it



Elder Guided

Guided by local Elders and cultural advisors



Culturally Responsive

Responsive to language, culture, and kinship systems

18. Cultural Continuity

Cultural safety is not an "add-on." It is central to:

- Reducing harm
- Strengthening identity
- Supporting emotional regulation
- Building pride and belonging

Culturally grounded care has been shown to improve:

- Early learning participation
- Employment outcomes
- Family stability
- Long-term wellbeing

19. Operations

Governance

The facility should be operated by:

- A local ACCO or in partnership with an ACCO and not-for-profit organisation
- With a local advisory group
- Clear accountability and transparency
- Strong safeguarding and child-safe frameworks
- Support and Representation from WA Police and Department for Communities
- Other local service agency support and representation

Staffing

- Qualified youth workers
- Cultural mentors and community workers
- Trauma-informed practice training
- Clear escalation and safeguarding procedures

20. Principles of Operation

Voluntary
Voluntary and consent-based

Wrap-Around
Wrap around support systems

Prevention-Oriented
Prevention-oriented



Voluntary

Voluntary and consent-based

Child-Centred

Child-centred and rights-focused

Non-Punitive

Non-punitive

Family-Inclusive

Family-inclusive

21. Community Safety and Long-Term Benefits

Contrary to punitive narratives, supportive overnight facilities improve community safety by:

Immediate Benefits

- Reducing youth street presence at night
- Preventing escalation into crime or detention
- Supporting early intervention
- Strengthening family capacity

Long-Term Outcomes

- Reduced justice system costs
- Improved education and employment outcomes
- Stronger family and community cohesion
- Healthier transitions into adulthood

22. Alignment with Human Rights and National Priorities

This model directly responds to national concerns raised by Children's Ground and others:

Family Connection

It keeps children close to family and Country

Child Safety

Complies with the National Child Safe Principles and Safeguarding

Reduced Detention

It reduces reliance on detention and policing

Rights Protection

It honors children's rights to safety, culture, and care

Narrative Shift

It shifts the narrative from punishment to protection

As CEO Jane Vadiveloo has stated, governments and communities hold decisive power over whether children are placed in harm or supported to thrive. An overnight youth facility in Carnarvon is a practical, local expression of that responsibility.

23. Conclusion: A Necessary, Not Optional, Investment

Carnarvon does not need another punitive response. It needs a safe place, at the right time, led by the right people, for the right reasons.

An overnight youth facility:

- Protects children
- Supports families
- Strengthens culture
- Reduces harm
- Improves community safety

Most importantly, it sends a clear message to young people: You belong. You are valued. You deserve safety, dignity, and opportunity.

Community Consultations

Stakeholder consultations were conducted with service providers, in Carnarvon . Seven key themes emerged from these conversations.



Disengagement & Underlying Drivers

"What we're seeing isn't kids being 'bad' — it's kids who are bored, tired, and carrying adult problems. When school disengagement combines with unstable housing or family stress, it doesn't take long before young people end up on the streets at night."

"By the time some students disengage from school, the behaviour is already a symptom of much bigger issues at home. Without somewhere safe and supportive after hours, those issues just escalate."

"There's a strong link between trauma, intergenerational disadvantage, and the behaviour we're seeing. Punitive responses alone aren't shifting anything."

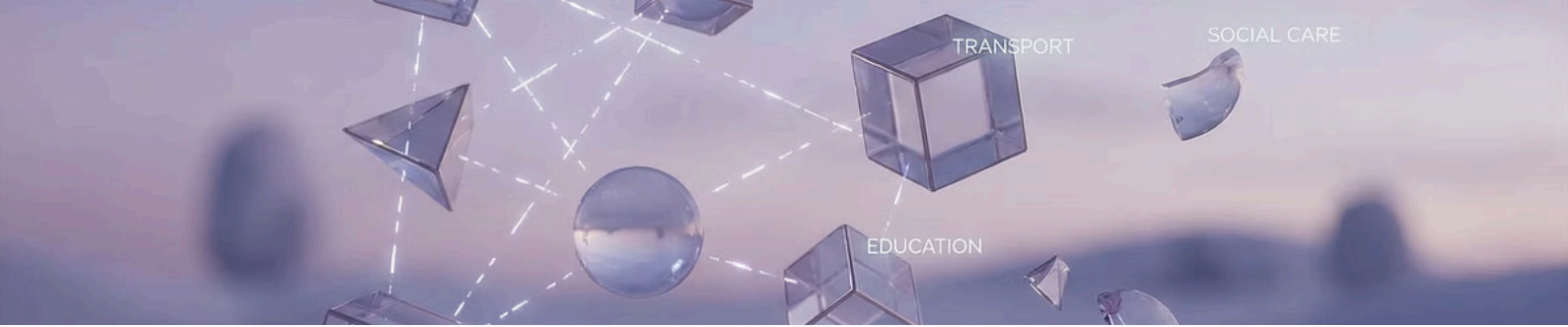


Pme 2: Personal Safety & After-Hours Risk

"Most incidents involving young people happen after hours. Often it's not criminal intent – it's groups of kids with nowhere to go, no supervision, and no safe alternative. We do not want to see children in the Police Lockup but sometimes we have no alternatives."

"When kids feel unsafe at home, they walk. The problem is there's nowhere culturally safe for them to land, especially at night."

"We regularly see young people presenting late at night who don't actually need medical care – they need somewhere safe and calm."



Theme 3: Service Gaps & Fragmentation

Government Agency Representative: "There are services in Carnarvon, but they're not coordinated. Young people fall between the cracks because eligibility criteria don't line up and operating hours don't match need."

NGO Manager: "We're constantly firefighting. There's no central place to triage or wrap services around a young person in a coordinated way. The T120 program isn't really making any large strides as there is limited places to take the children that is culturally appropriate and safe."

Local Council Stakeholder: "Everyone is doing their bit, but there's no shared system. We see duplication in some areas and complete gaps in others."



Theme 4: Youth Engagement & Participation

Youth Worker: "Young people won't engage in programs that feel imposed on them. When they help design something, attendance and behaviour change almost immediately."

Community Leader: "We don't ask young people enough what they want – we just tell them what's available."

School-Based Stakeholder: "The kids who need support the most are the least likely to walk into a formal service."



Theme 5: Cultural Safety & Aboriginal Leadership

Aboriginal Elder / Community Leader: "Any solution has to be Aboriginal-led. We know our kids, our families, and what works here. Too many programs fail because they're designed elsewhere."

Aboriginal Service Provider: "Cultural safety isn't a training session – it's relationships, respect, and consistency. Young people know straight away if something isn't genuine."

Justice Reinvestment Stakeholder: "This work has to strengthen families and community, not just manage behaviour."



Theme 6: Youth Hub Concept – Opportunities & Risks

Multi-Agency Stakeholder: "A youth hub could work if it's more than a building. It needs the right staffing model, clear purpose, and strong governance."

Youth Worker: "If done properly, a hub could prevent a lot of police and crisis responses. If done poorly, it could become another place kids are excluded from."

Aboriginal Organisation Representative: "It has to feel safe, not supervised in a controlling way. Kids need to want to be there."



Theme 7: Collaboration & Long-Term Change

Government Stakeholder: "This project is an opportunity to move away from reactive funding towards evidence-based prevention."

Service Provider: "What's missing is a shared vision and shared responsibility."

Community Stakeholder: "Success would look like fewer kids on the street at night and more kids connected to culture, education, and opportunity."

Summary Insight

Stakeholder feedback consistently highlighted that youth disengagement in Carnarvon is driven by a complex interplay of trauma, family stress, service gaps, and lack of safe after-hours options. Stakeholders strongly supported culturally safe, Aboriginal-led, and coordinated responses, with broad agreement that a youth hub or integrated model could play a key role if appropriately designed, governed, and resourced.

25. PART 4

Youth Voices – Justice Reinvestment Themes

Youth voice consistently highlights that contact with the justice system often occurs not because of criminal intent, but due to unmet needs for safety, belonging, emotional regulation, and culturally safe support. Young people expressed strong support for a safe, after-hours space that is youth-friendly, Aboriginal-led, and focused on prevention rather than punishment.

1. Feeling Unsafe & After-Hours Risk

"When it gets late, there's nowhere to go. You just walk around until something happens."

"When family are drinking and taking drugs we just walk around until everybody has fallen asleep which is about 3 in the morning, then its like safe to go home."

"If you don't want to be at home, you're basically on your own."

"Cops see us hanging around and think we're trouble, but we're just bored."

2. Disengagement from School & Services

"School just didn't feel like it was for me anymore."

"I tried going to services but it felt awkward, like they didn't really get me."

"Once you miss too much school, no one knows what to do with you."



3. Trauma, Stress & Emotional Overload

"People think we're angry, but most of the time we're just stressed."

"When stuff happens at home, it's hard to calm down – no one teaches you how."

"If you've been through a lot, you react quick. That gets you in trouble."



5. Youth Hub – Hopes & Conditions

“A youth hub could be deadly if it's done right.”

“It can't feel like school or police – otherwise no one will go.”

“It needs people who actually care, not just workers ticking boxes.”

6. Cultural Safety & Aboriginal Identity

“You know straight away if a place isn't for you.”

“We want Elders and mob involved, not just outsiders.”

“Culture makes you feel strong – more places should do that.”



7. Youth Voice & Participation

"Adults always decide things for us."

"If you let us help design it, we'd actually show up."

"People talk about us, not with us."

17. What Young People Say Would Help

"Someone to talk to when you're about to lose it."

"A place open at night that's not home or the street."

"Help with stuff like work, training, and feeling confident."

18. Youth Definition of Success

"Success is not getting locked up."

"Success is feeling safe and having something to do."

"Success is having people believe in you."

26. PART 5

Local Surveys

1. Survey Methodology

To further inform the case for an overnight youth facility in Carnarvon, two complementary surveys were undertaken in 2025:

Community Survey

Targeting parents, caregivers, service providers and community members

Schools Survey

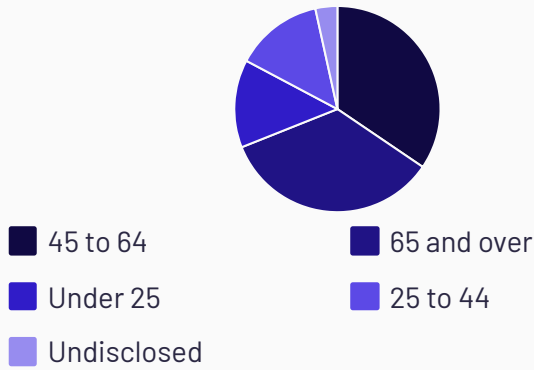
Completed by local students in both private and public schools, police on duty, PCYC and NGALA

Both surveys explored youth needs, safety concerns, preferred supports and ideas for positive activities in Carnarvon. The findings below provide a local, data-driven evidence base and directly align with the trauma-informed, voluntary and wrap-around model proposed in this report.

Surveys were disseminated through schools, youth services, community networks and online platforms. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, consistent with trauma-informed principles, ensuring young people and community members could express their views safely and without fear of judgement or consequence.

2. Community Survey: Age Distribution

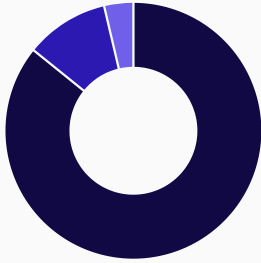
The community survey captured the perspectives of parents, caregivers, Elders, service providers and other community members. A total of approximately 29 responses were recorded for this item.



The age distribution shows strong representation from mature community members, with 68% of respondents aged 45 and over. This reflects engagement from experienced parents, caregivers, and Elders who have deep understanding of youth needs in Carnarvon.

3. Community Survey: Cultural Identity

A total of approximately 29 responses were recorded for this item. The distribution provides important insight into the cultural composition of respondents.



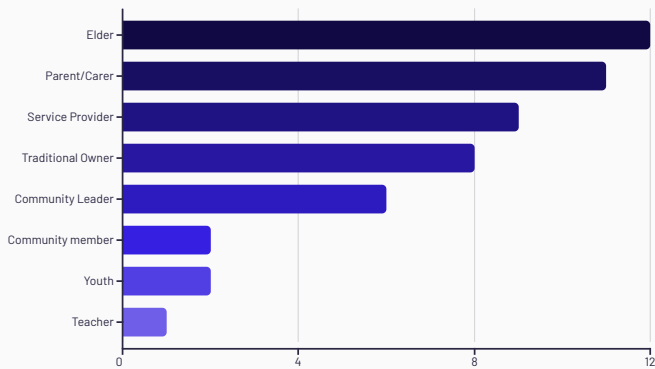
■ Aboriginal or Torres Strait... ■ Non-Indigenous ■ Prefer not to say

An overwhelming 86% of community survey respondents identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, demonstrating strong First Nations community engagement and leadership in this consultation process.

Cultural Identity	Frequency	Percent
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	25	86.0%
Non-Indigenous	3	10.0%
Prefer not to say	1	3.5%

4. Community Survey: Respondent Roles

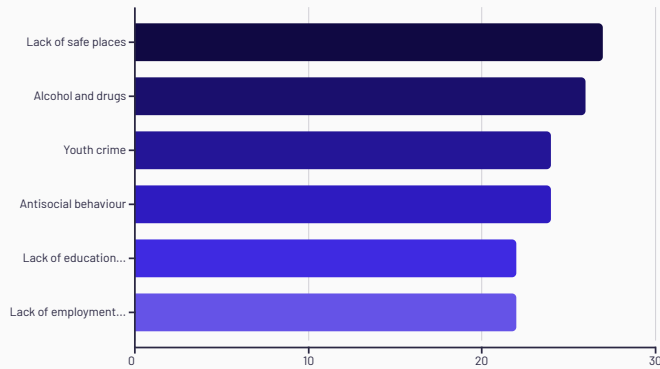
A total of approximately 52 responses were recorded for this item (respondents could select multiple roles).



Respondents represented diverse community roles, with strong representation from Elders (41%), Parents/Carers (38%), and Service Providers (31%). This demonstrates broad community engagement across multiple perspectives.

5. Community Survey: Main Concerns for Young People

A total of approximately 150 responses were recorded for this item (respondents could select multiple concerns).

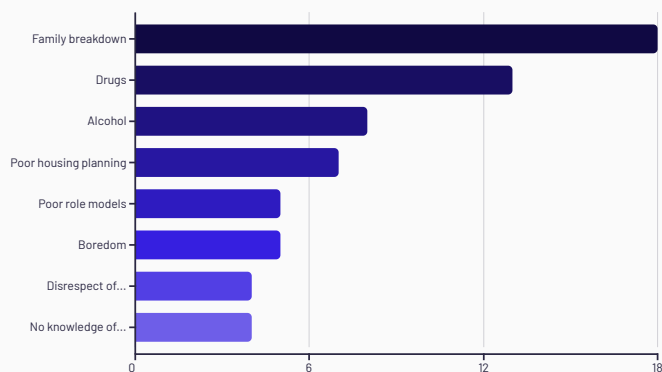


The top concerns identified by community members were lack of safe places (93%), alcohol and drugs (90%), youth crime (83%), and antisocial behaviour (83%). These findings strongly support the need for a safe overnight facility.

Concern	Frequency	Percent
Lack of safe places	27	93.0%
Alcohol and drugs	26	90.0%
Youth crime	24	83.0%
Antisocial behaviour	24	83.0%
Lack of education or training opportunities	22	76.0%
Lack of employment opportunities	22	76.0%
Lack of Parenting skills	2	7.0%
Americanisation Culture	1	3.5%
Language revival	1	3.5%
Lack of weekend activities	1	3.5%

6. Community Survey: Root Causes of Youth Issues

A total of approximately 81 responses were recorded for this item (respondents could select multiple causes).

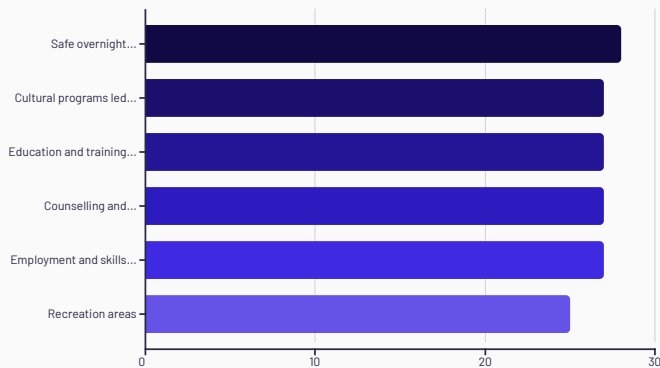


Family breakdown and lack of support was identified as the primary root cause by 62% of respondents, followed by drugs (44%) and alcohol (27%). This highlights the critical need for family-inclusive support services.

Root Cause	Frequency	Percent
Family breakdown / lack of support	18	62.0%
Drugs	13	44.0%
Alcohol	8	27.0%
Poor community housing planning	7	24.0%
Poor role models	5	17.0%
Boredom	5	17.0%
Disrespect of Aboriginal Culture	4	14.0%
No knowledge of Aboriginal History	4	14.0%
Homelessness	3	10.0%
Did not Answer	3	10.0%
Lack of sporting facilities	2	7.0%
Unemployment	2	7.0%
Limited weekend activities	2	7.0%
Limited Education	2	7.0%
Systemic racism	1	3.5%
Peer pressure	1	3.5%
Welfare Reliance	1	3.5%

7. Community Survey: Most Needed Services and Support for an Overnight Facility

A total of approximately 168 responses were recorded for this item (respondents could select multiple services). This question directly asked what should be included in an overnight youth facility.

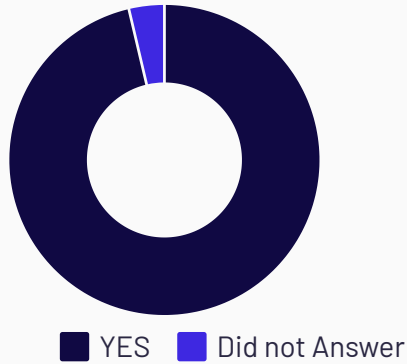


An overwhelming 97% of respondents identified safe overnight accommodation as essential, with 93% also supporting cultural programs, education spaces, counselling services, and employment programs. This demonstrates strong community endorsement for a comprehensive wrap-around facility.

Service	Frequency	Percent
Safe overnight accommodation	28	97.0%
Cultural programs led by Elders	27	93.0%
Education and training spaces	27	93.0%
Counselling and support services	27	93.0%
Employment and skills programs	27	93.0%
Recreation areas	25	86.0%
Youth Leadership Programs	3	10.0%
Community / Youth Service Hub	2	7.0%
Appropriately staffed	1	3.5%
Did not Answer	1	3.5%
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8. Community Survey: Support for Overnight Youth Facility

Question 7 asked directly: "Would you support an overnight youth facility in Carnarvon?" A total of approximately 29 responses were recorded.



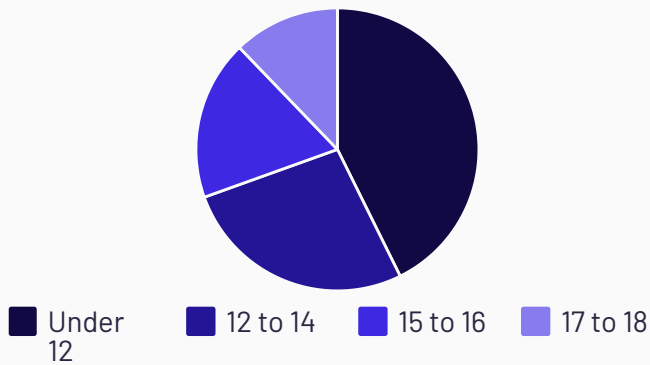
97% of community respondents expressed clear support for an overnight youth facility in Carnarvon. This represents near-unanimous community endorsement for the proposed facility.

Response	Frequency	Percent
YES	28	97.0%
Did not Answer	1	3.5%

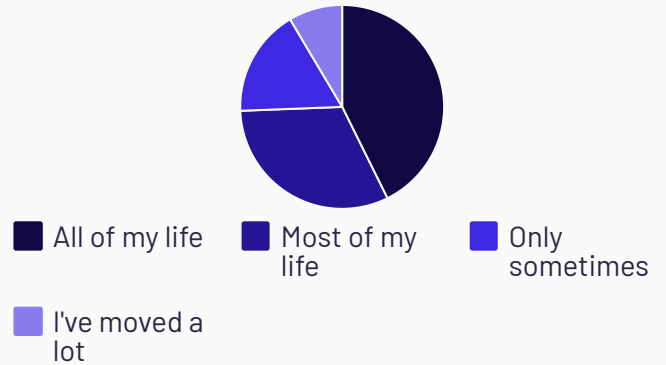
9. Schools Survey: Student Demographics and Connection to Carnarvon

The schools-based survey captured direct input from children and young people in Carnarvon. A total of approximately 82 student responses were recorded.

Age Distribution



Time Living in Carnarvon

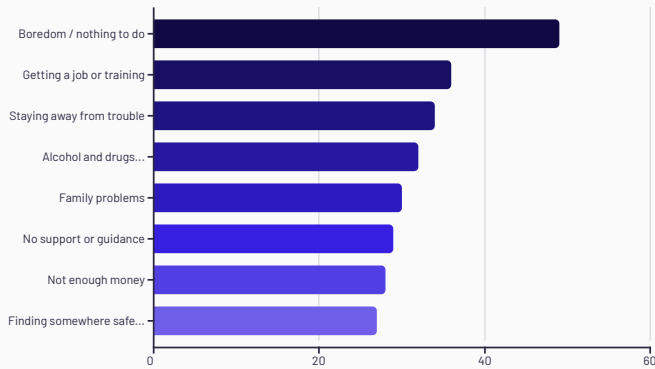


Age Group	Frequency	Percent
Under 12	35	43%
12 to 14	22	27%
15 to 16	15	18%
17 to 18	10	12%

Time in Carnarvon	Frequency	Percent
All of my life	35	43%
Most of my life	26	32%
Only sometimes	14	17%
I've moved a lot	7	8%

10. Schools Survey: What Young People Worry About Most

A total of approximately 274 student responses were recorded for this question (students could select multiple concerns).

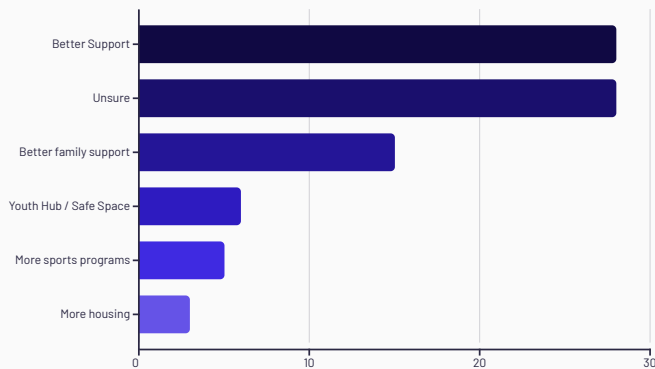


Young people's top concerns were boredom/nothing to do (60%), getting a job or training (44%), staying away from trouble (41%), and alcohol and drugs around them (39%). Significantly, 33% worry about finding somewhere safe to live.

Concern	Frequency	Percent
Boredom / nothing to do	49	60%
Getting a job or training	36	44%
Staying away from trouble	34	41%
Alcohol and drugs around me	32	39%
Family problems	30	36%
No support or guidance	29	35%
Not enough money	28	34%
Finding somewhere safe to live	27	33%
Being mean and stubborn	3	4%
Stealing stuff	2	2%
No Answer	2	2%
Language engagement	1	1%
Policing not targeted on repeat offenders	1	1%

11. Schools Survey: What Would Help Young People Most

A total of approximately 91 student responses were recorded for this open-ended question about what would help them most.

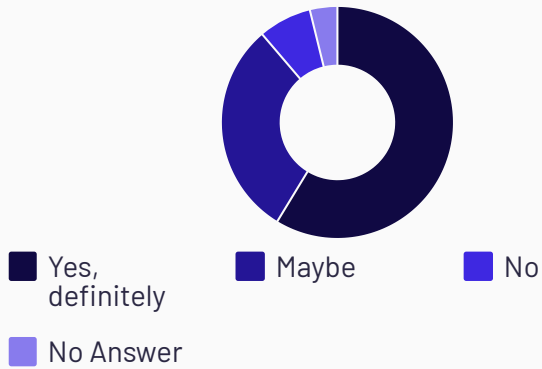


34% of students identified better support (education, training, job opportunities, options) as what would help them most. Another 18% specifically mentioned better family support, and 7% directly requested a Youth Hub or Safe Space.

Support Needed	Frequency	Percent
Better Support (education, training, job opportunities, options)	28	34%
Unsure	28	34%
Better family support	15	18%
Youth Hub / Safe Space	6	7%
More sports programs (boxing, basketball)	5	6%
More housing	3	4%
Access to toys, equipment and IT	2	2%
Support to move away	2	2%
Regional support for LGBTQUIA+	1	1%
Clothes shops	1	1%

12. Survey: Support for a Safe Place to Stay Overnight

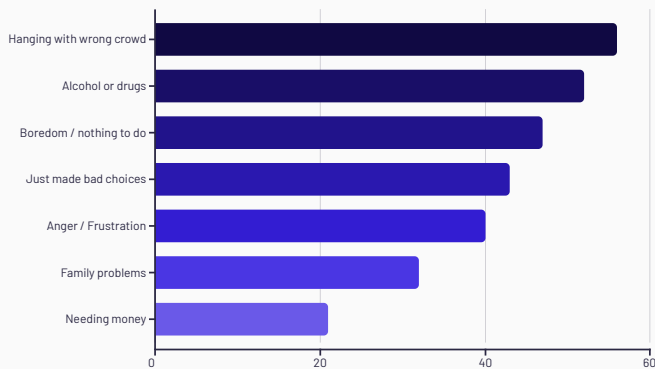
Question 5 asked students directly: "Would you use a safe place to stay overnight if you needed it?" A total of approximately 83 student responses were recorded.



60% of students said they would definitely use a safe place to stay overnight if they needed it, with another 30% saying maybe. This represents 90% of young people expressing openness to using such a facility, providing powerful direct evidence of need from youth themselves.

13. Schools Survey: Why Young People Get Into Trouble

A total of approximately 296 student responses were recorded for this question (students could select multiple reasons).

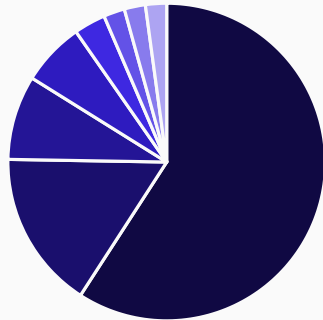


Students identified hanging with the wrong crowd (68%), alcohol or drugs (63%), boredom (57%), bad choices (52%), and anger/frustration (49%) as the main reasons young people get into trouble. These insights highlight the need for positive alternatives and emotional support.

Reason	Frequency	Percent
Hanging with the wrong crowd	56	68%
Alcohol or drugs	52	63%
Boredom / nothing to do	47	57%
Just made bad choices at the time	43	52%
Anger / Frustration	40	49%
Family problems	32	39%
Needing money	21	27%
No answer	3	4%
Mental Health problems	2	2%

14. Schools Survey: What Makes Young People Feel Safe

A total of approximately 97 student responses were recorded for this question about what makes them feel safe.



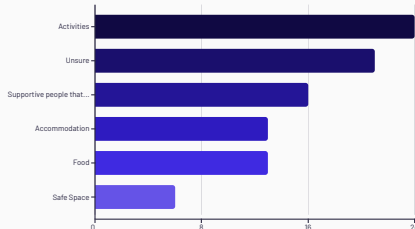
- Family and Friends
- Unsure
- Teachers
- Myself
- Self isolation
- Being safe
- Music and Art
- Being heard

67% of students said family and friends make them feel safe. This overwhelming response reinforces that the proposed facility must be family-inclusive and relationship-focused, not a replacement for family but a support to strengthen family connections.

Safety Factor	Frequency	Percent
Family and Friends	55	67%
Unsure	15	18%
Teachers	8	10%
Myself	6	7%
Self isolation	3	4%
Being safe	2	2%
Music and Art	2	2%
Being heard	2	2%
Police	1	1%
Doing activities	1	1%
Being healthy	1	1%
Not letting people get hurt	1	1%

15.Schools Survey: What Should Be in a Safe Place

A total of approximately 106 student responses were recorded for this question about what should be included in a safe place for young people.



Local Council Stakeholder:

"Everyone is doing their bit, but there's no shared system. We see duplication in some areas and complete gaps in others."

Students want activities (29%), supportive people who listen (20%), accommodation with sleeping and therapy rooms (16%), and food (16%). These direct requests from young people should guide facility design.

Feature	Frequency	Percent
Activities (IT games, movies, learning, sporting, educational)	24	29%
Unsure	21	26%
Supportive people that listen	16	20%
Accommodation (sleeping, therapy rooms, eating area)	13	16%
Food	13	16%
Safe Space	6	7%
Swimming Pool	3	4%
IT	2	2%
No violence	2	2%
Funding	2	2%
Family	1	1%
Rules	1	1%
No alcohol	1	1%
Anger Room	1	1%

27. Synthesis: A Trauma-Informed, Voluntary, and Wrap-Around Model

The combined survey findings reinforce the argument that an overnight youth facility in Carnarvon must be designed and operated as a trauma-informed, non-punitive and voluntary service. Community respondents and young people alike emphasise the importance of feeling safe, respected and listened to, and of having access to trusted adults, positive activities and calm spaces when things feel overwhelming.

Trauma-informed care in this context means recognising that many young people in Carnarvon are living with the impacts of intergenerational trauma, grief, loss, racism and systemic disadvantage. The overnight facility must avoid any practices that mirror detention or punishment, and instead create a predictable, culturally safe and relationship-based environment where young people can stabilise, rest and regulate.

Staff require specialised training in de-escalation, safeguarding, emotional regulation support, cultural humility and strengths-based practice.

Voluntary consent is crucial. Entry to the service should be based on the voluntary consent of the young person and their parent or caregiver wherever possible, rather than coercion. This is consistent with human rights principles and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. For children who arrive in crisis or via police or emergency services, consent and informed participation should be revisited as soon as the child is calm, ensuring they understand what the service is, what will happen next, and what choices they have.

The survey data strongly supports the need for genuine wrap-around services. An overnight stay must always be followed by proactive, next-day support – not simply a return to the same circumstances without follow-up. This includes warm referrals and, where consent is given, direct handovers to youth workers, school liaison staff, mental health, general health and alcohol and other drug services, family support, cultural mentors, and recreational programs. Staff should make follow-up contact with the child and their family the following day to check in, offer further support, and ensure any safety or wellbeing concerns are actively addressed.

28. Mentoring Programs for Indigenous Youth

Mentoring is a relationship intervention strategy that can significantly assist in building protective factors for Indigenous young people. This summary outlines key findings, effective strategies, and common pitfalls in mentoring programs.

What We Know

Risk Factors & Challenges

Young people of any ethnicity face risk factors such as antisocial attitudes, family issues, community violence, substance abuse, poverty, and poor housing. Indigenous youth also confront additional challenges including dispossession, cultural discontinuity, and intergenerational trauma.

Protective Factors

Strong cultural connection, high self-esteem, autonomy, and cohesive family/community environments are protective factors that foster productive life pathways for Indigenous young people.

Mentoring Effectiveness

Research shows mentoring can improve behavioural, academic, and vocational outcomes for at-risk youth, and to a lesser extent, reduce contact with juvenile justice systems.

Indigenous Context

Mentoring aligns well with Indigenous teaching and learning styles, helping to build strong collective ties within a community.

Program Variations

Programs can involve adult or peer mentors, delivered one-on-one or in groups. Integrating mentoring into broader programs yields greater positive change than single-intervention models.

Crucial Elements

Program design, implementation, and the nature of the mentor-mentee relationship are crucial determinants of outcomes.

29. Mentoring Programs: What Works

Program Design & Implementation

Early Intervention

Starting mentoring before antisocial or criminal behaviour emerges is most effective, though later intervention can still yield positive results.

Community Input

Obtaining input from the local Indigenous community in program design and delivery is vital.

Elder Involvement

Involving Elders in transmitting cultural knowledge through mentoring relationships is highly beneficial.

Strong Partnerships

Establishing strong partnerships with local youth counselling, health, and employment services enhances program efficacy.

Within the Mentoring Relationship

Long-Term Relationships

Relationships of at least 12-18 months, built on common interests, mutual respect, genuine friendship, and a non-judgemental approach.

Sustained Support

Mentoring that continues to support the young person as they consolidate positive changes.

Consistent Contact

Regular and consistent contact between mentor and mentee, potentially intensive (10-20 hours/week) initially, depending on needs.

Parental Involvement

Involvement of Indigenous parents can improve parent-child relationships.

Relatable Mentors

Mentors who have "been there, done that" - those who have overcome similar challenges - are most influential in achieving positive behavioural change.

30. Mentoring Programs: What Doesn't Work & Knowledge Gaps

What Doesn't Work

Short-Term Mentoring

Generally, mentoring relationships of 6 months or less are not effective.

Infrequent Contact

Irregular or infrequent contact between mentor and mentee is unlikely to produce change.

Authoritarian Approach

Mentors who are authoritarian or judgemental hinder positive outcomes.

Focus on Behaviour Over Friendship

Too much emphasis on expected behavioural change rather than building a genuine friendship first is counterproductive.

Too Many Goals

Overwhelming mentees with too many goals can lead to discouragement and disengagement.

Peer Mentoring as a Replacement

Mentoring by peers is not an effective replacement for adult mentoring.

31. What We Don't Know Yet

Effectiveness of Strategies

Debates persist regarding the relative effectiveness of gender-specific mentoring, racial/ethnic matching, and using paid versus volunteer mentors.

Long-Term Benefits

Further longitudinal research is needed to determine if the benefits of youth mentoring are maintained into adulthood.

Direct Link to Crime Reduction

While mentoring improves outcomes that indirectly help reduce crime, a direct link to crime reduction is not clearly established in reviewed studies.

For more information, visit www.aihw.gov.au/closingthegap

32. Safeguarding Framework

A strong safeguarding framework is essential for the credibility, safety, and operational excellence of the proposed Carnarvon Overnight Youth Facility. Safeguarding ensures that children and young people are protected from harm, that staff are trained to identify and respond to concerns, and that the facility's environment is physically, emotionally, and culturally safe.

<p>Child Safe Governance</p> <p>Clear policies, procedures, and escalation pathways. Alignment with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. Mandatory staff training in trauma-informed and culturally safe practice.</p>	<p>External Oversight</p> <p>Independent safeguarding oversight is essential for transparency, risk reduction, and quality assurance. An external safeguarding service can provide independent review and auditing of safeguarding incidents, ongoing professional advice to staff and leadership, training, supervision, and reflective practice coaching.</p>	<p>Trauma-Informed Practice</p> <p>Safeguarding must extend beyond compliance. It must ensure young people understand their rights, participation is voluntary, and crisis responses uphold dignity and minimise retraumatisation.</p>	<p>Cultural Safety</p> <p>Engagement of Elders and cultural advisors. Respect for language, kinship, and cultural identity. Inclusive decision-making involving Aboriginal community leadership.</p>
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Embedding robust safeguarding will significantly strengthen the effectiveness, trustworthiness, and long-term sustainability of the Overnight Youth Facility.

Carnarvon's young people deserve a safe place that protects, supports, and strengthens them. This facility represents a community-driven, evidence-based, and human rights-aligned response to a critical gap in youth services.

Why Carnarvon Needs a YOUTH OVERNIGHT SAFETY SERVICE



THE NEED IN CARNARVON



Unsafe Homes & Family Violence



Youth Homelessness



Kids Roaming Streets at Night

WHAT FACILITY WOULD PROVIDE



Safe Overnight Shelter



Nutritious Meals & Clothing



Hygiene & Laundry Services



Support & Supervision

BENEFITS FOR CARNARVON



Reduces Youth Crime



Improves Community Safety

Supports Police & Services



Breaks Cycles of Harm

LONG TERM OUTCOMES



Fewer Kids on the Streets



Better Health & Nutrition



Lower Youth Justice Rates



Brighter Futures for Children

Protecting Carnarvon's Children & Youth