

Media Release
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New report shows holistic support needed to cut youth crime

A new report published by the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria and the Centre for Multicultural Youth reveals that when young people had support services that addressed the causes of their offending their re-offending significantly decreased.

"Intensive, holistic support from a trusted adult can be incredibly helpful in supporting young people to understand the ramifications of their offence, address the underlying causes of their offending behaviour and getting them working towards goals for the future," says Youth Affairs Council of Victoria CEO, Kate Colvin.

Centre for Multicultural Youth CEO, Carmel Guerra added "Evidence suggests that appropriate diversionary initiatives can reduce future offending and thereby reduce the long term social and economic costs to society. It is essential that any such initiative is equally accessible and appropriate to young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds."

The report also identified that cautions and other diversion initiatives are most effective where young people clearly understand the process and the implications of their caution, diversion program or sentence.

Too many young people told us that police responses were inconsistent and unclear, and neither they nor their families understood the implications of the process, and consequently they didn't change their pattern of offending behaviour.

By contrast, where young people were clearly aware of the purpose of a caution or diversion program, and of the potential consequences of future offending, it encouraged them to 'turn over a new leaf'.

The report is based on in-depth interviews with 14 young people with experience of the youth justice system and was produced in response to the Victorian Government's discussion paper *Practical lessons, fair consequences: Improving diversion for young people in Victoria*. It reinforces the social and economic value of diversion programs and recommends a consistent approach to their delivery across Victoria.

For further comment please contact Kate Colvin, YACVic CEO on 0418 103 292 or Carmel Guerra, CMY CEO on 9340 3700