

YSAS welcomes ongoing investment in the Youth Support Service

Melbourne, 6 May 2014: The [Youth Support + Advocacy Service](#) (YSAS) today welcomed the announcement of ongoing funding of Victoria's successful youth diversion initiative, the Youth Support Service, which is provided by YSAS in metropolitan Melbourne and the Latrobe Valley.

Minister for Community Services Mary Wooldridge today confirmed funding of \$17.1 million for the continuation of the Youth Support Service.

"The Youth Support Service, in partnership with the Department of Human Services and Victoria Police, has successfully prevented thousands of young people from entering the criminal justice system," said Paul Bird, CEO of YSAS.

"Engaging experienced youth workers with young people when they first commit an offence or are cautioned works. 89 per cent of young people who completed the service provided by YSAS had no further contact with police.

"The Victorian Government's investment in diversion and the Youth Support Service will continue to have a proven impact on reducing youth crime, keeping young people out of the criminal justice system and providing support at the earliest point of contact with the law."

The Youth Support Service is the only early intervention service of its kind in the state, working with young people aged 10 -17 referred to the service by Victoria Police to address the underlying drivers of offending behaviour.

Recent YSAS research revealed:

- 89%ⁱ of young people who completed the Youth Support Service provided by YSAS did not enter the criminal justice system. They had no further, or only positive, contact with police.
- 55%ⁱⁱ of young people experienced family conflict 'very often' prior to accessing the Youth Support Service. This was significantly reduced to 18% by the end of service involvement.
- Young people engaged in education, employment or training increased from 38% to 78%ⁱⁱⁱ at service completion.

"Youth diversion services set young people up for life, not a life of crime. Young people and their families are connected with services to meet their individual needs and are provided the opportunity to contribute to the community through education and employment.

"The Government's investment today will allow YSAS and other Youth Support Service providers to continue to provide this opportunity to young people sustainably into the future."

For further information on the Youth Support Service, visit YSAS.org.au.

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Note to editors

A full report on outcomes of the Youth Support Service provided by YSAS is available on request. To arrange an interview with Paul Bird, CEO of YSAS, please contact:

Emily Bellemore

Media Manager YSAS

0401 021 015

ebellemore@ysas.org.au

3,952 young people have been referred to the YSAS Youth Support Service 28 April 2011 – 20 February 2014. YSAS provides a central intake function for metropolitan Melbourne with referrals for Moonee Valley, Maribyrnong and Hobsons Bay being triaged to the 20th Man Fund per contractual obligations with Department of Human Services. The Youth Support Service is funded by Department of Human Services as part of the Government's Youth Crime Initiative.

About YSAS

The Youth Support + Advocacy Service (YSAS) is a leading youth health agency that enables highly vulnerable young people with substance dependence and misuse issues, mental illness and social disconnection, to take control of their health and wellbeing.

For further information visit ysas.org.au or contact the confidential 24 hour free YoDAA line: 1800 458 685.

ⁱ History of contact with police 2 months post closure – n =141 young people

ⁱⁱ History of family conflict 6 months before and at end of service involvement – n= 301 young people

ⁱⁱⁱ History of education and employment 6 months before and at end of service involvement – n= 301 young people