

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – AUGUST 8, 2018

Damning report reveals extent of youth detention system failings: Jesuit Social Services

A damning report tabled today by the Victorian Auditor-General's office reveals the shocking failures of the youth detention system to rehabilitate young people involved in the system, ultimately failing to reduce reoffending, says Jesuit Social Services.

The report on *Managing Rehabilitation Services in Youth Detention* finds that young people in detention have not been receiving the rehabilitation services they need.

"The Victorian youth detention system has been under significant stress in recent times and this report lays bare what has already been clear – that the system is significantly failing its duty of care to these children and young people and in many cases they are exiting the system worse off than when they entered.

"This is failing everybody – it is failing young people, their families and the broader community."

The report found that while all young people receive health and mental health screenings when entering the youth justice system, more than half (51 per cent) of young people on remand did not have a case plan.

"We already know the characteristics of the children and young people involved in the justice system. We know the vast majority have a range of problems - drug and alcohol, mental health, homelessness and disengagement with school.

"The report found that the Department of Justice and Regulation, the Department that operates the youth justice system, 'does not understand service demand, needs or whether outcomes are being achieved.'

"How can we expect vulnerable children and young people to turn their lives around and become productive members of society if the system is not supporting them to address their problems?" asks Ms Edwards.

Jesuit Social Services recently launched the [#WorthASecondChance](#) campaign, which showcases what an effective youth justice system can look like and encourages all Victorians to call for the youth justice system the state deserves.

"Today's report is just another insight into the serious failings of the youth justice system and the desperate need for new approaches based on evidence and what we know works – including that detention is always a last resort.

"We call on all Victorians to join the campaign and help us call for a system that holds children and young people to account for their actions, supports them to address their underlying problems and helps them to get their lives back on track."

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