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Social Justice Unit**

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1 September 2009

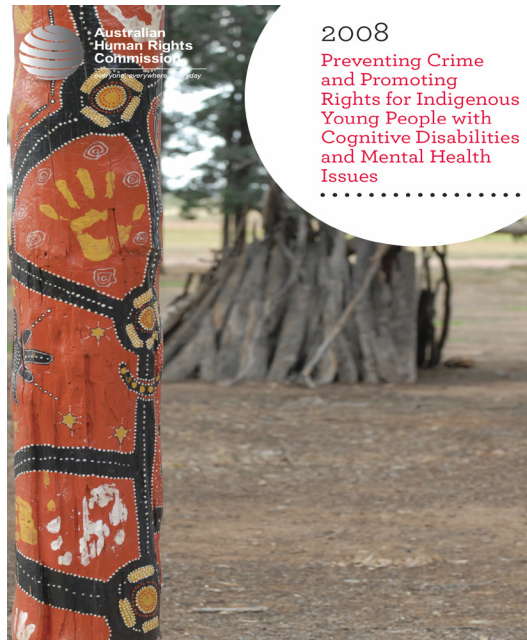
Preventing Crime and Promoting Rights for Indigenous Young People with Cognitive Disabilities and Mental Health Problems



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Preventing Crime and Promoting Rights for Indigenous Young People with Cognitive Disabilities and Mental Health Issues



2008

Preventing Crime
and Promoting
Rights for Indigenous
Young People with
Cognitive Disabilities
and Mental Health
Issues

- Research funded by the Australian Government Attorney General's Department, Indigenous Justice and Legal Assistance Division



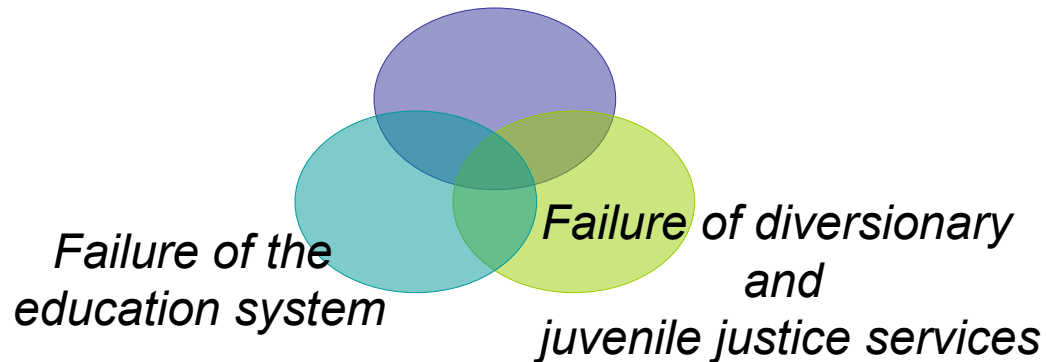
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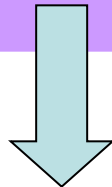
Systemic Failure



Failure of early intervention and assessment



In addition to Indigenous social disadvantage, poverty, intergenerational trauma, racism and poor access to services



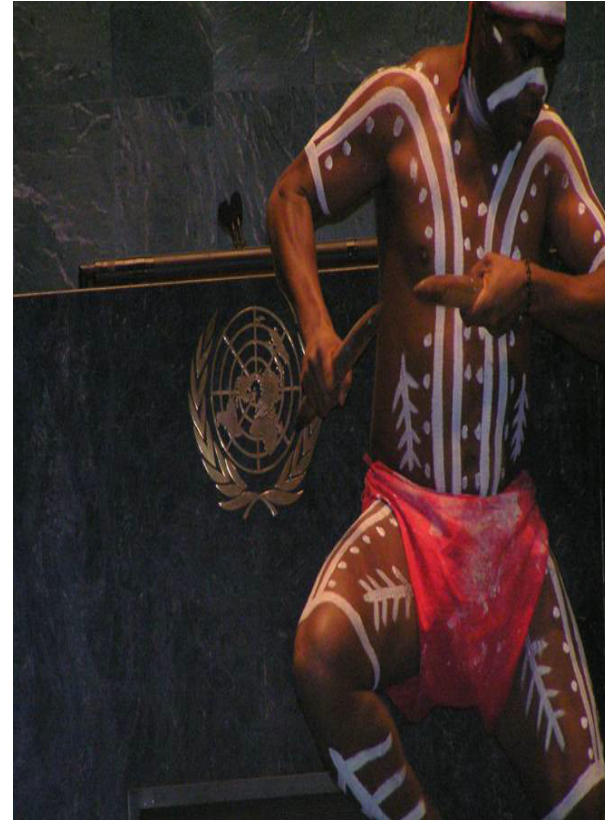
Imprisonment



Convention on the Rights of the Child

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1. Non discrimination
2. Best interests of the child
3. Right to life, survival and development
4. Dignity





Incidence

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- Indigenous young people in juvenile justice at least 4-5 times more likely to have an Intellectual Disability than non-Indigenous young people
 - Mental health stats unclear but 88% of all young people in custody report symptoms consistent with some sort of clinical mental health disorder



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Complexities in assessment

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- Large burden of undiagnosed and incorrectly diagnosed cognitive disability and mental health issues among Indigenous young people





Complexities in assessment: Foetal Alcohol Syndrome

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- 62% of reported cases of Foetal Alcohol Syndrome cases are Indigenous children
- Kimberley- 8.5 Foetal Alcohol Syndrome cases per 1 000 births- over 100 times higher than the non-Indigenous rate



Complexities in assessment: Trauma

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- Under diagnosis of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, often following exposure to family violence
- Diagnosed as conduct disorder instead



Indigenous concepts of disability

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- Mental health issues can be put down to external or cultural reasons
- Fear of Western mental health treatment especially when people have been separated from family and country in the past





Complexities in assessment: Hearing Problems

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- 60% of the Indigenous young people in NT detention had an abnormal middle ear function
- 90% of Indigenous prisoners in Darwin failed a hearing screening test.





Consultations



- Face the same underlying issues as other Indigenous young people
- Need to be viewed holistically
- Don't need another label
- Won't access disability specific services



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Need a foundation of cultural security first and foremost

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Good practice examples

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- **Victoria- Koori Juvenile Justice Program**
 - Koori workers able to make good assessments
 - Aboriginal Cultural Support Plans



Good practice examples

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- **Tirkandi Inaburra Cultural and Development Centre**
 - Residential
 - Education program
 - Cultural focus





Good practice examples

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- **Fitzroy Crossing Alcohol Management to prevent FASD and alcohol related harm**
 - Community led
 - Prevention focus





The way forward...

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- Culturally appropriate and holistic assessment
- Culturally secure services

AND MOST IMPORTANTLY

- Working in partnership with the Indigenous community for community wide prevention



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Thank you



- Further information:
- www.humanrights.gov.au/social_justice/index.html

