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### **Cunnamulla: A Coordinated Approach to Intervention**

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### Cunnamulla and its people

- Situated 800 km west of Brisbane in the Paroo Shire
- Established in the 1860s
- Traditionally owned by the Kunja people
- Five language groups: Kunja, Kooma, Kullilli, Budjiti and Mardigan people
- Agricultural production is the main source of economy





### Cunnamulla and its people – current issues

- A declining population of 1955 people as at April 2009
- Growing socio-economic disadvantage
- 27.6% Indigenous population in the Paroo Shire as at 2006
- Lower educational levels for Indigenous people compared to non-Indigenous people
- Significant over-representation of Indigenous young people in the youth justice system





### Youth and family Services to Cunnamulla

- Youth Justice Services and Youth Detention
- Youth Justice Conferencing
- Disability Services
- Child Safety Services
- Youth Support Worker in Cunnamulla
- Cunnamulla Community Support Service
- Indigenous Family Violence Service





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### Issues affecting youth in Cunnamulla

Current Youth Justice Service client data:

- All youth justice clients identify as Aboriginal
- Average age of 13.8, lower than regional average of 16
- Offending history of between 2 and 4 years
- 77% of clients moderate or high risk
- Majority have at least one immediate family member with a history of involvement in the criminal justice system
- Majority assessed as having substance abuse and peer relation issues as areas contributing to offending
- Majority have had involvement with the Child Protection system





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### Offending trends in Cunnamulla

- Majority property and assault offences
- Significant consistent growth in the number of finalised court appearances in Cunnamulla between 2004 and 2008
- Almost exclusive Aboriginal clients attending court
- Over-representation of Cunnamulla young people in custody
- Extended remand periods due to infrequent court sittings





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### **Application of the What Works approach**

- The risk principle Cunnamulla clients requiring a more intensive approach based on higher risk ratings
- The **needs principle** addressing core offending issues such as substance abuse and peer relationships
- The **responsivity principle** interventions taking into account the younger age, lower socio-economic status and Aboriginal culture of the client group
- The **integrity principle** acknowledging the limits of visiting service delivery and impacts on intervention efficacy
- The professional discretion principle acknowledging the professional judgement of local service delivery areas in meeting the needs of Cunnamulla young people.





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### The Cunnamulla Survey

- Survey of over 120 adults in Cunnamulla in November 2007
- Survey was conducted by the Aboriginal community with the support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services
- Six priorities identified by respondents:
  - Improving access to jobs
  - Engagement with young people
  - Reducing engagement with justice systems
  - Improving educational attainment
  - Improving housing conditions
  - Better collaboration processes between government and community





### The Cunnamulla Regional Collaborative Team

Established in 2008 with aim to:

"improve the wellbeing of young people and their families through a process of effective engagement that results in locally lead solutions to address Aboriginal priority issues."

 Membership comprised of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Community Capacity and Service Quality Team, Youth Justice Services and Youth Justice Conferencing





### The Cunnamulla Regional Collaborative Team

The collaborative has noted some key developments:

- Increased partnership with other key agencies such as Education Queensland around innovative ways to engage with young people and implement effective interventions
- Increased communication between key Cunnamulla partners
- Enhanced working relationship with the Community Justice Group (CJG)
- Move towards embedding multi-system approaches to young people and their families





### The Cunnamulla Negotiation Table

- Inaugural Negotiation Table held in June 2009
- A forum where Indigenous community members can meet with representatives from state, federal and local governments and local businesses to share knowledge and decide on better services and opportunities for the local Indigenous community.
- Highly successful forum, consolidating the Queensland Government responses to Cunnamulla.





### The New Department of Communities

- Brings together services provided previously by the former:
  - Department of Communities
  - Department of Housing
  - Department of Child Safety
  - Disability Services Queensland
  - Indigenous Government Coordination Office
  - Sport and Recreation
- Interim Strategic Framework outlines our commitments, goals and key priorities
- New organisational arrangements provide the foundation for improved service delivery





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### **Enhanced service delivery areas:**

- Housing and Homelessness services
- Youth and Family services, including youth justice services
- Child Safety services
- Disability, Home and Community Care, Community Mental Health services
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services
- Sport and Recreation services
- Multicultural services
- Women's services





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#### **Enhanced client outcomes:**

- Improving needs assessment for clients accessing human services
- Improving client access to the best mix of quality services and continuum of care when needed
- Meeting quality client service standards
- Building cultural capability
- Coordinating case management for clients with complex and specialised needs
- Redressing the relative under-or-over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Shifting the focus and balance toward prevention and early intervention
- Designing and delivering services that enable clients to be resilient and independent
- Linking clients to other services and supports, including sport and recreation





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#### **Future Directions:**

- Consolidating the enhanced Cunnamulla Regional Collaborative Team
- Further establishing the coordination of complex case management processes, using multi-systemic approaches
- Engagement with the Community Justice Group to:
  - Improve transitional programs for young people exiting custody and to maintain their residence in the community
  - Establish a Youth Murri Court in Cunnamulla
- Gather evaluation data as to the efficacy of this coordinated approach

