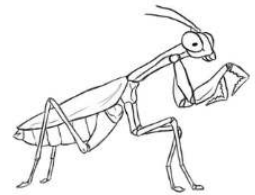


KEMPSEY CULTURAL SAFETY SUMMIT REPORT

30 June 2022



Warra Watayi

Stand There Alongside



Acknowledgement of Country

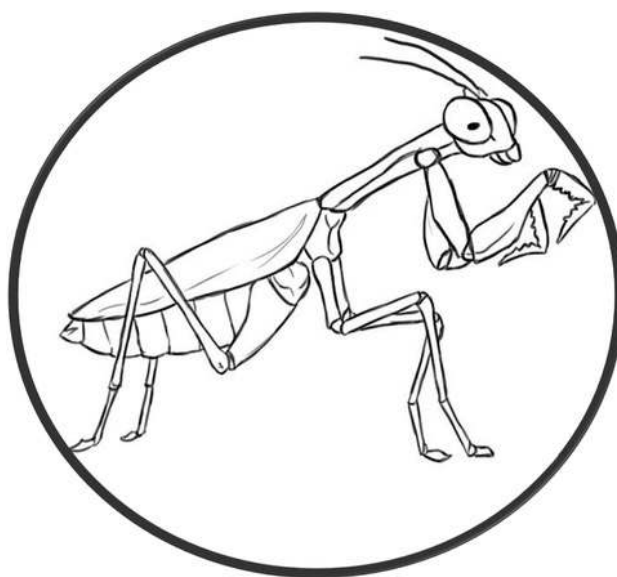
We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land, the Dunghutti / Thunghutti People (also known as Dhanggati and Dainggatti), who have cared for this land since time immemorial, from the saltwater coastal areas to the freshwater country upstream and the mountain country to the west.

We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present, and emerging, and commit ourselves to a future with reconciliation and renewal at its heart.

We pay respect to Stolen Generations Survivors and their families. Some returned home, some never did, and others are still finding their family and connections to culture and community.

We acknowledge everyone who continues to fight to right the injustices of the past.

This land always was and always will be Dunghutti land.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be aware that this report may contain images or names of people who have since passed away.



FOREWORD



Professor Stephen Blunden
Chief Executive Officer of Durri ACMS
Adjunct Professor of Practice
School of Medicine and Public Health
The University of Newcastle

I had returned to Kempsey and recommenced my journey as the Chief Executive Officer of Durri Aboriginal Corporation Medical Service after many years of absence. It became apparent to me that the Dughutti community, that I love and cherish, seemed to have a 'black cloud' shadowing over it due to the loss of our cultural identity and the traditional ways of our peoples.

On Thursday 22 April 2021 I called a meeting with Chief Executive Officers, Chairpersons, and other members of the Aboriginal providers within the Macleay Valley (approximately 30 providers were contacted) to provide a platform where we could all come together to express community concerns and issues pertaining to cultural safety.

Some of the most notable issues discussed and tabled at this meeting were:

- a. Loss of Aboriginal culture within the Macleay Valley
- b. What is our and what was our cultural footprint?
- c. Social conditioning within our communities
- d. Domestic Violence; and
- e. Drug and alcohol

The question that was asked on the day to all present was "Is this becoming our culture?"

Many attendees responded, shared their knowledge, thoughts, concerns, and recognised that this was not part of our Aboriginal people's culture to act in this way or to live our lives the way that we have been doing.

It was recognised that something needed to be done and I was given permission on behalf of providers to seek funding for a summit.

In preparation for the meeting, I approached Mr. Leon Donovan from the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA). We had many conversations of what was transpiring within the Macleay Valley and what Aboriginal provider representatives sought and their vision. Providers sought change, the change of our Aboriginal peoples as we are mourning the loss of cultural identity and safety.

NIAA provided funds for a summit to be held which in turn has provided the grounds for the attached reports.

I thank all the Aboriginal provider representatives for taking the initiative to attend and participating in the summit, having yarns with community, identifying the cultural issues and safety concerns that we are currently feeling, singular and as a community, and wanting to address the necessity for change by identifying that it is crucial for us as Aboriginal peoples to come together and start progressing towards being a proactive community not a reactive community.

A special thank you to NIAA for funding the summit and Mr. Leon Donovan for attending and taking the time from a very busy schedule to listen to our concerns, fears and what is the reality of Aboriginal peoples within the Macleay Valley.

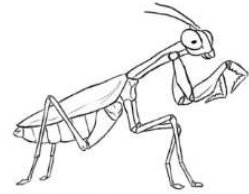
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen Blunden." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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SECTION 1



Executive
Summary

Section 1 | Executive Summary

Warra Watayi...

(Stand There Alongside)

Many Government Departments and agencies have come into Kempsey over the years to 'fix the problems that they have identified'. But as the saying goes "If you do what you've always done, then you get what you've always got".

Government has invested significant resources to address the high level of social issues, crime and anti-social behaviour in Kempsey, but what difference has this made?

Rather than repeating the mistakes of previous Departments who have attempted to Break the Cycle, Place Plan or even undertake a Family Investment model, Kempsey needs a different approach.

The Kempsey Community Cultural Safety project is different. It is Community-led. Aboriginal leaders from a number of organisations have come together to make this project happen. We are now inviting Government Departments and other agencies to walk alongside us on this journey.

Kempsey needs a platform where our Aboriginal leaders and community members can make decisions for our communities, families and future.

It needs a coalition of local Aboriginal leaders which is collaborative and resourced appropriately rather than relying on overstretched CEOs and Managers from our Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to do all the work.

Kempsey needs a platform for Government Departments, community partners and stakeholders to come to the table together with our Aboriginal leaders, to discuss investing in community-led initiatives, systems reform and formal partnership agreements. A meeting place where there is an overarching commitment to removing cultural bias and designing new ways of doing business, focussed on prevention and rehabilitation rather than being punitive.

We want to own the solutions, not have them imposed on us. We want the opportunity to direct where future funding goes in our community, examine existing funding and potentially have a say in redirecting it to where community feels it would work best.

Many non-Aboriginal service providers receive Government funding based on data relating to Aboriginal people in Kempsey, yet Aboriginal people are reluctant to use some of these services. Ideally, funding would go to Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations in Kempsey, but where this cannot happen agencies should be more accountable to the Aboriginal community. When contracts are up for renewal, service providers and their programs should be assessed against community priorities and cultural capability by a panel of Aboriginal leaders and this information used by Government Departments to determine if the program continues to be funded.

We want to see more funds diverted from crisis to early intervention and prevention, not just in the criminal justice and child protection system, but also in health and housing support services. This





includes investing in more drug and alcohol treatment and rehabilitation services, both in the community and in prisons. And expanding diversionary options and other out of the box thinking like establishing an Aboriginal community panel who sets bail conditions based on their local knowledge.

Spend some time getting to know our communities and build relationships with us. We want culturally capable, trauma-informed departments, organisations and staff delivering our services. People who engage our families in decisions that affect their children. We ask that you invite us to be on panels to review practices and policies, which see us over-represented in both the child protection and criminal justice systems.

We need employment, but this needs to be more than just traineeships and endless certificates. We want opportunities to do something meaningful each day if we cannot get a paid job - something which gives us hope and skills for finding real employment, regardless of our race and past history.

Consider employing our local Aboriginal community first, as chances are they already have somewhere to live and have strong connections with community. Ensure more identified positions are created in your agencies and that the staff employed to these positions are trained, supported and culturally safe. Demonstrate commitment to sustainable and ongoing Aboriginal employment by setting targets for Aboriginal people, including middle and senior management positions.

Provide funding to establish Aboriginal businesses, social enterprises and self-employment opportunities for men and women in areas such as tourism, culture and heritage.

Set procurement targets to purchase goods and services from Aboriginal businesses and refer other people to them.

The education system is not working for us either. We need schools who are willing to work with our community. To listen and learn from the many stories of the people in this valley. We want pedagogies that are better suited to our culture and ways of knowing. Where students undertake personalised projects that they are interested in and the curriculum is formed around this, rather than making all students fit into the curriculum.

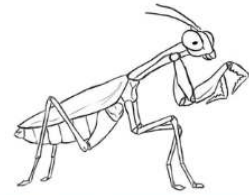
Our community needs opportunities for healing and programs which connect people to culture and country, giving them back their identity and meaning. This helps shift the focus to capacity building, rather than crisis management.

We should be providing safe homes for Aboriginal men, women and young people leaving prison, juvenile justice and escaping domestic violence, that are out of town and culturally safe. Places where they can understand their past, learn from their trauma and heal in order to break the cycle. Safe places where Aboriginal people deliver the programs and are able to reconnect the residents with family, education and community when the time is right.

We believe all this is possible if you come alongside us. Walk with us on this journey, as we build a brighter future for Kempsey.



SECTION 2



Community
Cultural
Safety Project
Overview

Section 2 | Community Cultural Safety Project Overview

2.1 Purpose

The Kempsey Cultural Safety Summit and Plan aims to:

- increase understanding and shared commitment to cultural safety in the Kempsey LGA amongst Government agencies, local organisations and community members so individuals and their families feel culturally secure, safe and respected.
- address issues and barriers to cultural safety in Kempsey by agreeing on actions and strategies that can be undertaken locally.
- achieve better outcomes for First Nations people in Kempsey by providing culturally safe services.

2.2 Project Background

This project was developed as an outcome of local Aboriginal community members and organisations coming together to discuss the issues impacting our community.

A meeting was held with local 28 Aboriginal organisations and Leon Donovan, manager of National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA). The community members wanted to discuss youth unrest, racism, violence, anti-social behaviour, and drug use in Kempsey. They were concerned that a number of mainstream organisations receive funding based on data about First Nations people, but the organisations are not cultural safe.

As a result of this meeting, Durri Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS), in partnership with Kinchela Boys Home, was funded to explore the issues and get community together with Aboriginal organisations, Government, and non-Government Agencies to develop a Community Action Plan.

The Project Team consists of

- Professor Stephen Blunden | Project Leader
- Jo-Anne Kelly | Project Coordinator
- Anthony Carter | Summit Facilitator
- Kim Thomson | Data Analysis and Mapping Assets Project Officer
- Mattarley Kelly-Scholes and Tyrone Duke | Administrative Support

The project report:

- is based on feedback from the Summit.
- is aligned with the Closing the Gap and NSW Premiers Department Priorities.
- includes actions for implementation and a way forward.
- highlights opportunities for Commonwealth investment or in which NIAA may have a role.

2.3 Methodology for the Project

Focusing only on the problems of a community or what is lacking – often called taking a ‘deficit approach’ – can be perceived as disempowering for communities and can discount valuable



information, skills and other 'assets' that communities possess.¹ All communities have resources that can be built upon, and so mapping these resources is crucial to improving outcomes.²

In every community something works. Instead of asking 'What's wrong, and how to fix it?', ask, 'What's worked, and how do we get more of it?' It generates energy and creativity.

All communities have assets, that is, resources in the local area that are for the benefit of the community. These can include: the skills, time, and expertise of community members; local groups and networks; opportunities such as employment opportunities; as well as organisations and spaces such as parks, hospitals, community centres, schools, childcare facilities, community centres and buildings.³

This project is based on key Asset Based Community Development Principles including:

- meaningful and lasting community change always originates from within.
 - local residents in a community are the real experts on how to activate that change - the wisdom of the community always exceeds the knowledge of the experts.
 - every single person has capacities, abilities, gifts, and ideas - living a good life depends on whether those capacities can be used, abilities exercised, gifts shared, and ideas expressed.
 - building and nourishing relationships is at the core of building healthy and inclusive communities.
 - communities have never been built by dwelling on their deficiencies.
 - focus on the resources, capacities, strengths and aspirations of a community and its residents, instead of dwelling on the needs, deficiencies, and problems.
 - the strength of a community is directly proportional to the level that the diversity of its resident's desire and are able to contribute their abilities and assets to the wellbeing of their community.
-

¹ Baum, F. (2008). *The new public health*. South Melbourne: Oxford University Press

² McKnight, J. L., & Kretzmann, J. P. (1997). Mapping community capacity. In M. Minkler (Ed.), *Community organizing and community building for health*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

³ Hawtin, M., & Percy-Smith, J. (2007). *Community profiling: A practical guide* (2nd edition). Berkshire, England: McGraw Hill, Open University Press.



2.4 Proposed Approach for the Project

In order to develop a comprehensive Community Cultural Safety Plan that is truly responsive to community need, the plan must be informed by multiple sources of evidence.

Figure 1 shows the three forms of evidence that will be used to inform the Kempsey Community Cultural Safety Project: lived experience, practice expertise and research evidence.

Figure 1: Evidence informed approach



Durri AMS and Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation engaged a consultant and project worker to undertake the project. The key phases of this project are outlined below:

Research – Evidence and data

Data Analysis

The project collected and reviewed data benchmarked against the Closing the Gap outcomes and targets, as well as the NSW Premier's Priorities to ascertain priorities for the Community Cultural Summit. This research forms both an analysis of the current situation and a baseline for measuring any initiatives that are undertaken as a result of the Community Cultural Safety Plan.

The data analysis component of this project was undertaken to:

- identify priority areas to discuss at the Community Summit and to guide the development of the Community Cultural Safety Plan.
- provide baseline data that can be used in an evaluation of the Community Cultural Safety plan or any of the initiatives that are undertaken as a result of this project.
- support funding applications or business cases in order to allocate or redistribute resources and design programs, policies and services.

The data analysis found that despite the Aboriginal population in Kempsey making up 12.9% of the overall population we are over-represented in the criminal justice system, making up 42% of the local gaol population and 54% of the clients of Kempsey Community Corrections, Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ).

Our Aboriginal children are over-represented in the statutory child protection system in Kempsey.



Both the child protection and the criminal justice systems need an overhaul to reduce cultural bias.

The Kempsey LGA ranked 15th in NSW in 2021 for incidents of domestic violence related assault as recorded by Police for that year and there were 206 Breach Apprehended Violence Order recorded incidents which is a rate of 688.5 per 100,000 population compared to 389 for NSW. This is nearly double.

There are high levels of social disadvantage due to low socio-economic factors including lower income levels and poor education.

In 2021, the median income of Aboriginal adults in Kempsey LGA was \$468 compared to \$563 for that of non-Aboriginal adults in this LGA. That is \$95 less per week.

Only 24% of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over 15 years of age in the Kempsey LGA have obtained year 12 compared to 33% for non-Indigenous people.

Keeping children engaged needs to start young - before they start school.

Although specific data for Aboriginal children is not available, AEDC data shows that 92.4% of children measured as part of the AEDC in the Kempsey LGA attended a preschool or kindergarten in the year prior to starting school. This was an increase of 2.5% from 2018. The other major increase was in care from a Grandparent which increased by 6.6% in 2021.

In 2021 Kempsey 28.2% of children were developmentally vulnerable on 1 or more domains, which is higher than all other LGAs on the Mid North Coast.

Kempsey has a high proportion of children (18.8%) who were developmentally vulnerable on two or more of the AEDC domains, compared to children in the rest of NSW (10.5%) and Australia (11.4%).

Aboriginal people in the Kempsey LGA face significant disadvantage particularly in relation to their health. Aboriginal people represent 5.7% of population Mid North Coast but 12.4% of all acute presentations to hospitals are by Aboriginal people.

Mental Illness is a real concern in our community. In the NSW Population Health Survey in 2020 (Mid North Coast Local Health District), young people aged 16-24 years reporting high or very high levels of psychological distress was 26.1% (17.3% in males and 35.1% in females).

Between 2016 and 2020 suicide was the 9th highest cause of death for men In Kempsey with 35 men reported as taking their own lives.

The full data analysis can be found in the Kempsey Shire Community Profile – a data analysis of the Kempsey LGA against the Premiers Priorities and Closing the Gap Targets.

Service Mapping

Research shows that locally-based approaches to crime prevention, including community development strategies, can have a much greater impact on criminal behaviour than law enforcement alone. To achieve positive outcomes, communities need a mix of services delivering crisis response, targeted intervention, prevention/early intervention, and community development.



Crisis Response

When we think of a crisis response in relation to safety and crime we usually think of Police, Fire Brigade and Ambulance. However, there are a much wider range of services providing a crisis response in Kempsey. Crisis response services also include hospitals, child protection agencies, domestic and family violence agencies, crisis accommodation providers, mental health services, and drug and alcohol services. Usually when a crisis response is required, a harmful event has already occurred or a person is in trouble. It has past the point for prevention and an immediate response is required to reduce the threat or harm to both the individual and the community. Crisis response services are the most costly to deliver and should ideally be a last resort.

Targeted Intervention

Targeted Interventions are those where services, activities or programs are offered to identified individuals, families, communities, or are run in identified places, neighbourhoods or communities. They aim to reduce risk or harm escalating to the point where a more costly crisis response is required. Examples of Targeted Intervention programs include Youth On Track which targets young people who have had contact with the criminal justice system, and the Kempsey Staying Home Leaving Violence Project which assists victims of domestic and family violence to stay in their homes. Analysing data from Targeted Intervention services can help in determining risk factors that lead to the need for a crisis response. The data can also be used to identify what works in prevention and early intervention approaches for particular risks and groups of people.

Prevention and Early Intervention

Prevention and early intervention can include services as well as strategies such as Government policies, health promotion, screening, and training and education. These can be delivered by one service or are part of a coordinated, integrated, multi-agency approach. Prevention is better and less costly than cure. The more that can be done to prevent risks and harm in a community the better for everyone.

Community Development

Community development is a process where community members are supported by agencies to identify and take collective action on issues which are important to them. It is about improving the social fabric of communities so they are more resilient and are able to generate solutions to community issues. There are a number of organisations in Kempsey established to undertake community development activities and support the community to take action on issues such as the safety and wellbeing.

Community Services Directory and Analysis of Gaps in Service Delivery

The project developed a Community Services Directory with details of services who work on Dunghutti country. The project also undertook an analysis of the mix of services in the Kempsey LGA to identify the type or types of services they deliver: a crisis response, targeted intervention, prevention/early intervention, or a community development approach. This document highlights areas where there is a gap in service delivery that can then be considered in the development of the Kempsey Community Cultural Safety Plan.

A good mix of services should be more of a triangle shape, however in Kempsey there are a lot of targeted services and not enough prevention and early intervention services (**Figure 2**). The project

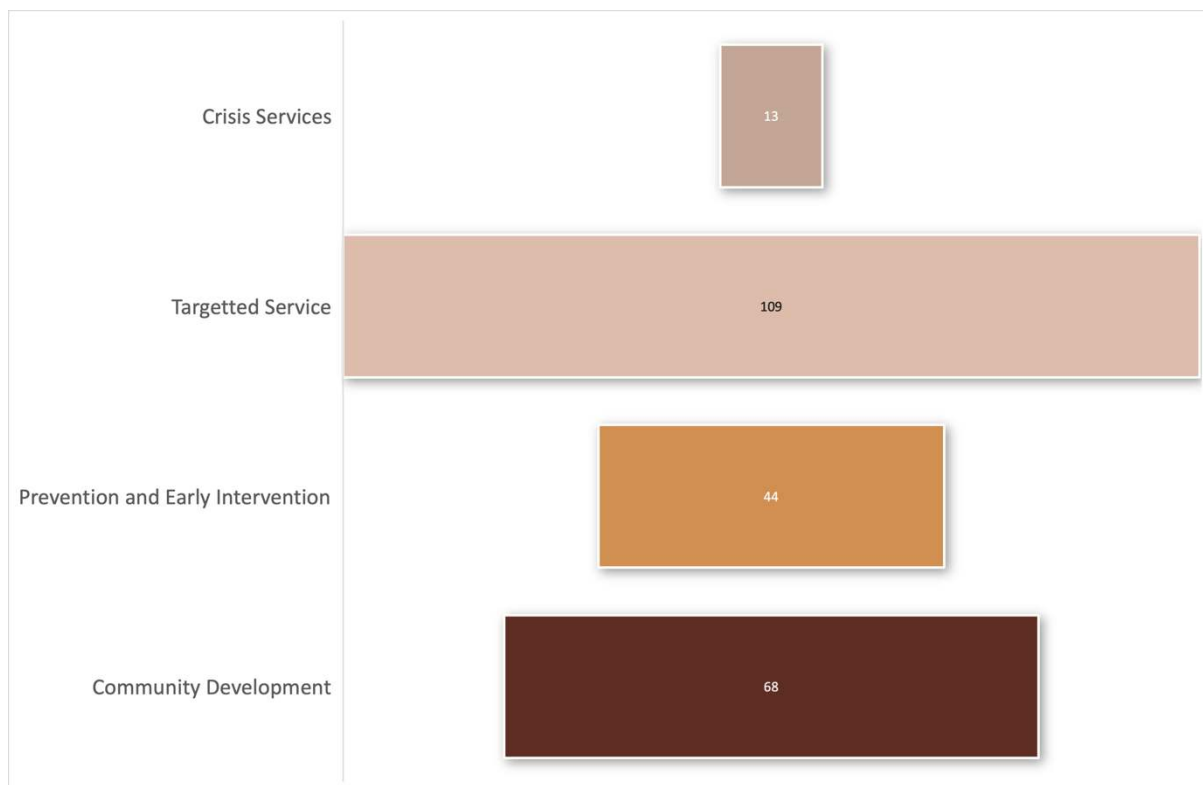


did not map all the sporting, recreational and other social activities which are delivered in Kempsey and this would account for the short Community Development bar in Figure 2.

Many of the targeted services are health, housing, family support, child protection and legal services. There are not a lot of these types of services in the prevention and early intervention space in the Kempsey LGA.

Some service providers offer a mix of targeted and prevention/early intervention. For example, Diabetes Educators, Drug and Alcohol and Family Support services.

Figure 2 Response Types in Kempsey LGA

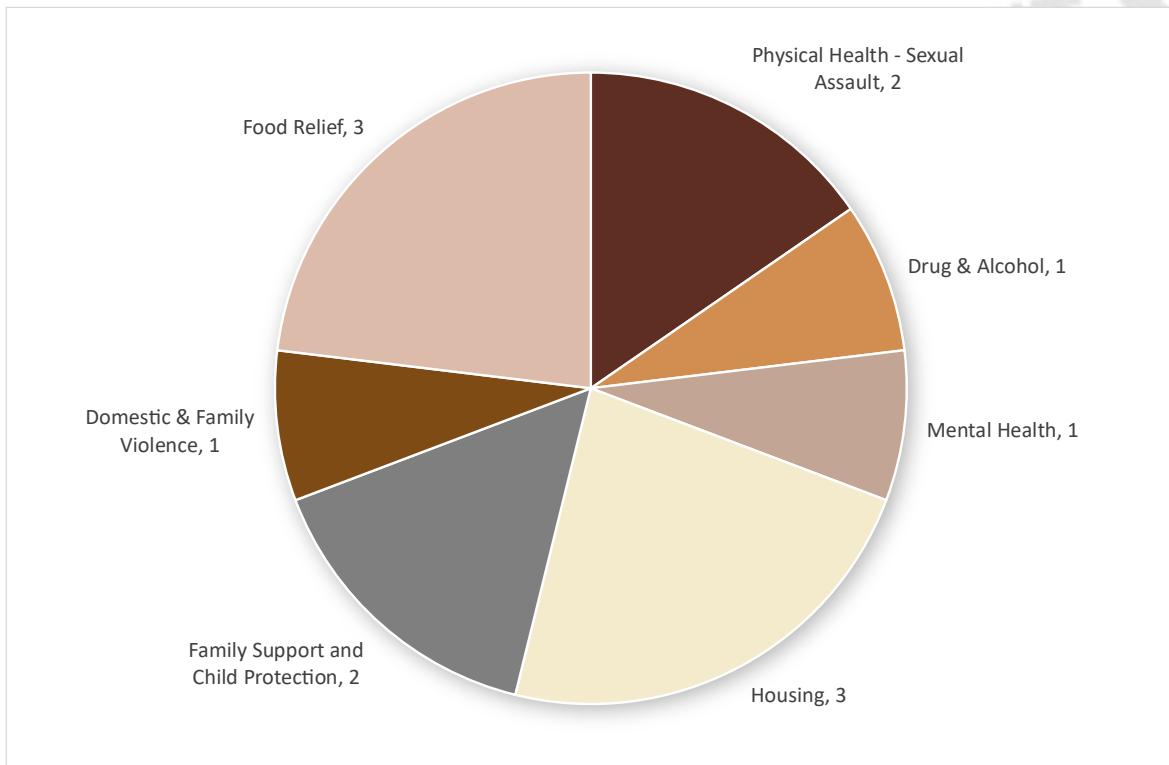


Both the Community Cultural Safety Summit and the Service Mapping identified a lack of drug and alcohol rehabilitation services in the Kempsey LGA so that families can stay together and remain on country.

There are 3 crisis housing services, 3 services offering emergency relief, 2 child protection crisis services, 2 sexual assault crisis services and 1 mental health, drug and alcohol and domestic violence crisis service operating in Kempsey (**Figure 3**).

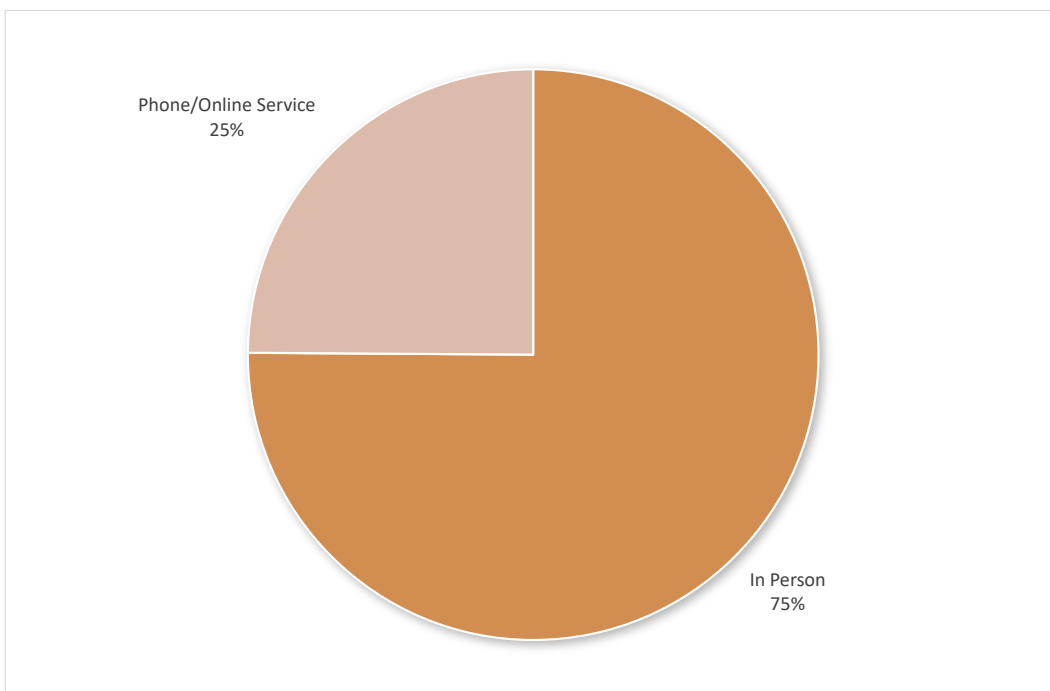


Figure 3 Crisis Service Types



There are other services who offer phone and online support for example the DV Line or operate outside of the Kempsey LGA but offer services to people living in the Kempsey LGA such as Drug and Alcohol rehabilitation services. 75% of services are offered in person in the Kempsey LGA while 25% offer phone or online services (**Figure 4**). Some services do offer both in person and phone/online.

Figure 4 Service Delivery Method

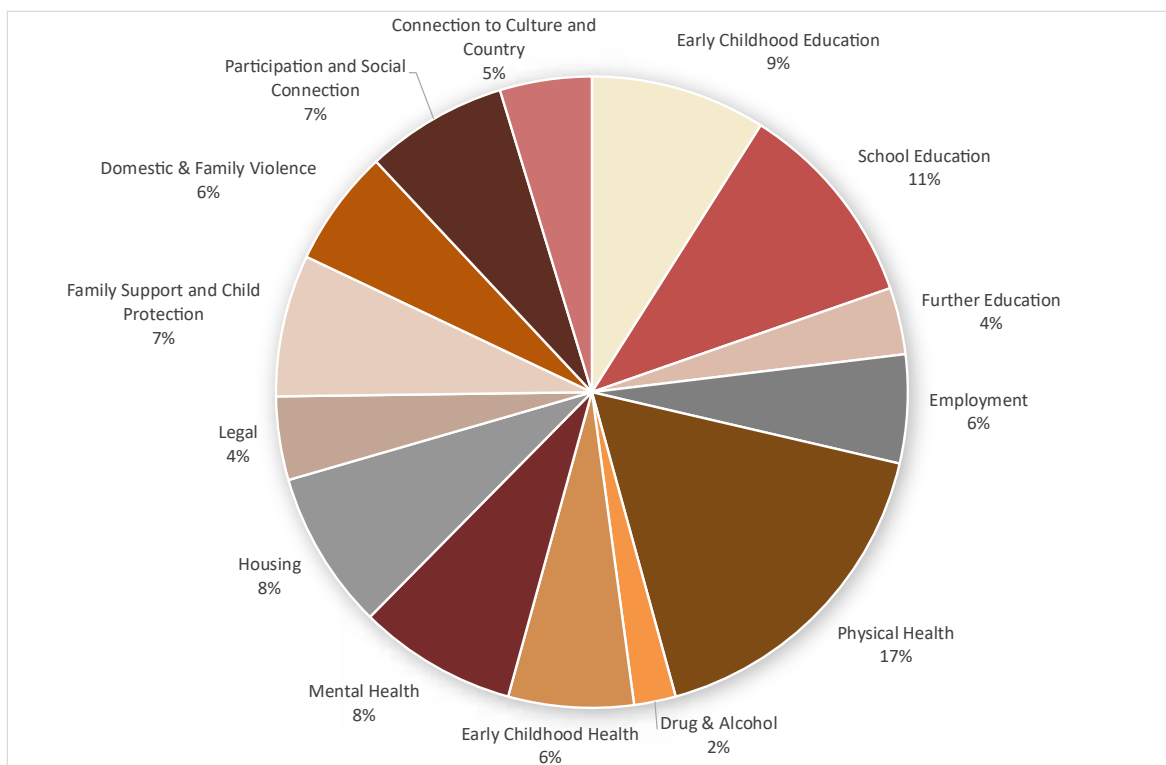


17% of community services delivered in the Kempsey LGA are physical health services such as podiatry, community nursing, chronic disease management and Aboriginal health services (**Figure 5**). This does not account for the funding received by these programs or the number of clients the services work with. The project initially set out to ascertain this information however service providers were not keen to share this. It is a count of the actual number of services in Kempsey.

Schools and school-based education programs make up 11% with Early Childhood Education making up a further 9%.

Housing and Mental Health services both represent 8% of the service types delivered in Kempsey.

Figure 5 Service Types in Kempsey LGA



Expertise – Skills and knowledge from workers

Online Surveys

As the Community Cultural Safety Summit was held during the day, many First Nations people who work were not able to attend. The project undertook a survey of First Nations people working in community agencies/organisations to determine issues relating to cultural safety and community safety in the Kempsey LGA. The survey asked for suggested actions to address these issues.

Community Cultural Safety Summit

Service providers who work in the Kempsey LGA were invited to participate in the one-day Community Cultural Safety Summit on 30 June 2022 to share their knowledge.

Lived Experience – community views

Community Conversations

To help inform the themes discussed at the Community Cultural Safety Summit a series of community conversations using the Harwood model were planned with small groups of First Nations people in communities of interest.

Due to restrictions relating to COVID-19 and some community members not being double vaxxed, only one community conversation was held in Bellbrook. Attendees were asked about their aspirations for their community, issues they are seeing in their community, ideas for addressing these issues and who should be responsible for addressing them.

Community Cultural Safety Summit

A one-day event was held to hear the lived experience from 87 community members, Aboriginal organisations, service providers and government representatives from the Kempsey LGA.

Structure for the Summit

The summit was held on 30 June 2022 at the Slim Dusty Centre in South Kempsey.

Kempsey Community Cultural Safety Summit

The Kempsey Cultural Safety Summit focussed on four of the Closing the Gap Socio-economic Outcomes which were identified as priorities in the data analysis. These were:

Outcome 10 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system.

Outcome 11 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system.

Outcome 12 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are not overrepresented in the child protection system.

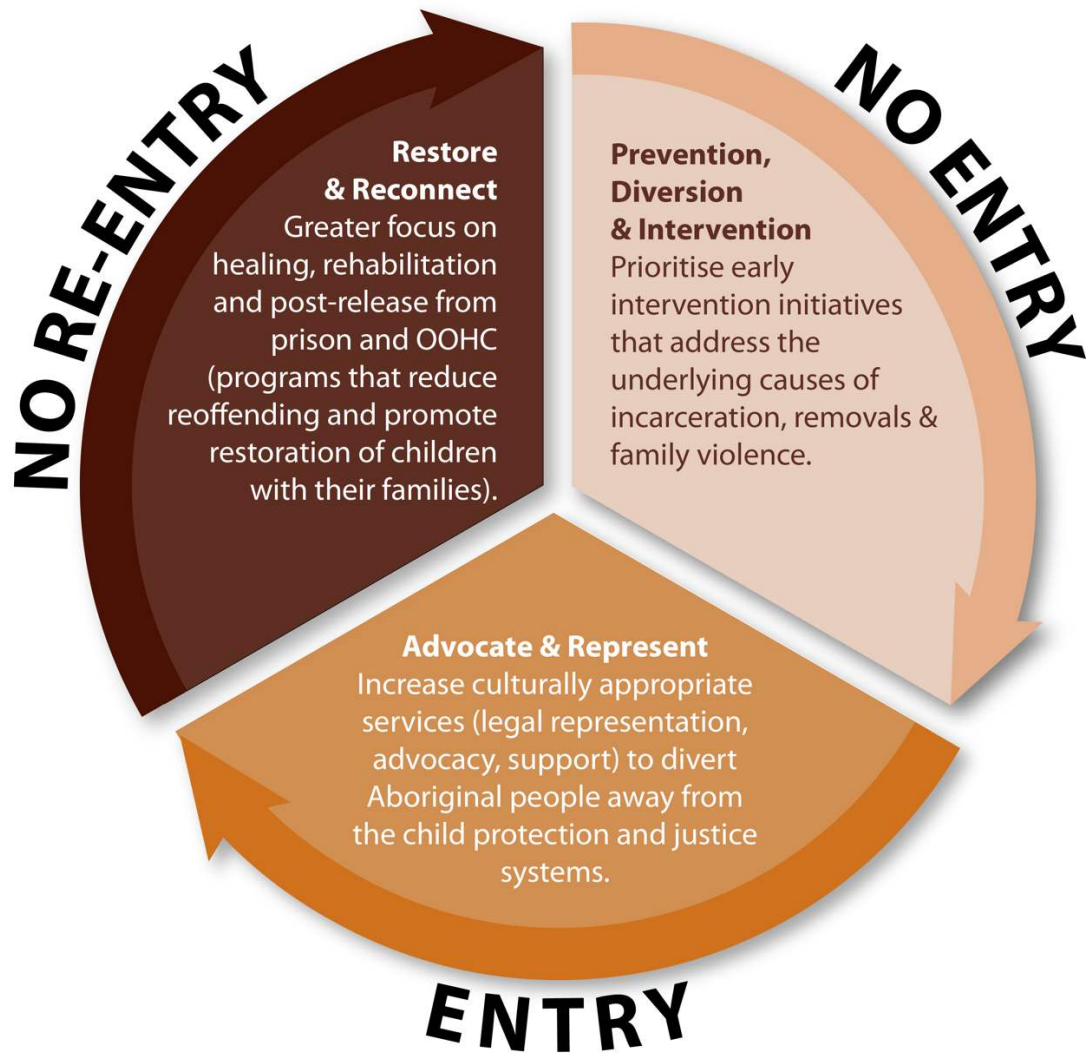
Outcome 13 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and households are safe.

For each of the 4 socio-economic outcomes (10, 11, 12 and 13) Summit participants were asked to think about various points along the Justice Continuum - No-Entry, Entry and No-Re-entry (**Figure 6**) and consider:



- What works and why it works?
- Areas for concern and potential solutions.

Figure 6: Justice Continuum



2.4 The Future of the Project

Stronger Places, Stronger People

At the time of the Kempsey Community Cultural Safety Summit the Project team knew that Stronger Places, Stronger People was coming to Kempsey.

Stronger Places, Stronger People is a community-led, collective impact initiative, stewarded by the Australian Government in partnership with state and territory governments and 10 communities across Australia. It seeks to disrupt disadvantage and create better futures for children and their families through locally tailored and evidence-driven solutions to local problems, in partnership with local people.

A unique feature of collective impact is the shared commitment to a local strategy by communities, governments, service providers and investors, with shared accountability for planning, decision making and results.

The Australian Government is investing \$35 million over five years in Stronger Places, Stronger People. There is also significant investment from state and territory governments and in some cases philanthropic organisations.

It is envisaged that Stronger Places, Stronger People will continue the project and implement some of the initiatives and recommendations of the project particularly those around education.

Justice Reinvestment

Justice reinvestment is also having conversations with the Kempsey community about the possibility of working alongside us, particularly in regards to the initiatives and recommendations for Closing the Gap Outcomes 10 and 11.

Justice reinvestment is a way of working that is led by the community, informed by data and builds strategies to address issues at a local level. The aim is to redirect funding away from prisons and into communities that have high rates of contact with the criminal justice system, through both community-led initiatives and state-wide policy and legislative reform.

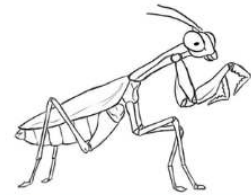
Justice reinvestment is not a 'program'. It is a long evolving process that improves service coordination and collaboration to build stronger communities. It recognises the power in placing communities in the driving seat to identify problems and lead solutions to reduce the number of Aboriginal people contacting the criminal justice system and thereby being imprisoned for minor offences.

Future Partnership and Funding Opportunities

We hope this report serves as inspiration for Government Departments, Businesses, Community Organisations and Philanthropic groups to come and walk beside us on this journey too. There are plenty of initiatives in this report that need your help. If you would like to be involved, please reach out to Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation kempseyoffice@kbhac.org.au or phone (02) 6533 1840.



SECTION 3



Environmental
Landscape

Section 3 | Environmental Landscape

3.1 | Closing the Gap

“Being able to offer long term support and advocacy to enable change to happen. The damage caused by long term disadvantage is expected to be fixed short term”

Quote Community Member 2021

Closing the Gap Objectives and Outcomes

The objective of this Agreement is to overcome the entrenched inequality faced by too many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people so that their life outcomes are equal to all Australians.

The Parties commit to mobilising all avenues and opportunities available to them to meet the objective of this Agreement.

The outcomes of this Agreement are:

1. **Shared decision-making:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are empowered to share decision-making authority with governments to accelerate policy and place-based progress on Closing the Gap through formal partnership arrangements.
2. **Building the community-controlled sector:** There is a strong and sustainable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector delivering high quality services to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the country.
3. **Improving mainstream institutions:** Governments, their organisations and their institutions are accountable for Closing the Gap and are culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including through the services they fund.
4. **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led data:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to, and the capability to use, locally-relevant data and information to set and monitor the implementation of efforts to close the gap, their priorities and drive their own development.

Closing the Gap: A New Approach

This Agreement is a commitment from all Parties to set out a future where policy making that impacts on the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is done in full and genuine partnership.

The Parties will listen to the voices and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and change the way we work in response.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been saying for a long time that:

- a. they need to have a much greater say in how programs and services are delivered to their people, in their own places and on their own country
- b. community-controlled organisations deliver the best services and outcomes for Closing the Gap
- c. government agencies and institutions need to address systemic, daily racism, and promote cultural safety and transfer power and resources to communities
- d. they need to have access to the same information and data as governments to drive their development.



3.2 | NSW Premiers Priorities

These priorities represent the government's commitment to making a significant difference to enhance the quality of life of the people of NSW.

They aim to tackle many of the issues that have been put in the 'too-hard basket', for too long. Each priority has an ambitious target.

They have been set with the purpose of delivering on the government's key policy priorities, being:

- a strong economy
- highest quality education
- well-connected communities with quality local environments
- putting the customer at the centre of everything we do
- breaking the cycle of disadvantage

Focus Area: Highest Quality Education

Priority: Bumping up education results for children

Increase the proportion of public-school students in the top two NAPLAN bands (or equivalent) for literacy and numeracy by 15% by 2023, including through state-wide roll out of Bump It Up.

Priority: Increasing the number of Aboriginal young people reaching their learning potential

Increase the proportion of Aboriginal students attaining their HSC by 50% by 2023, while maintaining their cultural identity.

Focus: Breaking the cycle of disadvantage

Priority: Reducing homelessness

Reduce street homelessness across NSW by 50% by 2025.

Priority: Reducing domestic violence reoffending

Reduce the number of domestic violence reoffenders by 25% by 2023.

Priority: Reducing recidivism in the prison population

Reduce adult reoffending following release from prison by 5% by 2023.

Priority: Towards zero suicides

Reduce the rate of suicide deaths in NSW by 20% by 2023.

Priority: Children and Young People

Increasing permanency for children in out-of-home care

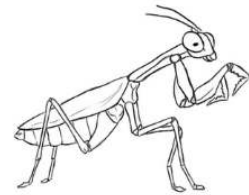
Priority: Protecting our most vulnerable children

Decrease the proportion of children and young people re-reported at risk of significant harm by 20% by 2023.





SECTION 4



Localising the
National
Closing the
Gap Priority
Reforms

Section 4 | Localising the National Closing the Gap Priority Reforms

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap is built around four new Priority Reforms that will change the way governments work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

The Priority Reforms have arisen from the Partnership between Governments and the Coalition of Peaks; they respond to the voices and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; and were overwhelmingly supported during the formal engagements on this Agreement in 2019.

Participants at the Kempsey Cultural Safety Summit were asked how the National Closing the Gap Priority Reforms could be implemented locally.

4.1 | Priority Reform 1: Partnering

What has been one of the strengths of today is that usually it's government saying to community, "Come to the table and have a chat".

Whereas today it's the complete opposite. It's community saying to the government, "Come to the table, let's have a chat and let's make a plan that's led by the community."

And ultimately we know that place-based decisions are going to have better outcomes because local problems have local answers. – Geoffrey Winters

Aboriginal People are empowered to share decision-making authority with governments to accelerate place-based progress on Closing the Gap through formal partnership agreements.

Strong Partnership Elements

Strong partnerships are those where:

1. Partnerships are accountable and representative
2. A formal agreement is in place between members
3. Decision making is shared between government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Government Actions Under the National Agreement

Governments commit to establishing policy and place-based partnerships across Australia which respond to local priorities. Many shared structures already exist developed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The actions under this Priority Reform are not intended to replace these arrangements but rather build on these successes. Governments commit to review existing partnership arrangements to assess how they meet the partnership elements by:

- Undertaking a stocktake of partnership arrangements already in place
- Reviewing and strengthening all current partnership arrangements to meet the strong partnership elements in the National Agreement, if Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners want to do so
- Reporting on the number of partnerships, changes to existing partnerships, and whether or not the partnerships meet the strong partnership elements.



How do or how can organisations include & involve Aboriginal People to ensure strong partnerships?



Communication

- Ask us what we want and how we want it
- Involve us in conversations that concern us
- Communicate openly with us including the sharing of information - not being selective on what we see.
- Communicate at a local level

Service Delivery

- Offer warm referrals
- Adopt culturally safe practice
- Take a strengths-based approach
- Deliver community-based services
- Organise community forums, family group conferences, info sessions, community BBQ's and community/Youth camps

Community Events

- Provide local cultural experiences together with other events
- hierarchy involved in community events
- Run community events targeting socioeconomic factors

Leadership

- Ensure Indigenous representation at a leadership level and at a grass roots level.
- Offer Voluntary or paid positions on Boards
- Allow leadership of our own projects
- Give us ownership of our interaction with services
- Invite our community leaders to share their experiences



Partnerships

- Develop formal partnerships between NGO's/Government (Local Health District/Police/DCJ) with our community.
- Make agreements accessible and inclusive to all community members including all families.

4.2 | Priority Reform 2: Strengthening

It's really important that we've got community organisations, and our community sitting at the forefront of having these conversations within our community. It's a fantastic initiative. – S. Seager

Building the Community-Controlled Sector

There is a strong and sustainable Aboriginal Community-Controlled Sector delivering high quality services to meet the needs of Aboriginal People.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled services usually achieve better results, employ more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and can be given preference over mainstream services.

What is a Community-Controlled Organisation?

Community-controlled organisations deliver services that strengthen and empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and people and are: 1. Incorporated under relevant legislation and not-for-profit 2. Controlled and operated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people 3. Connected to the community, or communities, in which they deliver services 4. Governed by a majority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander governing body

Strong Community-Controlled Sector Elements

Strong community-controlled sectors are those:

1. Where there is sustained capacity building and investment
2. Where there is a dedicated and identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce
3. That are supported by a Peak Body which has strong governance, policy development, and influencing capacity
4. Have a dedicated, reliable, and consistent funding model designed to suit the types of services required by communities

Government Actions under the National Agreement

Governments commit to building strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sectors and organisations in line with the strong sector elements. Governments commit to increase the proportion of services delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.



How do or how can organisations engage & empower Aboriginal People?



Aboriginal-led Services

- Fund Aboriginal-led and controlled organisations to deliver services for Aboriginal people and communities.
- More Aboriginal community leaders (young and old) in decision making roles.
- Sharing space and power, shared responsibilities, share of care in a cultural context.

Employment

- Organisations to provide genuine mentoring and upskilling programs for Aboriginal employees to develop them into future managers.
- Offer opportunities for role models who empower our Aboriginal young people.
- Embrace opportunities for employment of Aboriginal people, including more Traineeships.
- Government to bring back/reinvent the “CDEP” model so that people have something meaningful to do each day, which gives them hope and skills to gain real employment.
- Employers to provide more opportunities for advancement and recognition of Aboriginal people.

Service Delivery

- Deliver person centred practice - Listen to the needs and support each individual.
- Take a strength-based approach which adapts the delivery of services to ensure Aboriginal people are empowered.
- Adopt family-led decision making - engage with families in a way that is genuine and sincere, not judgemental.
- Deliver culturally safe services - Identify barriers to accessing services by Aboriginal people, break-down stigmatising factors, deliver cultural-based approach, promote/showcase Aboriginal culture, ensure staff are culturally capable.
- Re-engage with our community post COVID and promote services to Aboriginal people at Service Info days and Community events.
- Take public pledges to end racism and discrimination.



4.3 | Priority Reform 3: Transforming

“Government agencies do not fund these cultural programs because of their need for evidence-based funding. The community is not consulted enough on how funding can reach their targets.

Non-Aboriginal Organisations fail to deliver.

The funding should go to Aboriginal Communities”

Quote Community Member 2021

Transforming Government Organisations

Government, their organisations, and their institutions are accountable for Closing the Gap & are culturally safe & responsive to the needs of Aboriginal People, including the services they fund.

As part of this Priority Reform, parties commit to systemic and structural transformation of mainstream government organisations to improve accountability, and to respond to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Transformation Elements

Governments commit to the following transformation elements in mainstream organisations:

1. Identify and eliminate racism
2. Embed and practice meaningful cultural safety
3. Deliver services in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, communities and people
4. Increase accountability through transparent funding allocations
5. Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures
6. Improve engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Government Actions under the National Agreement

Governments commit to challenge unconscious biases that result in decisions based on stereotypes. Addressing institutional racism and promoting cultural safety is essential.

Governments commit to share and publish their engagement approaches that give effect to the transformation elements. Government commits to engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives before, during and after emergencies.



How do or how can organisations improve cultural knowledge of Aboriginal People?



Cultural Capable Organisations

- Create strong community and cultural linkages with Aboriginal organisations and community members on a regular basis (not just for special events). Be open, receptive, inclusive and willing to listen to them.
- Develop a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and/or implement a Cultural Safety Framework.
- Apply a cultural lens over your service delivery and organisation as a whole.
- Contract a cultural mentor or engage with the Aboriginal community to assist in embedding cultural approaches into your practice.
- Reporting on CTC initiatives and activities within their individual organisations.

Culturally Capable Staff

- Ensure all employees have appropriate training and understanding of the local Aboriginal community they work in, cultural lore and practices to build culturally safe services and work places.
- Engage cultural educators and run cultural programs for staff.
- Deliver NAIDOC education to staff and participate in local events.

Culturally Safe Communities

- Provide funding for cultural camps, programs and events for all communities.
- Have the local Aboriginal language compulsory in our education curriculum.
- Be Local info that is shared should be genuine, not generic/tokenistic.
- Invite Aboriginal community members to speak at town meetings.
- Genuine and meaningful consultation with Elders.



4.4 | Priority Reform 4: Informing

All government funding and service agencies. Some local organisations and government agencies are not connecting with our communities. This is why things are failing”

Quote Community Member 2021

Shared Access to Data and information at a Regional Level

Governments commit to enable shared access to location specific data and information for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations.

Disaggregated data and information (broken down by detailed sub-categories) is most useful to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities to obtain a comprehensive picture of what is happening in their communities and to make decisions about their futures.

Data and Information Sharing Elements

Data and information sharing practice elements between governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations contain the following features:

1. Partnerships in place to guide the improved collection, access, management, and use of data to inform shared decision making
2. Governments provide communities and organisations with access to the same data and information they use to make decisions
3. Governments collect, handle and report data at sufficient levels of disaggregation, and in an accessible and timely way
4. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations are supported by governments to build capability and expertise in collecting, using and interpreting data in a meaningful way

Government Actions under the National Agreement

Governments commit to implementing the data and information elements, including to:

- Share available, disaggregated regional data and information with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities
- Establish partnerships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and government agencies to improve collection, access, management, and use of data
- Make their data more transparent by telling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people what data they have and how it can be accessed
- Build capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities to collect and use data.



Service Delivery

- Fund more early intervention programs to keep kids home, safe and strong in culture.
- Fund services to support restoration of families and bring our kids back home.
- Deliver services which are flexible, affordable, offer transport and have community members involved.
- Provide more financial assistance to our communities in times of hardship.
- Develop a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Culture and Identity

- Allow us to enact and live by cultural/tribal lore and ways of life. Not colonised ways or laws.

To learn culture, to understand a bit about that and where they're from and knowing where they belong to. That's a big safety net for all Children to carry, is actually knowing that their own country and what country they're on. – Uncle John Kelly

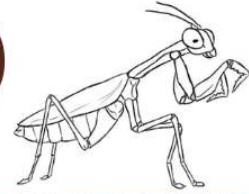




SECTION 5

CLOSING THE GAP

OUTCOME 10



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system.

Section 5 | Closing the Gap Socio-economic outcome 10

5.1 | Outcome 10 Data: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system.

Target 10: By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults held in incarceration by at least 15 per cent.

To achieve a safe and just place for the people of NSW, the NSW Government is working to both reduce Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander over-representation in the criminal justice system and to improve the way the justice system deals with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders, it needs to address the impact of trans-generational trauma and the impact of past policies and practices that still impact Aboriginal people today.

The NSW Government will work side by side with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through the development and implementation of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and NSW Jurisdictional Implementation Plan in line with best practice international research, which shows that investment in community-centred development, putting communities at the centre of the service system, produces sustained economic and social outcomes.

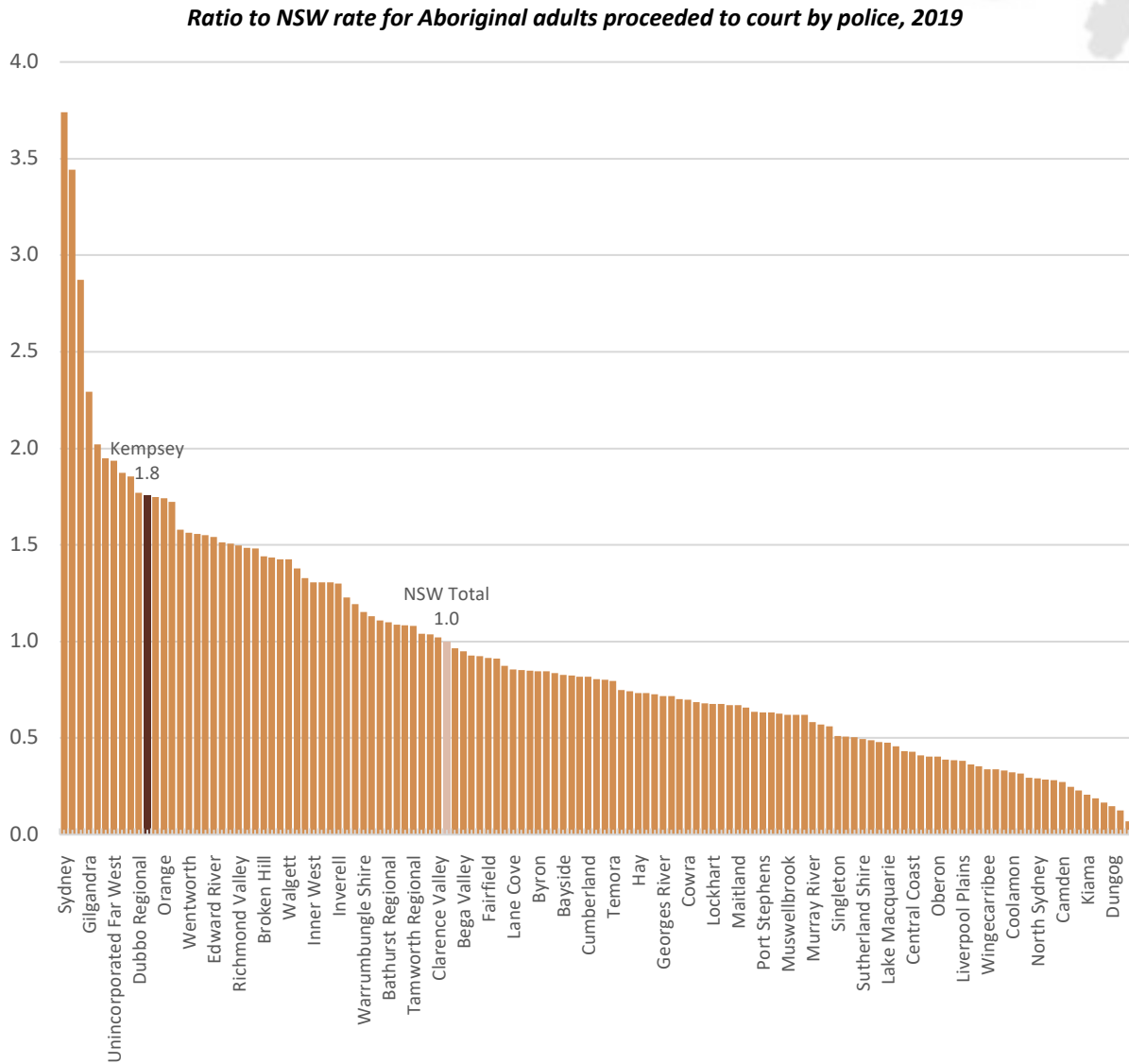
Data

NSW baseline (as at time of National Agreement inception)	Change required to reach CtG target	Data Sources	Progress (to be updated annually)
The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander imprisonment rate per 100,000 people in NSW is 1,684.2	A 15% reduction (i.e 280 people per 100,000) in the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults held in incarceration by 2031	Census Data	TBC

Kempsey LGA Statistics:

More Aboriginal adults are proceeded to court by Police than the NSW average (Figure 3).

Figure 7: Ratio for Kempsey compared to NSW for Aboriginal adults proceeded to court by Police, BOCSAR 2019



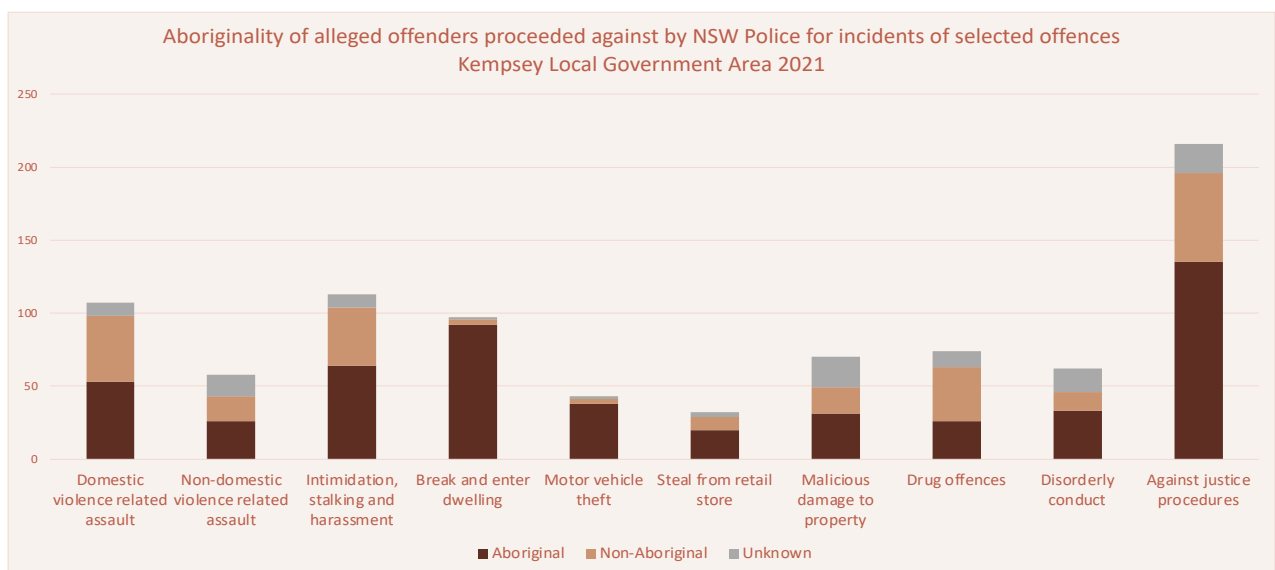
Offence Profile – Adults

The principal offence proceeded against by NSW Police of Aboriginal alleged offenders in the Kempsey LGA in 2021 was Against Justice proceedings (Figure 4) which includes breach AVO, escape custody, breach bail conditions, fail to appear, and resist/hinder officer.

A considerable proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people imprisoned for Justice Procedure Offences (JPOs) have breached the conditions of their community-based sentences.

The high rate of breach of community-based sentences indicates that greater attention should be given to the provision of culturally appropriate, community-based sentencing options and support services.

Figure 8: Kempsey LGA Statistics: Aboriginality of alleged offenders proceeded against by Police for incidents of selected top 10 offences in Kempsey LGA 2021 BOCSAR⁴

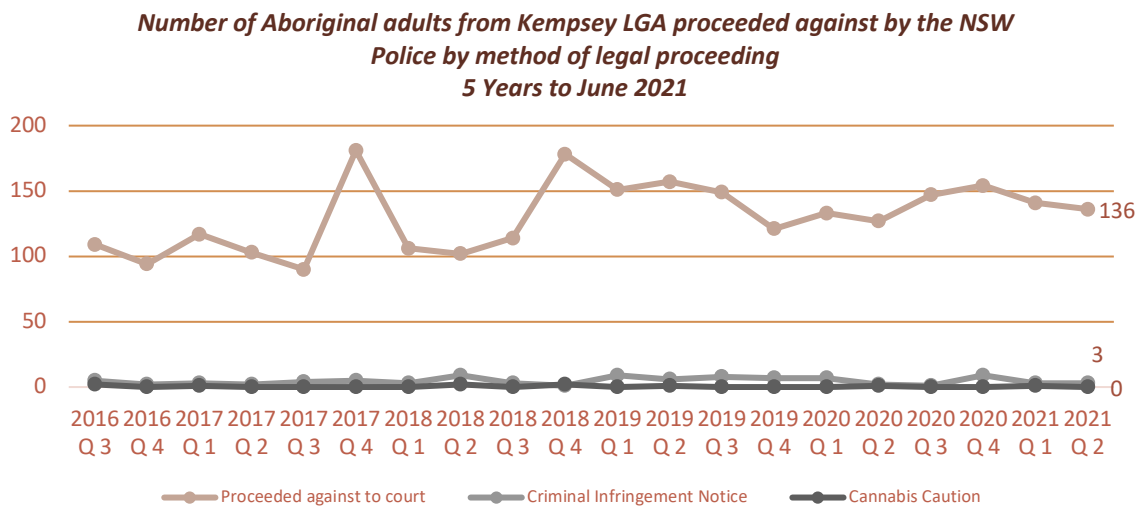


⁴ https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Pages/bocsar_datasets/Datasets.aspx

Trends in police proceedings – Adults

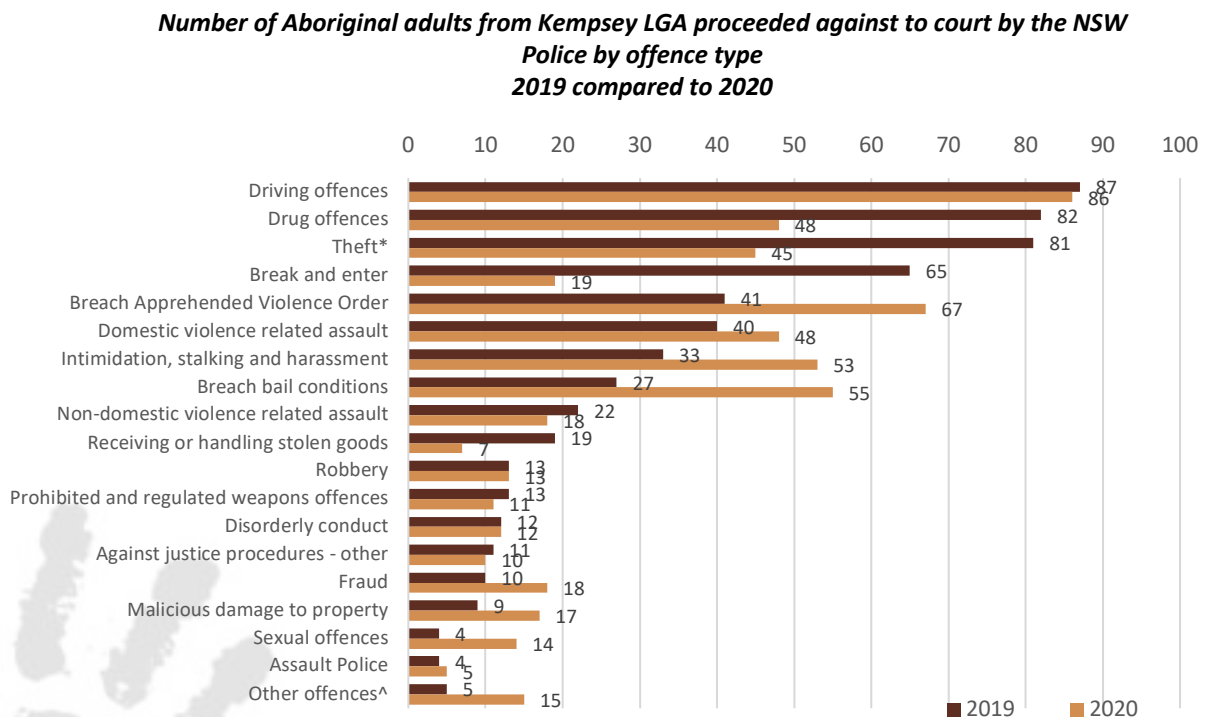
- The number of Aboriginal adults that received a Cannabis Caution or Criminal infringement remained **stable** over a 5-year trend (Figure 5).
- In five years to Jun-21, the number of Aboriginal adults proceeded against to court increased by **5.7% per year**, on average (Figure 5).

Figure 9: Number of Aboriginal adults from Kempsey LGA proceeded against by the NSW Police by method of legal proceeding 5 years to June 2021, BOCSAR



- Driving offences were high in 2019 and 2020 while Drug offences and theft decreased between 2019 and 2020 (Figure 6)

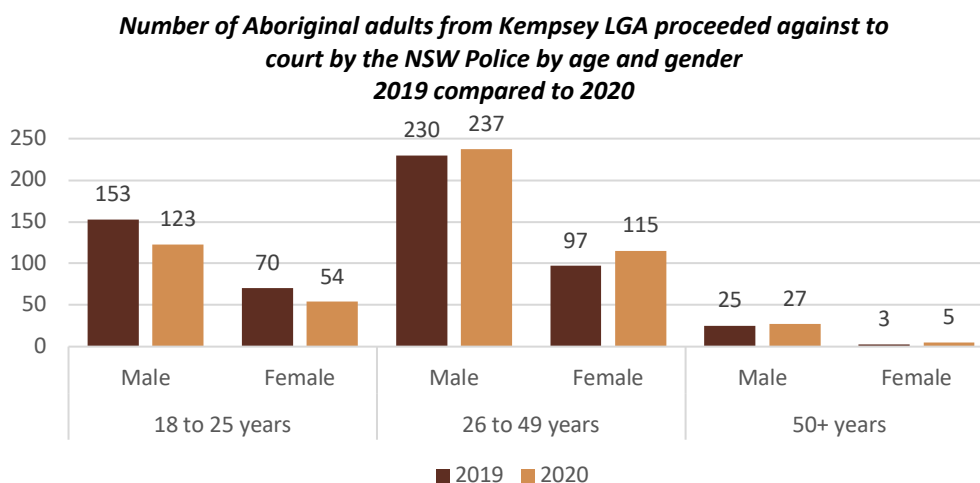
Figure 10: Total number of Aboriginal adults from Kempsey LGA proceeded against in Kempsey LGA 2019 and 2020,BOCSAR



Demographic Profile – Adults

- In Kempsey, adults 26 to 49 years made a substantial number of Aboriginal adults proceeded against to court in 2019 at 56.6% (Figure 7).
- Of the 578 Aboriginal adults in Kempsey in 2019, **70.6%** were **male** and **29.4%** were **female** (Figure 7).

Figure 11: Number of Aboriginal adults from Kempsey LGA proceeded against to court by the NSW Police by age and gender 2019 and 2020, BOCSAR



Police bail decisions - BOCSAR

- 161 (35.7%) Aboriginal adults in Kempsey were bail refused by police in 2019

Age	Police bail decision	Kempsey
Adult	Bail refused	161
	% bail refused	35.7%
	On bail	68
	Bail dispensed with	222
	Total police bail decisions	451

Initial court bail decisions - BOCSAR

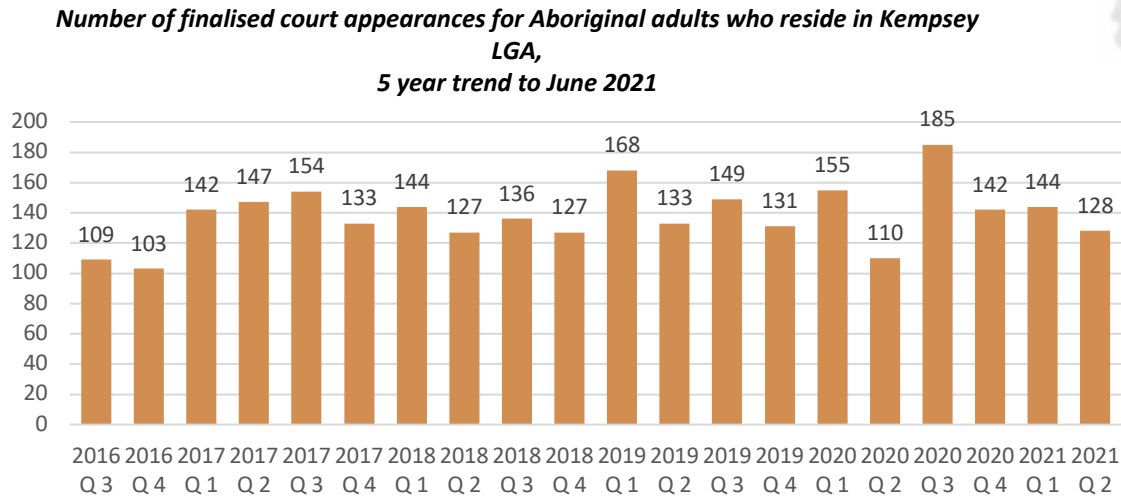
- 104 (23.1%) Aboriginal adults in Kempsey were bail refused by the court in 2019

Age	Initial court bail decision	Kempsey
Adult	Bail refused	104
	% bail refused	23.1%
	On bail	113
	Bail dispensed with	234
	Total court bail decisions	451

Court Appearances – Adult

The Number of finalised court appearance for Aboriginal adults who reside in the Kempsey LGA has increased over the past 5 years (Figure 8).

Figure 12: Number of finalised court appearance for Aboriginal adults who reside in Kempsey LGA 5 year trend to June 2021, BOCSAR

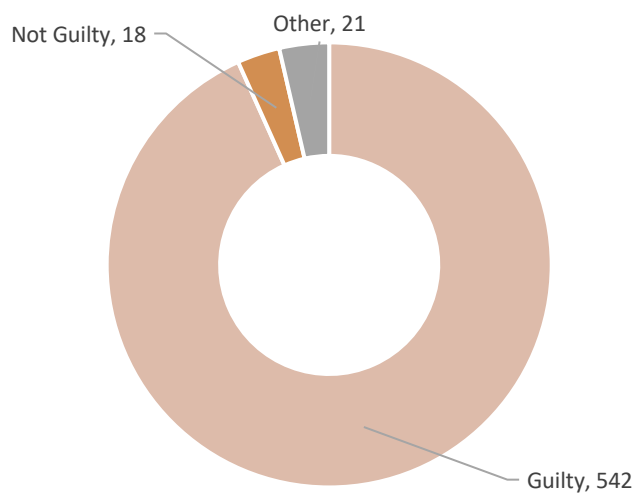


Court Appearance Outcome – Adults

The overwhelming majority of Aboriginal **adult** defendants in **Kempsey (93.3%)** received a guilty court outcome in 2019 (Figure 9).

Figure 13: Court outcomes for Aboriginal adults from Kempsey LGA 2019, BOCSAR

Court outcomes for Aboriginal adults from Kempsey LGA, 2019



Court Appearances – Adult

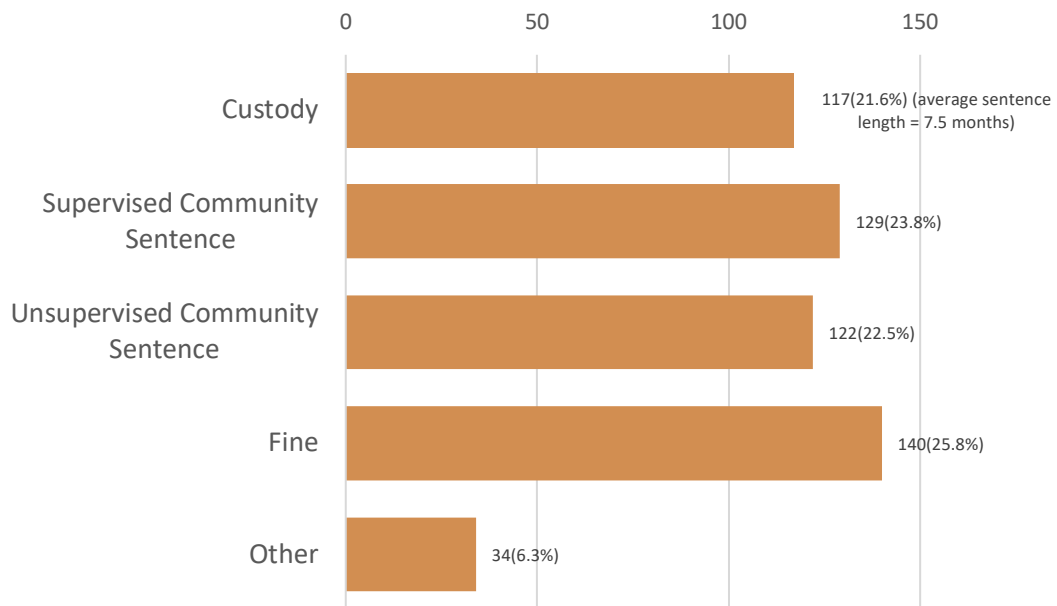
The most common penalty for adults in Kempsey (25.8%) was a fine. (Figure 10).

117 (21.6%) Aboriginal adults from Kempsey were sentenced to custody (Figure 10).

The average sentence length was 7.5 months.

Figure 14: Penalties for Aboriginal adults from Kempsey LGA 2019, BOCSAR

Penalties for Aboriginal adults from Kempsey LGA, 2019

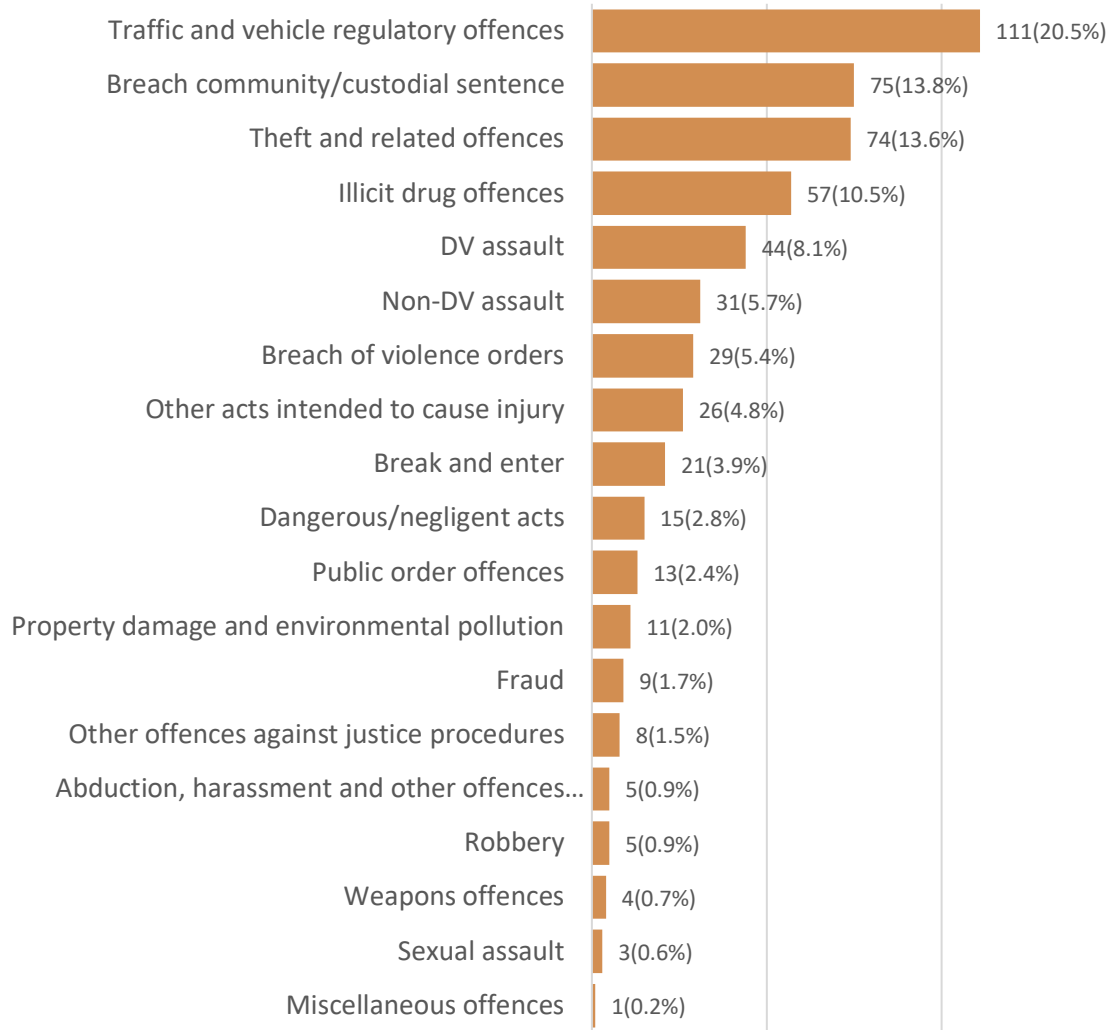


Court Appearances – Adults – Offences

Traffic and Vehicle Regulatory Offences were the most frequent principal offence in 2019 making up 20.5% of all offences. Breach of community/custodial sentence was the second highest (Figure 11).

Figure 15: Principal offence for Aboriginal adults from Kempsey LGA 2019, BOCSAR

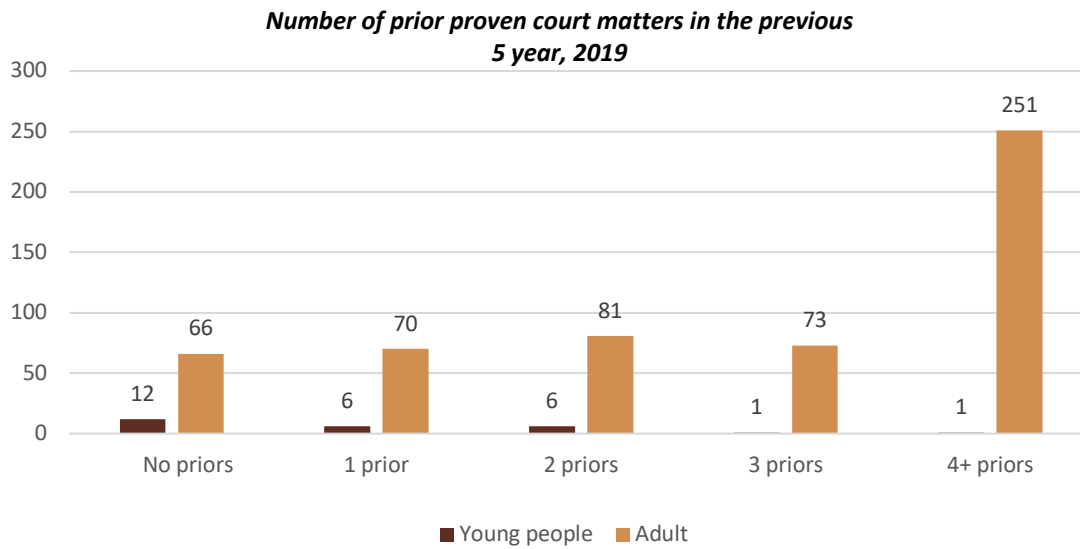
Principal offence for Aboriginal adults from Kempsey LGA, 2019



Prior Court Appearances -

- 87.6% of adults who were proceeded to court had a prior proven court matter in the preceding five years (Figure 12).
- 52.8% of adults who had prior proven court matters in the past 5 years had more than 4+ priors (Figure 12).

Figure 16: Number of prior proven court matters in the previous 5 years from Kempsey LGA 2019, BOCSAR



Prior Custody -

- 37.8% of adults in Kempsey with a proven court matter in 2019 had prior custodial sentence.

5.2 | Summit Responses - Outcome 10 – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system.



No Entry – Prevention, Diversion and Intervention

Prioritise early intervention initiatives that address the underlying causes of incarceration, removals and family violence.

What is Working?	Why is it Working?
Coaching Programs	Supports clients with holistic approach.
Cultural camps, youth focused.	Learning about culture connection with Elders and land.
Residential rehab program such as the Glen Centre and the Buttery.	Culturally safe, supportive environment to recover from alcohol and substance misuse. Kempsey had one but not anymore. We need this for families and the community.
Mental health support.	Essential service.
Employment support programs	Opportunities to upskill. Builds trust. We can talk down or remove the circumstance - crime driven by need. Pride in employment.
Programs to help people get their licence or licence upgrades - get qualifications for truck driving - skill capacity.	Generates pride and gives hope. Prevents driving offences being a gateway. It is an area where you see tangible confidence, choice and achievement.
Men's Behaviour Change Program.	Support for men to change behaviours and reduce incidents of domestic violence
Parenting Programs, Intensive Family Preservation, Intensive case management working towards prevention.	Support for families Holistic approach. Help the complex issues of a person and not just one issue.
Educational approaches and pedagogy that engages young people. Giving young people opportunities to learn and embrace their culture in school from pre-kindy to high school.	Young people engage in skills and career pathways beyond school. Programs like Love Bites at a young age. They are providing young people with context and pride in their culture.

Emergency Relief. Drop-in support.	Preventing charges - good connections.
Aboriginal controlled education and activities e.g. sport, creative, social.	Cultural safety. Good mentoring. Non-judgement. Networking, volunteering and support.

Community Concerns

Limited advocacy and support services

- No support for adults prior to court appearances.
- Not having a culturally appropriate service/worker or any service.
- Community awareness/acknowledgement of support programs.
- Lack of collaboration between services
- Accessible services.

Funding

- Availability and longevity of funding.
- Cancelling service funding when service is working.
- Lack of funding for case management services and intervention supports

Mental Health

- Not enough mental health services locally
- Our people feel a sense of Hopelessness - if you can't see opportunity you can't work on anything.
- Making people who have been in jail feel valued.
- Complications on the way to treatments.
- Acceptance in community.

Other concerns

- Lack of cultural capability training for judges and lawyers.
- Poverty.
- Unintended consequences of some programs e.g. tackling violence program.
- Lack of involvement from young people in solutions.
- No diversity within Kempsey Police or courts. Need more involvement in culture.
- Need for more diversity programs in Kempsey.
- Police need to focus on diversion and discretion.
- Lack of community transport.

Solutions

Programs and support services

- Program to assist with advocacy and support for people prior to court appearances.
- Aboriginal healing program to cover all areas within our family structures.
- Bring back or reinvent CDEP.
- Programs to support families to have a chance at staying together which meet their support needs.
- Easier and earlier access to treatments - (e.g. shorter rehab waiting time).
- Therapeutic interventions needed alongside individualised case management support
- Out of hours support. Not just 9am-5pm.
- Loop bus that goes from South West Rocks to Bellbrook.
- Develop a service map to make it easier to find services and simplify the process.

- Programs to address intergenerational trauma, dependence, poverty and hopelessness.
- Services working better together.

Employment

- More government/community driven programs with local Aboriginal staff and community members.
- Increase in representation of Aboriginal people in services, on Council, with Police and Court System.

Funding

- Funding programs for longer periods of time (more than 1 year) - 3-5 years is ideal.
- Encourage consortiums, working groups and partnerships to apply for funding together.
- Funding for rehab which allows families to stay together.
- Fund suitable, cultural, local treatment alternatives and accommodation services in community.

Cultural Connection

- Connect people to culture and land, give identity and meaning.

Other solutions

- Develop case studies, local stories, proof of change to show what works.
- Ask Aboriginal people, families and communities what will work.
- Break the poverty cycle - Employment is not the only solution. It is a broader government issue - advocate for more opportunities for Aboriginal people. Less shaming – people need to retain their benefits.
- Change at Government level needed to the Judicial System to reduce cultural bias including cultural capability training for judges and lawyers.
- Create local programs to prevent/educate around incarceration and take a holistic approach.

I love Kempsey. I love my community, but there is a lot of trauma in our community.

There's a lot of trauma, you know. – Auntie M. Donovan

Entry – Advocate & Represent

Increase culturally appropriate services (legal representation, advocacy, support) to divert Aboriginal people away from the child protection and justice systems.

What is Working?	Why is it Working?
Barrun Buti	Connecting to culture and families.
Rent subsidy housing NSW.	To assist people being incarcerated with keeping housing.
Intensive case management in gaol to prevent reoffending.	Providing support to prevent re-entry by taking a holistic approach.
Family connections to culture role models.	Good role models leading youth in the right direction. Programs will work if they want to do them.
Programs which promote staying connected to community and family such as Shine for kids.	Keeps inmates corrected with family, on release they have love from family, support and reason to stay out plus follow ups.
Red Dust Healing Program.	

Concerns

Pre-release supports

- Access to Community services and other supports pre-release.
- Inmates not having a pre-exit release plan.
- Not enough investment in prevention programs so many reoffend once out. They aren't job ready or prepared for release. One size fits all approaches.
- More support programs for families while a family member if in gaol.
- There are an excess of 'tickets' that aren't linked to real jobs.

Solutions

Allow connection between gaols and communities so it's not isolating.

Programs and services

- Programs/workers to do the job they are funded for.
- Holistic, individually tailored reintegration supports and programs to help inmates get back into the community before they are released such as:
 - Job ready programs
 - Programs which address offending behaviours such as men's behaviour change programs and drug and alcohol programs
 - Linking inmates with local housing, mental health support services pre-release
 - intensive care management plan.
- Collaboration between all support agencies working with inmates.
- Local solutions – needs are different for local people coming out of prison.

Employment

- Employment needs in local areas are identified and matched to offenders - training programs in real life situations - not random.
- Create opportunities in jail for people to rebuild/increase skills.

No Re-entry - Restore & Reconnect

Greater focus on healing, rehabilitation and post-release from prison and OOHC (programs that reduce reoffending and promote restoration of children with their families)

Concerns

- Blanket rules against employment post incarceration should be removed.

Solutions

- Need for ongoing support services post release.
- Providing safe homes for men and women leaving prison that is culturally safe where they can understand their past, learn from their trauma and heal to break the cycle.
- Establish rehabs close to home.
- Funded services need to have requirements to provide out of hours, weekends, including outreach and transport options.



5.3 Future Focus Areas for Closing the Gap Socio-Economic Outcome 10:

Summit participants were asked to determine the key areas that should guide Closing the Gap initiatives locally. They were asked to think about these in terms of what needs to happen upstream (if we get this right) and downstream (the result). The ideas are illustrated below.



5.4 | Summit suggestions for achieving Closing the Gap Socio-Economic Outcome 10:

While mainstream criminology has addressed this problem by conceptualising Aboriginal crime as the product of poor socio-economic circumstances, this analysis fails to capture the complexity of the issue and provide relevant solutions. Since the release of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody in 1991, Aboriginal over-representation has increased in almost all states and territories (Weatherburn, 2006)⁵. This suggests that policy derived from traditional approaches has not successfully reduced the problem. Over-representation must be addressed using a less conventional framework.

If we want to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice system in the Kempsey LGA we need to:

- Transform Government through continuous quality improvement, better monitoring and reporting on services so they do what they are funded to do and that Government identify funding for Aboriginal Organisations.
- Improve the cultural capability, develop the workforce and ensure better linkages between the services in Kempsey. This includes improved partnerships, data, reporting and evaluation. More employment and economic opportunities for our local people and building the Aboriginal Community-Controlled Sector.
- Deliver cultural programs through Health, Justice, Early Childhood, Education and Training as well as Housing and we need these Departments to communicate with us in an empowering way that focuses on our strengths.
- Maintain our cultural connection through our land, water, language, culture and most importantly through our families staying together.

I think as a community we really need to do more wrap-around support, building their sense of identity and worth, and also create opportunities for them to see beyond what they're seeing right now.

Give them that future vision that they are worthy, they are valued and that we can really support them. – Auntie Rhonda Radley

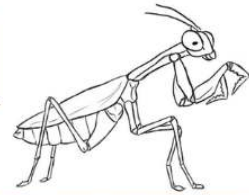
⁵ Weatherburn, D., Snowball, L. and Hunter, B. (2006). 'The economic and social factors underpinning Indigenous contact with the justice system: Results from the 2002 NATSISS survey', Crime and Justice Bulletin, no. 104, NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, Sydney.



SECTION 6

CLOSING THE GAP

OUTCOME 11



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system.

Section 6 | Closing the Gap Socio-economic outcome 11

6.1 | Outcome 11 Data: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are not over-represented in the criminal justice system.

Target 11: By 2031, reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10-17 years) in detention by at least 30 per cent.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait young people are highly represented in the criminal justice system compared to non-indigenous young people.

The closing the gap youth justice target is to reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth detention by 30% by 2031.

Based on the latest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population projection for NSW, this equates to a target Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth detention population of 92 in 2031.

Data

NSW baseline (as at time of National Agreement inception)	Change required to reach CtG target	Data Sources	Progress (to be updated annually)
The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth detention rate is 24.2 per 10,000 population	A 30% reduction (i.e 7.3 people per 10,000) in the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (10-17 years) in detention by 2031	The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander imprisonment rate per 100,000 people in NSW IS 1,684.2	TBC

It's sad, but unfortunately clearly known that the interactions [with the criminal justice system] of young Aboriginal people in Kempsey is far, far above those of their non-Indigenous peers.

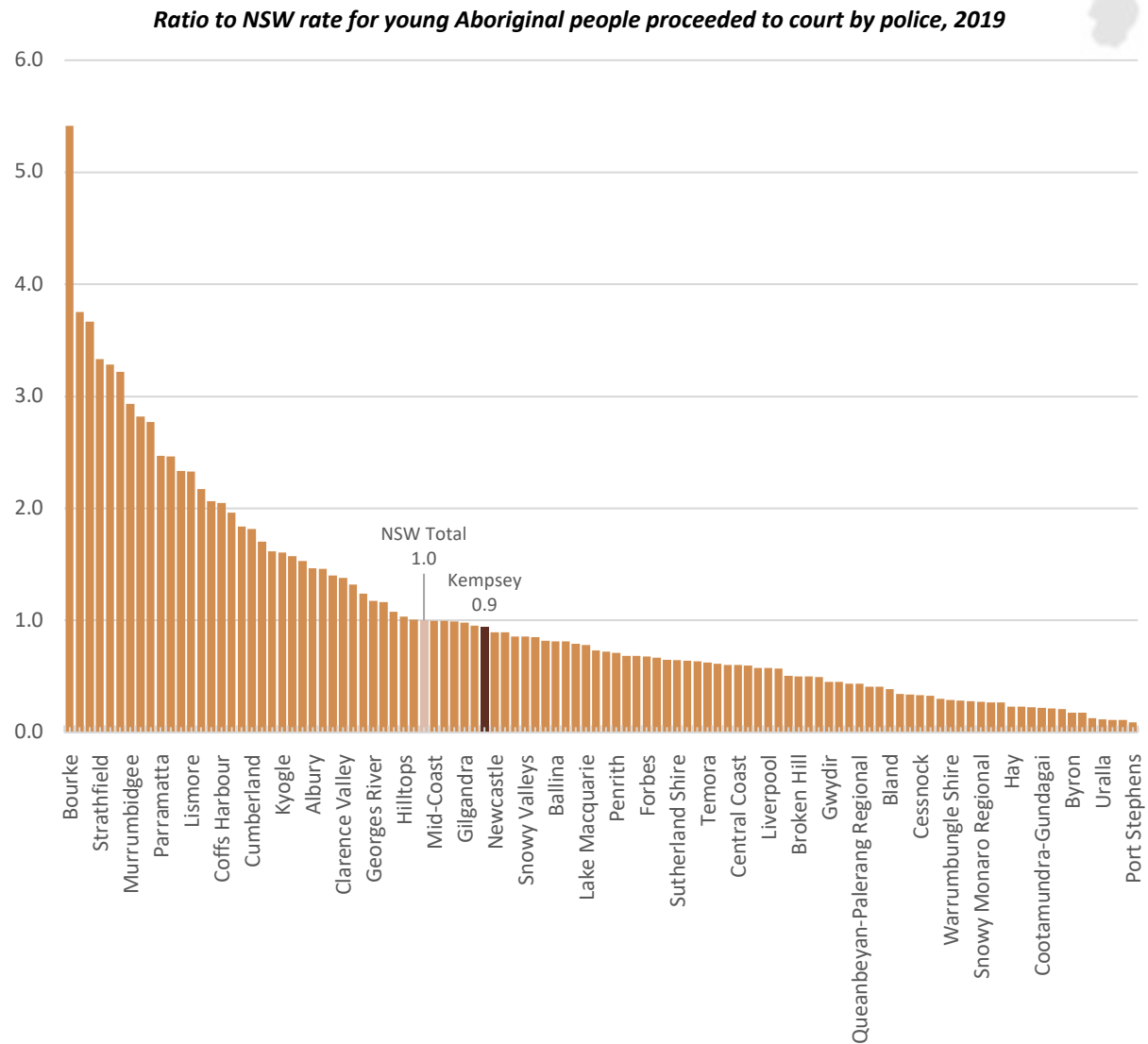
We know that bail appearances in terms of successful bail grants is far lower than their non-Indigenous peers. One of the things that the community really wants to think about is what's causing that.

How do you identify what we call justice circuit breakers? That is, those things that are leading young people into the criminal justice system that can be broken, such that that chain doesn't commence the cycle? – Geoffrey Winters

Youth Statistics

The ratio of young Aboriginal people proceeded to court in 2019 was 0.9, less than the State average.

Figure 12: Ratio of Kempsey compared to NSW rate of young Aboriginal people proceeded to court by Police, 2019 BOCSAR



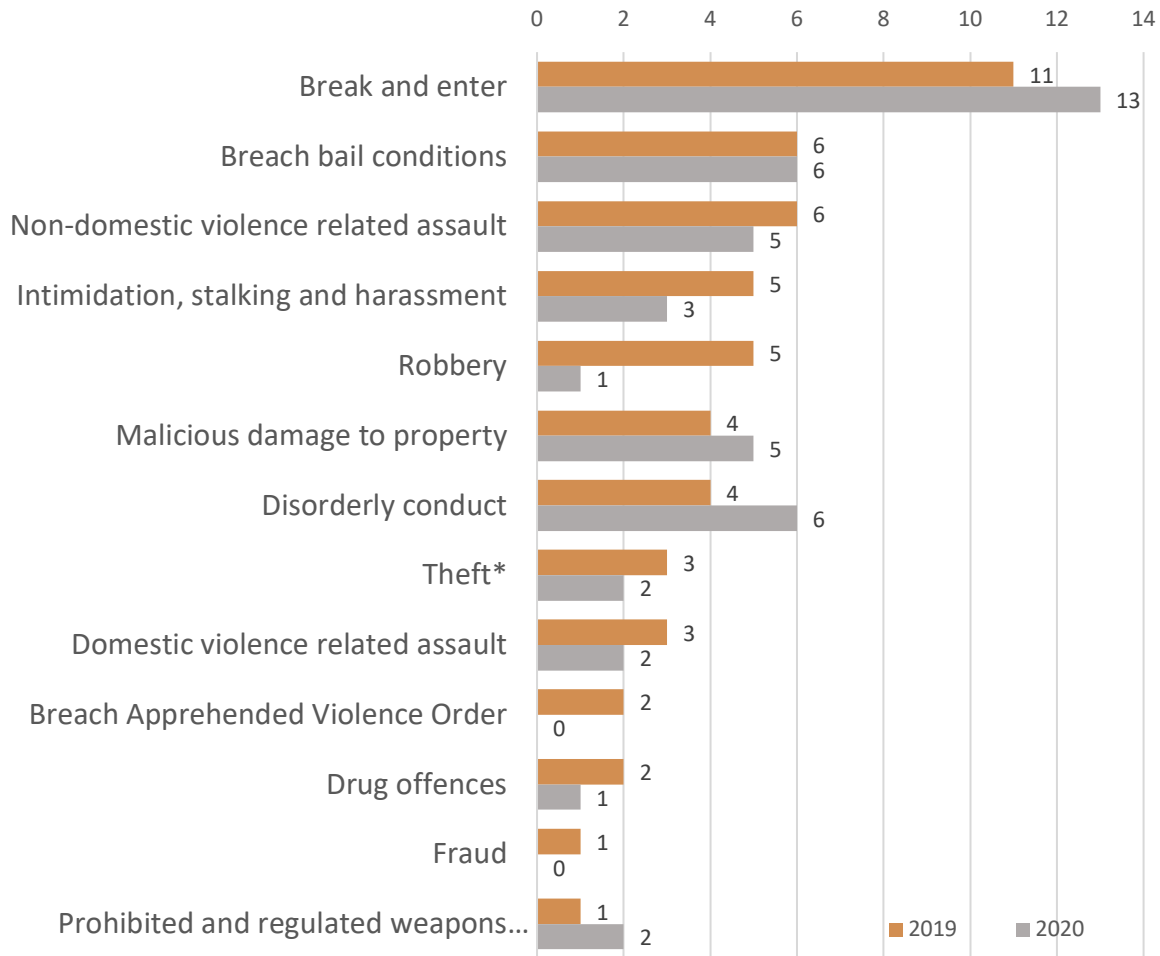
Bringing back that night sport or going out and doing stuff and learning language and dance, you know, stuff like that. Because they've got nothing to do and so it just leads to doing the wrong thing. - Uncle Geoffrey Oliver

Offence Profile – Young People - BOCSAR

In both 2019 and 2020, break & enter was the most common offence for young people to be proceeded against.

Figure 13: Number of young Aboriginal offenders from Kempsey LGA proceeded against to court by NSW Police by offence type 2019 compared to 2020 BOCSAR

Number of young Aboriginal offenders from Kempsey LGA proceeded against to court by the NSW Police by offence type 2019 compared to 2020



Total number of Aboriginal young people proceeded against in Kempsey LGA:

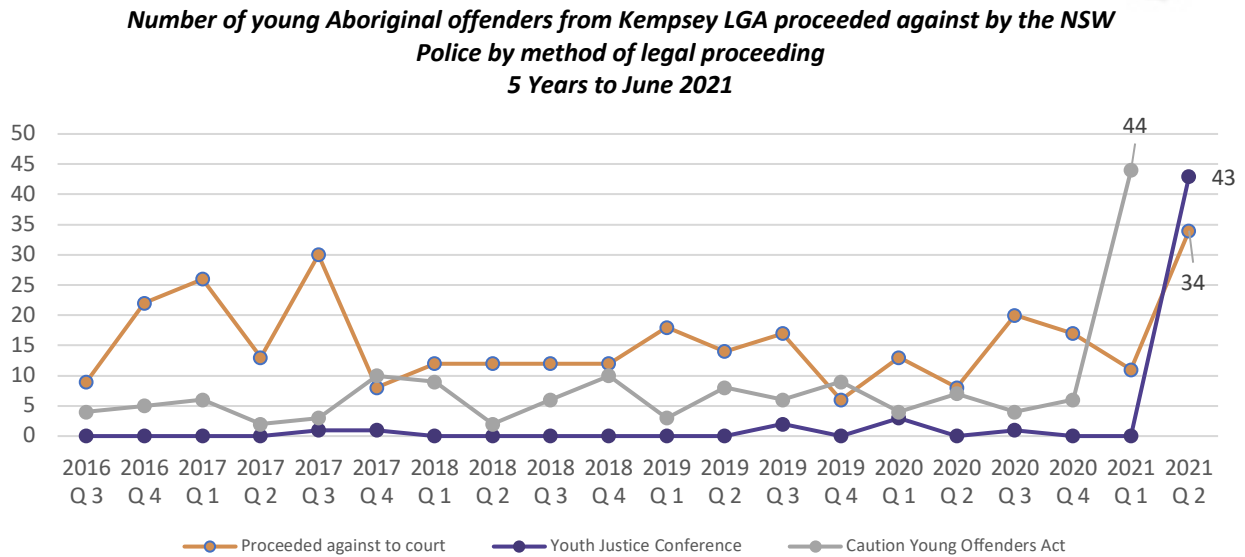
2019: 55

2020: 58

Trends in police proceedings – Young people

- The number of young Aboriginal proceeded against to court or cautioned in Kempsey LGA remains **stable** on average over five years.
- From 2021 Q1 to 2021 Q2 there was a sharp increase for all three methods of legal proceeding.

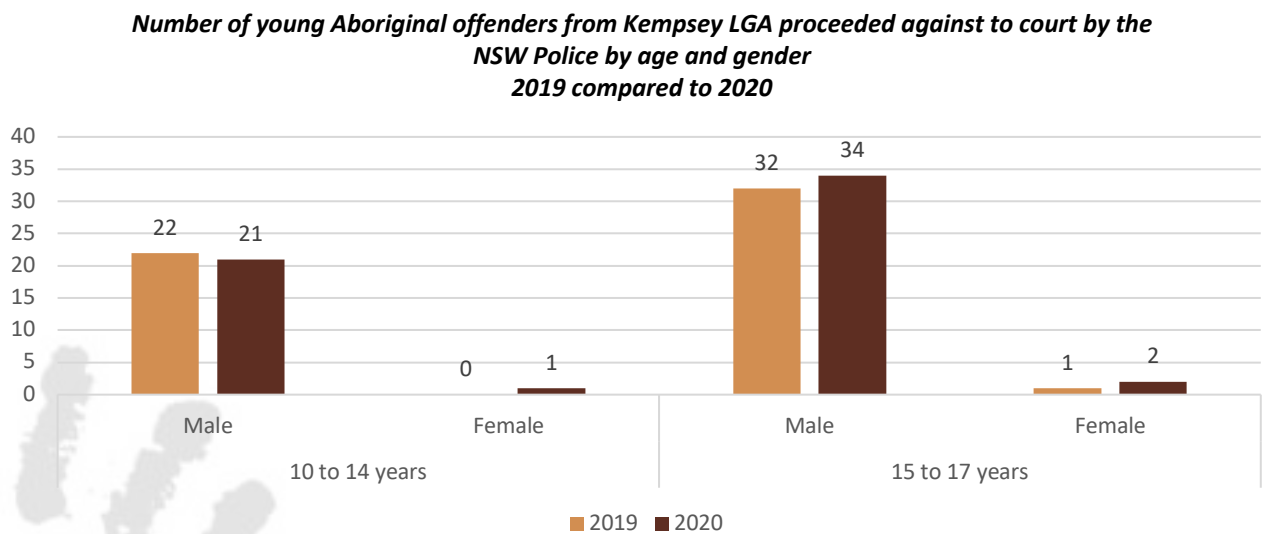
Figure 14: Number of young Aboriginal offenders from Kempsey LGA proceeded against by NSW Police by method of legal proceeding 5 years to June 2021, BOCSAR



Demographic Profile – Young Offenders

- 40% of young Aboriginal persons proceeded against in Kempsey are aged 10-14 years in 2019.
- Of the 55 young Aboriginal offenders in **Kempsey** in 2019, all but one were male (**98.2% were male and 1.8% were female**)

Figure 15: Number of young Aboriginal offenders from Kempsey LGA proceeded against to court by NSW Police by age and gender 2019 compared to 2020, BOCSAR



Police Bail Decisions – Young People

- 15 (31.9%) Aboriginal young people in Kempsey were bail refused by police in 2019

Age	Police bail decision	Kempsey
Young people	Bail refused	15
	% bail refused	31.9%
	On bail	8
	Bail dispensed with	24
	Total police bail decisions	47

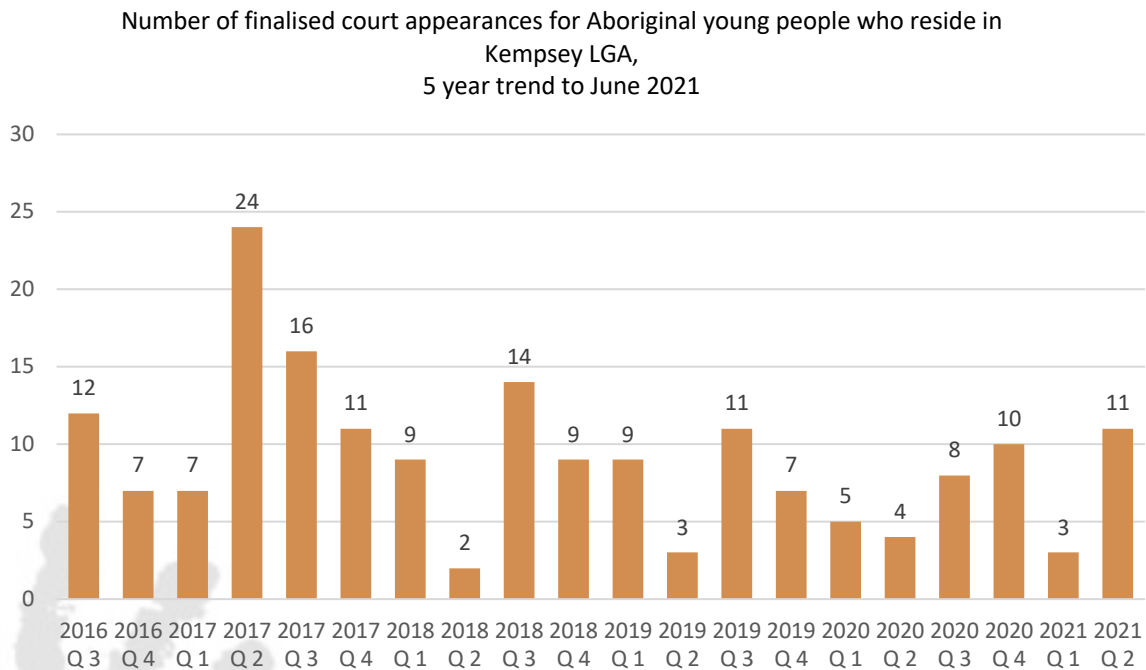
Initial court bail decisions – Young People

- 5 (10.6%) Aboriginal young people in Kempsey were bail refused by the court in 2019

Age	Initial court bail decision	Kempsey
Under 18	Bail refused	5
	% bail refused	10.6%
	On bail	17
	Bail dispensed with	25
	Total court bail decisions	47

Court Appearance – Young People

Figure 16: Number of finalised court appearance for Aboriginal young people who reside in Kempsey LGA, 5 year trend to June 2021, BOCSAR

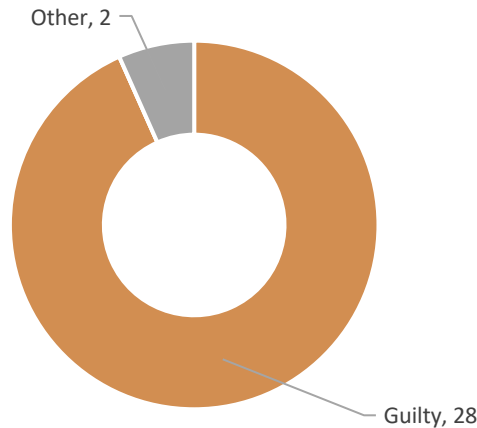


Court Appearance Outcome – Young People

The overwhelming majority of young Aboriginal defendants in Kempsey (93.3%) received a guilty court outcome in 2019.

Figure 17: Court outcomes for Aboriginal young people from Kempsey LGA, 2019, BOCSAR

Court outcomes for Aboriginal young people from Kempsey LGA, 2019



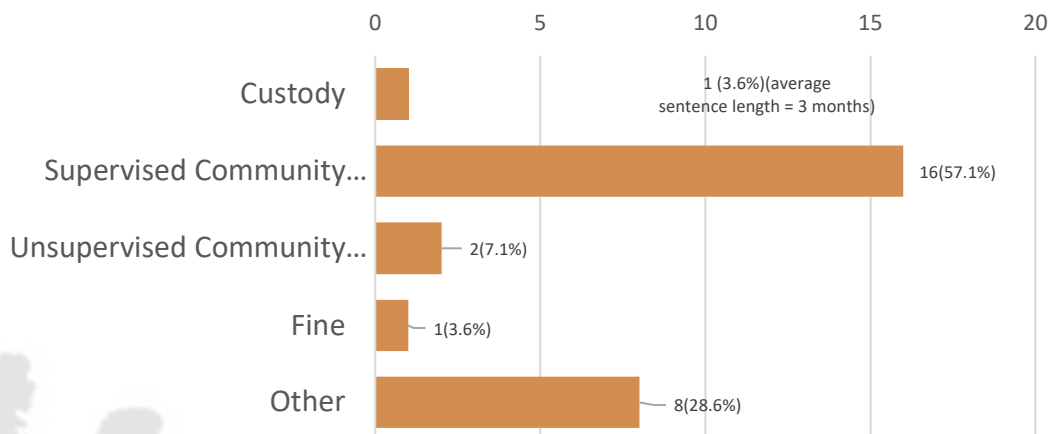
Court Appearances Penalties

The most common penalty for young people was a supervised Community Order (Kempsey = 57.1%).

The majority of Aboriginal young people who received a 'Other' penalty in Kempsey received either a YJC dismissal or a caution under Young Offenders Act

Figure 18: Penalties for Aboriginal young people from Kempsey LGA, 2019, BOCSAR

Penalties for Aboriginal young people from Kempsey LGA, 2019

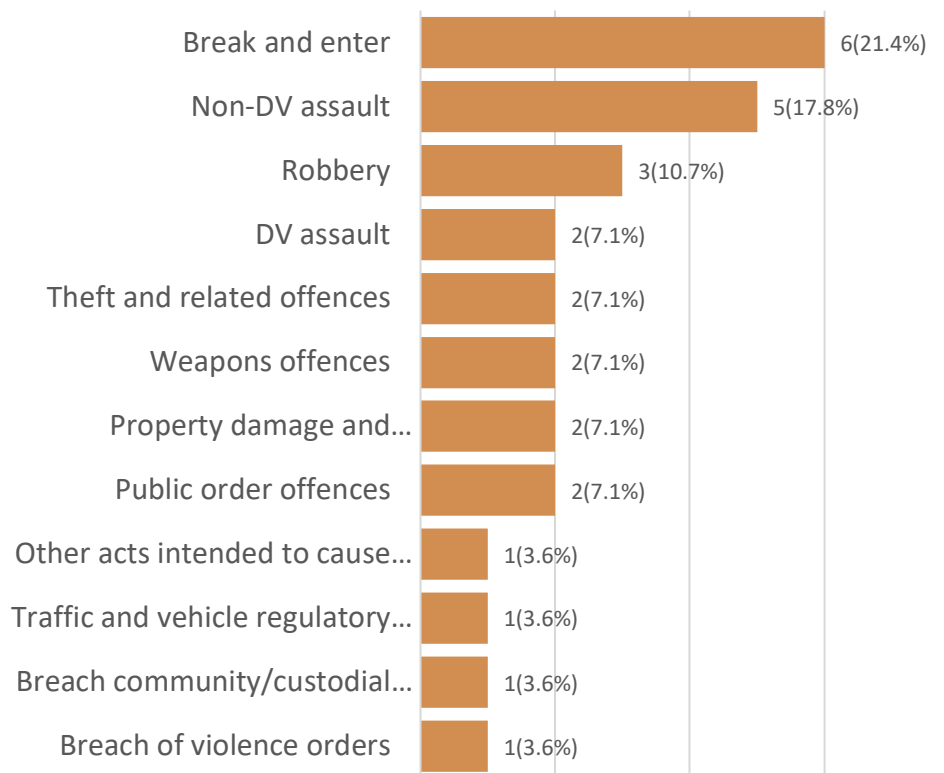


Court Appearances – Young People – Offences

Break and Enter is the most frequent principal offence making up 21.4% of all offences.

Figure 19: Principal offence for Aboriginal young people from Kempsey LGA, 2019, BOCSAR

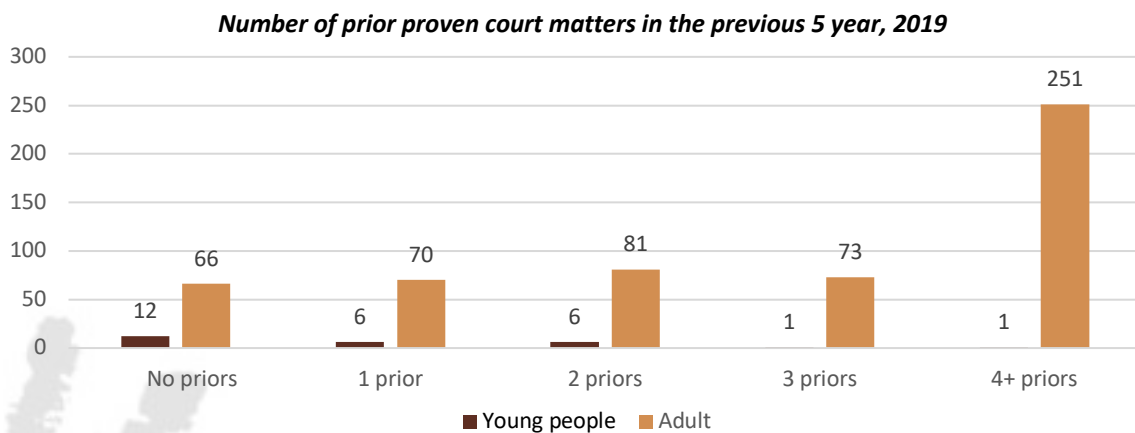
Principal offence for Aboriginal young people from Kempsey LGA, 2019



Prior Court Appearances

- **50.0%** of young offenders had a prior proven court matter in the preceding five years.

Figure 20: Number of prior proven court matters in the previous 5 years, 2019, BOCSAR



6.2 | Summit Responses - Outcome 11: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system.



No Entry – Prevention, Diversion and Intervention

Prioritise early intervention initiatives that address the underlying causes of incarceration, removals and family violence.

Entry – Advocate & Represent

Increase culturally appropriate services (legal representation, advocacy, support) to divert Aboriginal people away from the child protection and justice systems.

No Re-entry - Restore & Reconnect

Greater focus on healing, rehabilitation and post-release from prison and OOHC (programs that reduce reoffending and promote restoration of children with their families)

What is Working?	Why is it Working?
Legal representation	
Diversionary Youth programs	Mediation with victim. Contractual Commitment to Diversion.
Family support services	Trauma informed practices.
Sports and other opportunities for young people to be involved.	Supported with structure. More cultural engagement outside of school.
Programs in schools such as Clontarf, NASCA AEO's at schools, cultural and language programs.	Supporting the children to stay at school.
Employment opportunities including Traineeships and Youth Justice Employment.	Breaking cycles.

Connecting children to health care if they are in the system.	Mental Health Support. Health checks.
Mentoring programs	Gives young people a support system.

Concerns

Lack of Support at key transition points

- Lack of guidance for young people transitioning from primary to high school.
- Transition from incarceration to leaving and back in the system.

Services and supports

- Lack of programs to help young people develop skills and awareness.
- Lack of support.
- Cultural identity.
- Children roaming the streets.
- Services are not trauma-informed.
- Time frames of programs - building trust and relationships take time.

Other concerns

- Offender - not suspended without support - incarceration.
- Young people not able to build connection and relationships or see their positive attributes prior to diagnosis and labelling.

Solutions

Services and Programs

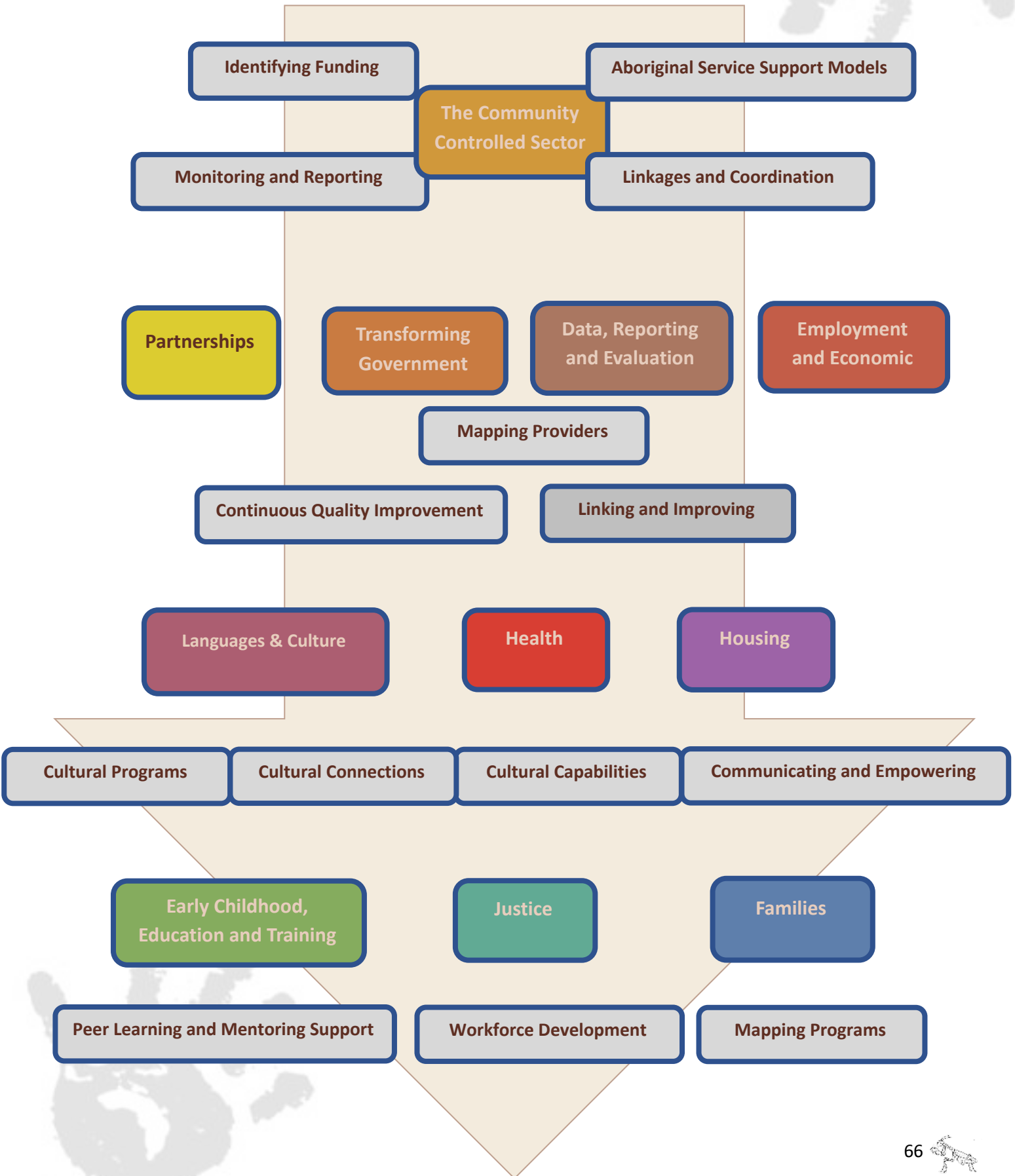
- Programs for young people which offer different ways of learning and teach skills around things they are interested in.
- Having Aboriginal people delivering programs.
- Having Aboriginal people supporting the youth.
- Community based cultural programs.
- Providing safe places for Aboriginal young people to go.
- Programs to direct young people away from the court system.
- Programs which help young people build connections and relationships.
- Services work more closely with Justice.
- Support children transitioning into high school.
- Finding ways to keep the kids home.
- Drop all the complex information and don't work in silos.

Trauma /Healing Programs

- Education around trauma and healing in a culturally appropriate way.
- Natural ways of healing.

6.3 Future Focus Areas for Closing the Gap Socio-Economic Outcome 11:

Summit participants were asked to determine the key areas that should guide Closing the Gap initiatives locally. They were asked to think about these in terms of what needs to happen upstream (if we get this right) and downstream (the result). The ideas are illustrated below.



6.4 Summit suggestions for achieving Closing the Gap Socio-Economic Outcome 11:

If we want to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the criminal justice system in the Kempsey LGA we need to:

- Build the Aboriginal Community-Controlled Sector. This includes identifying funding, delivering Aboriginal service support models, improving linkages and coordination between services, and better monitoring and reporting on services who are funded to work with young people.
- Develop partnerships, transform the way government works, improve data, reporting and evaluation processes, as well as increasing employment and economic opportunities for our young people. This includes mapping the providers who deliver programs to young people, ensuring continuous improvement and linkages.
- Focus on language and culture for our young people through programs, increased cultural connection and increasing cultural capability. Improve health and housing services as well as the way services communicate with our people to ensure it is empowering.
- Offer our young people peer learning and mentoring support and workforce development through early childhood, education, training and even in the Justice system.
- Support families and map the programs that are funded to do this.

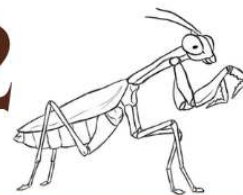
Young people....the drug and alcohol issues. The effects that it's actually having on them. And it's from a very young age, up to our youth and middle age.

...it's boredom, the accessibility to the varying drugs, part of the intergenerational trauma that we talk about. And this impacts on that. – Uncle C. Hoskins

SECTION 7

CLOSING THE GAP

OUTCOME 12



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are not overrepresented in the child protection system.

Section 7 | Closing the Gap Socio-economic outcome 12

7.1 | Outcome 12 Data: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are not over-represented in the child protection system.

Target 12: By 2031, reduce the rate of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care by 45 per cent.

Data

NSW baseline (as at time of National Agreement inception)	Change required to reach CtG target	Data Sources	Progress (to be updated annually)
60.2 per 1,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in OOHC in NSW	A 45% reduction (i.e. 27.1 children per 1,000) in the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in OOHC by 2031	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)	NSW data has remained relatively stable over the past several years.

I was only five years old. My mom wasn't stopping these strangers from taking me. So I can understand what it is like for the children today getting ripped and taken from their families... how they must be feeling, Because I know exactly how they're feeling. It's heart wrenching. Getting taken away from your mum and dad. That's your family. That's who you are. That's your strength. Your rock is your family. – Vicki Mosley Taylor

Mid North Coast Child Protection and Out of Home Care Statistics:

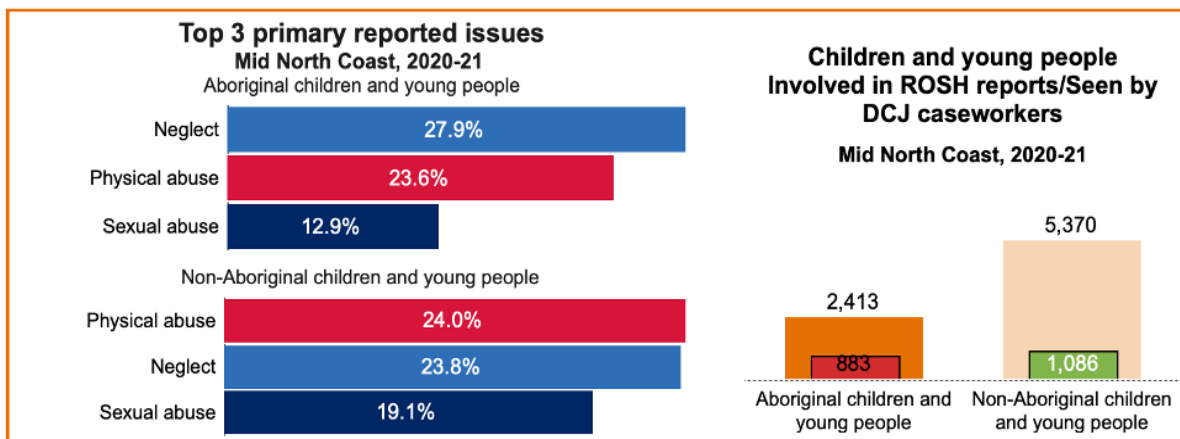
Aboriginal children on the Mid North Coast are **3 times** more likely to be involved in Risk of Significant Harm (ROSH) reports than non-Aboriginal children. They are **5 times** more likely to be seen by a DCJ case worker than a non-Aboriginal child or young person and they are **8 times** more likely to be in statutory OOHc than a non-Aboriginal child (**Figure 17**).

Figure 17: Population Rates of Aboriginal Children and Young People in the Child Protection System on the Mid North Coast 2020-2021⁶



The top reason for Aboriginal children on the Mid North Coast to be reported to DCJ is neglect (27.9%) (**Figure 18**)

Figure 18: Top reasons for ROSH reports and allocation to a DCJ caseworker Mid North Coast 2020-2021⁷



Of those Aboriginal children who are reported to DCJ 36.6% are seen by a DCJ caseworker compared to 20% of non-Aboriginal children who are reported (**Figure 19**).

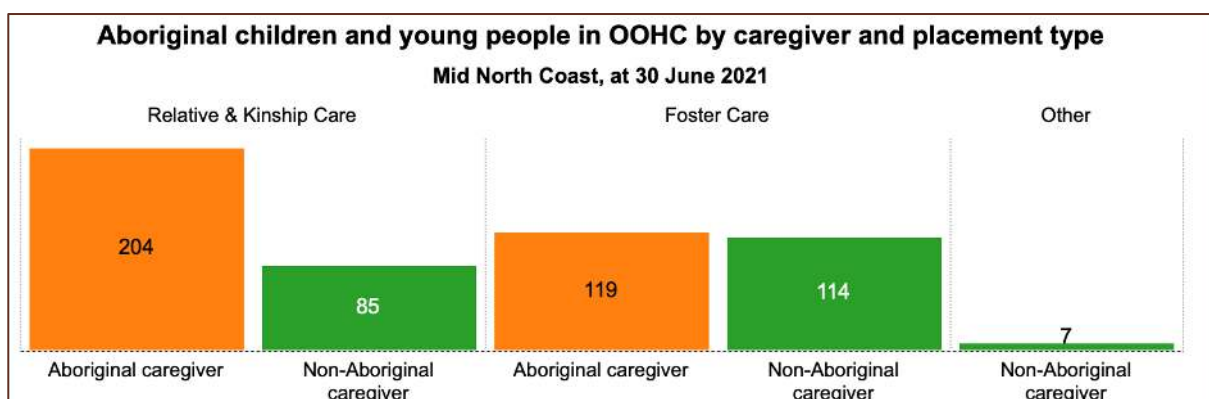
^{6, 7} <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/dcj.statistics/viz/Aboriginal-ledDataSharingChildprotectionandOutofhomecareDashboard/Aboriginal-ledDataSharingChildprotectionandOutofhomecareDashboard?publish=yes>

Figure 19: Percentage of Aboriginal children reported to DCJ seen by a DCJ caseworker compared to non-Aboriginal children Mid North Coast 2020-2021⁸



The majority of Aboriginal children and young people in Out of Home Care (OOHC) on the Mid North Coast are in Relative and Kinship Care (**Figure 20**). 39% of Aboriginal children and young people in Out of Home Care on the Mid North Coast in 2021 were placed with a relative or kinship care placement.

Figure 20: Aboriginal children and young people in OOHC by caregiver and placement type Mid North Coast as at 30 June 2021⁹

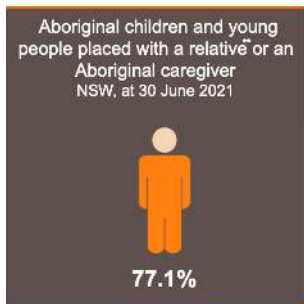


It's really sad because getting ripped away from your families, it's just overwhelming. It's really sad. It makes me want to cry. And not knowing where our children are going to and the support they're getting when they go. When they get taken from their families and then they're getting lost with their culture and their language and their identity. – Vicki Mosley Taylor

^{8, 9}<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/dcj.statistics/viz/Aboriginal-ledDataSharingChildprotectionandOutofhomecareDashboard/Aboriginal-ledDataSharingChildprotectionandOutofhomecareDashboard?publish=yes>

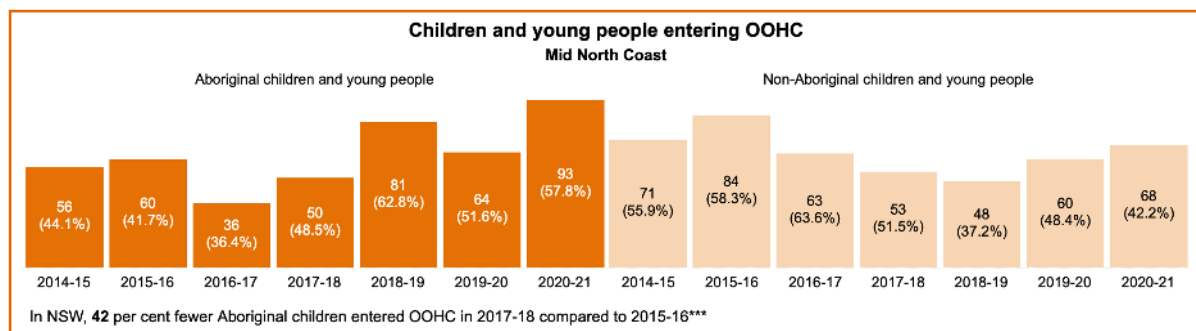
51% of Aboriginal children and young people in foster care on the Mid North Coast are with an Aboriginal carer (**Figure 21**).

Figure 21: Percentage of Aboriginal children in NSW placed with a relative or Aboriginal caregiver June 2021



Between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021 93 Aboriginal children and young people entered OOHC for the first time compared to 68 non-Aboriginal children (**Figure 22**). Aboriginal children are overrepresented in OOHC on the Mid North Coast.

Figure 22: Children and young people entering OOHC for the first time - Mid North Coast 2014-2021¹⁰



When that happens at such a young age, losing their identity and connection and the country and culture and land. The repercussions of trauma and everything that gets involved in that happening down the track... For a child that never reconnects with their family or culture, that's huge. We've seen it happen with the stolen generation.

– Vicki Mosley Taylor

¹⁰ <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/dcj.statistics/viz/Aboriginal-ledDataSharingChildprotectionandOutofhomecareDashboard/Aboriginal-ledDataSharingChildprotectionandOutofhomecareDashboard?publish=yes>

Concerns

Nothing IS working because we only have temporary services e.g. Counselling, D+A, Mental health.

Child Protection Reporting

- DCJ is not actioning process early enough. Doesn't feel like it goes anywhere. No Reps from AM's (SAM) and other. Receiver of report?
- System discrimination - People who have issues in past but want to change.
- DCJ - end result is generally removal. Staff turnover in services. Low LLN.
- What does reporting look like in a cultural context?
- Where is the cultural lens in reporting?
- Huge numbers of Aboriginal children in OOHC.
- Case workers judgement.
- Need an Aboriginal Committee working with DCJ- to share what concerns they have about Young people about to have a baby - how can we support them to not have their children removed?

Support Services

- Everyone is familiar with what is available (service) but families face shame if they engage.
- Holistic Family Services not available.
- Housing is generally the families focus.
- Limited service capacity.
- Services bulldozing their agenda.
- Short Time frames of engagement.
- Lack of Cultural Capability within organisations.
- Services are Mandatory Reporters.
- Services not working together well.
- Young People are scared to let services work with them because they might remove their baby.

Other concerns

- Grandparents caring for grandkids and do not have skills.
- Sympathy not required - Respect. Ask what that looks like.
- Number of young parents in Kempsey
- More local employment needed.
- Build education capacity with support to get education and life experience.

Solutions

Review of DCJ process.

- Review of mandatory reporting.
- Cultural lens/context of processes.
- Aboriginal culturally driven.
- Give people opportunities to keep their kids.

- We want to know what a kinship family actually looks like nowadays.
- Communication, cultural understanding, consistency in process.
- Handover process
- Having yarns and conversations with families about what they need.

Services and Programs

- Better support for parents to learn skills.
- More community-based programs as informal supports e.g. BBQ's, Events.
- Programs which take young people out into the bush and connect with nature - purposeful - local knowledge.
- Healing programs/Healing places - on country.
- Brokerage – to reduce the number of services 'managing' students.
- Programs which are Aspiration Building - 'tolerance, patience, respect'.
- Earlier prevention services to fill the gap.
- Stronger communication/resources to outreach programs to all of community.
- Sharing other organisations contacts to increase capacity of early intervention.
- Programs which show good models of parenting. Mentorship where they can learn about what safe families look like.
- Work with parents to address DV, D + A.
- Sharing info about programs and services through school spaces.
- Having yarns and conversations with families about what they need.

Education

- More education - not exclusion.
- Cultural curriculum.
- Trauma education.
- Aboriginal School.
- Education with teens about what is required to be a parent. Teach teens about the rights of the child, principles, practices and how to raise a family in primary before dropping out.

It's really great that they can have that opportunity, that flexibility, to be able to go back to school and finish off their education and in a cultural safe space as well. It's really important and also the fact that they bring their little ones with them and we provide care while they're in class. And it starts to set a pattern that going to school is a good thing and these little ones are looking at it. Mum's going to school. I'm going to school and I'm going to continue to go to school. – S. Seager

Other Solutions

- Identify community leaders and the collective of community at all levels.
- Recognise resilience as strength.

Entry – Advocate & Represent

Increase culturally appropriate services (legal representation, advocacy, support) to divert Aboriginal people away from the child protection and justice systems.

What is Working?	Why is it Working?
Restoring the children (however it needs to be easier).	Our kids need their families
Identifying support services	OCG, OOHC, DCJ
Health Access.	Connection to culture and activities. Good Koori plans.
Grandmothers against removals.	Talked directly to DCJ, politicians, stops removals and giving alternatives like support families with programs to keep kids safe.
Old motivation camps at Valla.	Not having access to tech - no reception. Different organisations help out, built support mechanisms in. Remove from addiction to connect.
Early childhood culture and language programs.	
Some healing programs.	
Family-led Decision making - Consultation with Aboriginal community/families.	Maintain connections. Self-determination.

Concerns

DCJ Processes

- The process in the lead up of the child being taken.
- The way the removal of the child is done.
- Lack of engagement with families.
- Loss of identity and the shame of being a DOCS kid. Kids lose connection ‘feel everything shut’ lost all connection, carrying so much trauma. Lack of continuity and consistency.
- Acknowledges choices.
- Mandatory reporting in regards to Neglect
- CSC staff capabilities.
- The restoration process needs to be easier and more supported.
- DCJ need Aboriginal workers but need to look at the Burnout rate on Aboriginal staff and how to retain Aboriginal staff.
- Connection to culture, community, land, country from an early age - learning on country need to be part of the cultural plan. Needs to be a Dhungutti cultural support plan. Dunghutti cultural educators to gather to create the same journey in community.
- How are we supporting kids who aren’t on country. Link families off country together.
- How do we support kids who don’t identify.

Service Delivery

- Families not seeking assistance out of fear their kids will be removed.
- Lack of understanding and judgement.
- Too many duplications of services.
- Services that close over periods of time e.g. Christmas, need to be accessible 24/7
- Waiting lists and virtually impossible to get a Young person into rehab.
- Need for trauma counselling for workers and staff working in agencies who support families who have children removed.

Solutions

DCJ Processes

- To ensure kinship connections/structure is present when the child is being removed.
- Processes need to be started earlier when the child is conceived. Not when they are delivered.
- Need to engage more with family members who take on kids.
- Finding ways of keeping kids connected to families.
- Better cultural education of DCJ staff
- Better communication with families and other agencies who are working with families.

Services

- Develop programs to help kids with healing trauma ongoing after camps.
- Having services attend info session for transition from primary to high school.
- Partnerships between services to cover after hours and holiday closures.

No Re-entry - Restore & Reconnect

Greater focus on healing, rehabilitation and post-release from prison and OOHC (programs that reduce reoffending and promote restoration of children with their families)

What is Working?	Why is it Working?
Decision making including Aboriginal families.	Collaboration needs to rise. Relationships as opposed to 'training'. Consultation.
Maintaining connection with the family.	
Art therapy for the whole family, all cultural groups.	
Bring culture and language into Early Childhood - early intervention. Dalaigur preschool having strong relationships with support services.	
Ginda Barri Program.	Inclusive partnerships, networking, thinking outside the box.
Referral to non-judgemental family support systems before mandatory reports.	Fit the service around the individual.
Red Dust Healing - starting with Year 7 Aboriginal boys.	

Goals of restoration.	If strong family support.
FDS working well to support young persons to not re-enter CD.	Education of available services.
When they come. Ceremony. Blanket - elders put pieces of material to sew into a blanket.	Something to take with you from country. To a girl going away ceremonies. 'This is us giving you a hug' it holds you and you need to bring it back (to country).

Concerns

DCJ Processes

- No Aboriginal voices at the forefront.
- What restoration?
- Historical funding limits.
- Penalty for being a victim of domestic violence, e.g. children taken.

Service Delivery

- Poor experiences with intervention services.
- Gaps in service supporting between restoration/guardianship.
- Services have good intentions – putting these into action is a challenge?

Other concerns

- People feeling disconnected or have to give birth in a different place.

Solutions

DCJ Processes

- Flexible and holistic support for families while their children are in the system
- Maintaining achievable goals.
- Help children in the system to buildup a sense of who they are, self - esteem, identity.

Service Delivery

- Filling local service gaps to maintain ongoing support for families including services to support between restoration/guardianship.
- Support services for mums who birth off country so that when they come back they feel at home. Key person to support transition to home. Welcome and acknowledge where you are.
- Investing in workforce to fill in intervention services - speech, trauma, OT, etc.
- Healing on country.
- Increase Aboriginal Educators and mentors.
- Informal parent support/social activities.
- Programs to raise awareness of protective factors and safety planning.
- Communication around available services.

7.3 Future Focus Areas for Closing the Gap Socio-Economic Outcome 12:

Summit participants were asked to determine the key areas that should guide Closing the Gap initiatives locally. They were asked to think about these in terms of what needs to happen upstream (if we get this right) and downstream (the result). The ideas are illustrated below.



7.4 Summit suggestions for achieving Closing the Gap Socio-Economic Outcome 12:

If we want to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system in the Kempsey LGA we need to:

- Build the Aboriginal Community-Controlled Sector. This includes identifying funding, delivering Aboriginal service support models, improving linkages and coordination between services as well as better monitoring and reporting on services who are funded to work with young people.
- Develop partnerships, transform the way government works, improve data, reporting and evaluation processes as well as increasing employment and economic opportunities for our young people. This includes mapping the providers who deliver programs to young people, ensuring continuous improvement and linkages.
- Focus on language and culture for our young people through programs, increased cultural connection and increasing cultural capability. Improve health and housing services as well as the way services communicate with our people to ensure it is empowering.

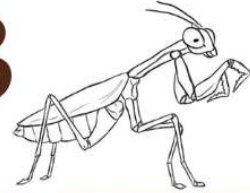




SECTION 8

CLOSING THE GAP

OUTCOME 13



Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander
families and
households are safe.

Section 8 | Closing the Gap Socio-economic outcome 13

8.1 | Outcome 13 Data: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and households are safe.

Target 13: By 2031, the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is reduced at least by 50% as progress towards zero.

Safe communities, where people feel secure and protected from harm within their home, workplace and community, are important for physical and social and emotional wellbeing. When a person feels safe, they are enabled to live a better quality and healthier life and are more likely to engage in the community, and the community faces a lower incidence of and costs from injuries and violence.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children experience family violence and abuse at higher rates than the general Australian population. This target is critical to ensuring the safety, health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities, so that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can lead happy and healthy lives.

The NSW Government is committed to a holistic and culturally appropriate approach to reducing the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Government agencies work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal, health and community services to deliver programs for early intervention and crisis support.

Data

NSW baseline (as at time of National Agreement inception)	Change required to reach CtG target	Data Sources	Progress (to be updated annually)
Approximately 10% of Aboriginal women and girls report experiencing domestic physical or threatened physical harm in the last 12 months	Approximate reduction of 5 percentage points as progress towards zero	ABS National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey	Data work in development.

Kempsey LGA Statistics:

In 2021 the Kempsey LGA had 259 (865.6 rate per 100,000 population) incidents of domestic violence related assault as recorded by NSW Police. This ranked the Kempsey LGA as 15th in NSW for incidents of domestic violence related assault as recorded by Police for that year¹¹ (**Table 1**).

Table 1: Incidents of domestic violence related assault as recorded by NSW Police for each NSW Local Government Area (LGA): Number, rate and rank (NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research)

Year	Total	Rate per 100,000 population	Rank
2017	219	741.1	11
2018	241	813.3	11
2019	211	709.4	20
2020	243	816.9	12
2021	259	865.6	15

From 1 January to 30 December 2021 in Kempsey LGA there were 206 Breach Apprehended Violence Order recorded incidents which is a rate of 688.5 per 100,000 population compared to 389 for NSW. This is nearly double (**Table 2**).

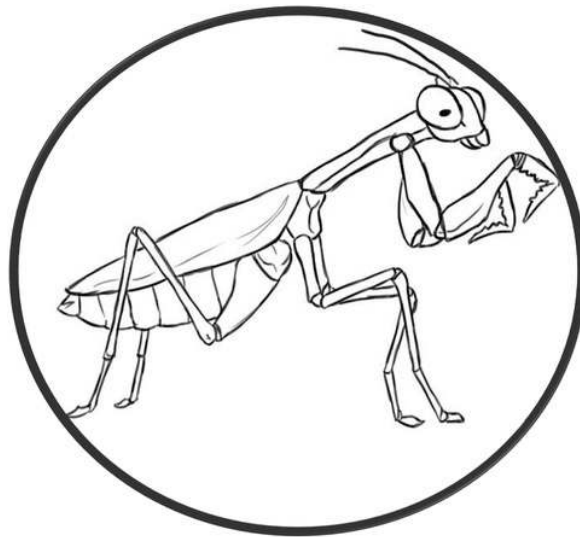
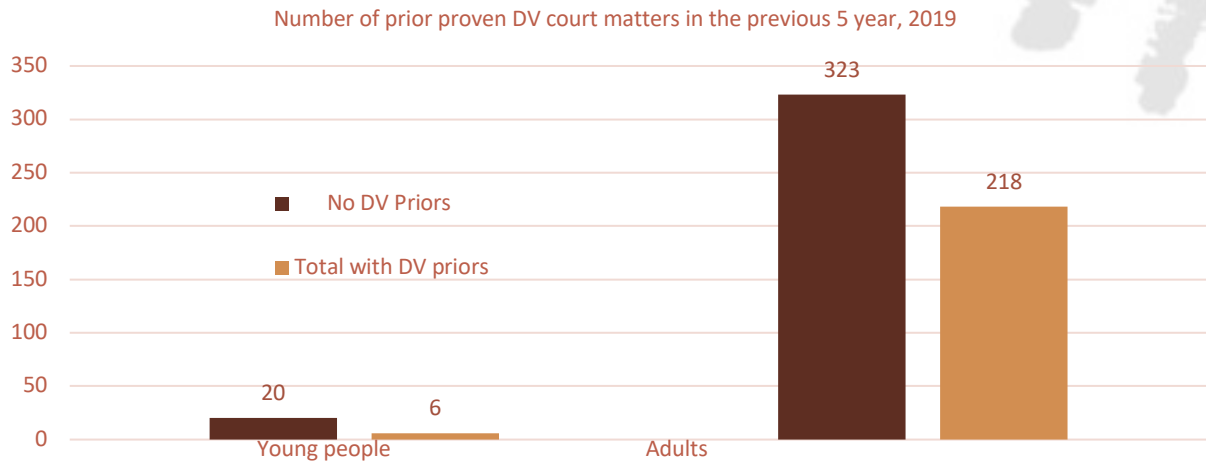
Table 2: Number of Breach Apprehended Violence Order recorded incidents and rate per 100,000 population in the Kempsey LGA NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research 2019-2021¹²

Jan-Dec 2019		Jan-Dec 2020		Jan-Dec 2021		24-month trend^^	60-month trend^^
Number of incidents	Rate per 100,000 population	Number of incidents	Rate per 100,000 population	Number of incidents	Rate per 100,000 population		
119	400.1	205	689.2	206	688.5	stable	13.8%

¹¹ NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research
https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Pages/bocsar_datasets/Ranking.aspx

Prior Domestic Violence Offences - BOCSAR

- 40.2% of young people with a proven court matter in 2019 had a prior proven DV offence.
- 21.4% of adults with a proven court matter in 2019 had a prior proven DV offence.



Girls Academy and Boys equivalent program.	Role modelling, mentoring and support programs before leaving school.
Safe housing for youth. Family teaching styles.	Support for kids/mentors. To support kids. Builds relationships and protects children.
Safety Action Meetings	Reduces incarceration

Concerns

Service Delivery

- Working short term with families. Need longevity to hold them through risk of falling back.
- Families becoming reliant on services reduces their own agency.
- Barrier - women without exclusion order advocacy.
- Service gap - no service accepting referrals.
- Limited support for women escaping domestic violence availability.
- Limited places in rehab.

Housing

- Processes are too complicated for crisis housing. Especially if children have been removed.
- Maintenance of existing housing is not occurring. Therefore, very bad conditions.
- Discrimination when applying for housing.
- Unsafe and unaffordable accommodation.

Other concerns

- Police response times (violence is not a priority) as they think it is the culture.
- Kempsey census shows increase in violence.
- Each community is treated the same.
- Poverty.
- Lack of Funding.
- Lateral violence is massive within community and schools.
- Educators not practising through a trauma informed lens.
- No services for adults who went through child sexual assaults.
- The concept of Safety is individual.
- People have a basic understanding of the Governments expectations of safety. Penalty for being a victim, e.g. children taken.
- Relationships between communities and police
- Departments do not communicate, e.g. DCJ and Dept of Housing/Community Housing.
- Impact of COVID and increased violence.
- Intergenerational trauma.

Solutions

Service Delivery

- Community based peer support groups.
- Services supporting women to gain exclusion order.
- Informal yarns safety planning.
- Services that connect and collaborate well.
- Run Violence Behaviour Change programs.
- Local, culturally safe, family friendly rehab programs.

Education

- Trauma informed education for all teachers across Macleay Valley
- Education of what is Domestic violence

Government

- Governments to focus on individuals and community needs, strengths and issues.
- More investment in housing, support CHC more.
- Increase employment opportunities - businesses to invest in bigger picture for community.
- Make Number 1 priority to engage with community.
- All Government Departments should have Aboriginal Liaison Officers.
- Implement on a government level programs to set kids up with skills, e.g. driver's licence.
- Funding cycles need long term (10yr) commitments. Not elective cycle.
- Data sharing to get better understanding of issues and provide evidence of issue.

Housing

- Fund affordable and safe housing.
- Address racism from real estates.
- Promote home ownership.

Other solutions

- Promote all the good things in our community.
- Move to a sustainable model of family, life-growing veggies, backyards, etc.
- Healthy kids - access to early intervention.
- More employment - financial stability to lift poverty line with continued support.

Entry – Advocate & Represent

Increase culturally appropriate services (legal representation, advocacy, support) to divert Aboriginal people away from the child protection and justice systems.

No Re-entry - Restore & Reconnect

Greater focus on healing, rehabilitation and post-release from prison and OOHC (programs that reduce reoffending and promote restoration of children with their families)

What is Working?	Why is it Working?
Safety Action Meetings - There is information and sharing of knowledge with health, DCJ, ECAT, Police.	Collaboration
Many Rivers.	Introduce education. Cover multiple ages, cross-gender, really proactive.
Women Elders at the refuge.	With consent, key elders liaise with DCJ to create a safety pathway before removal, whilst family do what they need to do.
Face to face visits and interaction when dealing with families.	Worker can eyeball and get a sense of what is happening - easier to build trust.
Shine for Kids program. Being able to connect to Aboriginal mentors - language and culture.	Supporting children and families.
Women's refuge.	DVLO working informally with community.
Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Scheme (WDVCAS).	
IPROUD working in other regions.	

Concerns

Housing

- Not enough housing, poor conditions.
- Refuge at capacity, housing crisis.

Culture

- When in survival mode in DV – women are cut off from culture.
- Institutionalised - loss of connection to family, culture and society.

Funding

- Aboriginal Domestic Violence organisations receive the same level of funding as other counterparts, considering their access.
- Rigid funding prescriptions i.e. need to report on families to get eligibility for funding support, but ethically it puts them at risk because if it goes wrong DCJ has to do documentation.
- Limited funding in crisis DV support.

Service Delivery

- Mistrust in services from the families - fear of losing children.
- SAMS needed to have broader involvement.
- Lack of support for families who have had to get on with their lives.

Solutions

Services and Programs

- Healthy relationship Programs.
- Centralised referral service.
- Get CDAT at a more community level and get more data.
- Community support services need to support the family with more flexibility and trauma informed care.
- Culturally safe programs during and after leaving the system. Need a sense of belonging - families become lost and dysfunctional.
- A culture centre in Kempsey to:
 - promote culture and positive stories of communities
 - Provide cultural education and Language programs
 - Healing.
- More Intensive supports.
- Charity orgs to provide Basic starter pack for women escaping violence.
- Partnerships for crisis intervention.
- Pathways other than refuge in crisis.
- Safe places for children, women and men to go - that are culturally appropriate, easy access, people know where they go.
- More men's programs.
- Informal cultural supports to raise awareness and support change.
- Community responding to safety together.
- Mobs in Jobs.

That's what makes you stronger, knowing our culture. And our identity makes us stronger - people knowing the language. That really empowers us as people you know. We need young, especially younger generation, to grab all that and run with it and be proud to paint themselves up, and go out and be proud of who they are. – Uncle Geoffrey Oliver

8.3 Future Focus Areas for Closing the Gap Socio-Economic Outcome 13:

Summit participants were asked to determine the key areas that should guide Closing the Gap initiatives locally. They were asked to think about these in terms of what needs to happen upstream (if we get this right) and downstream (the result). The ideas are illustrated below.



8.4 Summit suggestions for achieving for Closing the Gap Socio-Economic Outcome

13:

If we want to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and households are safe in the Kempsey LGA we need to:

- Fund cultural programs and Aboriginal service support models, particularly for men. Programs which encourage healing, connection to culture and leads to behaviour change.
- We need to do this in partnership and using evidence-based models.
- We need the Community Controlled sector, businesses and Government Departments (Health, Housing and Justice) to come together to develop a whole of community approach.
- An approach which embeds culture, and keeps our families and children safe.
- Services that are delivered on country as well as online.









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