

# Reducing over–representation of Aboriginal young people in custody on remand

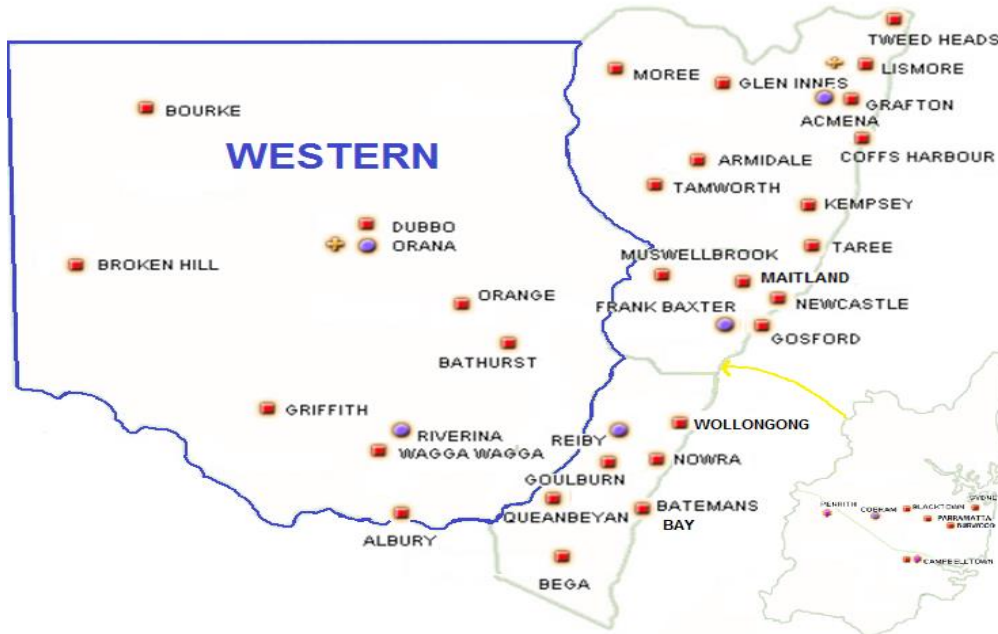
## Western Region

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# Introduction

- In Australia, just over half (53%) of all young people in detention on an average night in the 2017 June quarter were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.<sup>1</sup>
- Indigenous young people aged 10–17 were 24 times as likely as non-Indigenous young people to be in detention on an average night<sup>1</sup>.
- In NSW, on an average day in 2016/17 more than half (56%) of young people in detention were unsentenced<sup>1</sup> and
- 44% of young people in detention were serving a custodial sentence<sup>1</sup> .

# Western Region



- Covers approximately 80% of NSW, including predominantly Aboriginal communities.
- In 2012, the majority of Western Region young people on remand identified as Aboriginal<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Juvenile Justice Client Information Management System 2012

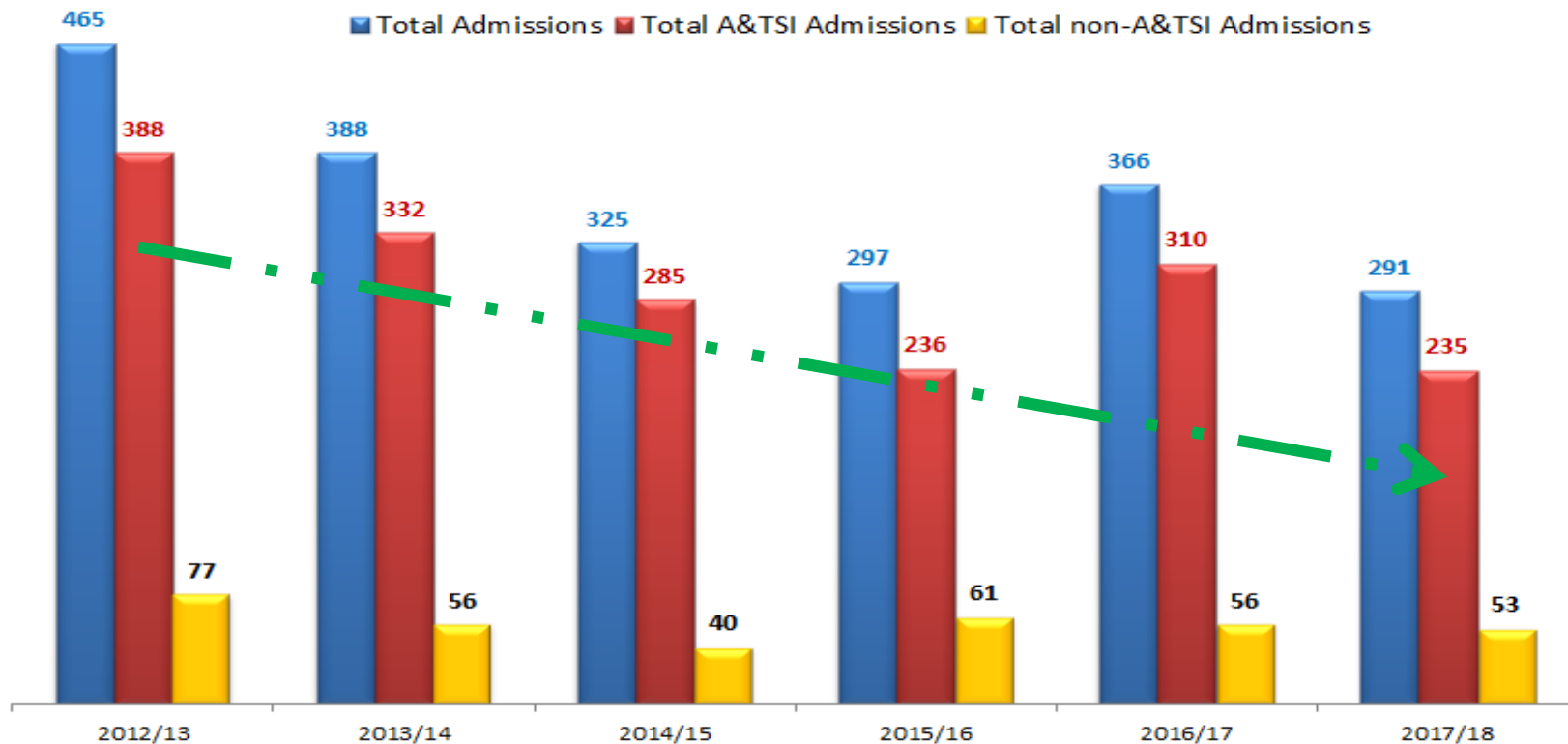
# Over Representation

- Indigenous young people are overrepresented in both the community and detention and make up 53% of all juveniles in detention and 39% under community supervision<sup>3</sup>.
- 90% of Western Region young people on remand identify as Aboriginal young people<sup>3</sup>.
- 20% of young people remanded into custody do not receive a control order<sup>4</sup>.
- Western Region implemented a specialist team in 2012, focusing on reducing the number of young people remanded in custody, waiting for court matters to be finalised.

<sup>3</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare; Youth Justice in Australia 2010-17

<sup>4</sup> Australian Institute of Criminology (Custodial remand of young people)

# Admissions to Orana Juvenile Justice Centre (Dubbo)

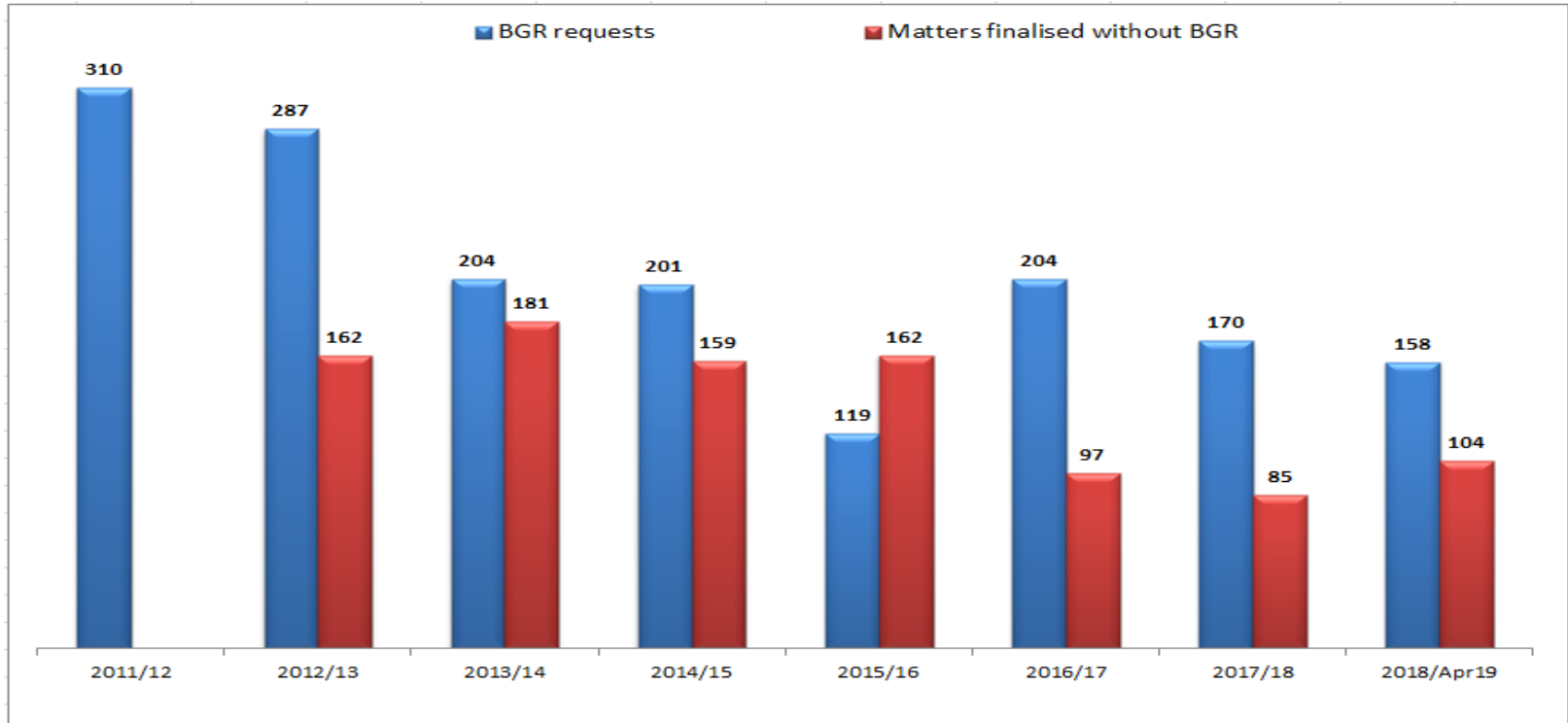


\* Information obtained from the JJ Client Information Management (CIMS) system

# Local strategy implemented by Western Region in response to high remand numbers

- Bail Services Team established in 2012, consisting of five staff.
- Management met with Magistrates, Solicitors, Legal Services and key community stakeholders within the service area to introduce the purpose of the bail team.
- Upon entry into custody, all young people are interviewed, with written and verbal information presented on the day of court.
- A monitoring system was developed and reviewed daily.
- All young people are reviewed for new bail applications to Local and Supreme Courts i.e. change of circumstance.
- A Juvenile Justice presence in all courts within the service area.
- Provide advise to the courts of cultural needs; accommodation, family, kinship ties, curfews.

# Local Statistics



\* Figures based on BST statistics

# Case Study

*Young person referred to as Joe*

- ❖ 14 year old Aboriginal boy from Bourke, with no previous JJ history
- ❖ Remanded in custody for breach of police bail – technical breach (curfew hours of 6:00pm – 6:00am)
- ❖ Joe's family regularly congregated during Summer evenings for recreation at the local waterways.
- ❖ Joe was returning home from family evening, when arrested for breach of curfew.
- ❖ Following Bail Services Team intervention, Magistrate was advised of impact of curfew hours, noting the effect on family stability, isolation of Joe from extended family, inability to be cared for by other family when mother away.
- ❖ Outcome - Joe's curfew conditions altered, compliance maintained, leading to no further custodial admissions



## What works

- Good relationships with Magistrates, Police Prosecutor, Family and Community Services, NSW Police, legal personnel and non government agencies.
- Building rapport with the young people who are involved with Juvenile Justice.
- Good interpersonal relationships within our own Agency.
- Providing factual, concise information to court ensuring the integrity of information provided.
- Consistency of presence in courts.
- Being aware of local community supports and talking to young people about what will work for them.

# Questions?