Local Time.

Design Guide for Small-scale Local Facilities

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There is a strong evidence base which informs how youth justice facilities should be designed to improve outcomes for justice-involved young people in custody, improve the working conditions for Youth Justice staff, and improve public safety through reducing the risk of reoffending.

This document outlines a scheme for a new architectural model for youth justice facilities in Victoria, including scientific evidence for best-practice in the design of new facilities and examples of successful facilities internationally.

Context: Reducing the incarceration of young people.

Detention is a last-resort measure, and it is important that resources are directed towards addressing the underlying causes of crime, preventing young people coming into contact with the justice system. Armytage and Ogloff state that it is critical to divert young people from custody, and it must be recognised that this involves reducing the number of custodial beds.

In the last-resort event that a young person is remanded or sentenced to custody, it is important that these young people find themselves within a safe and therapeutic environment, conducive to their prosocial rehabilitation, reducing the risk of their reoffending.

The impact of facility design.

The physical environment of a facility greatly impacts the procedures within a youth justice environment, the relationships between staff and young people, and ultimately a young person's prospects of rehabilitation and community safety.

As such, facility design can either promote or impede the delivery of rehabilitative programs. In Victoria, neither existing nor currently proposed facilities reflect what is known to assist in rehabilitation, and there is no evidence to suggest that these facilities are reducing reoffending. This demonstrates that they are not fit for purpose.

The design model for current facilities involves enormous and long-term investments. A large-scale facility locks a jurisdiction into long-term operating costs, regardless of whether it is cost effective or achieving positive or negative outcomes. The initial design of the physical infrastructure can therefore impede improvements in the youth justice system more broadly, over an extended time.
What works?
Current evidence and best-practice in reducing the risk of reoffending.

Current scientific evidence gives guiding principles for the effective treatment and rehabilitation of justice-involved young people. Section 3 of this document describes this evidence.

Strengths-based approaches

Strengths-based approaches are becoming more central in research and clinical models, with a focus on protective factors, including social relationships, autonomy and personal goals.

Purely deterrent and supervisory interventions are not effective and may even have a negative impact, whereas interventions that correspond to a young person’s individual risks, needs and capacities are most effective.

Protective factors

Protective factors, particularly social connections and school bonding, have been shown to be the main predictors for non-reoffending among young people. A lack of such protective factors has been identified for young people in custody in the Victorian system.

Implications for facility design: Small-scale local facilities

By examining the evidence of what works in addressing a young person’s offending behaviour, a number of key principles emerge as conditions for successful facility design. These principles form the basis of a design brief; a model which can be closely interwoven with specific contexts, programs, and staffing approaches.

The principles ensure that facility design promotes individually tailored responses and the strengthening of prosocial protective factors, including family and community connection, education and employment opportunities. In addition, it provides an environment which is fitting to address complex needs often presented by young people in custody.

The key principles are explained and evidenced in Section 4 of this document. In short, they are:

Small-scale
Approx. 8 beds, allowing staff to develop meaningful relationships with young people, to understand the individual motivations, risks, needs, skills and strengths of each young person, and to modify their role and behaviour based on this knowledge.

Local
Sited close to the young person’s community to support accessibility and allow the strengthening of protective factors, including school, family, and prosocial connections.

Differentiated and relational security
Promoting approaches that encourages a therapeutic relationship between staff and young people, with measures that are adaptable to individual dynamic risks and needs, and goals, with a preference for semi-open settings.

Therapeutic
A healthy and home-like environment, designed to reduce stress, aggressive and harmful behaviours, and promote overall wellbeing and mental health.

Opportunities, benefits and addressing current issues in Victoria

Addressing the complex issues facing youth justice system requires broad and innovative changes.

Implementing this model for facility design can contribute to part of the government’s response to current Youth Justice issues, including to the safety of young people and staff, reducing the risk of reoffending, addressing mental health needs, and addressing the number of young people on remand.

More effective custodial interventions will reduce the risk of young people reoffending and can avoid further policing, justice and correctional costs, while simultaneously improving community safety.

A small-scale local model for justice facilities provides the government with rapid flexibility to meet changing needs, while greatly reducing capital expenditure. Operational costs per person can be expected to be similar to current facilities, while outcomes and staff satisfaction can be expected to improve.

Developing and implementing this model will contribute to Victoria becoming once again a leader in innovative and evidence-based responses to youth justice.
International precedents

Small-scale, local, relational-security models have been successfully established in the Netherlands and the USA.

The key principles of these models are suitable for implementation in Victoria.

The Dutch ‘Small-scale Facilities’ model established 8-bed semi-open facilities, providing local custodial placement for young people in close proximity to their social environment and support. After a successful pilot, this model is now being rolled out nationally.

In New York City, the ‘Close to Home’ initiative offers small, local, limited-security and non-secure residences, and has replaced sentencing to distant, state-operated facilities. The success of this approach has seen it adopted in a number of jurisdictions in the USA.

Figure 2. Outcomes: Local Facilities - The Netherlands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continued their daytime activity eg. school/ work</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continued health care and/or youth services</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successfully involved their parents/ grandparents</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved back home with their parents/caretakers</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. Outcomes: Close to Home - New York City

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passed academic classes</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wore enrolled in prosocial activities</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decline in out-of-home placements</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decline in juvenile arrests in NYC</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Implementation and recommendations

While reducing the number of young people in custody through increased prevention, diversion and community orders, the Victorian Youth Justice system will benefit from implementing this model to improve outcomes within youth custody and supported bail accommodation. The model provides for facilities capable of individually tailored and place-based responses, aligned with current best practice in reducing the risk of reoffending.

In order to evaluate the benefits of this model in the Victorian context and provide a working basis for broader implementation across the state, the government can develop and implement a demonstration study involving three pilot facilities.

Involvement in the justice system is geographically concentrated and regional areas suffer from a lack of available services programs. As such, at least one pilot should be located within a regional city that can benefit from a localised response, with at least one other in a metropolitan area.

Specific cohorts for these pilots may include girls and young women, young people with a first or second offence, or young people who would be eligible for bail given a more structured and supportive setting.

The facilities can be operated by a locally-based service provider, with demonstrated experience in the delivery of community-based youth justice programs, and a clear understanding of local needs. Young people can be referred to and utilise pre-existing community supports and health services. These aspects contribute to the opportunity for culturally appropriate responses within the local area.

Through the evidence gathered in this report, our immediate recommendations for the Victorian Youth Justice System at this moment are:

» Focus on early intervention and legislative change to reduce the number of young people entering the youth justice system and to reduce the number of beds necessary for youth custody.

» Institute systems to prevent the commissioning and building of any new large-scale youth detention facilities or the expansion of existing facilities, as there is no evidence for the efficacy of this model and they fail to reflect best-practice or current scientific evidence.

» Halt the construction of the Cherry Creek facility, as there is no evidence to support such a model. If the project is too far progressed to halt completely, reduce the operational occupancy of Cherry Creek to 70 beds and implement a facility design following the Diagrama model (Refer Appendix 1, and Armytage and Ogloff Part 2, Section 8.1.1), adapted for the Victorian context.

» Develop the model for small-scale local youth justice facilities in Victoria, for those young people who can be shown to have a real need for custodial intervention.

» Fund the development and implementation of a long-term demonstration project for small-scale local facilities, including three pilot facilities across rural and metropolitan locations, to substantiate the approach and provide a working basis for broader implementation across the state.

» Create a network of small-scale local facilities, replacing large-scale detention, to minimise and diversify Victoria’s approach to youth custody, allowing for tailored responses to individual risks, needs and strengths; creating a step-up-step-down approach which encourages young people to grow and provides integration with the community, before trial, under sentence & prior to release.

» Fund ongoing evaluation and academic research of the model within the context of Victoria, in partnership with multidisciplinary teams of experts, to drive further improvements to the custodial approach.
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Acknowledgements

The work for this document occurred on the lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. We acknowledge that their sovereignty has not been ceded and pay our respects to elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge that the youth justice system systematically disadvantages Aboriginal communities and inflicts ongoing harm upon Aboriginal young people.

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Thank you to everyone who has provided us with their reflections, expertise, critique and encouragement.
Local Time. Project description

Resilience is important for all young people in a rapidly changing world. It is the ability to rebound successfully from adversity, to utilise social and emotional skills, to develop to one’s potential, and to grow to work productively, contributing to a healthy community.

We consider this definition of resilience to be a concise description of the ideal role for the Youth Justice System.

Local Time is establishing how the design of youth justice facilities can best support and embody this goal in Victoria.

We recognise that resilience is achieved by focusing on strengths; building on family and community connections, education and employment opportunities and addressing wellbeing and mental health issues, ultimately increasing prosocial resilience, reducing risk of reoffending and improving life outcomes of justice-involved young people.

Informed by international research and precedent projects, Local Time is defining the key design principles and requirements that shape resilience-focused facilities.

Document scope and purpose

There is a strong evidence base which informs how youth justice facilities should be designed to improve outcomes for justice-involved young people in custody, improve the working conditions for Youth Justice staff, and improve public safety through reducing the risk of reoffending.

This document outlines a scheme for a new architectural model for Youth Justice facilities in Victoria, including scientific evidence for best-practice in the design of new facilities, and examples of successful facilities internationally.

The purpose of this document is to make good design principles concrete, so that the designs of future facilities might have the benefit of a best-practice evidence base.

The document is intended to act as a starting point for discussion between stakeholder groups, community organisations and government.

Assumptions and considerations

The architecture of youth justice facilities is important, but in and of itself, it does not offer a complete solution to the issues faced by justice-involved young people, Youth Justice staff, and the youth justice system as a whole. Rather, the design of youth justice facilities should be considered one important aspect in a holistic approach.

This document focuses on how facility design can either aid or impede the delivery of best-practice rehabilitative approaches as per current evidence. Though not directly detailed here, it is important that the approaches and programs themselves are designed from the same evidence base and match with the design of the physical environment. Section 3 outlines the evidence base and underlying principles of best-practice approaches.

The success of the model outlined in this document is contingent upon skilled, dedicated and supported staff, who are appreciated for their expertise and efforts. One key objective of the model discussed here is to improve the working conditions of Youth Justice staff.

Programmatic and staffing approaches, along with the ideas which underpin the purpose of Youth Justice, are thoroughly intertwined with the design of a facility. As such, this document focuses on architecture as one way of describing how these intertwining elements create a best-practice youth justice environment and how these environments look when they are operating successfully.
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1. Context: Reducing the incarceration of young people

‘Diverting young people away from youth justice is important. Diverting young people away from custody is critical.’

- Penny Armytage & James Ogloff.

Detention is a last-resort measure, and it is important that resources are directed towards addressing the underlying causes of crime, preventing young people coming into contact with the justice system and providing effective diversions from custodial measures. This acts to improve community safety, makes for more responsible economic management of justice and improves the life-outcomes of those who may otherwise become involved with the justice system.

In the last-resort event that a young person is remanded or sentenced to custody, however, it is important that these young people find themselves within a safe and therapeutic environment, conducive to their prosocial rehabilitation, reducing the risk of their reoffending. In this event, custody should be regarded as an opportunity for the engagement and treatment of challenged youth within a safe and structured environment.

The model outlined in this document should be understood as one part of a general move to reduce the overall number of young people in detention, while focusing on increasing the rehabilitative effectiveness of custodial interventions.

2. The impact of facility design

‘The physical environment of a youth detention facility – the architecture, buildings, spaces, surroundings, furniture and ambience – greatly affects a young person’s experience of detention and therefore their prospects of rehabilitation.’

- The Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory.

The above quote, taken from the Royal Commission into Detention in the Northern Territory, concisely outlines the impact that the design of youth justice facilities has on the young people living within them. This importance is confirmed repeatedly in other reports examining the Victorian Youth Justice system.

The Armytage and Ogloff review highlights that “facilities and infrastructure form a critical component of the youth justice response” and must “be designed to support young people in feeling safe, secure and calm.” This report also notes that in the community, current facilities are not purpose built, nor located in proximity to relevant services.

The Victorian Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee highlights that the “location, size, architecture and design of corrections facilities all impact on prisoners’ emotional and psychological reactions to incarceration” and that “[these] same factors may significantly influence their prospects of rehabilitation and reintegration into society on release.” The committee makes note that “the infrastructure in and of itself” has contributed to poor behaviour of young people in detention.

The Victorian Auditor-General’s Office confirms again that the “environment in youth justice centres affects incarcerated young people’s behaviour and rehabilitation.”

Through a large-scale study of 32 different prisons in the Netherlands, the design of prison facilities has been directly linked to the positivity of relationships between prisoners and staff.

Further, by acknowledging similarities between detention and secure mental health care facilities, we are able to draw from a large body of academic literature studying the impacts of design upon staff and residents in these facilities. It has been long recognised that institutional environments can have a profoundly negative impact on residents in mental health care facilities, and there are many studies which examine the architectural details of what constitutes a supportive environment encouraging effective treatment. Studies on the physical and psychological impacts of environmental qualities regularly focus on the effects of light, natural lighting and glare; noise levels; adequacy of space for personal, communal, and work activities; home-like (as opposed to institutional) environmental qualities; and access to gardens and nature.

In addition, it is well recognised that prison architecture, both historical and contemporary, is densely coded with meaning and messages, values and goals. These messages can define certain identities and behaviours, and shape the daily activities and social rituals practiced by residents within detention, which in turn can have long lasting effects on the residents as ‘active citizens’ post-release.
It is important to acknowledge that the physical environment and the procedural/organisational structure of a facility are closely interwoven. These share a reciprocal relationship, and impact one another in a cyclical way.

As one example of this, logistical difficulties in escorting young people from space to space impacts upon the way staffing and youth programs are carried out. A physical solution - such as further restriction of movement - is implemented, which causes other impacts in the way spaces can be used, with further flow on effects. For this reason, facility design must be considered, carefully planned, and based firmly on the evidence of what works in youth justice programs.

Facilities are long-term investments, but needs within the Youth Justice system are changing constantly. It is therefore desirable that facilities be designed to be agile and flexible. A large-scale, high-security, expensive facility locks a jurisdiction into its long term operating costs - regardless of whether it is cost effective or achieving positive or negative outcomes. This is illustrated by the large proportion of the youth justice budget spent upon youth custody, relative to the acknowledgment that this approach has no measurable positive effect. The design of the physical infrastructure can therefore impede positive developments in youth justice system generally.

2.1 The importance of the design brief

While acknowledging that the architecture of a facility is only one element of youth custody, it is a pivotal one and as seen above, the physical environment of a facility can either impede, or promote rehabilitation and reintegration.

3. What works? Current evidence and best-practice in reducing the risk of reoffending

Current scientific evidence gives guiding principles for the effective treatment and rehabilitation of justice-involved young people. It shows that the most effective treatments use a highly individualised approach, with a focus on maintaining and building social relationships.

As the design of a youth justice facility has such an impact upon the lives of the young people and staff inside, it is important that those who commission the design of facilities, along with the designers themselves, have a strong mutual understanding of the long-lasting implications of their decisions.

The design brief, based upon rigorous research and a strong evidence base, is the starting point for this understanding. A poorly written brief can stifle positive outcomes from the very beginning of a project, while a well developed brief can be “the major contributing factor to a successful result.”

The currently adopted document guiding the writing of a youth justice facility design brief is the 1996 ‘Design guidelines for Juvenile Justice Facilities in Australia and New Zealand’. Though many aspects of this document are still applicable, others require updating. Some aspects lack appropriate definition, and require more specific guidance to provide appropriate advice, while other aspects are based upon assumptions about a specific model of facility that is no longer considered best practice.

For any specific facility, it is of great importance that the design team develops the brief in close relationship with the end-users of a facility, and gain cultural guidance from the communities of those user groups. It is possible, however, by examining the scientific evidence related to criminogenic risk and protective factors to define some key general principles which can guide the writing of an informed design brief from the very beginning.

In the next section, this document provides reference to this evidence base alongside, with the following section identifying the implications for the design of Youth Justice facilities in Victoria.

These implications outline a new architectural model, based on contemporary evidence, and supported by best-practice precedents internationally. A few of the precedents which inform this model are studied in Appendix 1.

3.1 Therapeutic approaches, Risks, Needs & Responsivity

Evidence from multiple, rigorous, meta-analytical studies argue that correctional interventions grounded in a therapeutic approach are the most successful, as opposed to solely punitive or deterrent techniques (e.g. sanction and supervision) which are ineffective in reducing recidivism, with some of these approaches potentially increasing the risk of future reoffending (e.g. youth boot camps).

Specifically, cognitive behavioural programs and Risk-Need-Responsivity appropriate interventions have been shown to produce the strongest effects in reducing reoffending in youth.
The Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model is a theoretical framework that gives guiding principles for reducing reoffending. In various justice settings and programs, adherence to RNR principles is associated with reduced recidivism, while low or non-adherence is associated with either increased recidivism or null effects on reoffending.33 The RNR model is grounded in three core principles for effective rehabilitation, which should be measured with structured and validated instruments:32

1) Risk principle: match the level of intervention to the person’s risk of reoffending. It states that intense treatment should focus on those with higher risk.

2) Need principle: assess criminogenic needs (i.e. changeable/dynamic risk factors directly linked to offending behaviour) and target them in treatment. It highlights the importance of such criminogenic needs in the design and delivery of treatment.

3) Responsivity principle: maximize the person’s ability to learn from a rehabilitative intervention by providing cognitive behavioural approaches (i.e. general responsivity) and tailor intervention to the learning style, motivation, abilities and strengths of the individual (i.e. specific responsivity).

Research indicates that custodial interventions for individuals classified as ‘low’ or ‘low-moderate’ risk increase the risk of reoffending.33,34 Implementing the RNR model within the youth justice system can provide a mechanism to move away from a punitive approach towards a focus on rehabilitation and individualised treatment, with more appropriate allocation of resources to young people with higher risks and needs.35

3.2 Protective factors and the Good Lives Model

In addition to dynamic risk factors (i.e. the Need principle), there has been a growing recognition of the role of protective factors. These are factors associated with reduced risk of (re)offending, that may moderate or buffer the adverse effect of dynamic risk factors.36,37,38

Strong social support (i.e. receiving support from at least one peer or adult in times of need and distress) and a close relationship with at least one prosocial adult (i.e. attachment) have been related to reduced violent offending in justice-involved young people in various settings (pre-trial, detention and pre-release).39 Furthermore, strong commitment to school or work, and positive attitudes towards treatment and authority has been related to reduced violent offending in detained young people.40 Prosocial support has been shown to have long-term protective effects in reducing violent reoffending in adults.41 The importance of maintaining supportive relationships was also shown by the UK Ministry of Justice, showing that for those in prison (adults) who received visits from a partner or family member, the odds of reoffending were 39% lower than for those who had not received such visits.42

A lack of such protective factors has been identified for young people in custody in the Victorian system, including a lack of social support and commitment to school.43

‘Good relationships are vital to reducing reoffending and the presence or lack of them can make or break other efforts to rehabilitate those who commit crime.’ - The Farmer review, June 2019.44

The more recent Good Lives Model (GLM) builds upon the RNR model through its strength-based focus and the identification and development of personal goals.45 The primary difference between the models is how criminogenic needs are understood and addressed. The GLM considers these to be intrinsically linked to the fulfillment of common life goals and aims to assist justice-involved people to attain these life goals in prosocial, non-offending ways, while simultaneously targeting risks. By identifying goals that are intrinsically valued, the GLM aims to facilitate treatment engagement (i.e. responsivity).46

There is growing evidence that such a strength-based and holistic treatment approach has the potential to further reduce recidivism within an RNR approach.47

3.3 Living Climate

A therapeutic approach should encompass more than specific therapy programs, as the greatest amount of time spent in custody occurs in the institution itself with correctional staff (i.e. up to 12 hours per day).48,49

The institutional climate is an important factor in the treatment of young people in custody.50 It can be understood as the shared perceptions of the environment.51 A therapeutic climate is considered ‘open’ when it provides support, facilitates personal growth, and allows flexibility in the balance between care and control. An ‘open’ climate is associated with higher treatment motivation52 and lower aggression in incarcerated youth.53 More positive youth perceptions of the institutional climate has been related to lower victimisation54 and fewer mental health symptoms experienced by young people in detention.55

Since the youth justice system emphasises the need for a therapeutic approach and rehabilitation, establishing and maintaining an ‘open’ climate is vital. Furthermore, evidence indicates that a positive social climate is likely to improve treatment outcomes and lower the risk of reoffending.56,57

A positive institutional climate which balances both care and control effectively requires ‘relational security’.

Relational security is the understanding and knowledge staff have of residents, and how this information is used to inform appropriate responses and maintain safety along with effective security. Quantitative elements that influence the quality of relational security include: staff/resident ratios, staff turnover, use of temporary staff and amount of face-to-face contact between residents and staff.58 Small-scale facilities tend to have higher levels of relational security relative to large-scale facilities.59

Relational security requires relationships between staff and residents to be professional, therapeutic and purposeful, with understood limits. Clear limits enable staff to maintain professional integrity and say ‘no’ when boundaries are being tested.60 Together with physical and procedural security it provides an overall safe and secure environment; it is essential that all three are in place at all times, and one should never substantially compensate for the absence or ineffectiveness of another.61

Relational security has been recognised in Victoria as “the best security element in a custodial setting”, however it currently does not form a core component in Victorian youth justice facilities.62
3.4 Resilience

A growing knowledge that children and young people respond to adversity differently from adults, has given rise to the study of resilience. In recent years there has been a growing interest in resilience and its potential to promote wellbeing and prevent mental ill-health.

Resilience can be defined as the capacity to adjust in response to risk or adversity (e.g. child abuse and neglect, exposure to family and community violence, family dysfunction and conflict, or chronic illness). It is not a fixed characteristic, but rather a dynamic quality that is impacted by social and environmental influences that interact with the developing individual.

It has been shown that the largest effect on resilience comes from protective factors, more so than risk and demographic factors. The Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) has led several research works into the wellbeing and resilience of young Victorians, and has identified the main protective factors involved in resilience of young people. They concluded that families, peers, schools and the community all play a role in enhancing the resilience of young people - and policies that facilitate a holistic response are likely to have the greatest impact.

Justice-involved young people are a particularly vulnerable group in society, facing many adversities and risks often with minimal social connection and support. For many, crime is a response to these difficulties. As such, resilience is of great significance for young people in custody.

For justice-involved young people, we can consider resilience assets to be the elements of their lives which can help them navigate away from offending behaviours enduringly.

The Youth Justice System should aim to build an individual’s resilience assets, strengthen social connections with family and the community, and facilitate school and work engagement.

4. Implications for facility design

The architectural design of a youth justice facility affects a young person’s prospects of rehabilitation and there is a strong evidence base to demonstrate what works in rehabilitative interventions.

It follows that we can improve the design of youth justice facilities by examining how the physical environment either facilitates or impedes those aspects identified as important in reducing the risk of reoffending.

By considering the evidence, and studying precedents which demonstrate best-practice internationally, four guiding principles emerge as key to facility design for Victoria's youth justice system. This chapter makes reference to specific facilities examined as part of a precedent study (refer Appendix 1), which inform the design implications of these principles.
4.1 Small-scale

The first principle concerns the size of the facility.

Current evidence and best-practice from the two leading rehabilitation frameworks highlights the need for understanding individual risks, needs, skills and strengths in order to effectively address offending behaviour. This requires a highly individualised approach, with staff developing and building relationships with young people in custody.

A facility should be small-scale in order to allow staff to develop meaningful relationships with young people. This involves understanding and identifying the individual motivations, risks, needs, skills and strengths of each young person, with staff modifying their role and behaviour based on this knowledge.

As young people in custody spend most of their time in the institution itself with staff, this relationship forms a major part of a therapeutic approach to a custodial intervention.

This also forms the basis of ‘relational security’ (i.e., being the understanding and relationships staff have of young people, and how this affects the management and de-escalation of incidents) discussed under the security differentiation section below.

Staff need to be able to identify the specific motivations, abilities, risks, skills and strengths of each young person and be able to modify their role and behaviour based on this knowledge. As young people in custody spend most of their time in the institution itself with staff, this relationship forms a major part of a therapeutic approach to a custodial intervention.

Notably, emerging evidence has been described by Liebling, suggesting that smaller prisons are better able to provide an individual and relational approach. She describes a prison quality study from Norway that showed smaller prisons, defined as less than 50 beds, had better quality of life ratings from both staff and detainees. Furthermore, she describes another evaluation of small Norwegian prisons that showed greater transparency and staff knowledge of individual detainees, which in turn led to more effective relational security. This evaluation also concluded that smaller prisons were more flexible and dynamic organizations, facilitating a more individual approach, and where staff felt their job was more satisfying and meaningful.

Design implications:

Youth Justice facilities should be designed to house approximately 8 young people, and house not more than 20, as a maximum. Exact size will be dependent upon the local context and needs.

Small-scale is defined by the ability of staff members to discuss the individual circumstances of every young person in residence at every shift-change, as well as any notable circumstances in the relationships between people in the unit, including staff members. This is a minimum requirement in order to support the building of strong, respectful relationships between young people and staff.

Smaller facilities are capable of allowing for greater flexibility to meet individual needs and strengths, through the facilitation of closer relationships between staff and young people. Small-scale facilities also provide a space for staff to practice closer observation of young people.

The size of the facility directly affects the procedural aspects of operation, and the degree to which it has an institutional climate. As a facility becomes larger, so does its management structure, increasing the likelihood of ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to operations, which runs contrary to the evidence of effective interventions. This limits the effectiveness of designing small ‘units’ within a larger facility.

Small-scale facilities allow for an outward-focus to the facility design generally, in line with a community integrated approach to rehabilitation programs.

Internationally, jurisdictions have understood and responded to the knowledge that size of a facility affects its operation and subsequently its results.

The Diagrama Foundation, which runs youth justice facilities in Spain (refer Appendix 1), has learned that, with quite remarkable procedural efficiency, the optimum size Spain for a relationally-focused facility is approximately 70 young people (refer Appendix 1). It is important to note however, that in respect to cultures of social habitation, organisation, management, and system context, Victoria is more similar to America and the Netherlands, which are focusing on significantly smaller facilities than this. A number of American jurisdictions including New York City have implemented small-scale facilities with success (6-20 bed facilities, distinguished as Limited Security and Non-Secure). The Netherlands, after a successful pilot study, has moved to make the majority of its youth justice facilities 8-beds in size. The only two youth justice facilities in Norway are 4-beds in size, which reflects their approach to genuinely only use custody as a last resort, for very severe cases. These precedents are discussed further in Section 6 and Appendix 1.

Figure 6. Size comparison of facilities studied in Appendix 1.

The size of a facility affects the quality of outcomes. Small-scale facilities better promote the approaches known to have the greatest impact in reducing the risk of reoffending.
4.2 Local

The second principle looks at facility siting and locality.

The evidence for protective factors against reoffending and for the building of resilience more generally, indicates that social connections with family and the community, and school and work engagement are important elements that can support a young person in getting their life back on track and desisting from crime.

Custody provides an opportunity to support young people in building and maintaining these protective factors.

Young people in custody should be able to maintain and build meaningful relationships with their family and community and maintain and/or build their commitments to school and/or work outside the custodial facility. A custodial intervention should aim to foster these social connections and actively work to support and engage young people in the community.

The United Nations rules for the protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty states that education should be provided outside the detention facility in community schools wherever possible - which fits with the knowledge that school-bonding a protective factor for non-reoffending. 68

As such, the custodial facility should be readily accessible for family and specific prosocial community-members. Furthermore, young people in custody should be able to easily access the community, education and potential workplaces from the facility.

It is important to note that this does not necessarily mean that young people are allowed to move freely in the community. Rather, it means that young people have the opportunity, as appropriate to their treatment plan, to be able to readily access the community and be supported in doing so with increasing autonomy over time. This autonomy relates directly to the effectiveness of the rehabilitation program.

Locality should also be considered in terms of proximity to specialist services and professionals that young people may need to access. Current estimated of wellbeing and mental health issues indicate that anywhere between 30 and 70% percent of young people may be in need of mental health care. 69 When a custodial facility is a great distance of such services, the provision of required specialist services is likely to become more difficult. 70

Further, locality is about providing a place-based approach to youth justice. Understanding individual needs, risks and appropriate supports for a young person, as well as specific responsibility, also involves understanding the cultural background and places in which they live. A place-based approach, with the facility sited in a local area, provides a greater opportunity for staff to be a part of, or engage with a young person’s cultural background.

Design implications:

Youth Justice facilities should be designed to reflect local needs, and be sited within active areas of the community.

Site selection for facilities should be made with the intention of promoting easy access to public schools, sources of employment and community engagement. Sites should be selected with the expectation that these will form part of daily routines, accomplished by the young person with varying degrees of autonomy dependent on their individual needs and treatment plans.

It is important to note here that socio-economic disadvantage and likelihood of interaction with Youth Justice is geographically concentrated. As one example of a prevailing trend, between 2008 and 2010, 25.4% of remandees came from 2.2% of Victoria’s postcodes. 71

As an indicative guide for the Victorian context, in the first instance, sites should aim to be within walking distance of community health and mental-health services, sources of employment and community engagement, education and public transport access. As a frame of reference, it should be considered that an effective youth justice facility, where necessary, be sited in line with the principles of Plan Melbourne - 20-minute Neighbourhoods. 72

In some instances there may be reasons for a youth justice facility to be distanced from young persons’ specific neighbourhood of origin, however this does not negate the requirement for the facility to be sited within and engaged with the community.

Siting the facility within the community requires a more considered and nuanced approach to its external architecture. Facilities should be designed to fit within and contribute to the existing neighbourhood character. The design of the exterior communicates and reinforces the relationship between the facility and its neighbourhood, the young people residing there and the community at large.

It is very important that the evidence which supports community inclusion bears upon the design of the facility’s architecture. The design of the facility can either contribute to a stigmatising and divisive relationship to its surrounds, or a normalising and inclusive relationship in the minds of community members and young people. A skillful architect should be able to provide a design which quietly promotes the fact that this facility, and the people living within it, are part of the immediate community.

The youth justice facility in Amsterdam offers a good example of this (refer Appendix 1). While neighbours are informed and encouraged to reach out to the facility manager if they ever have any issues, the architecture itself offers no cues of any separation between the facility and its neighbourhood.
Facilities stand to benefit from co-location with existing community youth services, mental and general healthcare providers, ready access to employment/work experience opportunities and community-based education facilities. Involvement with pro-social community groups is promoted by close-proximity to the activities of these groups. Proximity to public transport options is desirable, providing further connections to community based resources. Family participation within individual rehabilitation plans is encouraged by proximity to locations that form part of daily routines.

The predominantly suburban shape of the built environment in Victoria’s cities and towns influences where and how facilities might be sited, and subsequently their built form. External architectural form should not contain stigmatising cues relating to justice-system involvement, but rather draw from the surrounding context and result in a design that is unobtrusive and included within its surroundings.

These three examples are buildings from Melbourne’s suburbs which operate social services in close proximity to centres of community activity, utilising that connection with community as a valuable resource for those accessing the services. Each of these buildings demonstrate a curated relationship to their surroundings, with an architecture that seeks to balance a sense of identity while blending into its surroundings. These projects have provided access to community connection through developing central, underutilised parcels of land, above council car parking spaces which continue to operate.

**Figure 7. (Above right)**

Facilities stand to benefit from co-location with existing community youth services, mental and general healthcare providers, ready access to employment/work experience opportunities and community-based education facilities. Involvement with pro-social community groups is promoted by close-proximity to the activities of these groups. Proximity to public transport options is desirable, providing further connections to community based resources. Family participation within individual rehabilitation plans is encouraged by proximity to locations that form part of daily routines.

**Figure 8. (Right)**

The predominantly suburban shape of the built environment in Victoria’s cities and towns influences where and how facilities might be sited, and subsequently their built form. External architectural form should not contain stigmatising cues relating to justice-system involvement, but rather draw from the surrounding context and result in a design that is unobtrusive and included within its surroundings.

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**Image sources:** Author

- Tyne St - Carlton - 2012 - Williams Boag Architects
- Kyme Place - Port Melbourne - 2012 - MGS Architects
- Woodstock St- Balaclava - 2006 - MGS Architects
4.3 Differentiated and relational security

The third principle looks at security measures, and how these can be differentiated to suit individual needs.

It is currently understood that the youth justice system should always employ the least restrictive measurement or intervention suitable to an individual. A custodial intervention is a highly restrictive measure for those in need of a secure environment.

It follows from the RNR model that methods of maintaining security need to be differentiated according to the risks and needs of the individual.

By incorporating the GLM and resilience theory, this is extended to mean that security measures should cater to promote prosocial connections and protective factors for the young person.

Research indicates that placing individuals in custodial interventions who would otherwise be eligible for non-custodial interventions (i.e., with ‘low’ or ‘low-moderate’ risk levels) is likely to increase the risk of reoffending.73, 74 Therefore a custodial intervention should only ever be used for those who are deemed to be in need of a highly restrictive measure, which should be based on a structured assessment of risks and individual needs (i.e., ‘high’ risk).75

However, assessment is more than making decisions based on the level of risk.76 Individual risks and needs are dynamic and change over time, and effective treatment focuses on the notion that behavioural change can be facilitated by an appropriate intervention. If a custodial sentence offers effective treatment and rehabilitation, it should be expected that a young person’s need for security is dynamic and will decline over time. In addition, security measures need to be able to cater simultaneously for the needs of young people with different care and security needs.

As such, youth justice facilities need to provide differentiated security, that is, security that can be scaled up or down depending on dynamic, individual risks and needs. Further to this, differentiated security also allows for adaptability to a changing system and its demands over time.

The Armytage and Ogloff review highlights that relational security within a custodial setting should be the main focus, as it can be considered as the best security element in a custodial setting (as opposed to procedural and physical security). Relational security is the understanding and knowledge staff have of young people, and how this informs the management and de-escalation of security incidents. The report also points out that the use of relational security has been limited within the Victorian youth justice centres.

‘The best security element in any custodial setting is knowledge of the [young person]... In an effective operating model, these relationships form part of daily operations...’

- Penny Armytage & James Ogloff, 2017, 77

The design and layout of prison facilities has been linked to the degree of positivity in relationships between detained people and staff.78 Prisons which have been designed to have large physical distances between staff and detained people, to emphasise surveillance, to facilitate large ratios of detainees to staff, or those with an overall large scale are shown to reduce detainee-staff relationship satisfaction, while facilities designed to promote closer detainee-staff interaction are shown to benefit relationships.79

Design implications:

The primary focus for the design of facility security is to facilitate and strengthen relational security measures. Promoting meaningful relationships between staff and young people is the objective of this principle.

Physical security measures must be differentiable between individual young people’s needs over time, in ways that complement relational security approaches, and never detract from them.

Facility floor plans should be organised to encourage close interaction between staff and young people, as opposed to a surveillance mindset.

In addition to structured, formal treatment programs, facility design should promote association between staff and young people in informal settings, such as preparing and eating meals and engaging in leisure activities. As one example, staff and young people might share the same kitchen amenities (as in the Amsterdam facility - refer Appendix 1).

Staff-resident ratios play an important role,80 and as such facilities should provide space to adequately and comfortably accommodate the necessary number of staff members, in close proximity to the areas for young people.

Floor plans should provide a variety of different spaces and spatial configurations, with different degrees of sociability and privacy, communality and intimacy. This allows greater flexibility to staff when working and recreating with young people, to cater to an individual’s immediate needs regarding privacy and openness towards others.

These spaces should be defined using both ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ spatial division methods, with opportunities made to allow for doors to be opened and left open as part of normal usage.

Facilities should provide staff with options to encourage growth, responsibility, autonomy and integration with community when it is appropriate. It is easier for staff to develop productive relationships with young people if they are able to open doors, as well as lock them when necessary. This is to say, that encouragement and incentivisation for growth should be promoted through the spatial design of the facility.

The layout of the Bergen facility in Norway provides an example of this (refer Appendix 1), arranged so that the majority of doors in the facility can be left open for most of the time, with doors being closed for the purpose of specific programs, activities or incidents. This provides staff with flexibility in using the facility spaces for different purposes, while providing a normalised, home-like environment.

For further information regarding successful design responses to the task of differentiated security, a precedent study is contained in Appendix 1.
4.4 Therapeutic

The fourth principle looks at how the design of the physical environment can facilitate a therapeutic approach.

Victoria has been committed to achieve rehabilitation through a therapeutic model of youth justice for many years. As a custodial intervention involves a physical environment, it follows that the therapeutic approach should be extended to the design of the facility. Indeed, as discussed in Section 2, it is recognised that the physical environment experienced during custody greatly affects a young persons behaviour and prospects of rehabilitation. 81, 82, 83, 84, 85

Therapeutic design benefits both young people in custody and the staff working in these spaces, which in turn facilitates positive relationships between staff and young people, and this in turn again benefits the social environment of the facility in a cyclical relationship.86

By adapting a definition of therapeutic environments used for healthcare spaces, an environment is therapeutic when it supports excellence in treatment; supports the psycho-social and spiritual needs of the resident, their family, and staff; and has measurable positive effects on residents’ treatment outcomes and staff productivity.87

A hierarchy of design objectives can identify different bodies of contributing evidence, and allow a closer examination of what environmental aspects contribute to therapeutic design in a youth justice facility.

Therapeutic design for youth justice facilities can be considered to be that which:

1. Does no harm (i.e. ‘good’ or ‘healthy’ design); and
2. Improves safety by reducing stress, aggression, violence, and self-harm; and
3. Contributes to treatment and rehabilitation, for example by positively influencing protective factors, mental health and well-being.

The first point ensures a baseline of amenity within the facility, including basic ‘good design’ objectives that apply broadly to all environments and people in causing no harm to their occupants. Though these are basic and general requirements for a built environment to provide amenity for good health, the impact of addressing these aspects is increased in custodial environments due to the involuntary nature of people’s residence and the long periods of time spent within these spaces. Not meeting these objectives has flow on effects to more specific objectives, and therefore the general effectiveness of the rehabilitation program.

Addressed secondly, are environmental influences shown to have an impact upon residents’ stress, and aggressive, violent or self-harming behaviours. Historically, this has constituted the majority of research on environmental influences in custodial spaces.

Finally, in line with the evidence for effective treatment outlined in Section 3 of this document, environmental influences which can contribute to positive engagement with rehabilitation activities can be identified.

Specific design features to be considered are outlined below.

Design implications:

To promote best-practice in youth justice facilities, they must be designed to provide a healthy environment, which reduces stress, aggressive and harmful behaviours, and promotes overall wellbeing and mental health.

The first three principles identified in this report (Small-scale, Local and Differentiated Security) all contribute to the establishment of a therapeutic environment.

A growing interest in the impact of facility design on service-user outcomes has led to a large body of academic literature, especially in relation to mental health facilities. This research provides insight into how different people react to institutional spaces where they are admitted involuntarily.

This field of research is more complex and detailed than can be fully addressed here. However, common themes from the evidence base indicate the following elements should be included in designing therapeutic spaces for a custodial intervention in youth justice:

- Adequate lighting and access to adequate daylight 88, 89, 90
- Spacious communal spaces with moveable furniture and home-like atmosphere 88, 89
- Adequate personal space (i.e. privacy) with some sense of control over this space 88, 89
- Design to limit the subjective perception of crowding 88, 89, 90
- Smaller social groupings, with layouts that promote staff-resident interactions (See Small-scale) 90
- Noise reducing design and good acoustics 89, 90, including the use of sound absorbing materials and a reduction of background noise 91
- Free access to and use of green spaces and gardens 88, 89
- Visual access to natural environments through windows 89, 90 with particular reference to far-reaching views 90
- Visually distinct spaces clearly marking the different functions of spaces 88
- Enriched environment with aesthetic considerations, including art 88, 89, indoor plants, variation in colour and texture, and balance between visual order and complexity 90
- Normalised, non-hard architectural finishes (i.e. not vandal resistant) 90
- Some degree of individual control of environmental elements, including light, noise, temperature, air quality, movement 90
- The presence of ‘benign’ animals, such as pets, birds etc. 91
- The ability to personalise living spaces 90
- The ability to move autonomously between spaces, particularly of different spatial qualities, within the limits of facility security 90
- Providing spaces which offer visual and acoustic privacy, while still offering opportunities for social interaction 90

A full and rigorous study of design aspects which contribute to the success of rehabilitative youth justice spaces could gather a large amount of evidence to guide the design of these spaces in the future.

The precedents in Appendix 1 show existing youth justice facilities which seriously accept the challenge of providing a safe and therapeutic environment for the rehabilitation of young people, providing an example of the kind of outcome-focused facilities Victoria could create.
5. Benefits, opportunities and addressing current issues in the Victorian Youth Justice system

5.1 Addressing current issues in the Victorian Youth Justice System

It is recognised that the Victorian Youth Justice System is currently not operating effectively, facing a number of critical issues and requiring substantial reform. Among others, issues include a lack of focus and purpose for youth justice orders, and limited access to mental health services and education for justice-involved young people.

This model for small-scale local facilities provides improved opportunities to address current issues in the Youth Justice System as well as offering additional benefits as outlined below.

The overall purpose of the youth justice system is to prevent and reduce crime in the community, which includes the prevention of reoffending for those already in contact with the justice system. Its separation from the adult justice system is grounded in the recognition that children and young people do not have the same insight, judgement and self-control as adults and require different, age-appropriate responses.

“The youth justice system is a set of processes and practices to manage justice-involved children and young people who committed or allegedly committed a crime.” This includes a variation of responses to youth crime, including prevention programs, community-based programs, diversion programs and custodial interventions. A custodial intervention, being the most severe sentence option, is meant as a last resort measure and only to be applied when absolutely necessary. As such, it should be expected that very few young people end up in custody and that this concerns highly complex young people for whom other interventions have not been successful or can be shown to be inappropriate. In short, youth custodial interventions aim to:

‘... engage people in change by addressing their offending behaviour and equipping them with the skills required for positive community participation, within a safe and secure environment.’

- State of Victoria, Department of Justice and Community Safety

5.1.1 Providing a safe environment

Investigations by the Victorian Ombudsman and the Commissioner for Children and Young People have expressed serious, ongoing concerns about the circumstances within custodial facilities and the mistreatment of detained young people in Victoria. An excessive use of isolation, separation and lockdowns was reported. It is worth noting that the majority of lockdowns were due to staffing issues (83% at Parkville, 78% at Malmsbury), as opposed to the conduct of young people in residence. Furthermore, Victoria has recently had the highest rates of assaults in custody, including young person to young person, young person to staff and staff to young person. Currently, Youth Justice facilities in Victoria do not provide a safe and secure environment for neither staff nor young people.

Small-scale local facilities provide improved safety for staff and young people in several ways:

- by providing differentiated security that is adaptable to individual risks and needs; by providing a therapeutic space that reduces aggression, violence and self-harm; by focusing on and promoting “the best security element in a custodial setting” - that is, relational security.

5.1.2 Reducing the risk of reoffending

Evaluating the current model for youth custody, there is no evidence to show that time in custody contributes to a reduction in the frequency or severity of reoffending.

Small-scale local facilities are the result of directly defining a model by the evidence of what most successfully contributes to reducing the risk of reoffending.

The Australian Institute of Health & Welfare has estimated that 80% of those released from sentenced detention in Australia (2016–17) returned to supervision within 12 months, with more than half (59%) returning within 6 months. Return rates for custodial sentences were not available by states and territories. However, the Sentencing Advisory Council has reported similar estimates specifically for the state of Victoria. They reported that 82% of young people who received a custodial order in the Children's Court in 2008-2009 reoffended within 6 years.

The existing model for youth custody disconnects prosocial protective factors and is operated at a scale that impedes the delivery of individually focused responses. Looking at the evidence for what works in addressing risk of reoffending, these defining aspects of custody are likely to contribute to the likelihood of a young person reoffending.

Small-scale local facilities are defined by the evidence of what works in reducing the risk of reoffending as outlined in Section 3, and provide a tailored environment to promote those elements of rehabilitation which have the greatest effect.
5.1.3 Addressing mental health needs

Justice-involved young people are a particularly vulnerable group in society, facing many adversities and risks often with minimal social connection and support. For many, crime is a response to these difficulties.  

The Victorian Youth Parole Board has expressed ongoing concerns regarding the over-representation of young people with mental health issues in custody. Their most recent Annual Report stated that 70% of young people in detention were victims of abuse, trauma or neglect, 53% presented with mental health issues, 41% presented with cognitive difficulties that affect their daily functioning and 30% had a history of self-harm or suicidal ideation. (Fig. 9) This is in line with other research showing high-level and complex health needs in justice-involved young people in Victoria. In addition, between 2013-17, 48% of young people under youth justice supervision had also received child protection services during the period (9 times as likely as the general population) indicating a highly increased likelihood of traumatic experiences.

The built environment has both "direct and indirect effects on mental health," impacting a person's mental wellbeing through purely physical means and also by mediating the ways in which they act and interact socially.

Total institutions; i.e. facilities which are isolated from the broader community and bring large numbers of similarly situated people together within that isolation, are known to have serious negative effects on people experiencing mental illness.

Small-scale local facilities improve opportunities for addressing complex needs of young people in custody; by providing an environment which supports staff in becoming particularly aware of a young person's individual needs and prosocial strengths; by being located in proximity to, and promoting ongoing connections with specialist services and professionals in the community which young people may need to access; and by providing an evidence-based, therapeutic and destigmatising environment that provides a supportive space for addressing mental health, well-being and rehabilitation.

5.1.4 Addressing numbers of young people on remand

On an average day in Victoria 2017-18, 58% of 10-17 year olds in detention were unsentenced. While on remand, young people are separated from families, experience disruption to education and employment and are denied therapeutic programs (available for sentenced only). The average length of time spent in unsentenced detention in Victoria 2017-18 was 55 days. As Professor Ogloff has highlighted, this lost time can have a large impact on the life of a young person, in an enduring way.

The reasons for the rise in the number of young people on remand are complex, and involve reforms beyond the specific remit of the youth justice system. To reduce the number of young people on remand therefore requires a broad range of different actions, such as providing more alternatives that do not involve custody. However, one clearly identified contributing factor to this issue is a lack of available alternatives, with magistrates relying increasingly on remand, particularly for young people with complex needs.

Armytage and Ogloff identified that "members of the judiciary have reported a lack of confidence in some interventions, the promise of intensive supervision and the ability to manage serious risk in the community." They also reported that magistrates expressed a lack of confidence in the current business hours and office-based model of bail supervision as not being an appropriate approach to mitigate the risk to the community.

Further, in a comprehensive review of bail support programs, the Australian Institute of Criminology identifies housing as one of the key impediments to release on bail, noting that "facilitating access to suitable, stable housing is critical in supporting people on bail." Despite access to accommodation not being grounds for the refusal of bail, the Children's Courts are sometimes forced to remand young people due to a lack of suitable accommodation.

The proposed model is capable of providing supported bail accommodation, particularly for young people with complex needs who may otherwise be remanded in custody.

The intensive 24/7 support from residential staff in a small-scale setting, along with individually scalable security measures, provides opportunities for intensive case-management, helping to address a young person's particular needs and access services, while ensuring magistrates of sufficient supervision and structure to mitigate risk.

This proposal offers an alternative to remand, and avoids the negative effects of detention, and - as it would be sited locally - allows the maintenance and strengthening of protective factors.

Such an approach could be in a similar form to the Atrium Housing and Support Program, which provides housing and support during bail for people under 30, adapted for the particular needs of young people.

Figure 9. Mental health and wellbeing of young people in detention.

Sources: Youth Parole Board Annual Report, 2017–18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Condition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70%</td>
<td>Victims of abuse, trauma or neglect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53%</td>
<td>With mental health issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41%</td>
<td>With issues concerning intellectual functioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>With history of self-harm or suicidal ideation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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For those young people who can be granted bail given a more supportive environment, a small-scale local facility provides a base to access health and social services, as well as intensive diversion programs aimed at reducing the risk of reoffending. As noted above, these services are not available to young people on remand.

One example of a pre-sentence diversion program which may benefit from a residential component is the Youth Community and Law Program (YCLP) operating by The Youth Junction Inc. in Sunshine. To gain entry to the program, young people are referred by magistrate with around 48% of participants being enrolled in the program as part of their bail conditions. The program’s case-managers identify the holistic needs and risks which have contributed to a young person’s offending, connecting them to services which address these needs. Magistrate’s have praised this program for its effectiveness in reducing reoffending, and a cost-benefit analysis has demonstrated that the program’s benefits exceed its costs by more than 7 times.

However, The Youth Junction Inc. has identified access to stable and supportive accommodation as being a major impediment for young people accessing the YCLP program, specifically for those requiring more structured and intensive support.

The Youth Junction Inc. and the YCLP program offers one example of how a small-scale local facility might be operated by, or in partnership with existing youth service providers or youth hubs with a proven track record. This can potentially alleviate some of the difficulties which arise through small numbers of young people utilising these facilities in small communities that are separated by geographic distance.

5.1.5 Facilitating culturally-appropriate interventions

Culturally appropriate programs for justice-involved young people are required by provisions in human rights charters, including: Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities – Cultural Rights (s19 & 23) and United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty (Havana Rules) (Articles 37 & 38). The Armytage & Ogloff report has also identified the importance of interventions being delivered in a culturally safe environment, considerate of the “challenges experienced by these young people and their communities.” Despite this, the report identifies a current lack of culturally appropriate interventions for Koori Youth and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups. This importance, along with the lack of culturally appropriate approaches specifically for detained youth, has also been recognised by parliament.

Due to systemic disadvantages, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are dramatically overrepresented within the Victorian Youth Justice system.

“Aboriginal children are best supported by Aboriginal definitions of identity and wellbeing.”

-Koorie Youth Council

Self-determination for First Nations communities is of crucial importance. There is much to be learned and drawn from the strengths and knowledge of Aboriginal communities, including approaches to reducing the risk of reoffending. A positive example to look towards may be the successful Maranguka Justice Reinvestment approach in Bourke NSW. A successful example of a residential diversion program is the Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place, which may be adapted for the needs of young people. This proposal is explicitly recommended by Armytage and Ogloff.

For locations where young people in custody are predominantly from an over-represented cultural group, a small-scale local facility may provide a site in which a culturally rich environment can be operated around the clock, in all aspects of daily life. Andrew Jackomos, the former Aboriginal Children’s Commissioner, Commission for Aboriginal Children and Young People, has identified this to be “the greatest resource for our children.”

This report aims to be a starting place for discussion between stakeholders from community and government. For any given community the principles and guidelines stated here should be discussed and developed by the local community in order to best address the needs and strengths of it’s young people.

It is especially important in the case of Aboriginal young people that this design process is led by Aboriginal communities and organisations in order to successfully support Aboriginal justice-involved young people.

“When supports for Aboriginal children use non-Aboriginal frameworks to understand children’s needs and strengths, they are unsuccessful.”

-The Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care
5.1.6 Implementing Review and Strategy recommendations

The Youth justice review and strategy: Meeting needs and reducing offending, 2017 by Armytage and Ogloff is highly regarded as an analysis of current issues in the Victorian Youth Justice System. It has outlined a large number of reforms necessary for Victoria’s youth justice system to fulfill its role. The review recognises that “bold & innovative” change is required, with a focus on evidence-based decision-making.

In addition to this, despite directly focusing on a neighbouring jurisdiction, the Royal Commission into the Detention, Care and Protection Systems of the Northern Territory provides wide-ranging recommendations for reform which have been recognised to be applicable right across Australia, including in Victoria. These reports call for a new model for youth justice that is evidence-based and focused upon achieving best-practice.

In both reports there is a loud call for local solutions; promoting approaches in which young people maintain strong connections with their community and families; with a stronger focus on rehabilitation.

Contact with the youth justice system is correlated with social disadvantage and is geographically concentrated (25.4% of remandees come from 2.2% of Victoria’s postcodes). This allows for the implementation of local solutions, and indicates a community that is in need of increased service provision.

Local solutions involve understanding the needs and circumstances of the specific communities involved with the youth justice system, as well as strong connections between the community itself and the activities of the youth justice system.

In a system which understands the importance of localised responses, when custody is absolutely necessary, small-scale local facilities are the appropriate model for custodial interventions.

This is in line with the evidence base of what reduces the risk of reduces the risk of reoffending (Section 3), facilitating a stronger focus on rehabilitation and prosocial connections.

5.2 Further benefits to the Victorian Youth Justice System

In addition to the benefits of providing an improved environment for addressing current issues as discussed above, the implementation of small-scale local facilities has far-reaching economic benefits.

5.2.1 Cost benefits

Evidence-based facility design provides an environment for improved effectiveness of treatment, reducing the risk of reoffending and minimising long term costs. This can be achieved with reduced capital expenditure and comparable operating costs to the existing, ineffective facilities.

The small-scale local facilities outlined in this model are based upon the evidence of what works to reduce reoffending in young people, and designed to provide the most conducive environment possible for the success of these best-practice programs.

Reducing the risk of a young person reoffending, or reducing the severity of a young persons reoffending has the effect of reducing ongoing costs to the justice system throughout the course of their lifetime post-release. Intergenerational disadvantage and involvement with the justice system is common and as such cost benefits from reducing reoffending may also extend to future generations.

Reducing reoffending avoids direct justice costs associated with policing, legal costs including prosecution, legal aid costs, court costs, and the costs of any further corrections activities.

Addressing the underlying vulnerabilities which contribute to criminal activity, as outlined in Section 3, also contributes to broader cost benefits, including ongoing improved educational and employment outcomes.

In addition to this, the general community benefits from reduced levels of crime, reducing the financial and human costs due to reoffending.

In terms of the facility itself, direct economic benefits for adopting the model include greatly reduced capital expenditure for facilities. Currently Victoria is building a large-scale high-security facility approximately 50km west of Melbourne (Cherry Creek). This project involves significant infrastructural investments due to the facility’s size, it being located on an isolated greenfield site, and it’s inability to differentiate between security levels for individuals.

Matching young people’s risks and needs to an appropriate level of security, in addition to reducing the negative impact upon the young person’s prospects or reoffending, also reduces unnecessary capital costs associated with the infrastructure of high-security facilities.

In New York City, the Close to Home initiative commissions facilities by making small, considered renovations to existing dwellings within the city, allowing the dwelling to function effectively as a youth justice facility with minimal capital investment.

In terms of operating costs, based on the initial estimate for the Dutch pilot for small-scale local facilities, it can be expected that operating expenses are similar to the operating expenses of traditional large-scale, high-security facilities, with the added benefits associated with improved outcomes.
For rural areas with a concentrated involvement with the justice system, small-scale local facilities also have the potential to reduce the cost of transport involved with custodial interventions, which can be significant where large geographic distance separates a young person’s home from centralised state facilities. These costs are incurred by both the corrections system and the family of the young person in custody, and can prohibit effective involvement of the young person’s family in the carrying out of their order, which can contribute to further negative effects as discussed above (see Section 3.2).

Armytage and Ogloff state that workforce attrition is currently of great concern in the Victorian youth custodial system, with significant costs associated with the regular recruiting and training of new staff, in addition to high absenteeism. Further, they note that the retention of staff with institutional practice and knowledge is particularly important within a youth justice setting, where the nature of the work can be technically difficult, and where security can be compromised by high staff turnover.

Small-scale facilities have been linked to improved working conditions and staff satisfaction, and as such, it is reasonable to expect higher staff retention, reduced absenteeism, and reduced costs associated with staff recruitment, in addition to the significant benefits associated with retaining and developing the skill-sets of long-term staff.

5.2.2 Flexibility and decommissioning of underutilised custodial facilities

Reducing the overall number of youth in custody is an important objective for the Youth Justice system. Small-scale local facilities offer an opportunity for the Victorian Government to operate a flexible estate of best-practice custodial facilities, that adapts according to short term needs and reduces unnecessary operational expenditure.

In light of the criticality that young people be diverted away from custody, and in the knowledge that Victoria’s current model for youth custody has no impact on reducing reoffending, and further considering the evidence that punitive interventions generally have a negligible or negative impact on recidivism, and finally, considering the enormous financial burden of custodial interventions - it can be clearly understood that custodial interventions should be minimised as far as possible.

This must be balanced to cater for instances in which there is an immediate and demonstrable need for protecting the community, however this does not mean that youth justice facilities cannot be both secure and supportive in the process of rehabilitation.

The Victorian youth justice system can aim to minimise and diversify its approach to youth custody, allowing for tailored responses to individual risks, needs and strengths; creating a step-up-step-down approach which encourages young people to grow and provides integration with the community, before trial, under sentence and prior to release. Moving away from a ‘one-size fits all’ approach of large-scale detention, small-scale local facilities provide flexibility and differentiation in the acute end of the youth justice hierarchy of interventions - allowing placements tailored to individual security and treatment needs (Fig. 10). This occurs through both diversity across a network of facilities, and by greater flexibility in the operation of individual facilities themselves.

In New York City, as part of the Close to Home initiative (Refer Section 6), small-scale, local facilities are provided by retrofitting existing domestic buildings, “intentionally designed to ensure participation in programming while preserving the safety and security of youth, staff, and the surrounding community.” These facilities have very low capital start-up costs relative to large-scale high security facilities, and retrofitting activities are small in scope.

By organising custodial facilities with this model, New York City is able to quickly, easily and inexpensively commission and decommission youth justice facilities depending on their utilisation rate. This provides enormous flexibility to the managing department (Administration for Children’s Services NYC) to not incur operating expenditure for empty facilities, while at the same time providing facilities designed to provide the best possible environment for a young person’s rehabilitation. This model has been recognised as a great success, and is currently being adopted in a number of jurisdictions across America.

Large-scale, high-security facilities require huge initial expenditure, and then demand continuously high operational costs for the entire period of its operation, despite being able to demonstrate no measurable return on investment by way of reduced risk of reoffending.

Small-scale local facilities, such as those in New York, align financial, human and social costs, and promote the overall minimisation of the use of custody for young people, minimising the long term compounding costs associated with repeated justice involvement, and freeing more funds for use in preventative initiatives.

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Potential for small-scale local facilities:

- Small-scale supported bail accommodation, residential diversion
- Small-scale semi-open settings
- Small-scale secure settings

Figure 10. Matrix of intervention / security needs: Continuum of responses within the Youth Justice System.

To provide individualised approaches within the youth justice system, it is important to consider the difference between the need for security and the need for treatment. The need for security is to be based on the most severe offence at the time, while treatment needs involve dynamic risk factors and (a lack of) protective factors.

As part of a diverse continuum of responses, small-scale local facilities can sit at any point along these two continuums, providing environments for different combinations of security and treatment needs. Providing diverse options to the judiciary allows more appropriate placement for a young person, thereby avoiding the detrimental effects of an overbearing security response.

5.2.3 Victoria as a leading jurisdiction

The Victorian Youth Justice System has a proud history of innovation and evidence-based approaches to addressing youth justice involvement. Unfortunately, however, over the last decades Victoria's Youth Justice custodial system has slipped into a state of crisis, while other jurisdictions internationally have continued to develop approaches more closely aligned with scientific evidence available on reducing the risk of reoffending.

Leading jurisdictions around the world are implementing therapeutic approaches within therapeutic environments; reducing the size of youth justice facilities, focusing on community connection and protective factors, and tailoring their facilities and programs to be capable of addressing individual risks and needs.

The Victorian Government has an opportunity to regain the reputation of being a forward-thinking, evidence-led jurisdiction. One part of this involves the creation of therapeutic youth justice facilities, that are small-scale, local and capable of differentiation between individual young people.

6. International precedents

Small-scale, local, relational-security models have been successfully established in different jurisdictions around the world, including the Netherlands and the USA.

The key principles of these models are suitable for implementation in Victoria.

6.1 Detailed precedent study

Appendix 1 of this document contains a precedent study of three jurisdictions across Europe, looking at how they have provided therapeutic youth justice environments in various ways. The precedents are well regarded for their therapeutic approaches, and offer clear examples of how Victoria can implement the key principles of facility design (Section 4) and improve outcomes for justice-involved young people, youth justice staff and the broader community.

It is important to note that in respect to cultures of social habitation, organisation, management, and system context, Victoria is more similar to America and the Netherlands than Spain and Norway. Below, two precedents are considered from these more similar countries.
6.2 Small-scale facilities - The Netherlands

The Dutch ‘Small-scale Facilities’ model established 8-bed semi-open facilities, providing local placement for young detainees in close proximity to their social environment and support. After a successful pilot, this model is now being rolled out nationally.

As in Victoria, youth crime in the Netherlands has been decreasing, while young people in custody showed more serious problems including mental health problems and addiction with high recidivism. In 2016, the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Safety initiated a justice reform project - piloting small-scale local facilities for young people in custody.

Three facilities were established; each differed in geographical location, target group and local implementation processes. They provided local placement for young people in close proximity to their social environment and support.

The evaluation of the Dutch model gives precedent for the success and impact of the design. The local facilities were deemed a success based on these results and considered a positive contribution to the youth justice system in the Netherlands. The Dutch government has now begun expanding the model nationally as the primary model for youth custody, as part of a continuum of sentencing options.

The basic characteristics and lessons learned in the Netherlands can be used to inform the design of a model for sustainable local facilities within the Victorian context.

6.3 Close to Home initiative - New York City

In New York City the ‘Close to Home’ initiative offers small, local, limited-security and non-secure residences, and has almost entirely replaced sentencing to remote, state-run facilities. The success of this approach has seen it being adopted in a number of jurisdictions across the USA.

Beginning in 2012, the Close to Home (C2H) initiative is one part of a broader set of reforms to the youth justice approach in New York City, which has included reducing the number of young people in secure detention, developing and expanding community-based supervision options, and successfully piloting small-scale local facilities in New York.

C2H seeks to maintain the protective factors for young people which contribute to reducing the risk of reoffending, namely “their families, their schools, and positive community activities.”

Operated by not-for-profit service providers, the initiative comprises a network of facilities that are either ‘non-secure’ or ‘limited-secure’, housing between 6-20 young people in each. Part of a step-up-step-down approach, young people can move between houses with greater or lesser restrictions, based on their individual needs at a given time.

The facilities themselves are primarily retrofitted houses (‘brownstones’), maintaining a home-like, destigamising atmosphere. The scope of retrofitting is small, allowing the managing department to open and close facilities depending on utilisation rates and current needs (Refer Section 5.2.2).

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Figure 11. Small-scale Facility in Amsterdam.
Source: Author

Figure 12. Outcomes: Local Facilities - The Netherlands

Figure 13. Non-secure C2H facility in New York City.

Figure 14. Outcomes: Close to Home - New York City
7. Implementation and recommendations

In order to evaluate the benefits of this model in the Victorian context and provide a working basis for broader implementation across the state, the government can develop and implement a demonstration study involving three pilot facilities.

Pilot facilities should be co-located with health, mental health and other youth service providers, making advantage of existing support systems.

As involvement with the justice system is geographically concentrated, siting small-scale facilities locally provides an opportunity to improve the services available to regional communities where the youth population suffers from sustained involvement with the justice system. As such, at least one pilot should be located in a regional city which can benefit from a localised response. Further pilot facilities might focus on the outer metropolitan areas, reflecting the localities of origin justice-involved young people. The Dutch pilot and evaluation program supports this approach (Refer Section 6).

In Victoria, specific cohorts for these pilots - currently lacking in appropriate responses - may include girls and young women, young people with a first or second offence, or young people who may be eligible for bail in a more structured and supportive setting.

The facilities can be operated by a locally-based service provider, with demonstrated experience in the delivery of community-based youth justice programs, and a clear understanding of the local needs. Young people can be referred to and utilise pre-existing community supports and health services. These aspects contribute to the opportunity for culturally appropriate response to the local area.

Ongoing evaluation and research of the model within the Victorian context is important to ensure continuing improvement, and the effectiveness of the approach.

7.1 Recommendations

Through the evidence gathered in this report, our immediate recommendations for the Victorian Youth Justice System at this moment are:

- Focus on early intervention and legislative change to reduce the number of young people entering the youth justice system and to reduce the number of beds necessary for youth custody.
- Institute systems to prevent the commissioning and building of any new large-scale youth detention facilities or the expansion of existing facilities, as there is no evidence for the efficacy of this model and they fail to reflect best-practice or current scientific evidence.
- Halt the construction of the Cherry Creek facility, as there is no evidence to support such a model. If the project is too far progressed to halt completely, reduce the operational occupancy of Cherry Creek to 70 beds and implement a facility design following the Diagrama model (Refer Appendix 1, and Armytage and Ogloff Part 2, Section 8.1.1), adapted for the Victorian context.
- Develop the model for small-scale local youth justice facilities in Victoria, for those young people who can be shown to have a real need for custodial intervention.
- Fund the development and implementation of a long-term demonstration project for small-scale local facilities, including three pilot facilities across rural and metropolitan locations, to substantiate the approach and provide a working basis for broader implementation across the state.
- Create a network of small-scale local facilities, replacing large-scale detention, to minimise and diversify Victoria’s approach to youth custody, allowing for tailored responses to individual risks, needs and strengths; creating a step-up-step-down approach which encourages young people to grow and provides integration with the community, before trial, under sentence & prior to release.
- Fund ongoing evaluation and academic research of the model within the context of Victoria, in partnership with multidisciplinary teams of experts, to drive further improvements to the custodial approach.

Figure 15. Principles for best-practice facility design.
8. Notes & references


92. Armytage & Ogloff (2017). Meeting needs and reducing offending: Youth justice review and strategy, Executive Summary p.27.


103. Sentencing Advisory Council. (2016). Reoffending by Children and Young People in Victoria...p.39 Figure 25.


147. Personal communication with the Ministry of Safety and Justice, the Netherlands. Mw. J.H. Lems, 11/10/18.


**Precedent studies: European Youth Justice facilities**

As Victoria renews its Youth Justice system, it is important to reflect on the experiences and knowledge of other jurisdictions to guide an informed response.

In order to examine how youth justice facilities in different jurisdictions relate to the key principles, and to study how these affect the young people (YP) and staff living and working within them, we have made a series of precedent studies focusing on organisations and facilities which are well-regarded for successfully implementing evidence-based and therapeutic approaches to youth custody.

Through a series of interviews, discussions, site-visits and analyses of environmental elements, we have studied three facilities operated by the Diagrama Foundation in Spain, the Bjorgvin Youth Unit in Bergen, Norway and the Kleinschalige Voorziening (Small-scale facility) in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

Currently, this study only includes European precedents and it should be understood that these lessons need to be carefully adapted to local contexts, based upon the knowledge and expertise of local communities and stakeholders.

All the facilities in this study provide secure environments without overly restrictive or punitive physical security measures. This is accomplished by having highly-trained and highly-valued staff members, provided with adequate resources to maintain strong relational security approaches. These aspects greatly affect the way these spaces are used, and in turn, these spatial-practices influence how facilities are conceived of as spaces. Establishing a positive environment for rehabilitation involves both human and physical aspects, interwoven inseparably. This study examines facilities where this has been accomplished successfully, and shows what a successful facility looks like as a space.

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**Kleinschalige Voorziening**  
(Small-scale Facility)  
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

**Diagrama Foundation**  
Carmona, Cordoba & Castilla la Mancha  
Spain

**Bjørgvin Youth Unit**  
Bergen, Norway

**Cohort:** Males, 12-23 y.o., first or second offence, pre-trial.  
**Diagrama Foundation**  
Cohort: Males & females, 14-18 y.o., all offence types, sentenced and pre-trial.  
**Bjørgvin Youth Unit**  
Cohort: Males & females, 15-18 y.o., high-risk/needs, very serious offences.

For the study we’ve considered how each precedent relates to each principle.

For **Small-scale**, we’ve noted the number of beds, per unit and total per facility; and the footprint area of the facility.

For **Local**, we’ve examined the location of the facility, relative to the city centre and urban boundary. As a proxy for urban connectivity, we’ve looked at public transport accessibility, route options and travel time to the central transport node. The structure of planning regulations differ between jurisdictions, but a general note on land-use planning is made for each facility.

For **Differentiated/Relational Security**, floor plans are analysed to discern and describe physical attributes which affect the spatial-practices carried out between staff members and YP.

For **Therapeutic Design**, a photographic survey notes particular environmental characteristics which are highlighted in scientific literature as affecting psychological wellbeing and recovery.

For more information: contact@localtime.com.au
Precedent 01:
Kleinschalige Voorziening (Small-Scale Facility)

The Amsterdam Small-Scale Facility gives a clear example of a design focused on reducing recidivism by prosocial protective factors, eg. maintaining school attendance. The facility is located in a residential neighbourhood, upstairs above a martial-arts school.

YP generally attend their normal school or work, traveling predominantly by public transport, as part of an individualised treatment plan. In the evenings and on weekends, YP attend work and recreational activities (such as sport), prepare meals and engage with staff, and are confined to their room during the night.

Staff are selected for their understanding of strength-based and relational security approaches. This model can provide a semi-open, out-of-home placement in a community-integrated and rehabilitative environment. This removes the negative impact of an institutional setting, and allows YP to build autonomy and responsibility with individually tailored security arrangements.

For more information: contact@localtime.com.au
SpACES WHICH REQUIRE SOME SEPARATION FROM THE DAILY ACTIVITIES OF YP ARE CONTAINED AS ROOMS WITH NORMAL DOMESTIC BOUNDARIES, I.E. TIMBER DOORS WITH LOCKS.

Both staff and YP use the same kitchen facilities, sharing meals on a daily basis. This helps provide a 'natural' space in which supportive relationships can be established throughout everyday activities.

Entry to the facility is through a normal front door, with an intercom and CCTV monitoring. YP and visitors are greeted by the house-master, in a welcoming manner. Security screening devices are stored descreetly out of sight, in an adjacent room, along with lockers for YP's personal belongings not permitted inside the facility.

These arrangements promote trusting relationships between staff and YP, and the building responsible autonomy in YP. The design follows an understanding that the primary approach to security is relational, with recourse to physical security as a last resort.
**Precedent 01: Kleinschalige Voorziening - Amsterdam Small-scale facility**

**Amsterdam, NDL**
Kleinschalige Voorziening

**Bedrooms**

- **Acoustic design:** ‘Non-90°’ angles
- **Control of natural light and ventilation:** Large, secure, operable windows & curtains
- **Home-like furniture:** Moveable furniture
- **Colour and textural variation:** Cool, varied palette

**Living space**
Staff and YP shared

- **Glare reduction:** Natural light from high angle
- **Control of natural light and ventilation:** Operable windows with curtains & blinds
- **Home-like furniture:** Moveable furniture
- **Colour and textural variation:** Cool, varied palette & natural textures including timber

**Precedent 01: Kleinschalige Voorziening - Amsterdam Small-scale facility**

**THERAPEUTIC DESIGN:**

**Amsterdam, NDL**
Kleinschalige Voorziening

**First-floor terrace**
View into park

**Facility siting**
View from street

- **Presence of nature:** Views to green spaces and water
- **Access to views while sitting:** Transparent balustrade extends view
- **Colour and textural variation:** Textured finishes in familiar domestic palette
- **Inclusive siting:** Destigmatising location within residential area
- **Residential scale:** Facility building matches neighbourhood scale

- **‘Normalised’ secure boundary:** Building is secured using domestic architectural forms
- **Residential material palette:** Materials relate to surrounding context

For more information: contact@localtime.com.au
Further photos:

Front facade, in relation to neighbouring properties.

Door to bedroom.

Upstairs corridor: material variation, natural light, timber & glass partitions.

Shared kitchen in living space.


Corner of living space, solar access.

For more information: contact@localtime.com.au
Precedent 02:

Diagrama Foundation

For this study, we looked at three youth justice facilities (i.e. Secure Schools) operated by the Diagrama Foundation in Spain. The Diagrama facilities demonstrate the importance of staff-YP relationships in the way that facilities develop as an environment. Strong relationships between staff and YP are key to Diagrama’s model.

YP move through 5 stages from ‘Induction’ to ‘Autonomy’ based on their ability to act responsibly within the facility, with living units specific to each stage. Becoming more autonomous, YP leave the facility to attend school and work. Some facilities are purpose-built, while others are retrofitted. Great care is taken in the building and maintenance of the facilities, carried out by the YP as part of vocational education and training.

Skilled staff build long-term careers in the facilities. A flat management structure (achievable because of the facility size) ensures that issues are resolved effectively and in line with the Diagrama model.

Diagrama provides an example of a design in someways similar to Victoria’s current approach, but operated with far greater success. Philosophy, staffing and culture play an important role in this.

Model operational: Since 1992
Operated by: Diagrama Foundation
Cohort: Males & females, 14-18 yo., all offences types, sentenced & pre-trial.
Regime type: 5 stages, between closed and semi-open; range of security levels

Diagrama, Spain: Sierra Morena facility, Cordoba

Distance from city centre: 3.9km
Travel time: Public transport to main transport node 11 min.
Walking distance to public transport: 125m
Land-use zoning around facility: Transport, industrial, commercial, road zones

Diagrama, Spain: Los Alcores facility, Carmona

Facility area: 15,600m²
Unit sizes: 6-12 beds
Total facility capacity: 69 beds

Diagrama Foundation: Carmona — Los Alcores facility

Unit sizes:
- 6-12 beds

For more information: contact@localtime.com.au

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The Diagrama model is founded upon the idea that for rehabilitation to occur, change must be encouraged within the custodial environment.

The design of Diagrama’s facilities are developed to promote this change, with variation in spatial character according to the degree of autonomy that a YP is seen to be capable of at the time.

Privileges and less-restrictive access to certain defined spaces are associated with the most autonomous unit. This unit is designed to mimic a normal student share-house as much as possible in its layout, including access to and provision of laundry and kitchen facilities.

The first stage of the Diagrama model occurs in the Induction unit, where YP’s needs are assessed. These units are more rigorously laid-out, with a focus on control and sight-lines. Furniture is still moveable and home-like, and spaces are still personalised with belongings and pictures, but living spaces have fewer leisure items such as TV’s, games, musical instruments, animals etc.
**Precedent 02: Diagrama Foundation, Spain**

**Diagrama, Spain:**
Los Alcores

**Main courtyard**

**Facility acoustic design:**
Foliage absorbs sound, sounds of animals

**Destigamatising architectural form:**
Reflects domestic architecture of context

**Variation in finishes:**
Varied colour palette & natural textures

**Variation in light and shadow:**
Dappled light reduces glare

**‘Soft’ division of spaces:**
Green spaces & access to nature

**Gardens to perimeter**

**Diagrama, Spain:**
Sierra Morena

THERAPEUTIC DESIGN:

For more information: contact@localtime.com.au
Variation in finishes:
- Varied colour palette & textures

Home-like spaces:
- Destigmatising, familiar domestic spaces

Control of natural light and ventilation:
- Operable windows with curtains & blinds

Destigmatising decoration:
- Personalising space, home-like decoration

Acoustic design:
- Soft surfaces to absorb sound

Home-like furniture:
- Moveable furniture

Variation in finishes:
- Varied textures & colour palette

Diagrama, Spain:
Los Alcores
Unit living room

Diagrama, Spain:
Los Alcores
Unit kitchen & dining

Precedent 02: Diagrama Foundation, Spain

For more information: contact@localtime.com.au

Precedent 02: Diagrama Foundation, Spain

Further photos: Interior spaces

Domestic kitchen in the Autonomy unit. Cooking and cleaning by YP.

Shower room.

Furniture often built by YP in timber or metal workshop as part of vocational training.

View of double room.

Living space in autonomy unit.

YP practice domestic responsibilities.
Precedent 02: Diagrama Foundation, Spain

Further photos: Exterior spaces

Gardens are built and maintained by YP, building a sense of ownership as well as a skill set.

Gardens within perimeter walls keep animals, like peacocks.

YP tend to farm animals, learn agriculture.

A large variety of sport facilities are provided.

Propagation and crop care.
Precedent 03:

Bjørgvin Youth Unit

Bergen, Norway

The Bjørgvin Youth Unit is a high-security unit for young people who have high-risk/needs, who have committed very serious crimes. The facility is designed to provide a space for very focused and individualised treatments, based upon restorative justice methods, and the RNR and GLM models.

Very few YP are incarcerated in Norway. This unit is one of only two 4-bed youth facilities in the country. It is purpose-built and designed with extensive research into the impacts of closed-environments upon YP. The facility is located next-door to an adult prison, with care taken that the YP’s living spaces do not view the prison, but rather face towards the open.

Security is primarily relational, with staff highly trained in building and maintaining positive relationships with YP. By law, staffing is maintained at a ratio of 50-50 social-workers and prison-officers, with a two-year intensive training course a mandatory minimum. As in Amsterdam and Spain, staff wear casual clothes to reduce the appearance of hierarchy. A large amount of office space for specialists providing care is provided upstairs, along with an apartment for a YP’s family to stay in during visits.

Opened: 2014
Operated by:
Norwegian Dir. for Correctional Services; Norwegian Dir. for Children, Youth and Family Affairs
Cohort: Males & females, 15-18 yo., high-risk, high-needs
Regime type: Closed, high-security

Bergen — Bjørgvin Youth Unit

Total facility capacity:
4 beds

Facility area:
4,100m²

Single unit:
4 beds

LOCALITY:

Bergen, Norway:
Bjørgvin Youth Unit

Travel time: Public transport
55-65 min.

Walking distance to public transport:
1200m

Land-use zoning around facility:
‘Other construction area’ - at a distance from residential areas

For more information: contact@localtime.com.au

The unit has been cleverly arranged to provide a wide variety of ‘softly’ defined spaces, alcoves, and areas for meeting, in between the harder boundaries of doors, which are generally left open, but offer greater flexibility for spatial arrangements to staff during work.

Bedrooms are organised within concentric spaces, aligned offset to an axis, centered around a shared, home-like living space. This provides staff a wide range of both subtly and clearly defined spaces with different degrees of intimacy toward the young person’s private space. This flexibility and differentiation is an asset when looking to build relationships with complex young people.

All bedrooms have large, south-facing windows to gain sunlight, looking across the unit’s yard to the forested hills.

Security measures are provided to be used as a support for building relationships. CCTV monitoring is used in common areas, with decibel metres used in private spaces as a non-intrusive surveillance method. Doors to the common spaces are generally left open, but are present to provide flexibility for staff while working with YP.
**Presence of nature:**
Plants give textural variation, light & sound diffusion

**Variation in finishes:**
Varied textures & colour palette

**Building orientation:**
Windows and living spaces oriented to sunlight

**Acoustic design:**
Soft surfaces to absorb sound

**Access and control of natural light:**
Large windows with curtains & blinds

**Acoustic design:**
Soft surfaces to absorb sound

**Moveable furniture:**
Home-like furniture

**Variation in finishes:**
Graphic finishes to walls

**Shared sitting area**

**Bergen, Norway:**
Bjørgvin Youth Unit

Shared living room

Home-like spaces are destigmatising, but also provide a space in which daily domestic routines can be practiced.

Institutional settings, on the other hand, normalise institutional domesticity, and a familiarity with and dependence upon the institution.

A key principle of the NorwegianCorrectional Service is ‘Normality’; that life inside will resemble life outside as much as possible.

A ‘normal’ environment is taken as the starting point for every person in custody, with any deviation from this requiring argumentation.

This principle is consistently visible in the Norwegian approach to youth justice facility design.
Precedent 03: Bjørgvin Youth Unit - Bergen, Norway

Destigmatising architectural forms:
Reflected domestic architecture of context

Variation in landscape:
Ground slope within yard

Variation in finishes:
Varied colour palette & natural textures

Presence of nature:
Views and access to green spaces

Access to outside:
Protected area for outside access in bad weather

Variation in ground finishes:
Varied colour palette & natural textures

Bergen, Norway:
Bjørgvin Youth Unit

Outdoor yard

Patio to living space
**Precedent 03: Bjørgvin Youth Unit - Bergen, Norway**

Further photos:

- **Kitchen in communal space, used by YP and staff together preparing meals.**
- **Bedroom.**
- **Outdoor yard is designed to provide for specific activities and unspecified general use.**
- **Privacy screen growing at perimeter fence.**
- **Architectural form reflects common domestic buildings.**
- **Nooks are provided as activity spaces.**