AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

PERFORMANCE AUDIT

Managing and measuring success

Department of Juvenile Justice

The Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
SYDNEY NSW 2000

The Legislative Council
Parliament House
SYDNEY NSW 2000

In accordance with section 38E of the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*, I present a report titled **Managing and measuring success: Department of Juvenile Justice.**

R J Sendt
Auditor-General

Sydney
September 2005

Contents

Foreword

Criminal or anti-social juvenile behaviour affects us all. Some of us may be victims of juvenile crime, some may be apprehensive about their personal safety, while others may know of young people who have been in trouble with the law. And, as taxpayers, all of us contribute to the costs of juvenile justice.

Currently about one in every 200 young people in NSW is convicted of a crime each year. The Department of Juvenile Justice works with these young offenders to help them fit back into society and lead a life free of crime.

This is not an easy task. Young offenders are often difficult to help. Many come from disadvantaged backgrounds and may have had poor parental supervision. They may have achieved little at school, have poor work prospects and psychological problems, and be part of an anti-social peer group.

While the Department of Juvenile Justice has prime responsibility, agencies in the justice and welfare systems need to work closely together to tackle these complex and diverse issues. They ultimately desire the same result for young offenders – progression to a well-adjusted, crime-free adulthood.

The report highlights the challenges facing all those who work with young offenders - youth workers, police officers, magistrates, health workers and teachers. Achieving the best possible outcome for these young people will help bring about safer and more harmonious communities for us all.

This is the first of two audits in our current performance audit program that deals with young offenders. We examined how the Department of Juvenile Justice measures performance, and whether staff have adequate information to make sound planning decisions and recommend appropriate interventions for young offenders.

Our next audit, starting later in 2005, will review whether relevant government agencies effectively coordinate the management of young offenders.

Bob Sendt
Auditor-General

September 2005

Executive summary

Executive summary

Currently in NSW about one in every 200 young people between the ages of 10 and 17 are convicted of a crime each year.

The Department of Juvenile Justice works with these young offenders to help them lead a life free of crime. It aims to support them so that the next time an opportunity to commit an offence arises, they will recognise it, manage their impulses, and say "no".

These are some of the most disadvantaged and troublesome young people in society. It is no easy task to address what may have been years of dysfunction and neglect, and a multi-agency response is usually required. For the Department to impact positively on their lives it must know which activities successfully reduce reoffending. It must also have sufficient information to plan how it will deliver services and manage young offenders.

This audit examines how the Department of Juvenile Justice measures its success, and whether decision makers and managers have adequate information to make sound planning decisions and recommend appropriate interventions for young offenders.

Audit opinion

The Department's overall purpose is to reduce reoffending. This is a challenging role. Many factors are involved, often outside the Department's control. In recent years it has made significant changes to support its work with young offenders. These include improvements to its financial, human resource and IT systems, and changes in the structure and staffing of detention centres.

We found that the Department has sufficient information to manage offenders and plan effectively in the short to medium term. It has access to data on young offenders from its client database. It also identifies outside factors that affect its activities, and researches the latest thinking on what works in reducing reoffending.

However we are unable to determine how well the Department meets its long-term goals. We do not know whether it reduces reoffending and rehabilitates young offenders. It has limited performance information on the effectiveness of its activities and programs. This is partly due to limitations with its client information system which prevent it extracting quality performance data.

We also found that access to information from other agencies was not always timely and some data was unavailable. For example, the Department cannot access court data on young offenders who reoffend in the adult justice system.

Determining the best way to work with young offenders is a critical part of casework. Yet we found that the quality of case plans varied considerably. It was sometimes difficult to determine whether interventions addressed a young offender's needs or risk of reoffending. And staff do not formally check how well interventions have worked once young offenders have left their care. This means there is less certainty that interventions will reduce reoffending.

The Department recognises the challenges that lie ahead and has projects underway to address many of these issues.

Proposed IT upgrades and training programs on best practice from other jurisdictions may improve the quality of case plans for young offenders. The Department has recently developed results based performance measures and has a project underway to improve performance data. This last project is important. The Department must be able to check the effectiveness of its activities so that it can develop strategies based on what works in NSW.

Summary of recommendations

We recommend that the Department of Juvenile Justice:

Measuring performance

- incorporate results based performance measures and targets into its corporate plan (page 16)

- follow-up the reoffending rates of young offenders following release from the Department including those who enter the adult justice system (page 17)

- consider measuring other factors which aid rehabilitation such as education or employment (page 17)

- establish a formal process for analysing performance information to monitor the effectiveness of its activities (page 18)

- publicly report information on its performance including achievements against performance targets and the outcomes of programs and activities (page 18)

Access to information

- design its data systems to extract quality performance data to measure the effectiveness of its activities (page 21)

- reduce barriers to data exchange with other agencies to improve access to information (page 24)

- provide ongoing training and networking opportunities for conference convenors (page 26)

Appropriate interventions

- review the reoffending risk assessment tool and provide further staff training on its use (page 29)

- make sure policies on to how intervene with young offenders are consistent to ensure better targeting of staff resources (page 29)

- make sure that case plan interventions better match offenders' needs and risks of reoffending (page 31)

- assess the effectiveness of casework and youth justice conferencing to find out what works in NSW (page 33).

Audit findings

Chapter 1

Role and function

The Department of Juvenile Justice works with young people who admit to or have been found guilty of an offence committed between the ages of 10 and 17. Its vision is to break the juvenile crime cycle; that is to reduce reoffending by young offenders.

To achieve this the Department has two key roles:

- supervising young offenders in custody or the community
- managing youth justice conferencing, which aims to divert young offenders from the court system.

The prime focus of the Department's supervision of young offenders is to address factors that contribute to their offending behaviour. It also helps them to develop their education and life skills so they can appropriately interact with society. To meet these responsibilities the Department has to work closely with other justice and human service agencies and community organisations.

Chapter 2

Measuring performance

The department has systems in place to monitor and report on its activities, however there is limited information on the effectiveness of its operations in meeting its corporate objectives. Therefore we are unable to assess the Department's performance in this regard. We also found no evidence that the Department formally analyses activity data at the corporate level, although regional offices analyse this as part of their twice-yearly review.

The department is currently redefining its business information needs and developing results-based performance measures, which may address these issues in future.

Without good performance information, there is a risk that the department may not deliver services in the most efficient and effective way, and therefore is less likely to reduce reoffending.

Chapter 3

Access to information

The Department has sufficient information to manage young offenders on a daily or short-term basis. It has access to data on young offenders from its client database. It also identifies outside factors that affect its activities, and researches the latest thinking on what works in reducing reoffending.

However we found that although it can obtain most of the information it needs from other agencies, access is not always timely and some data was unavailable. For example it cannot get court data on young offenders who enter the adult justice system. Also the Department is unable to obtain good performance data from its client database to determine the overall effectiveness of its activities.

We also found that more could be done to provide on-going training, mentoring, and networking opportunities for conference convenors.

So although the Department can plan effectively in the short-medium term, it needs good performance data on its activities to develop a strategic approach based on what works in NSW.

Chapter 4

Appropriate interventions

The Department has systems in place to help staff determine interventions for young offenders. However the quality of case plans varied and we found it difficult to determine whether interventions addressed offenders' needs and risk of reoffending. Also, there is no formal system in place to measure and record the success of individual interventions for young offenders.

The Department's current focus on case management, and its recent IT upgrades may address some of these issues.

There is limited assurance that risks are being adequately addressed, and we don't know whether individual interventions are successful. Therefore there is a risk that interventions may not be the most effective in reducing reoffending.

Response from the Department of Juvenile Justice

Thank you for providing the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) with the final draft report of the performance audit Department of Juvenile Justice: Managing and Measuring Success, and for the opportunity to comment on its findings.

First, I would like to thank the Audit Office for providing a valuable external perspective on the way the Department defines and uses information for managing, planning and reporting.

I am pleased to note that the report acknowledges positive aspects that the Department already has in place in relation to information use and management. I refer in particular to statements that the Department's information systems are sufficient to manage young offenders and plan services effectively in the short to medium term.

I note further that the report recognises the efforts of the Department in developing organisational performance measures as part of the government's Results and Services budgetary processes. As the report also acknowledges, the Department is a major contributor to the development of nationally comparable juvenile justice information.

I note the Audit Office's perspective on the need for further work in the collection and use of appropriate information for longer-term strategic planning, measurement of performance and outcomes for young offenders and the community, and the analysis of the effectiveness of interventions with young people. These issues are currently being addressed and the department is further developing better performance information on the effectiveness of its activities and programs. The Performance Audit Report provides valuable advice in relation to this.

In relation to the issue of data exchange with other key agencies, the Department has already identified barriers to data exchange and is working with other agencies on this issue. Through its participation in the Criminal Justice System Chief Executive Officers Forum, the Department is working towards Courtlink, which will provide all appropriate agencies with access to data identifying court outcomes for young people.

The Department recognises that data on reoffending by young people, once they reach the age of 18, is integral to any analysis of recidivism of DJJ clients. This analysis requires collaboration with other agencies such as the Attorney General's Department, NSW Police and the Department of Corrective Services. The Department has strong working relationships with both agencies and a range of mechanisms in place for sharing information.

DJJ is undertaking further collaboration with these agencies and organisations such as the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR), to develop and access data that may assist the Department in this type of analysis. An agreed consistent national approach on the definition and measurement of recidivism would also be advantageous. I understand that the Australian Bureau of Statistics recently commenced work in this area.

It needs to be recognised that DJJ is a part of a wider criminal justice system and young people are referred to us through processes and agencies outside the Department's control and influence. In addition, the causes of young people's reoffending are highly complex and involve a multitude of factors, many of which are also outside the Department's control.

In this context, the report could have been enhanced by the broader understanding that DJJ's legislative purpose is to provide a range of community-based and custodial services to mandated juvenile offenders. In relation to possible measures of organisational performance, outcomes in relation to housing, education and employment, numeracy and literacy are outside the Department's scope and cannot be used as benchmarks for its success.

Finally, I would like to thank the audit team for the consultative and cooperative approach in which they undertook the review. The performance audit will assist the Department in the further development of its information management framework.

(signed)

Dr Elizabeth Coombs
Acting Director General

Dated: 30 August 2005

1. What is success in juvenile justice?

What is the Department of Juvenile Justice?

The Department of Juvenile Justice works with young people who admit to or have been found guilty of an offence committed between the ages of 10 and 17. Along with the police and children's courts, the department is one of three agencies in the juvenile justice system.

The department was part of the Department of Community Services until 1991, when it became a stand-alone agency. This is unique in Australia where the juvenile justice role is generally found within human service or justice agencies.

The vision of the department is to break the juvenile crime cycle; that is to minimise reoffending by young offenders.

To achieve this the department has two key roles:
▪ managing youth justice conferencing, which aims to divert young offenders from the court system
▪ supervising young offenders when ordered by the court. Supervision may be in:
  - the community (eg bond, suspended sentence)
  - a detention centre, if the person has been sentenced to a custodial order.

As shown below, most young people on supervised orders are managed in the community.

Exhibit 1: Departmental activities 2003-04

Custodial Orders 569 12%

Youth Justice Conferencing 1,232 27%

Community Supervision Orders 2,776 61%
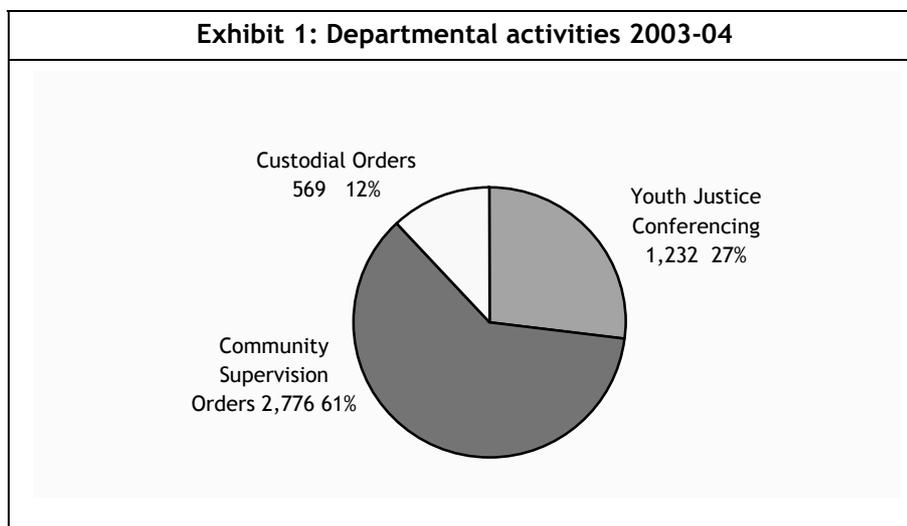
Source: DJJ Results and Services Plan 2005-06

The department also takes care of young people who have been remanded in custody. This means the court has ordered them to be looked after in a detention centre until their matter has been finalised. In 2003-04 there were over 3,200 remand admissions to detention centres.

Young offenders are not always easy to help. Many come from disadvantaged backgrounds characterised by poor parental supervision, difficulties in school and employment, negative peer associations, poor social skills, homelessness and neglect.

Most young offenders in the department's care are male. There is also a significant over-representation of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders (ATSI), compared to the general population.

Exhibit 2: Typical characteristics of young offenders			
	Community	Detention	Conferencing
Ave entry age	17	17	15 and over
% Male	86	87	81
% ATSI	31	44	28

Source: DJJ 2003-04 Annual Report

A major focus of the department's interventions with young offenders is to address factors that contribute to their offending behaviour. It wants them to understand and control matters such as their abuse of drugs and alcohol, violent behaviour, or the negative influence of their peers.

It also helps them to develop their education and life skills so they can appropriately interact with society. So that next time an opportunity to commit an offence arises, they will recognise it, manage their impulses, and say "no".

To meet these responsibilities the department has to work closely with other justice and human service agencies including the police, courts, correctives service, community services, health and education. The department also uses services provided by non-government organisations, and funds many community initiatives and programs.

Community safety is also a priority for the department and is factored into all decisions on young offenders.

The department has made significant changes in a number of areas over the last few years. These include improvements to financial, human resource and IT systems, and changes in the structure and staffing of detention centres. Further changes are flagged for staff working with young offenders in community.

What helps to reduce juvenile offending?

Research demonstrates that reoffending by young offenders is reduced if:
- offenders can be diverted from the court system
- offenders who are found guilty of an offence are subjected to the minimum intervention in the community proportionate with their crime
- offenders are only placed in detention when they have committed a serious offence or have a history of failing to respond to less intensive forms of intervention.

This is reflected in government policy in recent years. In 1997 the government introduced the *Young Offenders Act*. This aims to divert young offenders from the courts through the use of warnings, cautions or youth justice conferencing for offences covered by the Act.

Departmental staff also make it a priority to move suitable offenders out of detention centres where possible. For example, by finding accommodation for young offenders remanded in custody.

Exhibit 3: Orana Juvenile Justice Centre

The department focuses on getting appropriate young offenders, particularly those on remand, out of detention centres.
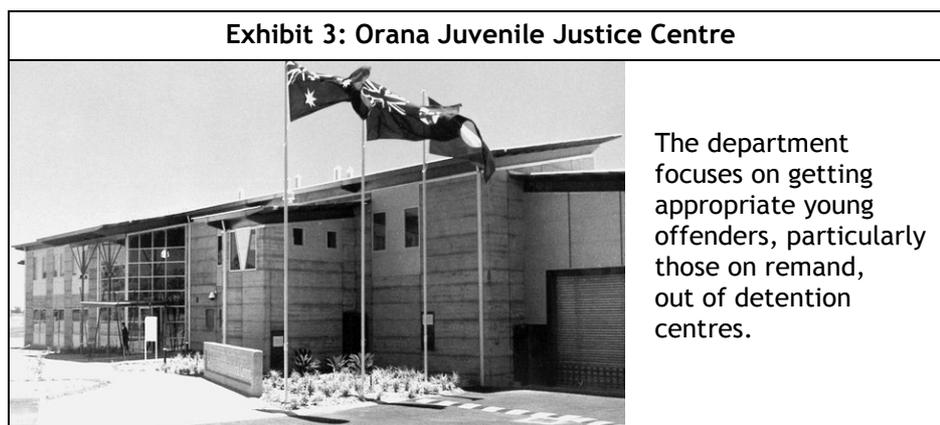
Source: DJJ film library

The graph below shows the reduction of young offenders in detention over the past six years. The average daily numbers of detainees has fallen from almost 400 in 1998-99 to about 300 in 2003-04.

Exhibit 4: Average daily detention centre population
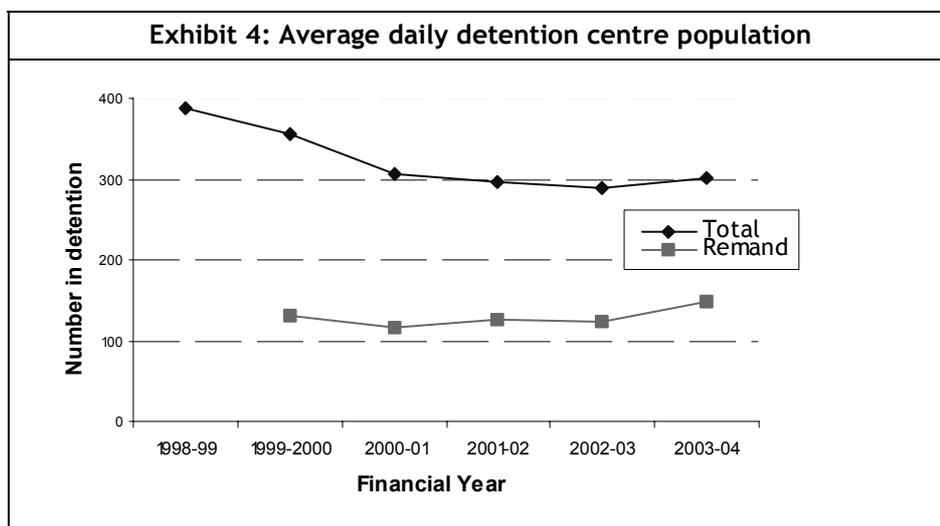
Source: Department of Juvenile Justice Annual Reports 1999-2000 to 2003-04

The department advises that overall detainee numbers has recently increased in 2004-05. In addition, the proportion of young offenders supervised in detention centres rather than the community, is higher in NSW than any other state.

What is the focus of the audit?

The audit examined how the department measures its success, and whether decision makers and managers have adequate information to make sound planning decisions and recommend appropriate interventions for young offenders.

This audit did not examine:
- how well the department delivers custodial and community sentences
- the effectiveness of diversion strategies under the *Young Offenders Act*
- the appropriateness of decisions made by magistrates.

Further information on the lines of enquiry, scope, criteria and audit approach can be found in Appendix 1 to this report.

2. How does the department measure success?

At a glance

The key question we wanted to answer was:

To what extent does the Department of Juvenile Justice have suitable systems in place to monitor, review and report the efficiency and effectiveness of its programs, and is performance improving?

Our assessment:

The department has systems in place to monitor and report on its activities, however there is limited information on the effectiveness of its operations in meeting its corporate objectives. Therefore we are unable to assess the department's performance in this regard. We also found no evidence that the department formally analyses activity data at the corporate level, although regional offices analyse this as part of their twice-yearly review.

The department is currently redefining its business information needs and developing results-based performance measures which may address these issues in future.

Possible impact if these issues are not addressed:

Without good performance information, there is a risk that the department may not deliver services in the most efficient and effective way, and therefore is less likely to reduce reoffending.

The department's vision is to break the juvenile crime cycle. To check that it successfully meets this goal, we wanted to find out whether it has established performance measures and set realistic goals or targets. We also checked whether it analyses performance information to identify areas that need improving.

Is the department achieving its goals?

No data on the department's success

We are unable to determine whether the department helps to reduce reoffending and rehabilitates young offenders. We found that there was limited performance information on the effectiveness of its programs and activities. This is partly due to limitations with the department's client information system which prevent it from extracting quality performance data.

The department is currently redefining its business information needs to help it obtain better performance data from its IT systems. This is discussed further in chapter 3.

The Productivity Commission benchmarks government services Australia-wide. The department is able to use this data to compare some aspects of its operations with other states, mainly on detention centres. For example:

- proportion of young offenders supervised in the community and in detention centres
- proportion of detainees that are male and female
- average daily number and rates of young offenders in detention centres
- average daily number and rates of indigenous offenders in detention centres.

However neither the Productivity Commission, nor most other states report on reoffending. Therefore we could not compare the department's performance with other jurisdictions.

Are there performance measures and targets in place?

Key performance measures are in place

Although the department is unable to assess its overall performance at this stage, it has recently established key performance indicators for 2005-06 that align with its corporate objectives. They measure both the results the department wants to achieve and how busy or active it is.

They were developed as part of the Results and Services Plan (RSP) which NSW Treasury requires of all budget-dependent government agencies. The department has also started to measure reoffending.

Exhibit 5: Key performance measures for 2005-06	
Reduced reoffending	▪ % of juveniles under the department's supervision returning to court within 12 months of their last court appearance (excludes conferencing)
Community confidence in managing offenders	▪ number of deaths in custody ▪ % of community orders breached ▪ escapes from secure perimeter / other ▪ number of major incidents
Young offenders complete their legal obligations	▪ % of community orders completed ▪ % of conferencing outcomes plans completed
Participation in conferencing	▪ % conferencing referrals resulting in a conference ▪ % of conferences with at least the victim, police, or the young offenders family and support persons
Interventions informed by risk assessment	▪ % eligible juveniles receiving a reoffending risk assessment on entry
Young offenders receive appropriate services	▪ % of young people entering the department's care via: - conferencing - community supervision - custodial sentence.

Source: 2005-06 Results and Services Plan

There are as yet no performance measures or targets in the department's corporate plan.

Including measures and targets in corporate planning documents is important because it shows how strategies align with an agency's goals and ensures that all departmental plans work toward a common purpose. The department advises that it will do this as part of its next planning process, after it has aligned the RSP and corporate plan.

Recommendation   That the department incorporate results based performance measures and targets into its corporate plan, and make sure that all planning documents align with its corporate goals.

How do other juvenile justice agencies measure success?

Juvenile justice agencies around the world measure success in a number of ways. Some report on reoffending as their key measure, others look at factors which may aid rehabilitation such as education, employment and health.

While there may be some structural differences between these agencies and the department, all work with young offenders in the community or custody, and have the same overall role and objective.

Other agencies measure reoffending and rehabilitation

Exhibit 6: How do other agencies measure success?	
Reoffending	▪ Reoffending rates for specified groups of offenders after release from custodial or community sentences ▪ Follow-up periods were 12 months, 18 months, 2 or 3 years ▪ Offender groups included offence, gender, ethnicity, sentence or penalty, age at first commitment, county or region
Education and employment	▪ Rate of young offenders in full-time education, training or employment at the end of a sentence ▪ Rate of young offenders in an appropriate school placement ▪ Rate of young offenders who dropped out of school following release from a residential program
Numeracy and literacy	▪ Rate of young persons improving by one skill level in literacy and numeracy tests ▪ Rates of youths in custody over six months whose reading and maths scores increased between admission and discharge
Housing	▪ Young people subject to community interventions or being released from custody have satisfactory accommodation
Health	▪ Rate of positive drugs screening tests ▪ Rate of youths in custody whose physical fitness assessments increased between admission and discharge
Risk assessment	▪ Rate of youths in custody who receive a higher score on their social skills assessment on release
Client satisfaction	▪ Rate of victim and parental satisfaction

Source: Audit Office research of other jurisdictions (see appendix 1)

Some agencies set targets that were measured as a percentage reduction from a base year, while others set an explicit target they wished to meet.

Agency 1:   Five per cent reduction in reoffending compared with the 2000 baseline.

Agency 2:   Less than 25 per cent of youths released from residential programs will be reconvicted within one year.

The department's RSP does not yet include rehabilitation measures. As caseworkers actively try and address these very issues, it is important that the department check that their work is delivering the desired results. In addition, the reoffending rate in the RSP is measured from the young person's last court appearance, not when they leave the department. The department should consider these other ways of measuring success to bring it in line with international practice. See chapter 4 for more on success measures.

Clearly state desired outcomes and how this is to be measured

The department should now clearly articulate what it would like to achieve in terms of:
- desired outcomes
- how this will be measured
- the current situation or where it is now
- where it wants to go in future.

At present the department cannot track young offenders into the adult justice system. It can only check whether young offenders reappear before a children's magistrate. As the most common entry age of offenders supervised by the department is 17, it is probable that any reoffending will occur after they turn 18. Therefore to judge the success of its rehabilitation strategies, the department needs to find out whether they later enter the adult system.

The Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) has recently established a reoffending database to track young offenders through the criminal justice system. This could be one means of obtaining data on reoffending.

Recommendation

That the department:
- follow-up reoffending rates of young offenders following release from the department, including those who later enter the adult justice system
- consider measuring other factors which aid rehabilitation such as employment or education.

Is performance information monitored and analysed?

Regular monitoring of activity

The department regularly monitors its activities through a number of processes including:
- corporate planning reviews
- executive reporting
- regional executive meetings
- monthly and daily activity reports monitored by regional staff
- legislative and quality assurance reviews of detention centres
- monitoring budget performance.

Limited analysis of activity data at corporate level	However we found no evidence that the department formally analyses activity data at the corporate level. For example, the operational report to the executive contained many statistics, but no analysis of what the figures meant.
Data analysed by regions and management services	Regional offices analyse activity data as part of their twice-yearly review, although most senior staff reported there was limited data review for strategic purposes. This is important for making resourcing decisions. Management Services staff also analyse HR, property and financial data.
	The department does not analyse information on results, as this data is not yet available. We believe that a formal process for analysing performance information is needed to ensure that activities are working effectively. This includes information on activity and results.
Benchmarking projects are underway	The department cannot yet benchmark its overall performance with other states or jurisdictions. This is largely due to problems with data availability and definitions. However it has been taking part in a benchmarking project being overseen by the Australasian Juvenile Justice Administrators. The project team has developed a minimum data set with common classifications and descriptors. This will improve comparability and make sure the same activities and processes are measured. The department advises that a draft report presenting this data will be released later this year.
	The department also provides data to other agencies such as the Productivity Commission, which benchmark government services Australia-wide.
Recommendation	That the department establish a formal process for analysing performance information, including benchmarking data, to monitor the effectiveness of its activities in meeting its corporate goals.

Is performance information reported to the Minister and the public?

The department's executive team receives quarterly or six monthly reports on its key operational areas such as community and custodial supervision, and conferencing. The Director-General and Minister also receive incident reports, financial reports, and updates of corporate planning documents.

No reporting of achievements	However most reporting relates to activity rather than results. Similarly, there is limited public reporting on performance. The department does not publicly report its achievements in terms of its corporate objectives. Its annual report focuses on activities and projects rather than outcomes.
	Reporting on results is an important accountability mechanism which allows the public to judge an agency's achievements. The department advises that it will include performance information in public documents once it has revised its corporate plan.
Recommendation	That the department publicly report information on its performance including:
- key performance measures and achievements against targets   - the outcomes of programs and activities in terms of its corporate objectives.

3   Is there adequate information to make informed decisions?

At a glance

The key question we wanted to answer was:

To what extent do decision-makers and managers within the Department of Juvenile Justice have access to sufficient information to plan, set realistic goals and manage young offenders effectively?

Our assessment:

The department has sufficient information to manage young offenders on a daily or short-term basis. It has access to data on young offenders from its client database. It also identifies outside factors that affect its activities, and researches the latest thinking on what works in reducing reoffending.

However we found that although it can obtain most of the information it needs from other agencies, access is not always timely and some data was unavailable. For example it cannot get court data on young offenders who enter the adult justice system. Also the department is unable to obtain good performance data from its client database to determine the overall effectiveness of its activities.

We also found that more could be done to provide on-going training, mentoring, and networking opportunities for conference convenors.

Possible impact if these issues are not addressed:

So although the department can plan effectively in the short-medium term, it needs good performance data on its activities to develop a strategic approach based on what works in NSW.

Do data systems provide sufficient information to plan for and manage young offenders?

The department's key data system is the Client Information Data System (CIDS). We found that CIDS has good operational data and is adequate for planning and managing young offenders on a daily or short-term basis. However the department is unable to obtain performance data on the effectiveness of its activities, therefore it is inadequate for long term planning.

Good operational data

CIDS is the main repository for all data relating to each individual client. It is essentially a register of individual client records. It has text fields for departmental officers to record information about clients including casework.

Caseworkers, counsellors and supervisors have online access to reports on client activity and behaviour. This helps them to understand and manage offenders, and supervise casework.

Poor performance data

However as CIDS was designed as an operational tool, it is difficult to obtain performance data on results or the overall effectiveness of the department's activities. For example, definitions can vary and text fields are difficult to analyse.

It is possible to generate some management data, such as the number of clients in the community allocated to a caseworker, or the number of clients held in custody in each region.

However, it is not possible to readily look back into history with CIDS to determine past activity and generate trend data. Data extractions tend to be time consuming and tedious, and rely on above average knowledge of the system.

Consequently it is difficult to collect data to support long term planning and measure the effectiveness of activities and programs. This restricts planning to the short term, using information from recent activities, client numbers and costs.

An upgrade to the CIDS system, known as Client Information Management System (CIMS), is planned for release in the second half of 2005. The department advises that it will help address some of the immediate shortcomings with data extraction.

Although this development will improve access to information on its activities, it will not resolve the problems with extracting results-based performance data. To address this the department has started a Corporate Information Data project to define its business information needs and help it identify and capture adequate performance data.

Recommendation   That the department design its data systems to provide maximum flexibility to meet both operational and corporate needs so that it can extract quality performance data to measure the effectives of its activities.

Do staff identify and address external issues that affect performance?

We found that the department identifies external issues that affect performance and factors these into planning, at both statewide and local level.

External issues are identified state-wide   Two significant external issues affecting young offenders behaviour are health and accommodation. The department has undertaken several projects in an attempt to understand and respond to these issues.

Exhibit 7: State-wide issues affecting performance
Health Survey of Young People in Custody 2003
(joint project with Justice Health, which is part of NSW Health)
This reviewed the health of a sample of juveniles in detention. It identified significant health issues regarding drugs and alcohol, mental disorders, intellectual disability and general poor health. The department is developing a clinical service plan with Justice Health to address these issues.
Accommodation Support Review 2004
This identified the accommodation needs of the department's clients, and its role in supporting accommodation services, including resource needs. The department is now working with the Department of Housing to review accommodation services, and carrying out joint pilot projects to help young offenders find a place to live long term.

Source: DJJ Health Survey, accommodation review, staff interviews

The Strategic Policy and External Relations Unit is also responsible for maintaining external relations and contributions to whole-of-government initiatives.

Regions develop cross agency solutions

Regional staff also identified external issues that affected performance. Although they reported that initiatives tended to be responsive and driven by community concerns, many tried to address these issues in a cross-agency or whole-of-government approach.

Exhibit 8: Cross-agency case management

In Dubbo, an intensive case supervision program was established to provide a coordinated response to concerns about some local young people. It required agencies to share information affecting actual and potential juvenile justice clients.

The Human Services Group within the Western Regional Coordination Management Group initiated the program. They recognised that:

- many agencies had knowledge about the social issues affecting these young people and their families

- an appropriate response had to be directed at many levels within the family structures

- the best assistance could be achieved by sharing information to provide a coordinated approach.

The agencies involved included Community Services, Police, Education and Training, Housing and Juvenile Justice.

The program ran for an initial three-month period with participants meeting weekly to share information and to case manage the process. The group is now meeting fortnightly on an ongoing basis.

Source: Staff interviews and document review

Another example of multi-agency case management is the Orana pilot which the department initiated in late 2003. The pilot aimed to provide coordinated services for four young Aboriginal people from Orana detention centre with high needs.

The department also participates in the justice and human services cluster groups coordinated by the Premier's Department. These groups aim to improve cross-agency collaboration and address whole-of-government issues.

Do staff have access to relevant information from other agencies?

We found that although the department can obtain most of the information it needs from other agencies, access is not always timely and some data was unavailable. For example, data on adult court outcomes.

The department needs information from other agencies to check reoffending, and manage young offenders through casework. This includes background reports for magistrates, offender risk assessments, and case plans.

To check reoffending, staff need information on offence history which is held by the courts and police.

No e-interface with court or police data

Court data on young offenders is available from the Children's Court Information System (CCIS). However it must be manually collected from children's courts, which is time consuming and inefficient. Unlike Corrective Services, the department does not have access to court data via an electronic interface, including adult criminal court outcomes. This means it cannot track young offenders into the adult justice system.

The department has similar problems getting information from the police on cautions. There is no electronic interface, and staff working directly with young offenders must contact the police if this information is not on the police reports.

Some problems accessing information from human service agencies

In addition to offence history, staff working with young offenders need information on their contact with other government agencies such as:

- Department of Community Services (DoCS)
- Department of Education and Training
- Department of Housing
- Department of Health, especially community health centres.

For example, if staff suspect that a young offender is known to DoCS they will need to factor this into their casework.

All staff we spoke to advised that their main source of information was young offenders and their families. They also use their local networks to obtain information from other agencies, using a consent release form if necessary.

However some staff reported difficulties obtaining information from particular agencies, such as the Department of Community Services. Persistent chasing was sometimes required and led to delays. Staff should be reminded of the processes in place to exchange information such as memorandums of understanding, and interagency guidelines. And any ongoing problems should be discussed with their supervisor.

The Department of Human Services in Victoria is trying to address similar issues and is developing a system to improve information exchange across its divisions.

Exhibit 9: Improved data access

The Victorian Department of Human Services is responsible for looking after the public's health and well-being, particularly vulnerable groups and those most in need. Responsibilities include disability, health and aged care, housing, young people and juvenile justice.

It is piloting a new data system to improve staff access to information from the various divisions. It incorporates data on:

- juvenile justice
- disability
- mental health
- child protection.

Front-end data from these areas will be available to all staff, including juvenile justice officers working with young offenders.

Source: Interviews with DHS staff

The department has been trying to improve its processes for collecting data for some years, but with varied success. One project being led by the Attorney-General's Department is Court Link. It aims to facilitate electronic exchange of information between courts and justice agencies.

The department advises that privacy and confidentially concerns are potential barriers to data exchange. These must be worked through in a coordinated and strategic way so that the department achieves the best possible outcome for young offenders.

Data exchange is a whole of government issue

To manage offenders and monitor the success of its activities, it is crucial that the department has ready access to information from other agencies. This is a whole-of-government issue as all agencies in the juvenile justice and welfare system ultimately desire the same result: to successfully integrate young people back into society.

Recommendation

That the department continue to reduce barriers to data exchange with other agencies so that it can follow-up reoffending and provide a more efficient service with fewer delays.

Do staff have access to the latest information on what works?

We found that staff have access to the latest information on what works in helping young offenders reduce their risk of reoffending. This knowledge is important because research shows that some interventions achieve this while others have little or less effect. This body of knowledge is known as "what works".

The department is currently rolling out two "what works" programs, known by staff as "Trotter and Targets". Both programs are based on interstate or overseas research.

Staff are being trained in the latest thinking on work works

Exhibit 10: "What works" programs
The Effective Supervision of Offenders (Trotter)
"Trotter" is an approach to interventions that focuses on the "how". It promotes the use of pro-social modelling, which means staff should treat and interact with young offenders in the way that staff would want them to interact with others. It calls on staff to set a good example, to be positive role models. This program is the result of assistance provided by Dr Chris Trotter, an Associate Professor at Monash University.
Targets for Effective Change (Targets)
"Targets" is an approach to intervention that focuses on the "what", developed by Professor James McGuire of Liverpool University, England. It provides examples of interventions with young offenders to address specific concerns, and comes with implementation instructions for staff using the tool, and worksheets for the young offender. There are modules on risk areas such as behaviour, accommodation, employment, relationships, violence, and substance abuse.

Source: DJJ Annual report, 'targets' course notes and staff interviews

The department's Programs Committee introduced both programs. This group of senior departmental staff selects and approves evidence-based "what works" programs to assist young offenders under supervision. An example of a locally produced program is "Our Journey to Respect", which aims to address violence in male indigenous offenders.

We do not yet know what works in NSW

The department does not yet know whether the "what works" programs are effective in New South Wales. There is no formal process in place to assess internal programs or the effectiveness of interventions young people experience while under its care. This is discussed further in chapter 4.

The department has commissioned various research projects in recent years including studies on risk assessment, and the health of young offenders. However, there is no research strategy focused on its core business. The department is developing a new research agenda to address this. It will be targeted approach, aimed at reviewing priority areas providing direct benefit to the department.

The department also reviews the effectiveness of some externally funded programs for young offenders, for example post release support, bail and accommodation support.

Do conferencing staff have adequate information to organise conferences and prepare outcome plans?

Youth justice conferencing is a restorative justice process designed to divert young offenders from the courts and detention centres. It involves both young offenders and victims.

The department engages convenors to organise and facilitate conferences, and prepare outcome plans. Conference administrators oversee the process and are responsible for reviewing outcome plans and monitoring their implementation.

Exhibit 11: Youth justice conferencing
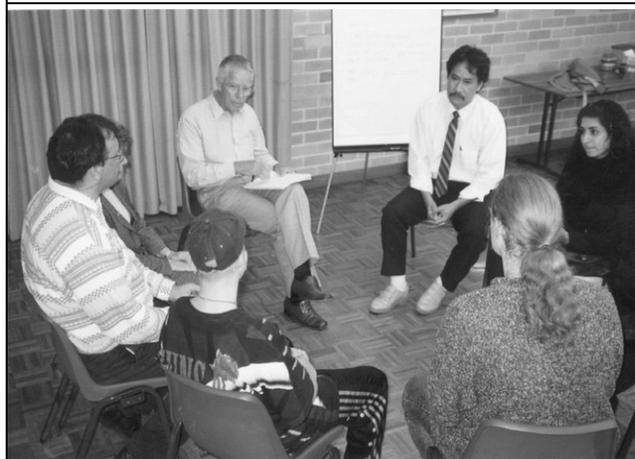
Outcomes plans are agreed by conference participants and contain activities or programs young offenders must carry out.

Source: DJJ film library

Different views on matters allowed in outcome plans

Although there is guidance material on conferencing and outcome plans, we found that convenors and administrators had different views about the type of activities or programs which may be included.

Staff we spoke to agreed that activities in outcome plans must relate to the offence, and address the needs of both the victim and young person. However the extent that programs and activities with a rehabilitation element should be included was unclear. An example of this is shown below.

Exhibit 12: Activities in outcome plans

Is it appropriate to include an anger management program in an outcomes plan?

View 1   Yes. Would include this program if it related to the offence.

View 2   Yes, but only in part. Would get the young person to agree to an initial appointment to discuss entry into a program, but would not expect the young person to commit to the whole program. Activities must be realistic and not beyond their capability.

View 3   No. Would not include a program such as anger management on an outcomes plan as it is not the convenor's role to identify and offer programs. However the convenor might include this on the recommendation or referral sheet attached to the outcome plan which is not enforceable.

Source: Staff interviews

The law governing conferences allows participants flexibility in determining items for outcomes plans, and these approaches may all be appropriate in certain circumstances. However, the perceived differences in restrictions means that the best approach may not always be taken.

Convenors and administrators advised that they regularly discuss conference planning and options for outcome plans. Some administrators also prepared bimonthly or quarterly newsletters for convenors.

Limited ongoing training and networking for convenors

Yet despite these efforts to keep convenors informed, some reported that they felt isolated and wished for opportunities to network with other convenors. This would help them to share information on conferencing and the latest thinking on outcome plans. Although convenors attend a training course before they are appointed, they advised that there was limited ongoing training and mentoring.

The department advises that conferencing offices in Sydney hold evening meetings for convenors, and state-wide refresher weekends for convenors will be now be held every two years. While this is encouraging, we believe more could be done to provide on-going training, mentoring, and networking opportunities for conference convenors.

Recommendation

That the department provide ongoing training and networking opportunities for convenors to improve information exchange and update convenors on the latest practices and approaches on conferencing.

4   Are interventions effective?

At a glance

The key question we wanted to answer was:

Does the Department of Juvenile Justice have suitable processes in place to help staff determine the most appropriate and effective course of action for young offenders?

Our assessment:

The department has systems in place to help staff determine interventions for young offenders, however the quality of case plans varied and we found it difficult to determine whether interventions addressed offenders' needs and risk of reoffending. Also, there is no formal system in place to measure and record the success of individual interventions for young offenders.

The department's current focus on case management, and the CIMS upgrade may address some of these issues.

Possible impact if these issues are not addressed:

There is limited assurance that risks are being adequately addressed, and we don't know whether individual interventions are successful. Therefore there is a risk that interventions may not be the most effective in reducing reoffending.

Determining the most appropriate and effective course of action for young offenders is a critical part of casework. Get this wrong and interventions will have less impact on reoffending.

Is there an intervention framework in place?

An intervention framework is in place

In September 2004 the department introduced an intervention framework which pulled together its various casework policies and guidelines. The framework states that interventions must match offenders' risk of reoffending and that targeting medium to high-risk offenders produces the best results.

In addition to positive role modelling which must occur throughout casework, the key elements of the framework include:

- reoffending risk assessment
- case plan with relevant interventions
- case review
- casework completion.

We found a number of limitations with the framework which may affect how staff prepare case plans. These related to:

- the Youth Level of Service Inventory (YLSI) risk assessment tool
- the Schedule of Standards for Community Supervision which specifies the minimum level of contact with the department.

Some limitations with the risk assessment

The YLSI risk assessment is the primary tool used to assess young offenders' risk of reoffending. We found some confusion among staff about whether it should be used as the sole basis for interventions, and whether it should be prepared by caseworkers in detention centres. Staff also reported that some categories were irrelevant or distorted the true risk level of a young offender.

Exhibit 13: Staff views on the YLSI
▪ It is not appropriate for indigenous young offenders
▪ The 'education' category is not relevant if the young offender has left school
▪ The 'family living' category is skewed if the young offender does not live with his parents or they have died, but he or she has supportive family elsewhere
▪ Caseworkers cannot include things they only suspect
▪ It is more accurate when completed later as caseworkers know more about a young offender
▪ Different caseworkers may come up with different risk levels for the same person

Source: Staff interviews

While there will always be a subjective element with assessment tools, it appears that staff need further training on its use. The department advises that it is reviewing the YLSI. It is important that it address the perceived problems including its suitability for indigenous offenders.

Recommendation

That the department review the YLSI risk assessment tool and provide further staff training on its use to ensure a more accurate risk assessment on which to base interventions.

Conflicting intervention policies

Staff reported that that the Schedule of Standards for Community Supervision conflicted with the intervention framework. The schedule outlines how often a young offender must meet a caseworker for each type of community order. Generally the upper end of the sentencing spectrum requires more frequent contact. Yet the intervention framework requires less intensive supervision of low risk offenders regardless of the sentence.

Exhibit 14: Conflicting polices
John Smith was assessed at a low risk of reoffending and requires less intensive intervention, as outlined in the intervention framework. However as the court gave the John a suspended sentence, he requires the maximum number of contacts; direct weekly contact for the first three weeks, and one direct contact per month thereafter.

Source: Staff interviews and document review

Recommendation

That the department align the Schedule of Standards for Community Supervision and the intervention framework to ensure more efficient and better targeting of staff resources.

Do staff have access to adequate information to develop case plans?

Adequate access to information

In general, staff have access to sufficient information to help them develop case plans. This includes:

▪ guidelines for preparing background reports for magistrates

▪ policies and procedures for developing case plans

▪ templates for background reports and case plans

▪ training on the latest thinking on what works to reduce reoffending

▪ information on offence history on CCIS.

Some difficulties obtaining client information from other agencies	Staff reported that their main source of information was young offenders and their families. They also use their local networks and contacts to obtain information from other agencies, using a consent release form if necessary.
	Some staff reported difficulties obtaining information from particular agencies. While persistent chasing often paid off, a more efficient means of obtaining information would mean fewer delays. This issue is discussed in more detail in the previous chapter.
Staff develop a list of services in their area	Staff use their local networks and advice from work colleagues to develop a list of services available in their region. Although the number and type of services differed across regions, staff reported that they find a suitable service in most cases, although there might be some delays. The most difficult services to obtain were:

- mental health services, both assessment and placement
- accommodation services, particularly for high risk offenders.

Do interventions match an offender's needs and risks?

We reviewed 55 casework files across three regions to determine whether interventions outlined in case plans matched offenders' needs and risks as determined by the YLSI.

The quality of case plans varied and interventions did not always match risk	The quality of case plans varied considerably. The different headings and categories used in case plans meant that we did not always know which risk was being addressed. Some plans appeared to address key risk areas, yet others had no direct link between risks and interventions.
	Staff in one regional office did not prepare formal case plans, but recorded interventions on the case review forms which supervisors use to monitor casework. They did not clearly outline casework responsibilities, timeframes or the purpose of key activities. At least three supervisors agreed that that case plans did not always address risk areas and they would review this when next monitoring casework.
Intervention framework not always followed	We also found some case plans that did not follow the intervention framework. For example, some young offenders assessed as low risk had lengthy case plans with many interventions, while some high risk offenders had no interventions other than weekly supervision.

Exhibit 15: Case Plan for John Smith – a high risk offender	
YLSI risk ratings	**Case Plan interventions**
Prior offences: high	▪ Agree to meet caseworker once a week
Family: high	
Education/employment: high	
Peers: high	
Substance abuse: high	
Leisure: high	
Personality: high	
Attitudes: high	
Overall risk of reoffending: high	

Source: Audit Office file review

In this case study the young offender is assessed as high risk, yet the case plan does not address any of the key risk areas. We recognise that there may be valid reasons for this. In this example the caseworker advised that the young person had a history of no-shows and would not contact the department when required. The best result was getting the young person to attend weekly meetings and talk about his situation. Anything more might "scare him off".

Exhibit 16: Case Plan for Jack Smith – a low risk offender	
YLSI risk ratings	**Case Plan interventions**
Prior offences: low Family: med Education/employment: med Peers: low Substance abuse: low Leisure: low Personality: low Attitudes: low Overall risk of reoffending: low	▪ Agree to meet caseworker once a fortnight ▪ Complete 'targets' risk reduction worksheets ▪ Do positive activities such as fitness, fishing ▪ Associate with positive peers ▪ Attend and complete TAFE ▪ Regulate sleep to attend classes ▪ Continue living with dad ▪ Discuss accommodation and family issues with caseworker

Source: Audit Office file review

In this case study the young person is assessed as low risk, yet interventions cover a number of risk areas. Again there may be valid reasons for a more intensive case plan. Perhaps this suggests that interventions are more successful with some low risk offenders.

Whatever the situation, it is important that activities in case plans clearly show how each risk area is to be addressed. If risk areas are not addressed, then the reasons for this should be documented with the case plan so that they can be followed up later if required.

The CIMS upgrade may partly address these issues as the key risk areas in the YLSI will automatically appear in the case plan. We also found that there has been a renewed focus on case management in recent years, particularly in detention centres where staff have changed from being guards to caseworkers. Case plans are also checked via case reviews and ad-hoc audits by supervisors. The department has also recently completed a casework audit of detention centres and is planning a similar review of community supervision.

Recommendation
That the department make sure that case plan interventions better match offenders' needs and risk of offending as identified in the YLSI risk assessment.

Are interventions effective?

The effectiveness of interventions is not formally assessed

The department does not formally assess the effectiveness of interventions young people experience while under its care. This includes both young offenders under the department's supervision, and young people attending youth justice conferences.

Caseworkers complete a supervision termination report when they want to suspend supervision early, however this is not used for all young offenders. The report does not specifically refer to case plan achievements and staff advise that they rely on anecdotal reports to check reoffending. Conferencing administrators send evaluation forms to participants, however they report that only a small proportion of these are returned. The department does not appear to collate or review either of these forms.

The effectiveness of interventions can be assessed in many different ways. This includes determining whether:

- individual activities in case plans or outcome plans have worked
- casework has reduced the risk factors associated with a young person's offending behaviour
- supervision or conferencing in general has helped rehabilitate a young offender and reduced his or her offending behaviour.

We asked staff what results they hoped to achieve through their work with young offenders.

Exhibit 17: What is success? Staff views…

- Legal obligations have been meet
- Young person is assessed at a lower risk of reoffending
- No reoffending during supervision
- Young person does not reoffend following release
- Young person reoffends less often or for less serious crimes
- Welfare or social issues have been addressed
    - stable family environment
    - the young person has found a job
    - no or less frequent substance abuse
    - found a place to live
    - is back at school / TAFE
    - can read and write
    - is learning new skills
    - can function socially
    - health issues are addressed
- Young person engages with staff
- Young person show signs of a change in attitude or behaviour

Source: Staff interviews

As well as the above factors, conferencing staff advised that other measures of success include:

▪ the victim and their family feel some resolution or closure regarding the incident

▪ the young person shows remorse and accepts responsibility for the harm he or she caused.

We recognise that the department manages some of the most socially disadvantaged and troublesome young people in NSW. It is hard to address what may have been years of dysfunction and neglect. Staff reported that family environment, education, and employment are key factors in helping a young person fit back into society and lead a life free of crime. This of course often requires a multi-agency approach to case management, which ideally starts before a young person enters the juvenile justice system.

Nonetheless, it is important that the department assess the success of interventions to find out what works in NSW. It can then change its programs to ensure the best possible outcomes for young offenders.

Examples of success measures used by other agencies can be found in chapter 1. As a minimum the department should find out whether a young person's risk of offending has reduced. This shows whether key risk areas have been successfully addressed.

Reoffending rates should also be followed-up to determine whether the department, through its work with other agencies, is meeting its high-level goal of breaking the juvenile crime cycle. Reoffending should be checked at least 12 months after young offenders leave the department. Checking again at two or three years would also provide the department with information on the long-term success of its activities.

Recommendation   That the department assess the effectiveness of casework and youth justice conferencing to find out what works in NSW.

Appendices

Appendix 1   About the audit

Objective

To examine how the Department of Juvenile Justice measures its success, and whether decision makers and managers have adequate information to make sound planning decisions and recommend appropriate interventions for young offenders.

Audit criteria

We reviewed whether:

- the department has suitable systems in place to monitor, review and report the efficiency and effectiveness of its programs, and performance is improving

- decision-makers and managers within the department have access to sufficient information to plan, set realistic goals and manage young offenders effectively

- the department has suitable processes in place to help staff determine the most appropriate and effective course of action for young offenders.

Audit approach

We acquired subject matter expertise through:

- interviewing head office and regional staff involved in performance reporting and strategic planning

- interviewing staff responsible for preparing background reports and case management plans

- interviewing staff who work with young offenders involved in conferencing

- reviewing strategic planning and performance reporting documents

- reviewing a sample of case management plans and client files

- analysing performance data (where available).

We also examined performance reporting and intervention processes in other jurisdictions to identify best practice examples.

We examined the following interstate and overseas jurisdictions:

- Victoria, Western Australia, Queensland

- New Zealand

- United Kingdom

- Canada

- US (Washington State, Massachusetts, Maryland).

Interviews	Site visits	No of files
Executive staff	Metropolitan region:	
Regional Directors	▪ Regional office	
JJCS Managers	▪ Cobham JJC	6
Juvenile Justice Officers	▪ Blacktown and Sydney JJCS	6 / 6
Counsellors	▪ Blacktown and Sydney YJC	
JJC Managers	Southern region:	
Key workers	▪ Regional office	
YJC Administrators	▪ Keelong JJC	4
YJC Convenors	▪ Bowral and Nowra JJCS	4 / 3
	▪ Wollongong JJCS	6
	▪ Wollongong JYC office	
	Western region:	
	▪ Regional office	
	▪ Orana JJC	4
	▪ Dubbo and Parkes JJCS	6 / 4
	▪ Bathurst JJCS	6
	▪ Dubbo YJC office	

JJCS: Juvenile Justice Community Service
JJC: Juvenile Justice Centre
YJC: Youth Justice Conferencing

Acknowledgements   We gratefully acknowledge the co-operation and assistance provided by representatives of the Department of Juvenile Justice. In particular we wish to thank our liaison officer, Patricia Gallagher, and head office and regional staff who participated in interviews, assisted with file review or provided other material relevant to the audit.

Audit cost   Including printing and overheads, the estimated cost of the audit is $260,014.

Audit team   Our team leader for this performance audit was Tiffany Blackett, assisted by Brian Holdsworth. Sean Crumlin provided direction and quality assurance.

Appendix 2   Glossary

Case plan	A document, written in a young person's language, that outlines the goals the young offender has agreed to strive for and the ways in which the caseworker and the young offender will cooperate to achieve important outcomes.
Caseworker	Employee of the Department of Juvenile Justice working directly with young offenders.
Casework	The activities carried out by caseworkers.
Case management	The process by which a caseworker develops, implements and monitors a case plan with a young offender.
Case review	Formal monitoring of the case plan and casework by the caseworker's immediate supervisor to ensure that it: - addresses the risks associated with reoffending - has been developed in consultation with the young offender - is being followed by the young offender - is updated as required by achievements, failures or other changes to circumstances.
Intervention	A program, counselling session or activity undertaken by a young offender, in conformity with the case plan, to address a reoffending risk area.
Outcome plan	A document recording the actions/outcomes to be undertaken by the young offender following a Youth Justice Conference. The young offender and any victim of the offence present at the conference must agree with these outcomes. The outcomes must be realistic and appropriate and any sanction must not be more severe than a court might have imposed for the offence concerned.
Pro-social modelling	An approach that calls on staff working with young people to set a good example and be positive role models. Pro-social modelling sets out the way caseworkers should interact with young offenders.
Rehabilitation	Reduction or management of factors leading to offending to reduce the risk of reoffending. Drug and alcohol abuse, inadequate education, and health problems all can lead to an offending lifestyle. Activities to address these problems are referred to as rehabilitation.
Remand	Keeping a young person in custody or on bail prior to a court decision on guilt or sentence. The decision whether to remand in custody or on bail requires an assessment of the threat to self or others and the probability of appearing in court.
Reoffending risk assessment	Tool to measure young offenders' risk of reoffending. See YLSI.

Supervision	When a Children's Court magistrate places a young offender under the management of the Department of Juvenile Justice, the offender is referred to as being under supervision. This is regardless of whether the young person is confined within a detention centre, or is free within the community. In both situations they are required to work toward the goals in their case plan.
YLSI	Youth Level of Service (Case Management) Inventory is a risk assessment tool based on identified risk factors. It is the primary method to gather information for case planning purposes. Common risk factors include: network of delinquent associates, difficulties in school and employment, anti-social attitudes, and low levels of self-control, impulsiveness.
Youth justice conferencing	A restorative justice process designed to divert young offenders from the courts and custody. It involves both young offenders and victims and results in outcome plans which young offenders must carry out.

Performance Audits by the
Audit Office of New South Wales

Performance Auditing

What are performance audits?

Performance audits are reviews designed to determine how efficiently and effectively an agency is carrying out its functions.

Performance audits may review a government program, all or part of a government agency or consider particular issues which affect the whole public sector.

Where appropriate, performance audits make recommendations for improvements relating to those functions.

Why do we conduct performance audits?

Performance audits provide independent assurance to Parliament and the public that government funds are being spent efficiently and effectively, and in accordance with the law.

They seek to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government agencies and ensure that the community receives value for money from government services.

Performance audits also assist the accountability process by holding agencies accountable for their performance.

What is the legislative basis for Performance Audits?

The legislative basis for performance audits is contained within the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983, Part 3 Division 2A,* (the Act) which differentiates such work from the Office's financial statements audit function.

Performance audits are not entitled to question the merits of policy objectives of the Government.

Who conducts performance audits?

Performance audits are conducted by specialist performance auditors who are drawn from a wide range of professional disciplines.

How do we choose our topics?

Topics for performance audits are chosen from a variety of sources including:
- our own research on emerging issues
- suggestions from Parliamentarians, agency Chief Executive Officers (CEO) and members of the public
- complaints about waste of pubic money
- referrals from Parliament.

Each potential audit topic is considered and evaluated in terms of possible benefits including cost savings, impact and improvements in public administration.

The Audit Office has no jurisdiction over local government and cannot review issues relating to council activities.

If you wish to find out what performance audits are currently in progress just visit our website at www.audit.nsw.gov.au.

How do we conduct performance audits?

Performance audits are conducted in compliance with relevant Australian standards for performance auditing and operate under a quality management system certified under international quality standard ISO 9001.

Our policy is to conduct these audits on a "no surprise" basis.

Operational managers, and where necessary executive officers, are informed of the progress with the audit on a continuous basis.

What are the phases in performance auditing?

Performance audits have three key phases: planning, fieldwork and report writing.

During the planning phase, the audit team will develop audit criteria and define the audit field work.

At the completion of field work an exit interview is held with agency management to discuss all significant matters arising out of the audit. The basis for the exit interview is generally a draft performance audit report.

The exit interview serves to ensure that facts presented I in the report are accurate and that recommendations are appropriate. Following the exit interview, a format draft report is provided to the CEO for comment. The relevant Minister is also provided with a copy of the draft report. The final report, which is tabled in Parliament, includes any comment made by the CEO on the conclusion and the recommendations of the audit.

Depending on the scope of an audit, performance audits can take from several months to a year to complete.

Copies of our performance audit reports can be obtained from our website or by contacting our publications unit.

How do we measure an agency's performance?

During the planning stage of an audit the team develops the audit criteria. These are standards of performance against which an agency is assessed. Criteria may be based on government targets or benchmarks, comparative data, published guidelines, agencies corporate objectives or examples of best practice.

Performance audits look at:
- processes
- results
- costs
- due process and accountability.

Do we check to see if recommendations have been implemented?

Every few years we conduct a follow-up audit of past performance audit reports. These follow-up audits look at the extent to which recommendations have been implemented and whether problems have been addressed.

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) may also conduct reviews or hold inquiries into matters raised in performance audit reports. Agencies are also required to report actions taken against each recommendation in their annual report.

To assist agencies to monitor and report on the implementation of recommendations, the Audit Office has prepared a Guide for that purpose. The Guide, *Monitoring and Reporting on Performance Audits Recommendations,* is on the Internet at www.audit.nsw.gov.au/guides-bp/bpglist.htm.

Who audits the auditors?

Our performance audits are subject to internal and external quality reviews against relevant Australian and international standards. This includes ongoing independent certification of our ISO 9001 quality management system.

The PAC is also responsible for overseeing the activities of the Audit Office and conducts reviews of our operations every three years.

Who pays for performance audits?

No fee is charged for performance audits. Our performance audit services are funded by the NSW Parliament and from internal sources.

For further information relating to performance auditing contact:

Stephen Horne
Assistant Auditor-General
Performance Audit
Tel (02) 9275 7278
email: stephen.horne@audit.nsw.gov.au

Performance Audit Reports

No	Agency or Issues Examined	Title of Performance Audit Report or Publication	Date Tabled in Parliament or Published
65	Attorney General's Department	*Management of Court Waiting Times*	3 September 1999
66	Office of the Protective Commissioner Office of the Public Guardian	*Complaints and Review Processes*	28 September 1999
67	University of Western Sydney	*Administrative Arrangements*	17 November 1999
68	NSW Police Service	*Enforcement of Street Parking*	24 November 1999
69	Roads and Traffic Authority of NSW	*Planning for Road Maintenance*	1 December 1999
70	NSW Police Service	*Staff Rostering, Tasking and Allocation*	31 January 2000
71*	Academics' Paid Outside Work	*Administrative Procedures* *Protection of Intellectual Property* *Minimum Standard Checklists* *Better Practice Examples*	7 February 2000
72	Hospital Emergency Departments	*Delivering Services to Patients*	15 March 2000
73	Department of Education and Training	*Using Computers in Schools for Teaching and Learning*	7 June 2000
74	Ageing and Disability Department	*Group Homes for People with Disabilities in NSW*	27 June 2000
75	NSW Department of Transport	*Management of Road Passenger Transport Regulation*	6 September 2000
76	Judging Performance from Annual Reports	*Review of Eight Agencies' Annual Reports*	29 November 2000
77*	Reporting Performance	*Better Practice Guide* *A guide to preparing performance information for annual reports*	29 November 2000
78	State Rail Authority (CityRail) State Transit Authority	*Fare Evasion on Public Transport*	6 December 2000
79	TAFE NSW	*Review of Administration*	6 February 2001
80	Ambulance Service of New South Wales	*Readiness to Respond*	7 March 2001
81	Department of Housing	*Maintenance of Public Housing*	11 April 2001
82	Environment Protection Authority	*Controlling and Reducing Pollution from Industry*	18 April 2001
83	Department of Corrective Services	*NSW Correctional Industries*	13 June 2001
84	Follow-up of Performance Audits	*Police Response to Calls for Assistance* *The Levying and Collection of Land Tax* *Coordination of Bushfire Fighting Activities*	20 June 2001
85*	Internal Financial Reporting	*Internal Financial Reporting including a Better Practice Guide*	27 June 2001

No	Agency or Issues Examined	Title of Performance Audit Report or Publication	Date Tabled in Parliament or Published
86	Follow-up of Performance Audits	*The School Accountability and Improvement Model (May 1999)* *The Management of Court Waiting Times (September 1999)*	14 September 2001
87	E-government	*Use of the Internet and Related Technologies to Improve Public Sector Performance*	19 September 2001
88*	E-government	*e-ready, e-steady, e-government: e-government readiness assessment guide*	19 September 2001
89	Intellectual Property	*Management of Intellectual Property*	17 October 2001
90*	Intellectual Property	*Better Practice Guide Management of Intellectual Property*	17 October 2001
91	University of New South Wales	*Educational Testing Centre*	21 November 2001
92	Department of Urban Affairs and Planning	*Environmental Impact Assessment of Major Projects*	28 November 2001
93	Department of Information Technology and Management	*Government Property Register*	31 January 2002
94	State Debt Recovery Office	*Collecting Outstanding Fines and Penalties*	17 April 2002
95	Roads and Traffic Authority	*Managing Environmental Issues*	29 April 2002
96	NSW Agriculture	*Managing Animal Disease Emergencies*	8 May 2002
97	State Transit Authority Department of Transport	*Bus Maintenance and Bus Contracts*	29 May 2002
98	Risk Management	*Managing Risk in the NSW Public Sector*	19 June 2002
99	E-Government	*User-friendliness of Websites*	26 June 2002
100	NSW Police Department of Corrective Services	*Managing Sick Leave*	23 July 2002
101	Department of Land and Water Conservation	*Regulating the Clearing of Native Vegetation*	20 August 2002
102	E-government	*Electronic Procurement of Hospital Supplies*	25 September 2002
103	NSW Public Sector	*Outsourcing Information Technology*	23 October 2002
104	Ministry for the Arts Department of Community Services Department of Sport and Recreation	*Managing Grants*	4 December 2002
105	Department of Health Including Area Health Services and Hospitals	*Managing Hospital Waste*	10 December 2002
106	State Rail Authority	*CityRail Passenger Security*	12 February 2003
107	NSW Agriculture	*Implementing the Ovine Johne's Disease Program*	26 February 2003

No	Agency or Issues Examined	Title of Performance Audit Report or Publication	Date Tabled in Parliament or Published
108	Department of Sustainable Natural Resources Environment Protection Authority	*Protecting Our Rivers*	7 May 2003
109	Department of Education and Training	*Managing Teacher Performance*	14 May 2003
110	NSW Police	*The Police Assistance Line*	5 June 2003
111	E-Government	*Roads and Traffic Authority Delivering Services Online*	11 June 2003
112	State Rail Authority	*The Millennium Train Project*	17 June 2003
113	Sydney Water Corporation	*Northside Storage Tunnel Project*	24 July 2003
114	Ministry of Transport Premier's Department Department of Education and Training	*Freedom of Information*	28 August 2003
115	NSW Police NSW Roads and Traffic Authority	*Dealing with Unlicensed and Unregistered Driving*	4 September 2003
116	NSW Department of Health	*Waiting Times for Elective Surgery in Public Hospitals*	18 September 2003
117	Follow-up of Performance Audits	*Complaints and Review Processes (September 1999) Provision of Industry Assistance (December 1998)*	24 September 2003
118	Judging Performance from Annual Reports	*Review of Eight Agencies' Annual Reports*	1 October 2003
119	Asset Disposal	*Disposal of Sydney Harbour Foreshore Land*	26 November 2003
120	Follow-up of Performance Audits NSW Police	*Enforcement of Street Parking (1999) Staff Rostering, Tasking and Allocation (2000)*	10 December 2003
121	Department of Health NSW Ambulance Service	*Code Red: Hospital Emergency Departments*	15 December 2003
122	Follow-up of Performance Audit	*Controlling and Reducing Pollution from Industry (April 2001)*	12 May 2004
123	National Parks and Wildlife Service	*Managing Natural and Cultural Heritage in Parks and Reserves*	16 June 2004
124	Fleet Management	*Meeting Business Needs*	30 June 2004
125	Department of Health NSW Ambulance Service	*Transporting and Treating Emergency Patients*	28 July 2004
126	Department of Education and Training	*School Annual Reports*	15 September 2004
127	Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care	*Home Care Service*	13 October 2004
128*	Department of Commerce	*Shared Corporate Services: Realising the Benefit including guidance on better practice*	3 November 2004

No	Agency or Issues Examined	Title of Performance Audit Report or Publication	Date Tabled in Parliament or Published
129	Follow-up of Performance Audit	*Environmental Impact Assessment of Major Projects (2001)*	1 February 2005
130*	Fraud Control	*Current Progress and Future Directions including guidance on better practice*	9 February 2005
131	Follow-up of Performance Audit Department of Housing	*Maintenance of Public Housing (2001)*	2 March 2005
132	Follow-up of Performance Audit State Debt Recovery Office	*Collecting Outstanding Fines and Penalties (2002)*	17 March 2005
133	Follow-up of Performance Audit Premier's Department	*Management of Intellectual Property (2001)*	30 March 2005
134	Department of Environment and Conservation	*Managing Air Quality*	6 April 2005
135	Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Sydney Water Corporation Sydney Catchment Authority	*Planning for Sydney's Water Needs*	4 May 2005
136	Department of Health	*Emergency Mental Health Services*	26 May 2005
137	Department of Community Services	*Helpline*	1 June 2005
138	Follow-up of Performance Audit State Transit Authority Ministry of Transport	*Bus Maintenance and Bus Contracts (2002)*	14 June 2005
139	RailCorp NSW	*Coping with Disruptions to CityRail Passenger Services*	22 June 2005
140	State Rescue Board of New South Wales	*Coordination of Rescue Services*	20 July 2005
141	State Budget	*In-year Monitoring of the State Budget*	28 July 2005
142	Department of Juvenile Justice	*Managing and Measuring Success*	September 2005

* Better Practice Guides

Performance Audits on our website

A list of performance audits tabled or published since March 1997, as well as those currently in progress, can be found on our website <www.audit.nsw.gov.au>

If you have any problems accessing these Reports, or are seeking older Reports, please contact our Executive Officer on 9275 7220.