

# **TOWNSVILLE STRONGER COMMUNITIES ACTION GROUP: INTENSIVE CASE COORDINATION OF FAMILIES AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

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## **ABSTRACT**

To address the challenges presented by youth offending across the Townsville local government area, the Queensland Government brought together a range of senior representatives from key government departments and co-located them at the Queensland Police Service's Rapid Action and Patrols unit (RAP). This group, named the Townsville Stronger Communities Action Group (TSCAG), was established in October 2016 and is led by a Police Inspector. The government tasked TSCAG with the intensive co-ordination of services for vulnerable families and young people through a process of case co-ordination. This was implemented under a Stronger Communities Engagement Plan (SCEP). This paper outlines the strategic alignment of the group within the Townsville context, including the aims of the group, the framework of legal provisions, and the theories that underpin the group's operations relating to SCEP. There are a range of outcomes based upon the recommendation of TSCAG to the Stronger Communities Executive Committee. A brief SWOT analysis of the key achievements and learnings gained through SCEP has been included. This paper considers the group's achievements and the SWOT analysis in providing reflections to the group's Executive Committee.

## **I INTRODUCTION**

In September 2016, the Queensland Government announced a Five-point Plan (FPP) to reduce youth crime in Townsville. While the Queensland Government recognised it was not just young people committing crimes, the nature of offending and associated community concern in Townsville required a particular focus on youth crime. The FPP reflects the need for a strong targeted police response, as well as a need to address the underlying causes of youth crime, such as family dysfunction, mental health issues, alcohol and substance abuse, and homelessness.

Prominent in the plan's priority to address the causes of youth offending is the formation of the Townsville Stronger Communities Action Group (TSCAG). The group was established to intensively coordinate the services provided to young people who offend or are at risk of offending, and their families.

TSCAG is a co-located collaboration of seven senior representatives from different government agencies. An Executive Committee (EC) oversees the group's actions and

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guides TSCAG operational responsibilities as identified in the Queensland Government's FPP.

This paper explores TSCAG's establishment as part of the FPP and briefly reflects on the reported levels of youth crime experienced between 2001 and 2018. The paper then focuses on TSCAG's aims, the various legal provisions that relate to the group's operations, and the theories and assumptions that underpin the group's efforts to co-ordinate services through application of its Stronger Communities Engagement Plan (SCEP). The paper also discusses the group's key achievements and presents a SWOT analysis. It will conclude by outlining key reflections that may be used to enhance the impact of TSCAG in the Townsville community.

## II SPECIFIC MEASURES IMPLEMENTED

The Townsville Stronger Communities Action Group (TSCAG) was established to respond to youth crime in the Townsville local government area, specifically '...to get young people back on track to lead more productive lives'.<sup>1</sup> TSCAG reports directly to the Executive Committee (EC) and is responsible for actioning components of the Queensland Government's Five-point Plan (FPP)<sup>2</sup> for reducing youth crime in Townsville. The FPP was developed to guide a whole of government, whole of community and whole of family effort to address youth crime in Townsville by breaking the cycle of crime.<sup>3</sup> The FPP is a move by government to go beyond mere deterrent measures and demonstrates an intent to rethink criminal justice policies in North Queensland.

The Queensland Government's FPP to reduce youth crime in Townsville consists of the following components:<sup>4</sup>

1. Targeted policing;
2. Increasing community involvement;
3. Addressing causes;
4. Improving service delivery; and
5. Boosting jobs, training and education.

It is important to note that TSCAG is not responsible for all actions noted in the FPP, however they are listed as assisting in the following key areas:

### ***'Targeted policing***

- *That the RAP (Rapid Action and Patrols unit) develop strategies to operationalise and support the actions of TSCAG.'*

An example of the relationship between TSCAG and the RAP includes a joint place-based operation undertaken in the Upper Ross community. This involved a joint police and government services door-to-door survey and referral service. Actions resulting from the joint initiative led to a significant reduction in calls for police assistance to the affected area.

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<sup>1</sup> Queensland Government, *Townsville Stronger Communities* (8 October 2018) <<https://townsvillecommunities.premiers.qld.gov.au/>>.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

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***‘Addressing causes of offending***

- *That for young people on YJ (Youth Justice) orders — the executive committee will leverage relationships and processes of TSCAG to improve service integration across agencies and support DJAG (Department of Justice and Attorney General — now Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women) case management.’*

The EC is able to use the relationships developed across the youth and family services sector with non-government and government organisations to problem-solve complex challenges. An example includes the joint initiative between TSCAG and Family and Child Connect to ensure families of young people, who were unlikely to be supported by a court order, had the opportunity to seek support from a supportive non-government organisation.

***‘Improving collaboration and service coordination***

- *The executive will provide operational direction to TSCAG, assist with managing linkages, address road blocks to integrated case coordination and ensure that work stays on track.*
- *Townsville YJ steering committee — currently run by QPS (Queensland Police Service) however, will transition to TSCAG.’*

In addition to assisting in the above key areas of the FPP, TSCAG has been the lead group on the following:

***‘Addressing causes of offending***

- *Provide integrated case coordination for selected young people and their families to increase economic participation by the family and reduce offending by the young people. While doing the coordination — develop appropriate structures and processes to provide intensive coordination. Also identify service gaps that may need to be addressed.’*

Two key service gaps were reported back to the EC. The first was a lack of after-hours youth support, which resulted in the procurement of *The Lighthouse* emergency accommodation service for children aged 10 to 16. The second related to a lack of specialised support services for families with teens displaying complex behaviours. This resulted in the procurement of a Targeted Family Support Service.

***‘Improving collaboration and service coordination***

- *TSCAG provides integrated case coordination and support to young people and their families.’*

While TSCAG has conducted a range of work to support sections of the FPP the group has lead with intensive case coordination. The key aims include:

1. Increase economic participation by the family.
2. Reduce offending by young people.
3. Develop appropriate structures and process to support intensive coordination.
4. Identify service gaps that need to be addressed.

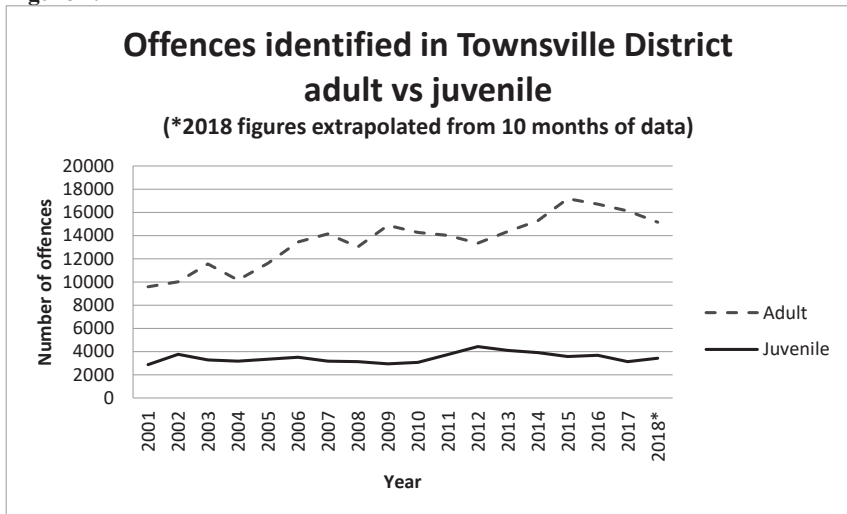
In light of the above key area of activity, the Stronger Communities Engagement Plan (SCEP) was developed as a framework to coordinate service engagement with selected

participants and their families.<sup>5</sup> The SCEP is a process that coordinates the services connected with, and goals identified by a family. The intent is to provide a succinct model that maps the engagement of individual organisations with the selected participants and their families.

A *Aim of the Stronger Communities Engagement Plan*

The key objective of the SCEP was to implement a whole of community coordinated response to address the offending risk of children who are starting to display anti-social behaviours, as well as children who are entrenched in the youth justice system and young adults who are deeply entrenched in the criminal system.<sup>6</sup> This aim was targeted at addressing community concerns about the extent of youth crime across the Townsville Local Government Area. As indicated in Figure 1, youth crime has been relatively stable since 2001, while adult-related crime has steadily climbed.

Figure 1.<sup>7</sup>



The graph illustrates the offences identified for which an adult or juvenile was responsible from 2001 to 2018. The last year includes a predictive level of offending based on 10 months of data available for 2018 at the time of writing. The figures cover the Townsville Police District and relate to all offences. Note: the data reflects offences, not individual offenders.

On the surface it would appear that community concerns about crime are unfounded. However, despite the overall downward trend associated with high volume offences, other offences that rate relatively low in numbers can attract serious concern, particularly when they are associated with high-risk activities that place innocent

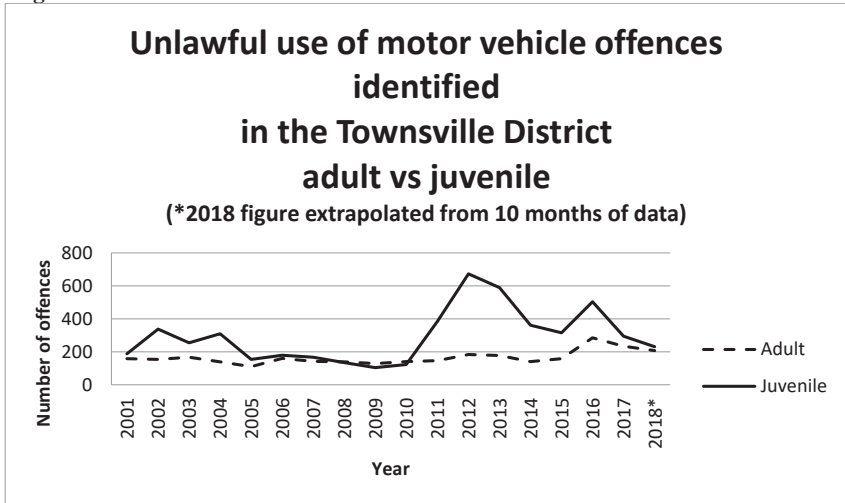
<sup>5</sup> Townsville Stronger Communities Action Group (Qld), *Stronger Communities Engagement Plan – Procedures*, Unpublished (2017).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Queensland Police Service 2018, 'Reported Crime Trend Data – Reported Offenders Numbers – Police Districts', Queensland Government. Raw data was viewed and then analysed on 22 November 2018 <https://www.police.qld.gov.au/online/data/>

residents at risk. Unlawful use of a motor vehicle (UUMV) is one such offence, with Figure 2 illustrating that the Townsville Police District hit peaks of UUMV in 2012 and 2016. It is worth noting that the 2016 peak was associated with a peak in adult offending for UUMV.

Figure 2.<sup>8</sup>



The graph illustrates the offences identified for which an adult or juvenile was responsible from 2001 to 2018. The last year includes a predictive level of offending based on 10 months of data available for 2018 at the time of writing. The figures cover the Townsville Police District for unlawful use of motor vehicle offences only. Note: the data reflects offences, not individual offenders.

### B Formation of TSCAG

TSCAG was formed in October 2016 in response to community concerns and reflects a desire by government to work collectively to strengthen Townsville’s response to youth crime. SCEP formed a critical component of additional services being rolled out across government, such as the Townsville Community Youth Response, which focused on enhancing the youth justice system. The FPP was established to put downward pressure on youth crime and help disrupt the pathway to offending for younger children.

The plan was for the coordination of services to result in the family and young person endorsing a family goal plan.<sup>9</sup> These plans were designed to set out goals decided upon by the client. They were to be monitored and reviewed by the client in a supportive and non-judgmental environment.<sup>10</sup> This is aligned with a client-focused approach to case management, with the family goal plan mapping activity across all agencies that family

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Townsville Stronger Communities Action Group (Qld), *Stronger Communities Engagement Plan – Family Goal Plan*, Unpublished document (2017).

<sup>10</sup> Nathaniel J Raskin and Carl Rogers, *Person Centred Therapy*, Australian Institute of Professional Counsellors, Book of Readings Vol 3, (1<sup>st</sup> ed 2005) p 72.

members and participants agree to work towards. Part of the project included an agreement by agencies to be held accountable for delivering approved actions associated with the family goal plan. These plans underpin an approach that requires close working partnerships, effective communication and a framework, collectively, to plan, implement, evaluate and learn. The plans were intended to enable a comprehensive and timely response from participating agencies to issues negatively impacting on the various participants and their families.

The model is also designed to maximise the chances that clients will develop pro-social skills and capabilities to deal with the challenges before them. The approach was premised on a fundamental understanding that prevention and intervention are the most effective methods of assisting an individual to use a pro-social and contributory-based lifestyle. The model was founded on the following principles:<sup>11</sup>

- Multiple agencies will work together to solve complex issues and work respectfully towards achieving common goals;
- Partnerships will be built on accountability and shared responsibilities;
- Innovative responses will be used to create real change;
- Action learning will drive innovation and effective responses;<sup>12</sup>
- Lessons learned will be shared, and models and practice will evolve; and
- Recognition of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture is critical for success when working with Indigenous young people and families.<sup>13</sup>

The SCEP model is outlined in the flowchart on the following page.

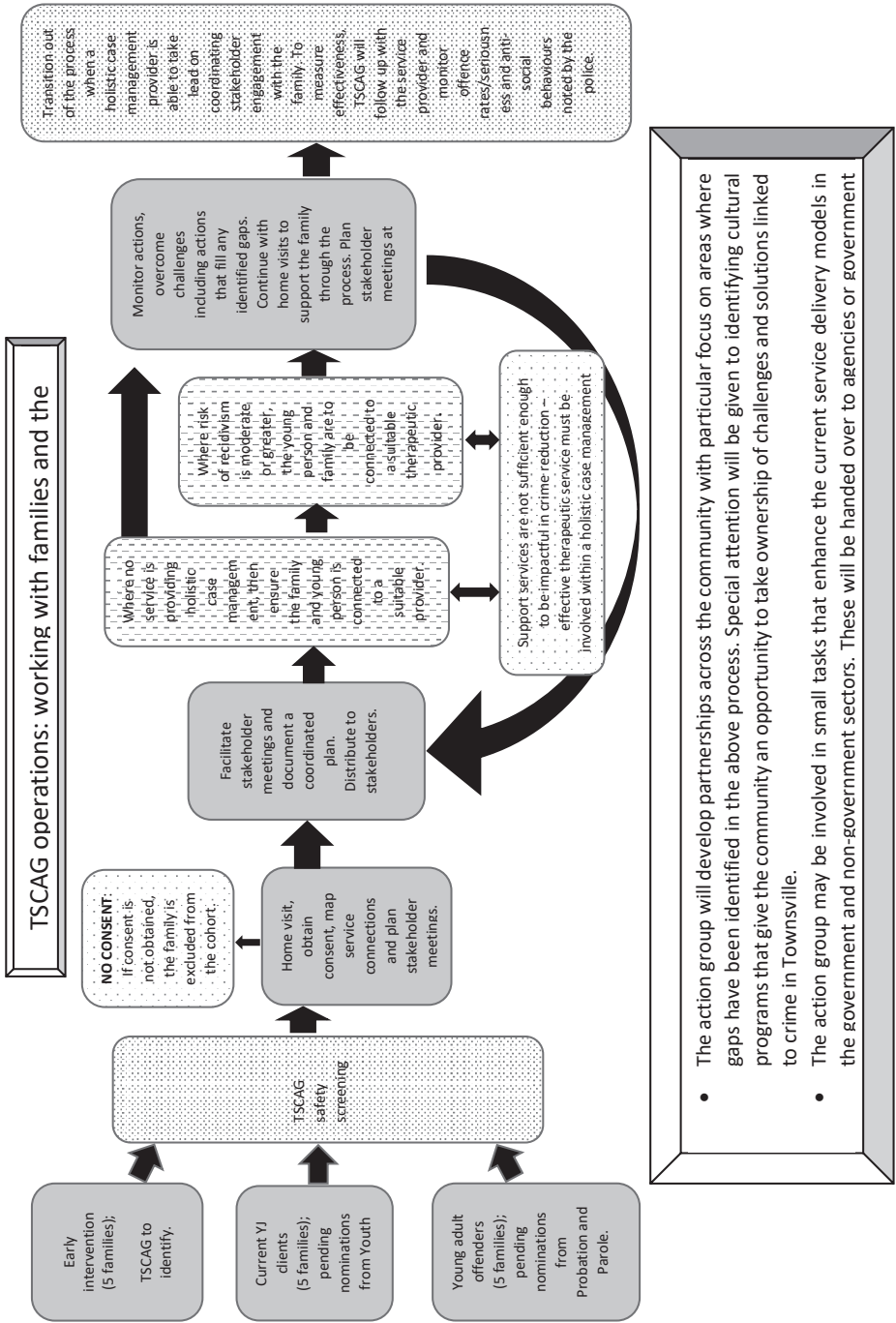
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<sup>11</sup> Townsville Stronger Communities Action Group (Qld), *Stronger Communities Engagement Plan — Terms of Reference*, Unpublished (2017).

<sup>12</sup> Mark Saunders, Philip Lewis and Adrian Thornhill, *Research Methods for Business Students* (7<sup>th</sup> ed, 2016) 189.

<sup>13</sup> Lesley Chenoweth and Donna McAuliffe, *The Road to Social Work & Human Service Practice* (2005) 190, 191

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### III LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

As TSCAG is a joint initiative between various Queensland Government departments, a range of legislation is relevant to ensuring the various programs are correctly coordinated. The group includes a Police Inspector, acting as the government coordinator, and six senior positions from Youth Justice; Child Safety; Housing; Education; Health; and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. The Executive Committee has representatives from each of these areas, as well as representatives from Corrective Services and the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training. It is therefore within the scope of the group to encourage changes to policies, procedures and legislation. Some of the relevant legislation includes the following:

- *Youth Justice Act 1992* (Qld);
- *Child Protection Act 1999* (Qld);
- *Criminal Code Act 1899* (Qld);
- *Penalties and Sentences Act 1992* (Qld);
- *Bail Act 1980* (Qld);
- *Education General Provision Act 2006* (Qld);
- *Housing Act 2003* (Qld);
- *Health Act 1937* (Qld);
- *Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000* (Qld); and
- *Information Privacy Act 2009* (Qld).

Intensive case coordination is based on the consent of families, and sits outside the legislative powers usually administered by TSCAG staff. As such, involvement by families in the SCEP process is voluntary and accommodated by a consent, intake and vetting process to ensure TSCAG involvement will not hinder the actions of government agencies, which may be engaging the family through formal legislative processes. The aim is to protect people's rights to privacy, and ensure information is only used as intended and expressly granted, while not increasing the risk of detrimental impact to the family.

TSCAG obtains consent from parents and guardians and, where appropriate, the child or children, to receive assistance from the group. Information sharing provisions are disclosed to families prior to obtaining consent.<sup>14</sup>

Information and privacy procedures were agreed through a memorandum of understanding between the key agencies. They formalised the following:

- Information obtained through TSCAG would be stored within the TSCAG framework and not on home agency databases; and
- Where information-sharing between home agencies would benefit the persons involved, such sharing must occur through current legislative means.

### IV THEORIES UNDERPINNING TSCAG AND SCEP

This section outlines a number of theories mentioned throughout this document, as forming the foundation of the work that TSCAG is undertaking through the SCEP. These theories underpin the assumptions that guided the development of the SCEP.

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<sup>14</sup> Townsville Stronger Communities Action Group (Qld), n 5 above.



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A *Client-focused*

The SCEP model is based on the premise that children and families will want to engage with services to help reduce anti-social behaviours and increase pro-social behaviours. This is reinforced within the SCEP model by having the family and the young person consent to engage with TSCAG. The SCEP model is also based on the principles outlined by psychologist Carl R. Rogers' client-focused or person-centred practice. This practice is formulated on the notion that a self-directed growth process would develop if a professional relationship is characterised by an approach that is genuine, non-judgemental, caring and empathetic. On a practical level, the person-centred approach is aimed at encouraging individuals to identify problems and then nominate what sort of assistance is required to solve or manage the problem. The encouragement is non-directional and thus empowers and enhances the individual's self-reliance to manage aspects of their own lives.<sup>15</sup> The SCEP model seeks to collate the goals identified by the clients across the various services connected with the family and assists them to review their goals at regular intervals.<sup>16</sup>

B *Case management*

Case management is defined as a process that involves '...screening, assessing, stratifying risk, planning, implementing, monitoring, transitioning and evaluation.'<sup>17</sup> In its simplest form, case management involves a process of assessing, planning, doing and reviewing. The Case Management Society of Australia and New Zealand and Affiliates is a professional association seeking to formalise and standardise case management practices.<sup>18</sup> This includes the development of the National Standards of Practice for Case Management.<sup>19</sup>

Case management is used by many government departments and is a fundamental requirement in procurement contracts managed by the Departments of Child Safety, Youth and Women<sup>20</sup> and Housing and Public Works<sup>21</sup>. This includes services offered by family and youth support organisations. These services are the ones that the SCEP would be most likely to assist in co-ordinating.

The SCEP model is premised on the understanding that case management is a critical component required to assist young persons reduce their offending risk. This is supported by an understanding that, where necessary, therapeutic intervention is required to help reduce moderate and higher levels of re-offending risk.

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<sup>15</sup> Raskin, N J and Rogers, C, 2005, n 10 above, 1.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>17</sup> Case Management Society Australia and New Zealand and Affiliates, *Case Management Definitions*, (8 October 2018) <https://www.cmsa.org.au/about-us/definitions-of-case-management>.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Frieda Marfleet, Scott Trueman and Raechel Barber, *National Standards of Practice for Case Management* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed 2013)

<sup>20</sup> Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women 2018, 'Outputs Catalogue', Queensland Government accessed 23 November 2018 <https://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/about-us/funding-grants/output-funding-reporting>

<sup>21</sup> Department of Housing and Public Works 2018, 'Homelessness Program Guidelines, Specification and Requirements v3.1.' Queensland Government accessed 23 November 2018 <http://www.hpw.qld.gov.au/Search/Results.aspx?k=funding&start1=11>

### C *Integration/collaboration/coordination*

The Queensland Council of Social Services defines integration/collaboration/coordination<sup>22</sup> as the process of ‘...a number of service agencies working together to collaborate and coordinate their support, services and interventions to clients’.<sup>23</sup>

Both the Departments of Child Safety, Youth and Women and Housing and Public Works refer to tasks associated with integration, collaboration or coordination as integral to case management.<sup>24</sup> This is logical, considering it would be difficult for a service to assist clients to meet their goals without connecting them to organisations that specialise in specific fields. For example, it would be relevant for a case manager to refer a client with substance use issues to a drug counselling service. An assumption of TSCAG’s SCEP process is that the group could assist in this area by offering service coordination to particular families in an intensive manner that could lead to improved outcomes. This effectively recognises that where a government agency is not leading case management, there may be an increased risk of services working autonomously.

### D *Risk needs responsivity model*

The model of ‘risk needs responsivity’ proposes that young offenders be assessed for their offending risk and needs. Based on these assessments, resources and energy can then be allocated accordingly.<sup>25</sup>

The youth justice system in Queensland uses the ‘youth level of service/case management inventory 2.0’. This tool provides ‘...a gender-informed, culturally-informed, strengths-focused risk/needs tool that reliably and accurately classifie[s] and predicts re-offending within male and female juvenile populations.’<sup>26</sup> The key domains of this tool include:

- Prior and current offences/orders/interventions;
- Family circumstances/parenting;
- Education/employment;
- Peer relations;
- Substance abuse;
- Leisure/recreation;
- Personality/behaviour; and
- Attitudes/orientation.

The model feeds into key assumptions underpinning the SCEP model in a number of ways. One example relates to early signs of anti-social behaviour. Police street-check data identifies particularly vulnerable children who are roaming the streets at night. The children are usually sighted without supervision and sometimes in the company of known offenders.

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<sup>22</sup> Queensland Council of Social Service, *A Guide to Integrated Service Delivery to Clients*, (8 October 2018) <<https://communitydoor.org.au/a-guide-to-integrated-service-delivery-to-clients>>.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid* p5.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid* n 20 and 21.

<sup>25</sup> Andrew Day, Kevin Howells and Debra Rickwood, ‘Current trends in the rehabilitation of juvenile offenders’ *Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice* (No. 284. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology <<https://aic.gov.au/publications/tandi/tandi284>>.

<sup>26</sup> R D Hoge and D A Andrews, *Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory 2.0* (MHS assessment portal 8 October 2018) <https://www.mhs.com/MHS-Publicsafety?prodname=yyls-cmi2>

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TSCAG uses this information to target potential families and to advise them of their child's activities. In discussions with families, TSCAG staff discuss potential referrals to services or, in particularly complex cases, seek their consent to have their goals coordinated through a SCEP.

### F *Cultural capability*

The Queensland Government's *Cultural capability training strategy* lists the essence of cultural capability as: knowing, doing and being. 'Being' includes, but is not limited to, being aware of personal values and biases and their impact on others. 'Doing' includes, but is not limited to, taking action in a culturally skilled manner. 'Knowing' includes, but is not limited to, gaining knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, customs, histories and place-based circumstances.<sup>27</sup> Given the history of European colonisation of Australia, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are untrusting of white institutions and social welfare organisations.<sup>28</sup> Having a level of cultural capability is essential to engage effectively with individuals, families and communities and to work together to achieve agreed goals.

Maintaining cultural capability in TSCAG is critical to developing individuals within the group and to developing the group within the Townsville community. It is well known that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are over-represented in the youth justice system. The 2016–17 Childrens Court of Queensland annual report noted 48 percent of its outcomes relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.<sup>29</sup>

### G *Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunity and Threats (SWOT)*

A SWOT analysis is a methodology often used to analyse an organisation's strategy by considering internal and external factors. The outcomes can then be used to build on strengths, mitigate internal weaknesses, exploit external opportunities and minimise the effects of external threats. The methodology does little to identify cause and effect of particular situations, however it can trigger conversations about changes that may be needed to maximise future potential.<sup>30</sup>

This document will use a SWOT approach to interview the contributing authors from TSCAG about the SCEP process.

### H *Action learning*

Action learning, also known as action research, embeds learning cycles into the structure of how a group/organisation attempts to solve a complex problem and overcome challenges as they arise. In an organisational context, this can lead to changes in policy and practice.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships & Queensland Public Service Commission 2016, '*Cultural Capability Matters*', Queensland Government.

<sup>28</sup> Lesley Chenoweth and Donna McAuliffe, *The Road to Social Work & Human Service Practice* (2005) 190, 191.

<sup>29</sup> Childrens Court of Queensland, 'Annual Report 2016–2017', Queensland Government available at [http://www.courts.qld.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/548135/cc-ar-2016-2017.pdf](http://www.courts.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/548135/cc-ar-2016-2017.pdf) accessed 1 May 2018.

<sup>30</sup> Bob Tricker, *Corporate Governance: Principles, Policies, and Practice* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed, 2015) 171.

<sup>31</sup> Mark Saunders, Philip Lewis and Adrian Thornhill, *Research Methods for Business Students* (7<sup>th</sup> ed, 2016) 189.

The concept of TSCAG is a case in point. The government brought together senior representatives from key agencies to work with at-risk families and young people. The expectation was that the group would take learnings back to the EC to enable consideration of potential changes in policy and practice that may enhance systems and, thereby, improve outcomes for young people and families, including reducing offending rates.

## V CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### A Reflection on the implementation of TSCAG including a SWOT analysis on SCEP

The theme of the 4th Annual Criminology Mini-Conference was *Beyond Mere Deterrence: Rethinking Criminal Justice Policies for North Queensland*. In light of this theme, TSCAG reflected on the primary task allocated to the team by the EC via the Townsville FPP. This set out four key aims sought by the executive:

1. Increase economic participation by the family;
2. Reduce offending by young people;
3. Develop appropriate structures and process to support intensive coordination; and
4. Identify service gaps that need to be addressed.

In working towards these outcomes, TSCAG was tasked with reporting back in an action learning model about policy areas that may need to be adjusted. To this end, TSCAG had made 31 recommendations to the EC at the time of writing. While many recommendations relate to internal processes and systems, some relate specifically to enhancements aimed at benefiting the community directly. Key outcomes include, but are not limited to:<sup>32</sup>

- Investment in after-hours support services for children, resulting in the procurement of *The Lighthouse* emergency accommodation service operated by the Townsville Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Service;
- Investment in a service that focuses on adolescents with problem behaviours, resulting in the procurement of a Targeted Family Support Service operated by Uniting Care Community;
- An expansion of the age requirements for youth-based support services from the previous ages of 12 to 18 years to 8 to 21 years;
- Investment in a fitness mentoring program in prison to assist with transitioning young adults from prison back to the community;
- Investment in a women's group at the Upper Ross Community Centre;
- Investment in cultural artwork on two police vehicles, as a means of enhancing the relationship between the Queensland Police Service and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community; and
- Development and implementation of a communication strategy to share the positive work being done to reduce youth crime. This includes a TSCAG website, Facebook page and Twitter account.

Complementing this work are additional projects and tasks that TSCAG has engaged in to explore and learn about challenges facing the family and youth services sector and

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<sup>32</sup> Townsville Stronger Communities Action Group (Qld), *Strategic Summary*, Unpublished (2017).

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to help the group learn from and enhance outcomes for young offenders and their families across Townsville.<sup>33</sup> These are listed in Table 1 below.

**Table 1**

| <b>Project/activity</b>                        | <b>Brief description</b>  |
|--|---|
| Detection of vulnerable young people           | Police street-checks are vetted for problem behaviour by young people. Monthly referrals can then be made to Family and Child Connect. The group follows up young people who appear on the police street checks over consecutive months.  |
| Place-based activities                         | Joint agency place-based door knocks and community information gatherings. Some environmental design planning with Department of Housing and Public Works, Queensland Police Service and the local council. Regular stakeholder meetings about the broader Upper Ross community. In response to high numbers of youth congregating around the Stockland shopping centre and a nearby McDonalds, Queensland Police Service and TSCAG have also partnered to engage young people about the situation. |
| Court early-response service                   | This started as a project to provide early intervention and access to services for vulnerable families at the court house. This merged into a joint program with Family and Child Connect.  |
| Community development                          | The establishment of the Queensland Police Service's First Nation's Reference Group to develop and implement a Reconciliation Action Plan.  |
| Sector engagement                              | Assisting Queensland Youth Services to deliver a forum for the Townsville youth services sector, including a session on social impact and collaboration. In general, TSCAG seeks ways to enhance the youth sector's response to youth crime issues.   |
| Calls for service                              | A strategy between the Department of Housing and Public Works and the Queensland Police Service to reduce the number of police calls for service to public housing properties.  |
| Priority profile                               | A joint project between several agencies to track the most prolific offenders and ensure gaps are minimised.  |
| Transition from custody                        | Discussions held with staff involved in the transition systems and advice to EC regarding this.   |
| Domestic violence integrated response          | Housing and Child Safety representatives sit on the Domestic Violence Integrated Response Group, which is led by the Queensland Police Service and consists of key agencies that seek to address extreme cases of domestic violence.  |
| Assisting the Yinda cultural mentoring program | Referrals are provided to the Yinda cultural mentoring program and impounded vehicles are supplied for its U-Turn program.  |

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

## *B SWOT analyses*

While the above briefly describes some of TSCAG's diverse work, its primary task is to intensively coordinate services for families and children identified as most in need. The following section will present a strength, weaknesses, opportunity and threats (SWOT)<sup>34</sup> analysis of the SCEP model as documented by the authors. The SWOT will be used to help reflect on the original strategy, as described throughout this report, and examine how the strategy may be adjusted to ensure relevance and effectiveness in achieving the stated objectives.

### **Strengths**

- Staff consistency on the action group enables the development of meaningful relationships with clients.
- Knowledge of the government and non-government sectors and how these agencies interface. Positional power and authority and political legitimacy enable TSCAG to advocate and navigate through government agencies on behalf of clients to achieve goals.
- Diversity and strengths of individual practice frameworks allow TSCAG members to view challenges through multiple practice lenses. This provides an opportunity to share these learnings with service providers.
- Bringing senior practitioners together from across Townsville enables a sharing of knowledge of local families who may be experiencing challenges, thereby offering an holistic perspective.

### **Weaknesses**

- The SCEP model's procedural complexity made it difficult to achieve consistent and effective application. This was largely due to the variance in individual skill sets and individual definitions of case management processes.
- Through active learnings, the SCEP model required modification to include a need for TSCAG members to actively lead case management of clients, going beyond a case coordination role.
- The ability to identify the willingness of a family and young person to receive assistance and their current stage of change. This ensures the family and young person are making informed decisions about the goals which they seek to achieve therefore aligning with client focused practice.
- There is no clear dedicated consultative space for co-developing projects and ideas with the community, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

### **Opportunities**

- Share the learnings surrounding SCEP with funding bodies.
- Enhanced relationships with service providers to grow a consensus understanding of what is case management practice and process.
- Further develop relationships in the family and youth services sector to enhance service responses to clients outside of the SCEP model.

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<sup>34</sup> Tricker above n 300, 171.

## **Threats**

- Inconsistent understanding and implementation of case management across the government and non-government sectors. This is apparent with integration and collaboration surrounding the goals of families and young people.
- After two years of working with the family and youth services sector, TSCAG does not yet have a complete map of available services.
- Human resource issues within the government and non-government sectors result in multiple changes to staffing, leading families and young people to cycle through multiple relationships. This greatly impacts on the development of a trusting, non-judgemental relationship as identified in the client-centred approach. Without an effective relationship, goal development may not be relevant to the client.

## *C Recommendations*

Key learnings indicate that a re-evaluation of TSCAG's SCEP strategy is essential to determine future direction. As with any action learning process, the challenges experienced in implementing the SCEP led to learnings that could be used to enhance the focus and direction of future coordination efforts. Together with the EC, TSCAG can reflect on learnings to date and reconsider the strategic direction of SCEP. Considering the SWOT analysis noted above, the key themes to consider at a strategy level include:

- Determine the best way to use TSCAG resources to increase the effectiveness of case management services across the Townsville community;
- That the government and non-government sectors work together to develop a shared understanding of case management;
- Develop a process that uses TSCAG to explore inventive solutions for complex problems facing complex cases;
- Prioritise mapping of the family and youth services sector across the Townsville Local Government Area to enable an effective place-based needs analysis; and
- Develop and define a community engagement process to enable joint analyses of challenges in the community and co-design of solutions. This should include dominant representation from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The concept of bringing together senior representatives from across government to work in a collaborative unit is a direct example of thinking outside the box and looking beyond mere deterrence. TSCAG's full potential may not be in replicating case management tasks, which are already fulfilled by government and non-government agencies, but in its unique ability to see current procedures and systems through a complex and multi-faceted lens. This ability has demonstrated an opportunity to lead change across the government space. Furthermore, there is potential to work in partnership with non-government organisations and the broader community particularly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to lead change. This would, in effect, lead the way in rethinking criminal justice policies and policies that have the potential to reduce crime in Townsville, North Queensland.

