

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 8th May 2013

State Budget misses opportunities to think outside in youth justice

Jesuit Social Services believes the 2013-14 Victorian State Budget has missed the opportunity to build a more effective youth justice system, particularly for young people in regional Victoria.

Commenting on yesterday's state Budget, Jesuit Social Services' CEO, Julie Edwards said, "The Budget contained some welcome announcements for vulnerable children and the wider justice system. However it has missed the opportunity to invest in initiatives which will strengthen our youth justice system, many of which were identified by Jesuit Social Services in our recent research report [Thinking Outside: Alternatives to Remand for children.](#)"

Noting the announcement that funding for after hours bail support will be continued, Ms Edwards said, "The fact that 80% of arrests take place after hours means that this program plays a key role in diverting children from custody. However, after hours bail support shuts at 3am and does not provide a full service outside of the metropolitan area. A larger investment in this service would have addressed these gaps and kept more Victorian children out of custody.

"Victorian children should not be disadvantaged because of where they live, particularly regional youth justice clients who might end up in custody hundreds of kilometres from their home. The Government's failure to fund bail support outside of regional areas is concerning and leaves children in regional areas at a disadvantage."

The 2013-14 Budget contained several welcome announcements that have the potential to keep vulnerable children out of the justice system. Ms Edwards commended the Government for these investments, "Much needed extra funding for the out of home care system is welcomed as children in this system all too often end up involved in youth justice. We also welcome the announcement that a crime statistics agency will be established. We have previously recommended this in our research and submissions to Government. We urge the Government to ensure this statistics agency extends right across Government so that we can see trends across the spectrum of services – from child protection, to youth justice through to adult Corrections.

"A major challenge continues to be to ensure the delivery of a more effective system of youth justice diversion in Victoria. We will continue to work with the Government to achieve this."

Jesuit Social Services is a not-for-profit organisation which works to build a just society by advocating for social change and promoting the health and wellbeing of disadvantaged young people, families and communities.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

BUILDING A JUST SOCIETY



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