

Summary:

Project Booyah is an initiative of the Child Protection and Investigation Unit (CPIU), Coomera District Police, Queensland Police Service (QPS). This is a multi-agency project designed to address the needs of at risk young people in the local area. The QPS assume lead agency conducting the project in partnership with the Nerang Child Safety Service Centre; the Queensland Police-Citizens Youth Welfare Association (PCYC); and Gold Coast Institute of TAFE. All participating agencies share responsibility for assisting young people, particularly young offenders and/or young people at risk of offending.

This program is an important example of problem oriented policing in action in which approaches are aligned with the realities of law and order issues within a stressed community and the development of sustainable and effective partnerships with government, non-government and communities in a common pursuit of reducing and preventing young people's involvement in crime, the criminal justice system and disengagement with community, education and family.

More specifically, the project promotes a collaborative approach designed to address the needs of young people exhibiting violent and/or anti-social behaviours; escalating in their criminal activities; and engaging in self harm and/or substance misuse.

Participants attend an innovative and structured 15 day wilderness adventure camp with a strong emphasis on addressing causal factors associated with their anti-social and/or criminal behaviour. The wilderness adventure therapy based camps operate on a 98 hectare property situated at Natural Bridge in

the Gold Coast hinterland providing an environment conducive to therapeutic approaches and individualised attention.

Participants returning to their communities and lives are supported through the community integration phase of the program. This important innovation assists participants to apply their newly acquired skills within the environment from which they live each day, an environment which has contributed to aspects of their previous anti-social and/or offending behaviour. This phase includes enrolment in a four month interactive learning environment at the Gold Coast Institute of TAFE (GCIT), a practical educational environment. This environment provides vocational skills for employment in a range of occupations including hospitality, retail, tourism, construction, and/or mining.

Participants are mentored throughout this entire program by specialist police detectives within the Coomera District CPIU and attend the Nerang PCYC weekly to engage in extra-curricular activities. They also receive lectures from mental health experts, enabling participants to acquire skills for understanding themselves, their social interactions and desirable/respectful community values. Young people also undergo life skills training and participate in drug and alcohol seminars.

As part of this multi-systemic approach, family members and significant others within the lives of participants are actively involved as an integral part of the program.

At the conclusion of the program, a graduation ceremony is held for participants involving all family members and significant others. While graduation represents the end of the formalised aspect of the program, the

program continues to support its graduates, linking them with local businesses and industries. This ongoing support aims to create future employment opportunities and/or a re-engagement in educational environments.

Description:

A. Scanning:

The Coomera Police District is comprised of a total area of 3,019.2 km². As of 30 June 2012, the estimated resident population of the area was 208,769 persons with 22.2 per cent of persons in the area aged 0 to 14 years. The largest number of families was couple family with children (25,733 families). There were also 8,701 one-parent families, accounting for 15.9 per cent of all families in the area and the number of unemployed persons aged 15 to 24 years in the area represented an unemployment rate of 15.1 per cent in this age group.

There is also currently over 1700 young people within the youth care facilities within the South Eastern Catchment Area.

In December 2011, detectives from the Coomera District CPIU in partnership with Nerang Child Safety Services identified concerns with young people within youth care facilities committing violent assaults upon care providers.

These incidents also involved damage to property and regular cases of young people being reported as missing from facilities. These incidents, specifically their associated financial, social and welfare implications, warranted further examination.

While broader police data confirmed the prevalence of young people in anti-social and criminal activity within this defined geographical area, these facilities and associated young people were particularly significant. An initial scan of existing police data was immediately undertaken to provide preliminary context to the suspected problem. This initial analysis confirmed statistically significant increases in calls for service from these facilities. The analysis further revealed an increasing impost on policing resources, with repeat calls for service focusing on certain facilities and a minority of young people. It was apparent repeat calls for service to this minority of locations and people that initially sparked police attention.

The initial analysis confirmed these locations and people were a problem. For police within this busy area, this also confirmed this problem as a priority in light of the impost on both first response officers as well as those specialists attached to child protection units.

B. Analysis:

Confirmation of these locations and people as a local problem led to further analysis to provide a deeper appreciation of the factors underlying and/or contributing to the problem. Such an approach required a commitment to identifying and consulting with stakeholders, in particular the various agencies tasked with comparable and/or complementary jurisdiction associated with young people and/or facilities associated with young people.

To facilitate effective discussion, meetings were arranged with Nerang Child Safety Services and PCYC. Armed with police data which revealed young offenders accounted for approximately 28% of unlawful entry offences, 25% of reported assaults, and 20% of wilful damage offences in the 2011-12 calendar year, we sought their perceptions of the identified locations and

young people. The Department of Communities (Child Safety and Disability Services) data enhanced existing police holdings, confirming that a high proportion of predominantly property offences in the area were committed by young people entrenched in the criminal justice system and/or previously subject to intervention by support agencies.

Whilst researching the underlying factors conducive to crime and antisocial behaviour amongst young people in care home facilities, a close association between alcohol and drug abuse was also identified. Further analysis revealed that substance misuse was also contributing to the broader antisocial behaviour of young people within the Coomera Police District.

Research further indicates that the average 18 year old male offender has the highest rate of re-offending and will cost society an average of \$3 million dollars in justice, police, correctional, and welfare systems and to victims in his life time. It should be further noted that it currently costs approximately \$500 per day to house a juvenile in an approved correctional facility.

In addition to substance misuse, the analysis importantly revealed a lack of seamless service delivery for dealing with the needs of these young people. Service gaps were affecting society's ability to identify, assist and divert young people at risk of offending, and/or currently offending.

Through an interagency, cooperative approach, it was determined that other environmental factors contributing to the offending behaviour required careful consideration. An attribute of adopting a multi-disciplinary approach to analysis was the collective ability to consider a broader range of issues as opposed to those typically considered by policing agencies in isolation. As a result of this approach, additional familial and social issues and stressors

were identified as causing and/or contributing to the identified offending behaviour.

This collaborative approach also revealed that previous efforts at addressing this behaviour, typically criminal justice centred responses, were ineffective. This realisation promoted a consideration of multi-systemic approaches to reducing and/or eliminating offending behaviour, as well as reducing and/or eliminating the associated harm. This recognition reinforced the significance of the multi-agency approach as it enables leveraging the expertise of often disparate service providers.

The committee agreed that the QPS would assume lead agency to promote a collaborative government/non government approach not only for addressing the issues of young people in care, but also for identified 'at risk' young people aged 13-17 years within the Coomera District.

With this in mind, and in alignment with program guidelines, the Project Booyah Program model was conceptualised and began to take form.

The committee therefore determined that extensive research needed to be undertaken into programs targeting 'at risk' behaviours of young people. Research undertaken by the multi-agency project committee identified countless programs targeting young people at risk of entering the Juvenile Justice System. Some had been trialled, each with varying effects on rates of repeat offending and social outcomes for participants.

While traditional boot camps, using intensive exercise, military drills and hard labour are less common in Australia than say in the United States of America, they have been found to produce positive, short-term attitudinal

change among offenders. Their long-term effects however produced mixed results.

The Australian Institute of Criminology suggest that strict, military style programs, such as Boot Camps, are ineffective at reducing rates of recidivism unless they are accompanied by therapeutic and skill building components that can be applied to the young person's usual environment. The committee also researched the importance of community re-integration following the successful completion of camps to enhance the sustainability of impact and deliver real change for young people.

Research indicates that early interventions are appropriate for young people beyond their formative years. However, the success of 'delayed' early intervention requires a focused program tailored for individual young people and, agreement and support from their family. Focusing on individual need during any intervention program recognises that young people who present with multiple risk factors for offending and/or come to the attention of the criminal justice system are more likely to progress into permanent offending careers.

The committee determined that the response(s) adopted also needed to incorporate an interactive learning environment; drug/alcohol awareness lectures; and promotion of good physical and mental health, enabling young people to develop their social interactions and desirable/respectful community values.

The committee therefore adopted the following aim for the ultimate response(s) adopted:

“Reduce and prevent youth crime through a structured adventure wilderness therapy based camp and Targeted Programming intervention strategy for young offenders, young people at-risk of offending, youth crime spots (crime attractors) and areas where young offenders come from (crime generators)”.

C. Response:

The committee considered various approaches to address offending young people within stressed communities and agreed to an approach based on multi systemic approaches to reduce offending and associated harm. Targeted Programming, a strategy adopted and evaluated in NSW, would require significant modification to meet the needs of the young people associated with this problem. The committee specified the following objectives; objectives which would ultimately serve as the base for process and outcome evaluations:

- Identify, recruit and engage the participation of offending young people, young people at risk as well as youth crime hot spots in a focused, tailored (individualistic) and managed manner to reduce the likelihood of offending and/or re-offending.
- Assume a role as an effective partner with government, non-government and communities in pursuit of youth crime reduction and prevention. Recruit, supervise, support and train appropriate personnel to implement *Targeted Programming*.

- Recognise and build upon the strengths of young people, families/significant others and communities, building resilience and enhancing protective factors. Engage the participation of young people in a program design ensuring interventions is client-oriented and relevant to their needs.
- Treat participants and their respective families/significant others with respect and dignity, promoting pro-social behaviour to help young people learn effective ways of coping with frustration and dealing with difficult situations.
- Respect and accommodate cultures, languages and religions of participants, families/significant others, adopting an individualistic approach to the program design which takes into account the participant's age, gender and ability.
- Involve families/significant others in programs and relevant interventions. While young people will remain the core focus of interventions, families, peers and significant others in the lives of these young people will participate where appropriate.
- Reduce unintended consequences of working with young people, through a commitment to monitoring the potential for negative effects of labelling that might result from involvement with police.
- Work in partnership with those agencies that address causes of crime, including structural factors such as child maltreatment, poor educational outcomes, poor nutrition and health outcomes and low levels of informal control.

- Disseminate research findings to contribute to evidence based policing through knowledge exchange, while upholding privacy principles.
- Rigorously evaluate the quality and outcomes of interventions for the participants, and their families/significant others.

'Project Booyah' is based on the Targeted Programming approach and was designed to target the specific issue of drug and alcohol abuse, and related antisocial/criminal behaviours.

The committee designed a program capable of empowering young people, instilling confidence to make the right choice. It was recognised that it was important for young people to develop these skills at a young age as drug and alcohol abuse can, without proper guidance, become a dangerous cycle severely affecting a person throughout their entire life.

Although it was recognised that there is no single factor that can be specified as the 'cause' of anti-social or criminal behaviour, the committee recognised that helping a young person change their current situation requires commitment and support for the young person, their primary learning environment – (in most cases schools) and their immediate support group – family and friends.

To understand how a young person's behaviour develops, Project Booyah considers three factors

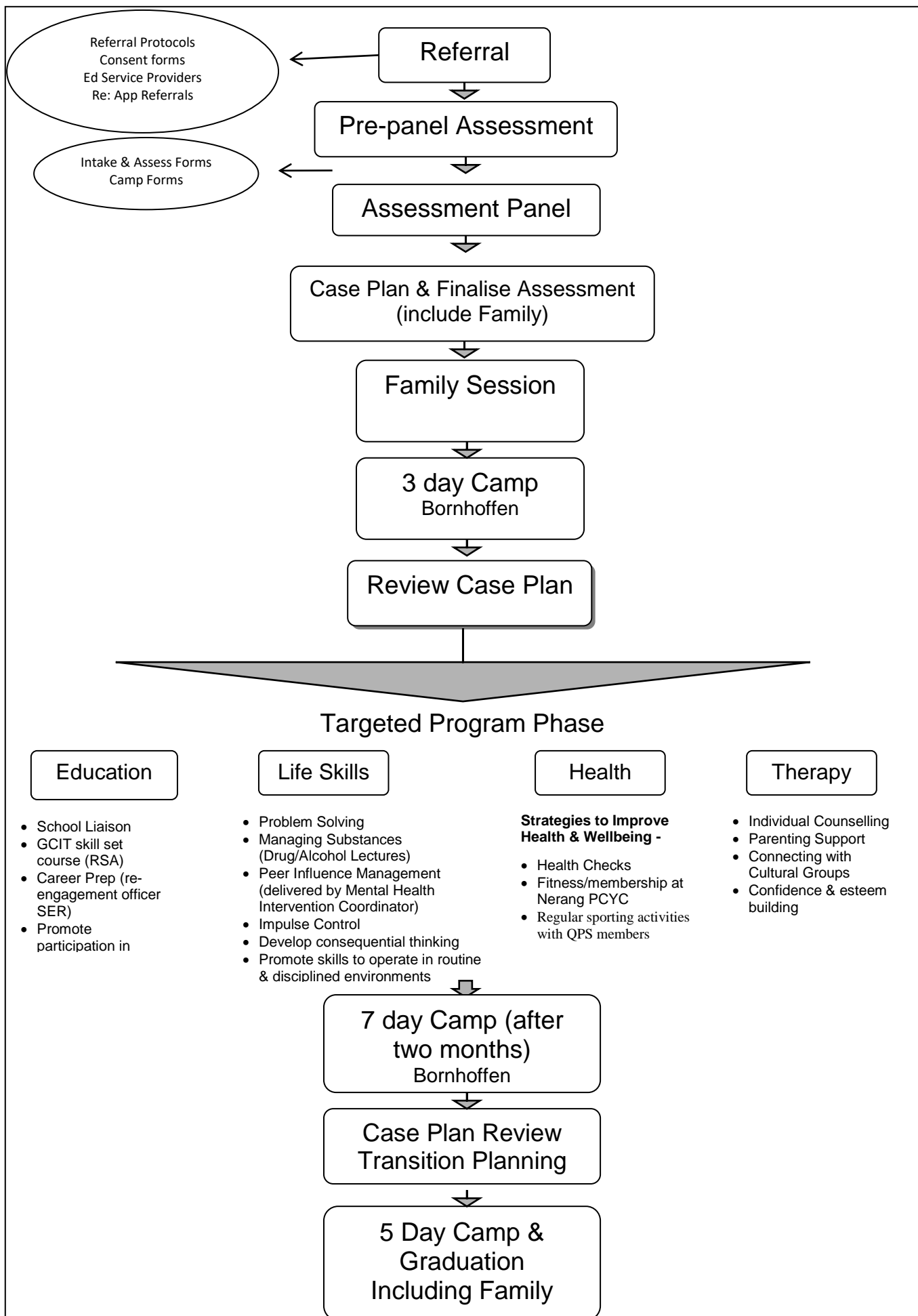
- their genetic make up,
- their family environment, and
- the community in which they live.

These factors shape the skills, attitudes and abilities young people develop, and also influence behavioural problems. Often, more than one causal and/or contributing factor can be present in a young person's life. The response also recognised an increase in self-harming by these young people and their disengagement from their community for a variety of reasons.

Associated referral criteria was developed and agreed between participating agencies, based on a young person exhibiting any of the following risk factors:

- early family/parental conflict
- poor parental supervision and discipline
- commencement of association with peer group with anti-social attitudes
- early involvement with alcohol and drug use
- family members involved in the criminal justice system/ condoning anti-social and criminal
- behaviour
- child maltreatment
- recent disengagement from education, training and/or employment of at immediate risk of disengagement
- anti-social behaviour

Below is the service delivery model that encapsulates the Project Booyah program:



'Project Booyah', which translates to an expression for 'joy, excitement or triumph', seeks to implement evidence-informed 'Boot Camp' methodologies, wilderness adventure therapy; expedition based outdoor education, decision making/problem solving exercises, resilience training, policing strategies and family inclusive principles. Importantly this project was tailored to meet the specific environment of Coomera and the community in which the program would be implemented.

Prior to each camp; the program commences with an information/education night for the parents/significant others of the participants. This ensures that the parents/significant others are aware of the processes adopted, are actively involved in the entire program and appreciate the possible reactions of their loved one, while also being provided tools to appropriately deal with participant reactions.

Phase One:

The identified 'at risk' young people participate in a 3 day introduction camp coordinated by the PCYC staff and Police at the camp location, Bornhoffen. The program is co-ordinated and delivered by qualified and experienced outdoor education facilitators, skilled in wilderness adventure treatment and QPS representatives.

PCYC Bornhoffen employs professionals trained in narrative practice, experiential learning, psychological first aid, wilderness first aid and multiple disciplines across a variety of adventure based activities.

Young people participate in structured experiences designed to challenge and extend them within a supportive environment. The young people participate

in a variety of techniques to reflect and draw learning from the experience which can be applied in everyday life.

Program staff recognise that each individual is different and that we all have unique strengths, skills and experience. The project supports individuals assuming responsibility for themselves, and encourages them to choose their own appropriate level of challenge (extension). Young people will embark on a three day camp that introduces them to individual, team and leadership development, taking advantage of the therapeutic benefits of the bush setting.

Phase Two:

The second phase of this process is aimed at implementing an Early Intervention Program (EIP) model that will build upon resilience gained from the camp. This involves the young people engaging with police at the Nerang PCYC once a week over a four month period. They will participate in a targeted skill set developed by the Gold Coast Institute of TAFE (GCIT) for employment in a number of areas.

An interactive learning environment is provided at the Ashmore Campus of the GCIT and delivered by lecturers linked with industry leaders on the Gold Coast. Young people who successfully complete this skill set receive a qualification in hospitality/retail ideal for employment with local program partners including McDonalds, Zarraffa's, Dreamworld, Marriott Hotel and Masters Home Improvement.

Psychologists and/or social workers from government Mental Health Services provide monthly lectures to the young people promoting resilience, anger management and self esteem. Drug and alcohol education are also presented to the cohort and individual case management plans are developed as

required. Re-engagement officers from the government's Education Queensland deliver literacy and numeracy classes to ensure young people have age appropriate skills. The analysis stage revealed that a lack of age appropriate literacy and numeracy skills contributed to a proportion of the targeted young people detaching from schooling. The young people are also exposed to regular physical activities promoted through the Nerang PCYC with full membership provided. Life skills training covering personal development; building a foundation and setting realistic goals; overcoming barriers; inspirations and achieving your dreams; job readiness/budgeting and time management skills; and health and nutrition are tailored and delivered to support participants.

Within phase two of the program, the young people return to Bornhoffen for a 7 day camp in order to maintain the acquired skills and healthy relationships with instructors/mentors.

Phase Three:

Young people return to Bornhoffen for a five day camp after completing phase two to participate in the final adventure based journey under the direct supervision of police. This camp reviews learning's and core values and promotes a feeling of attachment to family and community. The aim of this aspect of the program is for young people to develop necessary life skills for decision making, promoting self respect and respect for their families/significant others and their local community. The young people build on their skills in an incremental way, extending the concept of self to include self as a part of family and community.

At the conclusion of the program, a graduation ceremony is conducted at the Nerang PCYC and Ashmore GCIT respectively incorporating all family members/significant in recognition of their integral role in supporting participants during and after the program.

Participants are then linked with local business/industry partners with the aim of securing employment. Young people are also encouraged to re-engage in their schooling environment if age appropriate.

Government and non-government departments and interested stakeholders are introduced to a young person on a case by case basis throughout the program. This purposive strategy is designed to ensure participants and their families are linked into additional expertise and support agencies to assist with family issues and relationships to sustain successful outcomes.

Assessment

The long term aim of this project is to ultimately influence the behaviour and attitude of participants and reduce their involvement in the criminal justice system.

The program's outcomes are measured against the following performance indicators:

- Pre participation measures - rate of offending over the last 12 months & behavioural issues
- Participation measures – rate of re-offending and behavioural issues
- Post participation measures - rate of re-offending and behavioural issues.

- Pre- and post-participation truancy rates;
- Pre- and post-participation employment engagement;
- Post-participation recidivism rate at 12 months;
- Pre and post – participation perceptions of family functionality from young people and their family members ;
- Pre and post – participation perceptions of health from young people and their family members;
- Pre and post – participation measures of well-being (including measures of drug use and mental health);
- Pre and post – participation perceptions of self esteem from young people and their family members;
- Pre and post – participation perceptions of feeling safe and supported during program from young people;
- Pre and post- participation of consequential awareness from young people.
- Pre and post – participation perceptions of personal and inter-personal skills from young people and their family members;

Results for Project Booyah thus far have been encouraging. This is particularly true for reducing offending behaviour and promoting more positive outcomes for the families of the young people involved. Below mentioned are the results for Project Booyah to date:

	PRE-COURSE	COURSE	AFTER COURSE
Cohort 1 18 young persons 13-16 years (Males/Females)	<i>Pre-March 2012</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 committed • 124 criminal offences 	<i>March 2012 – August 2012</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 committed • 17 criminal offences 	<i>August 2012 – 1 May 2013</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 committed • 7 criminal offences
Cohort 2 16 young persons 13-16 years (Males/Females)	<i>Pre-August 2012</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 committed • 38 criminal offences 	<i>August 2012 - December 2012</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 committed • 1 criminal offence 	<i>December 2012 – 1 May 2013</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nil offences committed
Cohort 3 10 young persons 14-16 years (Males)	<i>Pre-February 2013</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 committed • 14 criminal offences 	<i>February 2013 - June 2013</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nil offences committed 	

It should be noted that the participants in cohort 3 have predominantly been recruited due their involvement in anti social activities associated with abuse of alcohol/drugs. This culminated in regular street check reports being compiled by Police that has ceased since involvement in the Booyah program.

50 percent of the second cohort has successfully gained employment with established business partners while several other participants returned to school on a full-time basis, and three joined the Australian Army Cadet Brigade. Currently 10 young people are participating in the latest Booyah Program, due to graduate on 20 June 2013. Two of the current cohort failed to attend school in 2012 exited the program after two months for the explicit purpose of re-engaging with their local schools. These two young people have maintained a high attendance rate at their schools. The remaining eight young people are expected to pass their educational component and participate in interviews with retail/tourism employers in early June. This cohort has not re-offended since linking with the Booyah program. Successful educational and employment outcomes are being achieved as a result of strong partnerships with the local businesses and industry leaders who collectively recognise the importance of providing local community support to these young people.

Project Booyah committee members are currently negotiating engagement in the program with franchise owners from Zarraffas Coffee across Queensland with a view of promoting future traineeship opportunities. A 16 year old female graduate from the Booyah program who successfully completed her traineeship with Zarraffas has agreed to act as an ambassador for the program for these negotiations with franchise owners. Prior to joining the Booyah program, she was addicted to drugs and alcohol and had attempted suicide on several occasions. She has now been employed for 6 months with Zarraffas and returned to school to obtain her grade 12 certificate.

Furthermore, evidence provided by program partner, Nerang Child Safety Service Centre, revealed that nine of the program group currently in the care of the Department exhibit improved behaviours reflected by more consistent and stabilised placements. One 'high risk' child in long term care has advanced significantly. Not only has his offending behaviour ceased, he has re-engaged with his family on a full time basis.

These results were recognised when Project Booyah was awarded the 2012 Queensland Child Protection Week Award – Youth Participation Category. In addition, the two latter case studies reinforce that 'success' or 'outcomes' need to look beyond an artificial offending/reoffending paradigm, instead examining the individual circumstances of young people and how program participation has impacted on an individual and their respective environment.

At a program level, Project Booyah enjoys a high attendance and completion rate due to the program design which ensures that interventions are aligned with client need. All participants and their respective families/significant others are treated with respect and dignity, promoting pro-social behaviour to young people reinforcing effective ways of coping with frustration and dealing with difficult situations.

Coomera District CPIU detectives involvement in the mentoring of the young people is a unique aspect of the program and critical to the successes of the program providing a positive environment to reengage and realign relationships, promote healthy role modelling and knowledge sharing particularly around the offending continuum and the role of Police in their local community.

The collaborative approach is unique in that it allows the QPS to assume a role as an effective partner with government, non-government and communities in a common pursuit to reduce and prevent young peoples' involvement in the criminal justice sector.

Project Booyah hopes to maintain an ethos of "You have a CHOICE, Use your VOICE!"

Section 3: Agency and Officer Information

Authors

- Detective Senior Sergeant Ian Frame – Officer in Charge – Coomera District Child Protection Investigation Unit – Queensland Police Service
- Inspector Stephen Pyne – Patrol Services Inspector– Coomera Police District - Queensland Police Service

Key Project Members

- Detective Acting Sergeant Constable Nathan Antonik – course facilitator - Coomera District Child Protection Investigation Unit – Queensland Police Service
- Sergeant Scott Muldoon – Branch Manager – Nerang Police Citizens Youth Club
- A/Practice Manager Kristy Yarnold, Nerang Child Safety Services
- Ms Debbie Goodchild – Clinical Nurse Consultant -Mental Health Intervention Coordinator
- Mike Bareham – Associate Director of Services – Gold Coast Institute of TAFE
- Peter Hodges – Policy Manager – Queensland Education Department

Project Contact Person

- Inspector Stephen Pyne – Patrol Services Inspector– Coomera Police District.
11 De Barnett street Coomera, Queensland, Australia
Telephone +61755147707
Email: Pyne.Stephenj@police.qld.gov.au
- Detective Senior Sergeant Ian Frame – Officer in Charge – Coomera District Child Protection Investigation Unit
11 De Barnett street Coomera, Queensland, Australia
Telephone +61755147810
Email: Frame.Ianl@police.qld.gov.au