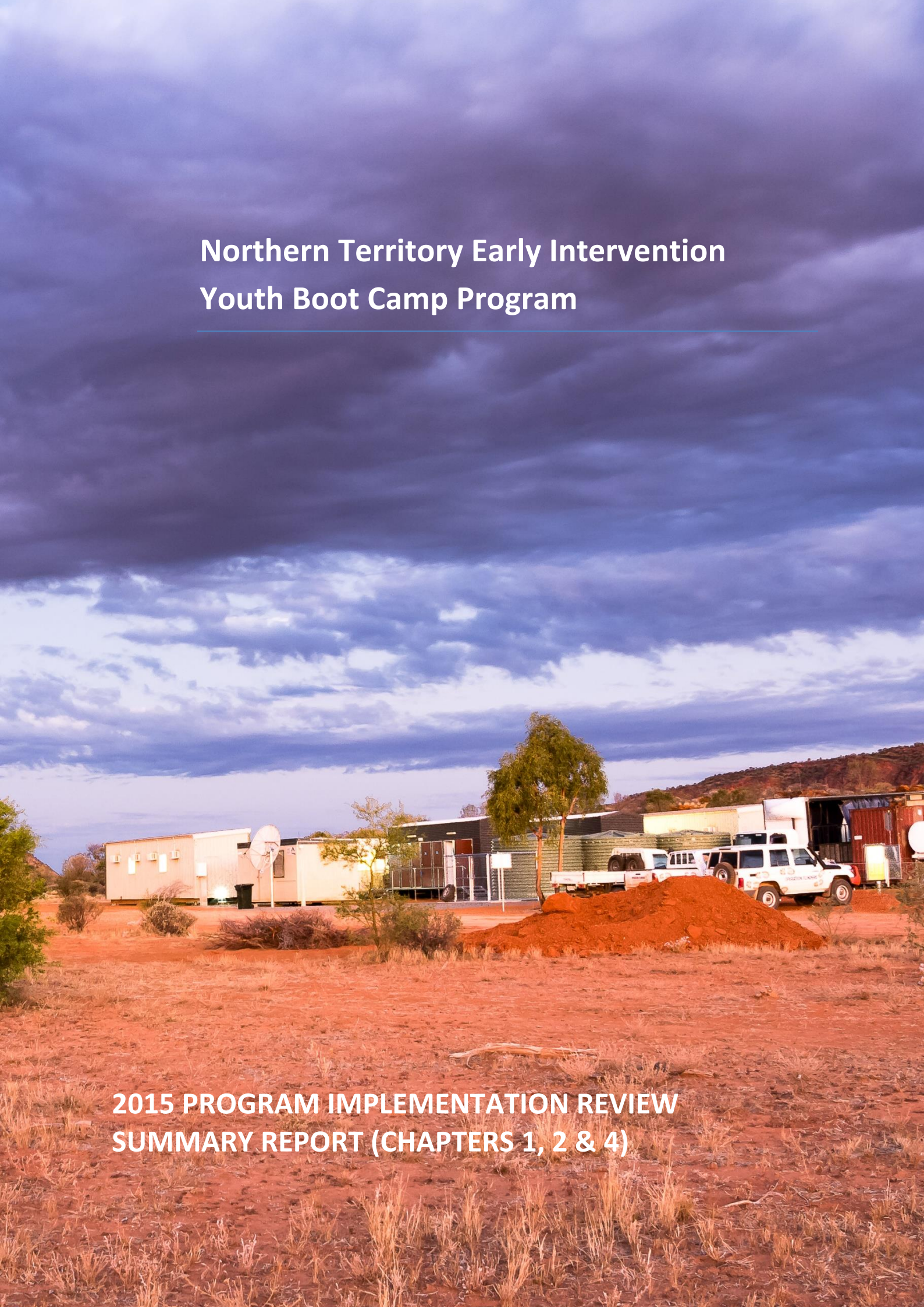
Northern Territory Early Intervention Youth Boot Camp Program



2015 PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW SUMMARY REPORT (CHAPTERS 1, 2 & 4)

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Date of Report: 7th January 2016

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Navigating this Report

This report has been written for a wide audience. It is acknowledged that individual stakeholders will be drawn to different chapters and depth of information. Deliberate attempts have been made for large sections of the report to not be written in an overly technical manner, but instead, provide the reader a cohesive narrative that contextualises the review, and integrates the evaluation material and outcomes within a wider forensic, therapeutic and youth justice body of literature.

As a starting point, the reader is encouraged to review the Contents section and then read Chapter 4: Summary and Recommendations. This chapter starts with a consolidated summary of the previous chapters. From there, it is suggested that individual chapters are reviewed in order of preference and interest.

A brief summary of each chapter is provided as follows:

- Chapter 1 (Context and Brief Literature Review) provides a summary context of the Northern Territory (NT) youth justice system, including the rationale and context for the EIYBC Program. Summary evidence informing the best-practice implementation of intensive wilderness programs for youth-at-risk is provided.
- Chapter 2 (Review Methodology) provides a detailed summary of the intent, processes and instruments underpinning the evaluation review.
- Chapter 3 (Operation Flinders Program) provides a detailed summary of the design and implementation of the Operation Flinders EIYBC Program, and the evidence collated as part of the process and outcome review. Specific recommendations for ongoing program development are offered. **Chapter omitted from public version of report.**
- Chapter 4 (Summary and Recommendations) summarises the previous chapters, and makes recommendations regarding the ongoing development and refinement of the EIYBC Program within the Northern Territory.

The appendices provide more detailed information referenced in the aforementioned chapters. **Appendices have been omitted from public report. Specific appendices are available upon request from the NT Government.**

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Acknowledgements

This report would not have been possible without the significant contribution from key program staff, government and non-government stakeholders, families and participants that contributed their time, energy and positive intent towards the review process.

Special thanks go to:

- Ms Amanda Nobbs-Carcuro, Ms Jade Ritchie and Ms Lynne Ellis that supported the many requests for information.
- Mr John van Ruth, Ms Kylie Pointon, Mr Karl Howard, Mr Stuart Duncan, Ms Liz Williams and Ms Robyn Donnelly who, alongside their Operation Flinders, YMCA and Relationships Australia staff teams, facilitated the review team's many requests for support, and access to information and families.
- Mr David Jaensch whose professional photos of Loves Creek Station and surrounds appear in this report. David's photos appear on the front page, and page numbers 20, 38, 48, 53 and 113. Copyright of these photos is retained by David.
- Ms Jennie Renfree, NT Police, for her tireless work in facilitating the collation of police and offending data appearing in this report.
- All stakeholders that provided their time and contributed to the evaluation process (please see Appendix A for a list of those who contributed).
- The young people and their families that contributed to the evaluation process and spoke frankly of their EIYBC Program experiences.

It should also be noted that this work would not have been possible without the commitment from the Northern Territory Government, both in terms of funding and investing in the coordinated and systemic development of the EIYBC Program.

Terminology

In this report the term **"Aboriginal"** is used to refer to people of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent. Where reference in this report is made to published material in which the term "Indigenous" is used, the same terminology will be adopted.

The term **"EIYBC Program"** is short for Early Intervention Youth Boot Camp Program.

The term **"review team"** refers to Ivan Raymond and Sean Lappin.

The term **"referral agency"** collectively refers to schools, government and non-government agencies that referred individual or groups of young people to attend an EIYBC Program.

The term **"intensive wilderness programming"** refers to a clearly defined and structured group-based program that is delivered within a remote or wilderness area, which is experienced by the participants as both physically and psychological demanding (or intense in nature).

The terms **"young person/young people"** collectively refers to children and young people aged between 12 and 18 years of age.

The term **"preferred provider"** refers to the NT Government contracted EIYBC Program provider. In 2015, the preferred provider was the Operation Flinders Foundation.

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Terms of Reference

The Northern Territory Government commissioned Connected Self to undertake a review and evaluation to address the following questions:

1. What is the breadth of outcomes being delivered by the EIYBC Program?[1]
2. What are NT stakeholder perceptions of the EIYBC Program and individual service providers?
3. To what degree has the contracted provider, Operation Flinders, delivered a program consistent with the EIYBC Program Guidelines and their individual Program Logic and Theory? What are the reasons behind changes in program delivery or implementation?
4. What are the continuous improvement (and capacity building) strategies required to be undertaken by provider agencies and the NT Government to build the individual and collective capacity of the EIYBC Program for service provision into 2016?
5. How can the EIYBC Program Guidelines and EIYBC Program Introductory Training Package be further refined and developed?

[1] Given the EIYBC Program is in a refinement phase, this assessment was restricted to a broad-based exploratory analysis.

Authors

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Ivan is the Senior Psychologist and Founding Director of Connected Self. He is finalising a PhD with Flinders University that addresses the question: "Can intensive wilderness programs be a catalyst for change for young people at risk of offending, educational disengagement or poor wellbeing?" He has extensive experiences as a practitioner, trainer, consultant and evaluator within government and non-government educational, child protection and youth justice settings. Historical practitioner roles include mentor, youth worker, program facilitator, wilderness-adventure facilitator, senior youth worker, supervisor alternative care, psychologist and Principal Psychologist. Ivan has been employed as a researcher for the University of South Australia and has published widely within the area of youth service provision. He is passionate about the design, implementation and evaluation of multi-systemic and innovative interventions, and has developed the life buoyancy model of change and resilience to guide program development, implementation and staff capacity building. The model provides specific processes and strategies to support children, young people and adults grow and adapt to the face-paced nature of modern life, as well as experience wellbeing, resilience and prosocial success (Raymond, 2013). The model is founded upon empowering individuals to be agents of change, growth and adaptation in their life.

Sean Lappin

Sean is the Principal Consultant and Managing Director of Connected Self. He has worked in the areas of youth programming, child protection and juvenile justice for a period of over 20 years; including within the roles of youth worker, alternative care supervisor, Chief Project Officer, Project Manager and Senior Manager for Community Residential Care for the South Australian Government. Sean has also worked as the National Advisor, Homelessness and Housing, for Mission Australia and has also acted as the National Manager for Community Services. As part of these roles Sean has undertaken key roles in large scale research projects in relation to homelessness in Australia and advocacy initiatives for housing and homelessness programs. Sean has significant experience in the development, management, evaluation and delivery of programs for young people, including young people with significant and complex needs. Sean has undertaken program management roles which incorporated the development of client files and information systems; development and implementation of case management processes; development of individual and group interventions; development and implementation of innovative program options (including camps and wilderness-based therapy); convening case planning and review processes; establishing service protocols and agreements with partner agencies and developing and implementing policy; including a lead role in the development of the *Keeping them Safe in Our Care* policy platform for the South Australian Government.

Chapter 1: Context and Brief Literature Review[2]

This chapter briefly summarises the background context behind the implementation of the EIYBC Program, and the body of evidence that informs the understanding and best-practice implementation of the intervention. A brief summary of the development and refinement of the EIYBC Program from 2013 to 2015 is also provided.

1.1 Program Context

1.1.1 Unique Youth Justice Needs and Context

Across Australia, one in four young people aged 16 to 24 experienced a mental health disorder (anxiety, affective or substance use disorder) within a measured 12 month period (Australian Institute of Health & Welfare [AIHW], 2011). In terms of youth justice or offending patterns, Australian figures indicate that one in 385 young people aged from 10 to 17 were on a youth justice supervision order on any given day in 2011 (AIHW, 2014). Furthermore, as young people transition into high school, there is up to a 7% decline in school attendance rates from the period Year 7 to Year 10 (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2013), with approximately 20% of Australian young people not completing Year 12 or their secondary education (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2011).

Compared with these national figures, Northern Territory (NT) young people present with higher rates of mental health, offending, educational disengagement and poor whole-of-life outcomes (Bamblett, Bath, & Roseby, 2010). With approximately 30% of the population identifying themselves as Aboriginal (AIH, 2010), it is universally accepted that Aboriginal young people have disproportionately poorer physical, social, educational and emotional wellbeing outcomes, with this magnified for young people that reside within remote or isolated communities (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare [AIHW], 2011).

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012-13) indicated that while the number of youth offenders in Northern Territory decreased by 4% to 1,600 from 1,660 in 2011-12, this was less than the national average reduction of 6% (ABS, 2014). Northern Territory also recorded the highest rate of youth offending per 100,000 at 4,413, with the principal offence being "acts to cause injury". This contrasts to other states and territories where the principal offences were theft, illicit drug offences and public order

[2] Large sections of this chapter have been reproduced from the 2014 review conducted by Connected Self titled "Early Intervention Youth Boot Camp Program: 2014 Program Implementation Review Summary Report". However, additional and updated information specific to 2015 is provided.

offences; apart from Western Australia who also recorded the principal offence as "acts to cause injury" (but at a much lower frequency than the NT).

In short, adolescence and youth is a period of both vulnerability and opportunity. However, compared to their national counterparts, young people within the NT present with high levels of vulnerability and distinct youth justice needs, with this magnified for Aboriginal young people, especially those originating from remote areas.

1.1.2 Culturally Sensitive and Multi-Systemic Early Intervention

Developmental trajectories initiated or consolidated in youth have the potential to extend into adulthood and have significant individual and collective impact (positive or negative). Young people with histories of offending, school disengagement or mental health problems are at higher risk of developing psychological or behavioural disturbances in adulthood, as well as becoming disengaged from work and social institutions (Finn & Zimmer, 2012; Henry, Knight, & Thornberry, 2012). The social and economic cost of these trajectories on both individuals (Heckman, 2008) and entire nations (Viner et al., 2012) remains significant. In short, early intervention within the period of childhood and adolescence is a best-practice consideration offering the greatest economic returns on investment.

Early intervention remains strongly indicated to reduce Aboriginal over-representation in the youth justice system (Allard et al., 2010), as well as "close the gap" between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal health and wellbeing outcomes (Council of Australian Governments [COAG], 2009). There are numerous determinants of Aboriginal health and welfare, which cluster on environmental, social, economic, cultural and historical domains (Zubrick et al., 2010). The legacy of colonisation and past policies (e.g. Stolen Generation), combined with dislocation from culture, land and spirituality continues to weigh heavily on the Aboriginal psyche, and directly influence current wellbeing and behavioural outcomes in young people (Dudgeon, Wright, Paradies, Garvey, & Walker, 2010). As such, best-practice early interventions for Aboriginal young people should target the broad-based social, cultural and historical factors that impact on wellbeing (Dudgeon et al., 2010), but in a manner that considers broader community wellbeing and the transgenerational impacts of sociohistorical events (Atkinson, Nelson, & Atkinson, 2010).

In short, there is a need for culturally sensitive, multi-systemic and targeted early intervention programs which can respond to the Northern Territory's unique youth justice and demographic needs.

1.1.3 Youth Camps as An Intervention Strategy

In 2008, the previous NT Government implemented the Northern Territory Youth Camp Intervention Strategy. This intervention was precipitated by an increase in youth related crime within the greater Darwin and Alice Springs regions, and represented a bold attempt to deliver a culturally sensitive and targeted youth intervention.

In 2010 Connected Self were contracted to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of three programs funded by the NT Government; which was loosely understood as a diversionary option in conjunction with case management services delivered by other non-government providers. The youth camps, or Youth Rehabilitation Camps as they were also referred to, were part of the overall Youth Justice Strategy in the Northern Territory at that time. The evaluation report was delivered to Government in January 2011 and presentations were made to key Government stakeholders and each of the provider agencies. The recommendations and modelling suggested by the authors were subsequently supported in a follow-up review of the Northern Territory youth justice system (Carney, 2011).

The three programs that were included in the evaluation process were:

- Balunu Healing Camp (Balunu Foundation).
- Brahminy Residential Camp (Brahminy Group Pty Ltd).
- Circuit Breaker Camp (Tangentyere Council).

The primary outcomes of the evaluation process were the identification of a range of recommendations designed to support the ongoing evolution of the programs towards best practice models, as well as to mitigate risks associated with the program operations (Raymond & Lappin, 2011). The authors found that while these early programs demonstrated promise, their lack of integration within the youth justice system and their fragmented post-care support raised doubts regarding the sustainability of outcomes and cost-effectiveness. The targeting, conceptualisation and benchmarking of the service delivery was largely driven by the contracted service providers, and the capacity of the program to respond to the post-care and multi-systemic needs of young people and their families was limited.

In September 2011 Connected Self provided a summary of progress against key recommendations (Raymond & Lappin, 2011), including a proposal for future support for provider agencies. This project continued into 2012 with the view to mitigating risks associated with the programs and building capacity for providers to deliver the program in a manner more closely aligned to best practice principles. It should be noted that while a number of policies, tools and procedures were generated through this process, the engagement from provider agencies varied significantly over time. Subsequently, while improvements resulted, they were not consistently applied across the provider agencies.

Most important to this review, Raymond and Lappin (2011) recommended that the NT Government drive the conceptualisation, benchmarks and targeting of the youth camp intervention, and two program models were recommended that targeted specific youth risk factors and needs:

- Therapeutic Camp Program – short-term intervention (8 to 10 days) for young people presenting with risk factors associated with future offending.

- Therapeutic Residential Program – this longer-term intervention (6 to 18 weeks) was targeted to young people who "have effectively disengaged from services, have comorbid issues and present with recidivist offending patterns".

Furthermore, the authors also recommended robust, well-articulated and accountable post-camp follow-up intervention that was multi-systemic in nature. In other words, integrated into the system (e.g., family, support agencies, school, community etc.) supporting a young person.

1.1.4 Early Intervention Youth Boot Camp Program (EIYBC)

In 2012 the incoming CLP Northern Territory Government introduced a law and order policy, titled Pillars of Justice, which identified the strategic direction for all agencies involved in the adult and youth justice systems. A key youth justice strategy of the incoming Government in 2012-13 was the establishment of Youth Boot Camps through the Strategic Executive Services section of the Youth Justice Division (YJD), within the Department of Correctional Services (DCS). Strategic and Executive Services also provided secretariat for the Youth Justice Advisory Committee, as a requirement embedded in the Youth Justice Act. The YJD's broader mandate was to enhance the youth justice system through interventions delivered via partnerships between Government and non-government agencies, especially for Aboriginal young people owing to their significant over-representation in the youth justice system. Key areas of strategic direction for the YJD were:

- The development and implementation of a Youth Justice Framework.
- The development and implementation of Early Intervention and Sentenced Youth Boot Camps.
- A systemic review of detention center operations.
- The development and implementation of a community-based youth supervision model.

A Department of Correctional Services funding information paper (2013-14) indicated that the purpose of the EIYBC Program was "to provide an intervention for young people at risk of entering a long term criminal career" with the purpose to:

- "Challenge the attitudes and behaviours of young people.
- Enhance the physical health and well-being of young people.
- Enable the identification of family and individual issues.
- Connect young people and families to support services."

The specific desired outcome identified within the funding paper was to "reduce the likelihood of young people being involved in criminal behaviour", with the specific objectives including:

- "Develop the consequential thinking of young people.
- Improve the health and well-being of young people.

- Enhance young people's ability to operate in routine and disciplined environments (such as school).
- Develop young people's family functioning.
- Increase self-confidence of young people.
- Develop the personal and interpersonal skills of young people.
- Increase young people's participation in school/employment."

The EIYBC Program was designed to include two intervention phases:

- Camp - which included the following elements: "structured activities", "natural consequences", "physical activities in a safe environment", "routine and discipline", therapeutic programs", "cognitive behavioural intervention", "cultural programs", "challenging activities", "education programs" and "experiential skill based interventions".
- Community Integration – which included the following elements: "partnering with other services in the delivery of education, heath, family and individual support" and "confirming the new skills, knowledge, attitudes and beliefs developed by the young person" during the camp.

Between 2014 and 2015, the target group for the EIYBC program was "male and female young people aged from 12 to 17 years of age that exhibited three or more of the following factors:

- Early family/parental conflict.
- Poor parental supervision and discipline.
- Commencement of association with peer group with anti-social attitudes.
- Early involvement with alcohol or drug use.
- Family members involved in the criminal justice system/condoning antisocial attitudes or criminal behaviours.
- History of maltreatment, family abuse or neglect.
- Recent disengagement from education, training and/or employment or at immediate risk of disengagement.
- Anti-social behaviour (including disturbance of the peace and trespassing).

The exclusion criteria included young people presenting with one or more of the following factors:

- Young people who are not willing to attend the program.

- History of sexual offences against children/peers.
- Extreme violence and aggression against others.
- Active and severe suicidal ideation and/or self-harm.
- Severe mental health issues (e.g., psychosis).
- Severe substance use dependence (e.g., addiction requiring a closely managed detox).
- Homelessness (where there is no identified placement or supporting adult figure in the post-camp period).
- The camp being used as a substitute for an alternative care placement.
- Severe cognitive or social impairment which impacts on a young person's personal or emotional safety within a wilderness environment and/or group program (e.g., severe and functionally impairing FASD or autism spectrum disorder symptoms).[3]"

Following a tender process, Tangentyere Council Inc and the Operation Flinders Foundation were each contracted to individually deliver one pilot EIYBC program in late 2013. Following a review and further program development, both agencies were contracted by the NT Government to deliver four EIYBC Programs in the second half of 2014. The nature and type of services provided in 2014 is summarised in a previous review (Raymond & Lappin, 2015). Operation Flinders were contracted by the NT Government to deliver eight EIYBC Programs in 2015. The nature of specific service delivery provided by Operation Flinders is provided in Chapter 3.

1.1.5 Integration of EIYBC Program in Youth Justice System

The broad approach of youth justice in the Northern Territory is informed by restorative justice principles. Restorative justice, in the words of Marshall, is "a process whereby all the parties with a stake in a particular offence come together to resolve collectively how to deal with the aftermath of the offence and its implications for the future" (Marshall, 1996). The core intention of the approach, in conjunction with the young offender "making good" for the offence committed, is to divert young people away from the courts and prevent re-offending.

In the Northern Territory there has been a significant focus on diversionary programs for young offenders, with the Juvenile Pre-Court Diversion Scheme introduced in July 2000 and embedded in legislation. While this approach is generally accepted within the community services and youth justice sector, youth justice in the Northern Territory has

[3] Reproduced from EIYBC Program Guidelines.

been highly politicised, and successive governments have implemented policies that appease community sentiment for the NT Government to be "tough on crime".

An important strategic direction of the current Northern Territory Government's law and order policy, Pillars of Justice, is the development and implementation of a Youth Justice Framework. Within this framework, the EIYBC Program is positioned as an early intervention program, and it interfaces with a number of NT youth justice service components, including:

- Family Responsibility Program that works with families and young people around identified wellbeing and behavioural needs.
- Youth Diversion Scheme (YDS) which is operated by Northern Territory Police under a Restorative Justice framework and includes verbal and written warnings and family and victim-offender conferencing.
- Case management - YDS clients who are formally diverted are case managed through the diversion process by a non-government funded service.
- Community corrections who are responsible for the case management of young offenders subject to supervised court and parole orders.
- Court ordered detention for young people with severe and/or recidivist offending patterns.

1.2 Brief Literature Review

This brief literature review is provided to assist the reader understand the evidence that informs the delivery of boot camp interventions, as well as the best-practice considerations that inform the implementation of intensive wilderness interventions for youth at risk of offending.

1.2.1 Review of Effective Crime Prevention Strategies

There is a wide body of literature examining the effectiveness of crime prevention interventions. In a summary review of this evidence, Sallybanks (2003) in "*What works in reducing young people's involvement in crime: Review of current literature on crime prevention*", produced by the Australian Institute of Criminology, conducted an international review of crime prevention strategies. Table 1.1 summarises the evidence.

Table 1.1 Consolidated Summary of Effectiveness of Crime Prevention Strategies (derived from Sallybanks, 2003)

Effective	Preliminary Support	No Support or Ineffective
Social competence training or skill based training based upon a CBT framework	Mentoring	Boot camps with no therapeutic component
Increasing school engagement and promoting positive school behaviour	Police cautioning	Removing young people from a familiar environment with no aftercare support
Multi-systemic therapy (MST)	Youth drug courts	Intensive supervised probation (with no case management)
Intensive supervision and case management (with clear intent)	Outdoor, recreational and wilderness programs (short-term impact)	Programs designed to increase employment
Mediation in the form of family conferencing	Therapeutic communities for substance use	Programs that lack clear aims and objectives and/or are delivered in an ad hoc manner

Pertinent to this review, boot camps with no therapeutic intent (e.g., based upon discipline and compliance as opposed to therapeutically-informed skill development), as well as programs that remove young people from their familiar environment with no aftercare support, are contraindicated or not supported as crime prevention strategies. Interventions targeting skill development through structured learning approaches (cognitive behavioural therapy), applying multi-systemic approaches and increasing school engagement are supported as evidence-informed crime prevention strategies. These later points have been integrated into the ongoing development of the EIYBC Program (see later point 1.3).

1.2.2 Heterogeneity of Programs

This section highlights the diversity of interventions that come under the banner of boot-camps and intensive wilderness programs. Interestingly, program developers and stakeholders may use interchangeable descriptors to describe the same intervention. A feature of both intervention types is that they are notably heterogeneous in terms of definition, composition, participant group and how they operationalise the change process. Each aspect is considered in turn.

First, stakeholders, funders, practitioners and researchers define interventions through their individual lens, and at times, definitions may be at odds with one another. Within

the literature, both researchers and practitioners have found it difficult to clearly define or operationalise the diverse spectrum of outdoor-adventure programs, including delineating them from purely recreational or camping-based experiences (Davis-Berman & Berman, 1994; Russell, 2001).

Second, there is wide variability in the nature, conduct and content of interventions, with this translating to differences across the following domains:

1. Program composition: length, intensity, location, degree of challenge, level of remoteness and type of outdoor experience (e.g., independent backpacking versus fixed accommodation).

2. Facilitation style, with communication ranging from directive or compliance based communication, to therapeutically aligned communication to scaffold increased awareness or skill development.

3. Inclusion of therapeutic enhancement techniques (e.g., anger management training).

4. Degree and nature of post-care services.

Within the wilderness literature, a number of these factors have been found to moderate program outcomes (see meta-analysis by Wilson & Lipsey, 2000). Of interest, program intensity, which is defined as those programs "that employ strenuous solo and group expeditions and other difficult physical activities" are associated with larger program effect sizes (largest reduction in delinquency outcomes) for youth-at-risk cohorts, compared to programs that include less rigorous activities (Wilson & Lipsey, 2000, p. 8).

Third, there are wide differences in the target cohort of wilderness and boot-camp programs for youth-at-risk, with participant targeting ranging from early intervention to rehabilitation. Systematic reviews of the literature (Wilson & Lipsey, 2000), as well as Australian research (Raymond, 2003, 2014), suggests that young people presenting with clear risk factors related to future offending and educational disengagement are more likely to obtain program benefits, compared to young people with fewer or no risk factors.

Finally, all boot camp and wilderness programs purport to create change. However, there is significant diversity in theoretical perspectives to explain how change occurs, and there is no unified model for explaining the diversity of stated outcomes (Russell, 2000). In part, this is due to an over reliance within the literature on outcome based research (Baldwin, Persing, & Magnuson, 2004; Hattie, Marsh, Neill, & Richards, 1997), as opposed to process or theory informing evaluation (Russell, 2000; Russell & Phillips-Miller, 2002). Traditionally, boot-camps have sought to create change through the key program processes of structure, routine, compliance, external authority and overcoming physical challenge (MacKenzie & Hebert, 1996). Conversely, wilderness programs have placed greater emphasis on the role of challenges and experiences within the wilderness environment, with the facilitator shaping, guiding and coaching skill and awareness development (Davis-Berman & Berman, 1994; Gass, 1993). There is a wide agreement within the clinical and forensic literature that interventions founded upon authority and

punishment, as opposed to relationship-based therapeutic processes, are not effective for building long-term mental health and behavioural outcomes (Carr, 2003; Gershoff, 2002).

For a detailed understanding of the conceptual and theoretical thinking underpinning wilderness programs, the reader is encouraged to read a summary review (see Gass, 1993; Mohr et al., 2001; Raymond, 2003). For the purpose of this report, it is concluded that intensive wilderness programs may achieve beneficial outcomes for youth-at-risk client groups for the following reasons (adapted from Mohr et al., 2001, p. 50):

- They remove the participant from a dysfunctional environment and thus the influences and contingencies maintaining dysfunctional conduct;
- They expose the participant to circumstances in which well-established beliefs and dysfunctional behaviour patterns are no longer viable;
- They create an uncomfortable or uncertain internal state (e.g., dissonance) – thus increasing the individual's susceptibility to the influence of models of appropriate conduct and promoting pro-social outcomes;
- They utilise a therapeutic community – i.e., a supportive group setting – in order to enhance the process of change.

1.2.3 Australian Boot Camp Programs

Across Australia, a number of state jurisdictions have funded "boot-camp" interventions under a youth justice service framework. However, there are wide differences in definition, composition, participant targeting and purported change process underpinning individually funded programs. A review of state government websites indicates that the inclusion of therapeutic and social-emotional skill-development processes remain important criteria for funded provision. In contrast, there appears to be less reliance on traditional boot-camp program elements (physically intense, militaristic, authority-driven and compliance based learning approaches) within the purported change process. Given this, and the noted heterogeneous nature of interventions, wholesale generalisations regarding the effectiveness, or lack of effectiveness, of "boot-camps" or "intensive wilderness programs" are currently not supported within the Australian context. Their critical review, understanding and effectiveness can only be assessed on a case-by-case basis, with consideration given to the program composition (e.g., length, intensity, facilitation style, use of therapeutic enhancement), rationale underpinning the change process and participant profile. For this reason, inter-jurisdiction comparisons of Australian-based boot camp programs are cautioned. In other words, the evaluation findings contained within this report may not be generalisable to other Australian states and the extrapolation of evaluation findings from other state jurisdictions to the Northern Territory context should be conducted with care. For example, a recent report by KPMG (2015) questioned the cost-effectiveness and impact of Queensland delivered boot camps. These outcomes are not generalisable to the NT EIYBC Program for the following two reasons:

- The differences in program targeting – the QLD boot camp program was a sentencing option for young people before the courts, while the NT EIYBC Program represents an early intervention program.

- Length and composition of intervention - the QLD boot camp program was a longer-term residential program (alternative to sentencing), while the NT EIYBC Program is a short but intensive intervention (10 day camp component with follow-up case management support).

Given the noted heterogeneity of Australian-based boot-camp programs, and the possibility that stakeholders may apply the term "boot-camp" in potentially erroneous ways, the authors operationalise the NT EIYBC Program as an "intensive wilderness program". This has been defined by Raymond (2014) as a clearly defined and structured group-based program that is delivered within a remote or wilderness area, which is experienced by the participants as both physically and psychological demanding (or intense) in nature. The use of this term affords the opportunity to integrate evidence from a previous evaluation (Raymond & Lappin, 2011) and the broader wilderness literature, into the critical assessment and ongoing development of the EIYBC Program.

1.2.4 Outcomes of Intensive Wilderness Programs

There is consistent evidence that, at least within the short-term, intensive wilderness programs have the potential to lower the risk of future negative outcomes by reducing a young person's risk of becoming disengaged from the school system or engaging in future criminal behaviour (Castellano & Soderstrom, 1992; Mohr et al., 2001; Raymond, 2003).

There are a number of meta-analyses[4] tapping psychological and behavioural outcomes within the outdoor and wilderness literature (for a review of meta-analyses see Bowen & Neill, 2013). In the most rigorous meta-analysis, Wilson and Lipsey (2000) reviewed studies that targeted juvenile delinquency and had a matched or equivalent comparison group. Of the 22 studies they reviewed, Wilson and Lipsey found that wilderness programs were related to a small reduction in antisocial behaviour (d = 0.24) and increased school adjustment (d = 0.30)[5]. Using a youth-at-risk population group, Bedard, Rosen, and Vacha-Haase (2003) replicated Wilson and Linsey's results but achieved slightly larger effect sizes (moderate range).

Taken together, there is moderately strong support that wilderness programs can have a small to moderate impact on the psychological and behavioural functioning of youth-at-risk, at least within the short-term.

[4] Meta-analytic techniques are a statistical method of combining the results of a large number of empirical studies. The results can be considered quite robust.
[5] Cohen's d (effect size) is a standardised measure of the difference between two means. Small, medium and large effect sizes are denoted by d = .20, d = .50 and d = .80, respectfully (Cohen, 1992).

1.2.5 Sustainability of Intervention Outcomes

One of the strongest challenges to the wilderness discipline relates to the long-term sustainability of participant outcomes (Mason & Wilson, 1988). There are a number of studies suggesting that participant outcomes regress back to pre-test levels of functioning upon a participant returning to their home environment (e.g., Davis-Berman & Berman, 1994). Durgin and McEwen (1991) noted that participant changes "are soon lost in the struggle against poor family interactions and negative community environments" (p. 34). The importance of consolidating outcomes remains a central area of concern for program developers (Davis-Berman & Berman, 1994, 1994). Post-care or program support, integrated as an extension of the intensive wilderness experience, remains an important benchmark for best-practice wilderness programming (AIC, 2006; Raymond, 2014).

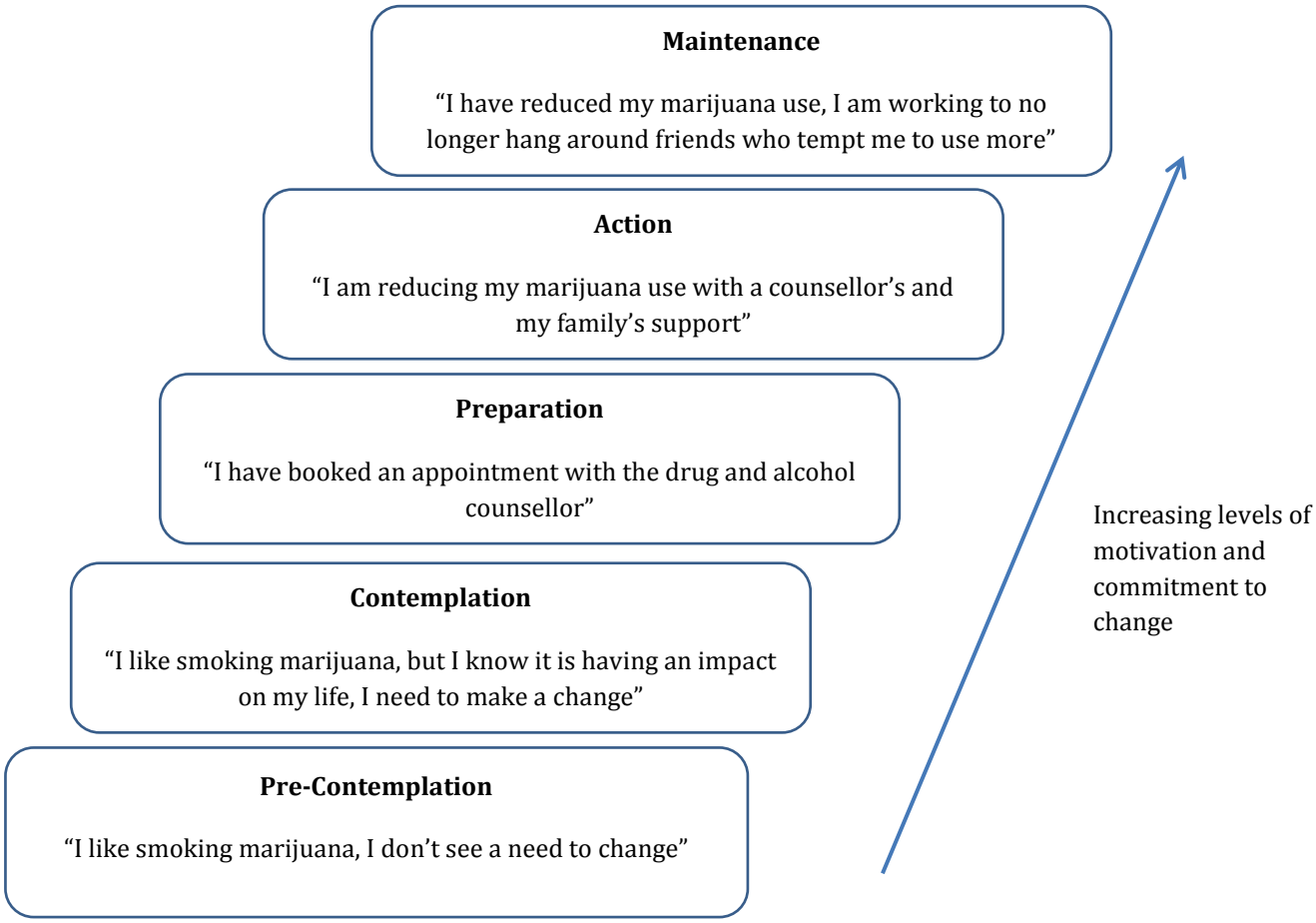
1.2.6 Intensive Wilderness Programs as a Catalyst for Change

A consistent qualitative outcome reported within the literature is the capacity of wilderness programs to engage youth-at-risk within a novel and interesting experience, and through this process, the program becomes "catalyst for change". This construct frequently appears in online searches of wilderness programs, and was a framework by which the authors understood and operationalised the potential value of the previous youth camp intervention funded within the Northern Territory (Raymond & Lappin, 2011). In the authors' opinion, this construct is foundational to understanding the role and utility of the EIYBC Program, more generally, and for this reason, an extended summary of the motivation to change literature is provided.

Both practitioners and researchers alike understand that young people at risk of negative outcomes may not be responsive to intervention, or be willing to make changes in their life. The reduction of any at-risk or offending behaviour requires a young person to be active and motivated to modify their behavioural patterns. In other words, a young person needs to critically reflect upon their current behavioural actions, be aware of their problems, develop realistic forward goals, explore future pathways and take committed action to achieve desired outcomes. Motivation to change remains a central consideration of best-practice forensic intervention with juvenile offenders (Day, 2005). Day, Bryan, Davey, and Casey (2006) have suggested that rehabilitation programs for reducing recidivism need to consider the "process of change" or the readiness of offenders to undertake interventions. They have suggested that program and policy makers need to consider the use of preparation or readiness programs as a lead-in to more intensive and targeted forensic interventions.

There is a large body of literature and associated strategies designed to assess and build motivation for change for a wide range of forensic, substance use and health behaviours. The Transtheoretical Model (Prochaska, Di Clemente, & Norcross, 1992) operationalises a stage-based model of change which is used to match intervention to an individual's readiness to change. This model is summarised as follows:

Figure 1-1 Transtheoretical Model (Motivation to Change)



While Figure 1.1 is presented as a linear or stage-based model, the way young people explore and commit to change is dynamic, which does not unfold in an incremental manner. Despite this, this model offers significant utility within offender rehabilitation (Casey, Day, Howells, & Ward, 2007; Day et al., 2006). Youth who present with offending and at-risk behavioural patterns frequently present with poor motivation to change (McMurran et al., 1998), and this remains a significant barrier to intervention (Day, 2005; Day, Howells, Casey, Ward, & Birgden, 2007). There is strong evidence that increased willingness to change, as operationalised by moving from pre-contemplative to action stages of change, is predictive of better intervention outcomes (see meta-analysis by Norcross, Krebs, & Prochaska, 2011).

In a pilot study, Raymond (2003) explored the application of the Transtheoretical Model within an evaluation of the Operation Flinders wilderness program. He found that participant pre-program motivation levels were associated with a consistent pattern of

larger program effective sizes or program outcomes (p. > .05)[6]. As an extension of this piloting, and applying Transtheoretical model to operationalise the analysis, Raymond and Lappin (2011) conducted a mixed method evaluation of three intensive wilderness programs for youth-at-risk in the Northern Territory. The authors concluded:

> "the camp programs can stimulate young people to move from pre-contemplation to contemplation of change, as well as engaging in some action towards creating that change" (p. 296).

Raymond and Lappin (2011) developed and piloted a tool tapping motivational constructs (self-efficacy, willingness to seek out helping relationships and problem awareness). However, owing to a small sample size, the measure's psychometric properties remained unknown. Pointon (2011) subsequently applied the measure within a pretest-posttest control group design evaluation of the Operation Flinders program. Participants attending the program (compared to controls) had differential improvements in their willingness to make positive future changes.

As an extension of this exploratory work, in a PhD program with Flinders University, Raymond (2014) designed and validated a questionnaire assessing motivation to change for young people at risk of educational disengagement, and this was implemented within a large-scale evaluation of an intensive wilderness program[7]. Preliminary analyses suggested that intensive wilderness programs can increase young people's willingness and motivation to make changes in their life (as compared against a matched control group).

In summary, strong evidence is provided that intensive wilderness programs can increase a young person's responsiveness to future change. Through the contracted consultancy work (see point 1.3), the authors have interwoven this construct into the development of the EIYBC Program model (logic and theory) and EIYBC Program Guidelines.

1.2.7 Best-Practice Benchmarks for Intensive Wilderness Programs

With wholesale generalisations not supported, the effectiveness of intensive wilderness programs need to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and with consideration given to both methodologically sound outcome and process orientated evaluation (Raymond & Lappin, 2011). Given that many programs are developed in response to a founder's vision or local context, Raymond (2014, p. 24) has identified nine key benchmarks for intensive wilderness interventions that, collectively, increase the probability that meaningful youth justice outcomes will be delivered. These benchmarks are integrated

[6] p. > .05 result is statistically non-significant, meaning that it cannot be ruled out that the result was due to chance factors. However, owing to the small sample size, the preliminary trends should not be discounted.
[7] A modified version of this questionnaire was included within the EIYBC Program Guidelines.

from principles taken from the forensic (risk, need and responsivity; Andrews & Bonta, 1998), mental health and wilderness literature. Intensive wilderness programs should:

1. "Have a clear, therapeutically aligned and documented program model that includes a hierarchy of criminogenic needs and outcomes, and a clear evidence-informed[8] program logic which details the program processes to achieve those outcomes.

2. Have undergone robust evaluation, utilising criminogenic outcomes predictive of future offending and/or at-risk behaviour (aligned to the program logic modelling), that supports the efficacy of the program model.

3. Uphold the principle of program integrity, that is, the program is delivered in a consistent manner as per the program logic model, where participants receive a similar "dosage" of intervention. Staff recruitment, training and supervision, as well as organisational systems and policies, should be informed by a documented and consistent practice approach informed by the program logic model. [9]

4. Integrate an upfront assessment and monitoring of program participants, such that program facilitators can tailor their relationship exchanges with participants to their specific criminogenic needs. The relationship exchanges should be driven by clear intent, for the purpose of cultivating increased insight or self-awareness and prosocial skill development.

5. Target young people at risk of offending behaviour.

6. Integrate post-program follow-up, guided by a program logic model, that extends from the wilderness experience through a consistent narrative (or story), and continuous adult relationships.

7. Include physical and psychologically challenging activities and experiences that are supported through validating, substantial and therapeutically responsive relationship exchanges between program facilitators and participants.

8. Be founded upon a comprehensive risk management assessment of activities and screening of program staff.

9. Be delivered in a culturally sensitive and meaningful manner, reflective of both participant and local cultural customs and traditions".

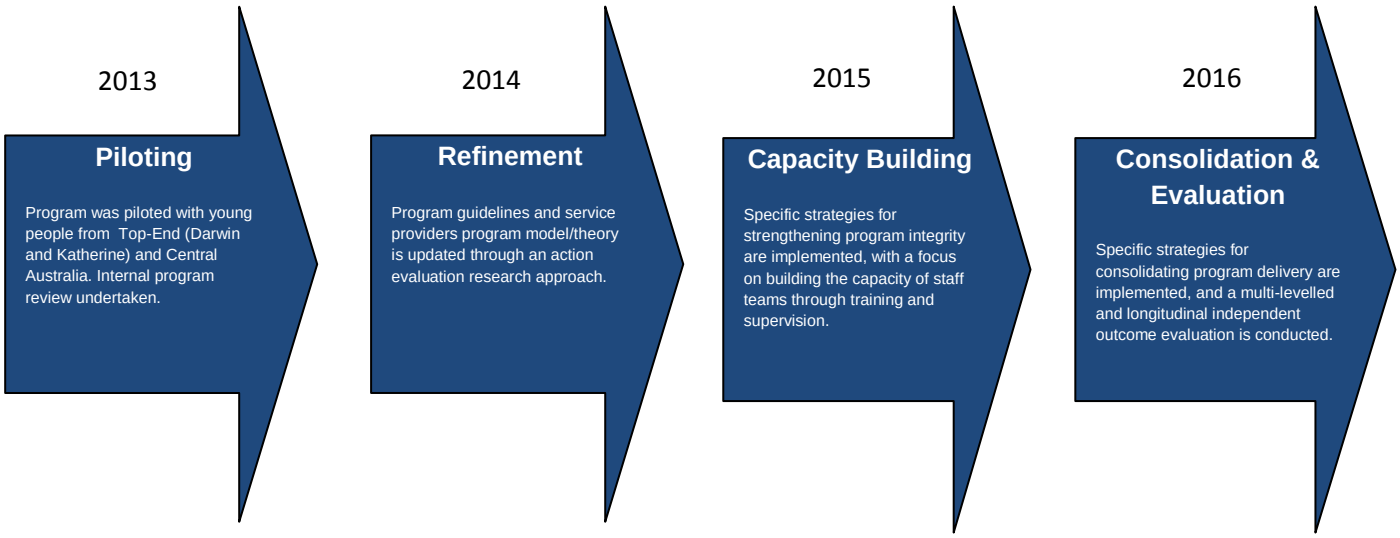
[8] Evidence refers to scientifically sound information contained within the youth development and forensic literature, or evidence gained through internal evaluation of program processes and outcomes.
[9] This requires a planned and resourced implementation process.

The consultancy provided by review team to the NT Government and the EIYBC Program preferred providers has been informed by these benchmarks.

1.3 EIYBC Program Development

This section is provided to support the reader understand the development and implementation of the EIYBC Program model from 2013 to 2015, and the recommended Consolidation and Evaluation phase spanning into 2016. This is summarised in Figure 1.2, with further detail provided in this section.

Figure 1-2 Program Development Phases: 2013 to 2016



Across 2014-2015, the review team worked alongside the NT Government and EIYBC Program preferred providers in the *Refinement* and *Capacity Building* phases. This work has been informed by the program development and implementation science. A brief summary of this body of literature is provided, with this followed by a summary of each EIYBC Program development phase.

1.3.1 Program Development and Implementation Science

Within the broader youth literature, it is acknowledged that youth programs are not equally effective; that is, some programs work for some young people, on some outcomes (Hattie et al., 1997; Wilson & Lipsey, 2000). Programs that are consistently delivered from strong theoretical basis, and where the program components (or processes) have a logical relationship with the stated program outcomes, are not only considered conceptually sound but are also associated with the largest program effect

sizes (Antonowicz & Ross, 1994). The area of implementation science has grown out of the realisation that while there has been significant progress in the development of evidence in the research setting, this has rarely translated to implementation within the operational or program setting. Recent momentum in this area establishes the importance of program integrity in maximising outcomes for community service agencies. Program integrity exists where interventions are delivered in a consistent and replicable manner (Day & Howells, 2002), as intended in both theory and design (Aarons, Hurlburt, & Horwitz, 2011; Hollin, 1994). Evidence has demonstrated the relationship between building program integrity and the consistency of quality outcomes (Aarons et al., 2011; Fixsen, Blase, Naoom, & Wallace, 2009; Wandersman et al., 2008). In short, programs with strong program integrity provide participants a similar "dosage" of intervention, and this remains a strong predictor of program impact and effectiveness with forensic interventions (Andrews & Bonta, 1998), and a best-practice consideration for intensive wilderness programs, more generally (Raymond, 2014).

A feature of wilderness programs, and this is equally attributable to the Operation Flinders program, is that they often develop in an organic manner from a founder's initial vision and philosophy, and refined through the circumstances related to funding, local context and physical environment (Raymond & Lappin, 2011). In short, given this organic start-up, significant time, resources and program refinement is required before the key program components (e.g., program preparation, length of walk, number of staffing, location) are bedded down and then delivered in a consistent manner (with integrity).

A further factor impacting on program integrity is facilitator style and communication. The EIYBC Program is a relationship-based intervention where the program facilitators and case workers are central to the therapeutic change process. Given the diversity of human personality, philosophies and coping capacity, such programs are likely see to large differences in facilitator style and capacity to deliver therapeutically-informed communication. Within clinical settings, interventions (for instance cognitive behavioural therapy) are often captured in program manuals to aid program integrity or consistency of facilitator delivery. However, manualised delivery approaches are contraindicated within the wilderness environment. In short, program integrity and impact is strongly mediated by the skills, capacity and experience of program facilitators, and significant start-up investment is required to develop quality assurance systems (e.g., training, clear operational guidelines, practice framework, supervision, practice coaching, recruitment) within program implementation. Given the risks and high operational demands associated with the delivery of remote wilderness programs for youth-at-risk, in the authors' opinion, quality assurance systems targeting program integrity may not be adequately resourced or prioritised within start-up phases.

Given the points noted, it is not surprising that the literature supports the viewpoint that established wilderness programs are more effective or deliver stronger program impact (Wilson & Lipsey, 2000). In 2014, the review team wrote to the NT Government and indicated that the "EIYBC Program model is still largely within its infancy and ongoing refinement, capacity building and consolidation is required". The authors recommended that the "NT Government consider an implementation and evaluation

strategy to bring the EIYBC Program model and individual service providers to consistent and best-practice implementation in an expedited manner".

The consultancy provided by the review team articulated in this section was informed by the broader implementation science. This body of literature has been widely applied within the medical discipline to foster better program integrity by exploring how evidence from research can be integrated into policies and service delivery (Proctor et al., 2009). In 2015, this included a greater focus on training for program staff and the creation of a competency framework

The intent of exploring this literature for the EIYBC Program was to develop an understanding of the core aspects of the implementation science which are correlated with program integrity. Much of the available literature highlights the importance of measuring program integrity and that "…assessing integrity involves two components: therapist adherence to the treatment protocol, and therapist competence in delivering the treatment" (Day & Howells, 2002). This concept of program integrity is extended to what Gendreau and Goggin refer to as "therapeutic integrity" which has similar characteristics and is influenced by factors such as professionalism, degree qualification of staff and ongoing training and development (Gendreau & Goggin, 1997).

A key feature of the implementation science is "knowledge translation". This operationalises the organisational, structural, financial and professional strategies that drive program integrity (Albrecht, Archibald, Arseneau, & Scott, 2013). Within healthcare settings, a foundational knowledge translation strategy is the creation of checklists designed to improve the development and monitoring of interventions. Recommendations for a checklist suggested by Albrecht, Archibald, Arseneau & Scott (2013) include:

- Enhanced levels of published detail about the program.
- Description and clarification of the underpinning design principles and key change processes.
- Development and availability of operational program guidelines.
- Articulation of detailed conditions for control (Albrecht et al., 2013).

These considerations have informed the program development consultancy to assist both the NT Government and preferred providers to grow their collective capacity to deliver the EIYBC Program as designed and intended.

In short, without attention being paid to ongoing quality monitoring, it is likely that critical components of the EIYBC Program will be diluted, and "program drift"" will occur with lowered program outcomes eventuating (Royse, Thyer, Padgett, & Logan, 2010). Attention to implementation and quality monitoring processes within the EIYBC Program cannot be overstated. It remains a crucial process to maximise the impact of finite resources.

1.3.2 Key Program Development Phases

The EIYBC Program has been developed and implemented as per the following program development phases (mapped to Figure 1.2).

1.3.2.1 Phase 1. Piloting (2013)

Operation Flinders and Tangentyere Inc delivered pilot EIYBC Programs in September 2013. The programs were formally reviewed and evaluated by the respective agencies and the NT Government in late 2013. Between February and March 2014 further review was conducted with the authors, which included discussions with both government and preferred provider representatives. The following summary themes emerged from this review:

- There was not a shared position between the preferred providers and the NT Government on the composition or expectations of the post-camp intervention.
- Post-camp follow-up did not occur in a consistent manner, and there was a lack of clear guidelines or rationale underpinning the post-camp process.
- There was an identified need to implement a structured assessment tool to guide participant selection and recruitment, and ensure the identified target group consistently participated in the program.

Based on this understanding, a proposal was tabled with NT Government to enter into a process of refinement of the program, informed through a review of available information and data, which emerged from the pilot.

1.3.2.2 Phase 2. Refinement (2014)

Through the pilot review, it was identified that there was no agreed position between NT Government and service providers on the conceptualisation and operationalisation of the EIYBC Program model, notably as it related to the integration of the wilderness camp and case management intervention. In response, the principal focus of the refinement phase was the development of a program logic and theory, which was operationalised through a set of Program Guidelines. The later included all of the templates (including assessment tools), benchmarks and processes associated with the delivery of the EIYBC Program. This section summarises this developmental process.

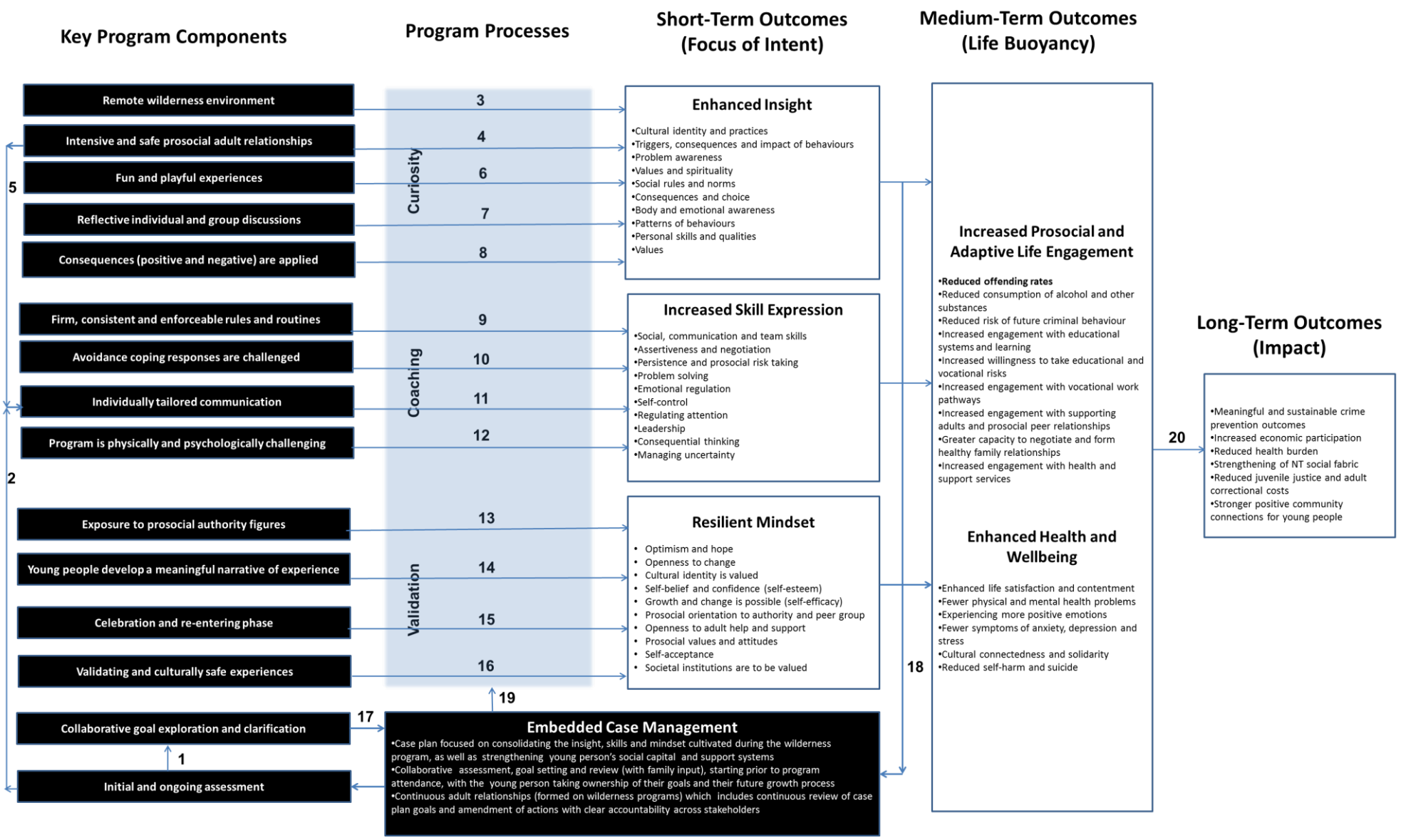
A best-practice benchmark of intensive wilderness programs (as a youth crime prevention strategy) is the articulation of "a clear, therapeutically aligned and documented program model that includes a hierarchy of criminogenic needs and outcomes, and a clear evidence-informed program logic which details the program processes to achieve those outcomes" (Raymond, 2014). *Program logic* is an approach that conceptually describes and evaluates the relationships between an individual program's processes (or resources/inputs/activities) and its outcomes (or outputs) (Cooksy, Gill, & Kelly, 2001). Logic models describe key processes of the program and

provide a logical structure of their relationship with purported outcomes. Such models provide a mechanism to describe the relationship between short- and longer-term outcomes (Julian, 1997), as well as to guide multi-method evaluation (Cooksy et al., 2001). Logic models also provide organisations with a shared understanding of the underpinnings of their program model (McLaughlin & Jordan, 1999), which support program integrity.

Between March and May 2014, the authors were contracted by the NT Government to develop a program logic for the broader EIYBC Program. Following consultation with a wide range of NT Government and preferred provider stakeholders, the program logic on the following page was developed (see Figure 1.3). This, along with the underpinning program theory, is reproduced verbatim as per the current version of the 2015 EIYBC Program Guidelines.

Wild brumbies Loves Creek Station

Figure 1-3 EIYBC Program Logic



Developed by Ivan Raymond and Sean Lappin from Connected Self, and informed by Life Buoyancy Translational Model (Raymond, 2014). © NT Government. 2014

In reference to Figure 1.3, the column "key program components" (black boxes) details the specific activities and participant experiences benchmarked to be delivered within the EIYBC Program. The column "program processes" articulates the key therapeutic processes by which change is cultivated through the program. That is, young people are expected to be engaged in experiences that are experienced as validating, evoke curiosity and coach them to build their skill capacity. The program logic also identifies a hierarchy of short, medium and long-term outcomes. The short-term outcomes are the immediate focus of intervention, and include enhancing participant insight (or awareness/knowledge), increasing skill expression and cultivating a resilient mindset. These short-term outcomes have an evidence-informed or predictive relationship with the medium-term outcomes, which include increasing positive life engagement (e.g., reducing offending, increasing school engagement), as well as health and wellbeing outcomes. Subsequently, these medium-term outcomes are predictive of the desired program impact (long-term outcomes).

The categorisation of the EIYBC Program Logic was grounded upon the Life Buoyancy model of change and resilience (Raymond, 2013)[10]. This therapeutically-grounded model articulates the specific processes (validation, curiosity and coaching) and focal points of intent (awareness, skills and mindset) to guide relationship-based interventions that are designed to foster the longer-term outcomes of resilience, positive life engagement and wellbeing (or life buoyancy) in children and young people. Importantly, at the heart of the Life Buoyancy model is cultivating young people's capacity to be an "agent of change" or growth in their life, which is a key practice intent of the EIYBC Program.

To deepen and better articulate the program logic, the authors developed a program theory which explained the conceptual relationships between EIYBC Program processes and outcomes. The theory is provided verbatim below, and should be read in conjunction with the previous Figure (numbers are referenced to Figure 1.3).

1 "At the point of initial referral, an assessment tool is completed tapping the young person's strengths and needs (against the selection criteria) and the assessment domains are mapped against the case plan which informs the longitudinal case management intervention. A continuous assessment and review cycle occurs throughout both the intensive wilderness program and case management intervention. This is used to inform and guide the collaborative goal exploration and clarification cycle occurring between young person and program facilitator (or case worker). The young person takes ownership of the goal setting process, as well as takes responsibility for the implementation and actioning of goals (with support from adults/systems).

[10] For more information, see www.lifebuoyancy.org

2 The initial assessment supports program staff to individually tailor their relationship exchanges (to specific needs and strengths) with young people during the wilderness component of the EIYBC Program.

3 The remote wilderness environment engages young people in a novel experience that evokes curiosity; providing a catalyst for insight development. Through the containment of the wilderness setting where avoidance coping responses are not supported, alternative coping skills are coached, shaped and positively reinforced. Furthermore, through the relationship exchanges with program staff, young people receive positive validation and feedback in the acquisition of adaptive coping responses.

4 During the wilderness experience, young people have access to high levels of support from safe, consistent and prosocial adult relationships (2 staff to 5 participants, or as articulated within a documented risk management plan). It is through these relationships that young people are exposed to communication that (1) evokes curiosity and builds insight, (2) coaches adaptive skill development, and (3) provides validation and feedback to cultivate resilient thinking processes (or mindset) and behaviours.

5 Program facilitators individually tailor their relationship exchanges and communication to each young person's specific needs and strengths, as guided by the initial assessment.

6 Through fun and play, curiosity and insight development is cultivated. When play and fun occurs between young people and adults, young people receive high levels of validation that they are worthwhile and valued (cultivating a positive self-esteem or mindset). Through such experiences, young people develop a positive and prosocial mindset of adults and adult relationships.

7 The application of reflective and curious communication by program staff (occurring at the individual and group level) are essential processes for young people to develop increased insight about themselves (including actions, goals and consequences), others, their world, their future and life in general. This communication is non-shaming in nature, but uses open dialogue to support young people to reflect on their behaviour, thoughts and actions (e.g., an adult saying: "I noticed that you yelled at Johnny, I wonder what that was about").

8 The use of fair, natural, safe and logical consequences (both positive and negative) remains an essential component of the EIYBC Program. When the consequences are delivered in a non-shaming and fair manner, with high levels of adult support and validation, young people develop increased insight about the nature and impact of their choices, as well as build their skill capacity for consequential thinking (ability to think through choice and consequence).

9 Firm, consistent and enforceable rules and routines are an important mechanism to build young people's insight into the nature and value of social

norms (and consequences of actions). When rules are delivered with high levels of adult support, validation and applying a coaching dialogue, the opportunity is provided for young people to build their skill capacity for self-control, consequential thinking, persistence, problem solving and emotional regulation.

10 An over reliance on avoidance-coping responses (e.g., aggression, withdrawal) remains a significant barrier to young people positively engaging with school, teachers, family, prosocial peers and community. The remote wilderness environment provides an opportunity to naturally contain and challenge avoidance, and through adult relationships applying validating, curious and coaching communication, young people develop the insight, skills and mindset underpinning adaptive coping responses.

11. Program facilitators individually tailor their relationship exchanges and communication with young people to build insight, skill development and shape a positive mindset. These exchanges are informed by both the assessment process and the specific outcomes of the program. Communication exchanges should involve scripts and language based upon curiosity, coaching and validation.

12. The wilderness program is challenging in terms of length, composition or nature to provide experiences and adult coaching opportunities for young people to develop skills in self-control, persistence, emotional regulation, problem solving and positive risk taking (etc.). Through the completion of the challenging experiences, young people experience a sense of validation which positively shapes their mindset, or how they see themselves (self-esteem) and personal capacity (self-efficacy).

13. Positive, playful and supportive exposure to prosocial authority figures (e.g., meaningful cultural figures, police officers, ambulance officers, teachers, military) during the wilderness program builds a positive mindset to adult relationships and authority, as well as cultivates respect for elders, authority and culture.

14. Young people develop a meaningful and positive narrative of the wilderness experience which represents a validating memory and metaphor for growth, positive life engagement and success.

15. At the completion of the wilderness program, young people receive validation and feedback from important adult figures that celebrates and acknowledges their wilderness journey and achievements, and this validates a positive mindset attached to personal worth (self-esteem) and capacity (self-efficacy).

16. During the wilderness experience young people are exposed to and explore personally meaningful and prosocial cultural experiences and relationships which validates a positive and proud cultural identity (or mindset). These are

culturally safe in that they are matched and tailored to a young person's particular cultural heritage.

17. The wilderness program is a catalyst to build young people's insight and awareness of their problems, the consequences of their choices/actions and through this process, increase a young person's responsiveness to engaging in future change behaviour. The exploration and clarification of future goals, occurring in a collaborative (validating and curious) manner between young people and program staff, remains an important feature of the wilderness program, as well as the embedded case management intervention. The young person is empowered to take ownership and responsibility for their future goals and growth.

18. The intensive wilderness component of the EIYBC Program has a catalytic effect in building insight, skill capacity and shaping a positive/resilient mindset in young people. However, the consolidation and generalisation of these qualities back into the young person's home environment is a central outcome of the EIYBC Program. The translation of these short-term outcomes to increased positive life engagement (reduced offending, increased educational engagement etc.) and wellbeing outcomes is dependent on young people having access to validating and responsive adult relationships and support systems. The case management intervention has a central focus on strengthening young people's social capital (e.g., positive supportive relationships) and support systems (engagement with education etc.). This is guided by a case plan formulated at the conclusion of the wilderness experience, and reviewed through a cycle of collaborative assessment and goal setting which is integrated across other relevant service systems (e.g., Diversion, Child Protection and Education). Relationships formed during the wilderness program should extend through the case management intervention.

19. Within the case management intervention supporting adults continue to individually tailor relationship discussions and communication to young people with the intent to build and consolidate insight, skill expression and positive mindset development (informed by the young person's specific needs, as well as the specific outcomes of the EIYBC Program).

20. Through the consolidation and generalisation of the insight, skills and mindset cultivated through the wilderness experience, occurring both through the case management intervention, as well as the strengthening of young people's social capital and support systems, the full impact of the EIYBC Program is possible, and longer-term outcomes are delivered."

In 2014, the review team also worked alongside both Tangentyere and Operation Flinders to develop an agency specific Program Logic and Theory that was mapped against the broader EIYBC Program Model. This consultancy and process provided both agencies the opportunity to understand the expectations the NT Government had of their service delivery, as well as understand and refine their program models. It was

recommended that the NT Government require individual service agencies provide them an updated Program Logic and Theory document should the individual agency wish to revise or change their program implementation.

To operationalise the EIYBC Program Logic and Theory into a clearly defined and deliverable intervention, the review team worked in collaboration with the NT Government, contracted providers and broader sector partners to develop the EIYBC Program Guidelines. These guidelines were designed to bring accountability and integrity to service delivery, but at the same time, allow providers to retain creative flair and innovation. Furthermore, the guidelines provided an important mechanism for the NT Government to conceptualise, articulate and drive a service model mapped to broader policy and youth justice needs. The guidelines also provided a framework to ensure that a planned and considered approach to the refinement of the EIYBC Program model could occur over time. These guidelines included the following key information:

- Flowchart of program implementation.
- Procedural guidance to program implementation.
- Program benchmarks.
- Program assessment instruments and templates.
- Program logic and theory.

While it is beyond the scope of this report to provide a detailed summation of the EIYBC Program Guidelines (Program Guidelines are publically available on the Department of Correctional Services website[11]), Figure 1.5 summarises the key implementation phases (from program marketing to exit planning) that are operationalised and benchmarked in the document. Each phase includes assessment and case planning documentation designed to build a cohesive pre-, during-, and post-camp intervention that centers on empowering young people to identify, own and commit to meaningful prosocial and post-camp goals (or be "an agent of change" in their own life). This foundational change process was operationalised through assessment and case planning documentation that was designed to build-upon and integrate within one another. This layered approach is summarised in the Figure 1.4.

[11] http://www.correctionalservices.nt.gov.au/YouthJustice/programsandservices/Documents/EIYBC/EIYBC%20Program%20Guidelines%20-%202015.pdf

Figure 1-4 Layered Integration of EIYBC Assessment and Case Planning Documentation

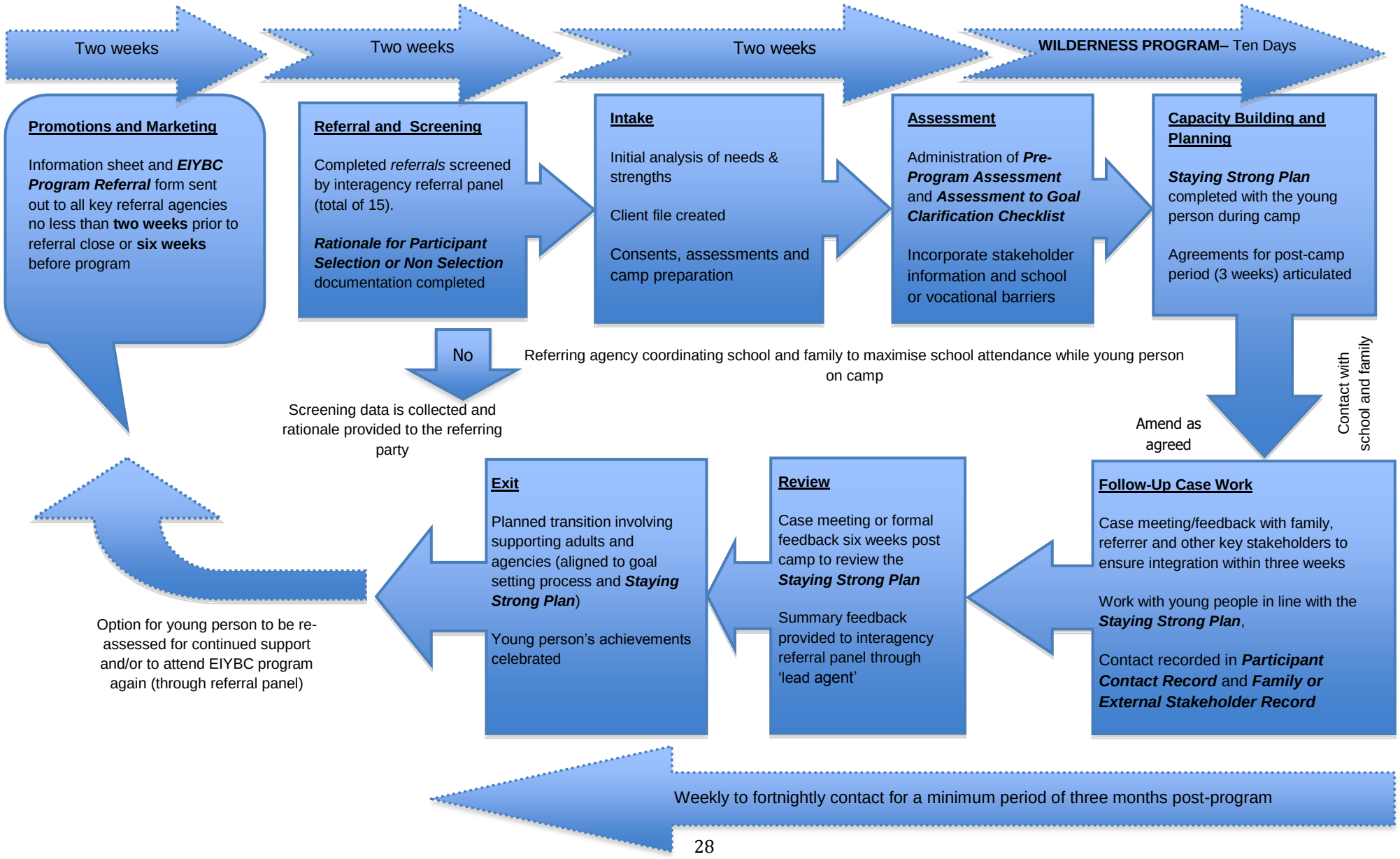
1. The referral form was mapped against domains on the Staying Strong case plan, as well as the pre- and within-camp assessment. The referral form was designed to assess both participant risk and need, as mapped against an early intervention cohort.

2. Pre-program instruments were designed to assess participant problem awareness and motivation to make changes to address problematic behaviours. This information was designed to guide the discussion and reflection of goals for the Staying Strong Plan.

3. A within camp assessment (Assessment to Goal Clarification Checklist) was designed to cue program facilitators to apply intentional communication with young people, and support an holistic assessment approach. The domains were mapped against the Referral Form and Staying Strong Plan to aid goal review and reflection.

4. The Staying Strong Plan (case plan) was designed to guide the case work intervention, and where possible, be a collaborative document between the case worker and young person. The plan was designed to be continuously reviewed with the young person, and be shared and integrated with the young person's family, school, community and support team (within a multi-systemic manner).

Figure 1-5 EIYBC Program Implementation Flowchart



The EIYBC Program Guidelines articulated a range of key benchmarks to maintain program integrity and high quality program delivery. These benchmarks are summarised in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2 EIYBC Program Benchmarks

Domain	Benchmark	Comments
Case files	Case files are set up for 100% of young people where a referral is accepted to attend an EIYBC Program. The ***Checklist of Key EIYBC Program Benchmarks*** is to be attached and completed on all case files.	All case files are to remain the legal property of the service provider; however, the NT Government reserves the right to access these files on request.
EIYBC Program referral	Referral documentation is to be completed and submitted for 100% of young people referred to an EIYBC program.	
Rationale for Participant Selection or Non Selection	Rationale for ***Participant Selection or Non-Selection*** documentation is to be completed for 100% of young people referred to an EIYBC Program.	When a young person is selected to attend the program, the ***Rationale for Participant Selection or Non-Selection*** documentation is to be placed in the case file. When the young person has not been selected to attend the program, the ***Rationale for Participant Selection or Non-Selection*** documentation is to be stapled to the ***EIYBC Program Referral*** documentation and centrally collated by the service provider.
Pre-Program Assessment	All young people attending an EIYBC Program are requested to complete the ***Pre-Program Assessment*** before Day 2 of the wilderness camp.	Where a young person has not provided their consent to complete this assessment, this should be acknowledged in the young person's case file. This assessment is to be placed in the case file.
Assessment to Goal Clarification Checklist	This checklist should be completed by the end of the wilderness program for 100% of young people attending an EIYBC Program.	This assessment document is to be placed in the case file.

Staying Strong Plan	The ***Staying Strong Plan*** is to be finalised by the end of the wilderness program for 100% of young people attending an EIYBC Program. Young people's achievements are to be acknowledged at the point of leaving the wilderness program, and the young person is to leave the program with a personally meaningful way to reflect upon their achievements post-program. All young people have a record of their goals when leaving the camp (e.g., ***Goal Card,*** page 36)	A copy of this document is to be provided to the young person (where appropriate), while a duplicate is to be placed in the case file.
Participant Contact Record	At least 8 attempted or completed contacts are made with each young person attending an EIYBC Program in the 3-month post-camp period. At least one participant contact is to be made in the week following the completion of the wilderness program (with a focus on educational or vocational engagement in the post-camp period).	All contact records are to be placed in the case file.

Family and Stakeholder Contact Record	Prior to the wilderness program, at least one completed contact is made with both an external family member and stakeholder to assess the presence of barriers to educational or vocational engagement in the post-camp period, as well ensure that both stakeholders and family members understand the aims and processes of the EIYBC Program. At least one contact is made with a significant stakeholder in the week following the completion of the wilderness program, with a focus on school/educational or vocational engagement. At least five completed contacts are made with a significant family member or stakeholder (or stakeholders) between the finalisation of wilderness program and program exit point. The ***EIYBC Program Post-Camp Feedback Form*** is to be completed on all young people and provided to the referral agency, referral panel and NT Government within 3 weeks of the wilderness camp.	All contact records are to be placed in the case file.
Review of Staying Strong Plan	The ***Staying Strong Plan*** is formally reviewed at least once during the post-camp period for 80% of young people attending an EIYBC program. All young people where the ***Staying Strong Plan*** is reviewed are provided a record of their goals (e.g., ***Goal Card***, page 36)	A copy of this plan to be provided to the young person (where appropriate), while a duplicate is to be placed on the young person's case file. Where a young person is not able to be engaged or contacted during the 3-month follow-up period, this should be acknowledged within the case file.

Transition Plan, Exit Assessment and Referral Agency Feedback	The ***Exit Assessment*** and ***Transition Plan*** are completed for 70% of young people attending an EIYBC Program. ***The EIYBC Program Exit Form*** is to be completed on all young people and provided to the referral agency, referral panel and NT Government at the 3 month anniversary of the completion of the wilderness camp.	Where a young person has not provided their consent to complete the ***Exit Assessment***, this should be acknowledged in the young person's case file. This assessment is to be placed in the case file. A copy of ***Transition Plan*** is to be provided to the young person (where appropriate), while a duplicate is to be placed in the young person's case file.

As part of the *Refinement Phase*, in early 2014, the review team undertook a process assessment of both Operation Flinders and Tangentyere's organisational capacity and systems to risk manage and sustainably deliver high quality and impact programs. This broad-based assessment was mapped against the tool employed in an earlier evaluation (Raymond & Lappin, 2011). Recommendations regarding areas of future program development and refinement were provided to both service providers. The review team also worked alongside Tangentyere to develop a number of policies and procedures where risk management gaps were identified in the implementation of the EIYBC Program, with the support of the NT Government.

To support sustainable monitoring of program delivery (external to Connected Self), the review team developed the *EIYBC Program Reporting Templates* which were mapped to benchmarks identified in the EIYBC Program Logic and Guidelines, and requirements identified through the process review (see Appendix C, D, E & F). The NT Government provided these templates to the preferred provider agencies for completion at different stages of each program and as part of the contract performance reporting process. In late 2014, this data, together with pre- and post-program NT police data, program observation, case file data, self-report attitudinal and behavioural measures, post-camp questionnaire and feedback and information provided from stakeholders, were captured in a report written by authors titled: The *Northern Territory Early Intervention Youth Boot Camp Program: 2014 Program Implementation Review Report* (Raymond & Lappin, 2015). This report provided a summary context of the Northern Territory (NT) youth justice system, including the rationale and context for the EIYBC Program and summary evidence informing the best-practice implementation of intensive wilderness programs for youth-at-risk. The report also provided a detailed summary of the design and implementation of the each of the EIYBC Programs implemented in 2014, and the evidence collated as part of the process and outcome review. Specific recommendations for ongoing program development were offered, including recommendations regarding the ongoing development and refinement of the EIYBC Program within the Northern Territory.

Following the delivery of this report, briefings were provided to the NT Government and Tangentyere and Operation Flinders, to highlight areas for future capacity building to improve program integrity, mitigate against identified risks and enhance the quality of program delivery.

In early 2015, independent of the review team, the NT Government made a decision to contract a single preferred provider, Operation Flinders, to deliver eight EIYBC Programs in 2015.

1.3.2.3 Phase 3. Capacity Building (2015)

Across 2015, the review team worked alongside the NT Government and Operation Flinders within a capacity building strategy that had three areas of focus.

Focus 1. Training to Build Capacity in a Sustainable Manner

The review team identified through the 2014 review that program integrity and quality were impacted by low case worker and practitioner awareness of key program processes, and the assessment processes were applied in an inappropriate and potentially harmful manner (Raymond & Lappin, 2015). In response, two capacity building projects were conducted in early 2015.

- A one-day EIYBC Program Introductory Training package was developed, with detailed notes and exercises included. The package systematically detailed the processes, benchmarks and assessment tools of key implementation phases as mapped to the EIYBC Program Guidelines, and was intended to build knowledge of how the assessment and case planning tools were to be used in a layered and integrated manner. This package was delivered to Operation Flinders staff (operational & leadership personnel associated with program) and the case management provider, and other key stakeholders (as nominated by the NT Government) in both Darwin and Adelaide. Following feedback, the package was refined by the review team, and then provided to the NT Government to disseminate to the providers. Following this initiative, a reporting requirement was established for all new program facilitators (wilderness facilitators & case work staff) to receive this training before being accredited to deliver the EIYBC Program.
- A staff competency assessment tool was developed articulating the staff competencies (e.g., cultural awareness, therapeutic etc.) to deliver both the wilderness and case work components of the EIYBC Program. This was benchmarked to the Certificate IV level (Community Services) and provided to Operation Flinders for their review and implementation.

Focus 2. Rolling Review of Program Implementation

Throughout 2015, the review team met with Operation Flinders leadership on a regular basis to provide support to the delivery of the EIYBC Program and monitor the Continuous Improvement Plan. This included providing guidance to the new leadership on EIYBC Program benchmarks and facilitate review workshops with Operation Flinders leadership, following their implementation of each camp. These workshops were intended to review program implementation against the EIYBC Program Guidelines and inform implementation strategies designed to build integrity for subsequent program implementation. This was supplemented by phone and email contact with nominated stakeholders (as suggested by NT Government) and

EIYBC Referral Panel members. Brief and consolidated summaries were provided to Operation Flinders and the NT Government to inform progress against the Continuous Improvement Plan.

Focus 3. Systematic Program Assessment (occurring August to December, 2015)

This report represents the culmination of a detailed program assessment process conducted in the second half of 2015. The evaluation methodology is detailed in Chapter 2. A debrief meeting with Operation Flinders leadership and the NT Government will be facilitated in Adelaide.

1.3.2.4 Phase 4. Consolidation & Evaluation (2016)

The following activities have been identified as part of the final phase of program development; with a focus on consolidation and independent measurement:

- A longitudinal evaluation, involving a matched control group, and applying multi-levelled measures (self-report, observer, forensic) is conducted by an independent evaluator.
- Service providers are supported to embed quality assurance systems (mapped against EIYBC Program Guidelines) within their organisation.
- A cost-benefit analysis of the EIYBC Program is undertaken, as benchmarked against other forensic or like interventions.

Following the delivery of this report, further planning will occur in conjunction with the NT Government and associated providers. This planning will bring a strong focus on building capacity internal to NT Government and provider agencies, including embedding the evaluation framework into the program that will enable streamlined information management and robust analysis of data. This is intended to enable more responsive measurement of program outcomes and outputs as part of the ongoing continuous improvement strategy with reduced associated costs for the NT Government.

1.4 Chapter Summary

The Northern Territory (NT) is faced with a range of unique challenges in the prevention and management of youth crime. The EIYBC Program has been developed out of a need for an early intervention, culturally sensitive, multi-systemic and innovative crime prevention strategy. The NT Government has invested in developing a program intervention that is cohesive, therapeutically-informed and working towards best-practice criteria. While the program has been refined in recent years, and some capacity building has occurred, there is an acknowledgement that further work is required to support the consolidation of the program model. This requires a strong focus to the ongoing development of staff in delivering the practice approach and robust data collection to inform the continuous improvement process and future independent evaluation (including cost-benefit analysis).

Chapter 2: Review Methodology

This chapter summarises the review method and processes undertaken, and the specific strategies to synthesise the themes and outcomes as reported in Chapter 3 and 4.

2.1 Principles Underpinning Review

The review team designed and implemented an evaluation methodology to address the questions specified in the Terms of Reference (page xiv). This occurred with consideration to the following principles:

- **Scientifically Grounded Evaluation Processes and Conclusions** – the review team sought to implement consistently applied, reliable and valid assessment processes, where conclusions were only drawn on the basis of the evidence gathered, with consideration given to the strengths and limitations of the evidence gathering process and tools.

- **Youth-Focused** – all attempts were made to ensure that the voice and experiences of program participants were captured and communicated within the report.

- **Multi-Levelled Evaluation Processes** – there were a range of barriers encountered within the review that impacted on the way evaluation processes could be applied. This included a relatively small number of program participants, restricted stakeholder capacity and time, compressed time-frames and the requirement to conduct a broad-based process and outcome assessment process. For this reason, the review team implemented multiple data gathering processes that were synthesised through thematic analysis and data triangulation. These included: self-report questionnaires, program observation, case study, observer feedback, archival and program reporting data, stakeholder survey and online survey.

- **Openness, Transparency and Independence** – given the potential that review processes may evoke distrust, loss of control and concern for funded agencies (Briggs & Campbell, 2001), the review team sought to implement a transparent evaluation process, where the intent of all processes were openly communicated. The first author had a previous long-term involvement with the Operation Flinders Foundation, including as program facilitator and representative on their Clinical Advisory Committee from 1999 to 2011. Since 2011, the first author has stepped down from the Foundation, and has been involved in an independent evaluation of the program through a PhD program with Flinders University (Raymond, 2014). The review team liaised with key NT Government and preferred provider stakeholders and sought feedback in terms of concerns regarding independence or conflict of interest. No such concerns were communicated. The second author has had no formal involvement with the Operation Flinders Foundation.

- **Inclusion of Culturally Sensitive Processes** – a range of cultural factors impacted on the review process, including: (1) a non-Aboriginal review team seeking culturally-centric observations and evidence, (2) highly mobile and geographically dispersed participant group, (3) low participant literacy and numeracy rates and (4) possible distrust to evaluation. For these reasons, the evaluation included a number of culturally sensitive mixed-method and narrative approaches (Mikhailovich, Morrison, & Arabena, 2007).

2.2 EIYBC Program Evaluation Framework

The EIYBC Program Logic Model (Figure 1.3) afforded the opportunity for program review and evaluation to be mapped against the program design, and at the same time, interchangeably inform the ongoing development and refinement of the EIYBC Program model (McLaughlin & Jordan, 2004). The EIYBC Program Logic was truncated as the evaluation framework. The EIYBC Evaluation Framework is provided in Table 2.1.

Loves Creek Station basecamp at night

Table 2.1 EIYBC Program Evaluation Framework

Processes		Hierarchy of Outcomes		
Wilderness Camp	**Follow-Up Case Work**	**Short-Term Outcomes**	**Medium-Term Outcomes**	**Long-Term Outcomes**
Reflective individual and group discussion	Pre- and post-wilderness program contact with family and stakeholders	Improved consequential thinking	Increased school attendance	Reduced repeat offending
Consequences (positive and negative) are applied during wilderness program	Case management contact schedule, between young person and case manager, is maintained as per program schedule	Prosocial attitudes to authority (including teachers, police)	Improved classroom and school behaviour behaviour	Increased school completion rates
Firm, consistent and enforceable rules and routines are applied	Collaborative goal exploration and clarification occurs throughout case management intervention	Prosocial aspirations for future	Reduction in impulsive acts	Increased vocational engagement
Young people have a meaningful narrative of program experience	Curious, validating and coaching dialogue is employed throughout case management intervention	Improved regulation of anger/aggression	Increased family engagement	Increased global health and wellbeing
Individual tailoring of communication by program staff	Case files are completed for all young people	Reduced criminogenic attitudes (towards crime and substance use)	Increased engagement with health agencies and practitioners	
Program is physically and psychologically challenging	EIYBC Program Referral and Rationale for Participant Selection or Non-Selection is completed on all referrals	Prosocial orientation to health and wellbeing	Increased engagement with supporting adults	
Involvement of prosocial authority figures	Assessment tools and Staying Strong Plan are completed on all participants	Prosocial attitudes and connectedness to culture	Decreased alcohol or substance use consumption	
Validating and culturally safe experiences	Family and stakeholder contact and communication occurs (post-program, as per Program Guidelines benchmarks).	Increased willingness to engage in change behaviours	Prosocial cultural exploration and engagement patterns	
Collaborative goal exploration and clarification occurs	Review of Staying Strong Plan and Exit Assessment completed (as per Program Guidelines benchmarks)	Increased willingness to engage with supporting adults in goal setting and personal growth	Reduced association with criminal peers	
Curious, validating and coaching dialogue is employed by program staff		Positive identification to prosocial peer groups	Engagement with case manager	
		Improved self-esteem and self-efficacy	Improved life satisfaction	

Please note: This table has been mapped against the EIYBC Program Logic and Theory framework. It should be noted that the delineation of "short-term" and "medium term" outcomes has been provided on the basis that they tap attitudinal and behavioural change, respectively. Attitudes can be assessed immediately post-program, while behaviours require a longer monitoring period (thus represent "medium term"). There is a body of literature supporting the viewpoint that attitudinal change is a predictor of future behavioural change. Within the forensic literature, many of the short- and medium-term outcomes noted within this table are labelled "criminogenic needs".

2.3 EIYBC Evaluation Tools, Processes and Procedure

The review team sourced and/or designed a range of evaluation tools and processes that were mapped to assess program processes and outcomes articulated within the EIYBC Evaluation Framework (Table 2.1). A number of assessment processes applied in the 2014 evaluation process (Raymond & Lappin, 2015) were replicated, thereby supporting comparative analysis. Each of these processes is summarised in turn.

2.3.1 Pre- and Post-Program Police Data

The reduction of offending in youth remains one of the stated goals of the EIYBC Program, and was of particular interest to the NT Government. As comprehensively reviewed by Richards (2011), it is a construct that is difficult to operationalise and assess, in particular for juvenile cohorts where the patterns of offending are unique and have different developmental trajectories compared to adults. Offending outcomes can be assessed in the following ways: (1) self-reported data, (2) police contact and/or apprehension data, (3) court appearance and conviction data and (4) correctional services data (Payne, 2007). Each of these data sources has strengths and limitations, and there are distinct periods of monitoring required for each data source (for detailed review see Payne, 2007).

The review team worked alongside the NT Police to obtain a set of de-identified police data for all young people who participated in a 2015 EIYBC Program. Data was collated across the period of program implementation, and this was supplemented by a final request made by the review team to NT Police in November 2015. The authors would like to acknowledge the tireless work of Ms Jennie Renfree in terms of supporting this request. The review team was able to access a data pool with the following parameters.

1. Pre-program police data was available for all young people participating in an Operation Flinders program (access date: prior to program).
2. Post-program police data was available for all participants that attended an Operation Flinders program for the period of 90 days post-camp.

Frequency data was provided with the following codings:

- "FV Offender" – this is internally defined as police have attended a domestic disturbance involving a family and the young person has been identified as the offender within the disturbance.
- "FV Participant" - this is internally defined as police have attended a domestic disturbance involving a family and the young person has been identified as a participant within the disturbance.
- "Person of Interest" - this is internally defined as police have attended an offence and police wish to speak to the young person in relation to that offence.

- "Offender" - this is internally defined as police have attended an offence and have identified the young person as committing the offence.
- "Suspect" - this is internally defined as police have attended an offence and have strong reason to suspect that the young person has committed the offence.
- "Spoken To" **-** this is internally defined as police have spoken to the young person which was considered significant enough to be logged onto the system to aide intelligence or information gathering and provides a basis for future follow-up.
- "Child Conveyance" – this is internally defined as the young person is taken home after wandering the streets at night; or could be after caught committing an offence and taken home to be formally interviewed at a more convenient time.
- "Child Welfare" - this is internally defined that a police check is conducted on the young person due to concern, report or family custody matters etc.
- "FV Child" - this is internally defined as the young person was an identified victim in a family violence matter.
- "Suicide Attempt" - this is internally defined as an actual attempt attended by Police, no matter how minor, even if it was expressed as intention such as a threat of self harm.
- "Substance Abuse" - this is internally defined as the young person abusing or consuming any form of volatile substance or drug, including alcohol.
- "Involved With" - this is internally defined as the young person has come to police attention through links with others, even if not through offending (e.g., there was another offender identified and this person was with them at the time).
- "Mentally Disturbed"- this is internally defined as the young person has been involved in a concerning behaviour or incident that requires specialist support.
- "Missing Person"- this is internally defined for young people who abscond from family or placements, and may also be applied in custody matters and abductions.

It is important to note that the coding and input of electronic data, relating to contact with police and offence behaviour, is open to individual police officer interpretation at the point of data entry. For instance, if a police member attends an "offence" and it is reported that an individual young person was within the local area when it occurred, the police member has to make a judgment whether or not it is coded on the system as "Person of Interest", "Suspect" or not coded at all. Furthermore, the current NT Police electronic data system does not code offences in relation to the type of offence or whether or not the young person was found guilty of an offence. Therefore, these variables remain confounded within the current review.

Replicating previous evaluations (Raymond & Lappin, 2011; 2015), three composite measures were developed for the review. They were named and operationalised as follows:

- **Police Offending Risk** - this composite measure included total number of logged entries in relation to *Offender, FV Offender* and *FV Participant*.

- **Contact with Police** – this composite measure included total number of logged entries in relation to *Suspect, Spoken to, Involved With* and *Person of Interest*.

- **Police Welfare Risk** – this composite measure included: *Family Violence, Child Conveyance, FV Child, Child Welfare, Mentally Disturbed, Substance Abuse, Suicide Attempt* and *Missing Person.*

The police data collated as part of the current review afforded the opportunity to:

- Provide reliable comment on participant targeting and selection, as it relates to broad-based static risk factors.

- Report qualitative trends on post-program risk factors predictive of offending.

It is important to note that when offending data is evaluated without the use of a control group, the authors are unable to rule out that any changes in participant behavioural functioning were not due to factors unrelated to program attendance (e.g., participant maturation, other related interventions, miscellaneous changes in participant). This poses questions in relation to the attribution of the outcomes achieved (i.e., to what degree can the outcomes be attributed to the young people's participation in the intervention). Previous evaluations undertaken by the authors in the Northern Territory (Raymond & Lappin, 2011) and South Australia (Raymond, 2014) explored the feasibility of employing a matched control group. The scope conditions for the implementation of a reliable control group, in the available timeframes, were not found to exist in both cases.

The review team worked to identify a suitable control group for the current review. Given that wide ranging demographic data was available on all youth referred to the EIYBC Program (including those that did not attend an EIYBC Program), the scope conditions were found to exist for an assessment of offending trends and recidivism. Unfortunately, however, throughout 2015 program implementation, there was no centralised database of program referrals that captured referral receipt date. Given this key variable was confounded within the matching process, the identification and isolation of a suitable control group within the timeframes was not found to exist.

2.3.2 EIYBC Reporting Templates

In 2014, the review team developed four reporting templates for EIYBC Program preferred providers to complete for the NT Government as part of their funding agreement. These templates were designed to capture broad-based evidence tapping program integrity benchmarks, quality assurance and continuous improvement outcomes. The templates completed were:

- Pre-Camp Monitoring Template – this template captured evidence and benchmarks in the pre-camp phase (until the start of the EIYBC camp component) (see Appendix C).

- Post-Camp Monitoring Template – this template captured benchmarks and outcomes associated with the delivery of the camp component (see Appendix D).

- Post-Program Monitoring Template – this template captured benchmarks and outcomes pertaining to the camp and community integration phases (until 3-month post-program) (see Appendix E).
- Continuous Improvement Template – this template was populated with continuous improvement focus areas (specific to each preferred provider) previously identified between the review team, NT Government and the provider. Reporting against these occurred across 2015 (see Appendix F).

Table 2.2 summarises the EIYBC Program Monitoring templates completed by Operation Flinders and provided to the NT Government and the review team.

Table 2.2 EIYBC Program Monitoring Documentation Completed

	Program Wave 1		Program Wave 2			Program Wave 3		
	Group 1	Group 2	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Pre-Camp	X	X						
Post-Camp	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Post-Program								

EIYBC Continuous Improvement Plans were reviewed and updated by the NT Government and Operation Flinders, and supported by the review team, on the 17/3/2015, 10/6/2015, 9/7/2015 and 27/8/2015.

Each template was reviewed and summarised by the review team, with a number of reporting domains cross-validated in the case file review.

2.3.3 Case File Review and Summation

The first author travelled to Darwin in November 2015 and conducted a review of case files relating to participants case managed by YMCA (Darwin). In collaboration with the designated case worker, each file was reviewed, with a data recording template (Appendix K) guiding the evidence collection process. This elicited a range of valuable information relating to the facilitators and barriers of program implementation. The first author travelled to Alice Springs to replicate this process with Relationships Australia case workers, however, this could not occur because of staff members' last minute unavailability. A truncated version of this process was conducted by telephone.

2.3.4 Program Observation

Observations pertaining to Operation Flinders EIYBC Program delivery of the camp component, as well as participants' experience and behaviour related to this component were assessed as

important domains to be captured. The review team developed a program observation template (Appendix G) that mapped observation domains against the benchmarks of the EIYBC Program Logic (Figure 1.3) and Evaluation Framework (Table 2.1).

To conduct the observation, the review team was embedded for 72 hours (towards end of camp component) within the Operation Flinders camp program in late August, 2015. The review team spent a full day completing the same activities as the EIYBC Program participants (e.g., 15km walk).

2.3.5 Self-Report Attitudinal and Behavioural Measures

The EIYBC Program Guidelines included pre- and post-program assessment measures to inform and guide subsequent goal setting and case planning (as captured in the Staying Strong Plan). Two assessment instruments, integrated within the EIYBC Program Guidelines, were collated and reviewed. These were the Behaviour Change Questionnaire and the Exit Questionnaire.

2.3.5.1 Behaviour Change Questionnaire (BCQ)

The EIYBC Program was designed to empower young people to identify, own and commit to meaningful prosocial and post-camp goals (or be "an agent of change" in their own life). This requires EIYBC Program facilitators (and/or case workers) to qualitatively assess a participant's level of problem awareness, and the motivation to set and action goals. With this aim in mind, the Behaviour Change Questionnaire (BCQ) was integrated into the EIYBC Program Guidelines and was scheduled to be completed by young people at the point of pre-program and exit assessment (see Appendix M). This was a modified version of a Behaviour Change Questionnaire that was designed and is currently being validated through a PhD program at Flinders University (Raymond, 2014).

The BCQ (as integrated within the EIYBC Program Guidelines) was designed to assess the presence of behaviours indicative of school disengagement, deviancy and generalised vulnerability. This questionnaire asked the participant to review 17 problematic behaviours and then circle a number corresponding to one of the following five statements: (1) *I don't do this behaviour,* (2) *I do this behaviour, but I don't see it as a problem,* (3) *This is a problem for me, but I don't want to do anything about fixing it* (4) *I am thinking about making changes to fix this problem* and (5) *I am doing things now to fix this problem.* These responses are mapped to the Transtheoretical Model (Figure 1.1, Chapter 1).

For the purpose of the current evaluation, two scales were developed from this questionnaire:

- **Total Behaviours** – this scale is a composite score of the total number of behaviours reported by the young person.
- **Motivation to Change** – this scale score is the mean motivation score calculated for young people who reported one or more problems. Higher scores indicate that a young person has increased levels of problem awareness, and is contemplating or possibly at a point of action in terms of being willing to change behaviours.

Given the BCQ is in the process of being validated, cautious use and interpretation of the instrument is warranted.

2.3.5.2 Exit Questionnaire

As part of the development of the EIYBC Program Guidelines, the review team developed a brief exit feedback questionnaire tapping young people's experiences of the EIYBC Program, the degree the program had been beneficial and areas of ongoing improvement. This questionnaire is provided in Appendix N.

2.3.6 Review of Historical Program Reviews, Referral Documentation and Key Internal Correspondence

The review team requested historical program reviews, key program documentation and internal documentation (e.g. staff feedback, critical incident reporting) specific to the 2015 delivery of the EIYBC Program. The review team also had access to historical evaluations pertaining to the Operation Flinders program (Mohr et al., 2001; Pointon, 2011; Raymond, 2003, 2014), and de-identified referral forms related to the majority of young people that were referred to a 2015 EIYBC Program.

2.3.7 Stakeholder Feedback

Broad based stakeholder feedback was sought in relation to program outcomes and processes, and the visibility of the EIYBC Program (related to marketing, referral, key program components, integration) across the Northern Territory. A pool of stakeholders was identified by:

- The NT Department of Corrections provided the authors a list of stakeholders, including the EIYBC Referral Panel members.
- A formal request was made to Operation Flinders to nominate stakeholders for the review team to make contact with.
- Additional stakeholders were identified through the contacts obtained through the aforementioned process.

Email and phone contact was initiated with all stakeholders provided. Where a stakeholder was not able to be contacted after two attempts (phone or email), no further attempts were made. A list of stakeholders engaged by the review team, where consent was provided for names to be reported, are provided in Appendix A. Stakeholder feedback was provided by phone or face-to-face interview following a semi-structured question template (Appendix I), with questions individually tailored on the basis of the stakeholder's interface with the EIYBC Program and area of expertise.

All stakeholders received an Information Sheet (Appendix B) and provided their consent to participate by email acknowledgement or verbally at the start of the interview (case noted).

As part of the stakeholder feedback process, systematic attempts were made to obtain feedback from participant families. Consent to initiate contact was brokered through Operation Flinders and YMCA case work staff. Seven phone conferences were conducted with a participant family member or guardian.

2.3.8 Post-Camp Questionnaire and Feedback

The review team sought participant feedback tapping their experiences of the EIYBC camp component. Following consent being provided, the review team individually administered a semi-structured interview (with supplementary Likert scale questionnaire) to 22 young people undertaking the Operation Flinders EIYBC Program (pertaining to EIYBC Program Wave 3). This was completed on the 4th to 5th day of the camp component. The interview and questionnaire is provided in Appendix H. Likert scale questionnaire items were read to all participants.

2.3.9 Post-Program Narrative

The review team sought feedback tapping young person's reflection and post-program narrative. The first author travelled to Darwin and Alice Springs in November 2015 and sought Operation Flinders (facilitated through YMCA) support to rendezvous with past 2015 participants and families where consent had been provided for this to occur.

An interview template, revised from the Post-Program Narrative template previously developed by the authors (Raymond & Lappin, 2011), was applied in a dynamic and youth friendly manner (see Appendix J). The assessment process was designed to elicit information on the way young people constructed the EIYBC Program in terms of:

- Their generalised experience of the program, and the enduring or dominant memories.
- The nature, frequency and type of contact with EIYBC Program staff.
- The role and impact of the EIYBC Program as a change factor within their life.

While this review process elicited a broad and youth-focused narrative of the programs, the recruitment method (convenience sampling) and small sample size cautions the generalisability of the findings. Four young people consented to be interviewed.

2.4 Data Synthesising and Thematic Analysis

The review team sought to implement a systematic, transparent and robust process to synthesise and collate the extensive data pool into summary themes that could inform and improve future program implementation.

The data pertaining to the process review was collected and then reflected upon in an iterative process involving key stakeholders and Operation Flinders. That is, the emerging themes were discussed and reflected upon throughout the data collection process, to provide a mechanism to continually validate and deepen the themes. This approach was grounded upon an participatory

action research approach (Baum, MacDougall, & Smith, 2006; Kidd & Kral, 2005), which represents an evidence-informed process to integrate research and practice outcomes. The themes that emerged from this review were collated and categorised under each of the EIYBC Program implementation phases (see Figure 1.5) within Chapter 3.

A broad and exploratory analysis of outcome trends was sought through the evaluation. Given that evidence was tapped from multiple sources and assessment processes, each with potential confounds or biases influencing their reliability, systematic attempts were made to triangulate data sources (Thurmond, 2001). Replicating previous evaluations (Raymond & Lappin, 2011; 2015), broad and summary outcome statements are provided with specific descriptors related to the evidence supporting the statement. The following descriptors are applied within this evaluation (written in italics):

- **Preliminary evidence** – the stated outcome is empirically supported through at least one *data source* or evaluation *process* that has been collected and verified independent of the preferred provider.
- **Consistent evidence** - the stated outcome is empirically supported through at least three or more *data sources* that have been collected and verified independent of the preferred provider.
- **Strong evidence** - the stated outcome is empirically supported through at least three independent evaluation *processes* that have been collected and verified independent of the preferred provider.

The evaluation *processes* applied within the evaluation include: police data analysis, stakeholder survey and interview, program observation, participant-report measures and interview, case file review, family feedback, and consolidated review of background documents and reporting templates. Many of these evaluation processes included multiple *data sources*. For example, each stakeholder or family member is operationalised as an independent data source.

2.5 Strengths and Limitations

The review methodology arguably achieved its objective to conduct a broad-based process and outcome assessment of the implementation of the EIYBC Program, with consideration given to the delivery of the program for young people across different geographical locations. Given that the process evaluation was conducted in a manner where the themes were consistently validated in collaboration with key stakeholders, the findings of the process evaluation can be considered quite robust. Where the themes are preliminary and require further evidence to validate them, this is explicitly stated within the following chapters.

In terms of the outcome assessment, the use of clearly defined descriptors related to evidence thresholds has reduced the probability that spurious findings are reported. As such, the review methodology has achieved its objective in conducting a broad-based and exploratory analysis of outcome trends. Collectively, the outcome evidence gathered within the review does not permit wholesale conclusions regarding the effectiveness, or lack of effectiveness, of the EIYBC

Program. As noted within Chapter 4, through a period of additional consolidation and capacity building, a robust longitudinal evaluation design is warranted.

2.6 Chapter Summary

In response to clearly define terms of reference (page xiv), a scientifically informed, systematic and pragmatic review methodology was undertaken by the review team which included multi-levelled assessment tools and processes. A large evidence pool was collated, which included police data, stakeholder survey and interview, program observation, participant-report measures and interview, case file review, family feedback, and consolidated review of background documents and reporting templates. This data pool was synthesised separately for the process and outcome components of the review. Following thematic analysis, the process (or implementation data) was validated through continuous discussion with key representatives of the NT Government, Operation Flinders, YMCA, Relationships Australia and other stakeholders. The outcomes associated with the process evaluation found within this report can thereby be considered quite robust.

Sufficient evidence, gathered from a variety of sources and assessment processes, has provided the opportunity for the review team to provide preliminary assessment of program outcomes. Clearly defined descriptors have been provided to quantity the body of evidence supporting stated outcomes. However, evidence gathered within the review does not permit wholesale conclusions regarding the effectiveness, or lack of effectiveness, of the EIYBC Program.

Landscape of Loves Creek Station

Chapter 3: Operation Flinders Program

Chapter omitted from public version of report.

Chapter 4: Summary and Recommendations

4.1 Report Summary

This section summarises the key information from the previous chapters of the report.

4.1.1 Context to EIYBC Program

The Northern Territory (NT) is faced with a range of unique challenges in the prevention and management of youth crime. Specifically, the overrepresentation of Aboriginal young people within the youth justice system requires culturally sensitive, multi-systemic and innovative crime prevention strategies.

Given the unique geographical, social and demographic factors within the NT, the utility of intensive wilderness-based interventions offers much intuitive appeal. While a 2008 piloting of this intervention approach demonstrated promise (Northern Territory Youth Camp Intervention Strategy), the program's lack of integration within the youth justice system and its fragmented post-care support raised doubts regarding the sustainability of outcomes and cost-effectiveness (Raymond & Lappin, 2011).

In 2013, the Northern Territory Government introduced the Early Intervention Youth Boot Camp (EIYBC) Program as a central feature of their youth crime prevention strategy and broader policy platform (Pillars of Justice). The program was targeted to male and female young people, aged from 12 to 17, exhibiting risk factors predictive of future offending. Following a tender process, in late 2013 Tangentyere Council Inc and the Operation Flinders Foundation delivered pilot EIYBC Programs for young people originating from the Alice Springs and greater Darwin regions (including Katherine), respectively. Both agencies were subsequently contracted to deliver a further four programs in the second half of 2014, and Operation Flinders was contracted to deliver eight programs in 2015.

The brief literature review contained within Chapter 1 indicates that boot camps with no therapeutic intent (e.g., based solely upon discipline and compliance as opposed to therapeutically-informed processes), and programs that remove young people from their familiar environment with no aftercare support, are contraindicated as crime prevention strategies. Furthermore, the review identifies that there are a range of program related factors that pose a significant threat to program integrity (or the degree participants receive a consistent "dosage" of intervention within the EIYBC Program). Program integrity remains a key predictor of program impact and effectiveness, and is strongly mediated by the skills, capacity and experience of program facilitators, and the implementation of robust quality assurance and practice systems (e.g., training, clear operational guidelines, practice framework, supervision, recruitment). Within program implementation, it is not uncommon for significant time and resources to be prioritised to managing the risks and operational needs associated with the delivery of remote wilderness programs. The development of quality assurance systems to build program integrity can easily be overlooked within program implementation, and subsequently

program slippage and drift can occur, and the outcomes and cost-effectiveness of the intervention compromised.

Given the aforementioned, across 2014 and 2015, the review team worked with the NT Government and EIYBC Program preferred providers to drive the EIYBC Program to best-practice benchmarks in an expedited manner. Through this, the EIYBC Program was consolidated around a therapeutically-informed program model (or logic) and theory; informed by best-practice benchmarks and a therapeutic framework (Raymond, 2013, 2014). At its core, the EIYBC Program was designed to build a young person's capacity to be an "agent of change" within their life, and through integrated post-camp support (e.g., involving families, teachers, community), support the young person to further identify, own and commit to meaningful prosocial goals. The model was operationalised through the EIYBC Program Guidelines; a document that provided clear operational guidance, templates and benchmarks to preferred providers to drive program integrity and quality assurance outcomes, and build continuity of pre- and post-camp services around a consistent intervention approach and narrative. The authors undertook to review the program implementation in 2014 with the report submitted to the NT Government in January 2015 (Raymond & Lappin, 2015). The recommendations articulated in this report (Raymond & Lappin, 2015) were reviewed with the NT Government and Operation Flinders and key strategies were incorporated into a Continuous Improvement Plan. This plan effectively shaped the agenda for the capacity building phase for the EIYBC Program in 2015 and was updated as additional information emerged from the program delivery throughout the year.

At present, a number of Australian jurisdictions are funding "boot-camp" interventions under a youth justice service framework. However, as detailed within Chapter 1, given the heterogeneous nature of programs, program effectiveness can only be assessed on a case-by-case basis with consideration given to the (1) program composition (e.g., length, intensity, facilitation style, use of therapeutic enhancement), (2) rationale underpinning the intervention change process and (3) participant profile. In other words, the evaluation findings contained within this report are not generalisable to other Australian jurisdictions (or vice versa) or programs without alignment to these considerations.

4.1.2 Review Methodology

In response to clearly defined terms of reference (page xiv), a scientifically informed and pragmatic evaluation methodology was undertaken by the review team which included multi-levelled assessment tools and processes (summarised in Chapter 2). A large evidence pool was systematically collated, which included police data, stakeholder interview, program observation, participant-report measures and interview, case file review, family feedback, and consolidated review of background documents and reporting templates. This data pool was synthesised separately for the process and outcome components of the review. Following thematic analysis, the process (or implementation data) was validated through continuous discussion with key representatives of the NT Government, Operation Flinders, YMCA, RANT and the EIYBC Referral Panel. The outcomes associated with the process evaluation found within this report can thereby be considered quite robust.

Sufficient evidence, gathered from a variety of sources and assessment processes, has provided the opportunity for the review team to provide meaningful but preliminary assessment of program outcomes. Clearly defined descriptors[12] have been provided to quantity the body of evidence supporting stated outcomes. However, evidence gathered within the review does not permit wholesale conclusions regarding the effectiveness, or lack of effectiveness, of the EIYBC Program.

4.1.3 2015 Program Delivery

Operation Flinders is a South Australian organisation that was contracted by the NT Government to deliver a pilot EIYBC Program in 2013, a further four programs in 2014 and eight programs in 2015. This represents a significant expansion of the service delivered by Operation Flinders, not just in terms of the number of programs and participants, but also in the geographic coverage with referrals coming from across the Northern Territory and programs being delivered at the Loves Creek Station site in Central Australia. The EIYBC Programs delivered by Operation Flinders in 2015 have direct antecedents to a program delivered in South Australia for over 20 years.

The review provides *consistent evidence* that the Operation Flinders EIYBC Program can be a catalyst for change for some, but not all, young people at risk of future offending trajectories within the greater Darwin area (including Katherine), Central Australia and the Tiwi Islands. Furthermore, and importantly, Operation Flinders has demonstrated the capacity to deliver the EIYBC Program in a safe manner, reflective of the risks that come from delivering remote wilderness-based interventions with both intrastate and interstate transportation requirements, with ongoing work required to mitigate against identified risks (e.g., appropriate supervision while transporting young people). The review has identified acceptable levels of program output in terms of the number of young people participating in the program, and post-program contact, given the compression of implementation timelines across 2015 and first year implementation of the program at a Northern Territory site. However, the translation of EIYBC Program benchmarks in terms of service integration, as well as program integrity related to the facilitator and case work delivery of the intervention, as mapped against the EIYBC Program Logic, remain within the moderately low range.

In 2014, a number of young people with low to negligible risk profiles attended the Operation Flinders delivered EIYBC Program. However, across 2015, there is consistent evidence that the participant cohort risk profile has significantly increased. There were a relatively high number of participants presenting with multiple risk factors and historical offending patterns requiring multi-agency support. This has occurred in the context of a lack of available, appropriate and timely referrals, magnified through pre-camp compression of timelines and inter-agency communication breakdowns. There is some evidence suggesting this compression resulted from the lack of clear information available in relation to the program and target group. Other anecdotal evidence suggests that this was further impacted by perceptions associated with

[12] Defined in Chapter 2.

media reporting (i.e., the emphasis on "boot camp" for young offenders), which has collectively contributed to protracted referral processes, with the need to generate new referrals to ensure appropriate numbers were available for the programs. In turn, this slippage further compressed intake timelines, including the lack of preparatory activities, and low levels of engagement with participants and families. It is likely that the lack of availability of case management staffing at different times, combined with the absence of clear scheduling of intake timelines, also contributed to slippage in the implementation of key intake activities.

Despite this, Operation Flinders has consolidated its presence in the Top-End, and started this process in Central Australia. There is evidence of an enhanced presence for the NT program on the Operation Flinders' website and the EIYBC Program remains a core component of the Operation Flinders Foundation's strategic direction, with evidence that there are high levels of investment (from the Board to the facilitator level) in the success of the EIYBC Program. While program traction in both Central Australia and Darwin has been initiated, the review finds that ongoing work is required to ensure that the Operation Flinders' program model and narrative resonates with a diversity of stakeholders, families and program participants across the Northern Territory. This includes recruiting and training volunteers across the Northern Territory to deliver the program. This will not only serve to reduce transport costs but, importantly, it will ensure that the program is tailored to the NT context and that the local community begins to share ownership in the program for NT participants.

While some work has occurred, in partnership with the Traditional Owners of Loves Creek Station, more work is required to embed cultural activities and narrative (e.g., program story) within the Operation Flinders delivered EIYBC Program to ensure it is meaningful for young people across the NT. There is evidence that the South Australian Operation Flinders program narrative (e.g., "if you can walk 100km you can do anything") will not resonate with sections of the NT community unless it is supported and articulated through a cultural lens. This has been prioritised as an area of ongoing program development, and moving forward, it is important that Operation Flinders brings a flexible approach to its program delivery. There are strong reasons to believe that, given the current levels of strategic intent to communication and continuous improvement, the Operation Flinders program will strengthen over time within the Northern Territory, in conjunction with program partners and stakeholder agencies.

Chapter 3 has identified some key challenges for Operation Flinders. At the broadest level, the EIYBC Program continues to require Operation Flinders to invest, monitor and resource pre-, during- and post-program elements. This has necessitated the organisation to bring attention and risk management to case work service delivery as well as co-working requirements through sub-contracting arrangements. While there is some evidence that benefits have been achieved through the partnering with YMCA and RANT in pre- and post-camp support in terms of program output, the review finds that follow-up support can be strengthened through better integration of assessment information, increased case worker application of multi-systemic approaches, and communication with higher levels of therapeutic intent.

The delivery of training to Operation Flinders (staff & volunteers) and partner agencies (RANT & YMCA) has enhanced the understanding of the EIYBC Program Guidelines and the therapeutic underpinnings of the program, and there is evidence of high quality practice output. However, there is a need for more sophisticated practice systems (e.g., training, operational guidelines, reflective practice) targeting quality assurance, risk management and a consistent practice

approach, as mapped to the EIYBC Program Logic and Guidelines. Furthermore, the integration between the Operation Flinders wilderness facilitators and YMCA/RANT case workers requires further attention, given there has been evidence of a lack of role clarity and shared understanding of the EIYBC Program Logic throughout the implementation. This may require a review of the contracting and governance arrangements into the future with the opportunity to build more focus on performance development through the competency based assessment process for facilitators and case workers.

Chapter 3 of this report has identified a number of recommendations to drive the continuous development of the Operation Flinders EIYBC Program. A key opportunity and risk for Operation Flinders in 2016 will be to build staff capacity to deliver the program in a manner consistent with the EIYBC Program Guidelines and Logic, while at the same time continuing to build organisational and logistical capacity to deliver the program from a Northern Territory site. Where Operation Flinders can achieve these capacity building strategies, alongside broader program delivery developments, it is likely that the program will achieve much better integration with the local services, and improve the outcomes for participants and their families.

4.2 Program Review: Summary Themes

While ongoing progress has occurred in developing the EIYBC Program across 2013 to 2015, it is the review team's opinion that the potential benefits or outcomes of the program have not been fully realised. There are a number of factors identified in this report that have negatively impacted on the effectiveness of the EIYBC Program in 2015. The following themes talk to how the impact of the program can be enhanced moving forward.

4.2.1 Consolidated Presence for the EIYBC Program in the NT

Across 2015, the EIYBC Program has evolved significantly since the previous review in 2014 (Raymond & Lappin, 2015). Most notably, in 2015, Operation Flinders was the sole provider and was responsible for the delivery of an expanded number of programs from a dedicated site in the Central Australia region with high quality infrastructure. Pre- and post-camp case management support was delivered by two separate agencies located in Alice Springs and Darwin. The EIYBC Program has gained a strong foothold and presence in the NT, with solid stakeholder interest in the program and confidence that it can intervene with young people who are at-risk of becoming entrenched in the youth justice system. Both the physical and programmatic foundations have been laid with optimism for enhanced outcomes through the implementation of strategic improvement activities.

A key area for future improvement is the ongoing need to explore how the program can be tailored to the Northern Territory context. The recent establishment and launch of a camp delivery site in the Central Australia region (Loves Creek Station), with dedicated high quality infrastructure, is core to this process. Future initiatives should focus on the establishment of a strong and locally based management and operational leadership structure for the EIYBC preferred provider, with operations based at strategic locations, and where focus can be brought to building local capacity to deliver the programs effectively. This includes the recruitment, training and ongoing support of a local team of volunteers, and other ancillary

staff, and establishing strong partnering agreements with local agencies associated with the delivery of programs.

Furthermore, there is a need to tailor the program to the NT cultural context. While attempts have been made to build a cultural element into the program, in conjunction with Traditional Owners of the local site, challenges remain in meeting the diverse and unique cultural needs of participants. A stronger cultural narrative needs to be interwoven into the program, where culturally meaningful engagement and activities are less compartmentalised.

It is recommended that:

The EIYBC Program preferred provider's management and operations team are consolidated in strategic locations across the Northern Territory with a focus on building local capacity to deliver the EIYBC Program.

A cohesive implementation strategy is developed by the EIYBC Program preferred provider(s) for the recruitment of other relevant staff and volunteers to deliver the program in Central Australia with appropriate training and support.

Partnership agreements are developed with key agencies associated with the delivery of programs, including: case management provider agencies, referral agencies, local service agencies and the EIYBC Program Referral Panel.

The EIYBC Program preferred provider(s) and the NT Government continue to work with the Traditional Owners and other key stakeholders in developing a cultural narrative, and associative activities, to support the meaningful engagement, cultural learning and safety for participants from a diversity of NT geographical regions.

4.2.2 Promotions, Marketing and Referral Processes

The lack of timely and appropriate referrals in 2015 created some significant issues associated with the perceived impacts of negative contagion between young people, as a result of mixed risk levels within groups, and compressing timeframes for the intake process. This resulted in minimal preparation for a number of young people and their families. More work is required to create marketing and promotions information that is easy to access and targeted to young people, families and referral agencies. A key aspect of this information is creating much greater visibility as to the target profile for the intervention and creating shared understanding of concepts such as "early intervention" and "at-risk of offending" using tangible case examples and easily understood language. There is also a need to create communication plans, which are tailored to the communication needs of the individual referral agencies, especially the Department of Education as a key referral point for early intervention.

The inclusion of a high number of young people with high and complex needs has had a significant impact on the EIYBC Program in 2015, both for other young people attending the program and program staff. It is the review team's opinion that young people with both complex needs and multiple agencies around them may not be appropriate referrals, unless the EIYBC Program can dovetail into a broader multi-systemic strategy. It is also critical that young

people with high and complex needs are appropriately matched in groups with other young people to prevent issues of negative contagion (i.e., more vulnerable young people being negatively impacted by exposure to certain behaviours). It is not appropriate for the EIYBC Program to become a "default" intervention where other interventions or programs have not been effective in responding to the needs of young people. There is merit is creating a feedback mechanism from the preferred provider to the Referral Panel in relation to the preparation, camp and follow-up phases to assist in refining the referral targeting. This would also enable the panel to assist with multi-systemic integration of services for identified EIYBC Program participants in the post-camp phase.

One of the key features of the current system, which was seen as a contributing factor in protracting the referral process, was the lack of engagement with families and young people prior to the referral being made. This resulted in young people being identified as appropriate for the camp through the EIYBC Referral Panel and, through follow-up, the young person or family did not have context for the referral and subsequently resisted their involvement. The future referral process must build in the need to confirm engagement with families and young people, prior to the referral being submitted to the EIYBC Referral Panel.

Significant work has occurred with the EIYBC Referral Panel, with consistent feedback from panel members that the process of bringing multiple agencies together to facilitate access to the EIYBC Program had a range of benefits. A planning session that was convened at the close of the camp season contributed to a range of initiatives to assist in streamlining the process and ensuring that relevant information is provided by respective agencies in an efficient manner. More work is required to explore the membership of the panel, with a number of stakeholders highlighting the importance of supporting continuity of the panel in contributing to effective decision-making. In particular, representatives need to be connected to their agency's operations, while having senior responsibility across the region. Furthermore, it appears that representation from Central Australia has been somewhat inconsistent and consideration needs to be given to the appropriate roles for key agencies in the region. Consistent feedback throughout the EIYBC Program implementation has been the lack of communication with the EIYBC Referral Panel, both in terms of the pre-engagement for the program, what occurred through the camps and the post-engagement phase; especially where young people have resisted engagement. More work is required to establish mechanisms for feedback at key junctures of the program.

It is recommended that:

A comprehensive strategic communications strategy is developed that includes key marketing messages for various audiences, common understanding of the target profile, multi-layered strategies for referral points (including "roadshows" and having key liaison points at different sites) and readily accessible information online for making referrals.

The system that supports the referral process is streamlined, including building in engagement with the young person and family to ascertain their interest prior to submitting the referral.

Membership of the EIYBC Referral Panel is reviewed with the intent to consolidate the panel for next year; including the identification of "vice" members should the primary membership not be available. Panel members should be provided introductory training in relation to the EIYBC Program.

Roles and responsibilities for providing feedback to the EIYBC Referral Panel are articulated, for the EIYBC Program preferred provider and case management agencies, at critical junctures of the program cycle.

4.2.3 Intake and Pre-Program Structures

The protracted referral process has led to a compression of timeframes for the intake process, including preparation work for participants and families, which were further compounded by staff availability, and the lack of guidelines, structure and scheduling for the pre-camp process. Feedback from stakeholders indicated that, in some cases, young people had no face-to-face contact with program staff until they were expected to attend the camp. This had a significant impact on the overall program integrity and is likely to escalate participant anxiety as they enter into a wilderness experience. Similarly a number of families were not engaged which may impact on their confidence with the EIYBC Program. Both of these circumstances are likely to lead to attrition from referral through to intake and attendance at the camp, and possibly reduce young people's capacity to self-regulate themselves during the initial stages of the camp, which can in turn manifest as difficult and complex behaviours.

There was overwhelming stakeholder support for more preparatory work, including engagement with young people and their families throughout the intake phase of the program. This includes face-to-face contact to provide young people and families a thorough overview of the camp and the schedule of lead-in activities. A number of stakeholders saw merit in building on this engagement through planned visits to consolidate relationships with families, and begin to plan and collaborate with families/caregivers in a partnership approach aimed at providing holistic support to the participants to aide goal setting and change.

Other stakeholder feedback pointed to the importance of having structured opportunities or mechanisms for the group forming process to be initiated and consolidated prior to the camp start. Through the establishment of these relationships it is likely that young people's anxiety will be moderated through group camaraderie. Roles and inter-group dynamics can be

established, thereby supporting young people to learn to begin to operate as a "therapeutic community". This information can be shared with the EIYBC Program preferred provider and promote healthy and constructive relationships through the course of the wilderness experience. A number of regional stakeholders (Tiwi Islands, Alice Springs, Katherine) indicated that they were positioned to develop EIYBC Program groups from young people restricted to their communities. Where this occurs with centralised support/training and with cultural mentors from the community supporting the young people, it is the review team's opinion that this represents a best-practice implementation of the EIYBC Program across regional areas.

It is recommended that:

Face-to-face contact occurs for all young people and families once their participation on the EIYBC Program is confirmed, to ensure they have a thorough understanding of the program, with particular focus on the pre-program preparation and schedule of structured activities.

Case workers engage parents/caregivers as partners in the provision of support for young people throughout the program, with collaborative planning occurring at the outset of the program to help parents understand their roles.

There is a schedule of preparatory activities, including group activities, to help young people to get to know one another and form as a group prior to transporting to the wilderness experience.

Regional communities are centrally supported and trained to identify and establish EIYBC Program groups from their community (supported by local cultural mentors/elders).

Case workers employ group forming processes to support groups of young people to act as a therapeutic community in preparation for the wilderness experience, and that this information is shared with the EIYBC Program preferred provider.

4.2.4 Delivering Program Intent

A key aspect of the program design is bringing therapeutic intent to communication with young people. This is critical in responding to the unique needs of each individual, and not simply reacting to youth behaviours, which may be symptomatic of the issues at the emotional core, especially young people who have experienced trauma. A primary mechanism to formulate therapeutic and practice intent is the assessment process. While, in 2015, compared to 2014, there has been greater traction in the administration of the assessment process, there is minimal evidence to suggest that this is translating consistently to the practice level. More work is required to build practitioner capacity to ensure that the assessment information is used to inform intent, and that this information is shared with all personnel responsible for delivering the program. This includes planning meetings between case workers and EIYBC Program

preferred provider staff prior to the start of the camp, to consider the intent for communication with each individual, as well as discussing how to support the therapeutic needs of the group. This shared intent is foundational to creating a dynamic that will support the development of goals and foster meaningful relationships with adults and other young people.

Another key aspect of the program is the importance of relationships as the vehicle for therapeutic intervention and supporting young people to make the changes in their lives that will enable them to achieve their longer term goals. Throughout the program implementation, both case workers and program facilitators often forge positive relationships with young people, which become the catalyst for the development of goals. A significant barrier to maintaining momentum towards these goals is the lack of continuity of supportive adults, particularly case workers responsible for the pre- and post-camp support. A key benefit to engaging young people within the wilderness context is that it expedites the development of strong bonds with adults and this becomes the foundation for growth and change. Promoting staff continuity throughout the program will assist in enhancing adult-youth relationships and will, in turn, increase the likelihood that young people will achieve their goals.

A feature of the EIYBC Program is that avoidance and resistance to change is expected with young people. Working with and safely challenging avoidance is a key feature of the program. There was inconsistent case worker capacity to perform this role. Training in motivational interviewing or enhancement strategies that validate and work with resistance are likely to be highly advantageous for EIYBC Program staff.

It is recommended that:

Ongoing training, and reflective practice coaching, is provided to staff to support them in translating assessment information to inform practice intent and build their capacity to work with young people in a responsive way that meets their therapeutic needs. Motivational interviewing training is likely to be highly advantageous for program staff.

A performance development program, underpinned by competency based assessment, is implemented to ensure that all staff associated with the program meet required practice benchmarks.

Strategies are developed and implemented to promote continuity of staff throughout the program, to support the development of strong and trusting relationships with young people.

4.2.5 Post-Camp Follow-up

In general terms, while wilderness programs have been found to elicit positive change outcomes, these outcomes often lack sustainability with no effective “aftercare” support (see the Literature Review in Chapter 1). In 2015, there has been evidence of increasing sophistication in post-camp follow-up. However there is significant room for development. The following section talks to this point.

In addition to promoting continuity of relationships through the preparation and camp phases, the engagement of families as key partners in the follow-up process will build a holistic practice approach. A number of parents reported a desire to work more intensively with the case work provider. Exploring ways to engage families to share participants' program experience, such as being involved in the celebration and acknowledgement of young people's achievements on camp, are important implementation considerations Families that understand young people's goals, and actively encourage their reflection and actioning, will support goal momentum. Another key follow-up partner for EIYBC Program participants is agencies who have regular involvement with young people (such as schools). Engaging schools and stakeholders in the understanding and review of the Staying Strong Plan will further integrate the intervention and contribute to sustainability.

One of the main reasons cited by agencies for the lack of post-camp follow-up was young people's refusal to be involved. Stakeholder feedback, including members of the EIYBC Referral Panel, indicated that this lack of engagement was not communicated to them, or that the information was provided too late to do anything about it. Regular and timely communication related to young people's progress will promote interagency collaboration in overcoming the challenges in engaging young people. A number of stakeholders also indicated the need for more structured and engaging activities as a way to support young people's ongoing connection to the program and key program relationships.

From a best-practice viewpoint, it is noted that:

Engagement of families, and significant others (including school representatives, the Referral Panel and other agencies involved with the family), in the celebration of young people's achievement will assist them to share in the young people's journeys and engage more constructively in supporting young people to achieve their goals.

Establishing a partnership agreement with related agencies, and the EIYBC Referral Panel, in relation to co-working arrangements, including communication expectations, will build more collaboration and integration of efforts.

Developing a schedule of post-camp structured activities (with a fun and rapport strengthening element) to engage young people on an ongoing basis and nurture relationships with workers, will support the review and actioning of goals within the Staying Strong Plan.

4.3 Program Development in 2015

The EIYBC Program is an intervention that has organically developed from a clear policy framework (Pillars of Justice). Unlike a previous youth camp initiative (see Raymond & Lappin, 2011), the NT Government has driven the conceptualisation and articulation of the EIYBC Program model around identified youth justice needs and aligned to best practice evidence. For this reason, the NT Government is in a strong position to ensure the accountability of finite

youth justice resources, and in the authors' opinion, this has translated to the EIYBC Program being significantly better placed to deliver a safe and high impact program (compared to the previous youth camp intervention).

While significant progress has been made since the early 2008 piloting of the Youth Camp program, the EIYBC Program model is still gaining traction at the practice and program levels, with ongoing refinement and consolidation required. This phenomenon is not particular to the EIYBC Program, especially in the context of the significant changes that have occurred this year; including establishing a dedicated site in the NT and the engagement of a new case management provider in Central Australia. Evidence indicates (see Chapter 1) that established wilderness programs are associated with the strongest program outcomes and this is facilitated through ongoing program monitoring, implementing continuous improvement strategies and the time needed for program facilitators, and other practitioners, to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the program and how it operates. The authors previously recommended that the NT Government consider an implementation and evaluation strategy to bring the EIYBC Program model, and preferred providers, to consistent and best-practice implementation in an expedited manner, with the view to consolidate the intervention as a "program", as opposed to a "camp". As summarised in Figure 1.2 (Chapter 1), a four-phase program development strategy consisting of *program piloting, program refinement*, *capacity building* and then *consolidation/evaluation* was proposed. Given the nature of program development, these phases were mapped to successive years (2013-2016). This report, and the recommended program improvements, signals the end of the *capacity building* stage. The following sections provide a brief overview of activity undertaken in these areas, together with a summary of further work required into 2016 as part of the *consolidation and evaluation* phase.

4.3.1 Phase 3: Capacity Building

As noted in Figure 1.2 (Chapter 1), the most recent program development phase is "capacity building". Three key areas of focus were prioritised in this phase (as detailed in Raymond & Lappin, 2015). They are considered in turn:

4.3.1.1 Multi-Systemic Integration and Targeting

Chapter 1 argues that culturally sensitive, multi-systemic and targeted early intervention programs are in the best position to respond to the Northern Territory's unique youth justice and demographic needs. The 2014 review provided *strong evidence* that the EIYBC Program has the capacity to be a culturally-sensitive intervention that can respond to the unique needs of Northern Territory young people (Raymond & Lappin 2015). However, ongoing attention needed to be paid to the multi-systemic integration of the program, and the targeting of the participants more broadly. The contents of this report indicate that this continues to be an area of need, with future attention to be brought to supporting a more meaningful cultural narrative, promoting multi-systemic involvement through partnering agreements and the more systemic engagement of the EIYBC Referral Panel.

Through the 2014 review, the authors found that the "early intervention" target group was defined differently by stakeholders, including what observed risk factors were required to be

present for referral. This led to some confusion around referral, with some evidence that a small number of participants who attended the camp did not have clear risk factors present. While the evidence associated with referral targeting process in 2015 indicates that this issue was overcome, with the overwhelming majority of young people having offending risk factors present, there continues to be a lack of clarity associated with what constitutes "early intervention". A number of 2015 program participants had significant risk factors present indicating risk profiles consistent with young people with more entrenched youth justice needs. The early intervention focus of the program continued to be strongly supported by stakeholders, including school and educational stakeholders, many who stated that the program fitted an unmet program need. However, ongoing monitoring and independent review of referrals is warranted.

In 2014, the Central Australian Referral Panel, commissioned for the EIYBC Program, worked alongside the locally based EIYBC Program preferred provider to provide an important review function. This panel gained traction as a viable and important system. As discussed in a previous evaluation (Raymond & Lappin, 2011), robust referral panels can have a central role driving interventions, like the EIYBC Program, to meet best-practice criteria in participant targeting and multi-systemic integration.

In 2015, an EIYBC Referral Panel was implemented in the Top End, with some representation from Central Australia at various stages throughout the year. While there was consistently good feedback in relation to the panel, and the value inherent in bringing multiple agencies together, their capacity to target referrals, and match groups of young people, were hampered by a lack of consistent referral input. There was also strong evidence to suggest that the program referral target, and the intent of the program, were not well understood and the program would benefit from more cohesive and strategic marketing/promotions. This includes providing tangible examples of appropriate referrals and case studies that demonstrate the intent of the program and how it works.

It is recommended that the roles and responsibilities of the current Referral Panel in Darwin are consolidated through a terms of reference, including providing panel members greater visibility of selection and exclusion criteria, and incorporating a review function of each camp with relevant providers.

(See other recommendations throughout this chapter relating to the Referral Panel)

Across 2014, a key barrier to achieving program integrity was the compression of timelines associated with the delivery of eight EIYBC Programs in less than 4-5 months (Raymond & Lappin 2015). While, in 2015, this issue was in part resolved, through attention to scheduling and planning, the protracted referral process led to a compression of the preparation phase of the camp. The operational effectiveness of the EIYBC Referral Panel is dependent on sufficient lead-in time being provided and young people and families being effectively engaged.

A core mechanism for driving multi-systemic integration is the partnering of preferred providers and local community service agencies in pre- and post-camp service delivery.

Significant opportunities for cross-agency collaboration were identified following the 2014 review (Raymond & Lappin 2015), with indications that partnerships (between the preferred provider & another agency) that were formalised at the executive level of organisations translated to tangible program outputs. While the current review has identified good examples of service integration, there were limited examples of formalised partnerships with local communities/agencies and this remains an area of key program development in 2016.

The 2014 review indicated that there did not appear to be a visible policy position by which the EIYBC Program interfaced with the Youth Diversion Program. This also manifested in preferred EIYBC Program and Youth Diversion providers (YWCA & RANT) demonstrating low levels of interagency collaboration. In 2015, this policy position continues to have low visibility.

It is recommended that the NT Government provide a clear policy position or framework which operationalises the integration between the EIYBC and the Youth Diversion Programs.

4.3.1.2 Capacity Building of Operational Staff

The EIYBC Program includes a range of assessment and case work processes that were designed to build upon and integrate with each other (see Chapter 1, Figure 1.4). Across 2014, the integrated nature of this process was not understood by preferred providers, or applied in a manner as designed and intended. On a number of occasions this translated to assessment measures being applied contrary to their design (e.g., measures designed to be completed by program facilitators being given to young people to complete). The resulted in a recommendation for more formalised training and coaching to preferred provider staff to implement the EIYBC Program Guidelines (Raymond & Lappin, 2015). An introductory training package was designed and tested in 2015 and delivered to Operation Flinders staff and YMCA staff in Adelaide and Darwin. As per its design, the training was also delivered by Operation Flinders personnel to internal and external stakeholders. However, there was evidence that the training became significantly diluted (on some, but not all occasions) under this arrangement. This report recommends the identification of Advanced EIYBC Program trainers that are responsible for independent delivery of the EIYBC Program training package to internal and external stakeholders.

It is recommended that Advanced EIYBC Program Trainers are identified across the NT and they are supported to develop the prerequisite knowledge, understanding and skills to deliver the EIYBC Program training package independently.

The EIYBC Program was designed as a therapeutically-informed intervention designed to support young people be an “agent of change” in their life. As discussed within Chapter 1, program impact and integrity is strongly mediated by the capacity of operational staff and

program facilitators. In the case of the EIYBC Program, a key program component is for practitioners to deliver individually tailored communication mapped to specific client needs and to the practice intent of the program. Consistent with findings in 2014 (Raymond & Lappin, 2015), in 2015 there were wide differences in the capacity of staff to delivery this program component, with particular reference to practitioners' confidence and capacity to respond to young people and families presenting with high levels of avoidance, or with complex and challenging behaviours. Furthermore, the authors formed the opinion that post-care follow-up with young people and families was not always guided by clear intent or mapped to a longitudinal goal or outcome. While many post-camp contact benchmarks were met, there is significant room for increased levels of therapeutic and case work intent to occur in this process. For example, when a young person refused to reflect upon their goals, or engage with the Staying Strong Plan, there were significant differences between practitioners in their confidence and capacity to subtly challenge avoidance, tease out the factors driving this behaviour, and apply strategies designed to improve motivation or elicit behaviour change.

To this end, in the authors' opinion, the clear articulation of staff competencies to deliver the EIYBC Program remains a key mechanism to drive program integrity. As supported by feedback obtained through both reviews (2014 & 2015), staff competencies to deliver the program as per the intended design and therapeutic underpinnings, appear mapped, at a minimum, to the Certificate IV level (Community Services). A competency assessment tool was developed and tested in 2015. While this developmental work occurred in 2015, it is yet to be systematically implemented by an EIYBC Program preferred provider. Ongoing implementation of the EIYBC Program competency assessment tool is indicated in 2016, with this process supported and monitored by Advanced EIYBC Program Trainers.

It is recommended that the Advanced EIYBC Program Trainers have a lead role in the implementation and monitoring of the EIYBC Program competency assessment tool.

It is recommended that the NT Government embed the requirement to implement training, and the competency based assessment process, for all staff and volunteers associated with the delivery of the EIYBC Program in 2016, as part of a broader performance development program, in all future service agreements.

While staff knowledge acquisition can be introduced through formal training, understanding and skill capacity is reinforced and consolidated through professional supervision, reflective practice and an organisational culture of professional development. This represents a key challenge for all community service organisations, and recommendations to support this process are outlined in more detail through the previous section and chapters. It is also necessary to develop the systems to underpin the practice processes, especially in relation to the pre-and post-camp work.

It is recommended that work continues to build organisational systems to deliver the program, especially in relation to case work and intentional practice.

Consistent with the 2014 review process (Raymond & Lappin 2015), this current review has identified that key EIYBC Program components related to the individually tailoring of communication (with therapeutic intent to specific youth needs), and the systematic integration of assessment material and key program activities (wilderness program and case work processes), have not been routinely applied. Through the implementation of high quality training, professional development systems, reflective practice coaching and ongoing support, the understanding and skills of program staff will develop over time. A key challenge into the near future is limiting the attrition of staff and volunteers to promote continuity and consistency, and build internal organisational knowledge which can support the development of understanding and practice skills to deliver the EIYBC Program.

4.3.1.3 Minimising Program Drift

There are a range of factors that pose a threat to EIYBC Program integrity into the future. While benchmarks are increasingly being linked to funded provision across Australia (Australian Government, 2009), their use and monitoring may be unfamiliar to community service agencies. As with many newly developed programs, there is high probability of "program drift" occurring (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). In the case of the EIYBC Program, this would result in the intervention regressing back to a "camp" as opposed to a "program". Given that EIYBC Program preferred providers are afforded the opportunity to bring innovation to the delivery of their programs, within agreed parameters, it is imperative that future EIYBC Program preferred providers continually liaise with the NT Government regarding programmatic changes, and areas of benchmark slippage. NT Government attention and monitoring of program integrity through the current reporting process cannot be overstated

It is recommended that the NT Government articulate the completion schedule of the EIYBC Program Reporting Templates in all future service agreements.

4.4 Systemic Program Development 2016

While there have been a number of recommendations associated with improvements to various elements of the EIYBC Program structure, this section provides an opportunity to explore the efficacy of more systemic changes to the program structure. In the authors' opinion there is merit in considering more fundamental changes to the procurement and delivery of the

program to maximise likely outcomes into the future, and mitigate against challenges that have arisen through the program development phase to date.

The first of these programmatic changes is designed to align each program more closely with communities in specific geographic areas, especially communities that have not had ready access to the program to date. This will promote more program coherence, assist with referrals, enhance capacity building within communities and integrate the case management process more effectively for both participants and their families. The general concept is that geographic areas for consideration are prioritised based on need and a lead agency within identified communities are appointed to facilitate the generation of referrals based on a schedule of activity. These referrals are made available to the EIYBC Referral Panel and presented by a representative of the lead agency. Decisions regarding the acceptance of referrals, or on-referral, and matching of groups are made collaboratively. Where possible, the agencies that are linked to the majority of participants support a staff member, or respected community leader, to attend the camp and provide case management for areas outside of Alice Springs and Darwin. Case management would be provided in line with the EIYBC Program Guidelines, with the appropriate training, coaching and competency assessment facilitated centrally through the EIYBC preferred provider.

In light of the above approach, and in response to complexities with sub-contracting arrangements for case management in 2015, it is recommended that the procurement structures be altered. The contracting of the camp providers, as identified by the NT Government, will continue to be managed directly, with responsibility to provide the wilderness experience and capacity building function for the program (including training, coaching & competency assessment). In contrast to current arrangements, it is recommended that the case management procurement be managed directly by the NT Government into 2016 and beyond. To enable the program to be delivered flexibly, across regions, it is recommended that a preferred provider panel is established, or an existing preferred provider panel broadened, for the delivery of case management. Providers would be contracted to deliver on a unit cost basis, depending on the number of young people referred from each area. In this way existing providers, such as youth agencies, youth diversion or schools, could augment existing service provision and better integrate the pre-and post-camp support in line with benchmarks articulated within the EIYBC Program Guidelines.

A further strategy to integrate the efforts of the camps is to align the program with mentoring initiatives, such as Clontarf Foundation and the Stars Foundation. This would link another support person to the case management process to assist in engaging and supporting young people with their goals, especially in linking with education and other community activities (e.g., sports). This would also provide another option for a continuous relationship throughout the program and after the case management intervention has been finalised.

It is recommended that:

The NT Government explores the potential of a "lead agent" approach to engaging communities in the referral process.

The procurement model is reviewed with the view to directly contracting case management services on a fee for service basis with providers pre-qualified to provide services.

The EIYBC Program preferred provider undertakes a capacity building role for agencies wanting to provide case management services and/or perform the "lead agency" role, and identifies a key liaison person for the referral process, training and coaching for internal staff.

Opportunities to integrate the EIYBC Program with mentoring foundations are explored to augment the program and provide more continuity for young people across key transition points.

4.4.1 Phase 4: Consolidation and Evaluation

The full impact and potential of the EIYBC Program will not be fully assessable until the program has gone through a period of consolidation, including the implementation of the Continuous Improvement Plan, incorporating agreed recommendations outlined in this report. This includes: (1) consolidating the presence in Central Australia and building capacity of the local workforce and volunteers, (2) embedding the performance development process in all organisations associated with the delivery of the program, (3) developing a cohesive marketing and promotions strategy to increase the numbers of referrals, (4) exploring a "lead agency" structure to link to communities more effectively, and (5) implementing a more meaningful cultural narrative (and elements) into the program. This will require ongoing monitoring and measurement to continue the continuous improvement process and bring evidence to the consolidated approach. Given the significant resources invested in the program, independent evaluation and cost-benefit analysis, external to review team, is warranted in 2016. Ideally, this should include a control group for comparative purposes and to strengthen the confidence of the findings.

Independent evaluation and cost-benefit analysis of the EIYBC Program is warranted in 2016, ideally with a control group for comparative purposes and to strengthen the confidence of the findings.

4.5 Conclusions

This report provides strong evidence that the implementation of the EIYBC Program has gained traction across the Northern Territory. Further to the 2014 review, there is optimism that the Northern Territory Government is at the forefront of best-practice and benchmarked implementation of such interventions. This is testament to the significant energy and commitment from a large number of passionate stakeholders across government, non-government agencies and the preferred provider/s. The recommendations in this chapter are offered to drive further continuous improvement, and to maximise program impact and cost utilisation. While the full impact of the EIYBC Program will not be assessable until further consolidation has occurred, there is shared agreement among many stakeholders that value is being delivered for young participants and their families, and that this value will be enhanced and strengthened over time.

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Appendices

Appendices have been omitted from public report. Specific appendices are available upon request from the NT Government.