



from those who know.

*minimum age of
criminal responsibility*

March 2024

collated by the South Australian Training Centre Visitor
on behalf of and with the expressed permission of children & young people
detained at the Adelaide Youth Training Centre.

The Training Centre Visitor respectfully acknowledges and celebrates the Traditional Owners of the lands throughout South Australia and pays its respects to their Elders, children and young people of past, present and future generations.

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a brief introduction

In February 2024, the South Australian Government released a discussion paper and a proposal to raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 12 years of age, in some circumstances with exceptions. In this discussion paper the government also sought feedback on a new alternative diversion model that would replace the existing criminal justice process for children who engage in behaviour that would otherwise have been a criminal offence. It is along these parameters that children and young people in the Adelaide Youth Training Centre were engaged to provide their input.

It is with great humility that I present this document as true and accurate account of the views and perspectives of children and young people who were detained and deprived of their liberty, either on remand or detention, at the Adelaide Youth Training Centre (the Centre), during the month of March 2024.

As the South Australian Training Centre Visitor, it is my responsibility (both morally and functionally) to enable agency and amplification of children and young people's voices in the Centre.

The approach I have taken is literal.

Throughout this document you will find direct quotes from children and young people who have experienced firsthand the South Australian criminal justice system. Some of whom are or were detained and deprived of their liberty at the age of 10.

It is confronting and direct. It is not meant to cause offence, it is merely the truth as seen, felt and experienced by children and young people in that place.

The quotes presented here were collected as just one part of each individual child and young person's life story. The quotes are their truths, whether you agree with them or not.

As I was trusted with these words, I am presenting them to you as unaltered as possible. Where minor alternations have been made these are indicated by square brackets or ellipses. This has been done to ensure contextual clarity and deidentification of the child or young person.

There is swearing and some people may take offense to this. The quotes provided describe the confronting scenarios and experiences that are very much a part of these children and young people's lives.

I have sought these views and perspectives in the context of the South Australian Government's consultation on the minimum age of criminal responsibility, because I believe wholeheartedly that decisions of such magnitude (and severity) should not be limited to the desktops and discussion tables of adults, politicians and well-meaning professionals.

I believe, completely, that such legislative and social policy crafting should be informed and shaped by the experts. In this case, that means those interacting with the criminal justice system between the ages of 10 to 21.

Lets face it, it is all of South Australia's children and young people who will bear the consequences of the decisions that we make today.

So, let's take the time to respectfully and meaningfully hear... **from those who know.**



Shona Reid

Guardian for Children and Young People
Training Centre Visitor
Child and Young Person Visitor
Youth Treatment Order Visitor

WHO & HOW

DETAILS

OVER A 2-WEEK PERIOD IN MARCH 2024
PHYSICAL VISITS TO THE CENTRE (WEEKDAYS & WEEKENDS)

27 CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE INVOLVED

ALL PERSONS WERE DETAINED OR REMANDED TO THE CENTRE

STYLE

CHOICE BETWEEN ONE-ON-ONE OR GROUP INTERVIEWS

10 INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED IN TOTAL

FEEDBACK POSTCARDS FOR THOSE WANTING TO PROVIDE THEIR OWN WRITTEN RESPONSES

7 POSTCARDS RECEIVED - 5 IN RELATION TO THE TOPIC

QUOTES

CONSENT PROVIDED FOR WRITTEN & RECORDED QUOTES

WHERE CONSENT PROVIDED, INTERVIEWS WERE RECORDED FOR ACCURACY

19 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE REQUESTED A COPY OF THE FINAL REPORT

"...if there's people as young as 10 getting locked up, kept in the system, it's just going to be a loop and it's just going to repeat."

"It's like instead of helping us, like, reconnect with, like, society. It's mainly, like, alienating us and making us think that because we've done crime, and we've ended up in court, we're not suitable for, like, normal society.

We're always outcasted.

We're always segregated."

thoughts on 10..12..14?

10 is too young.

"When you're 10 you still play with toys."

"That's too early for them. They don't even understand what their body is and that... still, their mind and everything. You know? They can't process what's going on."

"10 is like... you're still a little mummy's boy, still a little baby. And you should still be at home you know?"

"They shouldn't be in here... they should be like, with who they live with. They should be out with their friends."

"Yeah they shouldn't get put in [the Centre] at that age."

"At like 10, you're still trying to find your place."

"I'd say 15 or 16 [years of age]. Because that's when you've kind of developed enough like feelings and emotions and you understand yourself just that little bit more than you did when you were like 10."

"Yeah 12, 13 [years of age] cause then like you know what you're doing, you know the decisions you're making you should be old enough, you know, know from right and wrong and shit."

10 is okay.

"I feel like [10 is] the perfect age... if you're old enough to do the crime, you're old enough to be incarcerated."

Right. Wrong. Child. Adult.

"I think that kids as young as 10 might not know what they're doing, but they could be influenced by other people that might pervert the way that they see everything."

"Like, to be honest I don't even know what I'm doing right now. To put like a 14 year old in [the Centre], that's fucked bro. It is! Think about a 14 year old."

"Most 10 year olds are influenced. Like, do you reckon a 10 year old by just the ripe age will be like 'oh yup I'm just gonna go do this [crime] because I can?'"

"I didn't understand, didn't think [my first offending] was wrong cause I was doing it with other people. Like, just didn't think anything of it until I went to court."

"Like you obviously know what you're doing when you're young, like 12, but you don't really know what you're doing, you know what I mean? You don't really have that much common sense..."

"I got my first lesson... with the cops."

"I reckon by the age of about 12 I knew what was right and wrong. I reckon a lot of 12 year olds know what's right and wrong. I think 10 year olds it's more looking up to those people because you are getting older, but 12 you are that older person, if that makes sense?"



"...the age of 10 and 11, they don't know what they're doing. They just think it's fun. Cause they see everyone else do it [crime], then they decide to do it. But it's fucked, you don't do it."

"I think a lot of them don't know the consequences at all. They're just doing it [crime]. Without thinking."

"Me personally? I learned [about right and wrong] when I was like younger. Cause that's how I was brought up, that's how I was taught, you know? But it was too much responsibilities on me, and now that's why I'm in this position I'm in now, yeah."

It's. Complicated.

"The age of responsibility should be not a set figure, not a set number. It should be like if the court determines that this kid is criminally minded and knew what he was doing when he committed that offence. Because you could have a 10 year old that knows what he is doing, and that will like steal a car or some shit [crime], but you could also have the same 10 year old stealing the same car, but because he was told by other people to do it and shown by other people how to do it."

"It depends what their crime is. If it's something bad-bad, then... yeah... like. Kill someone, or something like that. Hurt someone."

"...it depends what life you grow up in. Like, if you grow up in a broken home or around criminals, like people who use drugs and that, then it's just normal to you, you know? It's just normal."

"Depends how mature you are... cause when I was 13, 14 I had like a 16, 17-year-old brain. Like mature, you know."

"Maybe they do need to obviously dynamically assess 10 and 11 year olds."

"Most kids who come in here, especially at a young age, are in care. And they live with older kids. Those 16, 17 year olds, like we look up to them, you know? We look up to them, as a older person, like a older [sibling], cause we hate the carers...and if they're doing crime then we think that's the right thing to do cause we don't have that figure in our life, if that makes sense, to look up to."

Disability. Is not a crime.

"They even bring kids in that's not meant to be in here, you know?...they got like special needs, and you know."

"They lock disability kids up in here, bro. It's shameful."



"They lock disability kids
up in here, bro.
It's shameful."

"Like, think about it.

What year are you in
school when you're 10?

...bro when I was [year]
5 at school I was just
learning my times
tables."

courts.

Court. Confusion.

"...at age 10 you don't understand that much like say you got bail and shit, you don't know what that is you need someone to explain that to you in a professional way."

"I didn't really understand what was going on, you know, yeah but like I didn't know what would happen, too. My mind was just going overtime and shit, thinking all of this."

"Went to court. Didn't understand what was going on at court. Got remanded. I didn't know what that was until like, they had to sit me down and tell me what it was, but other than that I still didn't know what it was."

"Bro they don't explain stuff to you. You don't have any freedom of speech, where's the freedom of speech in court? Why the fuck is some lawyer I barely know speaking for me, and why does this person in front of me have so much power over me?"

"Every time I go to court, prosecutor says something, judge says something, my lawyer says something. I don't get to say something. I want to be able to say something!"

"Yeah [it helps to be in the Centre]. Cause some kids don't really know what goes on in the courtroom like you know. So they need peoples to tell them *'oh this is what's happened'*."

"First few weeks I didn't understand anything. I just said yes to whatever they told me."



"I remember being in court,
looking at the judge and... I
was that short, I couldn't -
when I was sitting on the
seat - I couldn't actually
see over the microphone.

Like, I couldn't actually see
over to the judge's stand, I
was that young, like.

I remember sitting there
going like 'oh I'm going to
get flogged'."

"I didn't even know what they was saying because they were using all fancy words, you know?"

Those sort of things now, like at that age you don't really understand, you know?

That's why you just keep doing whatever you're doing, you know?"

Court. First Time.

"My heart was beating because I thought, you know how you see in shows... I thought they was about to just flip me around and send me straight back here."

"I was just scared at the time, I didn't know where I was you know? I didn't know what to ask, got no questions to ask.. everything that they said I was just 'yeah yeah yeah'."

"It's a scary place, you know?"

"...first time getting remanded is fucked, you know. It's not a good fricking feeling being remanded here."

"First time I went to court was before they did the VC stuff. So they took me, cuffed me, took me up there in the van. I guess that was very scary."

"I shat myself."

"I remember crying when I got put in handcuffs, cause I didn't know what was happening. And then I thought I was going to, like, go to where the movies are, and get like flogged and stuff, like how you see it in the movies."

"I didn't know, I was scared my first time [in court], I was like 'fuck', you know? Wundi that."

Court. Forever. Fear.

"...til this day, man, I just like get anxiety. Bad anxiety and just don't really know what the outcome's gonna be. I've spent a lot of time in here... I would have thought I'd be used to it by now but I still don't like going to court, you know."

"The thought... of my freedom being in someone else's hands... Like I know I done wrong but, you know what I mean? it scares me. Just gives me anxiety."

"All I can listen is 'bail!'"

"[That time when] I was on remand for that long, the last couple court dates I didn't really care. The last couple court dates I was just losing faith, losing hope. I'd been here for too long."

Court. Do. Hear. Some.

"They always listen to you. You always get a say in what you need to say."



cells.

Just. Not. Safe.

"I don't think kids should be in there [cells]."

"It's a shit place."

"It's not good for [little kids]."

"They're [cells] fucking dirty, they don't give you pillows, literally. So I'm sitting on like rock hard bed, with a fucking shit, probably dirty, heavy and dirty-ass blanket."

"They [cells] are not sanitised. You could get hepatitis from sitting on that toilet seat."

"They [police in the cells] give you junk food! They give you hard sausage rolls, hard pies."

"The beds are pretty much like a concrete slab with a little bit of foam on top of it... there's no pillow so you just like, you lay there. And the blanket is like a bit of cardboard."

"They [cells] stink. They're concrete beds. They're fucked."

In. There. Forever.

"...and I was in [the cells] for like 8 hours. Just like, sitting there."

"I spent 18 hours in there [the cells], and all I had to do was read a book to the point where I was going insane. I was swiping on that book, thinking it was my phone."

"They make you wait for hours [in the cells]."

Hurting. Harming.

"There's no privacy whatsoever... it's a hard bed, no TV, nothing to like keep a kid's mind off things, you know? You're just stuck there."

"I was like banging my head for entertainment. Cause, like, it's so quiet. And you can't see outside."

"When you like 'crack up' [escalate behaviour], they'll like chuck you in a padded cell, you know and treat you like an adult and stuff. It's not good for kids."

"I was 10 [my first time in the cells] and I remember bawling my eyes out."

"When I was in there [the cell] it was so quiet, and I couldn't see outside the cell. I thought like I was going crazy."

"Every time I been in there [the cell], there's been this guy that just yells and yells and yells, just all the entire time. And I was trying to go to sleep for so long, but I just couldn't. And I was in there for like 8 hours. Just like, sitting there."



"You're just sitting in there,
thinking.

A mattress.

A blanket if you're lucky.

Just being fucking stripped
down, photos taken, finger
prints taken.

Imagine 10 year old [you]
sitting in the cells."

"You're also stuck in there
with a bunch of adults that
just yell and scream.

Cause they're on drugs and
shit."

"They can see you when you
use the toilet!"

The cameras, they can see!"

cars. cops.

Patrol Car? Dog Box.

“First time I got arrested I was crying.”

“[Police] call it a dogbox... I said ‘what’s this?’ they said ‘a *dog box*’... I don’t even know [how old I was]... Ever since then I just thought that was the name of the car – the dogbox.”

“When you’re coming here [the Centre], too, especially being a little kid they even say ‘a *patrol car is coming to get you*’ or ‘a *dogbox is coming to get you*.’ And like you don’t know what that is, you know? You don’t know what it is... But then you’re too little, so you don’t ask questions.”

Police. Relationships.

“Sometimes police are a bit harsh on you, you know, cause like they’ll assume you’re old enough, you know? And you know what you’re doing, and then they’ll treat you, sometimes they treat you... real cheeky way [disrespectful], you know?”

“I just remember crying. And I told them [police] everything, and then I became a snitch because I didn’t know what was right, didn’t know if I was meant to say it or I wasn’t. Yeah. It was embarrassing. It was real scary as well. Like, imagine two police officers coming in and saying ‘*oh yup you’re getting arrested for this*’ and at that point, at that time I didn’t actually think anything wrong of [my behaviour].”

“The police and like the cell sergeants and that can be pretty hard on young fullas.”

“Police need to treat us with respect... and they treat you like shit, too!”



D

"cause if they went to the cells first, they'd probably have... I don't know what's it called... people scared of small spaces?"

i

"claustrophobia"

"yeah" "yeah"

"yeah"

A

"and when they bring you in the police cuffs and dogboxes"

L

"yeah dogboxes! Cuffs. And no seatbelts, you know. Whenever they turn, you got to use your feet to try and stop yourself from moving"

O

"and it's cold as, too. In the dogbox"

G

"especially if they like seize your clothes and everything. You got no protection at all, you know. You just [sways to demonstrate]"

U

"you hit the sides!"

"it's all white hard plastic. And when you turn you just hit the sides"

E

"you can't protect yourself, like... I thought there'd be a seatbelt in there at least."

two young people discuss their experiences in a police vehicle, colloquially referred to as a 'dog-box'.

centre life.

Too. Small. 4. Here.

"I reckon for kids aged like 10 and 11... it would be bad, the Centre. They'd miss their family, that's one thing. They'd miss their family, I don't think they'd understand."

"Recently there's been hella tiny ones coming in [to the Centre], you know, and I'm like 'well how old is this kid?' You know?"

"Literally, if I was 10 and I came in here [the Centre], I'd just sit in my room. I wouldn't leave, I'd shit myself."

"We always talk amongst ourselves when we see a little kid come in like 'what the heck, why is this kid in [the Centre]?"

"It'll be hard for young fullas cause, you know, they have to go straight into this routine and shit and get told what to do and shit. And they wouldn't be used to it, you know? Their first time. It would be a big thing, yeah."

"They harm themselves in here [the Centre], and that... get sad... crying everyday. Feel shit."

"This is not a good place for a 10 year to be, surely theres other things with the goverment, they should planed for kids." (sic)

"Cos when they're gonna come in [to the Centre] anyway they're gonna play up and stuff. They get agitated with shit, you know like very quick because they can't do this, and they can't do that."

"It'll be sad for them too, you know, in their rooms and shit at a young age and shit."

Remembering. First. Admission.

"Oh I was crying bro, when I got remanded. I was like 13, 12."

"My first time I was crying, right. I didn't know what was going on."

"... I wasn't that well, when I first come in [to the Centre]. Felt agitated and stuff. And that's what I reckon those young fullas would feel like."

"Being away from my family [made it shit] and you know, I'd never been in a place [the Centre] like this before."

"I was 10 years old [my first remand in the Centre] I'd say about 4 foot, if that. Skinny as hell."

"It was shit, man. It was shit. But... that's all I can say."

"First ever time... it was alright because I knew people who were in here [the Centre]. But it was shit at the same time as well."

"I was pretty stressed out, hey? It wasn't really that I was scared of this place [the Centre]. I don't know, I had a girlfriend [I missed]."

"It was a bit weird, but I can adapt to places real easy. So it wasn't that hard for me."



What's. The. Point?

"The system doesn't even help [the kids] get out of the fucking game. It just keeps them in here [the Centre]. It doesn't help them out at all."

"To be honest, I think there shouldn't even be a youth detention, you know? Like it should just be adults but for kids it should be like community centres and stuff like that. Cause like for kids, this is hard, you know? I don't... I just think, we're too young for this shit."

"And the system never gets better. I've been in here year after year. It's still shit."

"I don't even see why there should be a 'young boys unit' [in the Centre]. Like, if they literally have to have a unit for younger boys, then they shouldn't be here at all. You know what I mean? Like, they're obviously too young to mix with the older boys so why are they even in here? Because the older boys know what they're doing. But the young boys obviously don't and that's why there's another unit, so they don't get bashed."

Even. Courts. Cops. Know.

"They rarely send 10 and 11 year olds here [the Centre], but, if you're rarely gonna send them here why should that even be the age choice? Coz judges and police officers can obviously see they shouldn't be sending them here, because they're giving them bail."

"How often do you see a 10 or 11 year old here [the Centre]? So, like the police and courts obviously see a problem with it."

Rehabilitation. Yeah Right.

"The government is not really good at rehabilitation, it's more so, um, punishment."

"It just feels like when you're in here [the Centre], you're just missing out on other things. Like teenage life, and stuff. That's the worst part I'd say. It's like wasting your life away."

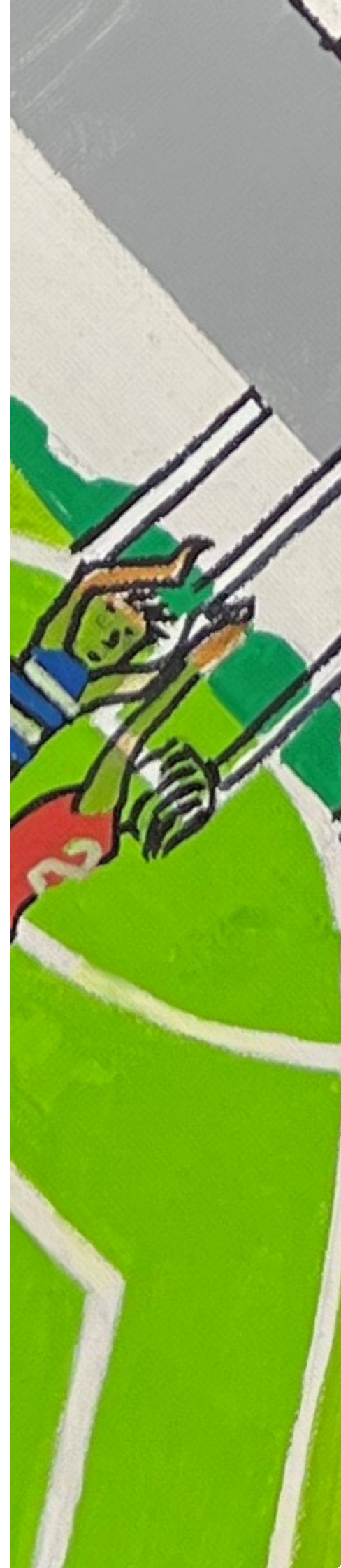
"It's a waste of life in here [the Centre]."

"Kids at the age of 10 should not come in here [the Centre] as it will affect them being away from their family."

"When I was younger and I was coming in and out [of the Centre] I thought it was cool, you know? But now I look back at it, not really. But I don't know these days, these younger ones probably feel the same, you know."

"They think that us being here [the Centre] is educating us. But in real life it's just a whole bunch of boys, in a unit, waking up and doing the same shit every day. You know? There's programs and that but programs don't really help us. You know? It's just waking up, doing the same shit every day."

"Some people keep coming here [the Centre], and you don't really like learn your lesson."





Learning. Wrong Way.

"People can be, um, persuaded to do things like by older people. It's easier for an older person to sit here and talk to a younger person and tell them *'oh, do this, do this because we do it and you'll be cool if you do it'*. Whereas some of the older people in here try to help little kids to like, not do it again. But I feel like the people that are trying to like... groom them into doing crime so that they won't get done for it and stuff. And it's just a cycle that starts."

"Imagine a 10 or 11 year old getting in a fight. They don't know how, they don't know why... they don't know that side of the world. You know what I mean? They don't know that side of things. And staff don't tell them *'no, you can't do that or stuff will happen'* staff just let it happen."

Need. To. Be. Safe.

"There's a lot of fights and altercations [in the Centre]."

"It's not safe because other kids, other residents, might bash you, you know, and that's not safe."

"...they get all these annoying kids around that have been here before."

"I don't reckon [the Centre's] a safe place because staff can be a little bit, like *'thing'* some time, you know... and I reckon they don't like handle young fullas, you know and they'll be like, yeah agitated with them too, you know? And that's when young fullas go off their heads and stuff."

Institutionalised. Kids.

"...as soon as they're in here [kids] get used to like, routine. They get used to being like told what to do, and then they're institutionalised from a young age and all they know is like having routine, getting out, doing crime, coming back..."

"They [staff] encourage, um, us to like lash out and stuff, because they'll get paid time off. Or like, they'll want us to be in for longer because they don't believe we can succeed. Like um whenever we tell some of the workers *'oh yeah we want to get out and change our lives and shit'* they'll be like *'oh yeah but I bet you'll be back within like a few weeks'* coz that's what everyone else says."

"They [staff] give you a routine that makes you feel like a whole-ass man in here. And then when you're out, you start to miss that routine and shit and you end up getting back in here."

"It's called being institutionalised, that's what it's called. Being institutionalised. And at the end of the day, that shit's low key fucked up. I ain't trying to be institutionalised. But shit, it's kind of hard. They chuck us in here, they lock us in here, and it's shit. We start to enjoy it in here."

Better. Than. Home.

"It's [the Centre] safe for them [some kids], you know, better than them being on the streets and running amok."

"[at the Centre] You go to the gym. You go to the pool. Like, some people don't have that kind of structure in their home life and shit. And then when they get in here, they feel like they're at home."

"Yeah [it's safe in the Centre]. No one can jump the barriers."

"For some kids, being in here [the Centre] is better than being on the outside because they get fed regularly, they get shelter."

"Some kids learn their lesson. And some don't, some love it."

Expecting. Deserving. Better.

"This place [the Centre] does not train you for the community. Because in here, you're in your room and there's no escape. So you have no choice but to be bored and watch TV."

"The staff don't care about you in here [the Centre]. They don't care about your mental health and shit."

"Some of the workers, I feel like they antagonise you."

"There's guards here [the Centre] and they're telling you what to do and what not to do and you can't get in a fight. When you get out in community, there's none of that. You're not locked in your room, so you're bored. You're gonna go out and do crime. You're gonna go out and see your mates. You're gonna go out and get on drugs and alcohol and fucking what else. And there's no guards to stop you, so what are you going to do if you're drunk, you're going to fucking fight the first person you see just coz you don't like the way they're looking at you."

"It's a different story if it's a police officer's kid. It'd be a different story. Or a government's kid!"



"If it's going to be a
Training Centre, like what
the fuck type of corruption
is that?

They training us for the
adult system!...

You're not meant to be
training me for the adult
system.

You're supposed to make
sure I'm not going to the
adult system!"

"These kids could be out at school, trying to be getting a job like an engineer or something.

It's - mind my language - it's fucking outrageous to be locking someone up at 10 years old.

That jeopardises their whole future."

another way?

Looking. Back.

"I grew up in a poor area, with a poor family. And then I started looking at all these rappers and I was like 'shit, they got a lot of money how do they make it?' And then my mate come around and he say '*hey this is how I make money. You want in?*' And that's when I started going down that path."

"Having a normal family and a more stable home [would have helped], because when I was 14 I started getting on drugs and drinking more alcohol, and running amok like a normal teenager does."

"Shit, ain't nobody guiding me, bro. I definitely didn't have that type of help."

"Most kids who come in here [the Centre], especially at a young age, are in care [with DCP]. And they live with older kids [in residential care]. Those 16, 17 year olds, like we look up to them, you know? We look up to them, as a older person, like a older sister, cause we hate the carers. Like older sister, older brother, and if they're doing crime then we think that's the right thing to do cause we don't have that figure in our life, if that makes sense, to look up to."



another way...run it right

Need. Chances.

"They [government] need to make a proper system, when it comes to chances and stuff. They need to make a proper system identifying who deserves a chance and who doesn't deserve a chance."

"First time I reckon you should get three warnings. Three lives."

"At least warn them [kids], give them a few chances."

"...the ones that just actual don't know what they doing, the ones who, shit, just mixed around with the wrong crowd... them kids deserve a second chance."

"They shouldn't bring them here [the Centre], they should give them another chance."

Consider. Circumstances.

"[when you should be held responsible] depends what life you grow up in. Like, if you grow up in a broken home or around criminals, like people who use drugs and that, then it's just normal to you, you know? It's just normal."

"Like they need to look at the person's background, and listen to them on how they've grown up and shit like that, and take all that into consideration."

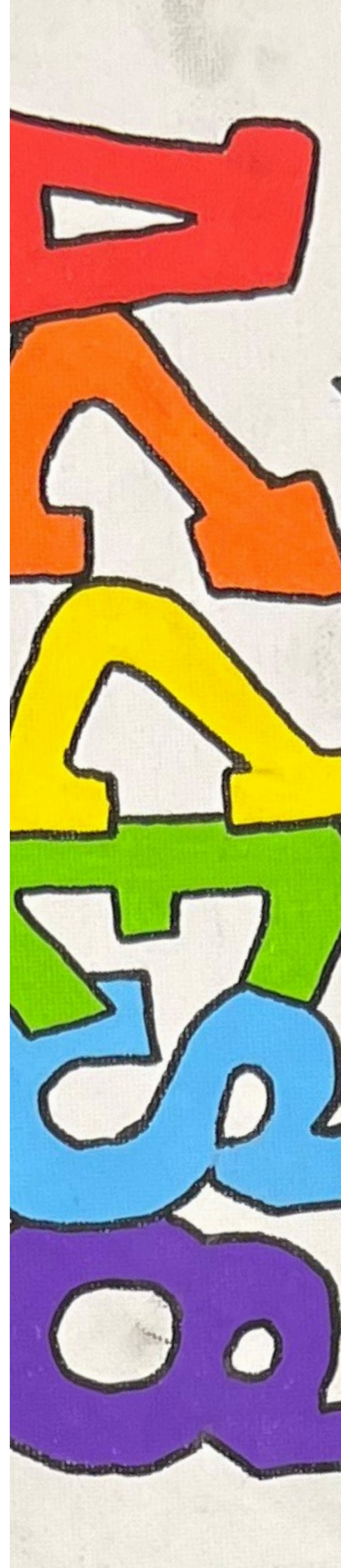
"If you want to hear, if you want to know, you need to hear my side of the story. But they [the court] don't want to hear my side of the story."

Improve. Supports.

"Have a youth worker to meet up with, and that. They have supervision, but supervision... they just catch up with them, ask if they're alright, piss test them and then fuck off. They don't really help anyone the way they need to be helped."

"Better supports like youth justice."

"You know when a young fella's got court outside they should have like a cultural advisor, you know, like someone pick them up and take them to court, you know."



STOP TOP TARGETING

OR LACK KIDS

DON'T
LOCK UP
KIDS WITH
DISABILITIES

"...There's nothing in here
[the Centre], and nothing on
the outside that helps kids
like me.

Like I want to do the right
thing, and I know I can do
the right thing...

But I need a bit more of
support in the community."

"You gotta like, you know,
be with the right people,
you know and that don't
influence you to do bad
shit."

another way... **be there for us**

Community. To. Be. There.

"They [government] should get more support on the outside for young fullas, you know. Like, get a program going, take the young fullas out. And stuff. Camping and stuff, you know?... So the kids are not doing crime and stuff, and they ain't here [the Centre], you know. They out gone, you know. Occupied."

"Encourage them and show them like that they're loved and they don't need to do crime to fit in with a group of people, but more so that um they're like... they don't need to put themselves out there to the wrong people to feel that they have a community."

"[kids need] something that can keep them busy and stay out of crime, you know."

"Community Centre... getting them [kids] interested into something."

Family. To. Be. There.

"Young kids need to be at home with their families."

"Having a normal family and a more stable home [would have helped]."

"If they have a broken home, you know, they fucking family is junkies and that they obviously need... somewhere safe, you know."

"Parents have got other kids to worry about."



Right People. To. Be. There.

"The [young people] that just actual don't know what they doing, the ones who, shit, just mixed around with the wrong crowd... them kids deserve a second chance."

"I think it's more peer pressure than actual like *'oh I'm gonna go do crime, because I know it's wrong'*."

"Every person I know started crime because they looked up to someone older than them and it spiralled from there."

"Stop hanging out with the wrong people."

"Hang around good people."

Help. Me.

"Psychology Guidance."

"Guidance. Possibly psychology."

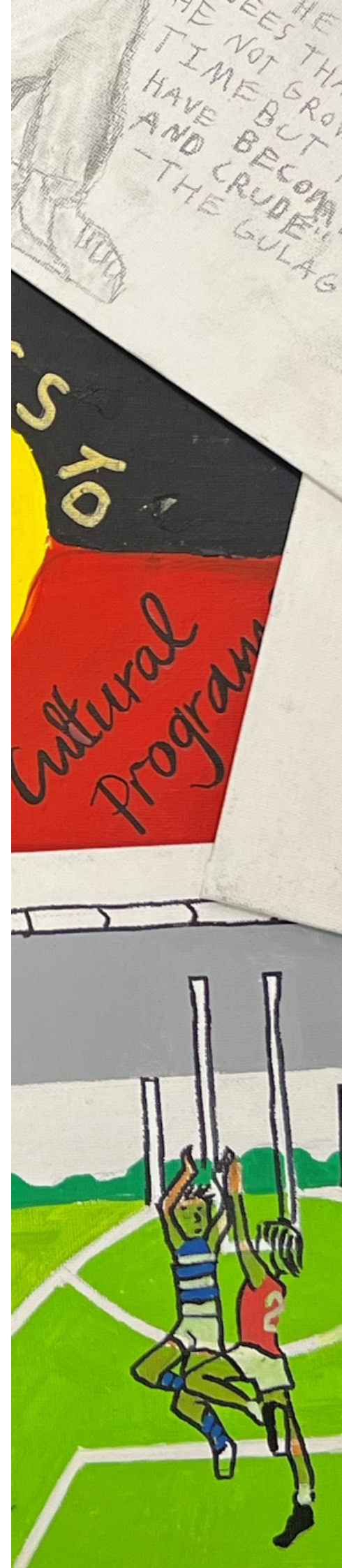
"You know, like CAMHS [Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services] or something."

Someone. To. Be. There.

"They should get more support on the outside for young fullas, you know. Like, get a program going, take the young fullas out. And stuff. Camping and stuff, you know?... So the kids are not doing crime and stuff, and they ain't here, you know. They out gone, you know. Occupied."

"Kids like that, they feel like they have no one to talk to, cause like me myself I was going through that stuff at one stage, you know? Felt like everywhere I went was just... nowhere was fucking like... there was no good home, you know?"

"More support, yeah. Kind of get out [of the Centre] and do more things."



DIALOGUE

"community centre as well. Like, getting all the bad kids together and just like doing stuff, like going out, um doing activities, going rock climbing, going ice skating and stuff like that"

"maybe we could have a role model. At the community centre. Like a basketball player or some shit like that"

"yeah... And getting them interested into something. Like, videogames, DJing, so they can take them instead of putting their energy into doing crime and stuff they can DJ"

"and coding"

two young people
solutions for supporting
young people in community

"build a youth centre where all the kids can go"

"but not, like not be trapped in there"

"outside that's where they can go to stop getting in trouble"

"but not be like locked up, just like you can go there. Go play games with other kids. Go do like... I don't know. Go out!"

DIALOGUE

two young people
need for youth engagement
Youth Centres

"I think there shouldn't even be a youth detention, you know? Like it should just be adults but for kids it should be like community centres and stuff like that."



"Build a youth centre where all the kids can go. Like with games and stuff... that's where they can go to stop getting in trouble."

ONE YOUNG PERSON'S IDEA

"Just mentors...even connection with SAPOL.

I reckon not a Youth Justice worker, I reckon like a Police Officer Mentor...

Youth justice is just like another person, but I genuinely reckon a police officer that, like, is there, you know what I mean?

Because then, like half the time these kids get themselves in tricky situations. But, if I was 10 and I called up a youth justice worker and said 'hey, they're trying to get me to do a bottle run I need help', they'd just go 'just don't do it'.

But if I had a police officer, you know? I reckon having that strong, structured figure at 10 and 11. Like if I would get a police officer now I'd be like 'no fuck off' you know, coz I'm older.

But I reckon at 10 or 11...

One, I'd shit myself that I had to have like weekly contact with a police officer.

Two, I think it would have put more structure.

The reason I got the idea from is Missing Person's [Officer].

I didn't come in here for a whole year because...

I'd get mad at carers, and he'd drive me to school.

I'd get mad at carers and he'd come to placement so I wouldn't get locked up.

Like, he would hear a call over the radio hearing a duress been pressed, and he would come.

There's been multiple times where I've been arrested and he's been my one phone call.

So that's where I kinda got the idea from. Coz I did have someone that was like, a police officer, but you know showed he was actually there to help."

another way... **learn & grow**

Programs. Education.

"If there was a program to educate me, you know? Yeah. That would have helped me... that would have helped."

"I reckon there should be some sort of program, bro. To educate them [kids], you know? To educate them more on right and wrong... that they should not be doing all that stuff. Putting them straight in here [the Centre] they're just gonna think 'oh I'm a bad person' you know? It doesn't educate them."

"More programs on the outside you can attend and stuff like that."

"I think like more support, and more programs you know in the community. Cause you know I don't really think there's much out there."

Focussed. Learning.

"Like... I don't know how to explain it... like crime and stuff, you know? Teaching them [kids] right from wrong. So they can get a better understanding you know... and they should get people from in here talking about like right or wrong, too, you know? Show them a video of it, you know, so they understand where we're coming from, too."

"Support to help them [kids] know right from wrong."

"... they [kids] should be shown other ways and given like a voice so then they can make a decision from what they really want to do."

"They [kids] should like talk to Victims of Crime, you know? That'll probably stop them doing it again."

"[Victims of Crime] shows them the victims side of things as well, like how it affects them."



another way... **detain & deter**

Real. Rehabilitation.

"[When in the Centre] they should like give the kids more time out, like you know... Go play sports or some shit, you know. Cultural garden. Or if it's like... just you know they should get cultural lunch mob, like cultural thing to get them out there."

"They [the Centre] think just cause it's got some stuff you need it's alright. But it actual gets boring every day... I don't know what would help, all I know is I'm bored in this place."

"They [the Centre] need more staff here."

"They [the Centre] should get one of the older boys, you know, to go there and mentor the young fellas and like, tell them how it is in here and stuff, you know. And just like show them the right way."

"Someone I know went to the adult system, and cause they had kids they went in there every second weekend for a weekend, to do their time. So maybe it's just to bring them [kids who do crime] here [the Centre], for a weekend, for two days a week on the weekends for six weeks to do their time, but to snap them into *'here's reality, now you're gonna get taken away for two days.'*... They'll be able to see the difference between reality and in here and it might, snap them back. But not being in here full time. Definitely not."

"If it's like any kid, you know, they should walk round, show them round the Centre and stuff. Yeah this is like this unit, you know, and show 'em like the older boys unit, you know. Bring them in. Show them a bunch of stuff. So they're all good."

Learning. Lessons.

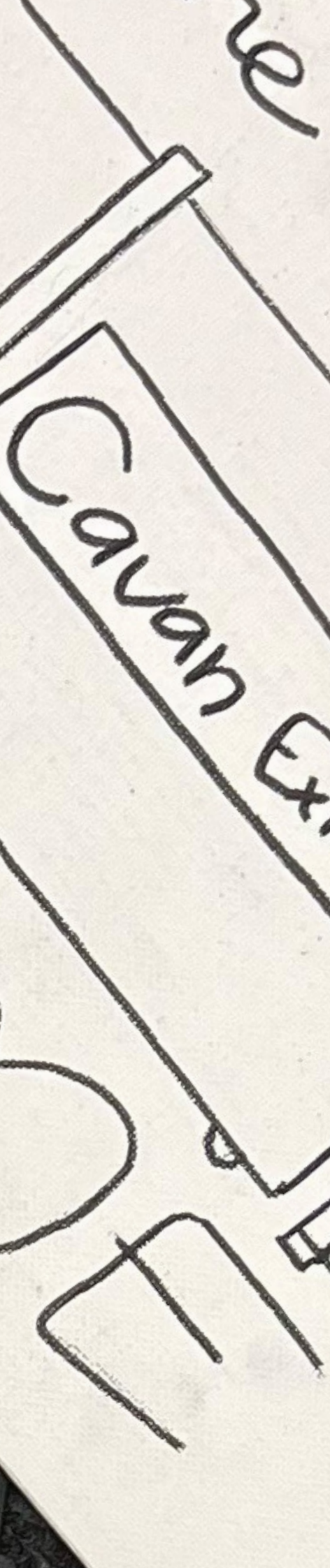
"Doing a crime, you learn from mistakes, I think. So as a kid you do stuff to learn from it, you know what I mean? So if you do crime for instance, you get arrested and you get to learn, you know? Get punishment from what you done to learn from your mistakes."

"Not getting arrested, but getting the cops having a word to them... hopefully teach them a lesson."

"Tell them like where they're gonna be, you know? And what this place looks like."

"They should take them on a trip up to Yatala, show them what it's going to be like in the future if they keep going down this path... they should do what they do in some reality TV shows."

"...[take them to the cells] like, just to scare them a little bit. Just so they know what they're heading for."



"I believe they [kids] should
be put into a rehabilitation
detention centre.

Not like this, but more so to
encourage them and show
them like that they're loved
and they don't need to do
crime to fit in with a group
of people.

But more so that um they're
like... they don't need to
put themselves out there to
the wrong people to feel
that they have a
community."



**WE
ASKED**



What does the Government need to understand about being in the Centre?

1.

THE CENTRE DOES NOT WORK

“It never works in here.”

“I reckon it makes you do more crime, the more times you come here, the longer you’re in here. And then you’re just like... mad. Then, you just want to do it more.”

“It’s a waste of life in here.”

“Instead of stopping crime, they’re creating more...”

2. THE CENTRE DOES MORE HARM

“I don’t think they know how boring this place is, you know? They think just cause it’s got some stuff you need it’s alright. But it actual gets boring every day.”

“Staff can be pretty ***** sometimes. They need to like, you know. Some’s [are] alright, some can be like ****, you know and just not like give us instructions what they’re doing, and we’ll like sit in our rooms not knowing what’s going on, thinking we’ll be there all day.”

“In here, I reckon little kids wouldn’t go well in here. It’s not good for them. They need to be with their parents.”

3. WE ARE JUST PEOPLE LIKE YOU

“Government has to realise. They got to open your ears and realise. You only see Aboriginal kids in here.”

“...That everyone’s not just a bad person, and fucking they’re just... I don’t know. A product of their own environment, you know. Yeah. Just the way people grow up, not in good homes... just fucking some people see the world through different way.”

4.

UNDERSTAND
TRUTH BEFORE YOU
MAKE DECISIONS

“Why don’t you give your kid a try in here, man? You never been in our shoes.”

“They should spend the night [here] if I’m honest. Spend the night here, see how it is for them.”

“I think they should at least see this place first, [the government] and the cells especially, you know? Because they don’t know we go to the cells first before we come here.”



I would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to the Department for Human Services and the operational team at the Adelaide Youth Training Centre for supporting access to the Centre to undertake this work. I know these words may be hard to read, but they are valuable. Not just in the context of 'minimum age of criminal responsibility' context, but in your everyday work with children and young people that I know you care for.

I also thank my team for their commitment and passion in bringing the voices of children and young people to the hearts and minds of those making such important decisions.

It is acknowledged and appreciated.

Children and young people engaged in this process with genuine desire to make things better for their siblings, family and friends - in the event they happen to 'get caught up' in trouble in their lives. They just want to make it better.

I thank the children and young people who, despite being detained and deprived of their liberty, spoke freely, with compassion and a desire to make things better.

I think they are brave and I commend them for this.





Acc...

HOME ONLY HAS
BECOMING HIS INTERESTS
CRUDEME MEAGER
THE GULAG ARCHEPELIDG

MORE ACCESS TO

Outdoor Spaces

Cultural Program

School Programs

Cavan
Health Services

Program

WZ MOT
TIME
OUTSIDE



