PROJECT SUMMARY

The primary aim of this evaluation is to determine the impact of participating in the Youth on Track program on rates of reoffending. Young people who are referred to Youth on Track between 1 July 2017-31 March 2019, and who consent to participate in this research, will be randomly allocated to participate in either Youth on Track or a shorter program called Fast Track. The NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research will compare the likelihood of reoffending within 12 months of consenting to the scheme for the participants in the two programs. Participants will also be surveyed regarding their accommodation status, engagement in employment, education and community at both the commencement of the program and at either program completion (for Fast Track participants) or 3 months after commencement (for Youth on Track participants). Changes in these social outcomes will also be compared across the two groups of young people. Participants will also complete a satisfaction survey at the conclusion of their program, which will also be compared across the two groups.

BACKGROUND

The Youth on Track scheme was introduced by the NSW government in July 2013 to help reduce juvenile reoffending. The scheme commenced on July 1st 2013 in the Blacktown, Newcastle City, and Mid North Coast Local Area Commands (LACs). These three sites were expanded to include the LACs of Manning Great Lakes, Lake Macquarie, Port Stephens, Mount Druitt and Quaker’s Hill on February 2nd 2015. Three additional sites were brought online in December 2016 – Central West (Orana and Canobolas LACs), Coffs (Coffs Clarence LAC) and New England (Oxley and New England LACs). Youth on Track aims to reduce re-offending by young people and prevent them from having long-term involvement in the criminal justice system. The process works using a combination of engagement, case management and interventions to try and reduce the young person’s contact with police/law enforcement and to improve their attitudes, relationship with family/carers, and engagement in the community. The key objectives of Youth on Track include:

- To identify young people at high risk of continuing in the criminal justice system, in a timely way
- To provide one-on-one case management and evidence-informed interventions targeted to address the individual criminogenic risk factors of the young person
- To provide an evidence-informed family intervention to support the family of young offenders to reduce the young person’s contact with police

The expected outcomes of Youth on Track include:

- Young people’s formal contact with police is reduced
- Young people’s wellbeing is improved by reducing their criminogenic risk and needs
- Young people’s participation and achievement in education or employment is improved
- Families display more positive family behaviours and ability to support their children

The Cultural and Indigenous Research Centre of Australia (CIRCA) is finalising a social outcome evaluation of the scheme, which is soon to be released. Changes in the young person’s behaviour and risk were measured through the Youth Level Service Case Management Inventory-Australian Adaptation (YLS/CMI). The YLS/CMI assesses eight areas of criminogenic risk in the young person’s life such as family and living circumstances, peer relations, and personality and behaviour. The evaluation revealed positive results with regards to
Outcome Evaluation of Youth on Track

YLS/CMI scores for multiple areas. More than half the Youth on Track participants improved on YLS/CMI areas of anti-social behaviour and thinking, peer scores, and education/employment attendance.

While the results of the social outcome evaluation were generally positive, there are several limitations of this work. Most notably, no comparison group was used in the analysis. Without a valid counterfactual (a comparison between what actually happened and what would have happened in the absence of the program) it cannot be determined whether the improvement observed in the stated outcomes is due to Youth on Track participation or some other confounding factor. For example, evaluations of other youth reoffending programs have demonstrated that young people modify their offending behaviour after a police contact, whether or not they are part of an intervention program (see Poynton & Menendez, 2015). Secondly, because the social outcome evaluation did not examine the primary outcome of the program; rates of reoffending\(^1\), the effect of the scheme on this outcome remains unknown. This is an important limitation as evidence for juvenile offender programs significantly reducing young people’s reoffending rates is mixed. Some programs have been shown to have beneficial effects on youth reoffending (Gottfredson, Gerstenblith, Soul, Womar, & Lu, 2004); however others have found no effect of the program (Poynton & Menendez, 2015) or have found evidence for an increased rate of reoffending amongst program participants (Ringland, 2016; Petrosino, Turpin-Petrosino, Hollis-Peel, & Lavenberg, 2012). It is therefore imperative that a rigorous re-offending evaluation of the Youth on Track scheme be undertaken prior to any further roll-out of Youth on Track across NSW.

**METHODODOLOGY**

**Aim**

The aim of this evaluation is to determine if participants in the Youth on Track scheme have a reduced likelihood of reoffending after consenting to the scheme – specifically, if participants in Youth on Track show reduced reoffending rates compared to participants in the control group who will complete a shorter program (hereafter referred to as ‘Fast Track’). Secondary aims include determining if participants in Youth on Track achieve improved social outcomes at exit (i.e. more stable accommodation, engagement in employment, education and community activities) and are more satisfied with their experience in the scheme compared with Fast Track participants.

**Sample**

The sample for this evaluation will be all consenting young persons referred to the Youth on Track scheme between July 1\(^{st}\) 2017 and March 31\(^{st}\) 2019. Young people are eligible for Youth on Track if they:

- Have at least one formal contact with police, a number of offending risk factors, and be referred by the police youth liaison officer (YLO) or their school (discretionary), or
- Have at least two formal contacts with police and are at 60% or greater chance of reoffending (automatic)

and:

\(^1\) It was intended that an outcome evaluation would have been completed in June 2015. However a slower-than-expected accrual of participants into the evaluation meant that it had to be postponed.
Outcome Evaluation of Youth on Track

- Are 10 – 17 years old
- Have never received a supervised court order
- Offend or go to school in one of the Youth on Track sites

The young people in the sample will be split into two groups via a randomised control trial (see details below for the different treatments and more details on the randomisation). For more detail on Youth on Track see the Youth on Track Service Specifications and for more detail on Fast Track see the Re-offending Evaluation Procedure.

Young people who are eligible and referred to Youth on Track are excluded from the evaluation if they:

- Do not provide their consent (note that participants 14 years and under also require parental consent, and parental consent is sought for participants 16 years and under, but is not required if the young person demonstrates capacity to consent)
- Have another member of their household who is already participating in the evaluation
- Have already participated in the evaluation as the result of an earlier Youth on Track referral

Protocols for dealing with young people who are referred but are ineligible for the evaluation are given below. Participants can withdraw their consent from the evaluation at any point by verbally communicating their decision with their caseworker. In this case, no data will be collected for this participant. Participants can also disengage from their program but still allow their reoffending data to be collected for the evaluation.

### Outcome variable

The primary outcome that will be compared across the two groups is time (in days) to first formal contact with the police after consenting to participate in the evaluation. This will be used to measure the reoffending rates of the participants in the two groups. A formal contact is defined as a police caution, youth justice conference (YJC) or charge.

In a secondary analysis, group differences in the proportion of young people in (i) stable and safe accommodation (ii) employment (iii) education or training and (iv) community activities will be compared before and during their participation in the scheme. Changes in the average number of hours worked per week and hours in education or training per week in the 4 weeks before consent to the scheme and the 4 weeks prior to exit will also be compared across groups. These data and further data on levels of satisfaction with the scheme will be drawn from the social outcome data survey (completed by the caseworkers at a participant’s entry and exit) and the participant satisfaction survey (completed by the participants upon exit for both groups, as well as 3 months after consent for Youth on Track participants).

We are attempting to obtain data on the Out-of-Home-Care (OOHC) placements of the participants from NSW Family and Community Services (FACS). If successful, we plan to link this data to the participants, and compare the number and type of subsequent OOHC placements across the two groups.

### METHOD

The ‘gold standard’ in evaluation research is the randomised controlled trial and we propose to use this method to evaluate the effectiveness of Youth on Track in reducing re-offending. The procedural flow chart
below illustrates the process by which young people will be balloted to treatment conditions in the Youth on Track trial (see Figure 1).

Young people who are referred to Youth on Track by the NSW police, school or through a Youth on Track screening officer will first be assessed for eligibility for Youth on Track by a Youth on Track screening officer, as per the current Youth on Track referral and screening process. The Youth on Track Service Provider in the area (the organisation responsible in the area for delivering the program) will then be sent the eligible young person’s details and will contact the young person and their family to ask if they would like to participate in a program and the Youth on Track evaluation. The young person and their family will be informed that an evaluation is being undertaken to determine the most effective method for delivering a support service to young people who offending - Youth on Track – the full 3-12 months Youth on Track model or the Fast Track program. The young person will then be asked if they wish to participate in the evaluation. It is important to seek consent to participate in the evaluation before randomly allocating young people to treatment conditions as this will mitigate sample bias arising from unobservable motivation effects (i.e. participants in both groups have voluntarily agreed to participate in an program, thereby demonstrating a desire to modify their offending behaviour), as well as helping to keep the sample size roughly equal between the two groups.

In cases where they do consent, the young person will be randomly assigned to either the ‘Youth on Track’ group or the ‘Fast Track’ group. The Youth on Track group will participate in the 3-12 month Youth on Track program as previously designed and delivered. Those participating in Fast Track will have their criminogenic needs assessed (using a shortened version of the YLS/CMI assessment tool) and an action plan developed, which will involve referral to appropriate local services. Should participants re-offend while the trial is ongoing and be re-referred to Youth on Track, they will not re-enter the ballot and will not be counted as a new participant in the study, as counting them as a new participant would introduce bias in the sample. The service provider at this point will have complete discretion to determine (in conjunction with the young person) what program they are placed on. Service providers will also exercise control over program placement when more than one young person from the same household is referred for treatment. In this instance, however, only the first-placed young person will be included in the study. This is done as some elements of the Youth on Track scheme involve working with the participant’s family, and these elements are not covered in Fast Track. Therefore, it would be inappropriate to assign members of the same household to different treatments.

Note that if the participate does not consent to participate in the evaluation, but would still like to participate in a program, they will also be randomly allocated to either Fast Track or Youth on Track. This is necessary to avoid manipulation by either the client or the caseworker (by eliminating any way for the client or caseworker to ‘choose’ a program), and to reduce coercion in the recruitment of participants (given that clients who both consent and decline to participate in the evaluation are treated identically). In addition, there are waitlists at each site, and so there would not be capacity to place all clients who decline to participate in the evaluation into Youth on Track.

Details of treatments

The referral process is the same for both Youth on Track and Fast Track. NSW Police Youth Liaison Officers and local schools refer young people to Youth on Track when the young person has at least one formal police contact and other risk factors for offending identified by the referrer. Young people who receive their second formal police contact are automatically identified through police records by the Youth of Track screening officer and are then assessed using an actuarial risk tool to determine if they are at medium to high risk of re-
offending. Once found eligible all young people are referred to the Youth on Track service provider in their local area. The referral includes information about whether the young person has an existing case manager with another agency. The Youth on Track service provider contacts the case manager to discuss how Youth on Track can assist the existing case manager with addressing the young person’s criminogenic risk factors.

To minimise bias across the two groups, the case managers who deliver Youth on Track will also deliver Fast Track. Youth on Track case managers receive comprehensive training on how to work effectively with young offenders, including training in motivational interactions and effective practice skills. Any new staff employed during the research trial will be trained in accordance with the Youth on Track Training Requirements and will be expected to deliver both Youth on Track and Fast Track.

**YOUTH ON TRACK**

Once a young person consents to participate in Youth on Track they are assigned a case manager who conducts the YLS/CMI.

The Youth on Track case worker develops a case plan with the young person and their family that focuses on addressing the young person’s individual risks/needs identified through the YLS/CMI. The assessment is reapplied every 12 weeks and a young person’s case plan can be adapted to reflect the changing needs and outcomes achieved.

The caseworker will work with the young person for between 3 and 12 months, depending on the level of risk as identified in the YLS/CMI assessment. During this period, the caseworker can work with the young person as often as they feel is appropriate. The Youth on Track service provider will also provide access to a range of evidence-informed criminogenic interventions that meet the needs of the young person and their family and address the underlying causes of offending behaviour.

Through the YLS/CMI assessment the Youth on Track case worker identifies if a young person has reduced their risk of re-offending and met their case plan goals and therefore completed the scheme. The case worker will work with the young person and family to develop an exit plan to facilitate access to ongoing non-Youth on Track community supports where required. Participants may stay on the scheme for up to 12 months depending on their risk of re-offending.

Note that Youth on Track has been running in this current model since July 2013 in the Blacktown, Hunter and Mid-North Coast sites, and since December 2016 in the Coffs/Clarence, Central West and New England sites.

**FAST TRACK**

The case manager will complete the screening version of the YLS/CMI (a shortened version of the full YLS/CMI) criminogenic assessment. The case manager and young person will formulate a plan of action, which includes goals for the young person and services needed to address the higher risk domains.
After identifying the young person’s needs and goals the case manager over 4 face-to-face interactions within 6 weeks will facilitate referrals to appropriate external services and programs. The case managers will conduct usual case management requirements around the 4 face-to-face meetings such as phone contact with referral agencies, reminder phone calls to young person and/or family, and completion of referral forms etc. Role clarification is a critical skill for Fast Track to ensure the young person and case manager are clear about the timeframes from the start.

The case manager will have up to 4 case management sessions over 6 weeks with the young person and/or the family. The young person must be involved in at least 2 of the sessions. A face-to-face interaction is counted as one interaction when the case manager has engaged with the young person and imparted skills or assisted with connections to services such as Centrelink, court, or mental health service.

The case manager can use a case conference as an exit meeting after the four face-to-face sessions. This will help the young person and their family connect to alternate services as well as assisting the services to be accountable to the young person. Case managers are encouraged to commence exit planning at the first meeting with the young person and family after allocation to Fast Track.

Differences between Fast Track and Youth on Track

Fast Track does not include:

- The detailed YLS/CMI-AA assessment (the screening version is used instead).
- Any more than 4 face-to-face case management sessions with the young person and family over 6 weeks.
- Any direct offence-focused behaviour or family interventions delivered by YoT staff.
Figure 1. Procedural flow chart for client referral, eligibility assessment and balloting for the RCT.

1. Referral from police/school or automatic referral
2. Comprehensive Eligibility Assessment
3. Eligible to participate in Youth on Track?
   - NO: Young person not referred to Youth on Track Provider
   - YES: Young person referred to Youth on Track Provider
4. Youth on Track Provider invites young person to take part in the study and participate in Youth on Track. This can be done by a separate staff member if necessary.
5. Client willing to participate in trial?
   - NO: Client’s information is not used in evaluation.
   - YES: Use BOCSAR ballot tool to determine which treatment the client is allocated to
6. Balloted
   - Treatment A: Standard Youth on Track procedures apply.
   - Treatment B: Fast Track and referral to appropriate services
Statistical analysis and power

Data on reoffending will be drawn from the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) Reoffending Database (ROD). Statistical analysis between the two groups will be performed using a log-rank survival analysis test, with the outcome variable being number of days until next formal police contact after the date of consent, and the explanatory variable being which group the offender was assigned to – Youth on Track vs. Fast Track. Appropriate checks will be conducted prior to the statistical analysis to ensure homogeneity across the groups with regards to age, gender, Indigenous status and Youth on Track site. If systematic differences between groups are observed a cox regression analysis including relevant statistical controls will be used to compare group outcomes.

Using estimates of the treatment effect size, we can calculate the required sample size for the evaluation for different levels of power – that is, the probability that this evaluation will detect a difference in time to reoffending between the two groups when a difference is actually present. Note that previous research has shown a baseline youth reoffending rate of 57% (Ringland, 2016). This reoffending rate is assumed for the control group in our power calculations. Table 1 shows the required sample sizes for different levels of power and different effect sizes for the treatment group, as measured by the percentage point reduction in reoffending probability (pp).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage point reduction in reoffending (aka effect size)</th>
<th>Power 90%</th>
<th>Power 80%</th>
<th>Power 70%</th>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>824</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>79,500</td>
<td>57,394</td>
<td>43,684</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is estimated that 400 young people/year will consent and be eligible to participate in the trial. Therefore, if the trial is run between July 2017 and March 2019, this would result in 700 participants (if 700 participants are accrued earlier than this, the evaluation will concluded earlier). Looking at Table 1, we see that we would
achieve 80% power if the effect size was at least 10pp\(^2\) (although we would only be 32 participants short of achieving this for a 9pp effect size) and for 70% power, the effect size would have to be 8pp or greater. Therefore if it is suspected that the effect size would be lower than 8pp, we may be required to accrue more participants into the study. A review of juvenile reoffending program evaluations across Europe found that the average odds ratio for reoffending for treatment to control groups was 0.74 – that is, the odds of an average juvenile reoffending after participating in one of the programs in the study was only 74% of the odds of a juvenile who did not (Koehler, et. al. 2013). This is consistent with a meta-analysis performed by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) on juvenile crime-reduction programs (Drake, Aos & Miller, 2009). When the baseline reoffending rate is 57%, this corresponds to a treatment reoffending rate of 50% - a reduction by only 7pp. However this review included programs with follow ups longer than 12 months and programs based on deterrence/military-style bootcamps, both of which result in higher rates of reoffending. Since Youth on Track fits neither of these categories, it is not unreasonable to assume therefore that Youth on Track would have a higher effect size than this, on average. Thus with our predicted sample size, we will achieve a 70% level of power for this evaluation.

Data from the Social Outcome Data survey consists of a series of yes/no questions relating to four different domains – accommodation, participation in employment, participation in education and participation in community activities. Average number of hours in employment per week and average hours in education or training per week in the 4 weeks before consent to the scheme and the 4 weeks prior to exit will also be collected. These data will be analysed using appropriate regression techniques.

Data from the Participant Satisfaction Survey will consist of a mix of open-ended and categorical responses to questions. The open-ended questions will be reported on qualitatively. The categorical responses (formed as 1-5 scale questions, where higher scores indicate higher levels of satisfaction) will be analysed using Chi-squared test for association.

Data management, storage and confidentiality protection

Personal details of the participants are kept by the Youth on Track service providers in line with existing Privacy legislation and their contract with the Department of Justice. Youth on Track service providers are required to comply with, and ensure staff are aware of, the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW) and Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (NSW). The NSW Privacy Commissioner made Public Interest Directions in relation to Youth on Track. These Public Interest Directions help to facilitate the collection, use and disclosure of personal and health information by the Department of Justice, the Youth on Track service providers and participating agencies for the purposes of the Scheme. The privacy directions can be found on the Youth on Track website at www.youthontrack.justice.nsw.gov.au.

There are requirements in the contract for the Youth on Track service providers to meet the above legislative requirements. Juvenile Justice NSW must also meet the requirements for collection, use, disclosure and

\(^2\) pp = percentage point

\(^3\) The reviewed programs in the WSIPP meta-analysis were not limited to programs with reoffending-based outcomes, and the reported effect sizes were the percentage change in the crime-related outcome reported by the study. The effect sizes ranged from 6.1% increase in crime-related outcomes to a 19.4% reduction.

All case management and evaluation data are stored in line with the above requirements. Personal information (names, dates of birth and central names index [CNI] number) will only be used by BOCSAR for matching participants to BOCSARs offending records. Once the matching is complete, the offending and survey data will be de-identified for all further analyses. In any publication of the research results, information will be provided in such a way that no individual can be identified.

Reoffending data for the participants will be stored by BOCSAR. The data at BOCSAR will be password restricted, and kept on a secure server. The building the servers are housed in is protected by 24hr, 7 day security. All officers who have access to the data sign a disclosure agreement when they commence work at BOCSAR requiring them to keep all personal data confidential.

In accordance with BOCSAR’s current procedures BOCSAR will retain reoffending data indefinitely. Personal details of participants and responses to the surveys will be retained by BOCSAR for 8 years before being destroyed.

### Ethical considerations

As the NSW Department of Justice does not have its own Ethics Committee, ethics approval for this evaluation will be sought from Bellberry Ltd and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). AIATSIS approval will be sought as the sites chosen for the trial are over-represented in terms of Indigenous Australians in the population. The application to AIATSIS was submitted in May 2017 to be heard on 16 May 2017. The results from this application are pending at this point.

There are two main arguments in support of the proposed randomised trial of the Youth on Track scheme.

1. All participants will receive a program of minimum 6 weeks, which will include a brief criminogenic assessment of the young person’s presenting needs, development of an action plan and referral to local services, so none of the young people consenting to the trial will be denied access to treatment. Currently we have no conclusive evidence that participation in the 3-12 month Youth on Track model has any positive impact on youth offending (or indeed any conclusive evidence that it does no harm) so it cannot be assumed that the group of young people balloted to Fast Track will be at any disadvantage. In fact, there is some evidence (at least in the substance abuse domain) that brief interventions with young people can modify behaviour and achieve beneficial outcomes (Tait & Hulse, 2003; Spirito et al., 2004; Kaner et al., 2009). Also, the trial could potentially increase the accrual of eligible young people into Youth on Track (currently at only 50%) if Fast Track is perceived to be more attractive to young people, their families and/or referrers; thereby potentially increasing the overall number of young people engaging with services.

2. It is also possible that demand for Youth on Track will outweigh the number of places available in the scheme. Youth on Track caseworkers can manage 7-9 Youth on Track clients at any one time. In some areas there are more referrals to these caseworkers than their caseloads allow. Currently, where this happens young people are placed on a waitlist until a Youth on Track place becomes available. Some of these young people are subsequently received into Youth on Track after a substantial delay but
others may disengage and not receive any type of service from the providers. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that there may be additional unserviced demand (over and above the service provider waitlist) because police and schools are not referring young people to Youth on Track at times when they perceive a shortage of Youth on Track places. Some young people are therefore already missing out on Youth on Track. We would argue that a random ballot into Youth on Track is the most equitable way to allocate these scarce resources. An ancillary benefit of this process is that it creates the conditions for a rigorous evaluation of the Youth on Track initiative.

Based on these considerations, we would argue that the benefits emanating from the trial would outweigh the risks associated with it. The risks and benefits of the trial (as well as the two proposed programs) will be explained to all eligible young people referred to the trial before obtaining their consent. Young people consenting to the trial will be reminded of their right to withdraw from the trial at any time.

## RISKS

Over a period of four weeks in April 2017, BOCSAR and Juvenile Justice NSW conducted extensive consultations with Youth on Track case workers, managers, stakeholders and Aboriginal community members in all six sites currently offering Youth on Track. During these consultations, relevant parties were informed of the proposed experimental design, the advantages and disadvantages of choosing an RCT over other possible designs, as well as proposals for the alternative treatment option (Fast Track). In addition, we asked the groups consulted to identify any potential risks or difficulties posed by the research that they could foresee.

Discussions were very productive, and as a result of the feedback obtained from the communities amendments were made to the evaluation proposal, research procedures and consent/information forms. The main concerns raised during the consultative phase and our responses to these issues are outlined in the attached ‘Youth on Track Stakeholder Engagement Plan’.

It should be noted that we do not foresee any specific risks arising from participation in either of the two treatments. The caseworkers working with the young people are all appropriately trained, there are no ‘physical’ aspects to any treatments, and participants are free to end a specific interaction with the caseworker, or withdraw their consent from the evaluation at any point.

The intervention model on which both Youth on Track and Fast Track are based rely on effective practice skills and motivational interactions. Interventions incorporating these techniques have been shown to be beneficial with regards to youth offending (see Bonta, et. al. 2011; Trotter, 2012) and young people’s engagement in risky behaviours (Tait & Hulse, 2003; Spirito et al., 2004; Kaner et al., 2009). Family-based therapy, which is an additional component of the Youth on Track program, has also been shown to improve outcomes for young people at high-risk of offending (Borduin, et. al, 1995; Henggeler, 2012).

One of the main risks identified during consultations was the potential for participants to feel disadvantaged if they discover that other Youth on Track participants are receiving programs of different intensities and/or durations (particularly if two participants working with the same caseworker receive different treatment). This could potentially lead to one (or both) of the participants feeling disheartened, and not engaging with their treatment. While acknowledging that this is a potential risk, it is also the case that participants who are currently engaged in Youth on Track already receive services of varying intensity from their case worker depending on their risk and need. For example, young people who are assessed as low risk based on the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI) assessment tool only participate in the scheme for a
maximum of 3 months. This compares with young people assessed at high risk of offending who may participate in the scheme for up to 12 months. Differences in program intensity and duration will be fully explained to the young person by the caseworker at the point of consent to ensure that they are aware that programs delivered by the service providers can and will vary across participants and that the evaluation is attempting to assess which of these approaches are most effective.

Another concern raised during the consultations was the limited number of services available in some locations to refer young people to and the potentially reduced capacity of the available services to take on new clients. This is an existing problem for young people engaging with Youth on Track but is perhaps more acute for participants who will be balloted during the trial to Fast Track, as these young people will be exited from the scheme sooner. This risk will be mitigated by adding an additional ‘case-conference’ session to the structure of Fast Track in cases where the service provider deems it in the best interest of the young person. The case conference would act as a fifth session, to put the young person in touch with the services they have been referred to and ensure that there is a plan in place for continuity of care after the young person has exited from Fast Track.

A third risk identified during these consultations was the potential for young people participating in Fast Track who have their referring offence currently before the court to receive differential treatment from the magistrate or judge in bail or sentencing decisions to their Youth on Track counterparts. BOCSAR will mitigate this risk by informing all magistrates and judges in the relevant areas that the evaluation is being undertaken, highlighting the fact that young people participating in the trial will receive different services from their Youth on Track case managers during the evaluation period and the reasons why this approach has been adopted. The Chief Magistrate will also be briefed on the research by the Executive Director of BOCSAR to ensure that support by judicial officers in these areas is secured.

Any further issues that arise during the course of the evaluation will be addressed by the aforementioned Evaluation Advisory Committee.

TIMELINE

Shown below is the timeline and significant milestones for the proposed evaluation (subject to ethical clearance);
**Timeline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Milestone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar 2017</td>
<td>Finalise research design and evaluation proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May/Jun 2017</td>
<td>Obtain ethics clearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 2017</td>
<td>Random allocation to treatment conditions commences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 2018</td>
<td>Draft analysis on Jun 2017- Mar 2018 data for interim findings report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 2018</td>
<td>Review and publish interim report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 2019</td>
<td>Random allocation ceases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 2019-Mar 2020</td>
<td>12-month follow-up period for measuring reoffending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun 2020</td>
<td>Extract reoffending data from ROD and match to RCT data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 2020</td>
<td>Analysis and draft report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 2020</td>
<td>Review and publication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CONSULTATION AND GOVERNANCE**

The evaluation proposal was developed following a series of workshops and consultations that discussed the evaluation proposal, monitoring and evaluation data with key stakeholders. An initial workshop was conducted which included representatives from Juvenile Justice, the YoT Providers, NSW Treasury, and NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research. BOCSAR and Juvenile Justice then conducted site visits to the six Youth on Track areas where a further 18 consultation meetings were held with Youth on Track staff, key stakeholders, and Aboriginal Community members.

To continue to inform the successful delivery of the evaluation BOCSAR will form an Evaluation Advisory Committee, which will include members from Aboriginal Affairs, Juvenile Justice Aboriginal Strategic Unit, NSW Police, NSW Treasury, and NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet.

BOCSAR will also provide updates to the Juvenile Justice’s Youth on Track Unit. The JJ Youth on Track unit will convey this information to the Youth on Track Implementation Committee and the Regional Governance Committees.

BOCSAR will also provide the final report to the YoT Providers, key stakeholders and Aboriginal community members prior to publication.
REFERENCES


