



**Report of the
Ministerial Taskforce
on Youth Offending**

April 2002

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Chairperson's Acknowledgements

Throughout my involvement in the work of the Ministerial Taskforce, I have been greatly encouraged by the professionalism, experience and dedication of those working in the youth justice sector. It was their knowledge and opinions that informed us in our work.

I would like in particular to thank all those who attended the meetings of the Taskforce as we travelled the country - the staff of Police Youth Aid and Child, Youth and Family, and especially the community representatives who attended. I greatly value their generosity in giving of their time and knowledge to inform us in our work and I hope that this report and the accompanying recommendations for action in the Youth Offending Strategy reflects their input adequately.

I would also like to thank all members of the Taskforce, the Chief Executives of the member agencies and their representatives, for their regular attendance and contributions to the frequent meetings. The meetings were always conducted in an open, honest and forthright atmosphere and I greatly appreciated all contributions. I would like to single out Matt Hakiha of the Te Whānau O Waipareira Trust whom I invited to join the Taskforce as a Māori community advisor. His knowledge, insight and humour were essential to the work.

Since June 2001, I have been succeeded as Principal Youth Court Judge by Andrew Becroft. His energy, expertise and experience have also been of immense assistance to the Taskforce in our work. I would also like to acknowledge the staff of the Ministries of Social Development and Justice for their tireless work in supporting the work of the Taskforce throughout the year. In particular I express thanks to John McGrath from the Ministry of Social Development and John Meek from the Ministry of Justice in organising both the regional visits and the regular meetings of the Taskforce. I also acknowledge the contribution of John McGrath, Caroline Holden and Andrea King for preparing the drafts of this Report and the Youth Offending Strategy. Their ongoing efforts, especially as this report was being finalised over the last couple of months, are greatly appreciated.

Finally, I acknowledge Bronwyn Somerville, the former Director of the Crime Prevention Unit whose energy, leadership and experience were pivotal to establishing the path of the Taskforce.



Judge David Carruthers
Chair, Ministerial Taskforce on Youth Crime

Executive Summary

This is the report of the Ministerial Taskforce on Youth Offending. It should be read in conjunction with the Youth Offending Strategy.

The Ministerial Taskforce on Youth Offending was established by the Government in August 2000 to:

- develop and drive through a co-ordinated package of initiatives focused on improving practice, processes and inter-agency co-ordination to reduce youth crime.
- ensure a collective approach to the use of resources in the youth justice sector.

The Taskforce's work has focused on three main areas - consulting with key stakeholders, implementing projects in areas of immediate priority and developing a comprehensive Youth Offending Strategy to guide Government in its response to youth offending.

The Strategy is designed to provide a blueprint for the medium to long-term development of the youth justice sector. It contains a number of detailed recommendations to improve outcomes in this important area.

Key Messages Received

The Taskforce held a series of 24 meetings throughout the country with key stakeholders and community groups. It received feedback about a wide range of issues concerning the youth justice sector. Several key themes emerged and these are briefly summarised below:

- There is strong support for the present legislative basis for the youth justice sector and the Family Group Conference process in particular.
- There is a need for much clearer leadership in the youth justice sector given the wide range of agencies involved.
- There is a need for better support and resourcing for Child, Youth and Family and Police Youth Aid professionals working in the youth justice sector.
- Current mechanisms to ensure interagency co-ordination, collaboration and accountability are inadequate. Better structures are required to support and encourage co-ordination between Child, Youth and Family, Police Youth Aid, Health, Education and Courts.
- The funding, resourcing and range of youth offending programmes currently available are inadequate, especially to meet the needs of hardest-end offenders.
- A sentencing option beyond Supervision with Residence is required for the hardest-end youth offenders.
- There are particularly high rates of offending by Māori young people. This must be addressed and support provided to Māori young people and their families/whānau.
- Pacific young people are over-represented in offences involving violence.
- A lack of detailed statistical information is inhibiting planning.

Areas Requiring Immediate Action

The Taskforce identified the following areas for priority action.

Intra-agency practice: This applies particularly to Child, Youth and Family and Police Youth Aid. The Taskforce sees there is an urgent need to develop best practice guidelines, improve training and raise the status and profile of youth justice within these agencies. This is discussed in detail in Part 4 of the Youth Offending Strategy.

Co-ordination and Collaboration at a local level: The Taskforce recommends that local youth offending teams should be established throughout New Zealand, with representatives from Child, Youth and Family, Police, Education, and Health. These teams would co-ordinate service delivery for young offenders and report to the Senior Officials Group, described below.

National Co-ordination and Leadership: The Taskforce recommends the establishment of a Ministers' Group, comprising the Ministers of Justice and Social Services and Employment, and the Ministers of Police, Courts, Education, Health, Māori Affairs, Pacific Island Affairs and Youth Affairs as appropriate. This group would oversee the development of the youth justice sector.

At a departmental level, the Taskforce recommends the Youth Justice Senior Officials Group be given new terms of reference and tighter membership to oversee the operation of the local youth justice teams and to update Ministers regularly on progress in the implementation of the Youth Offending Strategy.

The Taskforce also recommends the establishment of an independent Advisory Council. This should comprise the Principal Youth Court Judge (chair), government representatives and community representatives, including youth advocates, and Māori and Pacific representatives. This Advisory Council would advise the Senior Officials Group and Ministers.

The Taskforce considers that these three areas require immediate attention to achieve discernible improvements in the youth justice sector.

Introduction

It is acknowledged that New Zealand's youth justice system is generally working well. The Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989 is recognised internationally as an effective and progressive way of dealing with youth offending.

However, despite this solid legislative foundation, reported rates of youth offending by under 17 year olds have continued to rise throughout the last decade. Furthermore, problems in youth justice practice remain despite the introduction of a range of initiatives in recent years. There have also been delays in implementation and only partial implementation of some of these initiatives.

A contributing factor has been the high number of agencies involved in the youth justice sector. This has made strategic direction setting and co-ordination of policy development, purchase advice and service delivery very difficult.

The cost to Government and the community of offending by young people is significant and has major implications if it is not addressed, particularly in terms of increasing New Zealand's future prison population.

It is therefore essential that the response to youth offending is as effective as possible, not only to improve the lives of young people concerned, but also for the wider benefit of society. These efforts must focus on both preventing and responding to youth offending. This will require support, not only from the core agencies in the youth justice sector (Police and Child, Youth and Family) but also from the other relevant agencies working with youth, such as health, education and other agencies.

Background

In 2000, the Government established the Ministerial Taskforce on Youth Offending to address these issues and bring a much broader, inter-agency approach to youth offending.

The Ministerial Taskforce was given responsibility to:

- develop and oversee the implementation of a co-ordinated package of initiatives designed to improve practice, processes and inter-agency co-ordination to reduce youth crime.
- ensure a collective approach to the use of resources in the youth justice sector.

The full Terms of Reference for the Taskforce are attached as Appendix A to this report.

Membership

The Taskforce was chaired by Judge David Carruthers and comprised Chief Executives from the Ministries of Justice, Social Policy (now Social Development), Youth Affairs and Pacific Island Affairs, Child, Youth and Family, the Departments of Internal Affairs and for Courts, the New Zealand Police, Te Puni Kōkiri and the Crime Prevention Unit.

The Chief Executives of the Ministries of Education and Health, the Department of Work and Income (now Social Development), the Hillary Commission, Skill New Zealand, the Chief of Staff of the Defence Forces and Matt Hakiaka, a Māori Community Advisor, later joined the Taskforce. On his appointment as Principal Youth Court Judge, Judge Andrew Becroft also joined the Taskforce.

Work Programme

The Taskforce's work has focused on three main areas - consulting with stakeholders, implementing projects in areas of immediate priority and developing a comprehensive Youth Offending Strategy to guide Government in its response to youth offending. Each of these areas is briefly summarised in the sections that follow.

Section 1 - Operational Group Visits

The Operational Group of the Taskforce met with Child, Youth and Family, Police Youth Aid and Government and community representatives throughout the country to ascertain how the youth justice system was working and identify its current strengths and weaknesses. The purpose of the meetings was to:

- discuss current service delivery and sector co-ordination and explore ways to improve delivery and best practice over the next twelve months.
- promote training in effective best practice.
- begin compiling information about existing programmes and activities to ensure better access for local agencies and better integration, consistency and support for current initiatives.

A full list of the 24 meetings is attached as Appendix B to this report.

Separate meetings were held with representatives of Police Youth Aid and Child, Youth and Family and joint meetings were held with Youth Advocates, community representatives, Strengthening Families co-ordinators and Strengthening Families member agencies, Safer Community Councils and other government agencies.

Careful note was taken of issues raised at each venue and this feedback was passed on to Taskforce meetings throughout the year. Presented here is a selection of priority issues raised during the visits. They are considered in detail in the Youth Offending Strategy.

Key Issues

A large number of issues were raised throughout the consultation process. These have been grouped below according to the relevant government agency or sector.

Issues Raised for Child, Youth and Family

- Youth justice is under-funded and under-resourced within Child, Youth and Family. The youth justice budget should be ring-fenced or otherwise consideration given to removing youth justice responsibilities from Child, Youth and Family altogether.
- More Youth Justice Co-ordinators should be appointed, their workloads re-allocated and their status within Child, Youth and Family increased.
- There has been, and continues to be, a lack of youth justice training provided over the years to professionals working in Child, Youth and Family.
- Child, Youth and Family funding should be properly targeted at appropriate service providers and not spread too thinly.

Issues Raised for Police

- The Police Youth Aid budget should be ring-fenced within Police structures.
- Police Youth Aid needs to be properly supported within the broader Police structure, at the local level and through a strengthened national office.

Cross-sector Issues Raised - Joint Police and Child, Youth and Family

- Police Youth Aid and Child, Youth and Family (geographic) boundaries need to be fully aligned.
- There should be joint training and regular scheduled meetings between Police Youth Aid and Child, Youth and Family. This used to happen on a national basis.
- There needs to be a consistent local and national structure for the delivery of youth justice services, with final accountability clearly defined.

Issues Raised for the Education Sector

- There is widespread dissatisfaction at the levels of exclusions from schools. Many young offenders who appear in court are not at school.
- The access criteria for entry to Alternative Education are too tight and exclude alienated younger students. Additional alternative education placements need to be provided.
- There need to be proper assessments, where relevant, of the underlying causes of the educational failure of young offenders.

Issues Raised for the Health Sector

- There are large gaps in the availability of appropriate mental health services for young people, and particularly alcohol and drug treatment services for younger teenagers.

Issues Raised on Legislative and Court Matters

- A sentencing option beyond Supervision with Residence is required to provide for the needs of the hardest-end offenders.
- Court proceedings are drawn out over too long a timeframe and are impacting on the attitudes of young people towards the seriousness of the offences they have committed.
- Youth Court judges need to sit in, and be responsible for, individual districts.

General Issues Raised

- Family Group Conferences need to be targeted at those with whom they have most impact. The process does not work so well with the hardest-end offenders.
- Funding application processes are too bureaucratic. There should be a standardised funding application form across agencies, and longer-term funding beyond one year needs to be provided.
- The lowering of the drinking age should be revisited.
- Cannabis abuse is a large problem for young people and many young offenders appearing in court have a cannabis abuse problem.
- All sectors suffer from a lack of an adequate pool of qualified professionals from which to choose staff and appointments.
- There is a need for parenting courses specifically targeted at fathers.
- There was widespread support for mentoring programmes.

Particular Issues Raised Concerning Māori Young People

Matt Hakiaka, a Māori Community Advisor, was appointed to the Operational Group of the Taskforce to ensure that meetings also focussed on local and national issues of importance for Māori young people. He identified the following youth justice issues for Māori:

- More Māori community-based programmes are needed, with a strong focus on strengthening whānau, hapū and iwi.
- Schools must address the high stand-down and expulsion of Māori students. The Tū Tangata programme needs to be better positioned in schools.
- Programmes that develop better parenting skills for Māori fathers are important.
- Appropriate mental health services need to be provided for Māori youth.
- There needs to be better relationships between the Police and Māori and Māori youth.
- There needs to be better relationships between Māori communities and organisations and Child, Youth and Family.

Particular Issues Raised Concerning Pacific Young People

- Specific measures are required to address the nature of Pacific youth offending which currently tends to be violent, yet non-recidivist.

Addressing the Issues

Taskforce members have given a commitment to carefully consider and, where appropriate, address issues raised at the meetings. Work is already underway in a number of areas. These initiatives are summarised below with the lead government agency/ies identified in brackets.

- There has been an increase in funding for the promotion of healthy lifestyles and minimising alcohol and drug abuse among young people and additional funding for mental health services (including alcohol and other drug services) with the Blueprint for Mental Health Services in New Zealand (HEALTH).
- The Family Start programme has recently been extended to facilitate earlier and later referrals - up to six months before and after birth (HEALTH, EDUCATION, CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY).
- There is now one Youth Court judge assigned to organise every Youth Court in the country (PRINCIPAL YOUTH COURT JUDGE).
- Steps have been taken to reduce the number of Youth Court judges sitting in the larger youth courts throughout the country to ensure greater procedural consistency and a greater ownership of the Youth Court by those judges, and steps have been taken in the development of specialist judicial teams (PRINCIPAL YOUTH COURT JUDGE).
- The Ministry of Education has contracted 17 Māori community providers to recruit mentors from the community, and to match them with Māori secondary students in 105 schools. The programme will be running in schools in 2002 (EDUCATION).
- The Ministry of Education's Suspensions Reduction Initiative is working with 86 schools that have a history of high suspensions of Māori students (EDUCATION).

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- Child, Youth and Family has established a performance improvement Action Plan to address the service improvements identified as necessary during the Operational Group visits (CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY).
- Child, Youth and Family's New Directions project has set specific youth justice targets to improve practice and service provision (CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY).
- Child, Youth and Family has separated youth justice and care and protection funding into separate output classes (CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY).

Other issues raised with the Operational Group are treated in detail in the Youth Offending Strategy.

Section 2 - Taskforce Projects

At an early stage in its work, the Taskforce identified urgent needs in the youth justice sector and established eleven priority projects to improve practice, processes and co-ordination between agencies.

A brief description of each project is provided below. Most of the projects are ongoing, but where possible, completion timelines have been identified.

Christchurch Court-Based Drug and Alcohol Pilot

Under this pilot project, led by Judge Walker, the Youth Court will use the judicial process to refer young offenders with serious drug and alcohol problems for assessment and, if necessary, for treatment under judicial supervision. The successful completion of a treatment programme will then be taken into account in the final sentencing of the young offender. The pilot is due to run from the end of February 2002 until the end of February 2003, with a review and evaluation period to follow.

The pilot's objectives are to:

- improve the participants' health and social functioning and decrease their drug use.
- reduce crime associated with drug use.
- reduce criminal activity.

A special Youth Drug Court will work with young offenders with serious drug and alcohol problems with a judge appointed to oversee and monitor their progress. Young offenders who meet the agreed threshold for drug and alcohol problems, and who agree to the process, will receive full assessments conducted by trained clinicians. These detailed assessments will be considered at the young person's Family Group Conference, with a final recommendation then forwarded to the special Youth Drug Court.

If the young person agrees, the youth drug court judge will impose a court-supervised intervention/treatment order. If the young person does not agree, he/she will return to the regular Youth Court process. Operational agencies, for example Education, Health and Police, will provide services to support the recommendations made by the judge and the co-ordination of activities will be undertaken by a social worker from Child, Youth and Family.

Drug and Alcohol Services Literature Review

The Taskforce has started a literature review, led by the New Zealand Police, on the effectiveness of programmes designed to assist 'at risk' young people, in dealing with the issues underlying their drug and alcohol use. This work complements the pilot Youth Drug Court project in Christchurch (see above), and enables a broader consideration of the overall effectiveness of a range of approaches to alcohol and drug use by young offenders. It will be complete by the end of May 2002.

Encouraging Greater Use of Mentoring

The Taskforce supports mentoring as a means of providing valuable guidance and support to 'at risk' youth. This project, led by the Ministry of Social Development, with involvement from the Ministries of Health, Education and Pacific Island Affairs, and Te Puni Kōkiri, will:

- work in partnership with Māori and Pacific Peoples, and community providers where relevant, to identify ways in which the Government can best support mentoring programmes.
- promote mentoring based on evaluation and best practice.

- facilitate a co-ordinated approach to the provision of mentoring programmes, which could involve a directory of providers and mechanisms for sharing ideas and experience.
- work with Māori and Pacific Peoples and community groups to establish and promulgate best practice standards nationally.
- monitor and evaluate individual mentoring schemes around New Zealand.

Project planning has been completed and work started at the end of January 2002. A report will be submitted to Ministers at the end of September 2002 recommending means by which Government can best support mentoring programmes in the medium term.

In addition to this ongoing work, a number of specific mentoring initiatives were undertaken throughout the year. The Taskforce:

- established a relationship with the Youth Mentoring Association of Aotearoa New Zealand to discuss ways in which Government can support mentoring and to assist with the increased participation of Māori and Pacific mentoring groups.
- carried out a number of meetings/hui/fono throughout the country with Māori and Pacific mentoring groups to ascertain what is needed to move mentoring forward for Māori and Pacific peoples.

A Programme to Target ‘Hard-End’ Offenders

In recent years, concern has been expressed about the increase in the number of apprehensions of young people aged 14-16 years, especially for violent offences. The Taskforce shares this concern.

In response, Judge Henwood has pioneered the development of a programme to cater for high-risk recidivist youth offenders: YF8 (Youth Focus Eight), Intensive Intervention for Recidivist Youth Offenders. The programme would target young men and women who would otherwise be facing significant periods of imprisonment, have a history of previous offending and are likely to reoffend.

The programme being developed is based on a therapeutic best practice model and current research. It would be supportive of an approach which is holistic, individualised, both residential and community-based, involve the family/whānau in the intervention and have a graduated and supported return to the local community. The goals of the programme would be to reduce serious and persistent offending, hold young people accountable for their offending, provide a realistic and effective alternative to imprisonment for young people, and help each young person to be a positive member of society.

Development of a Minimum Youth Justice Data Set

The need for agencies to plan and establish a minimum set of data for youth justice was recommended by the Review of Youth Court Jurisdiction and Sentencing in 1999. The Ministerial Taskforce supports this move and is concerned about the current system's inability to:

- link offences to individuals.
- track individuals across agencies in the youth justice sector.
- easily establish individual contact histories.

The Ministry of Social Development has commissioned a report on the first stage of developing the minimum set of data. This report confirmed the need for such data and indicated some of the elements

that will make up the data set. The project will now be advanced through the Justice Sector Information Strategy, led by the Ministry of Justice, with officials reporting to the Ministers of Social Services and Employment and Justice with milestones by 31 July 2002.

Early Intervention Assessment Tool

In its discussions, the Taskforce noted that people without social work training in the broad social services sector are often required to make informal judgements about levels of risk experienced by a child or youth. It is concerned that poor decisions may be made, leading to inappropriate service provision and poor outcomes for young people and their families. The Taskforce is keen to explore the development of an early intervention assessment tool for lay practitioners.

The development of such a tool carries certain risks. It may encourage lay practitioners to make decisions where they should really seek professional assistance. With these issues in mind, the Ministry of Social Development has undertaken to:

- clarify the potential users and the proposed purpose of the assessment tool.
- determine the viability of such a tool and the degree to which it might add value to informal decision-making.
- consider the merits of the tool relative to other decision-making improvements that might be available.

Officials will report to the Ministers of Social Services and Employment and Justice on these issues by 30 September 2002.

Mental Health Services

The Taskforce has also been concerned at the lack of mental health services, particularly alcohol and drug treatment services, for children and young people. However, it is aware that the Government is committed to implementing the Mental Health Commission's Blueprint for the Development of Mental Health Services in New Zealand. The Taskforce supports the Ministry of Health's work and wants to ensure it can contribute to the Youth Offending Strategy.

The Blueprint For Mental Health Services in New Zealand provides a model of the service developments required to implement the government's mental health strategy, including alcohol and other drug services. The document outlines the numbers of full-time equivalent staff, and beds or care packages needed to provide services to reach the 3% of the population estimated to need specialist mental health services or support services at any point in time.

Current figures show that there has been an increase in spending on child and youth mental health services, from \$38.2m in 1998/99 to \$69.9 m in 2000/01. Generic alcohol and other drug services (which may also provide services to young people) also increased from \$45.5m to \$48.6m over the same period. Despite these increases, the Taskforce is aware that the targets in the Blueprint are a long way from being met.

The Taskforce recognises that the focus of the Blueprint is on achieving mental health outcomes. However, the improved quantity and quality of these services will be of immense benefit in meeting the needs of those most 'at risk' of offending. The Taskforce considers that the implementation of the Blueprint should be closely linked to the ongoing development of the youth justice sector.

Funding Practices

The Taskforce received repeated and strident criticism of the funding and accountability arrangements in the youth justice sector - and the community sector generally. The issue that caused most dissatisfaction amongst groups working with young people was having to apply to numerous government departments for what were often limited amounts of money.

The Taskforce is aware that the Community and Government Steering Group has been established to lead work to:

- improve participatory processes around developing and making policy.
- improve funding and accountability arrangements.
- strengthen the community sector.

This group will review existing and future arrangements for Government funding of communities. It will assess their effectiveness, develop options for change and develop good practice models. Efforts will also be made to improve Government officials' understanding of working realities and needs of community organisations and voluntary, iwi/Māori and Pacific groups, including their values and governance arrangements.

The Steering Group is to report to the Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector by 30 June 2002. The Taskforce stresses the importance of this work.

Legislative changes

While the Taskforce found general support for existing youth justice legislation and the Family Group Conference process, a range of legislative amendments were also suggested by groups and individuals. All the proposed amendments relate to the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families (CYPF) Act 1989. They include:

- providing for longer periods of supervision with residence orders and the development of a longer and more comprehensive sentence for the most serious young offenders.
- empowering Youth Court judges to send all charges relating to one incident to the District or High Court.
- amending the provisions of the CYPF Act regarding reparation so that they are consistent with the proposed changes to reparation in the Sentencing and Parole Reform Bill.

Some of the amendments have general approval from the Taskforce and these are considered in detail in the Youth Offending Strategy.

Officials will provide a report to the Ministers of Justice and Social Services and Employment by 30 September 2002 on the legislative proposals, indicating whether or not they should be included in a CYPF amendment bill for the 2003 legislative programme.

Army Initiatives

The Taskforce wants the youth justice sector to be able to benefit more from the resources and programmes provided by the Army. It believes that the skills and disciplines promoted by the Army have the potential to have a beneficial impact on youth offending.

The Army has examined how its current programmes could be better targeted towards young offenders and has identified two programmes, the Limited Services Volunteer Scheme and Youth Life Skills, that could be developed further to meet the needs of 'at risk' youth.

The Limited Service Volunteers (LSV) scheme was primarily designed as an employment programme, but is known to have positive effects on behaviour and offending patterns. This programme is run in conjunction with the Ministry of Social Development. Burnham Camp in Christchurch has the capacity to handle up to 1704 LSV trainees per year based on six residential courses, each of six weeks, with 284 trainees on each course.

Youth Life Skills (YLS) courses specifically target 14 to 18 year olds and provide training in skills designed to improve a person's integration with the community. The Army could provide 75 YLS residential courses per annum, each of five days duration with 20 students on each course for a total of 1500 students per annum. Fifty of these courses would be conducted in the North Island and 25 in the South Island.

Education Initiatives

The Taskforce's key concerns in the education sector were the growing trends in truancy, school exclusions, and non-engagement in education. Many young offenders are not engaged in education and are likely to have low levels of educational achievement.

There are a number of initiatives underway in the education sector that focus on raising educational achievement and reducing disparities and the Taskforce is concerned that these be closely linked with the implementation of the Youth Offending Strategy.

In addition, the Taskforce supports the introduction of a full assessment of the educational and health needs of young offenders at the point of the first youth justice intervention - the Family Group Conference. A new process for joint education and health assessments prior to the Family Group Conference has been proposed. This would be followed by appropriate services from both sectors to meet the identified needs of the young offender. This work is to be developed by the Ministries of Education and Health and core youth justice agencies in time for the 2003/04 budget process.

Section 3 - Youth Offending Strategy

The Youth Offending Strategy is the major output of the Ministerial Taskforce. The Strategy is designed to guide Government on where it should focus its effort in youth justice policy, and to help co-ordinate service delivery by those agencies working on the front line with children and young people who offend.

The aim is to reduce and prevent offending and re-offending by children and young people.

In developing the Strategy, the Taskforce has worked to ensure that all activity in the youth justice sector is consistent with the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989. The Taskforce's work has also been informed by the following set of principles:

- **Accountability** - young persons should be held accountable for their offending.
- **Victims** - measures should consider the needs of victims of the offending.
- **Early Intervention** - intervention should be directed at the earliest point of a young person's development towards possible offending.
- **Protection** - the vulnerability of young people entitles them to special protection.
- **Age and Developmental Appropriateness** - interventions should recognise the young person's developmental level.
- **Best Practice** - interventions should be based on best practice.
- **Consistency with the Treaty of Waitangi** - responses to youth offending should be consistent with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.
- **Cultural Responsiveness** - responses to offending by children and young people should reflect the values, perspectives and cultures of the children and young people concerned.
- **Youth Participation** - young people should be provided with every opportunity to participate in the making of decisions that affect them.
- **Holistic Approach** - measures should aim to involve and strengthen the family/whānau.
- **Limited Involvement in the Formal Youth Justice System** - sanctions should take the least restrictive form that is appropriate in the circumstances.

The Strategy recognises that New Zealand's existing youth justice system and legislation are fundamentally sound, although some modifications are required in terms of delivery. It acknowledges that early intervention (both in a general sense and within the youth justice sector) is critical for preventing and reducing youth offending and that there are key points in a young person's progression towards serious offending where intervention is most effective and appropriate.

The Strategy also acknowledges that young people who offend can be distinguished according to their risk of continued offending and that interventions should be based, in part, on this risk.

The Strategy takes a broad view of young people's development and is designed to create appropriate links with other initiatives that will reduce the risks of offending or re-offending. These include the Action for Child and Youth Development (ACYD) (which is bringing together the work programmes of the Agenda for Children and the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa), the Crime Reduction Strategy, the Strategy to Reduce Offending by Māori and Pacific Youth, the Department of Corrections' Youth Strategy and the Child, Youth and Family's Youth Justice Plan.

It will be important to ensure that the Youth Offending Strategy links in well with these other strategies to avoid duplication of provision and ensure the best outcomes for young people and their families.

Appendix A

Terms of Reference of the Ministerial Taskforce on Youth Offending

Role

The Ministerial Taskforce will be a time-limited intervention, responsible for developing and driving through a co-ordinated package of initiatives to reduce youth crime and ensuring a collective interest approach to the use of resources in the youth justice sector. The initiatives will be focused on improving practice, processes and co-ordination between justice sector agencies.

Membership

The members will be the Chief Executives, or their representatives, agreed by both the Chief Executive and the Taskforce Chair, of the following agencies: Ministries of Justice, Social Policy (now Social Development), Youth Affairs and Pacific Island Affairs; Departments of Child, Youth and Family Services and for Courts; New Zealand Police; Crime Prevention Unit and Te Puni Kōkiri. Other agencies, such as Treasury and the Department of Corrections, will be asked to join the Taskforce to discuss particular issues.

Role of the Chair

The Taskforce will be chaired by Judge Carruthers, the Principal Youth Court Judge. Judge Carruthers will continue to sit as a judge and work for the Taskforce 1-2 days per week. His role will be facilitative, designed to establish a bridge across the top of various sector interests. He will ensure agencies co-operate and focus on effective operational initiatives.

Reporting

The Taskforce will commence from 1 October 2000 and will report finally to Ministers by 30 September 2001. The strictly time-limited duration of the Taskforce reflects its short-term, goal-oriented nature and ensures that there is no ongoing intermingling of judicial and executive functions.

Servicing of Taskforce

Officials from the Ministries of Justice and Social Development will service the Taskforce. These Ministries have joint responsibility for the leadership of youth justice policy.

Remuneration, Costs and Expenses

Judge Carruthers will continue to receive his judicial salary while being a member of the Taskforce. The costs of servicing the Taskforce will be met within the Ministry of Justice's baselines. Other agencies' costs associated with involvement in the Taskforce will also be met within their baselines.

Appendix B

Operational Group of the Ministerial Taskforce

Membership of the Operational Group

- 1) Judge David Carruthers - Chair, Ministerial Taskforce on Youth Crime
- 2) Lisa Hema - Senior Advisory Officer, Service Policy and Development, Child, Youth and Family
- 3) Inspector Chris Graveson - OIC, Police Youth Aid
- 4) Neil Cleaver - National Manager, Co-ordinators, Child, Youth and Family
- 5) Matt Hakiaha - Māori Community Advisor
- 6) Bronwyn Somerville - Director, Crime Prevention Unit (until May 2001)
- 7) John McGrath - Senior Policy Analyst, Ministry of Social Development
- 8) John Meek - Senior Policy Analyst, Ministry of Justice

Judge Andrew Becroft chaired the meetings in New Plymouth, Wanganui, Palmerston North, Masterton, the Wellington region and Blenheim on behalf of Judge Carruthers. On certain occasions the group was also joined by representatives of other government departments and Ministries, notably by Courts and Education, and by other interested representatives from Social Development and Justice.

Operational Group Visits

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| 1) North Shore, Auckland | 11 December 2000 |
| 2) Auckland City | 12 December 2000 |
| 3) Manukau City | 13 December 2000 |
| 4) Invercargill | 5 March 2001 |
| 5) Dunedin | 6 March 2001 |
| 6) Christchurch | 7 March 2001 |
| 7) Whangarei | 19 March 2001 |
| 8) Kaikohe | 20 March 2001 |
| 9) Tauranga | 30 April 2001 |
| 10) Hamilton | 1 May 2001 |
| 11) Rotorua | 14 May 2001 |
| 12) Whakatane | 15 May 2001 |
| 13) Gisborne | 19 June 2001 |
| 14) Napier/Hastings | 20 June 2001 |
| 15) Greymouth | 11 July 2001 |
| 16) Nelson | 12 July 2001 |
| 17) New Plymouth | 27 August 2001 |
| 18) Wanganui | 28 August 2001 |
| 19) Masterton | 29 August 2001 |
| 20) Palmerston North | 30 August 2001 |
| 21) Wellington | 24 September 2001 |
| 22) Porirua | 25 September 2001 |
| 23) Hutt Valley | 25 September 2001 |
| 24) Blenheim | 26 September 2001 |

