

State Govt funding boost to help Armadale's at-risk youth

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Armadale MLA Tory Bull, youth workers Jamie Barr, Samantha Dragon and Heidi Holman, and Police Minister Michelle Roberts at the funding announcement for AYIP.



ARMADALE'S at-risk youth will be supported with \$800,000 in State Government funding towards a juvenile crime intervention program.

The Armadale Youth Intervention Partnership (AYIP), steered by Save the Children's Youth Partnership Project, aims to identify at-risk kids early to reduce youth offending and help break the cycle of reoffending.

According to statistics released by the group in April, one in 12 young people in Barksdale Hill Detention Centre from 2015 to 2016 was from Armadale, and half of the area's high school students miss more than one month of school per year.

Save the Children's WA manager of place based strategies Karina Chicco said the investment will go a long way to helping young people on the juvenile justice trajectory.

"In 2016, locking up young people from Armadale cost taxpayers \$8.2 million, what we are doing hasn't been working," Ms Chicco said.

"By investing in early intervention, we will ensure that the most vulnerable young people in the community will get the right support at the right time. This will not only support these young people to engage back in to education and thrive in their community, but will provide significant cost savings."

Armadale Police Station officer in charge Senior Sergeant Glenn Spencer said funding will enable the project to set up diversion programs for children at risk.

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"It's generally designed around the 10 to 12 years age, on the fringes of offending at the moment. So it might be their peers or their family. It's not just criminal offending, it's also domestic violence... it's engaging them in education, life skills, diverting them away from that offending lifestyle," he said.

"It's designed to be a cultural change. A lot of the violence in these homes is cultural. It's not Aboriginal kids, it's not white kids, it's a broad cross-section more to do with socioeconomic."

"Employment is a big factor. The follow on from this program is to identify pathways, so as these kids get older, they have that opportunity for employment. At the moment it's very scary, and what are they going to do when they hit 15, 16?"

"Unemployable, uneducated, criminal records. It's designed to change the culture in the future, with the intent that if it's proved to be successful, we can roll it out across different areas."