

Marlamanu on-country diversionary program to tackle youth offending in Kimberley

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Marlamanu Pty Ltd selected to progress delivery of an on-country diversionary program for at-risk youth in the Kimberley
Recruitment and detailed facility design to commence in the coming weeks
Planning for residential safe havens to start in Kununurra and Derby
Part of a comprehensive \$40.4 million package to help break the cycle of youth offending in the Kimberley

The McGowan Government's on-country diversion facility in the Kimberley has reached a major milestone, with Marlamanu Pty Ltd selected to progress delivery of the pilot program for at-risk youth.

A detailed service agreement will now be negotiated with Marlamanu Pty Ltd which will see an Aboriginal-led diversionary program established at the Myroodah cattle station, approximately 112 kilometres south-east of Derby in the West Kimberley.

It follows completion of the program design - aimed at providing up to 16 places each year for young men between 14 and 17. Work is underway with agencies - including the Western Australia Police Force and the Department of Communities and Justice - to refine the pathways for referrals to the program, including from the courts.

Earlier this year, the McGowan Government allocated \$15 million towards an on-country residential facility for young offenders.

The State Government has been working closely with Aboriginal leaders and other experts on the design of the Marlamanu program, which provides alternative rehabilitation pathways and builds on cultural strengths.

It is expected the facility will open in the second half of 2023, with recruitment of the principal and detailed facility design to commence in the next few weeks.

The McGowan Government will also provide around \$240,000 to Emama Nguda Aboriginal Corporation and Miruwung Gajerrong Aboriginal Corporation to progress planning and development of other safe place residential accommodation proposals in Derby and Kununurra.

The on-country facility is part of a comprehensive cross-agency \$40.4 million package which has seen a range of programs and initiatives rolled out to tackle youth crime and help break the cycle of reoffending in the Kimberley.

The \$2 million Kimberley Community Action Fund has delivered grants to 12 local projects to better engage youth and improve community safety over the next two years.

The rollout of Target 120 in Broome is well underway. More than 70 per cent of participants in Broome have had no further contact with police since joining Target 120.

In addition, consultation is underway with families for Target 120 Plus, which will support a smaller cohort of at-risk youth who have already entered the justice system.

Operation Regional Shield was launched in February to target the acute issue of youth crime in the regions, with additional police officers deployed to the Kimberley and Pilbara.

The McGowan Government has provided additional funding of \$2.5 million for the operation, which has resulted in an increase in arrests and a reduction in high-risk offending.

The Kimberley Youth and Community Justice Response builds on the \$14.8 million the McGowan Government has already invested towards the Kimberley Juvenile Justice Strategy.

Comments attributed to Regional Development Minister Alannah MacTiernan:

"Our commitment to the Marlamanu program today aims to give youth offenders a genuine alternative to detention in the Kimberley.

"We are embracing the KRED vision of taking young offenders from the towns, onto a working pastoral station - where they can learn from indigenous role models to build relationships of trust and responsibility, and benefit from physical activity and skill development.

"These kids need to reset and learn about accountability. Developing strong connections to culture and country is a powerful tool on this journey.

"The McGowan Government is focused on supporting communities to break the complex cycle of youth offending in our regions."

Comments attributed to Kimberley MLA Divina D'Anna:

"I welcome the McGowan Government's commitment to the Marlamanu diversionary program today, an important step towards trying to break the cycle of youth offending in the Kimberley.

"I am hopeful this program will help transform young people's lives in the justice system, while keeping them closer to country.

"I believe with the right support, education and encouragement, youth offenders in the region can get their lives back on track."

Minister's office - 6552 6200