

**IN THE MATTER OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION  
INTO FAMILY VIOLENCE**

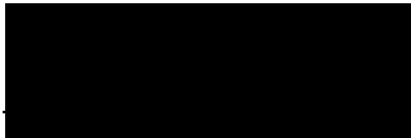
**ATTACHMENT JT-9 TO STATEMENT OF JACQUALYN LOUISE TURFREY**

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This is the attachment marked '**JT-9**' produced and shown to **JACQUALYN LOUISE TURFREY** at the time of signing her Statement on 16 July 2015.

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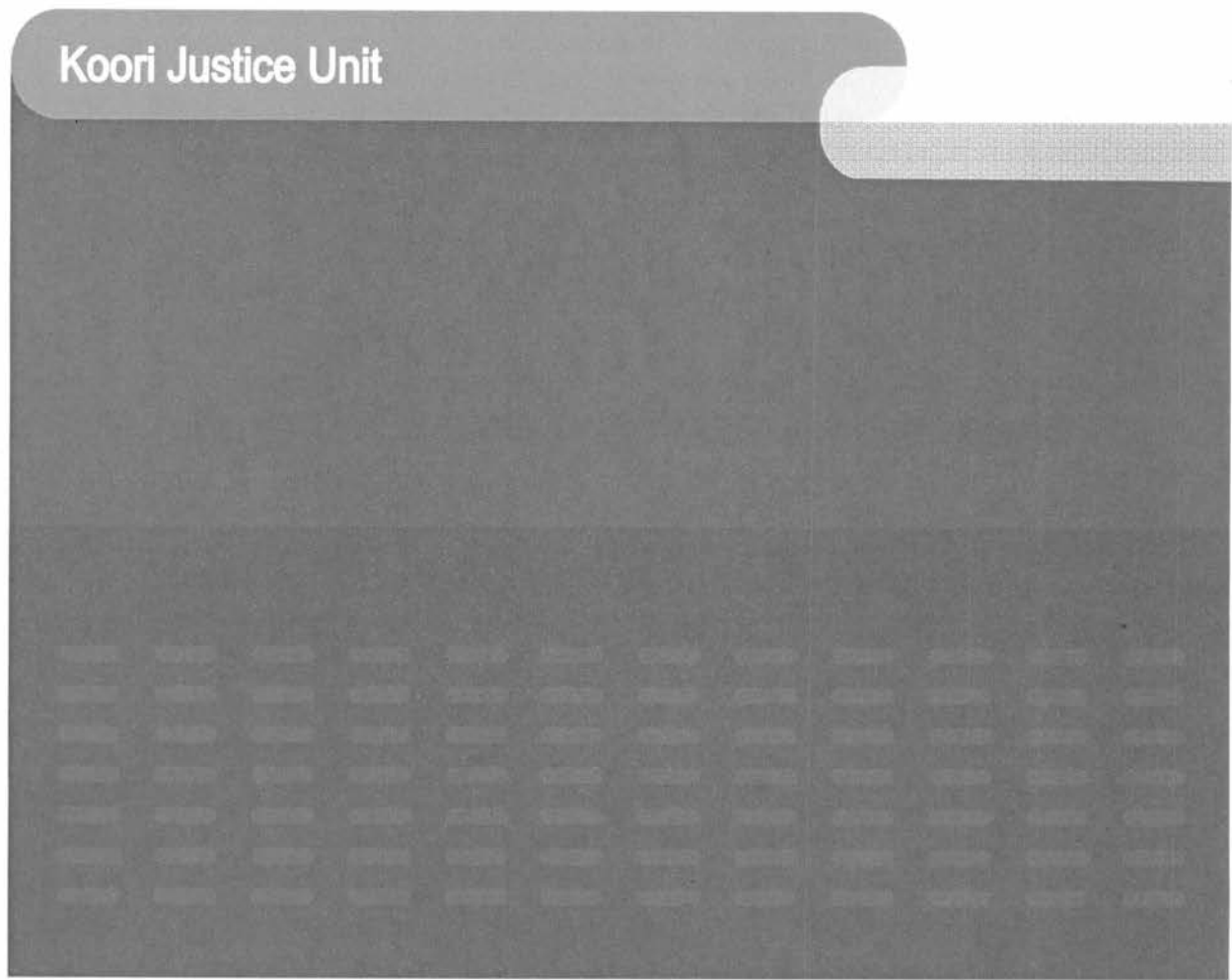
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Attachment JT-9

# Koori Women's Diversion Project

## Mildura Pilot Project Plan

**Koori Justice Unit**



TRIM ID: CD/15/257958  
Date: 5 May 2015  
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**Department of  
Justice & Regulation**

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# 1 Introduction

The Victorian Koori population is significantly over-represented in the Victorian criminal justice system. Furthermore, the Koori prisoner population is increasing at an alarming rate. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. While the overwhelming majority of prisoners are male (93 per cent),<sup>2</sup> on a per-capita basis, there are now more Koori women in prison than non-Koori men. Only Koori men are more over-represented in the Victorian prison system.

## 1.1 Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement

The Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement (AJA) is a formal agreement between the Victorian Government and the Koori community to work together to improve Koori justice outcomes. Each phase of the AJA builds on the one before it.

The AJA1 (2000 to 2006) laid the foundation for improved Koori justice outcomes in Victoria by developing robust partnerships and infrastructure, and putting in place a range of new Koori justice initiatives.

AJA2 (2006 to 2012) focused on preventing the progression of young Koories into the system, reducing re-offending, and changing the justice system to be more responsive and inclusive in its approach to Koories.

In 2013, the Victorian Government and the Koori community signed the third phase of the AJA (AJA3). A key focus area of AJA3 is to increase the rate at which justice agencies are successful in diverting Koori female offenders from further contact with the criminal justice system and strengthen community-based alternatives for Koori women offenders. An initiative of AJA3 commits the Koori community and government to work together to "implement initiatives that divert Koori women from prison, and reduce numbers on remand" (Initiative 2.3.2).

In 2012, an independent evaluation of AJA2 found there had been a lack of investment in prevention and diversion options for Koori women. Furthermore, the evaluation report stated that this gap presents a "key risk point in the system that could be strengthened to reduce over-representation."<sup>3</sup>

Given the gap in services identified in the evaluation of AJA2 and the focus of AJA3, creating cultural and gender appropriate responses and interventions for Koori women prisoners and offenders, including options to divert Koori women from contact with the Victorian criminal justice system, is a key priority area for both the Koori community and government.

## 1.2 The Koori Women's Diversion Project

The Koori Women's Diversion Project (KWDP) commenced in 2013 under the auspices of the Aboriginal Justice Forum with the support of Elders and Respected Persons of the Koori Court.

### 1.2.1 Purpose

The objectives of the KWDP are to:

- explore options to increase the rate Koori women are diverted from initial and deepening contact with the criminal justice system
- make recommendations for the most effective means to divert Koori women who are in contact, or at risk of contact with the criminal justice system into community-based alternatives

### 1.2.2 KWDP Governance

To guide the decision-making process, a Steering Committee was established comprising representatives from the Koori community, government and the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC). The KWDP Steering Committee is responsible for the project's overall strategic direction. As the project leadership body, it provides governance, advice, assesses progress, and uses its influence and authority to assist in achieving project outcomes.

<sup>2</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. *Prisoners in Australia catalogue number 4517.0*. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2014).

<sup>3</sup> Nous Group. *Evaluation of the Aboriginal Justice Agreement Phase 2 final report* (2012): 54



[REDACTED]

*Prior contact with the criminal justice system*

[REDACTED]

*Housing*

[REDACTED]

*Most Serious Offence*

[REDACTED]

## 2.1 Profile of Koori women

Recent research on Koori female prisoners<sup>11</sup> found:

- the majority (92.9%) of Koori female prisoners surveyed were classified as having current substance abuse problems
- major depressive episodes were the most frequent lifetime affective disorder for imprisoned Koori females (46.7%)
- post-traumatic stress disorder was the most frequent current anxiety disorder for females (46.2%)

These findings are consistent with other research conducted on Aboriginal women incarcerated in other Australian jurisdictions.<sup>12</sup>

In addition, Koori women in prison are on average younger, have more prior terms of imprisonment and receive shorter sentences compared to non-Koori women. Approximately 80 per cent of the Koori women in prison have children.<sup>13</sup> This separation from children presents significant challenges relating to the maintenance of relationships with children and family and is a source of trauma.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Ogloff, J., Patterson, J., Cutajar, M., Adams, K., Thomas, S., & Halacas, C. *Koori Prisoner Mental Health and Cognitive Function Study*. Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science, Monash University (2013)

<sup>12</sup> See Jones, J. and Wilson, M. *The social and cultural resilience and emotional well-being of Aboriginal mothers in prison*. National Drug Research Institute (2014).

<sup>13</sup> Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC). *Unfinished Business: Koori women and the justice system*, VEOHRC (2013)

<sup>14</sup> Wilson, M., Jones, J. and Gilles, M. The Aboriginal mothers in prison project: an example of how consultation can inform research practice. *Australian Aboriginal Studies*, 2 (2014): 28-39

## 2.2 Drivers of offending behaviour

It is well established in the research literature that there are certain factors that drive offending behaviour.<sup>15</sup> These include:

- homelessness and unstable housing
- drug and alcohol abuse/misuse
- mental illness
- family violence
- previous history of imprisonment
- disadvantage
- child abuse and neglect
- low levels of educational attainment
- unemployment
- disconnection from family, culture and community

Due to entrenched disadvantage, all of these factors are exacerbated for the Koori female offender population. Given the rapid increase and growth of Koori women in the prison system, the profile of the women and the drivers of offending behaviour, there is a need to develop service and diversion initiatives specifically for this population.

## 2.3 Where should intervention occur?

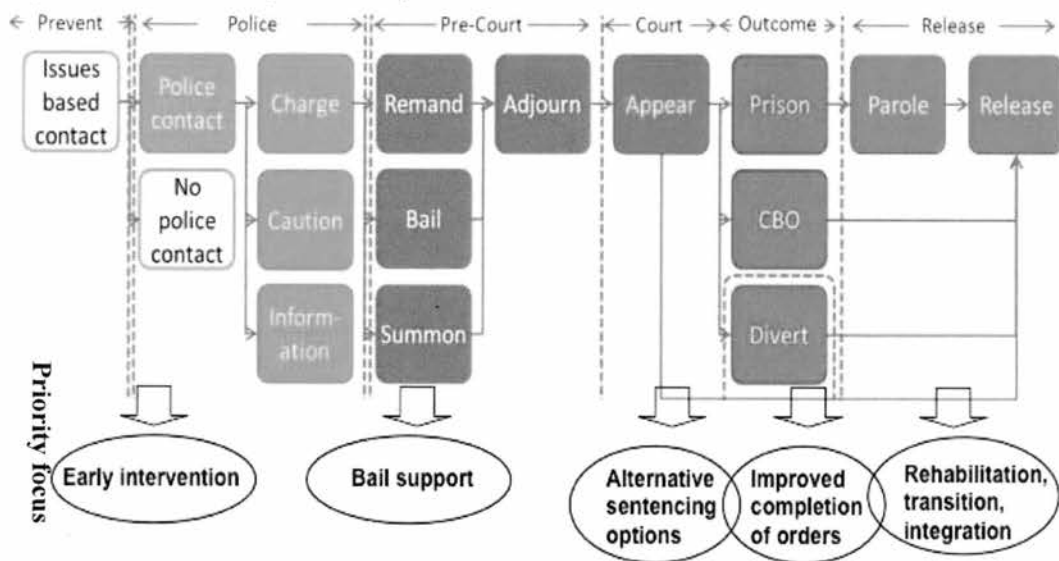
Figure 1 below identifies the points at which intervention can occur. The four main points at which diversion can occur are:

- pre-contact with the criminal justice system (prevention and early diversion programs that address the risk factors that drive offending behaviour such as drug and alcohol misuse, homelessness, family violence, mental health issues etc).
- pre-sentencing (once an offender has been charged and goes to court including bail support programs and court diversion programs)
- post-sentencing (including Community Corrections Orders and supported residential options)
- post-release (including transitional support post-release from prison and residential/housing options).

The types of intervention may vary depending on where intervention occurs along the justice continuum.

<sup>15</sup> See VEOHRC, *Unfinished Business: Koori women and the justice system*, VEOHRC (2013); Wetherburn, D. and Holmes, J. Rethinking Indigenous over-representation in prison. *Australian Journal of Social Issues* 45 (4). (2010).

Figure 1: *Intervention points and priorities for Koori women*



Interventions are required for Koori women at all stages of contact with the criminal justice system in order to reduce the potential for future and deepening contact with the justice system.

## 2.4 Where are the gaps?

The evaluation of AJA2 found that there had been a lack of investment in prevention and diversion options for Koori women.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, research conducted by the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC)<sup>17</sup> found that in Victoria appropriate diversion/intervention options have yet to be established for Koori women. The report also identified that many Koori women struggle to navigate the different services they need or are required to attend as a condition of their bail, community corrections or parole orders.

Mapping of the existing service system reveals that there is a lack of cultural and gender appropriate responses to address the needs of Koori women in contact with the criminal justice system including lack of diversion specific services targeted to Koori women.

In conversations with Magistrates, the KJU has received anecdotal feedback that Koori women are bailed multiple times, prior to being remanded in custody. It was also suggested that remand in custody often occurs due to a lack of appropriate residential services in the community to which Koori women can be referred and an increase in frequency of offending behaviour.

Given the lack of cultural and gender appropriate prevention and diversion services, and the escalating use of remand in prison for Koori women, more community-based alternatives are required.

## 2.5 What should intervention look like?

The 'what works' research literature on offender rehabilitation is clear that interventions for Aboriginal offenders and prisoners must be tailored to meet their cultural needs. There is agreement in the literature that including culturally specific program content, modifying program design and improving program delivery to address cultural needs can increase the effectiveness of offender treatment programs for Aboriginal people.<sup>18</sup>

In addition, a review of national offending behaviour programs found that interventions for Aboriginal women offenders should be tailored to meet their gender needs.<sup>19</sup> Aboriginal women offenders experience exacerbated high rates of trauma, mental health, substance abuse problems and family breakdown and are likely to have different needs, relating to their own victimisation and self-esteem.<sup>20 21</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Nous Group. Evaluation of the Aboriginal Justice Agreement Phase 2 final report (2012): 54

<sup>17</sup> VEOHRC, *Unfinished Business: Koori women and the justice system*, VEOHRC (2013).

<sup>18</sup> Macklin, A and Gilbert, R. *Working with Indigenous Offenders to end violence*. Indigenous Justice Clearinghouse (2011)

<sup>19</sup> Howells K, Heseltine K, Sarre R, Davey L, Day A. *Correctional offender rehabilitation programs: the national picture in Australia*. Forensic Psychology Research Group, Centre for Applied Psychological Research, University of South Australia (2004).

<sup>20</sup> Wilson, M, Jones, J and Gilles, M. The Aboriginal mothers in prison project: an example of how consultation can inform research practice. *Australian Aboriginal Studies*, 2 (2014): 28-39

<sup>21</sup> Heffernan, E, Andersen, Kt Kinner, S, Aboud, A Ober, C and Scotney, A. *The Family Business – improving the understanding and treatment of post traumatic stress disorder among incarcerated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women*. Beyond Blue (2015).



With this in mind, to positively influence outcomes for these women, interventions need to respond to the particular circumstances and the complexity of needs experienced by Aboriginal women.<sup>22</sup>

### 3 The proposal

The KWDP proposes to establish a pilot in a geographical location where data shows a high number of Koori women in contact with the criminal justice system. With limited funding available to establish residential diversion options for Koori women, the pilot will focus on approaches to divert Koori women from the front end of the criminal justice system (i.e. pre-prison).

#### 3.1 The pilot site

The pilot will be conducted in Mildura, in the Loddon Mallee region, which comprises part of the North Area of the DJR Regional Service Network.

Geographically, the Loddon Mallee region is the largest of the eight DJR operational regions. It has 10 Local Government Areas (LGA) including Greater Bendigo, Central Goldfields, Macedon Ranges, Mount Alexander and Loddon in the south of the region and Buloke, Campaspe, Gannawarra, Swan Hill and Mildura in the north. Victorian population estimates indicate that approximately 302,128 people reside in the Loddon Mallee Region. Estimates indicate that there are about 7,207 Koories in the region (comprising 2.3 per cent of the population), of which 2,291 reside in Mildura LGA.<sup>23</sup>

##### 3.1.1 What the data tells us

###### *Police contact*

[REDACTED]

###### *Community Correctional Services*

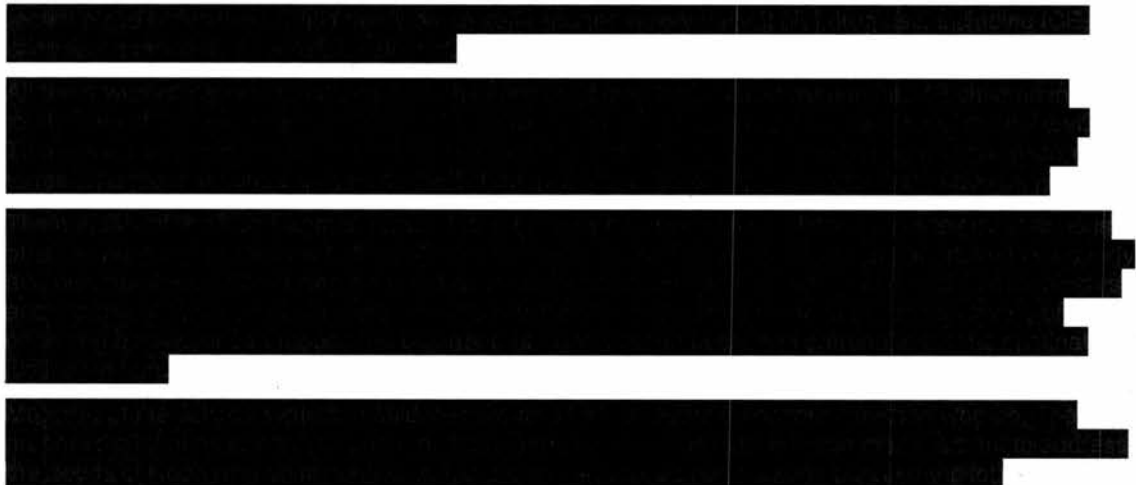
[REDACTED]

###### *Remand data*

[REDACTED]

<sup>22</sup> Heffernan, E, Andersen, K, Kinner, S, Aboud, A Ober, C and Scotney, A. *The Family Business – improving the understanding and treatment of post traumatic stress disorder among incarcerated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women*. Beyond Blue (2015).

<sup>23</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. *Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, June 2011 (2013)* <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/3238.0.55.001Main+Features1June%202011?OpenDocument>



## 3.2 Pilot specifications

### 3.2.1 Purpose

The purpose of the pilot is to:

- divert Koori women from deepening contact with the criminal justice system
- provide a referral pathway into programs and services to reduce Koori women's propensity for offending and reoffending
- support Koori women on court orders, bail, community corrections and parole orders to successfully complete their orders
- assist Koori women to navigate the justice and broader service system

### 3.2.2 Scope

The proposed model is a two-year pilot program targeted at Koori female offenders in contact with the criminal justice system in Mildura. The pilot will provide intensive case management and cultural and gender appropriate diversion options for up to 15 Koori women at any one time, for up to 12 months.

### 3.2.3 Delivery

The proposed pilot will be developed and delivered in partnership with Mallee District Aboriginal Services (MDAS), an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation. MDAS is an organisation that has provided support, services, information and advice to Koori people and their families for more than 30 years.

MDAS has been chosen as it already offers a range of programs and services (such as drug and alcohol, family support, mental health, healing and housing) to the Koori community in the area.

Through community grants, funding will be provided to MDAS to employ a case manager, to case manage and deliver integrated services and support for Koori women and build the capacity of MDAS to provide an intensive 'wrap around' service model (see Appendix 1 Guidelines for Practice for further details).

Referrals into the pilot will come from:

- Police - where an individual comes to notice and in the view of the police is at risk of offending (or further offending). This could mean evidence of significant intoxication, being homeless and/or a victim of violence, or when suspected of low level offending
- Courts - where charges have been laid and being released on bail with support is appropriate and/or when remand in custody is being considered
- Corrections Victoria - where an individual is on a community corrections order or is being released from prison with no support in place.

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data. Please exercise caution when interpreting this data. In addition, this data may not be representative of Koori women overall.

As Koori women come into contact with the criminal justice system in the local Mildura area, they may be referred into the pilot program to undertake programs and access services. The case manager will assess each referral and determine whether the applicant is suitable for the pilot program. The case manager will assist each woman to navigate the existing service system and work in collaboration with the justice system and broader service sector to get the best outcomes for each woman and her family. It is also expected that the case manager will engage other organisations where required to obtain relevant services and supports.

### 3.2.4 Adopting a place-based approach

The pilot will be underpinned by a place-based approach to design and implementation, informed by data and local intelligence relating to the needs of Koori women in contact with the criminal justice system in the Mildura area.

Place-based approaches are typically used where there are multiple/complex issues and a range of different agencies/strategies and possible solutions to those issues. Place-based approaches that are informed by local community knowledge are more likely to succeed as they incorporate critical insights into that community and can identify what strategies are likely to fail or succeed.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, research has found that place-based interventions with a social focus are more effective at reducing crime.<sup>28</sup>

Best practice research<sup>29</sup> has identified that successful place-based approaches share a common set of characteristics. Successful place-based approaches:

- are designed to meet the unique needs of the location/region
- engage stakeholders across all sectors in collaborative decision-making
- seize opportunities, particularly local skills and resources
- evolve and adapt to new learning and stakeholder interests
- encourage collaborative action by crossing organisational borders and interests
- pull together assets and knowledge through shared ownership
- attempt to change behaviour and norms in a location.

In addition, a set of guiding principles for place-based approaches have been identified in the research literature.<sup>30</sup> Successful place-based approaches:

- take time to develop
- require adequate resourcing
- develop relationships between stakeholders
- enable community participation, ownership and leadership
- build community capacity
- are strongly supported by government
- are tailored to different communities
- measure success and evaluate.

Consistent with the above guiding principles, the pilot will draw on local community knowledge and expertise, and work in partnership with the existing service system and government agencies. Such an approach has the potential to empower community and assist with building the capacity of the Koori community and its organisations to respond better to issues as they arise within the local community.

<sup>27</sup> Department of Health and Human Services. *Place-Based Approaches to Health and Wellbeing: Issues Paper*. Department of Health and Human Services Hobart, Tasmania (2012)

<sup>28</sup> Larsen, K. The health impacts of place-based interventions in areas of concentrated disadvantage: a review of the literature. Sydney South West Health Service (2007).

<sup>29</sup> See Department of Health and Human Services. *Place-Based Approaches to Health and Wellbeing: Issues Paper*. Department of Health and Human Services Hobart, Tasmania (2012). Government of Canada. *The Evaluation of Place-Based Approaches: Questions for Further Research*. Government of Canada, Ottawa (2011).

<sup>30</sup> Department of Health and Human Services. *Place-Based Approaches to Health and Wellbeing: Issues Paper*. Department of Health and Human Services Hobart, Tasmania (2012).

### 3.2.5 Intensive case management

The pilot will adopt integrated case management approach underpinned by the following principles:

- client centred - each woman is at the centre of the case management process, and is actively involved in developing her case plan and identifying the supports required
- family focussed - Explore the family needs and networks the client may want to address and recognise the strength and value of these connections, particularly in supporting culture.
- proactive - Prioritise acting in advance to ensure early identification of needs, risks and potential barriers, rather than a focus on reactive responses
- strengths based - Identifies and builds on client capacities including coping mechanisms, resilience and support systems
- logical - The process of case management is a step by step structured approach which is reasonable and considered
- partnership - Successful partnership benefits client through clarity of purpose, good leadership, respectful relationships, commitment to collaboration and participation, and a sensitive approach
- outcomes driven - The process is focussed on outcomes and achieving client goals through monitoring, reviewing and accountability
- culturally responsive - An inclusive approach that is respectful and relevant to the client and their cultural identity. Culture refers to a range of personal and community factors including race and/or ethnicity, geography, identity, age, ability, gender, sexuality, family, spiritual beliefs, language, history and economic status
- holistic - The process takes into account all factors relating to a client's wellbeing including, but not limited to, health and wellbeing, cultural and social factors.
- dynamic - Revision of goals and outcomes are undertaken throughout the process of case management allowing responsiveness to the individual's changing circumstances and progression through case plan objectives

Consistent with the above guiding principles relating to integrated case management, each Koori woman participating in the pilot will be at the centre of the case management process, and will be supported to be actively involved in developing her case plan and identifying the service responses required. The case management process will actively work with each Koori woman and where appropriate her family, to identify her experiences, circumstances, needs and goals related to her contact with the criminal justice system. This includes developing an understanding of the context of her family and community.

The case plan will also identify interventions, strategies and support aimed at reducing each woman's contact with the criminal justice system. It is expected the tailored case plan will identify, prioritise and address needs in relation to the social drivers of offending behaviour for each Koori woman, included but not limited to:

- homelessness and unstable housing
- drug and alcohol abuse/misuse
- mental illness
- family violence
- child abuse and neglect
- low levels of educational attainment
- unemployment
- lack of income security
- disconnection from family, culture and community

### 3.2.6 Anticipated outcomes

#### Core outcomes - individual level

It is anticipated the following core outcomes will be realised for each Koori woman participating in the pilot project:

- reduced incidences of offending and re-offending
- increased CCO/bail/parole completion rates
- reduced likelihood of future contact with the criminal justice system

In addition, it is anticipated the pilot will demonstrate outcomes as identified and prioritised in each Koori woman's case plan. These outcomes may relate to:

- increased motivation to seek assistance
- increased knowledge of the service system and where to go to seek assistance
- stabilisation of housing/living arrangements
- reduced drug and alcohol use/misuse
- healing to address trauma
- improved independent living skills and financial management
- engagement with education, training and job-seeking
- improved mental and physical health outcomes
- improved connection with family, culture and community
- improved relationships with children, family and community
- improved parenting skills

#### Core outcomes – service system level

It is also anticipated that the pilot project will deliver the following core outcomes in relation to the health, community and justice service system in Mildura:

- increased diversion options and rates for Koori women in Mildura
- reduced rate of Koori women's reoffending
- increased understanding of the complexity of support needs, including of the social drivers of offending behaviour, of Koori women in contact with the criminal justice system
- improved capacity to provide cultural and gender appropriate responses to Koori women in contact with the criminal justice system
- improved capacity to provide tailored interventions using a case management approach
- improved partnerships, collaboration and information sharing arrangements

### 3.2.7 Participation

Koori women offenders in contact with the criminal justice system would be offered the opportunity to take part in the pilot as opposed to being mandated to take part. Where possible their families will also have the option of being involved.

### 3.2.8 Governance

A Local Governance Working Group (LGWG) has been established to assist in the development, implementation and management of the pilot project. The LGWG reports to the Koori Women's Diversion Project Steering Committee. The knowledge and expertise of the LGWG members will assist in targeting and identifying issues as they apply to Koori women, the justice system and the local area.

Table 1: Local Governance Working Group

Representative	Organisation	Title	Role
Aunty Jemmes Handy	RAJAC	RAJAC chairperson	Chair
Paula Murray	DJR	RAJAC Executive Officer	Member
Rudi Kirby	MDAS	CEO, MDAS	Member

Representative	Organisation	Title	Role
Case Manager	MDAS	Koori women's diversion case manager	Member
Selina Pusat	Court Service's Victoria	Registrar Mildura Law Court	Member
Inspector Simon Clemence	Victoria Police	Victoria Police Mildura Region	
Glenis Beaumont	DHHS	Director Mallee Area	Member
Gary Weir	Department of Education and Training	Senior Advisor, Regional Performance and Planning	Member
Kim Avers / Andrew Arden	FVPLS / VALS Mildura office	Lawyer / Client Service Officer	Member
Simone Gristwood	Koori Justice Unit	Senior Project Officer, Koori Women's Diversion Project	Secretariat

### 3.2.9 Monitoring and reporting


For monitoring and evaluation purposes, a range of quantitative and qualitative data will be collected during the project. For monitoring purposes, reporting will occur monthly via the LGWG. The monitoring and evaluation team will then collate the data into quarterly reports. This data will be used to inform ongoing monitoring of the pilot, as well as the evaluation of the pilot.

Whilst a full data set will be determined in consultation with MDAS, the LGWG and the evaluation team, it is anticipated that data will include, but not be limited to:

- unique justice identification numbers (e.g. JAID/CRN)
- demographic information for each participant
- baseline information regarding previous contact with the criminal justice system
- primary drivers of offending behaviour and other risk and vulnerability factors (i.e. family violence, housing status, health issues, parental status etc.)
- types of services and supports identified in case plans
- numbers of referrals, participants and case closures
- outcomes of intake and referral processes
- progress and outcomes of case management plans
- emerging issues, including strategies to mitigate and manage risks

MDAS will also be required to produce three qualitative case studies, which will identify and discuss some of the barriers, problems and solutions related to the pilot.

### 3.2.10 Budget

 The funding will be used to employ a case manager, cover administration costs and provide brokerage funds for additional services and programs to support Koori women with complex needs.

## 4 Evaluation

A full evaluation plan will be developed in consultation with MDAS and the LGWG prior to the commencement of the pilot. It is anticipated the evaluation will focus on:

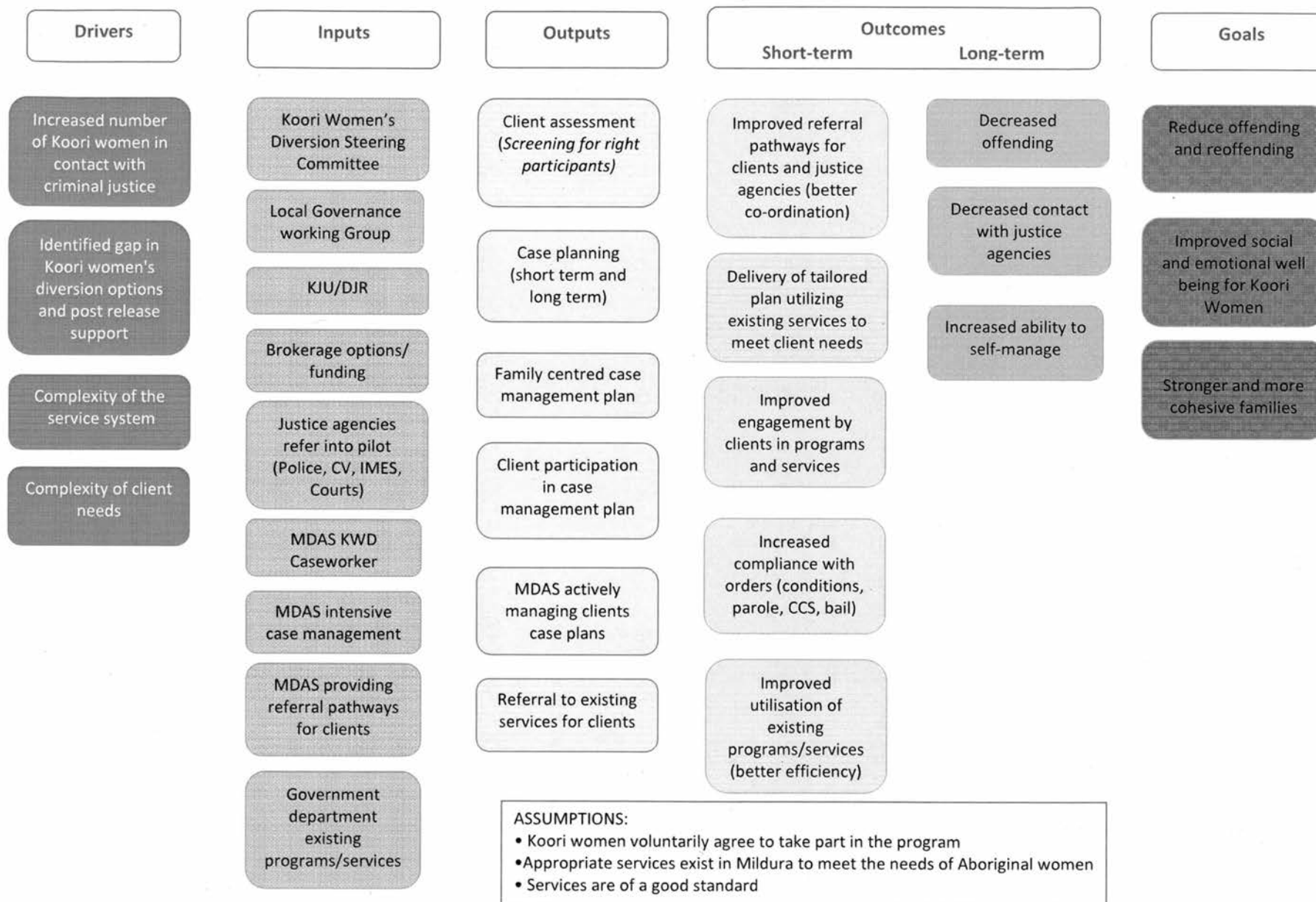
- 1) the effectiveness of key processes applied by the pilot, including implementation of a place based approach, cultural and gender appropriate responses, and individually focused integrated case management

- 2) the achievement of core individual and service level outcomes anticipated by the pilot (see section 3.2.6)
- 3) any changes in service system processes or practice
- 4) barriers / lessons learned for future implementation

An interim evaluation will commence at the midway point of the project (12 months, August 2016 TBC) to identify whether the pilot is achieving its aims and objectives and to determine whether any modifications are required.

The program logic (figure 2 below) sets out the pilot's activities, inputs, outputs, and the expected outcomes. This will guide the evaluation process.

Figure 2: Draft Program Logic Koori Women's Diversion - Mildura Pilot





## 5 Document information

### Document details

Criteria	Details
TRIM ID:	CD/15/257958
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### Document approval

This document requires the following approval:

Name	Title	Organisation
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### Audience

The audience for this document is MDAS, KJU and Regional DJR staff and KWDP Local Working Group members.

### Reference material

Acronyms	Description
AJA	Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement
AJA1	Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement Phase 1
AJA2	Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement Phase 2
AJA3	Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement Phase 3
DJR	Department of Justice & Regulation
KWDP	Koori Women's Diversion Project

Terms	Description
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## Appendix 1 Guidelines for Practice

### Engagement and Assessment

The pilot will provide a single point of contact for police, courts and corrections (see figure 3 below for delivery model). When contact is made the caseworker will:

- Meet with the woman and gain an early view of the circumstances leading to her engagement with the system, undertake an assessment of the immediate issues of concern and offer the support of the pilot
- Provide the police/court/corrections with advice as to what the service can offer the woman concerned and outline what this means in the short term
- Develop a short-term and long-term plans including details of accommodation, level of support to be provided and specialist interventions such as alcohol and drug treatment, and/or mental health
- Meet with family members and assess the level of support available within the family system where appropriate to do so
- Within 5 working days, convene case planning meeting with key professionals involved and where possible meet with representatives of the family to establish a plan with the full participation and agreement of the woman concerned.

### The nature of interventions

The pilot acknowledges that the level of personal engagement with the women referred into the program will be the foundation of success. It will be critical to build rapport and trust with each woman and offer tangible support such as accommodation, support for children, and assistance in negotiating with the justice system and DHHS (if necessary). This means keeping the initial engagement to one or two staff members who will work closely and intensively with each participant with a view to creating an 'alliance' that becomes the basis for a more comprehensive set of interventions in the future. Once engaged each participant will have a range of interventions available according to need and a 'wrap around' service purpose built for the individual and her needs.

## Building Blocks of the Service

### Family Intervention

Working with the family of each participant will be critical. The extended family may also contain key members who can play a supportive role and be called upon to take some responsibilities within a broader case plan. The intention of the Service should be to engage closely with the family system and look for ways in which they can be engaged in long term support. Where there is the presence of internal conflict or interpersonal difficulties within families that prevent support being available the Service will engage with community leaders to see what assistance they can provide.

The framework of Family Group Conferencing or Family Decision Making may be a helpful technique for the Service to develop.

### Family Responsibilities

Where participants are also parents and where Child Protection has become involved the Service will assist each person in being able to provide for the care and safety of their children and work closely with DHS in maintaining and or re-building family relationships. The Service will provide or engage professionals with expertise in family work, parenting and child development to build the capacity of each participant who is also a parent in order to be re-united with the children if they have been removed by the State. If the children are still in the care of the participant a package of family support will be provided

### Cultural Connection

Koori women in contact with the criminal justice system experience disconnection from family, culture and community. A strong connection to culture is a protective factor and helps build resilience. Providing services that are culturally safe and gender appropriate, have the ability to connect or re-connect women to their culture, community, and strengthen cultural identity. This could occur by linking Koori women to existing MDAS services such as the family services, KOSMP, art program and women's yarning circles or by providing new services.

## Accommodation

Safe and supportive accommodation is likely to be a critical factor in providing an initial response. Provision of safety and changing the living circumstances (at least in the short term) of each participant will provide a basis for the service to better understand the issues they face and provide 'time out' particularly where alcohol and drugs and violence have been a factor. The issue of withdrawal from alcohol and drugs where required will need to be addressed the capacity for the service to provide a 'home based withdrawal' option may need to be considered, depending on the availability of appropriate support and supervision.

Different models of supported accommodation will need to be considered including the 'leading tenant' model and a version of the family group home model as well as independent accommodation.

## Alcohol and Drugs and Mental Health

Anecdotal evidence suggests the high prevalence of alcohol and drug problems and/or mental health concerns among women coming into contact with the criminal justice system. Each participant will need to undertake an assessment and be linked to appropriate clinical care as part of the wrap around support provided by the pilot.

## Education, Training and Employment

In addition to the immediate concerns/interventions already mentioned, access to a training and employment pathway will also be an important feature of long term success. We know that generally the level of educational attainment and the employment rate for Koori women is low. And while they may have had family responsibilities that impact on access to training and employment we know the importance of creating opportunities for further education and a pathway to employment.

It may be necessary to provide access to pre-vocational training as a way of building employment aspirations for participants in acknowledgment that many will have had negative experiences of education and may not have an employment history.

Figure 3: Service Delivery Model

