



Department of Corrective Services
Government of Western Australia

JUVENILE OFFENDER Community Work PROJECTS



REPAY WA

Partnerships that work



Juvenile offender community work projects

Young offenders repaying the community

Offender community work projects have contributed to the Western Australian community since 1977.

Juvenile offenders help repay WA for offences they have committed, and in the process, develop new skills to help them adopt law-abiding lifestyles.

A range of strategies has significantly reduced the number of juvenile offenders appearing before the courts, with about 60% of offenders having no further contact with the justice system within two years. Community work is one of those strategies.

Young offenders have great potential to mature and change, and community work provides them with opportunities for rehabilitation, personal growth, education and skills development. It can assist young offenders to successfully integrate into the community and improve their lifestyles.



At any one time, about 1800 community work projects are underway in WA. This includes work by both adult and juvenile offenders.

The Department of Corrective Services is continually looking to expand the Repay WA program and develop new partnerships with community organisations. There is a particular need for opportunities to place individual juvenile offenders in one-to-one work situations, where they will benefit from being part of a typical work environment and have the opportunity to experience and develop positive work and life skills to get back on track.

This brochure provides further information on community work projects and how your organisation can become involved.

The facts

- Community work can help provide valuable labour for under-resourced community organisations.
- The program frees up community resources and enables completion of many worthwhile projects that otherwise wouldn't get done.
- About 650 juvenile offenders are subject to community work orders on any given day.
- The average cost of keeping a juvenile offender in custody is about 10 times the cost of supervising them on projects in the community.

Who can host a community work project?

Any community organisation, ranging from churches and aged-care facilities to sporting groups and not-for-profit organisations, may be eligible to host a community work project.

Partnering organisations will be required to provide all materials, equipment and tools needed to undertake the work. They also need to provide someone with a police clearance to act as a supervisor for the young offender while they undertake the work.

What are the aims of community work projects?

There are four main objectives to having young offenders engage in community work. These are to:

- provide offenders with meaningful work that is socially useful and allows them to fulfil their sentence obligations to the court and community.
- enhance their work and social skills and demonstrate alternatives to offending.
- offers an alternative to imprisonment for young offenders and keeps them away from more serious criminal influences.
- increase community benefits through lower costs of imprisonment and more community work.

Who is eligible for community work?

- Young offenders who have been sentenced to between 10 and 100 hours of community work are eligible to take part in community work projects.
- Male or female offenders aged between 12 and 18 years. Offenders of compulsory school age need to do their community work after school and on weekends.



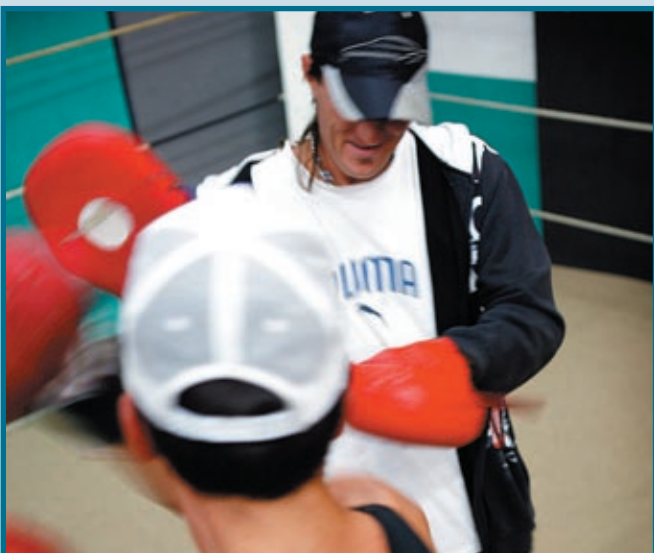
What type of work is suitable?

Offenders who undertake community work orders come from a range of backgrounds and skill levels. Because of this, the type of work they can do varies in scope and complexity.

Activities can include gardening, tree planting, painting, grounds maintenance, cleaning, recycling projects, clothes sorting, kitchen duties, and basic administration.

Juvenile offenders cannot work on the same project as adult offenders and projects can not last for longer than three months. This is because an offender must complete his/her hours within three months, and another offender could take his/her place within that time. Work can be done on a regular or project basis.

The work undertaken by offenders must not be work that would normally be done by paid employees under a commercial arrangement, and the community organisation cannot make any direct financial gain as a result of the work.



Projects undertaken

Bunbury Car Club



This South-West speedway group has developed a successful and ongoing partnership with the Department, with many juveniles – both male and female – having worked there.

A variety of jobs have been allocated, with the club aiming to match roles to the individual. They include cleaning, mowing, gardening, maintenance of grounds and fences, painting over graffiti and helping with mechanical work. The focus is on encouraging the young offender and giving them a direction, rather than undertaking a mundane job.

The work is done on weekends, making it a perfect fit with offenders' schooling.

Albany Police and Citizens Youth Club (PCYC)



The Albany PCYC has been providing community work for both male and female offenders for many years.

The club seeks to provide a mentoring role for young offenders to address their behaviour while also showing them there are consequences for that behaviour.

The work provided often combines jobs, such as cleaning, with restocking supplies and participating in some club activities.



Albany Community Food Centre

Community food centres provide food at cost to people on low and fixed incomes. The Albany centre, known as Fair Foods, is run and staffed by volunteers.

Fair Foods has been providing community work for adult offenders for a number of years and, in 2005, placed its first juvenile offender. The work covers a wide range of experience in the retail trade, including filling shelves and pricing stock.



Fremantle Police and Citizens Youth Club (PCYC)

The Fremantle PCYC has been a major supporter of the juvenile offender community work program since 2003, with about 50 offenders having worked at the club over two years.

They do a variety of jobs such as cleaning vehicles, painting and maintenance, administration, shopping, restocking and counting money under supervision. They are given jobs that require them to take on responsibility and results have been impressive.

The club tracks the progress of offenders after they complete their community work, and in the 12 months to March 2005, 91% had not re-offended.

Several young offenders have also gone on to success in the community:

- two went on to train at the WA Circus School and were picked to compete in the National Indigenous Circus Festival in Queensland
- a young graffiti artist was given a chance to paint a mural at PCYC and has now given up illegal 'tagging' in favour of conventional art
- an offender who was often in trouble for fighting has learned to channel his aggression into the sport of boxing.

What our partners say:



Phil Rose, Bunbury Car Club

"Both parties benefit from these placements. The club gets much-needed extra hands to get work done and the kids get to see there are alternative activities to getting into trouble."

"We've generally seen a lot of success with the placements we have had. Some have remained involved with the club after completing their hours and the parents of two juveniles joined the club."



Senior Constable Terry Eaton, Albany PCYC

"The club has been taking placements for many years and I believe the program is very successful. If you can turn some people around it's a huge win for the community."



Joy Sampson, Manager of Albany Community Food Centre

"Community service placements have worked well for us over the years. We distribute goods valued at \$7000 to \$8000 per week, so there is always plenty of work to be done. We are lucky in that we have a loyal band of volunteers, but the extra hands definitely help."

"It also gives the offenders a good grounding in supermarket work, which can help them get a job. They have to interact with lots of different people, which is also good for them."



Senior Constable Ian Abercromby, Fremantle PCYC

"I believe the program is worthwhile. From our figures, it seems that the juvenile offenders who worked at Fremantle PCYC have not re-offended. We have had several go on to generate positive news coverage for themselves and the club."

Health and safety

The Department and the community organisation have a duty of care to ensure that offenders only work in areas that are healthy, safe and adhere to the relevant legislation.

It is the responsibility of the community organisation to ensure offenders receive adequate training and supervision when performing work tasks and are not exposed to unnecessary risks or hazards.

The community organisation is responsible for property insurance and other liability safeguards.

Gender issues must also be considered when individuals are taken on to work with your staff. Ask the Department's Community Work Support Unit for more information about this safety standard.



Materials, equipment and tools

The Department provides only the labour required to undertake work projects. Community organisations are responsible for providing all materials, equipment and tools required to undertake the work.

Benefits for community groups and offenders

The benefits community work projects provide to offenders are significant. They allow offenders to:

- make a contribution to local communities as part of their rehabilitation (this is a key component of the Government's commitment to community safety and security)
- develop valuable new skills while repaying society for their offences
- enhance their self-esteem, develop positive work values and a greater sense of responsibility
- embrace a constructive alternative to imprisonment while boosting valuable opportunities for training.

In return, the program provides valuable labour resources for often under-resourced community organisations and enables completion of many worthwhile projects that otherwise wouldn't get done.



Expressions of interest

The Department of Corrective Services welcomes expressions of interest from local community organisations interested in hosting a community work project for juveniles.

Community work projects consist of individuals or teams of offenders assigned to community organisations to undertake meaningful community work. Work takes place daily for agreed periods of time that need to be monitored and reported on by the supervising authority.

A community work project is a partnership between the Department and the local community organisation. The arrangement carries certain responsibilities and obligations as well as many benefits for the individual community organisation, broader community, the justice system and offenders.



Applications

For more information or to nominate your organisation to host a community work project for juvenile offenders, contact the Community Work Support Unit in Belmont or a Community Orders officer at your local Community Justice Services office.

Further information:

- Phone: Community Work Support Unit, Belmont, on 9334 6043 or 9334 6042
- Email: communitywork@correctiveservices.wa.gov.au
- Website: www.correctiveservices.wa.gov.au
> Juveniles in the Community > Sentencing Options
> Intensive Youth Supervision Order – Without Detention
- Visit: Your local Community Justice Services office listed in the White Pages under Department of Corrective Services, Community Orders and Parole Supervision, or phone 9264 1372.



