



We build strong **PEOPLE**  
strong **FAMILIES** strong **COMMUNITIES**

The **Bridge Project**

# The Bridge Project

**Reducing recidivism in young offenders**

## **Power of Cross Sector Partnerships**



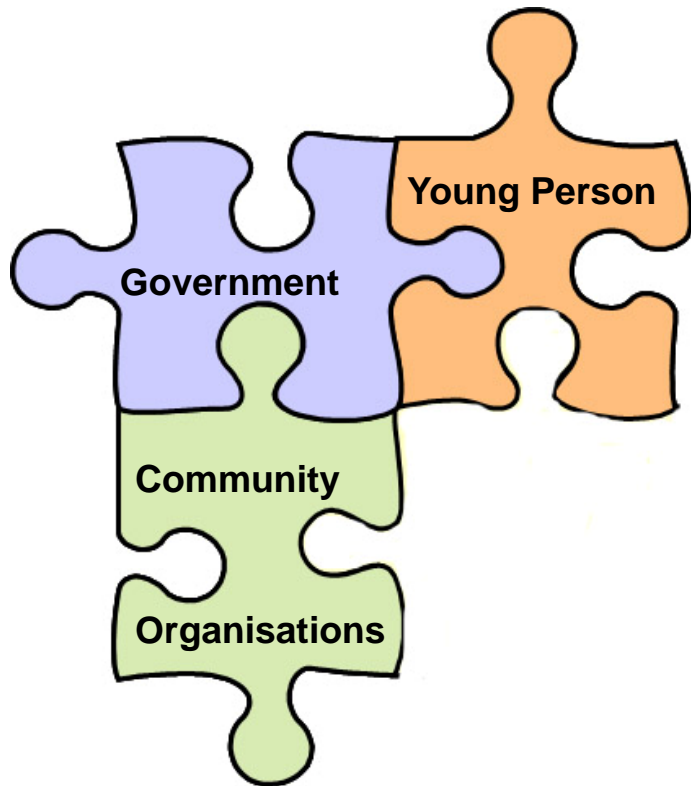
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The **Bridge Project**

## YMCA & Youth Justice – an unique opportunity



- For 15 years the Y has been the only non-statutory agency to have contact with **every** young person in custody across Victoria on a daily basis.



## Reintegration Puzzle

In Victoria - Current  
juvenile re-offending  
rate over 60%

What was the missing piece  
of the puzzle in traditional  
transition programs?



## What is The Bridge Project?



- Community lead initiative supported by the YMCA
- Supporting young offenders to engage in education, certified training and employment



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## The **Bridge Project**

# Community supporting rehabilitation

*“It takes a whole village to raise a child”*



- The Bridge Project driven by a group of community volunteers
- Over 50 engaged employers and businesses provide training & employment

## Important to manage multiple needs of cross sector partnerships

### Government

- Sustainable outcomes
- Accountability
- “risk factors”
- Legal responsibility

### Young Person

- Multiple disadvantage
- Lack of opportunities
- Lack of support
- Disclosure of criminal record
- Desire to make change

## THE BRIDGE PROJECT

- Community Initiative
- Support & Guidance
- Education/Training
- Advocacy
- Acknowledge all needs
- Sustainability

### Community Organisation

- Identifies community needs
- Lack of resources and funding
- Innovative
- Open doors

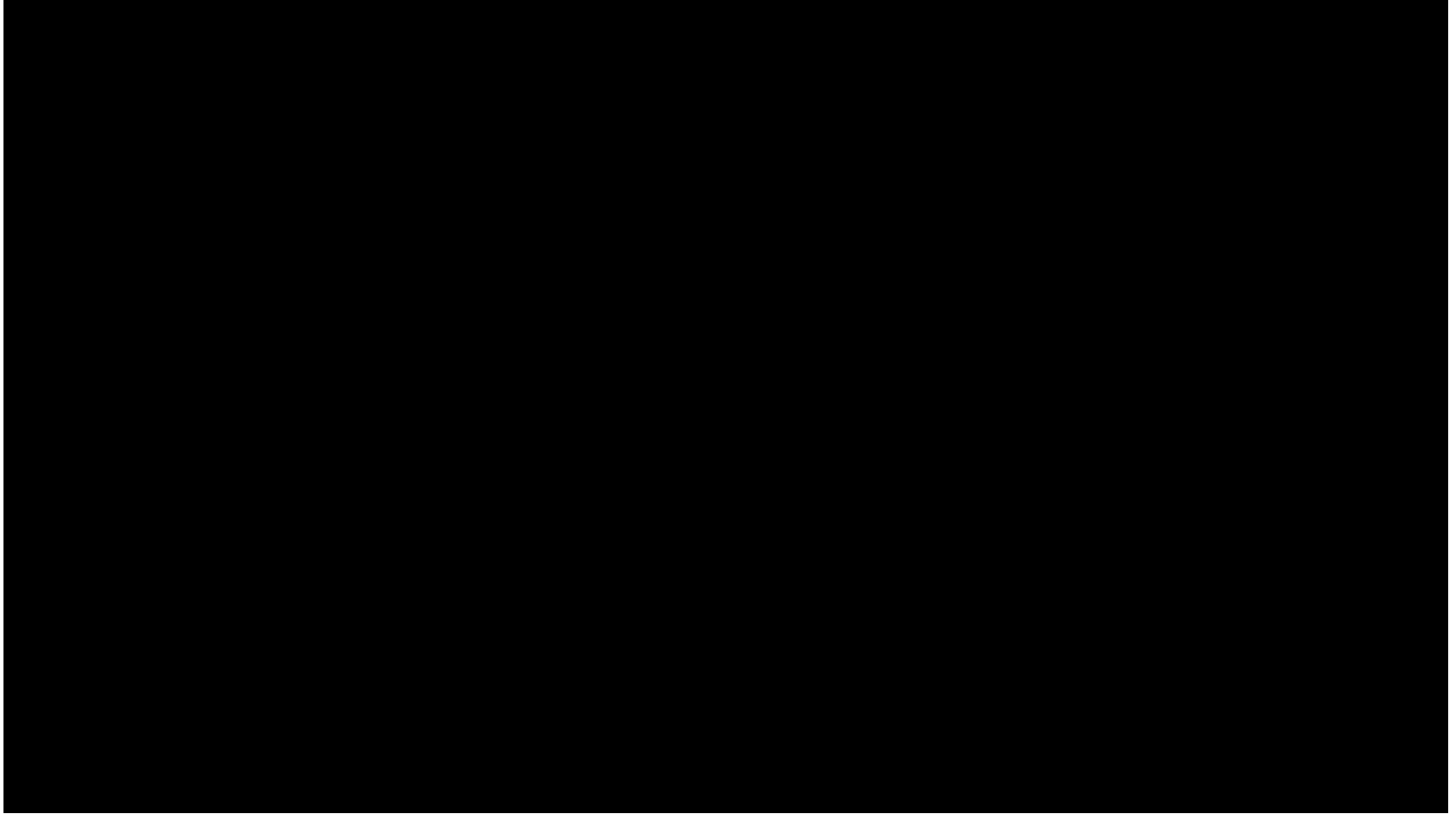
### Employer

- Skills shortage
- Labour shortage
- Need to be good corporate citizens
- Nervousness to take a chance



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# The **Bridge** Project



## The importance of work opportunities

- Having a job is crucial for the **economic and social success** of a young person's return to society.
- Regular employment develops **professional skills**, a **sense of worth** and **responsibility**.
- Work place mentors, provide **support**, **community connection** and **opportunity for skill acquisition**



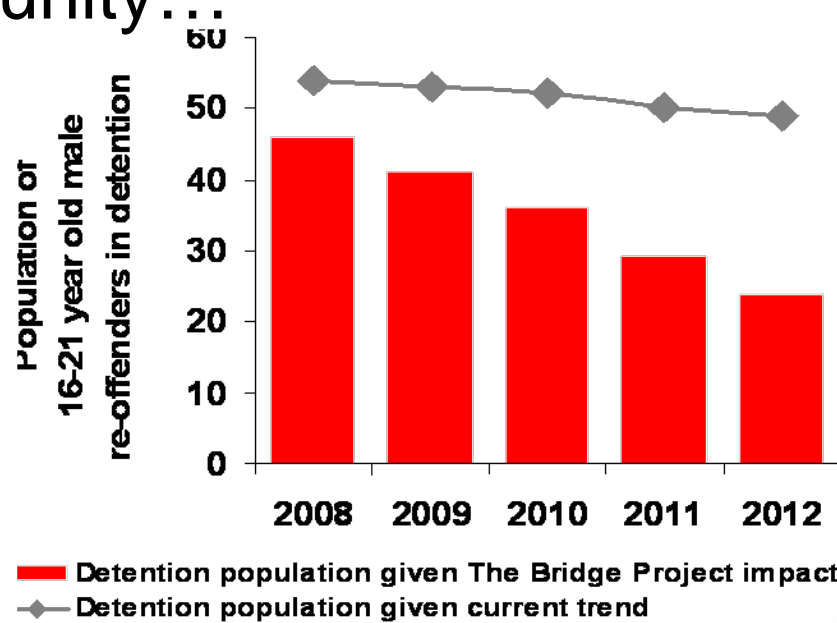
***"I have no trouble recommending the Bridge Project to any employer looking for keen young workers." – Paul Myers – Doncaster BMW***



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# The **Bridge Project**

By working with young offenders throughout their return to the community.



We can **reduce** their chance of re-offending from 60% to <25%

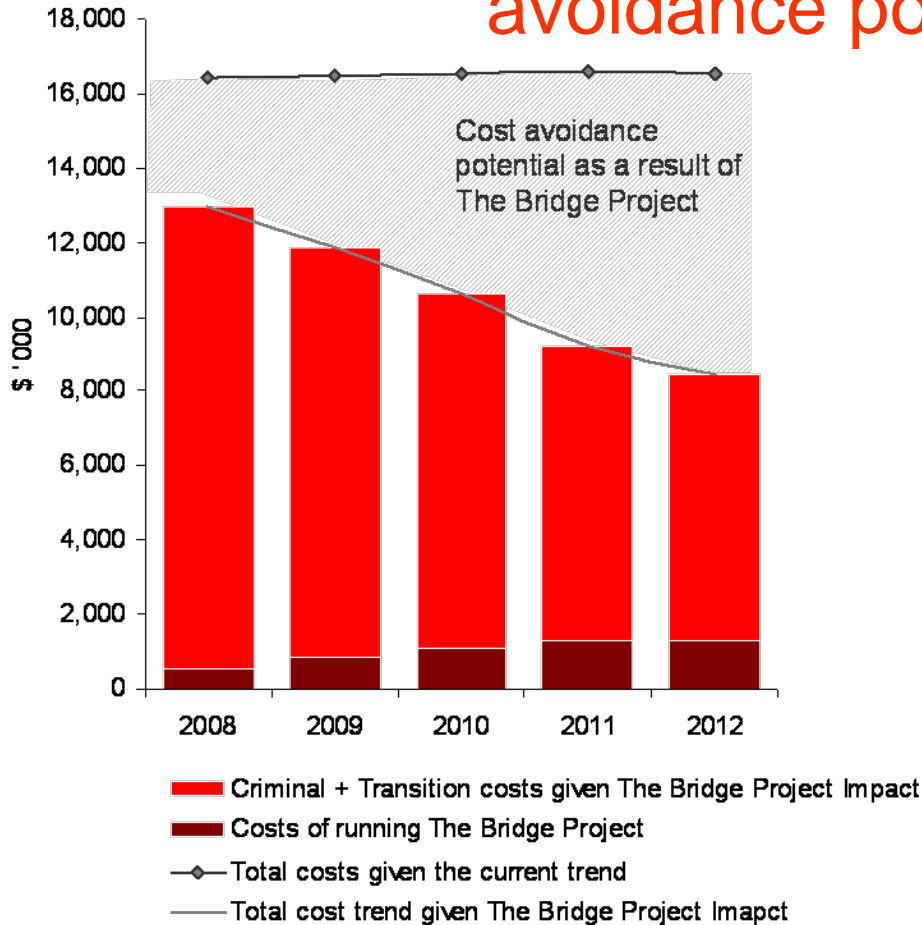




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# The **Bridge Project**

... and the impact created in terms of cost avoidance potential....



\$29.4 million  
over 5 years

\$8 million  
annually thereafter

That is an ROI of  
**588%**



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## The **Bridge** Project

### **Proof of Concept**

- *Reduced Recidivism - Safer communities*
- *Strong partnerships.*
- *Supportive work environments*
- *Sustainable Employment Opportunities*
- *Education & Training Opportunities*

# Success Factors

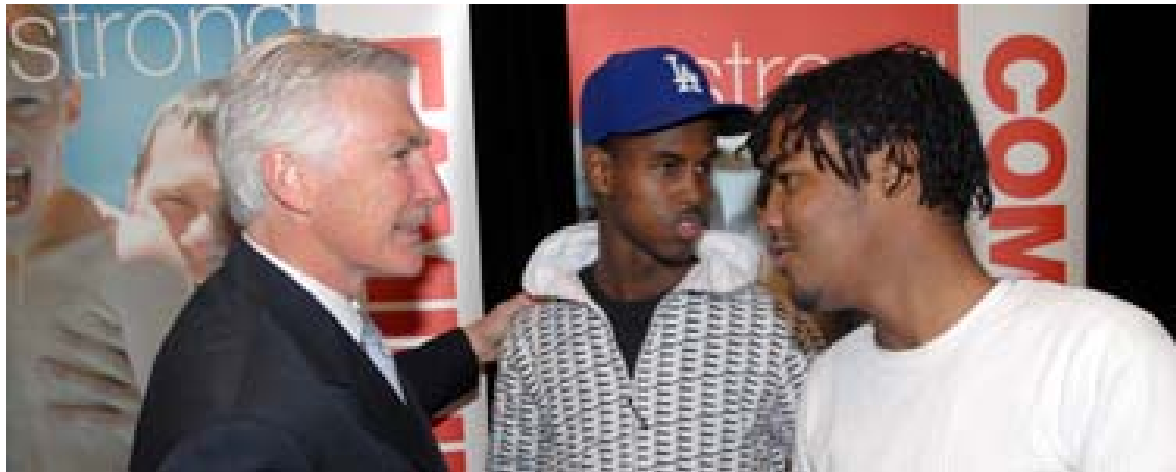
## Increased Opportunities for Young Offenders

- Strong Relationships
- Community Involvement in Youth Justice
- Quality and consultative cross sector partnerships
- Empathetic Employers

## Best Practise Transition Program

- Consultation & Feedback from all stakeholders
- Ongoing Evaluation & Audit
- Ongoing support

## Cross Sector partnerships – solving the reintegration puzzle



***" ..its the effort to give a chance, you don't know what will come out of it – but if you change the lives of one of these kids to the affirmative – how fantastic do you feel?" - Mick Malthouse***