



Anglicare[®]
Victoria

FAMILY FUNCTIONAL THERAPY (FFT)

Delivering better outcomes
for Youth Justice

2020

 FUNCTIONAL
FAMILY THERAPY



WHAT IS FFT-YJ?

AV's Functional Family Therapy – Youth Justice (FFT-YJ) program works with young people in the Youth Justice system and their families to prevent re-offending.

Qualified staff work with young people aged 10-18 and their families, building on their strengths to deliver better tomorrows. Together.

AV's program is the only FFT trial in Australia that specifically targets youth justice and was made possible by \$3.2 million in funding from the Victorian Government.



57 young people and families were supported in our (FFT-YJ) program in 2019-2020

FFT: A PROVEN SOLUTION

A strong evidence base,
established over 30 years

Effective over a range of
domains and settings

Recognised worldwide
rated 'Model Plus' by
Blueprints for Healthy
Youth Development

Rigorous fidelity regime
for assured quality in
service delivery

Globally, over 1,600 practitioners from
over 330 organisations provide FFT to
50,000 families each year.

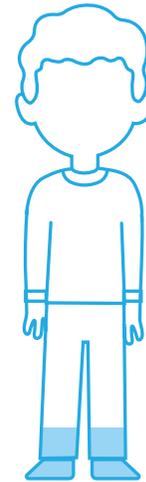
DELIVERING MEASURABLE OUTCOMES



Re-offending

60% lower recidivism rate than alternative programs ¹

Significantly better outcomes compared to probation ²



Drug use

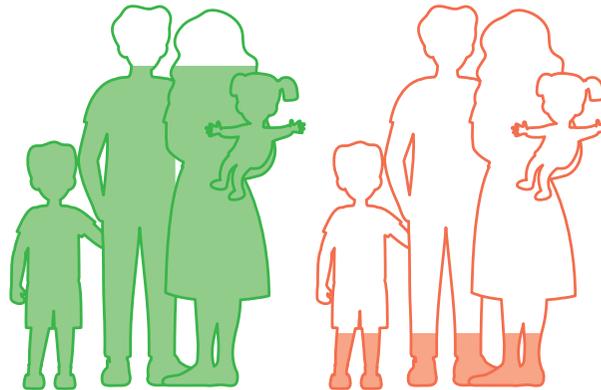
Lower rate of reconvictions for drug offenders ⁴

11% of gang-involved youth recharged with drug offences, versus 22% of control group ⁵

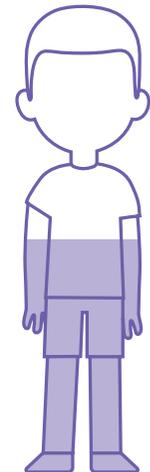
Family functioning

Reducing offending in younger siblings ³

Significant improvements in family functioning – **82%** versus **14%** at two-year follow up ⁷



50% reduction in substance use compared to alternative treatments ⁶



1. Barton et al., 2007, Generalizing treatment effects of Functional Family Therapy: three replications, *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 13(3):16-26.
2. Sexton and Turner, 2010, The effectiveness of functional family therapy for youth with behavioral problems in a community practice setting, *Journal of Family Psychology*, 24(3), 339-348.
3. Klein NC, Alexander JF, Parsons BV. Impact of family systems intervention on recidivism and sibling delinquency: A model of primary prevention and program evaluation. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*. 1977;45(3):469-474. [PubMed] [Google Scholar]
4. Celinska et al., 2018, An outcome evaluation of Functional Family Therapy for court-involved youth, *Journal of Family Therapy*.
5. Gottfredson et al., 2018, Scaling-Up Evidence-Based Programs Using a Public Funding Stream: a Randomized Trial of Functional Family Therapy for Court-Involved Youth, Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/30056615>
6. Waldron et al (2008). Cost-effectiveness analysis of four interventions for adolescents with a substance use disorder. *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment* 34, 272-281.
7. Hansson, K et al., 2004, Functional Family Therapy: A method for treating juvenile delinquents. *Socialvetenskaplig tidskrift*, 3, 231-243.

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Health and wellbeing

38.1% clinical recovery rate in adolescent behavioural problems, mental health risk and family functioning⁸

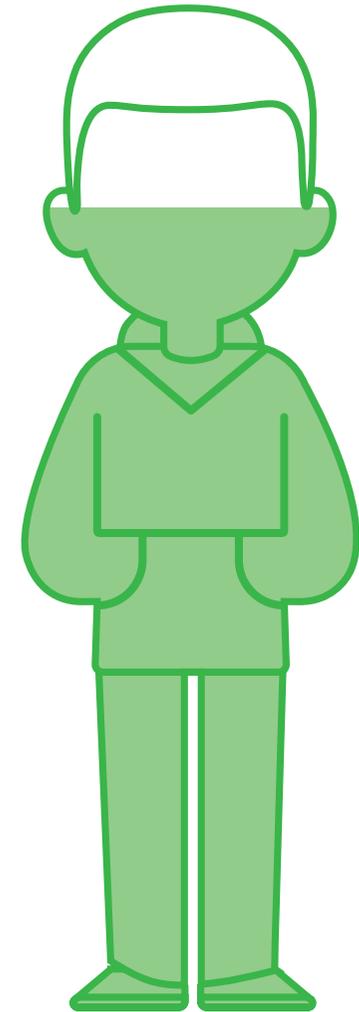
Reduction in emotional and behavioural needs and risk behaviours⁹

Additional indirect benefits include

Improved housing outcomes

Reduced child protection involvement

79%
of young people
accessing FFT through
AV stopped re-offending



Outcomes Source: KPMG report *Better Outcomes in youth justice: The costs and benefits of Anglicare Victoria's Functional Family Therapy – Youth Justice* (August 2020).

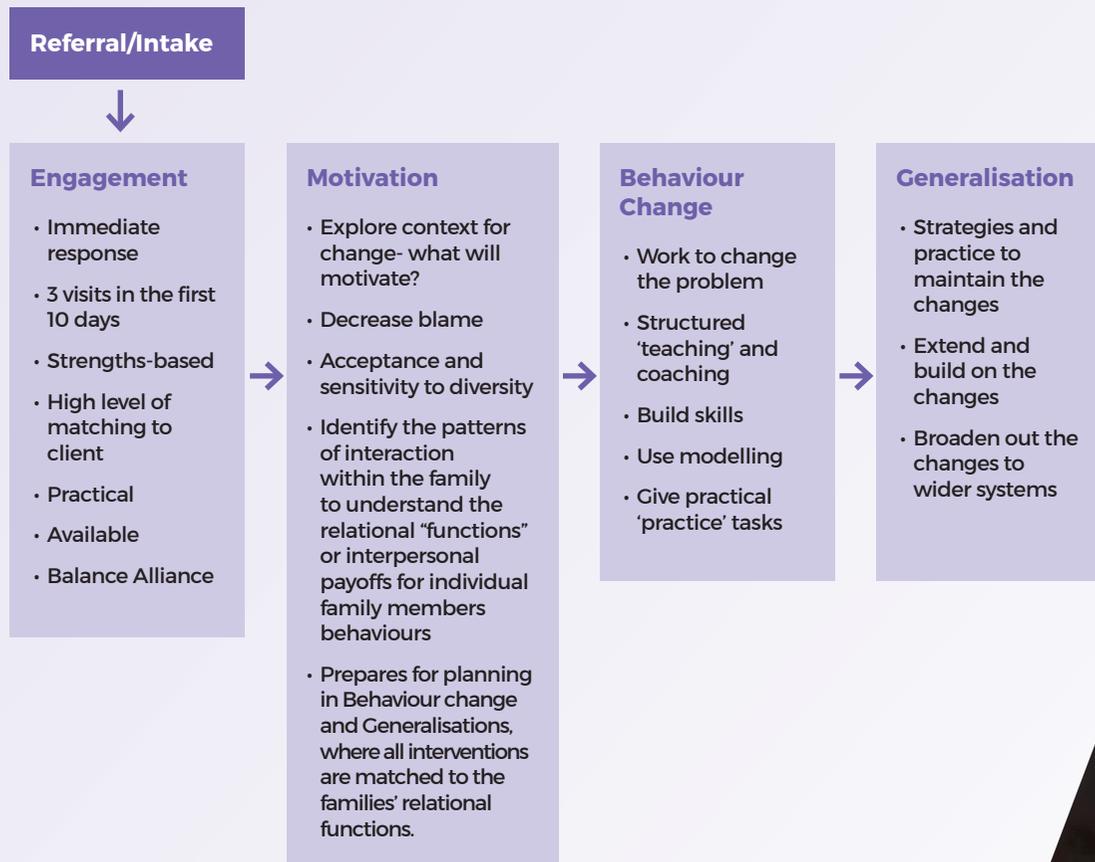
8. Hartnett et al., 2016, The Effectiveness of Functional Family Therapy in Reducing Adolescent Mental Health Risk and Family Adjustment Difficulties in an Irish Context, *Family Process*, 13 June 2016.

9. Celinska et al., 2013, An Outcome-based Evaluation of Functional Family Therapy for Youth with Behavioral Problems, Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/284958783_An_Outcomebased_Evaluation_of_Functional_Family_Therapy_for_Youth_with_Behavioral_Problems

HOW DOES IT WORK?

FFT works to build trust between the family and the practitioner, and through relentless engagement with the family, on their terms, reduces conflict and increases motivation for change and encourages and sustains positive change.

FFT Phases (3-5 months)



A TRACK RECORD OF WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

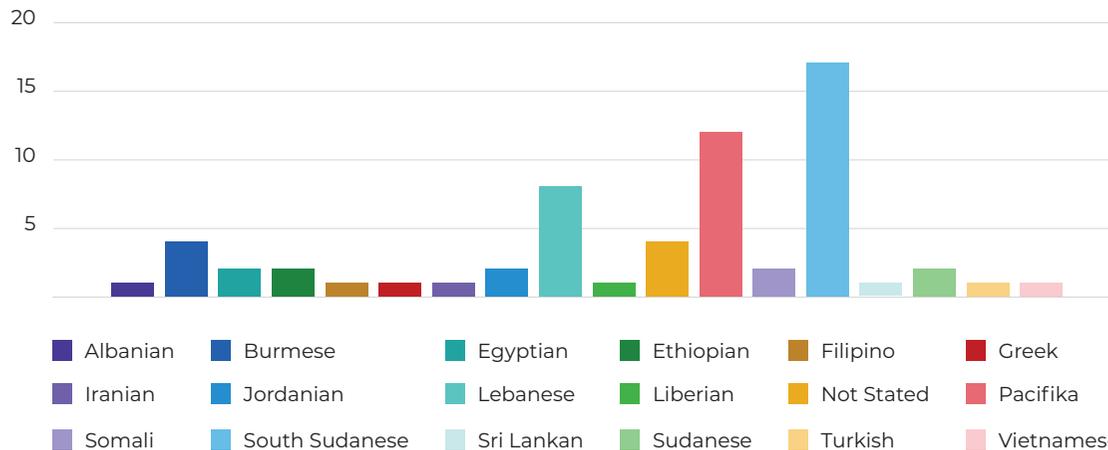
Prior experiences have wide-ranging impacts on the young person and the family:

- English may not be the preferred language for discussion
- Refugee background, including civil war and trauma in countries of origin
- Limited family or community support
- Experience of systemic racism
- Complexities associated with visa status and access to financial support
- Disproportionate media interest.

60% of clients were involved in both Youth Justice and Child Protection when referred

Of 92 referrals, 66 had younger siblings – who also take part in family sessions⁹

FFT clients identified with a range of ethnic groups



9. April 2019 – June 2020.

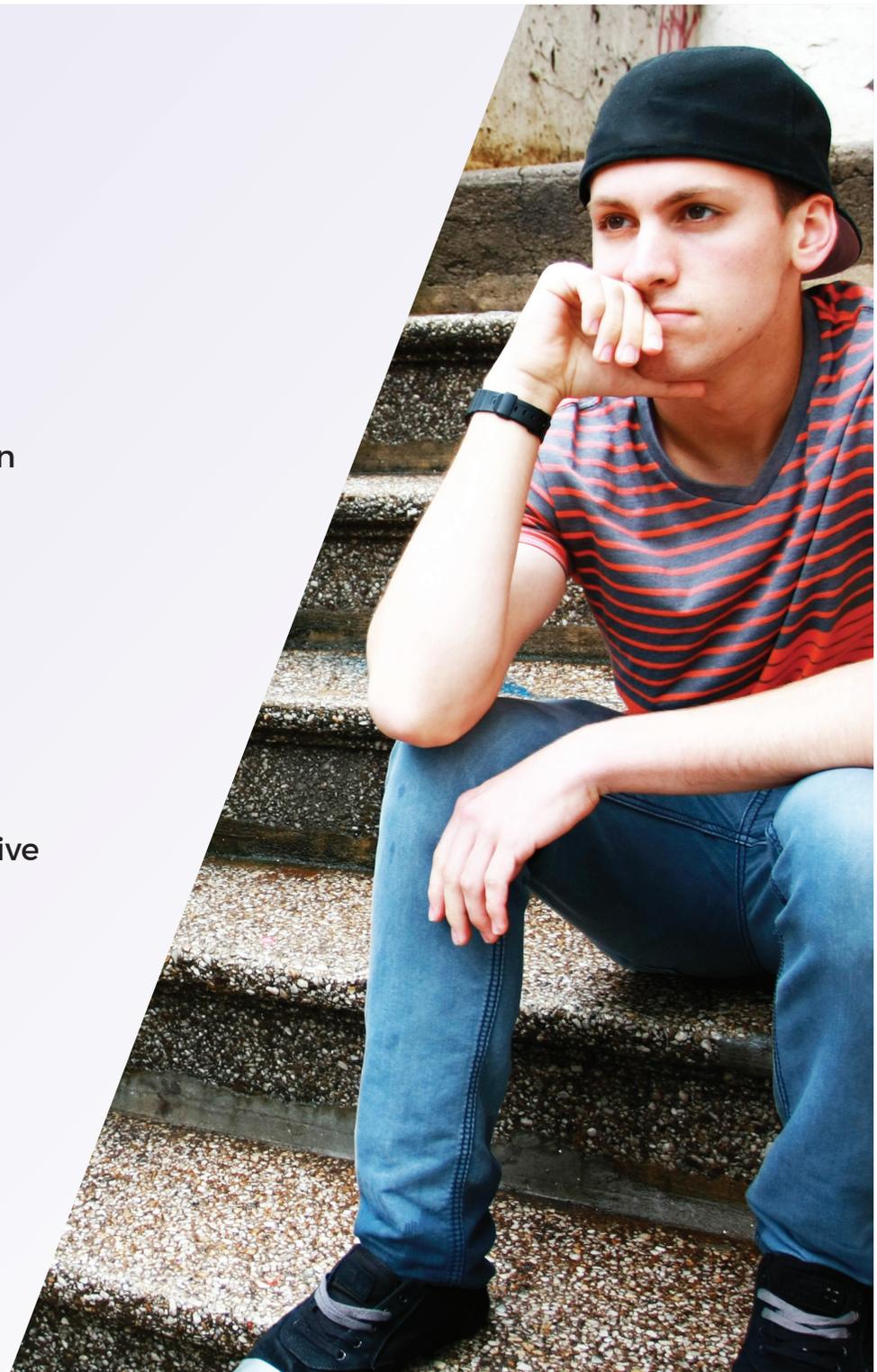
FFT-G: TACKLING GANG INVOLVEMENT

FFT-Gang supports families and young people at risk of gang involvement. Compared to a control group receiving alternative interventions, controlled trials¹⁰ USA have shown

- lower number and prevalence of arrests
- fewer felony charges
- fewer crimes against the person charges
- fewer property charges.

FFT-G participants were also shown to be less likely to receive more expensive services (e.g. residential services) while participating.

10. Gottfredson et al (2018) Reducing Gang Violence: A Randomized Trial of Functional Family Therapy available at <https://www.fftllc.com/documents/FFT-G-Research.pdf>



PROVEN EFFECTIVENESS – DELIVERING SAVINGS

A recent analysis of FFT-YJ estimated the return on investment in the Victorian context.

It found that further investment in the program would deliver positive returns for government by delivering savings across a range of domains.

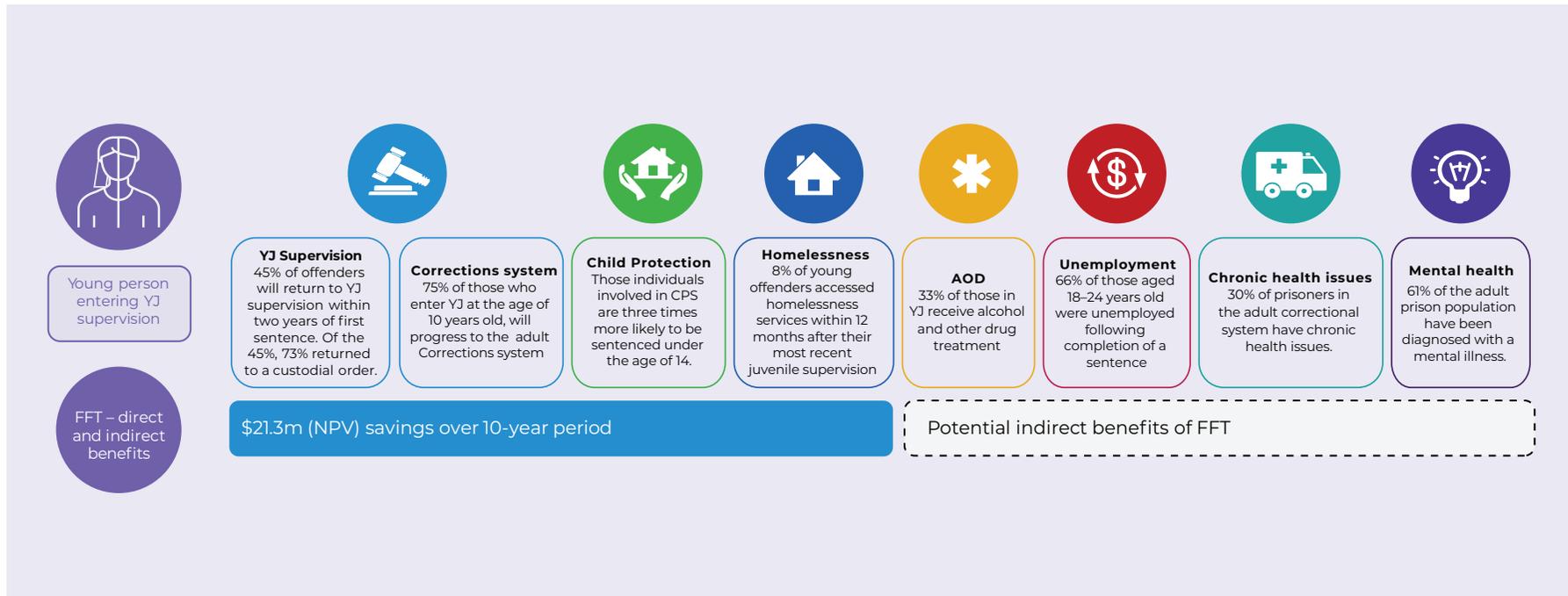
Quantitative analysis shows nominal savings of nearly \$30 million over 10 years.

Overseas studies show the significant community benefits also provide substantial returns to government and other stakeholders – as high as \$11.86 for every dollar spent.¹¹

11. Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2011, Return on Investment: Evidence-Based Options to Improve Statewide Outcomes, Available at: http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/ReportFile/1089/Wsipp_Return-on-Investment-Evidence-Based-Options-to-Improve-Statewide-Outcomes-July-2011-Update_Report.pdf)



COMMUNITY AND FINANCIAL BENEFITS OF FFT-YJ



ALIGNMENT WITH THE YOUTH JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2030

FFT has an established record that demonstrates its efficacy with a wide variety of adolescent-related problems including youth violence, drug abuse and related behaviours. This directly aligns with the Plan's four key reform directions:

- 1 Improving diversion and supporting early intervention and crime prevention
- 2 Reducing re-offending and promoting community safety by supporting children and young people to turn their life around
- 3 Strengthening partnerships with children and young people, families, services and professionals who support their rehabilitation and positive development
- 4 Investing in a skilled, safe and stable Youth Justice system and safe systems of work.

“They worked with us to understand what was happening in our world. We had to work hard – it wasn't easy, but we are getting there. We don't fight as much, and when we do, we can get things back on track.”

– Parent

GAI'S STORY

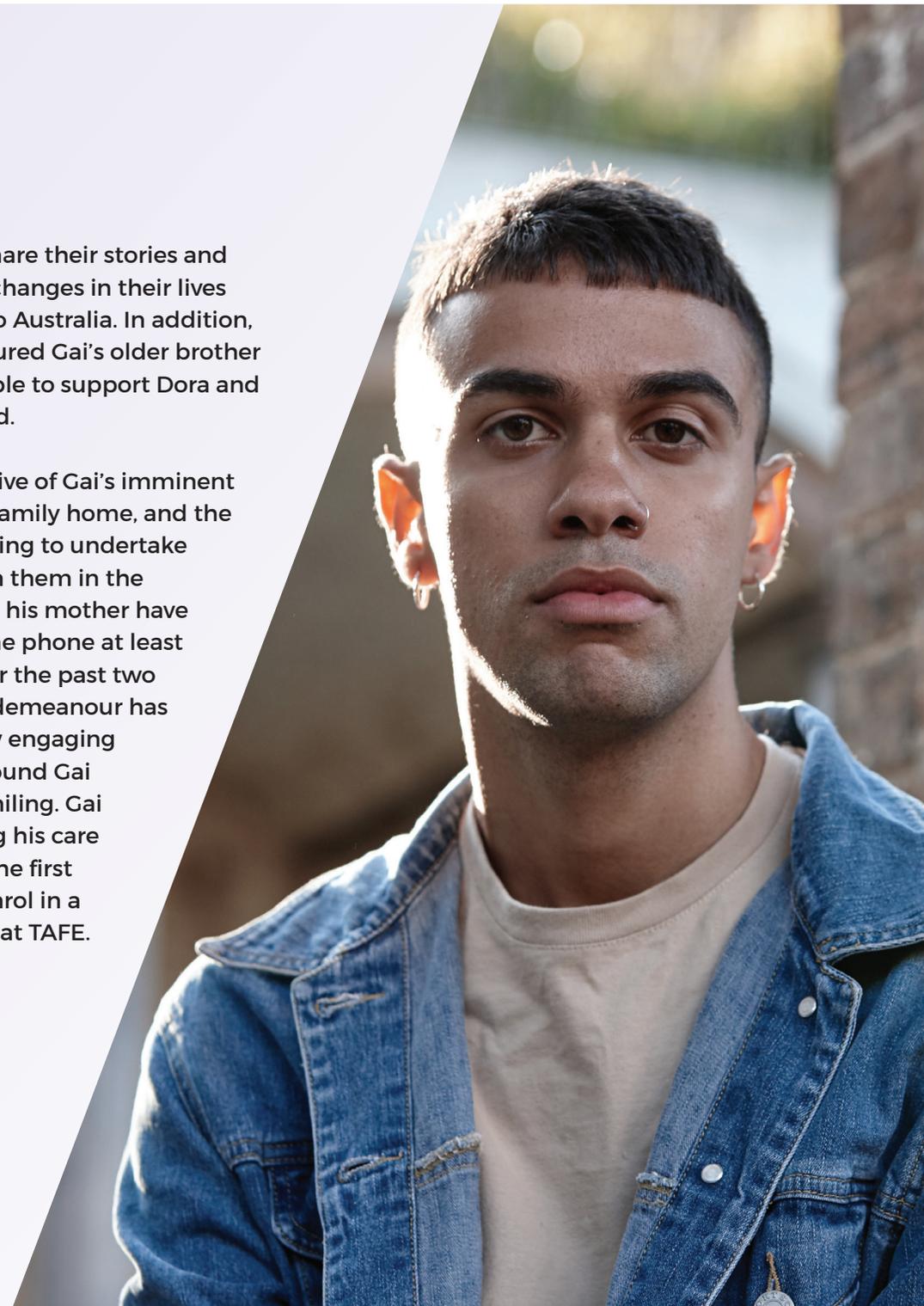
Gai*, 17, is a South Sudanese young person. The youngest of seven children, at the point of referral Gai was on remand due to serious criminal offending including aggravated carjacking, assault, intentionally causing serious injury and robbery. Initially, his mother Dora was dismissive of the FFT program, stating that she was 'fed up' with Gai and the system around him. Gai had no contact with Dora whilst in remand, and the two had not spoken in months. Engagement work included 1:1 contacts and visits with Dora, listening to her concerns and conversing in Dinka, the family's native language. After six weeks of building engagement, Gai and his mother met for their first session.

The FFT practitioner taught Behaviour Change skills such as emotional regulation and communication in a culturally appropriate way, using Dinka storytelling for a communication/bonding skill and teaching Gai and Dora how they can use this to share and build an understanding of each other.

Both were able to share their stories and experiences, about changes in their lives from South Sudan to Australia. In addition, the practitioner ensured Gai's older brother was included and able to support Dora and Gai once FFT finished.

Dora is now supportive of Gai's imminent release back to the family home, and the practitioner is planning to undertake further sessions with them in the community. Gai and his mother have been speaking on the phone at least four times a week for the past two months and Dora's demeanour has changed. She is now engaging with the services around Gai and is happy and smiling. Gai has begun attending his care team meetings for the first time and plans to enrol in a construction course at TAFE.

*Real names not used to protect privacy



CONCLUSION

FFT-YJ is a proven model that significantly improves outcomes for young people involved in the justice system, and their families, and prevents further offending.

By expanding the FFT-YJ program, there is an opportunity to improve access for vulnerable families, strengthen crime prevention and support community safety while delivering significant cost savings to government.

For more information, please see
KPMG's report: *Better Outcomes in youth justice: The costs and benefits of Anglicare Victoria's Functional Family Therapy – Youth Justice*

