

Tasmania Government - 2024-25 Budget Community Consultation Submission Cover Page

Organisation or Individual	Building Pathways Program
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Overview

Introduction

The Building Pathways Program (BPP) is a transformative initiative committed to empowering individuals on a journey away from criminality. The program focuses on developing pro-social behaviours, reducing recidivism, and fostering self-efficacy and motivation through personalised coaching, educational workshops, advocacy, and community engagement. Guided by respect, client-centred focus, and empowerment, BPP has demonstrated significant positive impacts, as reflected in testimonials and comprehensive evaluations.

BPP's methodology involves face-to-face coaching and mentoring sessions, educational workshops, and advocacy, creating a supportive environment for participants to navigate life challenges and make constructive choices. The program's emphasis on communication skills, community connections, and personal growth aims to break the cycle of criminal behaviour and contribute to safer, more harmonious communities.

With a target cohort that includes individuals referred by Community Corrections, the Tasmanian Prison Service, and self-referrals, BPP has successfully engaged clients actively seeking positive change. The program's impact extends beyond individual clients, creating a ripple effect that enhances living skills, social connections, and overall well-being.

Options for program development include sustaining and enhancing core functions, a 50% increase for intensified impact, and a 100% increase for significant scaling. Each option builds upon the program's success, with corresponding funding levels to achieve deeper and broader positive outcomes for participants and the community.

In conclusion, the Building Pathways Program has proven valuable in fostering positive change. The proposed budget levels align with strategic growth plans, ensuring continued success and a more significant impact on community reintegration and the reduction of criminal behaviour.

Recommendations

Option One - Core Function: Sustain and enhance the Building Pathways Program's current operations, focusing on tailored coaching, educational workshops, and community engagement to empower individuals on their transformation journey, reducing recidivism and fostering positive change.

Option Two - Core Function + 50% Increase: Elevate impact by intensifying outreach, improving resources, expanding participant support, ensuring a deeper connection with the community, and enhanced effectiveness in achieving program goals.

Option Three - Core Function + 100% Increase: Significantly scale the program to reach a broader audience, doubling the impact on community reintegration through increased staffing, more comprehensive outreach, technology integration, and a dedicated research and innovation fund, aiming for a substantial reduction in criminal behaviour within targeted cohorts.

Introduction

What We Do:

At the Building Pathways Program (BPP), we aim to empower individuals on a transformation journey, providing them with the tools, support, and guidance needed to forge new paths towards meaningful lives outside criminality. Through a unique blend of coaching, mentoring, educational workshops, advocacy, and community engagement, we develop pro-social behaviours, reduce recidivism, and cultivate self-efficacy and motivation.

How We Do It:

Our approach is client-centred, around regular coaching or mentoring sessions); we also run educational workshops for groups focused on building healthy behaviours. All our contact sessions are face-to-face, enhancing the opportunity to connect deeply. Coaching and mentoring activities will span three to six months, addressing individual needs and providing essential support. Our coaching practice is firmly rooted in empowering our clients and using the SMART principles - ensuring that goals are Simple, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-focused.

Advocacy is a cornerstone of our work as we stand alongside clients, navigating life's challenges, reducing complexity and stress, and reducing the risk of continued criminal behaviour. Educational workshops focus on communication skills and fostering social connections, while our coaching and mentoring sessions include an educational process that guides clients towards more productive and appropriate life choices.

Why We Do It:

We believe in the potential for positive change within every individual. By addressing communication and social skills and fostering personal growth, we aim to break the cycle of recidivism and create safer, more harmonious communities.

We believe that reducing criminal behaviour requires fostering a sense of belonging, purpose, and resilience. By developing communication skills and enabling participants to recognise how to make constructive choices, we are arming them with the skills to lead meaningful lives and contribute to society.

Guiding Principles

Respect and Empathy: We treat everyone with respect, empathy, and without judgment, supporting their potential for positive change.

Client-Centred Focus: We prioritise the client's perspective, experiences, and goals, creating a safe space for them to explore challenges and personal growth.

Empowerment: We help clients make positive pro-social decisions, fostering confidence for a meaningful life beyond criminality.

Strengths-Based Approach: We identify and amplify clients' strengths and resources to overcome challenges and achieve lasting change.

Trust: Trust is critical. We build it through open dialogue, genuine connections, and a commitment to providing a safe space.

Holistic Perspective: We support clients to address immediate challenges and underlying factors contributing to criminal behaviour.

Continuous Learning: We commit to ongoing learning and improvement, staying open to feedback and incorporating new research.

Community Connection: We recognise the importance of social support, offering community engagement opportunities and advocating for clients' needs.

Our People

Building Pathway Program coaches and mentors have decades of experience working with people, particularly men, in various contexts. Our team has considerable experience in corporate coaching, leadership, management, training, and community development, running men's events and activities, developing, and facilitating men's groups and group facilitator training in Tasmania and nationally.

Governance

Men's Resources Tasmania (MRT) plays a pivotal role in auspicing the Building Pathways Program (BPP), showcasing its commitment to community development and skill-building initiatives. As the auspice organisation, MRT provides essential support and oversight to BPP, ensuring its alignment with MRT's broader mission of elevating men's health and well-being in Tasmania, as well as compliance and best practice.

MRT is committed to separating governance from operational activities, ensuring a well-defined and transparent decision-making process. By establishing policies, procedures, and communication processes, MRT upholds the principles of leadership, collaboration, reconnection, sustainability, and understanding combined with best practices in its governance framework.

MRT fosters the growth and success of BPP, contributing to the organisation's vision of a thriving and connected Tasmanian community.

Target Cohort

Individuals - adults may be referred by Community Corrections, Tasmanian Prison Service, self-referral, family members or other relevant government or community sector agencies. While there may be a direction for someone to attend the program, participants must choose to be actively engaged in the project with a desire to effect change in their own lives and achieve successful community reintegration.

Acceptance into the program will depend on the outcome of an initial intake meeting between the participant and program staff to establish a solid and trusting relationship.

Community Corrections

Referrals from Community Corrections pertain to individuals under a Home Detention Sentence, or a Community Order motivated to benefit from BPP's resources and guidance for successful community reintegration.

Tasmanian Prison Service

Referrals from the Tasmania Prison Service pertain to individuals within approximately three months of their release, either upon completion of their sentence or with an active application for parole, are encouraged to engage with BPP. This category targets individuals who are in the process of transitioning back into the community from prison and who can benefit from the program's resources and support. The secondary criteria acknowledge the unique needs of prisoners nearing their release to facilitate a smooth reintegration process. Typically, the critical personal development focus is to improve a client's communication skills, thus enabling them to get better life outcomes. This has proved to be essential once a prisoner transitions back into the community, where the stresses of coping outside of the prison environment are challenging for many.

General Community & Self-Referral

Referrals originating from the general community are often initiated by concerned family members who recognise the potential advantages of BPP for their loved ones. The eligibility criteria aim to encompass those seeking support and guidance to reintegrate into society or address specific community-related challenges that may otherwise lead the individual to enter the criminal justice system.

The Impact

The Building Pathways Program fosters profound change, creating ripple effects beyond individual clients. As clients engage in prosocial relationships with our team, trust flourishes, and vulnerability leads to a more profound commitment to the program. With increased self-efficacy, motivation, and a desire for change, clients develop improved communication and living skills, prosocial relationships, and renewed confidence.

Where appropriate, clients will establish connections to community-based groups and activities. Some clients will be offered the opportunity to become future coaches and mentors, providing them with peer worker employment opportunities.

The ripple effect of our work is undeniable. Clients improve their living skills, develop the skills to create healthier relationships, experience greater security, and exhibit the ability to navigate daily challenges with newfound confidence. While the program is not therapeutic, there can be therapeutic benefits such as improved communication, more harmonious personal outcomes, stronger relationships, and improved well-being.

Evaluation

The evaluation revealed a multifaceted range of outcomes that align with the program's goals, providing strong evidence that BPP effectively achieves its goals (Figure 1.). These outcomes encompassed various domains of participants' lives, including improved social connections and trust, enhanced help-seeking behaviour, heightened connection to the community, transformed relationships, refined communication skills, and significant improvements in mental well-being and future-focused attitudes.

The participants' testimonies illustrate how BPP has brought about transformative changes in their lives. The program's emphasis on fostering open communication, teaching practical problem-solving skills, and providing a supportive environment has facilitated a profound shift in how participants interact with others and view their potential. BPP's holistic approach has enabled participants to overcome barriers, engage with their communities, strengthen relationships, and cultivate a renewed sense of self-worth and optimism.

Moreover, the accounts of participants experiencing improved mental well-being, reframing their outlook on life, and setting achievable goals highlight the program's significant contribution to personal growth and resilience. The testimonials resonate with the idea that BPP has served as a catalyst for positive change, guiding participants away from harmful patterns and instilling them with the tools to navigate challenges in healthier ways.

The overarching message from participants is clear: BPP has made a profound impact on their lives, empowering them to make meaningful strides towards personal betterment and a more promising future. As reflected in the themes that emerged, the program has successfully addressed critical areas of improvement, aligning with its core objectives. The transformative power of BPP's approach, as demonstrated through participants' narratives, highlights its value as an effective intervention that imparts practical skills and fosters lasting positive change in the lives of those it serves.

Engagement

BPP has been operating for 13 months. There are currently 14 active clients, all fully engaged, with 13 males and one female. Eleven clients have completed the program, with ten referred from Community Corrections and one from the Tasmanian Prison Service (TPS). The success is measured based on meeting or exceeding set goals.

Six clients have needed to pause from the program, with reasons including mental health issues (4 clients) and temporary reincarceration due to breaching bail (2 clients). Eight potential clients are yet to be inducted into the program, with two from TPS and six from Community Corrections; their delay is due to BPP's volunteer workforce being at capacity.

For those who have completed the BPP, the average time in the program is five months, consisting of 3 months of basic programming and a 2-month extension, mainly for Community Corrections clients. On the other hand, TPS clients are expected to spend an average of 18 months in the program, including five months in prison and 11 months in the community.

Three coaches support the program, and in the 13 months of operation, a total of 195 coaching/mentoring sessions have been conducted, with an average time of 70 minutes per session. This translates to a total time of 13,650 minutes (228 hours). Additionally, there have been 175 hours of operational meetings, excluding networking and marketing meetings.

Figure 1. Participant Responses

Improved social connection and trust	Improved help-seeking behaviour	Improved connection to community
<p>"[BPP] can communicate with people on all different levels."</p> <p>"...doesn't push for me to talk, if I don't want to talk about stuff."</p> <p>"...came in and shook my hand and became my friend."</p> <p>"...has made a huge difference in my confidence."</p> <p>"Before [engaging with BPP], I was isolating and wasn't really talking to anyone. I was fairly depressed... [BPP Coach/Mentor] was the person I needed, the stranger that had no bias, no judgement."</p>	<p>"...to come to C3 [Church] to meet [me and] my other supports on my section 42 leave."</p> <p>"...more easily open up to people and talk to people."</p> <p>"[BPP taught me to] talk about problems and issues and seek help when I need it."</p> <p>"[improving communication] I feel it will help me stay away from drugs, which I used to do, to deal with all the crap."</p>	<p>"... built my confidence to talk to future employers."</p> <p>"[BPP] went out of their way to come to C3 [Church] to meet [me and] my other supports on my section 42 leave."</p> <p>"I'm now talking to people I didn't think I ever would, and I feel so much more confident in approaching people and asking questions and making friends."</p> <p>"I now have a job."</p>
Improved relationships	Improved communication skills	Improved mental wellbeing & future focused
<p>"...I realized I had shut down communicating...It was a protective mechanism."</p> <p>"...easier to talk to people..."</p> <p>"I've started talking to my family again and I've come out of my shell."</p> <p>"I now have the confidence to speak my mind and be honest."</p> <p>"I have reconnected with my kids."</p>	<p>"...big thing I have learnt is communication."</p> <p>"...teaching me to ask the right questions therefore enhancing better communication skills, which is something I really needed."</p> <p>"We've been working on making my communication better."</p> <p>"... has helped me renew and improve my communication skills."</p> <p>"...feels good to be able to learn to communicate better."</p> <p>"...really helped me with my communication skills and taught me how to ask good questions and taught me how to talk to people again."</p> <p>"More open with my communication."</p>	<p>"...makes me feel enthusiastic about my future."</p> <p>"I have moved away from thoughts of suicide."</p> <p>"...goals I want to achieve and how to go about achieving those goals in a manageable way."</p> <p>"...spoke about my father recently, who passed away. I was close to my dad. I had never spoken about it."</p> <p>"My Self-belief/self-worth and a much more positive outlook on life and the future"</p> <p>"A new self-confidence Pride in who I am now."</p> <p>"...cause of what I've learned, I have a really good chance of making something again of my life."</p> <p>"I'm not going down that path again."</p> <p>"I'm done with being a mad, bad person."</p> <p>"I have learnt other ways to handle my anger."</p>

Budget Recommendations:

Initiative	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Option One – Core Function	\$478,500.00	\$526,350.00	\$578,985.00
Option Two – Core Function + 50% Increase	\$738,100.00	\$811,910.00	\$893,101.00
Option Three – Core Function + 100% Increase	\$1,006,500.00	\$1,107,150.00	\$1,217,865.00

Note: Budget recommendations have provision for CPI, rapid referral increase, and contingency buffer for sustainability.

Option One – Core Function

Objective: Sustain and enhance the current operations of the Building Pathways Program to empower individuals on a transformation journey, fostering positive change and community reintegration.

Auspice by Men's Resources Tasmania.

Core function components:

- *Coaching and Mentoring Sessions (Face-to-Face):* Regular sessions tailored to individual needs, spanning three to six months.
- *Educational Workshops:* Build healthy masculine behaviours, communication skills, and social connections.
- *Advocacy:* Stand alongside clients, navigating life challenges and reducing complexity and stress.
- *Community Engagement:* Offer opportunities for community-based connections and activities.
- *Training for Coaches and Mentors:* Continuous learning for staff, incorporating new research and best practices.
- *Evaluation:* Continuous, data-driven assessment to measure and enhance the transformative impact of the Building Pathways Program, ensuring its effectiveness in fostering positive change and community reintegration.

Impact: Improved communication skills, pro-social behaviours, reduced recidivism, and the development of self-efficacy and motivation.

Option Two – Core Function + 50% Increase

Objective: Intensify program impact by expanding outreach, improving resources, and enhancing participant support.

Auspice by Men's Resources Tasmania.

In addition to the core function components:

- *Extended Coaching and Mentoring Sessions:* Increase session frequency or duration for deeper engagement.
- *Resource Development:* Enhance program materials, tools, and resources for more effective coaching and workshops.

- *Expanded Community Connections:* Strengthen ties with community-based groups for additional support.
- *Peer Worker Opportunities:* Identify and offer select clients the chance to become future coaches and mentors.

Impact: Heightened participant support, strengthened community connections, and increased effectiveness in achieving program goals.

Option Three – Core Function + 100% Increase

Objective: Significantly scale the Building Pathways Program to reach a broader audience, doubling the impact on community reintegration and reducing criminal behaviour.

Auspice by Men's Resources Tasmania.

In addition to core function components:

- *Increased Staffing:* Hire additional qualified coaches and mentors to accommodate a larger participant pool.
- *Wider Outreach and Marketing:* Promote program visibility to attract a more diverse range of participants.
- *Technology Integration:* Explore online coaching options for greater accessibility.
- *Research and Innovation Fund:* Allocate resources for ongoing program evaluation, innovation, and adaptation.

Impact: Expanded reach, diversified participant pool, and reduced criminal behaviour within the targeted cohorts.

Conclusion:

The proposed budget levels for the Building Pathways Program reflect a strategic approach to empowering individuals on their transformation journey. Each class builds upon the core functions, with increased funding corresponding to a deeper and broader impact on participants and the community. The program's success, as evidenced by testimonials and evaluations, justifies the investment in its continued growth and effectiveness.

Other Priority Issues

Addressing other priority issues is crucial for the continued success and expansion of the Building Pathways Program (BPP). Concentrating efforts on individuals incarcerated for the first time, a demographic associated with the highest recidivism rates, aligns with BPP's mission to break the cycle of criminality. By tailoring coaching and mentoring interventions specifically for this group, the program can proactively target the root causes of criminal behaviour and instil the necessary skills for successful rehabilitation and community reintegration. This approach aligns with the program's commitment to a holistic perspective, addressing immediate challenges and underlying factors contributing to criminal behaviour.

Moreover, integrating into the education system and focusing on grades 9 to 12 is a strategic initiative to cultivate positive behaviours early in individuals' lives. By engaging with young people during their formative years, BPP can contribute to the prevention of criminal behaviour, fostering pro-social attitudes and decision-making. Running educational workshops within schools tailored to building healthy behaviours and communication skills can create a positive ripple effect on the community by nurturing resilience and empowering students to make constructive life choices.

Running a full-time person in prison, responsible for connecting, training, and facilitating men's circles, exemplifies a commitment to fostering change within the correctional environment. This initiative recognises the critical transition period for prisoners nearing release and aims to improve their communication skills, a crucial factor in successful reintegration. Finally, expanding into other areas of the state is an ambitious yet necessary step for reaching a broader audience. This expansion would require careful consideration and additional budget allocation to accommodate different regions' unique needs and challenges, ensuring the program's effectiveness and impact across diverse communities.