

P R A X I S Y O U T H

Strategic Plan

Breaking cycles of youth incarceration through stable housing and support.

FY2026–29

Our Purpose

MISSION

Breaking cycles of youth incarceration through stable housing and support.

VISION

A future where every at-risk young person has a safe home, the support they need and the opportunity to build a meaningful life.

Praxis Youth is a registered charity working with justice-involved young people aged 16–25. Incorporated in September 2025, we completed our pilot and achieved DGR status within our first three months and are now positioned to consolidate and grow our impact over the next three years. This Strategic Plan is downstream from our North Star – the primary expression of our mission, vision, values and strategic pillars – and our Theory of Change, which sets out the logic by which our work produces lasting change.

2 – OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

The Context for Our Work

THE SCALE OF THE PROBLEM IN NSW

NSW is in the midst of a youth justice crisis. BOCSAR’s December 2025 quarterly update recorded 225 young people in youth detention – a 29.3% increase since December 2023. At its peak in June 2025, the number had reached 234, representing a 34% rise over two years, reversing a decade-long decline. The primary driver is remand: as of December 2025, 75.6% of young people in custody had not yet been convicted.

The overrepresentation of Aboriginal young people is both the most urgent and most persistent dimension of this crisis. Aboriginal young people now account for 57–60% of the youth detention population despite comprising approximately 8% of NSW’s young people. The Aboriginal youth remand population increased 68.9% in the two years to December 2024, placing NSW in direct breach of its Closing the Gap commitments.

The economic case for intervention is stark. Detention costs more than \$1.3 million per child per year in NSW. Most are released within weeks or months, often back into the same housing instability, disrupted schooling or untreated trauma that contributed to their offending. Early, relational intervention is not only more effective – it is orders of magnitude less expensive.

YOUTH HOMELESSNESS: THE CRITICAL INTERSECTION

Homelessness and justice involvement are deeply intertwined. In NSW in 2023–24, specialist homelessness services helped 17,062 young people aged 15–24, of whom 13,217 presented alone. For justice-involved young people specifically, housing instability at point of release is one of the strongest predictors of reincarceration.

The Structural Constraint

There are currently zero affordable rental properties accessible to a young person on Youth Allowance anywhere in Australia. Addressing this requires the active relationship management with housing providers, government programs and community housing organisations.

POLICY AND FUNDING ENVIRONMENT

The NSW Government's current approach to youth justice is predominantly punitive. The 2024 Bail Act amendments were widely criticised by legal, criminology and human rights experts as counterproductive. This creates both a challenge and an opportunity: the evidence base for alternative approaches is strong, but the political environment requires sustained advocacy alongside credible delivery.

The federal and state funding landscape for youth-serving organisations remains fragmented and short-cycle. Government commissioning for justice-adjacent services is nascent but growing, with DCJ increasingly interested in outcome-based contracting for transitional support. DGR Item 1 status provides Praxis Youth with a meaningful competitive advantage in philanthropic fundraising.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

- Lived and professional experience in founding team
- Housing-First model backed by evidence
- DGR Item 1 status
- Strong, early strategic partnerships spanning evaluation, volunteers, advocacy and custodial program delivery
- Low unit cost (~\$2,025 per participant)
- Strong relational practice culture

Weaknesses

- Early-stage track record
- Small team with key-person risk
- No confirmed multi-year government funding
- Board still being constituted
- Formal MEL framework in development

Opportunities

- Growing demand as youth detention rises
- Government interest in outcome-based commissioning
- Philanthropic appetite for justice-reform innovation
- Further sector partners
- First Nations equity agenda

Threats

- Punitive policy environment
 - Housing market constraints
 - Employment market constraints
 - Competitive grant landscape
 - Short funding cycles create relational instability
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How We Produce Change

Praxis Youth's model is based around the belief that safe housing is the prerequisite for everything else, and the caseworker relationship is the mechanism by which all other change becomes possible. Three delivery strategies give that belief practical form: (1) **Housing-First Placement and Tenancy Sustainment**, (2) **Intensive Relationship-Led Casework**, and (3) **Skills Development and Community Building**. Together they address four domains in parallel: housing sustainability, employment and education, mental health and wellbeing, and social connection. Reduced reincarceration is the headline outcome, but it follows from change across all four domains.

The full casual logic, pathway sequencing, assumptions and external constraints are set out in Praxis Youth's Theory of Change.

Praxis Youth maintains the belief that quality must be established before scale is pursued. A model built on relational trust and consistent caseworker presence degrades if grown faster than the infrastructure supporting it can absorb. That sequencing logic drives the order of the three priorities in Section 4.

THE 12-WEEK INTENSIVE PROGRAM

PHASE	WEEKS	KEY ACTIVITIES
Phase 1: Stabilisation & Intake	Weeks 1–4	Intake, risk assessment, preliminary case plan and ISP; housing search and placement; DCJ coordination; 1:1 casework begins; employment planning initiated.
Phase 2: Engagement & Skills	Weeks 5–10	Intensive casework continues; life skills workshops co-facilitated with community volunteers; education enrolment support; attendance monitoring; social network expansion.
Phase 3: Evaluation & Transition	Weeks 11–12	Exit interviews; MEL data capture; transition planning; connection to ongoing community and formal supports; informal check-in schedule established.

Three Interdependent Priorities

This plan is organised around three strategic priorities that are interdependent and sequenced. Delivery quality must be established before scale is pursued; scale cannot be sustained without systems; and government partnership requires both.

01

Deliver & Deepen

Strengthen program quality and participant outcomes

Our first obligation is to the young people already in our programs. This priority ensures the model works as intended, that outcomes are measured, and that quality is not sacrificed in the pursuit of scale. It establishes the practice evidence base upon which everything else depends.

OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE	TARGET	TIMEFRAME
Generate outcome data from at least two cohorts sufficient to demonstrate impact to funders and government	Data from 2+ cohorts published	Q2 FY2026
Establish an annual learning publication cycle that translates cohort data into accessible evidence for funders, partners and policy audiences	1 learning note per year	Q3 FY2026 ongoing
Establish formal monthly case supervision cadence	All cases reviewed monthly	FY2026 ongoing
First Nations strategy: cultural advisor or partner identified	Advisor/partner engaged	Q1 FY2027
Cost per participant tracked against \$2,025 Cohort 2 baseline	Within 25% of baseline	Annual

02

Grow & Systematise

Build the infrastructure for responsible scale

Growth without infrastructure is fragile. This priority builds the funding, staffing, governance and partnership foundations that allow Praxis Youth to expand its reach without degrading the quality that makes the model work.

OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE	TARGET	TIMEFRAME
Board constituted with six directors across all portfolio roles	Six directors in place	Q4 FY2026
Formal referral MOU with at least two post-release partners	2 signed agreements	Q2 FY2027
Build a stable employment reintegration pathway through at least two active ethical employer or labour hire partnerships	2 active partnerships	FY2026
Revenue from at least three distinct funding sources in FY2027	3+ funding sources	FY2027
Annual participant numbers growing year-on-year within staffing capacity	Growth documented in Annual Report	FY2027, FY2028

03

Secure Government Partnership

Establish Praxis Youth as a trusted government partner

Government commissioning represents the most sustainable long-term funding pathway for intensive transitional work. This priority is about building the relationships, evidence base and track record needed to be a credible partner to DCJ, Housing NSW and federal agencies – and ultimately to access outcome-based commissioning.

OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE	TARGET	TIMEFRAME
Formal engagement with DCJ regarding referral pathways and potential partnership	Meeting and follow-up documented	Q3 FY2026
At least one formal submission or advocacy contribution to an inquiry	1 submission lodged	FY2027
Government partnership strategy documented and approved by Board	Strategy in place	Q2 FY2027
At least one government contract, MOU or partnership agreement signed	1 agreement signed	FY2028

Three-Year Sequence

The following roadmap sequences key activities across the three-year plan period. It is structured to ensure each year's activities create the conditions for the next. Operational detail is managed through quarterly business reviews and annual operating plans.

YEAR 1 (FY2026): CONSOLIDATE FOUNDATION

PRIORITY AREA	KEY ACTIVITIES
Deliver & Deepen	Complete pilot and cohort 2 program and evaluation cycle, and embed findings into program practice; establish formal case supervision cadence; begin planning for Cohort 3
Grow & Systematise	Constitute the board formalise further referral partnerships; establish initial philanthropic and grant revenue sufficient to fund next cohort; activate first employment reintegration partnership.
Secure Government Partnership	Establish formal relationship with DCJ; begin building practice evidence base and advocacy positioning needed for future commissioning conversations.
Governance & Finance	Establish core financial governance with Board, compliance infrastructure and operational systems sufficient to support responsible growth.

YEAR 2 (FY2027): BUILD FOR SCALE

PRIORITY AREA	KEY ACTIVITIES
Deliver & Deepen	Grow participant numbers within staffing capacity; publish second learning note.
Grow & Systematise	Secure at least three active funding streams; execute referral MOUs; build operations infrastructure for multi-cohort delivery.
Secure Government Partnership	Lodge first formal policy submission; develop government partnership strategy with Board sign-off; explore DCJ commissioning or pilot opportunities.
Governance & Finance	First formal strategic review against this plan; begin preparation for potential financial audit as revenue grows.

YEAR 3 (FY2028-29): SCALE RESPONSIBLY

PRIORITY AREA	KEY ACTIVITIES
Deliver & Deepen	Target 100+ participants per year; maintain cost discipline and outcome quality; full MEL framework operational across all cohorts.

Grow & Systematise

Multi-year funding agreements in place; board fully operational with committee structure; consider trading entity for additional revenue.

Secure Government Partnership

At least one government contract or commissioned service in place; active participant in NSW youth justice policy dialogue.

Governance & Finance

Full strategic review; develop FY2029–32 strategic plan.

6 – FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS

Financial Outlook FY2026–29

Basis and Limitations

All projections are derived from the approved Cohort 2 program budget (February 2026). Direct program costs use the verified unit cost of \$2,025.40 per participant per 12-week intensive phase (total cohort cost: \$48,610 for 24 participants).

Participant numbers are capacity targets dependent on staffing and funding – they are not fixed commitments. These projections are not an approved budget and will be reviewed annually by the Board.

INDICATIVE THREE-YEAR FINANCIAL OUTLOOK

Reviews Direct program cost projections are based on the verified unit cost of \$2,025 per participant per 12-week intensive phase, drawn from the approved Cohort 2 budget (February 2026). The full budget breakdown is maintained separately.

	Year 1 (FY2026)	Year 2 (FY2027)	Year 3 (FY2028–29)
Target participants (indicative)	~48 participants	~72–96 participants	100+ participants
Direct program costs	~\$97,000	~\$146,000–194,000	~\$200,000+
Org overhead (indicative)	~\$65,000	~\$80,000	~\$100,000
Total indicative expenditure	~\$162,000	~\$230,000–275,000	~\$300,000+
In-kind contributions	Material – not quantified	Material – not quantified	Material – not quantified
Revenue / source mix	Grant + philanthropic	Diversified: 3+ sources	Incl. government contract

Year 1 organisational overhead includes CEO remuneration at approximately \$45,000 (part-time, 0.6 FTE) plus estimated board costs, insurance and administration of approximately \$20,000. All figures are indicative and will be revised in each Annual Operating Plan approved by the Board.

Headline KPIs

Praxis Youth's headline KPIs are organised across six domains drawn from the Theory of Change: housing stability, education and employment, wellbeing and mental health, social connection, program delivery and quality, and organisational strength.

KPI	WHAT WE MEASURE	TIMING
Housing Stability	Housing secured at intake; tenancy sustained at exit	Phase milestones
Education & Employment	Active employment or education engagement; enrolment supported	Phase 1 milestone
Wellbeing & Mental Health	MHCP referral completed if needed; casework sessions to plan; no unmanaged critical incidents	Monthly
Social Connection	Life skills workshops attended; case plan goals progressed	Exit and quarterly
Delivery & Quality	Budget adherence; reporting on time; MEL data captured at exit	Monthly
Organisational Strength	DCJ coordination maintained; data privacy; cost per participant within baseline	Quarterly

At a strategic level, the Board will assess progress against this plan annually using three questions:

- Are we reaching the young people who need us most?
- Are we producing the outcomes our Theory of Change predicts?
- Are we building the organisation needed to sustain and grow this work?

Key Partners and Stakeholders

PARTNER / STAKEHOLDER	RELATIONSHIP	NOTES
Department of Communities & Justice (DCJ)	Government / referral pathway	Key partner for post-release coordination and future commissioning. Referral MOU a Year 2 priority.
Confit Pathways	Referral partner	Formal pathway in development.
Justice Reform Initiative (JRI)	Advocacy & sector partner	Delivering education advocacy in collaboration with Global Freedom Scholars
UNSW	Research & evaluation partner	Independent evaluation support and advice
Aspiring Entrepreneurs	Philanthropic funder	Provided rental subsidy for participants in Cohort 1.
Waratah Education Foundation	Prospective funder	Invite Round 3 application in preparation, March 2026.
NSW Government (Connect IRL Grant)	Prospective government funder	Application submitted January 2026; decision expected mid-March 2026.
Ethical labour hire agencies	Employment reintegration	Bridge employment partnerships (e.g., Programmed, Chandler Macleod).
Friends of Youth Justice	Sector network / advocacy	Michael Kwan presenting at Parliamentary Event, February 2026.
Youth Law Australia	Workshop partner / advocacy	Legal information workshop and youth justice access advocacy partnership

Glossary

BOCSAR

NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research. Primary source of NSW custody and crime statistics cited in this plan.

Cohort

A group of participants undertaking the 12-week intensive program together.

DCJ

NSW Department of Communities and Justice. Responsible for youth justice, child protection, housing and community services in NSW.

DGR Item 1

Deductible Gift Recipient – Item 1 (Public Benevolent Institution). Allows donors to claim tax deductions for contributions to Praxis Youth.

Housing-First

An evidence-based approach prioritising stable housing immediately, without requiring compliance with treatment programs as a precondition.

Case plan

A personalised plan covering goals across housing, employment, education, mental health and social connection.

Justice-involved

A young person currently or recently involved with the youth justice system, including those on remand, serving a sentence, on parole or under supervision orders.

MEL

Measurement, Evaluation and Learning. The systematic approach Praxis Youth uses to track outcomes, learn from practice and demonstrate impact.

MHCP

Mental Health Care Plan. A formal GP-developed plan enabling Medicare-subsidised mental health sessions.

Remand

Detention of a person charged with an offence but not yet convicted or sentenced. As of December 2025, 75.6% of young people in NSW youth detention were on remand.

SCHADS Award

Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award (MA000100). The relevant Modern Award for Praxis Youth caseworkers.

WBS

Work Breakdown Structure. The task-level structure in the Cohort 2 project budget used to define and cost all program activities.

