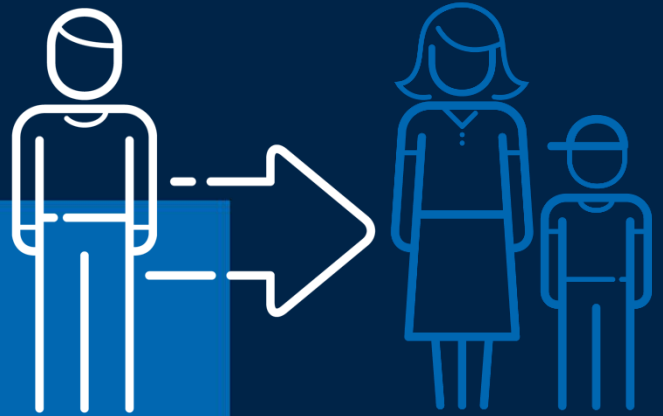
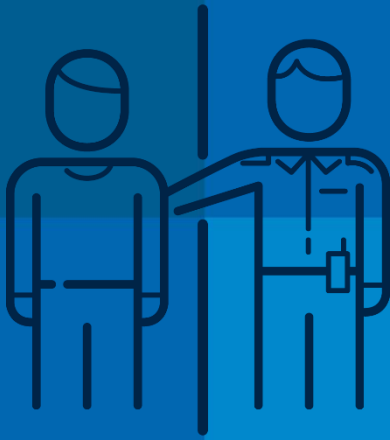




**ACT  
CORRECTIVE  
SERVICES**

**One team, one purpose:**  
supporting a safer community

# Yeddung Mura External Reporting Site Pilot— Evaluation Report



**ACT**  
Government

Justice and Community Safety

# Contents

Acknowledgement of Country.....	1
A note on language use.....	1
Acronyms and abbreviations.....	2
Suggested reference.....	2
Commissioner’s foreword.....	3
Executive summary.....	4
Yeddung Mura External Reporting Site.....	4
The evaluation.....	4
Findings.....	4
Future considerations.....	5
Introduction.....	7
Background.....	7
The evaluation report.....	7
Culturally supportive services in ACTCS.....	8
The Yeddung Mura External Reporting Site.....	8
Evaluation framework.....	11
Method.....	13
Codesigning the evaluation.....	14
Findings.....	16
Case Management Plans and supervision.....	16
Culturally supportive supervision.....	18
Service improvements.....	21
Case studies.....	23
Case study 1—Jeremy.....	23
Case study 2—James.....	24
Case study 3—Victor.....	25
Conclusion.....	27
Did the External Reporting Site provide culturally supportive supervision?.....	27
How did co-located services at Yeddung Mura support clients to meet the conditions of their case plans?.....	27

How did the External Reporting Site improve the relationships between clients and stakeholders? ..... 28

How can the External Reporting Site model be improved? ..... 28

Limitations of the evaluation..... 28

Future considerations..... 29

Appendices..... 30

Appendix A - External Reporting Site Community Instruction 2021 ..... 31

Appendix B: Interview questions—ACTCS staff..... 34

Appendix C: Interview questions—Yeddung Mura staff and stakeholders ..... 35

Appendix D: Interview questions—Clients of the External Reporting Site ..... 36

## List of tables

Table 1. Program objectives and activities of the Yeddung Mura External Reporting site, and related evaluation questions ..... 12

Table 2. Semi structured interviews conducted as part of the evaluation ..... 14

## Acknowledgement of Country

This document was developed on Aboriginal land. ACT Corrective Services (ACTCS) acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians, and recognise any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region.

We acknowledge their spiritual connection to Country and continuing culture. We acknowledge Elders past, present and emerging and give appreciation to the continuing importance of language, land, culture, and spiritual beliefs of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who work and engage with ACTCS and share their knowledge and contribute to the diversity of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

## A note on language use

The term ‘First Nations Peoples’ is used in this report to refer to individuals or groups of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

‘Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander’ is used to refer to documentation or proper nouns in which that term is used or in reference to specific data related terminology. The word ‘Indigenous’ is used only when quoting a primary source, or in the use of the term ‘non-Indigenous’.

It is acknowledged that ACTCS interacts with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at different points in the criminal justice and corrections pathway, including accused and sentenced clients in custody or on a community supervision order, which includes a community service work condition.

When referring to all these groups, the word ‘client’ is used, otherwise the Framework uses language specific to each setting.

## Acronyms and abbreviations

Acronym	Definition
<b>2CA office</b>	ACTCS reporting site at 2 Constitutional Avenue, Canberra City
<b>ACTCS</b>	ACT Corrective Services
<b>AMC</b>	Alexander Maconochie Centre
<b>AOD</b>	Alcohol and Other Drug
<b>CEO</b>	Cultural Engagement Officer
<b>CCO</b>	Community Corrections Officer
<b>External Reporting Site</b>	The Yeddung Mura External Reporting Site
<b>GBO</b>	Good Behaviour Order
<b>ICO</b>	Intensive Correction Order
<b>JACS</b>	Justice and Community Safety Directorate, ACT Government
<b>LSI-R</b>	Level of Service Inventory – Revised. This is a risk of reoffending assessment tool.
<b>NDIS</b>	National Disability Insurance Scheme
<b>SAB</b>	ACT Sentence Administration Board
<b>Winnunga</b>	Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services
<b>Yeddung Mura</b>	The Yeddung Mura Aboriginal Corporation

## Suggested reference

Australian Capital Territory Corrective Services. (2023) *Yeddung Mura External Reporting Site Pilot—Evaluation Report*. Canberra City: Australian Capital Territory Government.

## Commissioner's foreword

ACTCS plays an important role in ensuring clients are provided with the appropriate support and services when they are released from custody.

The Yeddung Mura External Reporting Site (the External Reporting Site) was established in July 2021 to help facilitate culturally appropriate supervision of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders who are subject to community-based corrections orders, such as Parole Orders, Intensive Correction Orders and Good Behaviour Orders.

The External Reporting Site aims to promote successful completion of orders, foster linkages with other services based at the site, and provide an alternative model of trauma-informed care for clients with complex mental health issues. It also helps to increase cultural awareness and culturally appropriate practice with our Community Corrections staff.

The External Reporting Site aims to contribute to the government priorities of reducing re-offending and providing safe, secure, decent, and humane management of offenders. It aims to achieve this by:

- Providing culturally sensitive and holistic justice and social support services,
- Strengthening relationships between ACTCS and First Nations clients, and
- Reducing the risk of reoffending and behaviour that can lead to over-representation and recidivism in First Nations communities.

ACTCS conducted this evaluation of the Yeddung Mura External Reporting Site to help us understand whether the pilot was meeting its intended objectives and to identify any required improvements to the model. The evaluation highlighted the many benefits the External Reporting Site offers ACTCS clients, including improving social and cultural supports that enable clients to stay connected to the service and achieve their case plan goals. The evaluation also highlighted that many clients preferred reporting at the External Reporting Site, as the site enabled them to better build rapport with our Community Corrections staff in a less formal and more familiar environment.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this important work including our Yeddung Mura partners, as we look forward to continuing to develop the External Reporting Site model into the future.



A/g Commissioner, Bruno Aloisi



## Executive summary

### Yeddung Mura External Reporting Site

On July 13 2021, ACTCS launched the External Reporting Site. The site provides a culturally supportive service for eligible First Nations clients to meet the reporting requirements under their supervised community-based order. These clients can report at the Yeddung Mura Aboriginal Corporation (Yeddung Mura), instead of attending ACTCS's office in Canberra City (known as 2CA).

The External Reporting Site has been designed with the primary aim of contributing to the reduction of over-representation of First Nations Peoples in the ACT justice system. It aims to achieve this by:

- Providing eligible First Nations clients with a familiar and culturally supportive site,
- Increasing access for First Nations Peoples to access co-located services,
- Increase cultural awareness and culturally supportive management of case plans and supervision of community corrections orders for First Nations clients, and
- Assessing the longer-term viability of alternative reporting sites for First Nations Peoples and other populations.

### The evaluation report

The evaluation report provides an assessment of whether the External Reporting Site met these intended aims during its establishment phase. The evaluation was undertaken using:

- Administrative data from the ACTCS electronic records management system,
- Qualitative, semi-structured interviews with clients, ACTCS staff, and stakeholders, and
- Case studies of External Reporting Site clients.

A further goal of the evaluation was to assess the longer-term viability of the external reporting site model for First Nations Peoples. After receiving considerable positive feedback about the service, further external reporting sites were established in the ACT.

The findings from this evaluation will be used to inform future improvements to the external reporting site model at Yeddung Mura and the other sites.

### Findings

The evaluation found that clients, stakeholders, and Yeddung Mura staff were overwhelmingly supportive of the External Reporting Site. It provided a culturally supportive approach to case management and supervision by working with the clients on building positive relationships and reporting outcomes. This included:

- Referring and linking clients with a range of supports and services which enabled individuals to complete the objectives outlined in their case management plans,
- Clients actively engaging with supervision and reporting requirements,

- ACTCS and Yeddung Mura working together at the External Reporting Site to address issues of non-compliance and developing strategies to support clients to achieve their case management objectives, and
- Supporting clients with complex mental health issues, and those with experiences of trauma, by providing an alternative model of care.

The External Reporting Site offered a range of formal co-located programs, in addition to wrap-around supports and services offered by Yeddung Mura. Many of these additional supports and services enabled clients to meet the conditions of their orders and adhere to case plan goals. These supports included transportation to 2CA and other locations and assistance with job-ready skills. The range of supports and services enabled clients to gain employment and assist in achieving their Case Management Plan objectives.

Yeddung Mura offered a range of social supports and relationships with community networks that further supported clients to engage at the External Reporting Site. First Nations Elders, Yarning Circles, and family networks are examples of social supports which they felt as beneficial and supportive in their engagement at the External Reporting Site.

The main disadvantage noted about the External Reporting Site was that clients were required to conduct urinalysis at 2CA. Clients felt that this experience was visible and they felt a sense of shame when completing their tests at 2CA.

## Future considerations

The following points outline recommended steps for ACTCS to consider in the ongoing improvement of the External Reporting Site model:

- The External Reporting Site model could be enhanced to offer a broader range of services. ACTCS could consider, for example:
  - Offering additional sites in the ACT and consider establishing another northside reporting site,
  - Expanding the eligibility criteria to offer to non-Indigenous clients or other vulnerable groups, and
  - Offering additional days per week for clients to report at the Yeddung Mura External Reporting Site.
- By offering external reporting sites to non-Indigenous Australians, ACTCS could improve the range of interventions that reduce the risks of a client breaching their order conditions. For example, enabling reporting at alternative locations can reduce a client's interactions with negative influences in the Canberra City.
- Review the case management and supervision at 2CA office to understand how the service could be more positive and culturally supportive for those that do choose to report there.
- Improve record keeping of case management and supervision practices conducted as part of the External Reporting Site and ensure those practices are aligned with those at 2CA.
- Explore alternative options for conducting urinalysis at 2CA and at the External Reporting Site, to ensure that clients feel comfortable (and less exposed) from meeting those



drug-testing requirements. By removing the need for clients to present to 2CA, this could furthermore minimise opportunities for these clients to reconnect with past acquaintances.

- Review which reintegration programs and supports are being offered at the External Reporting Site and whether it is possible to expand on these services.

## Introduction

The External Reporting Site contributes to whole of government priorities at the Commonwealth and ACT Government levels. It aims to:

- Provide a holistic approach to improving justice services,
- Provide a culturally inclusive and supportive approach that strengthens relationships, successfully rehabilitates, and reintegrates ACTCS clients into the community, and
- Reduce recidivism in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities (referred to as ‘First Nations Peoples’) and their over-representation in the ACT justice system.

## Background

The Commonwealth Closing the Gap initiatives aim to develop coordinated action among states and territories to reduce the rate of offending among First Nations Peoples. The Commonwealth works closely with states and territories to reduce the drivers of high incarceration rates and ensure First Nations Peoples benefit from culturally supportive justice services.

The ACT Government’s *RR25By25*, Reducing Recidivism in the ACT by 25% by 2025, and the Justice and Community Safety (JACS) Directorate’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019–2028 commits to reducing the over-representation of First Nations Peoples in the justice system. JACS agencies aim to achieve this by increasing clients’ access to diversionary programs, improving services, and reducing recidivism.

The second pillar of *ACTCS Strategic Plan* commits ACTCS to providing reintegration opportunities for clients, especially those in vulnerable or over-represented cohorts.

On 13 July 2021, ACTCS launched the Yeddung Mura External Reporting Site. This site provided an opportunity for First Nations Peoples being supervised on a community-based sentence to fulfill their reporting requirements at the Yeddung Mura Aboriginal Corporation (Yeddung Mura), based in Fadden ACT.

## The evaluation report

This evaluation report aims to provide an assessment of the External Reporting Site during its initial establishment phase. The evaluation examines whether the External Reporting Site provides a culturally supportive service for First Nations clients.

The initial purpose of the evaluation was to assess whether other external reporting sites should be established based on this model. After receiving considerable positive feedback about the service, further external reporting sites were established in the ACT.

The findings from this report will be used to inform improvements in the External Reporting Site model. A summary of findings will be provided to external stakeholders.

## Culturally supportive services in ACTCS

In 2023, the ACTCS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Framework, *Be the Change We Seek*, informs elements of what constitutes a culturally supportive program design. The Framework outlines elements of a culturally safe service that are relevant to the External Reporting Site. These include:

- Co-design and leadership by First Nations staff and community members with cultural knowledge and capability.
- Culturally defined priorities, such as First Nations kinship and meaning of family and connection, and the obligations inherent to kinship ties including Sorry Business.
- Gender-specific, that is, designed with knowledge and understanding of the gender norms, roles and common experiences of both women and men. First Nations women experience with incarceration can impact on their family and community relationships, for example, parenting, child-care, and leadership, and can further entrench disadvantage.
- Holistic services and supports that do not categorise a person into different parts, but rather are open and responsive to presenting needs.

While this framework was not available when the External Reporting Site was established, these elements of service design were core priorities for how ACTCS engage with First Nation clients and their communities.

## The Yeddung Mura External Reporting Site

The External Reporting Site has been designed with the primary aim of contributing to reduction of over-representation of First Nations Peoples in the ACT justice system. It works towards this aim with the following objectives:

- Providing a culturally supportive site for First Nations Peoples to attend for the purpose of meeting the reporting requirements of their community-based corrections order(s),
- Increasing access for First Nations Peoples to Community Operations and linkages with other services offered by Yeddung Mura,
- Increasing cultural awareness and culturally appropriate practice for ACTCS Community Operations staff,
- Developing strong working partnerships with community agencies particularly those who serve the First Nations communities, and
- Assessing the longer-term viability of alternative reporting sites for First Nations Peoples and other populations.

The External Reporting Site aims to improve compliance with orders, a reduction in breach actions and other adverse outcomes, and in time, a reduction in the over-representation of First Nations clients in the ACT justice system.

### A culturally supportive model of engagement

The External Reporting Site pilot sought to provide a culturally supportive site for First Nations clients for the purpose of meeting requirement of their community-based correction orders.

Clients attend the Yeddung Mura office at 56 Coyne Street, Fadden for their supervision requirements, rather than the Community Operations office at 2 Constitution Avenue, Canberra City (2CA office).

A Community Corrections Officer (CCO) and Cultural Engagement Officer (CEO) are available at Yeddung Mura every Tuesday from 10am to 3pm to meet with clients.<sup>1</sup> While at Yeddung Mura, the Community Operations staff liaise and work in partnership with Yeddung Mura staff to assist clients in accessing programs and other supports. These additional services are provided by Yeddung Mura and other external service providers at the site on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The CCO role at the External Reporting Site has similar responsibilities as the CCO role at 2CA. As with CCOs at 2CA, the CCO periodically meets with clients for supervision interviews and to assist the client to meet the conditions of their order(s) and Case Management Plan goals. The CCO also provides support to the client in accessing services.

Supervision responsibilities remain shared with the client's supervising officer based at 2CA, who retains responsibility for the client's Case Management Plan, submitting reports to courts and the Sentence Administration Board (SAB), and ensuring compliance with drug testing where required. Depending on the conditions of their order, clients may alternate between reporting at Yeddung Mura and 2CA.

### The role of Cultural Engagement Officers

The role and presence of the CEO at the External Reporting Site is central to the model. The CEO helps ensure that First Nations clients feel comfortable, willing, and able to meet their reporting requirements. This, in turn, may facilitate more meaningful engagement in their conversations with their CCO and contribute to improved or continued compliance with court mandated conditions and the achievement of case plan goals.

The CEO is also an important resource for the CCOs, both at the External Reporting Site and at 2CA. They provide advice, information, and support around how best to work with First Nations clients. This can be done in a variety of ways, including modelling culturally appropriate ways of communicating (both giving and receiving information), ensuring that impacts of culturally significant events are considered, and striving to maintain engagement in a culturally appropriate manner.

The CCO and CEO also refer clients to Yeddung Mura programs and other services. The CCO and CEO attending the External Reporting Site may also liaise with CCOs at 2CA regarding client engagement and provide progress reports. Clients may also be required to attend 2CA periodically for activities that cannot be performed at Yeddung Mura (e.g., drug tests, community service, and ACTCS criminogenic programs).

### Other external reporting sites

Yeddung Mura Aboriginal Corporation hosted the external reporting site which became a model for other sites. During the pilot phase, from 13 July 2021 to 30 June 2022, Yeddung Mura and ACTCS received significant positive feedback and a strong demand for its services.

The feedback served as a key driver to establish other similar external reporting sites—one at the Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services in Narrabundah, which

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<sup>1</sup> The CEO is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identified position meaning Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander ancestry is considered essential for recruitment.

commenced on 4 May 2022, and another at Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy (CAHMA) in Belconnen, which commenced on 26 May 2023.

### Eligibility for clients to report at the Yeddung Mura External Reporting Site

The *External Reporting Site Community Instructions 2021* ([Appendix A](#)) outlines the process for ACTCS staff to refer clients to the External Reporting Site. The criteria for suitability in the program include clients who meet all the following requirements:

- are subject to a sentenced community-based order with supervision,
- identify as First Nations Peoples,
- have a current LSI-R assessment (a risk and needs assessment tool) and an approved case plan in place, and
- have shown a satisfactory level of compliance in relation to supervision reporting or may benefit from a more culturally appropriate setting to demonstrate compliance.

Those clients who do not meet these criteria are considered unsuitable for reporting at the External Reporting Site if the person has:

- previously shown a level of aggression, particularly physical violence, to ACTCS staff, and/or
- recently returned an ongoing positive urinalysis result.

If the CCO considers a client suitable for referral, the CCO discusses this with the client and the client has the option to report at the External Reporting Site instead of the 2CA office.

In 2021–22, ACTCS Community Operations supervised a total of 1,707 clients. Of these,

- 284 (or 16%) clients identified as First Nations Peoples,
- 1,361 (or 80%) identified as non-Indigenous adults, and
- Indigenous status for the remaining 62 clients (or 4%) was unknown.

Of the 1,707 clients, 465 clients were subject to breach action. Of these,

- 131 (or 28%) identified as First Nations Peoples,
- 329 (or 71%) identified as non-Indigenous adults, and
- 5 cases (or 1%) Indigenous status was unknown.

During the pilot phase, 21 clients were eligible and agreed to supervision at the Yeddung Mura External Reporting Site.

The views of clients at the External Reporting Site, as well as those of ACTCS staff and stakeholders, were crucial to understanding whether the pilot was meeting its intended objectives and where there could be improvements to the program in the future.

## Evaluation framework

The evaluation examines whether the pilot project, Yeddung Mura External Reporting Site, achieves its stated objectives, which are:

- Providing eligible First Nations clients with a culturally supportive alternative reporting site.
- Increasing access for First Nations clients to co-located services at Yeddung Mura.
- Increasing cultural awareness and culturally supportive management of case plans and supervision of community corrections orders for First Nations clients.
- Assessing the longer-term viability of external reporting sites for First Nations clients.

Table 1 provides an outline of the program objectives, activities and evaluation questions that are designed to assess whether the program has achieved its intended goals.

A primary goal of the evaluation is to assess the longer-term viability of the pilot external reporting site model for First Nations Peoples and other vulnerable ACTCS clients. It aims to highlight the strengths and challenges of the program and note areas where the model could be improved.

**Table 1. Program objectives and activities of the Yeddung Mura External Reporting site, and related evaluation questions**

Program objectives	Program activities	Evaluation questions
Provide eligible First Nations clients with a culturally supportive alternative reporting site.	<p>CCOs and CEOs are present at Yeddung Mura every Tuesday from 10am to 3pm to meet with clients.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Eligible clients are referred to the Yeddung Mura External Reporting Site.</li> <li>2. CCOs and CEOs work in partnership with clients and service providers to enhance working relationships.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Did clients prefer report at the External Reporting Site compared to reporting at the 2CA office?</li> <li>2. Were eligible clients willing to engage with supervision provided by the CCO and CEO?</li> </ol>
Increase access for First Nations clients to co-located services at Yeddung Mura.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Yeddung Mura External Reporting Site offers co-located services that are culturally supportive, including access to First Nations Elders and leaders.</li> <li>4. The External Reporting Site service links clients with appropriate programs (e.g., Relationships Australia, Legal Aid, Aboriginal Legal Services, and OneLink and other external service providers).</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Did the External Reporting Site assist access to programs that enabled clients to meet the conditions of their order?</li> <li>4. Did clients find the programs helpful?</li> <li>5. Did clients meet the conditions of their order (e.g., attend appointments, progress case plans, complete orders)?</li> </ol>
Increase cultural awareness and culturally supportive management of case plans and supervision of community corrections orders for First Nations clients.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. CCOs and CEOs work in partnership with clients and enhance engagement between ACTCS, clients and external service providers.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Did the service help build positive working relationships between:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. ACTCS and clients and</li> <li>b. Clients and First Nations Elders?</li> </ol> </li> <li>7. Were clients willing to engage with ACTCS staff at Yeddung Mura in a positive and proactive manner?</li> </ol>
Assess the longer-term viability of external reporting sites for First Nations clients.		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Were there disadvantages to clients reporting at the External Reporting Site rather than at the 2CA office?</li> <li>9. Were there any suggested changes to service delivery that could enhance the provision of services and effective supervision of clients?</li> </ol>

## Method

The External Reporting Site evaluation was undertaken using:

- Administrative data on client records from the ACTCS electronic records management system (JOIST and CORIS),
- Qualitative, semi-structured interviews with clients, ACTCS staff, and stakeholders, and
- Case studies with External Reporting Site clients.

### ACTCS administrative data

Administrative records, from 19 July 2021 to 30 June 2022, were extracted on clients including case notes, Case Management Plans and other correspondence. Records were analysed to understand clients' service use and determine how they engaged with the External Reporting Site. For example, how often they attended the site, period of engagement, and whether they completed their order successfully.

### Qualitative interviews

Semi-structured individual and group interviews were conducted to understand how the Yeddung Mura External Reporting Site delivered a culturally supportive service, perceptions about the service and how it could be improved in the future. Interviews were conducted with:

- ACTCS staff, including individual and group interviews with CCOs,
- Yeddung Mura staff and external stakeholders, and
- ACTCS clients, including telephone interviews with past clients who participated in the program.

The number of interviews conducted, stakeholders involved, and aim of the interview is outlined at [Table 2](#). Interview schedules are provided at [Appendices B–D](#).

### Case studies

After the initial data collection phase (administrative data and interviews), ACTCS found that the data provided insufficient information about the nature of supervision and how these relationships contributed to service outcomes. For this reason, case studies were then developed to further understand these aspects of the program.



**Table 2. Semi structured interviews conducted as part of the evaluation**

Stakeholder	Number of interviews	Purpose
<b>ACTCS staff, CCOs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 group interviews.</li> <li>• 9 individual interviews.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the referral process and how the service was culturally supportive.</li> <li>• Barriers and opportunities to engaging clients in this program.</li> <li>• Relationships between CCOs, ACTCS staff and Yeddung Mura staff.</li> <li>• Service outcomes for clients.</li> </ul>
<b>Yeddung Mura staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 group interview.</li> <li>• 5 individual interviews.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barriers and opportunities to engaging clients in this program.</li> <li>• Relationships between CCOs, ACTCS staff and Yeddung Mura staff.</li> </ul>
<b>Yeddung Mura Nannies Group</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 group interview.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the benefits to the program and if it was culturally supportive.</li> </ul>
<b>Yeddung Mura External Reporting Site clients</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 individual interviews with clients who were present at Yeddung Mura during the evaluation.</li> <li>• 6 individual telephone interviews with clients who previously attended the site. These clients reported at the site during the first year of operation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive and negatives of the External Reporting Site.</li> <li>• If they used other services at the site.</li> <li>• Understand if the service was culturally supportive and where it could be improved.</li> </ul>

## Codesigning the evaluation

The evaluation team planned and designed the evaluation with guidance from our executive leadership team, our service partners, ACTCS Cultural Engagement officer (CEO) and Community Operations staff.

We acknowledge there is a power imbalance between the researcher and client, particularly given the researchers involved were non-Indigenous and employed by a correctional agency. While recognising this, we endeavoured to ensure that the evaluation process was respectful and culturally supportive, and our First Nations colleagues were actively involved in planning and designing the evaluation.

The CEO was involved in the development of the evaluation plan and provided guidance throughout the planning phase. The evaluation plan was also provided to the ACTCS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services Committee for feedback, and to Yeddung Mura management for comment and approval.

The CEO was on-site during the fieldwork phase and assisted in recruiting interview participants. The CEO ensured that clients interviewed were comfortable and verbally expressed informed consent. Information on the evaluation was presented in plain English.

Consent to release the case studies was agreed verbally and in writing. These participants were provided with a copy of their case study prior to finalising the report.

## Findings

This section of the report presents the evaluation's findings based on the evaluation framework (Table 1, p. 12). This section focuses on the following key themes:

- Case Management Plans and supervision,
- Culturally supportive supervision, and
- Opportunities for service improvements.

### Case Management Plans and supervision

During the pilot phase (13 July 2021 to 30 June 2022), 24 clients attended the External Reporting Site. Of these,

- 14 clients were subject to Good Behaviour Orders (GBOs),
- 3 clients were subject to Parole Orders,
- 1 client was subject to an Interstate Parole Order,
- 1 client was subject to an Intensive Corrections Order (ICO),
- 3 were accused persons on Bail Orders,
- 1 client was subject to a Parole Order and a GBO, and
- 1 client was subject to a GBO and Bail Order.

Of the 24 clients,

- 5 clients attended the External Reporting Site once,
- 7 clients attended the site twice,
- 12 clients attended the site on 3 or more occasions, including 3 clients who were accused persons on Bail Orders and therefore their interaction with ACTCS was limited.

During the pilot phase, non-sentenced clients were not eligible to report at the Yeddung Mura External Reporting Site. Three clients on Bail Orders (with no other concurrent orders) heard about the External Reporting Site and commenced reporting there, without a referral from their supervising officer at ACTCS.

Even though these clients did not meet the eligibility requirements, ACTCS decided on a case-by-case basis to allow them to report at the External Reporting Site. These decisions were made to better enable the clients to engage with ACTCS, with the aim of improving their compliance with reporting.

The 24 clients at the External Reporting Site were subject to a total of 37 orders during the first year of the External Reporting Site's operation. Of these 37 orders,

- 24 were completed,
- 6 orders were cancelled due to successful appeal, termination, or administrative reasons,
- 5 orders were breached, and
- 2 orders were still ongoing after the first year.

### Case management and supervision

To understand the level of engagement among clients, ACTCS reviewed administrative attendance data of the 10 sentenced clients who had ongoing engagement with ACTCS at the External Reporting Site on three (3) or more occasions per year. Nine (9) of these 10 clients attended other programs and services at Yeddung Mura. Clients' participation in these programs was voluntary and not specified as a condition of their court order or case plan.

For these 10 clients, attendance data and case notes were reviewed to understand how case management and supervision was conducted at the External Reporting Site. The attendance data highlighted that appointment times were not strictly adhered to at the External Reporting Site and reasons for missing appointments were not always recorded. Some clients appeared to informally drop-in to see the CCO and CEO when they were not required to report.

This approach to case management indicates aspects of positive engagement among clients, while highlighting that the service endeavours to offer a flexible and culturally supportive approach to building relationships with clients. As the service further develops, ACTCS may consider improving the documentation around appointment times and ensuring the relevant aspects of case management are recorded.

### Referral to the External Reporting Site

Interviews with ACTCS staff highlighted that, during the period of the evaluation's data collection, there appeared to be some misunderstanding among clients about how to report in at the External Reporting Site. Some clients appeared at the site for reporting, without having been referred, and other clients misunderstand that not all services (e.g., urinalysis) were offered at the site.

In an interview, ACTCS staff mentioned some clients prefer not to report at an external reporting site, either Yeddung Mura or other external reporting sites. Some clients chose to keep their program engagement and reporting separate, and others chose the convenience and location of the 2CA office.

### Links to other programs and services

A theme that emerged from interviews with Yeddung Mura staff and clients was the importance of the External Reporting Site being co-located with an Aboriginal corporation. Of the six (6) people interviewed, five (5) clients engaged in social support programs offered by Yeddung Mura and one (1) was not interested in programs but focused on employment opportunities.

Yeddung Mura offers programs which aim to motivate clients to change their behaviours and seek employment opportunities. These services include, but are not limited to:

- Circuit Breaker, a program which aims to support the prevention of family, domestic and sexual violence,
- SMART Recovery, a program to address harmful addictive behaviour/s,
- Circles of Security, a program for parents and caregivers,
- Yarning Circles, and
- Mental health and wellbeing programs, including a 10-week anxiety program.

At the time of the evaluation, programs were generally run on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and in the interviews, Yeddung Mura staff advocated that the External Reporting Site should be expanded to operate on both those days so that clients could maximise their opportunities at Yeddung Mura.

Yeddung Mura offers clients transport options and can assist clients to gain their driver's licence. One client was not interested in attending social programs but aspired to gain a driver's licence and opportunity to work in construction. Yeddung Mura helped the client with transport and eventually the client gained his driver's licence and his fork-lift licence.

Another client was able to complete his Community Service Work hours at Yeddung Mura and these skills enabled him to gain paid employment after completion.

## Culturally supportive supervision

### Clients' views of Yeddung Mura

In the qualitative interviews, clients were asked about their views on the External Reporting Site, and whether they preferred reporting at the External Reporting Site or at the 2CA office.

Several interviewees mentioned that they valued the relaxed environment at Yeddung Mura:

*Going to Yeddung Mura lifts your day. They are beautiful, great, couldn't fault them at all.  
[Client, Interview 2]*

*It took a load off my shoulders coming here. It's good to avoid the city and it's peaceful out here. [Client, Interview 5]*

Two (2) interviewees were former clients who had completed their orders and who still attended Yeddung Mura regularly. They expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the service.

Another two (2) interviewees were, at the time, subject to ACTCS supervision, but expressed a strong desire to continue participating in Yeddung Mura programs after their orders were complete. One stated, 'I'm taking advantage of everything available to me' and, another stated, 'I feel blessed to attend at Yeddung Mura'.

### Yeddung Mura compared to 2CA

In interviews, clients reported being more comfortable and less intimidated when reporting at Yeddung Mura. One former client described:

*You feel like you're on the same level at Yeddung Mura—less judged coming here. It is not an office environment. The surroundings here [at Yeddung Mura] are more laid back, more comfortable, and it's good having Indigenous workers here. And, you have more support here, like Legal Aid. They can help if you're having a problem with probation.  
[Client, Interview 6]*

*I like sitting here with people of the same colour, sitting in a comfortable chair. They are open and listening to me. I feel comfortable and not pressured. I am able to be myself.  
[Client, Interview 5]*

One former client had successfully completed his order and was still attending programs at Yeddung Mura during the data collection phase of this evaluation. In the interview, he said:

*In the past, I didn't comply with my order. But I feel I have support here to deal with my problems. People here tell you what you need to hear. You still have the sense that you have to conform to the rules, but the formality is gone. [Client, Interview 4]*

This also demonstrates the ability of the External Reporting Site to facilitate ongoing links between clients and community-based services.

There were a range of reasons why clients would prefer not to attend supervision appointments at the 2CA office. One (1) client who was interviewed for this evaluation mentioned that she was thankful to have the External Reporting Site at Yeddung Mura which she described as 'unbelievable' and that ACTCS staff were helpful. She felt as though everyone in the city where the 2CA office is located 'knows your business', particularly if you are required to engage in urinalysis.

### Perceptions of reporting at 2CA

Some clients commented that they did not like the atmosphere at 2CA, particularly noting that it was formal which emphasised the power imbalance between client and CCO:

*I recommend to others who were feeling uncomfortable, and I tell them they should request to report at Yeddung Mura. I have nieces and nephews that I have spoken to about reporting at Yeddung Mura. It would be good to have younger clients who fear they may be locked up if they report to 2CA. [Former client, Interview 6]*

*Absolutely, 100% Yeddung Mura is great. I felt like there was no tension in the air. At 2CA, I felt like it was 'Us vs. Them'. I felt like we were enemies. [Former client, Interview 5]*

*Its better at Yeddung Mura because of the cultural aspect. They look at you for who you could be, rather than who you were. [Former client, Interview 4]*

Several clients interviewed expressed a dislike for the physical locality of reporting in the 2CA office and, at the same time, felt more comfortable with sharing their experiences and reporting at Yeddung Mura. Interviewees commented:

*[At Yeddung Mura] I can talk to people about my problems, and I want to talk to people who are trying to change. It's hard when your friends are still using, but I want to change. Going to Yeddung Mura lifts my day and I can talk there without feeling shame. [Client, Interview 2]*

*At Yeddung Mura, they don't run you in—they work with you. [Client, Interview 1]*

Some clients could have had negative experiences in Canberra City. One client disclosed he was dealing with trauma and that the 'sounds, smells, and sights' of Canberra City reminded him of these past experiences. Similarly, another client disclosed that she felt relieved about being able to meet her reporting obligations at the External Reporting Site because, at the time, she was experiencing anxiety around seeing an ex-partner in Canberra City.

### Social supports at Yeddung Mura

In the interviews, clients shared their overall positive experiences with ACTCS staff at the External Reporting Site and they highlighted that the atmosphere was positive, helpful, and supportive.

One client mentioned that she felt comfortable attending Yeddung Mura because other family members used the services, while other clients said that having family members who worked at Yeddung Mura also helped make it a positive environment.

Another strength of hosting the External Reporting Site at Yeddung Mura is the co-location with First Nations Elders. For example, the Nannies Group which is a group of Elders who meet to yarn and support clients at Yeddung Mura. Several clients reported that they appreciated the presence of the Nannies Group who provided advice and support to clients, including:

*Elders told me to look after myself and it helped keep me on-track. [Former client, Interview 2]*

*Elders came to visit me [while in custody] and then again in the community. That gave me a sense of stability and I felt good about that. [Former client, Interview 3]*

*The Elders were really helpful. They gave me advice about keeping on a good path, and they were available at any time I needed them. They came to my home on Christmas Eve and gave us a hamper. We just had a baby, and I couldn't get an appointment at Yeddung Mura. [Former client, Interview 4]*

*I appreciate the opportunity to participate at Yeddung Mura, and the advice from Elders. I felt really connected to them. They understood when I had a bad day, otherwise I could have been breached for not attending the appointment in the city. [Former client, Interview 6]*

The Nannies Group also reported a high degree of satisfaction with the External Reporting Site staff, claiming that they tell clients who have issues to go and talk to them, and that it is 'a good spot for the boys and girls to come here' to meet their reporting obligations.

#### Yeddung Mura stakeholder views

Yeddung Mura staff and management were universally supportive of the Yeddung Mura External Reporting Site. They were particularly supportive of the work performed by the regular attending ACTCS CCO and CEO who provided the service. One Yeddung Mura staff member described the approach taken by ACTCS staff as 'sensitive to culture and progressive'.

Another Yeddung Mura staff member reported that:

*Clients understand the difference between Yeddung Mura and [ACT] Corrections—but they have a good rapport.*

ACTCS External Reporting Site staff were perceived by all Yeddung Mura staff as being more approachable than 2CA staff and they reported that clients felt comfortable going to them with their problems. For example, when clients needed to attend Sorry Business, one staff member mentioned 'clients don't feel like they can say this stuff in town' but they felt comfortable talking about culture at the External Reporting Site.

Another staff member reported that clients feel respected by External Reporting Site staff and they 'word things better' than 2CA staff. One staff member stated that the External Reporting Site '100 per cent meets cultural safety.'

#### ACTCS staff views

The External Reporting Site was also perceived by ACTCS staff as being a culturally supportive option for First Nations clients who were willing to engage with the Yeddung Mura service, particularly if they were already connected to people there.

One (1) staff member provided a case study of a former client who had become completely socially isolated after their family disowned him due to his offending. The former client was also involved in

an accident which contributed to the death of a family member, and he was encouraged to report at Yeddung Mura and engage with their services.

The staff member considered this to be a successful example of the service. The former client also participated in this evaluation and reported that they had a positive experience at Yeddung Mura:

*... it was way better, more relaxed, more comfortable with the people and the environment.*  
[Staff, group interview]

Yeddung Mura staff helped the client get back on track with psychologist appointments, facilitated strong relationships with staff, and kept him on track to achieving his reporting goals.

## Service improvements

Interviewees were overwhelmingly positive about the case management, supervision and services offered at the External Reporting Site and most interviewees did not offer any negative perspectives on the services offered.

At the time the evaluation was conducted, the External Reporting Site was a recently established initiative. Yeddung Mura and ACTCS staff who were interviewed offered some suggestions for future service improvements.

### Barriers to engaging with the External Reporting Site

One area where the External Reporting Site could improve its services in the future would be to offer alternative options for conducting urinalysis for clients.

Yeddung Mura offer transport services for clients who are required to conduct urinalysis at 2CA office. These services assist the client to return home or to Yeddung Mura. In interviews, some Yeddung Mura staff expressed their concern that when clients travel to 2CA for urinalysis that they get stuck in the city:

*Yeddung Mura workers take clients to town [2CA] to report. The clients don't want a lift home most of the time. They say they want to see friends, but then they go and use.*

*It is difficult for them to report at 2CA and then they go to use to calm down. But they can have support if they report at Yeddung Mura. Yeddung Mura is like a safety net for them.*

*We try to stop the peer pressure so young people can break-away from bad connections.*  
[Staff, group interview 2]

Furthermore, some clients expressed discomfort with the 'visibility' of conducting urinalysis at 2CA, meaning that, they were uncomfortable because they felt that:

*Everyone knows your business, like if you're getting urinalysis done.* [Client, Interview 1]

Yeddung Mura staff have suggested that ACTCS should explore alternative options to conduct urinalysis at the External Reporting Site rather than only offering these services at the 2CA office. In addition, if all aspects of the client's order are managed at Yeddung Mura, this would reduce confusion among clients on their reporting obligations and requirements.



## Programs and services

The role of the CEO was mentioned as an important role that further contributes to the culturally supportive services offered at the External Reporting Site. Some of the positive feedback about this role was that clients felt that they could be honest and open with the issues happening in their lives:

*The [Cultural Engagement Officers] are aware of issues going on and they are understanding of Sorry Business. They help organise something else for them and are sensitive to culture, are progressive. [Staff Interview 1]*

*If clients have issues, the [Cultural Engagement Officers] are aware. Like 'Sorry Business', clients don't feel like they can say that stuff in town. [Staff Interview 2]*

In an interview, one Yeddung Mura staff member suggested that it would be better if the CEOs were on-site for two days (Tuesdays and Thursdays) even if their attendance on those days is shorter. The staff member suggested that they could attend 11am–2pm on two days. Tuesdays and Thursdays was suggested because these are the days that Yeddung Mura offer programs for clients.

Another suggestion offered was that ACTCS should consider offering through-care services at Yeddung Mura by the Offender Reintegration Division. This would enable better connection with other services that clients may need access to. However, any changes in the program would need to consider how the days/times offered for reporting impact on people with different needs, for example, by enabling those clients with employment to still access the service.

## Case studies

This section presents case studies of Yeddung Mura clients who had ongoing engagement with 2CA and Yeddung Mura, and as a result, successfully completed their order. The case studies highlight how the relationship between 2CA and Yeddung Mura engages with a culturally supportive approach to case management and reporting. The case studies are based on the genuine stories of former ACTCS clients and pseudonyms are used in all examples.

### Case study 1—Jeremy

The first case study is of a young Aboriginal man who has been renamed as ‘Jeremy’.

Jeremy (pseudonym) had a turbulent upbringing and spent time in out of home care as a child. He had a disrupted education due to changes in living circumstances and behavioural issues, and experienced extended periods of unemployment since leaving school at the age of 16.

Jeremy has a lengthy history of offending, which began when he was a juvenile, and includes serious offences. He also has a history of poly-drug use which began at age 9. Jeremy attributes much of his offending to funding his problematic drug use, which he readily admits is still a struggle for him to overcome.

Jeremy reported a troubled family life as a child and adolescent, during which he experienced periods in out-of-home care and challenges with his mental health. He currently has very few family supports in the ACT, has minimal cultural connections and identifies his ex-partner and stepchildren as his primary supports.

Jeremy has been known to ACT Corrective Services since October 2019, when he was remanded in custody at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) for theft and property damage related offences. He was subsequently convicted of these offences and spent over two years in custody.

In December 2021, he was released to parole and accommodated in a Justice Housing property. At the time, he was engaged with the ThroughCare program and shortly after his release, he secured employment. In addition to his Parole Order, Jeremy was also subject to a 12-month GBO, in relation to an assault he committed upon another detainee in the AMC.

Jeremy was assessed as a medium-high risk of reoffending and he was required to engage in weekly supervision appointments with ACTCS. His Case Management Plan objectives included:

- Obtaining employment,
- Engaging in alcohol and other drug (AOD) counselling and attending SMART Recovery to address his problematic substance use,
- Engaging with mental health services to obtain a mental health care plan, and
- Attending the Yeddung Mura External Reporting Site and engaging with the CEO to access to culturally appropriate interventions and support services.

Though Jeremy experienced difficulties abstaining from drug use, he showed progress in other aspects of his transition back to the community. Accordingly, he was referred to the Yeddung Mura External Reporting Site. In consultation with the CEO, it was decided that Jeremy would alternate his supervision appointments between 2CA and the Yeddung Mura External Reporting Site.

During his parole period, Jeremy reported for a total of eight supervision appointments with his allocated CCO and two appointments at the Yeddung Mura External Reporting Site. With the encouragement of the CCO and

the CEO, Jeremy agreed to a referral for the SMART Recovery program facilitated at Yeddung Mura and attended three sessions. He was also introduced to a Yeddung Mura Case Manager who provided additional support for Jeremy to work towards his Case Management Plan objectives. Jeremy engaged with AOD services for 1:1 counselling and engaged with Winnunga for mental health support. Despite receiving a 'Formal Warning' from his CCO for cannabis use, Jeremy successfully completed his Parole Order on 18 February 2022.

Upon completion of his Parole Order, Jeremy's supervision reporting requirements were changed to fortnightly appointments and alternated between 2CA and Yeddung Mura External Reporting Site. He reported for a total of 16 supervision appointments with his allocated CCO, attended 10 appointments at the Yeddung Mura External Reporting Site and one appointment at the Winnunga External Reporting Site.

During his final supervision appointment at Yeddung Mura Reporting Site, Jeremy discussed his plans to move interstate to be closer to family supports.

Overall, Jeremy engaged well with his allocated CCO and staff at the Yeddung Mura External Reporting Site and met his Case Management Plan objectives of obtaining employment, engaging with AOD and mental health supports. Jeremy successfully completed his GBO on 18 November 2022.

## Case study 2—James

The second case study is a middle-aged Aboriginal man who has been renamed as 'James'.

James (pseudonym) has an extensive criminal history which includes several periods of incarceration and multiple community-based orders. He demonstrated mixed compliance with his previous orders. He was subject to breach action on multiple occasions due to his failure to accept supervision, ongoing problematic substance use and further re-offending.

James had a traumatic family background marred by frequent relocations and exposure to alcohol misuse and domestic violence. He left school early to commence an apprenticeship, which he did not complete due to his involvement in criminal activity. James had a history of problematic alcohol consumption and illicit substance use, which commenced as a teenager and contributed to his issues with the law. He struggled with mental health and low motivation. James was prescribed methadone and anti-depressants.

James has a limited employment history. He has three children and a large extended family. He reported feeling regret from being disconnected from his tribe and the land.

James has been known to ACT Corrective Services since 1996. In November 2021, he was sentenced to a 24-month Good Behaviour Order for property damage related offending.

James was assessed as a medium-high risk of reoffending and was required to report for supervision on a fortnightly basis. His Case Management Plan objectives included:

- Continue methadone treatment and engage in SMART Recovery at Yeddung Mura for relapse prevention,
- Engage with Relationships Australia for counselling,
- Engage in medicated treatment for depression and participate in a mental health re-assessment with a psychiatrist,
- Integrate into Yeddung Mura programs and look at assisting in a mentoring role, and
- Complete 40 hours of community service work at Yeddung Mura.

James was referred to the Yeddung Mura External Reporting Site in February 2022, and attended his first appointment soon after. In consultation between his allocated CCO and the CEO, it was decided that James would attend fortnightly supervision appointments at Yeddung Mura. He was also given approval to complete his community service work hours at Yeddung Mura.

During his supervision period, James attended 18 supervision appointments at the Yeddung Mura External Reporting Site and reported for supervision via telephone as requested by his CCO on three occasions. He completed the Circuit Breaker program and a barista course, attended SMART Recovery, and participated in the Alcohol Anonymous Yarning Circle at Yeddung Mura. He also sought support from the Elders for grief and loss.

Yeddung Mura management confirmed that James attended programs regularly and was taking a lead role in the Yarning Circles and that the younger members looked up to him. He also received assistance with writing a resume and job interviewing skills. James successfully completed his community service work hours, of which he was very proud.

Overall, James engaged well with his supervising officer and staff at Yeddung Mura, and he met several of his Case Management Plan objectives. He appeared to take a more positive approach to supervision during this order compared to during his previous community-based orders.

### Case study 3—Victor

The third case study is an older Aboriginal man who has been renamed as 'Victor'.

Victor (pseudonym) had four adult convictions over a long period. In August 2020, Victor was sentenced to imprisonment with scheduled release on parole. He was granted parole and received support to reside at his home, which was leased from Housing ACT.

Victor has a history of family related trauma and violence as a young person. He completed Year 10 in secondary school, and then went on to complete an apprenticeship. Victor was a long-term cannabis user and experienced dependence on heroin. He engaged in pharmacotherapy to address his use of heroin. He was prescribed treatment for his diagnosed mental health disorder and granted a Disability Support Pension.

Victor has a child with his ex-partner and has some social networks and supports. However, Victor's traffic-related offences resulted in the death of a close family member, which created fractures in his social supports and family relationships.

During his parole period, Victor attended in-person supervision appointments as required, however due to his problematic drug use, he faced parole breach hearings on two separate occasions.

Victor's Case Management Plan objectives included:

- Engagement in AOD counselling via Yeddung Mura to address his use of illicit substances,
- Relationship counselling via Yeddung Mura, and
- Monitoring Victor's engagement with a psychologist provided through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Victor continued to engage in parole supervision as required. In March 2021, Victor provided a sample for a urinalysis drug test containing illicit substances. An alleged breach of parole was submitted to the SAB with the recommendation of issuing a formal warning due to his compliance with reporting for parole supervision and his engagement in support from Yeddung Mura and other service providers. The SAB hearing found that the breach was proven and resolved to give Victor a warning about the need to comply with his parole obligations.

Victor was referred to the Yeddung Mura External Reporting Site soon after the site commenced operation in July 2021. Due to the COVID-19 lockdown, the service temporarily conducted supervision via telephone rather than in-person attendance in an office environment.

Upon recommencement at Yeddung Mura, Victor's attendance increased, especially in contrast to his historical attendance at the ACTCS office environment. He advised that he felt relaxed at Yeddung Mura and with the support of Yeddung Mura and ACTCS staff, he engaged with a range of services that provided outreach at Yeddung Mura on Tuesdays, Victor received assistance with his NDIS matters and engaged with counselling services offered by Directions ACT and Relationships Australia. He continued his engagement with Yeddung Mura and additional services until his Parole Order was successfully completed.

Overall, Yeddung Mura was a significant agency partner who contributed linkages to other services to address Victor's case plan goals. Following his commencement at the External Reporting Site, he reported feeling a greater sense of comfort with reporting for parole supervision, which contributed to the successful completion of his sentence in the community.

## Conclusion

This section summarises the key findings from the evaluation, based on the evaluation objectives outlined in the evaluation framework (pp. 11–14) and [Table 1](#). It furthermore notes several limitations of this evaluation and then proposes suggestions for ACTCS to consider in improving the service.

### Did the External Reporting Site provide culturally supportive supervision?

The evaluation report showed that clients and Yeddung Mura staff were overwhelmingly supportive of the External Reporting Site model. It provided a culturally supportive approach to case management and supervision by working with the clients on building positive relationships and reporting outcomes. This included:

- Referring and linking clients with a range of supports and services which enabled individuals to complete the objectives outlined in their Case Management Plan.
- Clients actively engaging with supervision and reporting requirements offered through the External Reporting Site, highlighted by the attendance data and case notes (p. 13).
- Contributing to improved compliance when the CCOs and CEOs could work with the client and Yeddung Mura to manage breaches and prevent non-compliance.
- Supporting clients with complex mental health issues, and those experiences of trauma, by providing an alternative model of care.
- ACTCS and Yeddung Mura working together at the External Reporting Site to address issues of non-compliance and develop strategies for the client to achieve their Case Management Plan objectives.

### How did co-located services at Yeddung Mura support clients to meet the conditions of their case plans?

The External Reporting Site offered a range of formal co-located program (e.g., AOD counselling, mental health and wellbeing programs, and family violence prevention programs), in addition to a range of additional wrap-around supports and services offered by Yeddung Mura.

Many of these additional supports and services enabled clients to meet the conditions of their orders and adhere to case plan goals. These supports include:

- Transportation to 2CA and other locations,
- Assistance with job-ready skills (e.g., resume writing and interview preparation),
- Assistance in gaining qualifications (e.g., a barista course or construction-related certificates), and
- Connection to other services (e.g., applications for driver's or other types of licences).

These range of supports and services enabled clients to gain employment and assist in achieving their Case Management Plan objectives.

The case studies showed examples of clients with complex needs and vulnerabilities, such as long-term dependence on illicit substances and challenges in consistently attending supervision appointments. The case studies highlighted how the relationship between Yeddung Mura case managers and 2CA staff (the CEO and CCO) enhanced the delivery of supports to ensure that supervision appointments could provide a trauma-informed approach.

## How did the External Reporting Site improve the relationships between clients and stakeholders?

Yeddung Mura offered a range of social supports and relationships with community networks that further supported clients to engage at the External Reporting Site. Clients mentioned that First Nations Elders, Yarning Circles, and family networks are examples of social supports which they felt as beneficial and supportive in their engagement at the External Reporting Site.

Yeddung Mura linked clients with additional supports required and the presence of First Nations Elders provides additional motivation for clients to continue engaging with the site. The continued connection between Elders who visited clients while in custody and later at Yeddung Mura provided a meaningful sense of connectedness and stability that some individuals needed when reintegrating into the community.

## How can the External Reporting Site model be improved?

Interviewees offered few criticisms about the External Reporting Site.

The main disadvantage noted about the External Reporting Site was that clients were required to conduct urinalysis at 2CA. Clients felt that this experience was visible and they felt a sense of shame when completing their tests at 2CA. Future improvements could explore options for conducting urinalysis that better upholds the dignity of clients and that is trauma-informed.

The evaluation showed that the service could be expanded by either offering additional reporting periods at Yeddung Mura or offering another location for clients for reporting in the ACT.

## Limitations of the evaluation

There were some limitations to the data available to inform the evaluation. The External Reporting Site received a considerable number of clients during the pilot phase, with 24 clients who reported using the service between 13 July 2021 and 30 June 2022. However, the uptake and use of the service was impacted by the ACT COVID-19 lockdown period which commenced in August 2021, and these health regulations resulted in the site being closed from 17 August to 23 November 2021.

The limited sample size could potentially skew the results towards those who were willing to engage with ACTCS on a regular basis. There was limited information available on other clients (who had less frequent attendance at the External Reporting Site or those who chose not to be referred).

The administrative data provided limited information on engagement between clients and ACTCS staff and how this impacted on service outcomes. For example, the data provided insufficient detail

about why some clients only attended once or twice, and the reasons why they stopped attending the site.

The limited information documented in the case notes highlighted one potential area for improvement. As noted below, the Community Operations team could consider whether sufficient appointment details are being recorded and whether sufficient detail is documented in Case Management Plans and notes.

At the time of conducting the evaluation, the program was in the early stages of operation and limited data was available to observe participant engagement with the program.

## Future considerations

The following points outline recommended steps for ACTCS to consider in the ongoing improvement of the External Reporting Site:

- The External Reporting Site pilot could be expanded to either additional sites in the ACT (particularly, considering establishing another northside reporting site) or additional days per week for clients to report at the Yeddung Mura External Reporting Site.
- When considering the expansion of services at external reporting sites, particular consideration should be given to services for both First Nations and non-Indigenous Australians. By offering external reporting sites to non-Indigenous Australians, ACTCS could improve the range of interventions that reduce the risks of a client breaching their order conditions. For example, enabling reporting at alternative locations can reduce a client's interactions with negative influences in the Canberra City.
- Review the case management and supervision at the 2CA office to understand how the service could be more positive and culturally supportive for those that do choose to report there.
- Improve record keeping of case management and supervision practices conducted as part of the External Reporting Site and ensure those practices are aligned with those at 2CA.
- Explore alternative options for conducting urinalysis at 2CA and at the External Reporting Site, to ensure that clients feel comfortable (and less exposed) from meeting those drug-testing requirements. By removing the need for clients to present to 2CA, this could furthermore minimise opportunities for these clients to reconnect with past acquaintances and potentially engage in anti-social behaviour.
- Review which reintegration programs and supports are being offered at the External Reporting Site and whether it is possible to expand on these services.



## Appendices

The following appendices are provided to accompany the information presented in this evaluation report.

- Appendix A: ACTCS External Reporting Site Community Instruction 2021
- Appendix B: Interview Questions—ACTCS staff
- Appendix C: Interview Questions—Yeddung Mura Staff and Stakeholders
- Appendix D: Interview Questions—Clients of the External Reporting Site

## Appendix A - External Reporting Site Community Instruction 2021

### External Reporting Site Community Instruction 2021

COMMUNITY INSTRUCTION	External Reporting Site
COMMUNITY INSTRUCTION NO.	C23.1
SCOPE	Community Corrections

#### PURPOSE

To provide ACT Corrective Services' (ACTCS) Community Corrections staff with instructions on the suitability of offenders, the referral process, the safety and operations of an external reporting site.

#### DEFINITION

An external reporting site provides a culturally appropriate reporting site for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are subject to probation/supervision conditions on their community-based orders.

#### PROCEDURES

##### 1. Suitability and referral

1.1 Offenders suitable to be referred to an external reporting site include clients who:

- a. are subject to a sentenced community-based orders with supervision
- b. identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- c. have a current risk assessment and an approved case plan in place
- d. have shown a satisfactory level of compliance in relation to supervision reporting or may benefit from a more culturally appropriate setting to demonstrate said compliance.

1.2 As well as those who fall outside of the parameters noted in 1.1, offenders who are considered unsuitable to be referred to an external reporting site include clients who have:

- a. previously shown a level of aggression (particularly physical violence) towards ACTCS staff
- b. recently returned ongoing positive urinalysis results.

1.3 If the Community Corrections Officer (CCO) considers the offender to be suitable for referral to an external reporting site, the CCO should discuss the potential for external reporting with the offender. If the offender expresses a preference for external reporting, the CCO and the offender should meet with ACTCS' Cultural Engagement Officer (CEO) before submitting a referral.

1.4 The CCO will complete the *External Reporting Site Referral* form and provide the signed copy to the CEO. This will include the proposed date and time of the first appointment at the site. Where possible the CCO will consult with the CEO regarding this appointment date.

1.5 The CEO is responsible for maintaining a client list and appointment schedule. The CEO will determine if the proposed appointment is available; if not they will advise the CCO of the next available date and the CCO will contact the offender to reschedule.

## 2. Site safety

2.1 Two staff members must be present to run an external reporting site.

2.2 If no site representatives are present at the reporting site, the CCOs should cancel the session.

2.3 Staff attending an external reporting site must take a mobile phone with them and be available to be contacted throughout the session/day.

2.4 The CEO and CCO must ensure that offenders with non-associations are not scheduled to report to an external reporting site on the same day.

2.5 Offenders will wait in the designated waiting area at the external reporting site and CCOs will call them in to the interview room when ready. This is to avoid multiple offenders being in the interview room at once.

2.6 If an offender attends who appears to be under the influence of alcohol and or drugs, the CCOs should advise the offender that no appointment can be undertaken while they are under the influence and reschedule or provide a direction to contact at a later stage.

2.7 The CCOs should position themselves in the room so that they have a clear and unobstructed exit path should they need to leave quickly.

## 3. Operations

3.1 Supervision appointments conducted at an external reporting site should focus on the same information as would normally be discussed in an office interview. This includes a clear focus on case plan goals, risks, interventions, and order compliance.

3.2 If previously planned, the CCOs should take the *Alcolizer* and/or oral swab drug testing equipment with them to the reporting session. Testing for alcohol and other drugs is permitted at an external reporting site.

3.3 If a preliminary oral positive drug test occurs, and the offender has a condition not to use, the CCOs may complete a confirmatory oral test, or direct the offender to report for urinalysis at the Community Corrections office.

3.4 If the offender attending the external reporting site is not linked with the staff or services there, the CCO may assist them in engaging with the organisation.

3.5 All offenders reporting at external reporting sites must be given details of a subsequent appointment in writing. This notification must state the location at which the offender will be required to report for this appointment.

3.6 All contact with offenders at an external report site must be case noted in line with the *Case Note Policy* and *Case Note Categories Community Instruction*.

## RELATED DOCUMENTS AND FORMS

- Case Note Policy

- Case Note Categories Community Instruction -
- External Reporting Site Referral

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A/g Assistant Commissioner  
ACT Corrective Services

12 July 2021

#### Document details

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Version no.	Date	Description	Author
V1	July 2021	First Issued	Michael Steen

## Appendix B: Interview questions—ACTCS staff

### Group interviews

These are the questions used to guide group interviews with ACTCS CCOs.

Questions:

1. How well does the referral process work?
2. What proportion of offenders offered referral are interested in reporting at Yeddung Mura?
3. Is there anything that ACTCS can do to improve the referral process?
4. How do you make decisions regarding referring offenders to Yeddung Mura for reporting?
5. Are there any concerns regarding having offenders reporting off site?
6. Are there any benefits for ACTCS in having an external reporting site based at Yeddung Mura?
7. Any other comments?

### Individual interviews

These are the questions used to guide individual interviews with ACTCS CCOs.

Questions:

1. In your experience, have offenders attending Yeddung Mura found the service culturally supportive? In what ways?
2. In your experience, are there any differences in the supervision provided at Yeddung Mura compared with 2CA?
3. Do you know if offenders have linked into other programs or activities at Yeddung Mura?
1. Are there any benefits for ACTCS in having an external reporting site based at Yeddung Mura?

## Appendix C: Interview questions—Yeddung Mura staff and stakeholders

### Group interviews

These are the questions used to guide group interviews with Yeddung Mura staff.

Questions:

1. What has it been like having an external reporting site at Yeddung Mura?
2. Can you tell me about your interactions with clients who report here?
3. Are there any benefits for clients coming here to report, rather than to 2CA?
4. Are there any benefits for Yeddung Mura in having an external reporting site based here?
5. Have there been any issues with having clients reporting here?
6. ACTCS attend Yeddung Mura on a Tuesday from 10:00am to 3:00pm. Is this a good day and time for Yeddung Mura?

### Individual interviews

These are the questions used to guide group interviews with the Yeddung Mura Nannies' Group.

Questions:

1. What has it been like having an external reporting site at Yeddung Mura?
2. Do you think it is good for the clients to come here to report?
3. What are the ACTCS staff like?

## Appendix D: Interview questions—Clients of the External Reporting Site

These are the questions used to guide individual interviews with clients at the Yeddung Mura External Reporting Site.

Questions:

1. Did you like reporting at Yeddung Mura better than 2CA?
2. Did you have any good experiences at Yeddung Mura that you can tell me about?
3. Did you go to any of the other activities at Yeddung Mura?
4. Is there anything that ACTCS could do to make reporting at Yeddung Mura better?
5. Would you recommend reporting to Yeddung Mura to others?