

TAS Party positions on JR

Australian Prison Reform Journal

Volume 5, Issue 1, Article 2, 2025

© APRJ 2025 All Rights Reserved

Cameron I Russell

 [View ORCID profile](#)

URL: [www.aprj.com.au/articles/APRJ-5\(1\)-2-TAS-Party-JR-positions.pdf](http://www.aprj.com.au/articles/APRJ-5(1)-2-TAS-Party-JR-positions.pdf)

Abstract

It currently appears possible that Tasmania will have an early election following Liberal Premier Jeremy Rockliff's defeat in a no-confidence motion.* Australian Prison Reform Journal is endeavouring to publish the policy positions of the major parties on justice reinvestment before each State/Territory/Federal election. If a party adds or amends their policy at any time, APRJ will amend the publication.

*Since initial publication, the Tasmanian election date has been announced. It will be held on Sat 19 July 2025.

Policies on justice reinvestment

Prior to each state, territory or federal election, [Australian Prison Reform Journal](#) asks the major parties for their policy on justice reinvestment, which is considered by the [Journal](#) to be the main way in which the root causes of crime can be addressed and our high rates of incarceration reduced. It is also the main way in which the overrepresentation of First Nations peoples in the criminal justice system can be addressed and the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people closed. As the Tasmanian Governor Barbara Baker considers the request for an early election, the policies of the three major parties have been sought. All three parties have returned their policy:

Liberal Party of Australia

The Honourable Guy Barnett MP – Deputy Premier, Treasurer, Attorney-General, Minister for Justice

Party position:

Thank you for your email of 19 April 2025 regarding the Tasmanian Liberal Government's position on the complex issue of justice reinvestment. I am pleased to provide information on the Tasmanian Government's commitments in this important area. Justice reinvestment

is a multifaceted issue that presents a number of challenges, particularly in a state like Tasmania which has a substantially lower imprisonment rate than, for example, some US jurisdictions which have highlighted the dramatic economic and social benefits of their justice reinvestment initiatives. Even so, the Tasmanian Government believes there are significant opportunities to build momentum in this area through strong governance, collaborative approaches, and innovative investment.

A recent and significant example of this was in 2024 when the Government determined not to proceed with the construction of a new correctional facility in the north of the state, which had the potential to increase the numbers in custody, and to instead invest in rehabilitation to reduce recidivism. This decision provided a clear example of the government's confidence that reducing reoffending and ensuring the safety of the Tasmanian community can be achieved through alternatives to custodial infrastructure. Other examples over the past 12 months include:

- Expanding treatment options for prisoners experiencing drug and alcohol dependency through repurposing of an existing facility as a residential alcohol and drug treatment centre, where services will be delivered in cooperation with a specialist nongovernment service provider.
- Investment in in-cell technology and expansion of video-calling capability to help prisoners remain more closely connected to their families and support networks, improve access to legal representation, and to enable the Tasmania Prison Service to adopt a more flexible approach to the delivery of programs and education.
- Employment of additional staff to offer more opportunities for training, education programs and activities with specific support services being made available for Aboriginal prisoners to help reduce the rates of incarceration of Aboriginal people.

These initiatives reflect our commitment to supporting safer, more resilient communities across Tasmania, and to limiting the number of people who come into contact with the criminal justice system.

Australian Labor Party

The Honourable Dean Winter MP – Leader of the Opposition

Party position:

Tasmanian Labor is committed to ensuring we have the right policy settings that reduce crime and promote safer communities.

In Tasmania we know we have a youth justice system that is failing – demonstrated by the fact that almost 100% of young people who spend time in our youth justice system not only reoffend while within the youth justice system, but also later go on to serve time at our adult prison. Many of these issues begin much earlier in particular for children in the out of home care or child protection system.

Labor promotes policies that intervene early to divert young (and adult) offenders from a path of offending and that offer genuine rehabilitation programs that promote a reduction in recidivism.

At the last election we committed to policies including a stand-alone youth court which would have operated on a community justice model, to hold young offenders accountable, but in a way that would provide genuine diversionary and rehabilitation options to prevent further offending.

My team and I look forward to continuing to develop policies in this area during this period of opposition.

Australian Greens

The Honourable Cassandra (Cassy) O'Connor, Spokesperson for Justice

Party position:

The Greens support evidence-based approaches to break the cycle of disadvantage that can cause crime, legislative reform to achieve this and increased funding for early intervention and prevention.

Regrettably, while Lutruwita/Tasmania has a Youth Justice blueprint which has an emphasis on trauma-informed, culturally-sensitive responses to addressing disadvantage and youth crime, government ministers still talk 'tough on crime'. The prison population has steadily increased under a Liberal government, in both adult and youth detention.

Persistent government neglect of at-risk communities, a punitive legal framework and detention system - the antithesis of justice reinvestment - have caused harm to children and young people in Tasmania since colonisation. Profound intergenerational trauma, particularly among First Nations people, is the result.

We have been calling for the closure of Ashley Youth Detention Centre, and investment in therapeutic, evidence-based responses to juvenile offending, for more than a decade in Tasmania. Under enormous political pressure due to clear evidence of harm to children, the Tasmanian Government has announced it will close Ashley, but it is now two years behind deadline. The Greens supported the then Tasmanian Commissioner for Children and Young People's "Justice Reinvestment Framework for Tasmania" with its child centred approach and recognition of community led solutions.

With Palawa children and adults disproportionately represented within the justice and corrections systems here, we support the right and leadership role of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community in determining alternatives to incarceration and developing community-led responses for their children.

The Greens also strongly support improved parole options and increased funding for community corrections.

Our policy platform is strongly focussed on tackling poverty; health, educational and housing disadvantage; investment in early intervention and prevention.

Please let me know if there's any more you need or any clarification required.