

NT Party positions on JR

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Abstract

Australian Prison Reform Journal is endeavouring to publish the policy positions of the major parties on justice reinvestment. We will progressively publish these positions soon after receiving at least two of the party positions in a particular jurisdiction. If a party adds or amends their policy at any time, APRJ will amend the publication.

Policies on justice reinvestment

[Australian Prison Reform Journal](#) is asking 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. The policies of the three major parties in the Northern Territory (NT) were sought and they are as follows:

Country Liberal Party

Hon Marie-Claire Boothby, Attorney-General

Party position:

The NT Government's commitment to community led initiatives recognises the importance of partnering with Aboriginal people to protect victims and hold people to account while developing longer term strategies that reduce offending and address the root causes of crime. While community safety is paramount, we recognise prevention and rehabilitation are vital to reducing offending and recidivism and are committed to diversionary measures and the continued implementation of key initiatives under the Aboriginal Justice Agreement, such as Law and Justice Groups, Community Courts and Alternatives to Custody.

These initiatives align with the principles of justice reinvestment through a systems approach focusing on community engagement, addressing the root causes of criminal behaviour, promoting diversionary programs and alternative sentencing and using data driven approaches to monitor progress and ensure accountability. Law and Justice Groups and Community Courts Law and Justice Groups are community groups comprising Aboriginal elders and leaders designed to address local justice issues through participation in the Community Court process and the development and delivery of culturally informed justice responses. Community Courts are established under the Sentencing Act 1995 and seek to enable Aboriginal elders and leaders to work directly with judges to make culturally informed sentencing decisions and develop appropriate community-based sentencing and rehabilitation options.

Law and Justice Groups provide guidance and support to offenders and victims in navigating the court process and operate to rebuild the authority of elders, including through assistance with in-community supervision and compliance monitoring of offenders with court orders (community work, good behaviour requirements etc.). Law and Justice Groups may also operate to prevent and manage conflict through peacemaking and mediation efforts, improving community safety and reducing the potential for offending and subsequent contact with the justice system. Together these initiatives seek to: engender a sense of strength and ownership among Aboriginal elders and leaders who are striving to rebuild cultural frameworks and create cohesive communities; and increase the opportunity for Aboriginal communities to play an active part in reducing offending and increasing community safety, including through addressing the root causes of crime. Re-engaging people in family and culture holds them in community enabling greater opportunity for involvement in pro-social activities including ceremonies, education and employment. Law and Justice Groups are operating in five communities across the Northern Territory: Kintore; Maningrida; Groote Eylandt; Ramingining; and Barunga / Wugularr. Community Courts are operating in all of these communities, except for Barunga / Wugularr. It is anticipated Community Court will commence at Barunga / Wugularr in the second half of 2025. Further, the Attorney-General's Department will conduct an evaluation and review into the effectiveness of the Law and Justice Groups in November 2025.

Alternatives to Custody Alternatives to Custody (ATC) provide Aboriginal Territorians with targeted programs tailored to their individual needs in addressing the root causes of their offending. People can be referred by the Courts, Police, Corrections, legal services, other program providers, family or self-referred. The Attorney-General's Department funds the operation of two ATC facilities: the Life Skills Camp for Aboriginal Women in Alice Springs; and the Anindilyakwa Healing Centre for Aboriginal men on Groote Eylandt. Both facilities are currently operated by Drug and Alcohol Services Australia. The Life Skills Camp ATC in Alice Springs continues to operate at near full capacity to provide intensive support and tailored rehabilitation services to Aboriginal women in contact or at risk of contact with the justice system. In January 2025, the Anindilyakwa Healing Centre on Groote Eylandt was completed. The facility has residential capacity for 32 clients. Day programs commenced in August 2024, and residential programs commenced in May 2025.

Other programs and initiatives There are a range of other programs and initiatives aimed at addressing the root causes of offending and recidivism being progressed by other Government agencies, including: The Circuit Breaker program - A cross-agency initiative to identify strategies, interventions, and support services to address the young person's behaviours and give families the tools they need to make positive changes, including referrals to specialist support services for more holistic support. Investment in programs targeting domestic violence prevention, early intervention and accountability for perpetrators. Increasing housing options for domestic violence victim survivors and investing in wrap around supports for crisis accommodation, tenancy support programs and place-based responses that address the needs of victim-survivors that extend beyond immediate shelter. Increased investment in rehabilitation and treatment options to combat alcohol harm and misuse, including increasing investment in alcohol and drug rehabilitation services. Ensuring effective data collection and information sharing systems are in place to support rigorous monitoring and evaluation to build the evidence-base of what works in the Northern Territory by collecting detailed data on crime reduction initiatives to support robust evaluation work, and deliver evaluations of initiatives that determine whether initiatives are delivering value for money. Thank you for your letter, and continued interest in justice reinvestment policies in the Northern Territory.

Australian Labor Party

Chanston (Chansey) Paech, Shadow Attorney-General

Party position:

Territory Labor firmly believes in the principles of justice reinvestment and is committed to supporting initiatives that reduce offending, strengthen communities, and deliver better outcomes for all Territorians. We believe that by investing in Justice reinvestment we can address the root causes of crime by redirecting resources toward preventative measures and community-based solutions, rather than solely relying on punitive responses that have not and are not working.

Evidence from all over the country demonstrates that Justice Reinvestment (JR) not only reduces recidivism but also creates stronger and more resilient communities. Territory Labor recognises the unique challenges faced by remote and regional areas and understands that a tailored, community-led approaches are essential to achieving success as communities hold many of the answers to local problems and one size does not fit all when it comes to addressing complex social issues.

Territory Labor's commitment to justice reinvestment is reflected in our work and advocacy to expand alternatives to custody programs, strengthen diversionary programs, and support rehabilitation initiatives that are grounded in evidence, therapeutic responses and support peoples lived experiences. We are particularly focused on addressing the overrepresentation of First Nations people in the justice system by investing in culturally safe and locally driven programs that deliver meaningful change.

We believe that justice reinvestment is not just about reducing crime it's about building opportunities, it's about equity, and healing for individuals and communities. By supporting this approach, Territory Labor is working to build a brighter future for all Territorians.

Territory Labor understands that Justice reinvestment is fundamentally about addressing the underlying social and economic issues that contribute to crime, making it far more than just a justice issue. It's about preventative measures and early intervention, recognising that challenges such as poverty, unemployment, inadequate housing, poor education, and lack

of access to health and systemic racism services play a significant role in driving criminal behaviour and Justice Reinvestment is one way to address these inequalities.

Justice Reinvestment should be everyone's business.

Australian Greens

N/A: Sent to office@nt.greens.org.au

Party position:

The Greens do not hold any seats in the NT Legislative Assembly and therefore do not have an A-G spokesperson.