

## SA 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. 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 state of South Australia (SA) have been sought. One party has responded so far:

### Australian Labor Party

The Hon. Kyam Maher MLC, Deputy Premier; Minister for Aboriginal Affairs; Attorney-General

Party position:

I write in response to your correspondence on behalf of the Australian Prison Reform Journal regarding South Australia's work to strengthen justice reinvestment. Thank you for your interest in this promising area of reform. Justice reinvestment is a long-term, community-led approach that aims to prevent crime by addressing the drivers of contact with the justice system. The structure of justice reinvestment activities will look different from community to community, based on local knowledge and challenges. In 2022, the Australian Labor Party took to the federal election a commitment to fund 30 local justice

reinvestment sites. In the 2022-23 Federal Budget, \$81.5 million was allocated to justice reinvestment as a part of First Nations justice measures, including funding for locally tailored initiatives that address the underlying causes of incarceration, and the establishment of a National Justice Reinvestment Unit. An additional \$10 million was later committed to support place-based initiatives in Central Australia. The Federal Government has since opened up a number of grant rounds and through open, non-competitive application processes, has identified successful sites. Two South Australian sites were successful in receiving funding: Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority in Murray Bridge and Healthy Dreaming Pty Ltd in Port Augusta.

The Federal Government has indicated that state and territory governments have a role to play in ensuring the success of these justice reinvestment initiatives, and the South Australian Government is committed to providing practical support through actions that are identified and agreed in partnership with communities hosting justice reinvestment sites. This might include support such as data sharing to inform justice reinvestment activities. The South Australian Government, through the Department of Human Services, also provides support to the existing justice reinvestment site in Port Adelaide, Tiraapendi Wodli. Tiraapendi Wodli supports the local Aboriginal community at its 'Hub' by providing a community-led space for connection and support. It offers a range of programs and support services that promote cultural and educational engagement, including men's, women's and Elders yarning groups, life skills workshops, and post-release programs for people returning to community after prison. As both Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Attorney-General, I am eager to see these initiatives succeed and have a meaningful impact on justice outcomes for First Nations people in South Australia.

### **Liberal Party**

Mr Joshua (Josh) Teague MLA, Shadow Attorney-General; Deputy Leader of the Opposition; Shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

Party position:

The South Australian Liberal Party took a \$40 million "Breaking the Cycle" Fund policy to the recent state election. This fund would have provided a significant investment in gold

standard early intervention programs to help break the cycle of offending. It would back programs that have proven themselves to be effective off-ramps for at-risk youths.

The funding was applauded by a number of stakeholders, most recently referred to by the South Australian Law Society in the 2026-27 State Budget Submission, which asked for "a significant increase in funding for youth diversionary and early intervention programs that at least matches the \$40 million "Break the Cycle" Fund by the Liberal Party prior to the State Election".

### **Australian Greens**

The Hon. Robert Simms MLC, Greens SA Spokesperson for Justice

Party position:

The Greens believe that if we care about breaking the cycle of crime and inter-generational poverty, we need to reduce imprisonment rates. We would prioritise investment in justice reinvestment programs, where projected increases in imprisonment expenditure are re-directed, in advance, to programs which are demonstrated to address the root causes of crime. This could be supporting programs for single parents, educational activities for pre-school-aged children, or sports programs for school-aged children. We recognise that justice reinvestment has proved highly successful in other jurisdictions. Since a justice reinvestment initiative was introduced in Texas in 2007, they have closed 16 prisons, and their recidivism and crime rates are at historic lows. In the Australian context, justice reinvestment can help reduce the shameful over-representation of Aboriginal people in our prisons. Aboriginal young people in South Australia are 23 times more likely to be placed in detention than non-Aboriginal young people. These numbers are increasing. If this crisis of overrepresentation is not addressed, South Australia risks losing another generation of First Nations peoples to the criminal justice system. By investing in First Nations communities, we can end this cycle. I understand that at the moment there is only one justice reinvestment program in South Australia, which is in Port Adelaide, Tiraapendi Wodl. This receives a combination of funding from the South Australian Department of Human Services (DHS) funding from the Australian Red Cross (ARC). The cost of adult incarceration is approximately \$147,000 per year per

prisoner. The Greens would redirect projected imprisonment cost increases into justice reinvestment, with a target of \$30 million over 4 years. We propose to open another 3 programs over 4 years, and for at least one of those to exist outside of Adelaide.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to respond. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any further questions.