

# Justice and Community Safety Directorate

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs

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Primary responsibility for public sector policy development and service delivery in connection with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT rests with the Department of Disability Housing and Community Services. Specific information can be found on their [website](#).

The Justice and Community Safety Directorate works to provide and improve justice services and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within our community.

Research and evidence from a range of sources provides a consistent message as to the issues and circumstances surrounding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people throughout Australia. Research suggests that the justice system needs to:

- Develop effective solutions "with" the Indigenous community.
- Concentrate on improving Indigenous community safety to underpin reforms in housing, education, health and employment.
- Improve access to culturally competent support services in key areas of rehabilitation and family support and link persons from the criminal justice system to these services.
- Improve diversionary options within the justice system which encourages individuals, families and communities to heal.
- Understand that poverty and disadvantage is the driver of crime and supporting families prevents them coming in contact with the care and protection and criminal justice systems.
- Build the capacity of agencies to understand and work in partnership with Indigenous communities.
- Coordinate services and programs across the wide range of current initiatives being implemented under the banner of "Closing the Gap" in the areas of health, education, housing and employment.
- Incorporate evaluation mechanisms to foster continuous improvement of services and policies with a view to achieving key targets and improved outcomes.

The Directorate, on behalf of the ACT Government, has developed a whole-of-government approach for the provision of effective services.

[ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Agreement 2010 - 2013](#)

[Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Law and Justice Services in the ACT - A practical guide](#)

ACT Services include:

- [Aboriginal Justice Centre](#)
- [ACT Courts](#)

- [ACT Ombudsman](#)
- [ACT Policing](#)
- [ACT Corrective Services](#)
- [Consumer Guide](#)
- [Human Rights Commission](#)
- [Restorative Justice](#)
- [Victim Support](#)

## **Aboriginal Justice Centre**

[The Aboriginal Justice Centre](#) provides practical and emotional support to offenders in the criminal justice system. The Centre works with all justice agencies including ACT Policing, ACT Corrective Services, Victim Support ACT, Youth Justice, Ngambra Circle Sentencing Court, Human Rights Commission and legal services to improve and coordinate services.

## **ACT Courts**

An Indigenous courts reference group provides ongoing consultation with the Indigenous community to improve the response to Indigenous offenders and victims.

[Ngambra Circle Sentencing Court \(pdf\)](#)

## **ACT Ombudsman**

The [ACT Ombudsman's office](#) has a dedicated Indigenous Unit that provides assistance when dealing with complaints from Indigenous people and communities.

## **ACT Policing**

The [Australian Federal Police](#) employs an Indigenous community liaison officer who liaises with the Indigenous community to establish and maintain positive relationships and foster mutual understanding.

## **ACT Corrective Services**

[ACT Corrective Services](#) has developed a number of initiatives to reduce the number of Indigenous men and women in the criminal justice system. These include:

- An Indigenous Throughcare/Aftercare Program which delivers tangible ongoing support.
- A co-facilitation model for programs that improves the effectiveness of rehabilitation by having an Indigenous person or "cultural broker" involved to improve cultural appropriateness.
- An Indigenous cultural place at the AMC to provide a venue for prisoners to create a sense of community and express themselves through cultural activities.

- Culturally appropriate community service opportunities for offenders performing community service work.
- Community probation and parole reporting centres to mitigate transport and access problems.
- Indigenous detainees at the Alexander Maconochie Centre or Bimberi Youth Justice Centre have access to a [Mental Health ACT Aboriginal Liaison Mental Health Officer](#).

## Consumer Guide

The Office of Regulatory Services provides a consumer guide to provide Indigenous consumers with information about making purchasing decisions for a range of products in a wide range of situations.

[Indigenous Consumer Guide \(pdf\)](#)

## Human Rights Commission

The Commission works as part of the Access to Justice for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Network convened by the Women's Legal Centre. The Network engages with the indigenous community, including consulting the Aboriginal Justice Centre, the Aboriginal Legal Services, Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service and Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation.

Brochure: [Have you been treated unfairly?](#)

[Recent research](#)

## Restorative Justice

The [Restorative Justice Unit](#) undertakes additional activities to support Indigenous youth through the restorative justice process including outreach assessments, home visits, support with travel and community based placements involving culturally appropriate support.

## Victim Support ACT

Victim Support ACT offers an Indigenous service delivery plan to meet the needs of Indigenous victims of crime. Victim Support ACT works with the Domestic Violence Crisis Service and Canberra Rape Crisis Centre to provide an integrated support approach to Indigenous people.