

# Justice and Community Safety Directorate

## Restorative Justice

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Restorative Justice (RJ) is a way for the people most affected by a crime - the victim, their family and friends and the offender and their family and friends to talk about:

- **What happened?**
- **How were people affected?**
- **What needs to be done to make things better?**

The ACT Restorative Justice Unit's (RJU) primary objective is to provide restorative justice to members of the ACT community who have been affected by an offence in a forum that provides:

- victims with an opportunity to talk about how the offence has affected them and others close to them;
- offenders with an opportunity to accept responsibility for their actions;
- victims, offenders and supporters an opportunity to discuss the harm and what needs to be done to repair that harm; and
- offenders with an opportunity to repair the harm done by the offence.

The RJU operates according to the Crimes (Restorative Justice) Act 2004 and has been in operation since 31 January 2005. Criminal justice agencies can make referrals to restorative justice at various points in the criminal justice process. Participation in RJ is voluntary.

### **Phase 3 - Family Violence and Sexual Offences**

The final phase of the scheme commenced on 1 November 2018, providing for the inclusion of referrals for family violence and sexual offences.

The ACT Restorative Justice scheme is a victim-centred response which prioritises the safety and interests of people who have been impacted by crime. RJ participants and processes are carefully assessed by convenors in order to facilitate a restorative process which addresses the unique needs of all participants. The RJU will work with ACT justice agencies and community organisations to ensure that safety assessment and planning is prioritised, recognising the dynamics and complexities of family violence and sexual offences.

RJ conferencing can only proceed if it is safe to do so and meets the needs of the victim of crime. The person responsible for the offence must show a willingness to accept responsibility for having caused harm and agree to be actively involved in making amends that is within their capacity to achieve. In

family violence and sexual offence referrals, professional supporters will assist participants to be emotionally and psychologically prepared for the RJ process.