



INDIGENOUS SUPPORT AND CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

The RJ Unit has an Indigenous Guidance Partner and Convenor who can ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients are supported to understand the RJ process, achieve positive outcomes, and be referred to other relevant services. For more information on how Indigenous people can be supported in the RJ process, please contact the office on 6207 3992 to talk to an Indigenous worker.



CULTURAL SUPPORT

The RJ Unit is committed to providing a culturally safe space for all participants where responses are appropriate and sensitive, interpreters are used when needed and specific cultural supports can be sourced and included in the process.



YOUNG PEOPLE

The RJ Unit works with young people across all types of matters. Young people are empowered to make informed decisions about their participation in RJ. Guardians are invited to participate as support people where appropriate.



INCLUSION AND ACCESS

The RJ Unit works to ensure that the needs of all participants are identified and accommodated, that people feel safe and welcome, and that all identities are respected in the RJ process.



VICTIM SUPPORT ACT

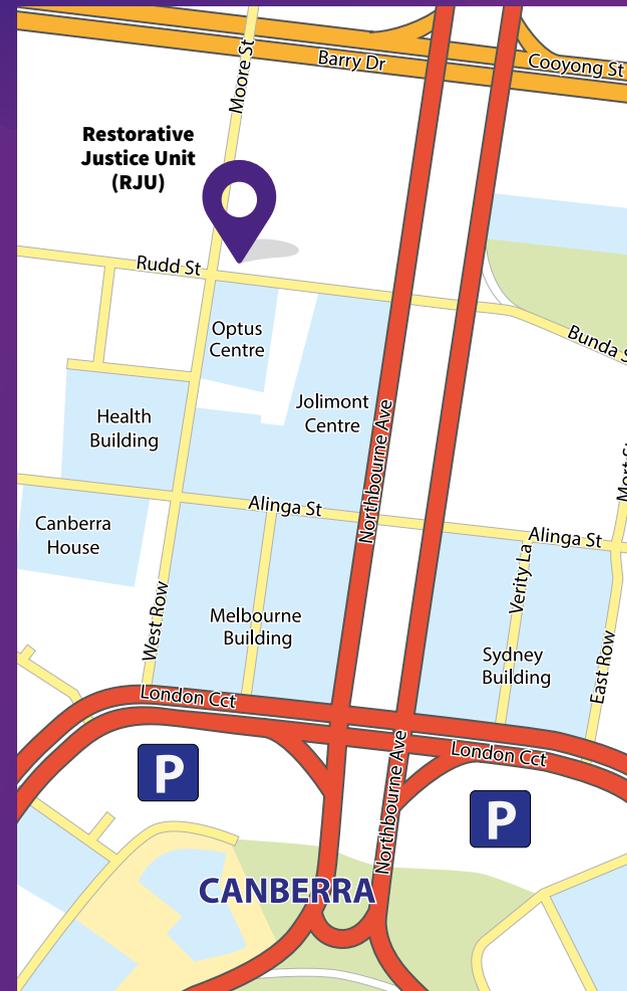
Victim Support ACT (VS ACT) is a service that can help support you in your decision and participation in RJ. They help people impacted by crime by providing information, support and referrals to other services where appropriate, and assisting you to access your rights and entitlements.

VS ACT offers services including:

- > support and counselling
- > advocacy and assistance navigating the justice system
- > help accessing the financial assistance scheme for victims of crime

Other support services include:

- > Domestic Violence Crisis Service
02 6280 0900
crisis@dvcs.org.au
- > Canberra Rape Crisis Centre
02 6247 2525
- > Lifeline Australia
13 11 14
- > 1800 RESPECT (National counselling helpline)
1800 737 732
- > EveryMan Australia
02 6230 6999
- > Menslink
02 6287 2226
info@menslink.org.au
- > Kids Helpline
1800 55 1800



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Phone: 02 6207 3992
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have a voice
 support be heard
 accountability
 regain safety ask questions
restorative justice
 closure help recovery
 restitution empowerment
 address concerns reparation

AN EXPLANATION OF
 RESTORATIVE JUSTICE
 FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE
 BEEN IMPACTED BY A
 CRIMINAL OFFENCE



WHAT IS RESTORATIVE JUSTICE (RJ)?

RJ is a voluntary process which involves an exchange of information between the people most affected by and involved in an offence.

It is a process that provides you an opportunity to talk about how you have been affected. It can also be a chance to address any unresolved questions or needs you might have as a result of the offence, to help repair the harm.

Information can be exchanged either directly through a face-to-face meeting or indirectly through a series of letters or messages.



WHAT HAPPENS IN A RJ PROCESS?

RJ is co-ordinated by a person called a convenor.

A convenor prepares everyone for RJ and helps everyone talk to one another safely and meaningfully. The convenor guides participants through three stages:

- 1. What happened?** The person responsible for the offence will be asked to talk about what happened in ways that take responsibility, in whatever level of detail you are comfortable with. They will also be asked how they think others were affected.
- 2. How were people affected?** The convenor asks everyone what they thought and felt about the offence. You and other participants can tell the person responsible how you were affected by what happened.
- 3. How to make things better?** The convenor asks everyone what they think needs to happen to make things better. This may result in an agreement between you and the person responsible about what they need to do to try to repair the harm caused by the offence.



WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN A RJ PROCESS?

The convenor will talk to you about who you would like to participate in the process. It usually involves:

- > You and people you care about, like your family and friends
- > The person responsible and people who care and are concerned about their behaviour
- > Other people who were involved with the offence, like the police officer, a witness or responder
- > Professional workers who can offer further emotional and psychological support



THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW BEFORE AGREEING TO TAKE PART

There are some things you should think about if you are going to do RJ:

- > It's voluntary, you do not have to participate or continue to participate
- > You can ask someone to participate in RJ on your behalf
- > You can talk to a lawyer at any time about doing RJ
- > You don't have to sign an agreement if you don't want to
- > Depending on the seriousness of the offence, RJ can happen at different points in the criminal justice system:
 - Instead of the matter going to court
 - As well as the matter going to court
 - After the court has sentenced the matter
 - As long as the person responsible is serving a court-imposed order
- > The court, in sentencing the matter, may take into account whether the person responsible accepts responsibility for the offence



WHAT ARE SOME BENEFITS OF RJ?

Everyone gets something different out of RJ. Here are some things participants have found helpful in the past:

- > It's a safe, guided process for you to talk about what happened and how it affected you and those close to you
- > It can help you feel safer and more in control
- > It's a chance to hear the person responsible explain what they did, be accountable, and offer ways to make things better
- > You can get answers to questions and address unresolved issues and concerns
- > You can have a say about what you think the person responsible should do to make things better
- > Others can better understand what happened and they can help to make things better for you
- > The person responsible may better understand the need to commit to behaviour change



RJ AGREEMENTS

Participants in a RJ meeting may reach an agreement where the person responsible agrees to do some things to try to repair some or all of the harm. For example, RJ agreements might include:

- > An apology, verbal or written
- > A work plan for the benefit of you or the community
- > Financial reparation
- > A plan for the person responsible to address their behaviour. A person might make a commitment to positive social activities, agree to avoid risky situations, or seek support for behavioural or drug and alcohol issues
- > A commitment by the person responsible to look for employment, participate in relevant community programs or activities, or participate in education or self-development
- > Anything else that would help repair the harm

Agreements must:

- > Be fair and reasonably able to be carried out by the person responsible
- > Not be unlawful or require the detention of the person responsible
- > Not be degrading or humiliating to anyone
- > Not cause distress to anyone
- > Not be for a term longer than six months from the date the agreement is made, or if a later starting date is chosen, the later date

Things to know about agreements:

- > You do not have to sign an agreement if you don't want to
- > There can be a 'cooling off period' (up to 2 weeks for you to consider the agreement before committing to it)
- > You can get legal advice about a RJ agreement
- > Copies of the agreement are given to you, the person responsible, and the agency that referred the offence
- > The convenor monitors compliance with the agreement and reports to the referring agency
- > Agreements may only be changed if the person responsible cannot complete the original agreement because of a change in circumstances