



ACT
Government

CANBERRA AS A RESTORATIVE CITY OUR VISION



MINISTER'S MESSAGE



In 2016, the ACT Legislative Assembly called on our community to work towards the declaration of Canberra as a restorative city. Today, the ACT uses restorative practices across a number of sectors – in our justice system, in our schools, in family support programs and in healthcare initiatives, to name just a few. The scope for restorative approaches is broad, as the work underway highlights.

But there is much more that can be done.

Our city is growing and becoming more diverse. We are preparing for and responding to changes in our climate. We are maintaining a high standard of living while simultaneously diversifying our economy. All of these changes present both opportunities and challenges. By approaching them restoratively – that is, by valuing relationships, treating each other with care and respect, and solving problems collectively – we can make sure that we are responsive to the needs of our most vulnerable community members in adapting to change.

This document outlines our vision for Canberra as a restorative city. It outlines the sorts of principles that restorative cities are built on and some of the work we have done to date. Ultimately, it is up to this community to decide where we might go from here, and how we want to move forward together.

I thank all those within the ACT and beyond who have contributed to this work so far and who continue to support Canberra on its journey towards becoming a restorative city. I also thank those who put restorative values into practice every day in quiet and often unrecognised ways – your efforts provide the foundations for this entire initiative.

Gordon Ramsay MLA
Attorney-General

Acknowledgement of Country

The ACT Government acknowledges the Ngunnawal people, the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live and conduct our business. We pay our respects to Ngunnawal Elders past, present, and emerging. We recognise the continuing culture and connection to country of the Ngunnawal people, and of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia. When we talk about Canberra becoming a restorative city, we also recognise that in many different ways, these principles have been – and continue to be – practiced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across this continent.

VISION STATEMENT

To grow the ACT as a safe and connected community where relationships are valued, problems are solved jointly, and every person is treated with respect, care and dignity.

WHAT IS A RESTORATIVE CITY?

A 'restorative city' is based on the principles of 'restorative practice'. Restorative practice is all about recognising that relationships are central to our wellbeing, community and society. Restorative practices can be used as a shared approach to problem solving based on equal respect, accountability and support.

A restorative city operates by using restorative practices. Of course, this can happen in many different ways. It's up to all of us to decide what this means for Canberra.



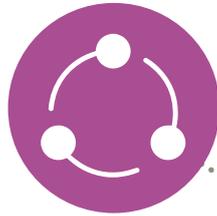
Ultimately, it's what matters to **our community** that will shape Canberra's values as a restorative city.

OUR PROGRESS

Within the ACT Government, there are a number of programs and initiatives underway to work towards making Canberra a restorative city. There are also many more examples being undertaken by community groups, non-government organisations, and individual citizens. This is a snapshot of the ACT Government work to date:

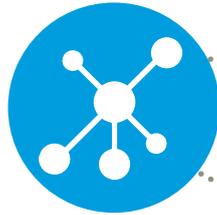
Circle sentencing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Galambany Court (for adults) in operation since 2004 under another name, Warrumbul Court (for young people) set to open in December 2019.



Canberra Restorative Community Network

The ACT Government works with the Network, which first met in 2015 and continues to be an open space for engaging with restorative approaches, as well as bringing experts from Australia and around the world to share learning with government and community in Canberra.



Law Reform Advisory Council inquiry

The ACT Government asked the Council to explore how to build Canberra as a restorative city. Recommendations delivered in October 2018 and report released November 2019.



Intermediary scheme

Through the Victims of Crime Commissioner, this will implement recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse around testimony of child witnesses. Due to commence January 2020.



Conflict Resolution Service training

Funded by ACT Government to support community-based restorative practice training.



Restorative Justice Scheme

Since 2005, offers restorative conferencing between people harmed and people responsible for criminal offences, holding over 1500 conferences since its creation.



Canberra as a Restorative City workshops

A variety of workshops held since 2016 on a range of topics relating to restorative practice.



Expanded access to Family Dispute Resolution

Allowing people to access Family Dispute Resolution through Legal Aid without needing to be granted legal assistance beforehand.



Education initiatives

Schools use restorative practices in a number of areas. Across the ACT, schools are implementing Positive Behaviour for Learning, a whole school approach building safe and supportive environments.



Drug and Alcohol Court

Incorporating therapeutic jurisprudence with the aim of achieving long-term positive behavioural change. Set to open by December 2019.

The ACT Government has so far heard from the community through reports, forums and community engagement about a variety of areas on which to focus the initial efforts of the Canberra as a Restorative City initiative. These are some of our priorities for 2019-2020.



ACKNOWLEDGING AND LEARNING FROM EXISTING INITIATIVES

Canberrans are already living and working in restorative ways. We want to collect these stories to celebrate the work that is already being done, and to draw out lessons for expanding these practices in the future.



RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

Building an evidence base for Canberra as a Restorative City, and highlighting benefits for wellbeing, connectedness and safety.



CORONIAL REFORM

Strengthening restorative practices in the Coroner's Court, to ensure safer, more sensitive and more meaningful processes for families and for the public interest.



ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

Engaging people across the ACT, both within and outside government, to grow awareness of and involvement in restorative processes, initiatives and events.



WORKSHOP ON RESTORATIVE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

Giving all community members a voice in shaping Canberra's own, unique framework of restorative values and principles.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

We want everyone to be included and involved in working towards Canberra as a restorative city. If you are working on a restorative project or initiative, please let us know by visiting our website so we can collect your story. If you have ideas or questions about restorative practice or the Canberra as a Restorative City initiative, please reach out to us through our website.

Each of us is a part of Canberra's unique journey to becoming a restorative city. We can't wait to see what we can do together as a community.

Come along to a meeting of the Canberra Restorative Community Network – an open network of practitioners, professionals, academics and people interested in expanding their knowledge of restorative practice.

Get in touch with the Network at
www.canberrarestorativecommunity.space/contact

Visit the ACT Government website for Canberra as a Restorative City:

act.gov.au/restorativecity

Find ways to build restorative practice into your life – with colleagues, with family, with friends, and with people you've never met.



Justice and Community Safety
November 2019