



Youth Justice Research Agenda 2023-2024

Priority research themes

Early intervention

Acting early to address the needs of children, young people, families and carers to stop entry into the youth justice system

- Best practice early intervention programs including for children prior to age of criminal responsibility.
- Improving our understanding of youth offender trajectories.
- Understanding young people's pathways into the youth justice system.
- Understanding risk factors and intervention points where entry into the youth justice system can be prevented.
- Understanding how families or carers can be supported to manage and respond to anti-social or offending behaviour in children and young people.
- Education and health as predictors/protective factors.

Diversion

Diversionary programs for children and young people with early or low-level offending. Effective processes and supports that reduce the number of young people in custody

- Best practice diversionary programs.
- Involuntary diversion strategies.
- Remand reduction strategies.
- Desistance from crime.
- Alternative restorative justice programs.
- Understanding how young people reconnect with education and vocational training.
- Understanding what effective engagement is and whether it leads to better intervention outcomes.
- Understanding the occurrence of net widening and its connection with diversion services engagement.
- Understanding the mental health issues and needs of young offenders.

Serious repeat offenders

Addressing the needs of serious repeat offenders through offending focused change-oriented programs and service responses

- Effective responses for repeat offenders: throughcare; aftercare; and re-entry programs.
- Quality service delivery and therapeutic responses for complex needs young people and families, particularly in the community sector.
- Improving responses for young people engaged in adolescent family violence.
- Re-engagement with education.
- Early identification and improved responses for young people with neurodevelopmental impairment or disability.
- Understanding how to successfully reintegrate young offenders with families, culture and communities.
- Understanding the level of service a young person should receive based on reoffending risk.
- Preventative measures for young people exiting the youth justice system entering homelessness.
- Building community confidence that the youth justice system is addressing the causes of offending, rehabilitating young offenders, and detaining those who pose an ongoing risk to the community.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people

Working with and empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to deliver culturally-safe and responsive solutions that result in positive futures for their children

- First Nations restorative justice approaches and justice reinvestment.
- Understanding the role of culture in preventing and responding to crime.
- Understanding effective family and community engagement.
- Identifying trauma informed practice that responds to intergenerational trauma.
- Understanding the value add of greater investment in the First Nations community-controlled sector.
- Understanding cultural connection as a protective factor.
- How do non-Indigenous service providers compared to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers interpret Aboriginal culture in the delivery of services to at-risk and in-crisis youth offenders?
- How do organisational values influence interpretations of 'culture', and more specifically pan-Aboriginal culture, in the service delivery space?

Building the evidence base

The purpose of the research agenda is to build an evidence base about 'what works, for whom, and in what circumstances' to better address the needs of young people in the youth justice system

- Robust evaluations of new and existing programs and services.
- Build the evidence base for localised responses (i.e. place-based to address specific needs - rural and remote locations).
- How to change community attitudes towards youth offenders and youth crime.
- Improve responses to meet the different needs of girls and young women, young people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities and young people with disabilities.
- Identify the necessary worker skills and competencies to effectively manage and support girls in the youth justice system, including those who have experienced sexual, physical and domestic violence.
- Understand the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the youth justice system and how we can better respond to future pandemics.
- Understand young people's experiences of video-link court appearances, how to address potential deficits, and when video-link technology should be used by judicial officers.