

Eight Measures to Improve Justice

1. **Justice Reinvestment** – invest in the community rather than in prisons.

This has at least two aspects to it. First, invest in communities that need more housing, welfare assistance, educational support, and employment opportunities. Second, put money into helping specific individuals and groups of individuals who could use this support.

2. **Restorative Justice** – put repairing harm at the centre of justice processes.

A criminal justice system that puts repairing harm at its centre translates into activities and programs that treat offenders as active, not passive. Such an approach also opens the door to responses to harm/crime that advantage victims and communities.

3. **Therapeutic Jurisprudence** – address underlying problems and co-morbidities.

Courts and community corrections, in conjunction with community partners and collaborators, can make a difference by changing the conditions that underpin much repeat offending, especially in regard to substance use and mental illness.

4. **Trauma-Informed Approaches** – recognise and respond to grief and pain.

Most offenders are victims of physical and sexual assault, and many also suffer from intergenerational grief related to government policies and practices (e.g., Indigenous communities and stolen generations). Interventions to incorporate trauma-informed care.

5. **Mentoring** – link people to those they respect and will emulate.

For juvenile and adults, individual change often comes from being with someone you respect, whether this is an elder, friend, sportsperson, or teacher. Mentors can provide support and be excellent role-models.

6. **Raise the Age of Criminal Responsibility** – keep people out of criminal justice.

One of the biggest predictors of future imprisonment is age of first imprisonment. To keep prison numbers down, keep children and young people out of prison in the first place – alternatives are possible and desirable.

7. **Systems of Accountability** – monitoring standard operating procedures & practices.

Resources need to be put into the monitoring of and responses to system operations, whether this be through official visitor programs, OPCAT and/or the Ombudsman. There needs to be a Human Rights Act as well as robust whistle-blower protection legislation and policy.

8. **Victim Engagement** – mechanisms for active participation and meeting needs.

Victim voices need to be heard in the criminal justice system, not just in relation to direct court proceedings but with respect to increasing offender understanding and empathy. Victim participation need not contradict or undermine offender rights and future pathways.