

Justice Re-Investment Matrix Overview

This matrix provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how justice reinvestment principles can transform responses to young people in contact with the justice system. It maps stakeholder evidence against system issues, impacts, and evidence-informed opportunities for change.



Early Intervention & Prevention

Stakeholder Evidence

"Kids don't start off offending — they end up there after everything else has failed."

"By the time we see them, the family is already in crisis."

System Issue Identified

Reactive, crisis-driven responses dominate the current system. Limited family-based supports mean that by the time young people are identified, intergenerational disadvantage has already taken hold.

Impact on Young People

Escalation of behaviour before support is provided, with intergenerational disadvantage continuing unchecked. The justice system ends up absorbing social failure rather than preventing it.

Justice Reinvestment Implication

Investment occurs too late. The justice system becomes the default response when early intervention could have prevented escalation.

Evidence-Informed Opportunity

Shift Funding

Move resources toward early, place-based prevention

Wraparound Support

Embed family support in youth responses

Safe Places & After-Hours Support

The Evidence

"Most incidents happen because kids have nowhere to go."

"Police are responding to welfare issues, not crime."

These statements reveal a critical gap in after-hours support infrastructure.

What's Happening

No safe after-hours options exist for young people. This leads to increased street presence and higher police contact. **Policing is filling service gaps**, resulting in the criminalisation of vulnerability.

Justice Reinvestment Implication

Inefficient justice spend occurs when police resources are used for welfare responses rather than crime prevention.

Evidence-Informed Opportunity

- Invest in safe, supervised, culturally appropriate spaces
- Develop non-police responses to youth wellbeing needs.

Service Coordination & System Efficiency

01

Service Integration Challenge

"There are services — they just don't talk to each other."

02

Access Barriers

"Operating hours don't match when kids need help."

03

Result

Young people fall through gaps and experience repeated justice contact

System Issue Identified

Fragmented service delivery dominates the landscape. Service design is misaligned to need, with operating hours that don't match when young people actually require help.

Impact on Young People

Young people fall through gaps in the system. Missed intervention windows lead to escalation, ultimately resulting in justice responses when earlier support could have made a difference.

Justice Reinvestment Implication

Repeated justice contact occurs due to system fragmentation. Escalation to justice response becomes the default when coordination fails.

Evidence-Informed Opportunity

- Central coordination or hub-based model
- Align services to peak risk periods.

Youth Voice & Co-Design

Stakeholder Evidence

"We don't ask kids what would work."

"Kids engage when they feel ownership."

System Issue Identified

Adult-designed solutions dominate program development. Compliance-based programs are created without meaningful input from the young people they're meant to serve.



Low Engagement

Young people don't connect with programs designed without their input

Disengagement

Programs fail to maintain participation

Failed Programs

Wasted investment with no reduction in justice contact

Justice Reinvestment Implication

Programs fail to reduce justice contact. Wasted investment occurs when young people don't engage with solutions designed without their participation.

Evidence-Informed Opportunity

Embed Youth Co-Design

Involve young people meaningfully in program development from the start

Youth-Led Program Design

Create structures where young people have genuine ownership and decision-making power

Cultural Safety & Aboriginal Leadership

Stakeholder Evidence

"Solutions fail when they're designed elsewhere."

"Kids know immediately if it's not genuine."

These insights reveal the critical importance of authentic Aboriginal leadership and cultural safety in service delivery.

System Issue Identified

Top-down program design dominates. Cultural safety is treated as training rather than being embedded in service delivery.

Impact on Young People

Distrust of services develops when programs aren't genuinely culturally safe. Disengagement follows, leading to increased justice contact as justice responses replace care.

Justice Reinvestment Implication

Increased justice contact occurs when services lack cultural safety. Justice responses replace care when young people don't trust or engage with available services.

Evidence-Informed Opportunity

Aboriginal-Led Governance

Ensure Aboriginal leadership in program design and delivery

Culture Embedded

Integrate culture throughout service delivery, not just as training

Trauma-Informed Responses

Stakeholder Evidence

"Behaviour is trauma showing up."

"Kids don't have tools to cope."

System Issue Identified

Behaviour is treated punitively rather than as a manifestation of trauma. Skills-building is absent from most responses, leaving young people without tools to regulate their emotions or cope with difficult situations.

Impact on Young People

Escalation occurs when trauma-driven behaviour is met with punishment. Reactive behaviour continues without intervention, leading to increased police contact.

Justice Reinvestment Implication

The justice system becomes the default response when trauma is not recognized and addressed. Resources are spent on reactive justice responses rather than therapeutic support.

Evidence-Informed Opportunity

Trauma-Informed Workforce

Build capacity across all services to recognize and respond to trauma

Therapeutic Supports

Provide therapeutic and regulation supports to build coping skills

Youth Hub / Integrated Model

Stakeholder Evidence

"A hub could work if it's more than a building."

"It must be Aboriginal-led and safe."

These statements highlight that infrastructure alone is insufficient — the governance model and service integration are what determine success.

System Issue Identified

Infrastructure without model is a common problem. Buildings are created without the integrated service delivery model needed to make them effective. Poor governance risks failure from the outset.

Impact on Young People

Ineffective investment occurs when hubs lack proper models. Exclusion happens when governance doesn't prioritize cultural safety and Aboriginal leadership. **This reinforces harm** rather than addressing it.

Justice Reinvestment Implication

No justice reduction occurs from infrastructure investment alone. Without the right model and governance, hubs become another failed investment.

Evidence-Informed Opportunity

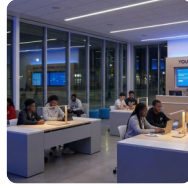
- Integrated service model
- Community-controlled model

Key Justice Reinvestment Domains Summary



Early Intervention & Prevention

Shift funding toward early, place-based prevention with wraparound family support



Safe Places & After-Hours

Invest in safe, supervised spaces with non-police wellbeing responses



Service Coordination

Central coordination model aligned to peak risk periods



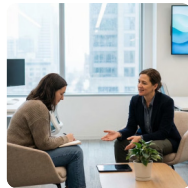
Youth Voice & Co-Design

Embed youth co-design and youth-led program development



Cultural Safety & Leadership

Aboriginal-led governance with culture embedded in delivery

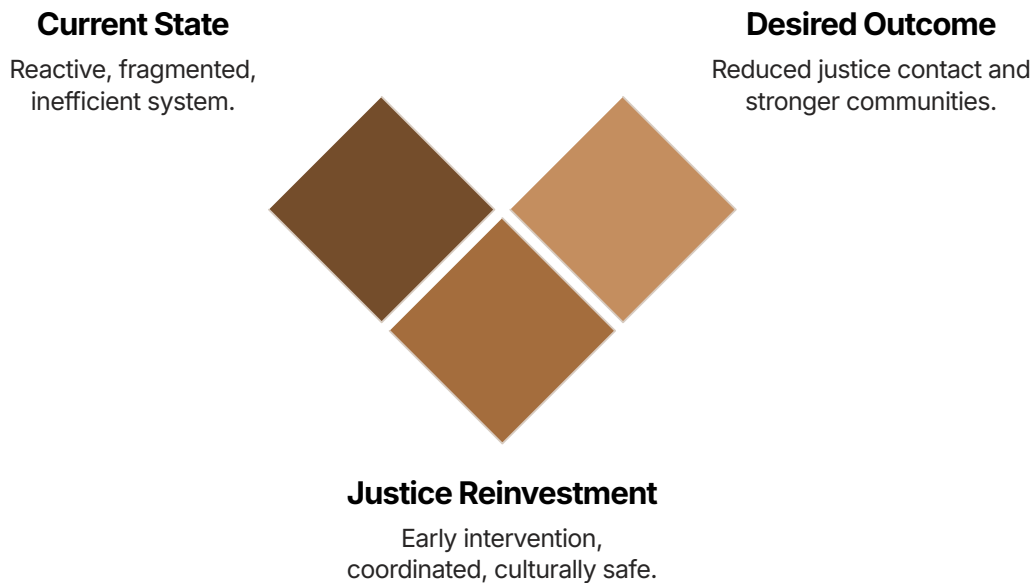


Trauma-Informed Responses

Trauma-informed workforce with therapeutic and regulation supports

The Path Forward: Integrated Justice Reinvestment

The evidence is clear: **the current system is reactive, fragmented, and inefficient**. Young people are falling through gaps, with the justice system absorbing social failure rather than preventing it. Investment occurs too late, services don't coordinate, and responses aren't culturally safe or trauma-informed.



This transformation requires a fundamental shift in how resources are allocated and services are delivered.

Critical Success Factors

- Aboriginal-led governance and community control
- Youth voice embedded in co-design
- Integrated service model, not just infrastructure
- Trauma-informed, culturally safe responses
- Early intervention before crisis
- Coordination aligned to when young people need help

The opportunity is clear: redirect justice spending toward evidence-informed prevention and support. The stakeholder evidence shows what works — now it's time to invest accordingly.