

Courts Innovation Program

Community Justice Group Program

What is a Community Justice Group (CJG)?

The Community Justice Group Program (the CJG Program) provides essential support and services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims and offenders within the criminal justice system. The Department of Justice and Attorney-General (DJAG) provides funding to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to develop strategies within their communities for dealing with justice-related issues, and to decrease Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' contact with the criminal justice system.

The CJG Program provides community members with the opportunity to work collaboratively with the courts, police, and staff from other government agencies to address criminal behaviour, and provide support and assistance to victims of crime.

CJGs are estimated to support over 5,000 Indigenous offenders and 3,000 victims of crime in communities throughout Queensland each year. CJGs develop strong working relationships with many non-government agencies to which they refer both victims and offenders to gain the support and assistance needed. These agencies include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health organisations, rehabilitation centres, Relationships Australia, the Salvation Army, Centacare, employment agencies, sexual assault services, youth support groups, and men's and women's groups.

Where do CJGs operate?

The statutory groups (established in the remote discrete communities) are located in:

Aurukun	Bamaga	Cherbourg	Doomadgee
Hopevale	Injinoo	Kowanyama	Lockhart River
Mapoon	Mornington Island	Napranum	New Mapoon
Palm Island	Pormpuraaw	Seisia	Umagico
Woorabinda	Wujal Wujal	Yarrabah	

Non-statutory groups (established in the regional or urban centres) are located in:

Brisbane	Badu Island	Boigu Island	Caboolture
Cairns	Charters Towers	Cleveland	Cloncurry
Coen	Cunnamulla	Darnley Island	Goondiwindi
Horn Island	Inala	Ingham	Ipswich
Kubin Community	Kuranda	Logan	Mabuiag Island
Mackay	Maryborough	Mossman	Mt Isa
Murray Island	Normanton	Rockhampton	Saibai Island
St Paul's Community	St. George	Tablelands	Thursday Island
Toowoomba	Townsville	Warraber Island	Yam Island
Yorke Island			

What is the role of a CJG?

The majority of CJG members are respected Elders, traditional owners, Respected Persons and people from the main Indigenous social grouping of a community and community members of “good standing”.

The CJGs role is to support Indigenous victims and offenders at all stages of the legal process. They encourage diversionary processes (such as encouraging offenders to engage with the Indigenous Sentencing List), and develop networks with other government agencies to ensure that issues impacting on Indigenous communities are addressed.

CJGs provide two important activities: the making of appropriate cultural submissions to the Magistrates Court and the identification and promotion of supporting programs that assist Magistrates in decision making.

How is a CJG formed?

A CJG is formed usually when a group of community members come together on a voluntary basis to help reduce crime and social problems within their community.

The Department of Justice and Attorney-General allocates funding to CJGs on an annual basis through a Service Agreement.

CJGs may also receive funding from other government agencies including the Commonwealth Government, charity and benevolent organisations or other funding opportunities. The funding is used for local justice initiatives that provide real change in their community.

Legislation

The following legislation is relevant to CJGs

- *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities (Justice, Land and Other Matters) Act 1984* (Statutory Groups);
- *Penalties and Sentences Act 1992*;
- *Bail Act 1980*; and
- *Youth Justice Act 1992*.

Please note: This publication was produced prior to the current government.

For further information please contact the Indigenous Justice Programs on 3109 9186 or indigenousjusticeprograms@justice.qld.gov.au