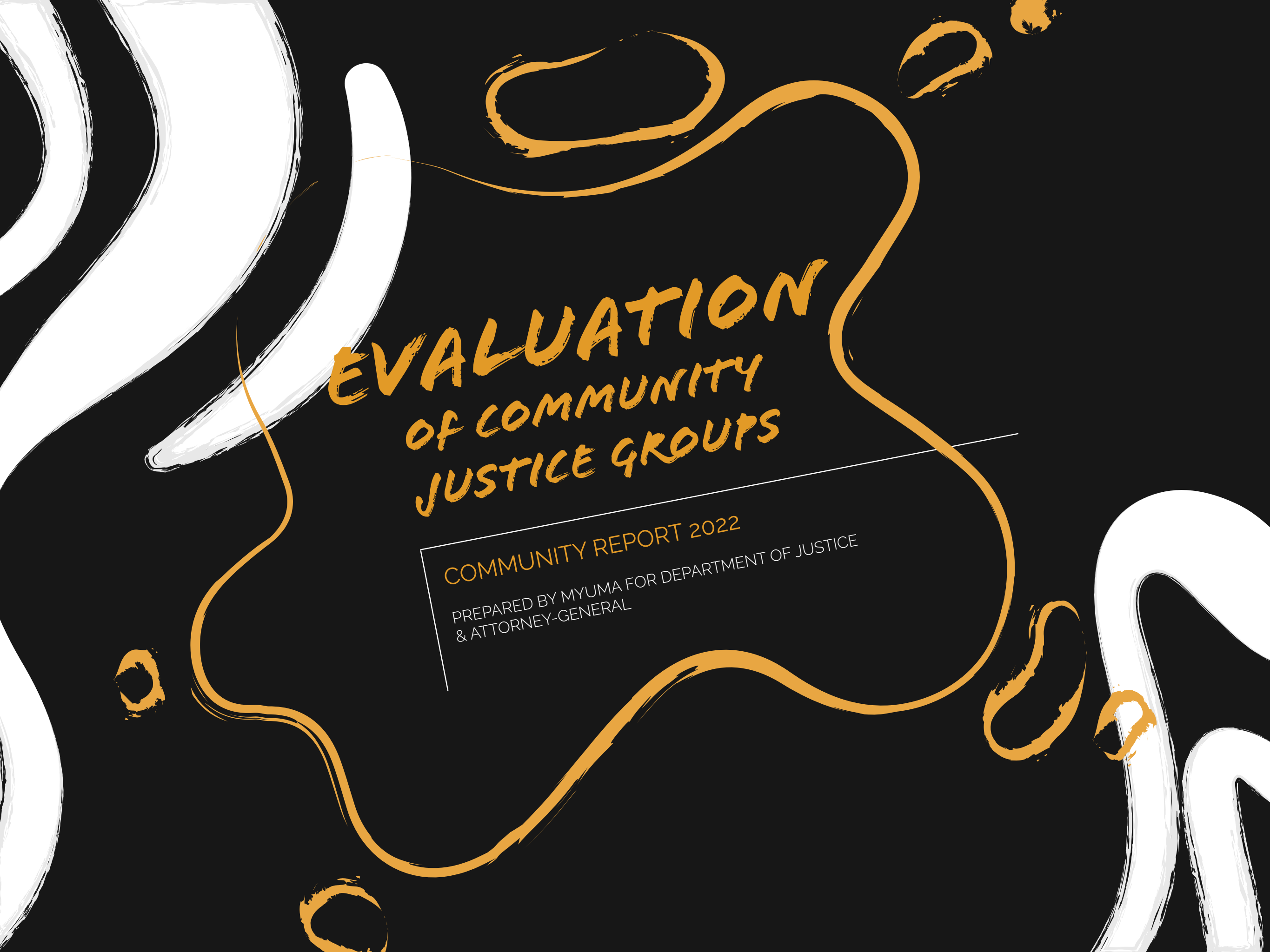




EVALUATION OF COMMUNITY JUSTICE GROUPS

COMMUNITY REPORT 2022

PREPARED BY MYUMA FOR DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
& ATTORNEY-GENERAL

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BACKGROUND ABOUT THE EVALUATION

PART: A

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This report showcases the findings from the first two years of the 3-year evaluation of the Community Justice Group (CJG) Program. The evaluation is being conducted for the Department of Justice & Attorney General (DJAG) by a team from Myuma, a social enterprise owned and managed by the Indjalandji-Dhidhanu people from the Camooweal region of north-west Queensland.

The first two years of the evaluation have been focused on how the CJG program is implemented – what funding, training, support and other inputs are being provided for CJGs and what activities and outputs are they delivering in practice? The final year of the evaluation in 2023 will be focused on what outcomes are being achieved by CJGs – how are their activities reducing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who come into contact with the criminal justice system?

This report summarises how the evaluation has been conducted to date and what it has found so far. It also sets out examples of good practice by CJGs around Queensland as they respond to local justice challenges in their communities. It is hoped that these examples will provide useful information and inspiration to all those working in CJGs across the State.

To read the full Evaluation Report: visit www.courts.qld.gov.au/services/court-programs/community-justice-group-program



BACKGROUND TO THE CJG PROGRAM



Community Justice Groups (CJGs) were first established in three Aboriginal communities in the early 1990s as a community response to the over-representation of Indigenous people in the criminal justice system, as highlighted by the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC) in 1991. The concept of Elders and respected persons coming together voluntarily to drive local solutions to justice issues was widely embraced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and when funding was made available from 1997, more than 30 communities established variations of CJGs. The Program has since grown to more than 50 locations across Queensland, and CJGs have become an important part of the functioning of the justice and social services systems in Indigenous

communities. In 15 locations, the role of CJGs providing advice to Magistrates and supporting community members through the court system has become formalised through Murri Courts.

For two decades, CJGs operated with a small grant of approximately \$100,000 per year to employ a local Coordinator to work with a group made up of Elders and respected persons volunteering their time. In 2019, the Queensland Government committed \$20 million in additional funding to the CJG Program. The Framework for Stronger Community Justice Groups was developed as a blueprint to guide the new phase of development of the CJG Program. The reforms have enabled CJGs to be provided with a more viable funding base

(approximately \$281,000 per year at most sites) to meet the costs of staffing and delivering activities, as well as enhancing remuneration for CJG members. For CJGs in 18 discrete communities, this funding complements additional funding of \$150,000 per year they receive under the DFV Enhancement program.

With the enhanced funding, CJGs across the State are undergoing a transformation, and now have the opportunity to properly resource a range of their activities aimed at supporting people who are in the criminal justice system or at risk of entering the system. An evaluation is crucial at this time, for several reasons: to support the Program's growth with evidence about what works; to work directly with CJGs to help them monitor

and improve their delivery and capture their impact; to help DJAG ensure the Program's implementation is optimised to support CJGs in their work; to help other government and non-government agencies to understand how best to support and partner with CJGs; and to help the Queensland Government understand the impact of its investment in these unique initiatives.

The scale of the challenges faced by CJGs is immense. As the Appendix shows, there has been an alarming rate of increase in Indigenous incarceration in the three decades since the Royal Commission (RCIADIC) report (1991). Despite falling rates of reported offences for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in recent decades the rate of imprisonment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has more than doubled in Queensland since 1988.

The number of Indigenous adults in Queensland prisons has increased eight-fold in this time, from 431 on 30/6/1988 to 3,410 on 30/6/2022. Around two-thirds of the children in detention are now Indigenous, up from about half a decade ago. The likelihood of an Indigenous person in the Magistrates Court receiving a prison sentence almost doubled from 2007 to 2019 – an Indigenous person now has about a one in four chance of being sentenced to prison from the Magistrates Court. The need to support grassroots initiatives like CJGs to keep Indigenous people out of the court system is starkly evident.



PROGRESS OF THE EVALUATION TO DATE

The evaluation is being conducted by a diverse evaluation team bringing together a majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultants and research assistants (17 to date) supported by non-Indigenous evaluators and data analysts (3 individuals). The evaluation team is located across Queensland, and therefore has greater capacity for fieldwork with CJGs. In 2021 and 2022, the evaluation has conducted participatory, strengths-based 'Local Evaluations' with CJGs in 16 of the 40 funded CJG locations across all parts of the State.

Local Evaluations are conducted in collaboration with CJGs and are based on the principles of 'appreciative inquiry', which seeks to capture stories of what the program looks like when it is working. CJG Staff and Elders and members have been willing partners in data collection, including interviewing agency stakeholders and clients and collecting community surveys.

The Local Evaluation sites visited to date are Mackay, Doomadgee, Normanton, Goondiwindi, Rockhampton, Mossman, Tablelands, Mount Isa, Hope Vale, Thursday Island, Cherbourg, Palm Island, Coen, Wujal Wujal, Bayside (Cleveland and Wynnum) and Northern Peninsula Area.

The evaluation approach is guided by the broad objective that the evaluation will not only assess the effectiveness of CJGs, but also inject and cultivate new capabilities for CJGs to plan, deliver, measure and adapt innovative local strategies to reduce Indigenous people's contact with the criminal justice system. With this overarching objective of empowerment in mind, the planned approach incorporates the following methodological features:

- (a) A strengths-based, storytelling approach using 'Appreciative Inquiry' methods
- (b) A 'Developmental Evaluation' approach to assist emerging initiatives in some locations
- (c) A 'principles-focused' approach to cater for diversity across CJGs
- (d) Participatory planning and co-design in conducting local evaluations
- (e) Respecting and strengthening Indigenous data sovereignty
- (f) Mixed methods approach, across local and Statewide components

The evaluation also involves a communications platform, **Our Community Justice**, to enable sharing of information across the CJG network about established and emerging good practice in implementing local justice strategies, including data collected from the evaluation.

Several more CJGs will be visited during the final year of the evaluation in 2023.



DATA COLLECTION AT THE 16 LOCAL EVALUATION SITES HAS INVOLVED:



216 community surveys
administered in 11 locations.



95
hours

of interviews recorded,
transcribed and analysed
using Nvivo qualitative
data analysis.



62 days
spent by 12 Myuma team
members at CJG sites.



144
interviews

with CJG staff, members, agencies, service
providers and community members.

OUR PLATFORM FOR SHARING STORIES OF SUCCESS

Using the Our Community Justice platform for communications and information-sharing is designed partly to address the need for improved awareness of the contribution of CJGs around the State.

This communications platform enables sharing of information across the CJG network about established and local justice strategies, including data collected from the evaluation.

Through uplifting stories and practices, opportunities are created for CJGs to share knowledge of what's working in their community, and provide assistance to other CJGs so that they may access, understand and use that emerging good practice in their planning and delivery of local responses to justice issues.

Information-sharing is facilitated through the central website, social media, yearly newsletters and monthly online 'Coffee Catchups.'

There was a wide range of suggestions by stakeholders to improve CJGs' promotion, such as more information on websites, social media and pamphlets. There is more that DJAG could do at the Program-wide level, and there is more that individual CJGs could do locally to raise awareness of CJGs.

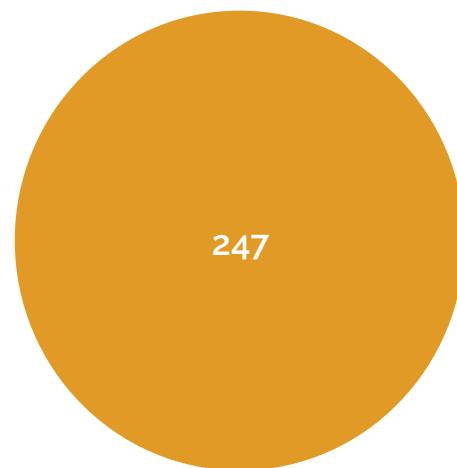
The Our Community Justice communications platform, whilst created with the principal aim to increase the opportunities for CJGs to share good practice across the network, can also increase the public visibility of what CJGs do. DJAG should support CJGs to broaden their communication and promotion of what they offer to their

communities and to stakeholders who might assist them.

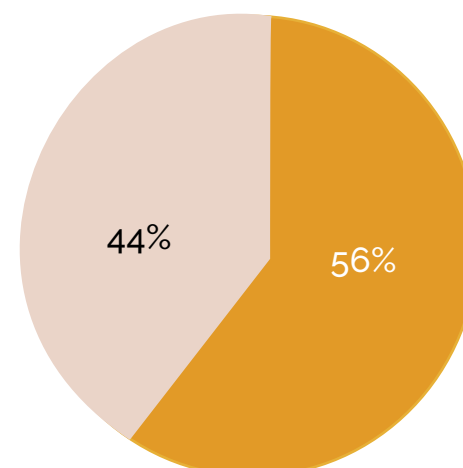
Further, this communications platform is an opportunity for government to promote the availability of data for CJGs and value-add to legacy by way of enshrining examples of innovation happening throughout regional communities and shared across the CJG network.

For more information visit us at:

ourcommunityjustice.org.au
www.facebook.com/ourcommunityjusticeqld
www.instagram.com/ourcommunityjusticeqld/



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CJGS SHOULD BE ENABLED TO DEVELOP AN ONGOING CJG NETWORK TO SUPPORT EACH OTHER, BUILD THEIR KNOWLEDGE BASE AND ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE COLLECTIVELY.

THIS COULD INCLUDE BUILDING A NETWORK THROUGH AN ONLINE COMMUNICATION PLATFORM, A NEWSLETTER, AND QUARTERLY OR HALF YEARLY GATHERINGS OR FORUMS.



GOOD PRACTICE SHOWCASE

PART: B

GOOD PRACTICE

This part of the summary report sets out examples of good practice that have emerged from the Local Evaluations with CJGs around the State during 2021 and 2022. The examples show how CJGs are tackling critical issues and challenges. Many of these issues are common across Indigenous communities, so it is hoped that these examples could be useful to other CJGs.

One of the key program inputs identified in the Phase 1 report was 'knowledge of what works.' It was noted that CJGs have regularly expressed a desire for coming together more often to share good practices, but that this has not often been possible. Statewide or regional CJG forums have been held in the past, but the cost of these forums means that only a limited number of people can attend and they can only be held occasionally. The evaluation encourages more such forums and notes that they are planned for later. In addition to these events, the evaluation suggests that there should also be more systematic avenues in place for regular information-

sharing and collaboration between CJGs.

The *Our Community Justice* communications platform created by Myuma for the evaluation will facilitate the sharing of research and information about leading practice to CJGs. Just as important as providing information through emails, social media posts and website updates, CJGs would benefit from an interactive 'community of practice'. To start facilitating connections between CJGs, *Our Community Justice* has been convening monthly informal 'coffee catchups' over Microsoft Teams.

A hallmark of the evaluation's Appreciative Inquiry approach is that the evaluators have sought out stories about what it looks like when things are working. It is hoped uplifting these *stories of success* and sharing them online will evolve into a community of practice and solution sharing, contributing towards a narrative illustrative of what the CJG program looks like when it is *making a difference*.

“

HAVING THE
COMMUNITY JUSTICE GROUP
INVOLVED AND...SPENDING
A LOT OF TIME WITH PEOPLE
GETTING THEIR PERSONAL
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I THINK THAT THAT IS
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GAP IN THE CULTURAL
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”



How to get the community involved in the CJG



How to recruit younger members to the CJG



How to help people address underlying trauma

PROFOUND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A challenge faced by many CJGs is how to engage the community and Elders and respected persons in the work of the CJG. Community engagement is important to attract new CJG members and to get current members more involved in the CJG's activities.

It is also important as an informal way to engage community members who may need the CJG's help. The following examples show how CJGs around the State are using art, social activities and games as a way to engage the community.





ROCKHAMPTON - Community Theatre

In 2021, a key cultural activity of Rockhampton's Community Justice Group was organizing a screening of the documentary "The Art of Incarceration" at the Birch Carroll & Coyle Cinemas Rockhampton.

Following the journeys of four Aboriginal men in the Victorian prison system, "The Art of Incarceration" explores the healing of the men through their love of Aboriginal art as part of the well renowned "The Torch" Indigenous Arts program. Seen through the eyes of Indigenous prisoners at Victoria's Fulham Correctional

Centre, and narrated by Uncle Jack Charles (Boonwurring Dja Dja Wurrung), the feature follows the inmates' quest for cultural identity and spiritual healing as they prepare for life on the outside. The program is the only one of its kind in the country where 100 percent of the proceeds goes back to the artist and also offer a post-prison release art program.

Community Justice Group Elder Aunty Elaine Williams performed a Darumbul Welcome to Country, followed by a panel discussion with other Community Justice Group Elders on the operations and promotion of Community Justice Groups, as well as a call out for new members

from the community. Sandra Creamer, AM Lawyer and advocate, gave a brief presentation on her work around Indigenous social justice in the community and urged community to get involved in advocacy to create change.

The event generated positive feedback and a high attendance with a number of mainstream and Aboriginal and Islander organizations involved, including a few Murri Court clients.



GOONDIWINDI - Town Commons Program

The Goondiwindi Community Justice Group has an innovative partnership with the Goondiwindi Regional Council for a court diversion program that will clean up the town common at the same time as working with local offenders to reduce recidivism.

Auspiced by Care Goondiwindi, the project will be delivered by the Goondiwindi Community Justice Group over three years with funding from the Department of Justice and Attorney General's Courts Innovation Program. Engaging around sixteen young or vulnerable offenders each year, the program sees participants work under the supervision of the CJG Coordinator as part of a scheduled work program.

According to the Goondiwindi Community Justice Group Coordinator, Jason Scott, the initiative is based on a simple philosophy: 'Heal the land and it will heal the people'.

From the clearing out of noxious weeds to the removal of refuse and trash at the site, offenders will help to regenerate the Common whilst upskilling, receiving training and developing a strong work ethic to better equip them for success outside the program.



NORMANTON - Games as Engagement and Recruitment

In Normanton, community bingo games are used as a recruitment and engagement tactic for keeping Elders involved with the local Community Justice Group. The CJG coordinator runs a bingo night every week and uses the opportunity to engage with the female Elders to discuss priorities for the CJG, and keep Elders from the different families communicating with each other. Police are also invited, which helps communication flow between the community and police.

Sharing this example of good practice during an Our Community Justice online Coffee Catchup has led to the Tablelands Community Justice Group incorporating this strategy in their region.

At Coen, the CJG staff provide bingo and a hot meal as a way of bringing women together and reducing stress: "We get to sit around the same table. These are women who would not normally sit together. They are sitting on the same table, enjoying a meal, playing bingo, you know."

RECRUITING THE NEXT GENERATION OF CJG MEMBERS

For many CJGs, a high priority is to work on a succession strategy for the ageing membership of the group. The evaluation has heard many CJGs talk about recruiting younger people as emerging Elders.

Some groups have very few male members. The following case study shows how one CJG has recruited a younger male member.



MACKAY - Community Radio

Out in Mackay, our evaluator Jenny Pryor sits down with Lyndon Francis, a young man who works with the Pioneer Murri Court Elders to promote youth engagement in the region using their innovative 'Street Beat' program. Lyndon was working in local community radio when he was asked to become involved with the Murri Court Elders Group.

How did you get into the Murri Court program and doing the "Street Beat" with the kids?

'Well, I didn't really get asked, I got recommended! The kids weren't engaging with the Elders here on the Pioneer Murri Court. So now I'm here to get through to the young ones. And the notion was put that we might need younger people, like up-and-coming Elders, to be able to talk to these young kids and hopefully engage them better.'

'The magistrate here in Mackay, they were very humble. I felt honoured when they put my name up and so I came on with the Pioneer Murri Court via Aunty Veronica [the Coordinator]. At the start, I was just sitting back and watching the court process, seeing how these young kids acted. And then we talked to the magistrate and said, look, before court, we just want to have a word with these young people, you know, just see how their week has been, see what they've been up to? Also, to give them a rundown on how the court process works, so they don't tell the judge off or anything like that. And then it started coming down to having one-on-one conversations with the children as well. And

coming from a different aspect of looking at things, because for these kids, if you look down the same path all the time, you're only going to see the same thing. You've got to step to the side a little bit to see it from another angle, to be able to give a better judgement on what's going on.'

'Things changed with Aunty Veronica. She does a lot of work outside of the Pioneer Murri Court, constantly driving people around or on the phone to people, checking in on them. We had these young kids running amok up on the Cane Lands. You know when you have a lot of kids bored together? They get boisterous. And unfortunately, it can make people uneasy. So the local police actually approached Aunty Veronica and said, "Is there anything that you can do to try help us out? Especially for the people doing their late-night shopping?" Aunty Veronica, as she always does, steps up and says "Yep I'll do that."'

'Aunty Veronica asked me, did you want to come up? And I thought, I better because Aunty Veronica is just one person. But now, over the last few weeks and months of going up there and walking around, we're engaging the kids a lot more. I'll go over and actually interact with the kids asking them what's up or what's been going on? How has the week been or what's going on tonight? You know, is there any trouble up there? Is there anything I can help you with? It's a different way of doing a night patrol. We'll stay up there for a few hours and then Aunty Veronica and I will shuttle the kids home.'

For the full story, please visit the Archives page at ourcommunityjustice.org.



ADDRESSING UNDERLYING TRAUMA

Many people involved in CJGs told the evaluation that they believe the main issue driving offending amongst their community members is unresolved trauma.

The following example shows how the Doomadgee CJG is supporting people to deal with grief and loss.



A LOT OF OUR PEOPLE HURT AND THEY DON'T
EVEN KNOW IT... [I]T'S THE COMPOUNDED
TRAUMA. YOUR GREAT GRANDMOTHER, YOUR
GRANDMOTHER, YOUR MOTHER, YOUR GREAT
GRANDFATHER AND ALL THOSE GENERATIONS
HAVE HAD UNRESOLVED TRAUMA. AND YOU
DON'T KNOW IT.

BUT YOU INHERIT SOME OF IT. IT AFFECTS
YOUR HEALTH... SO IT'S LIKE A MELTING POT,
AND SOONER OR LATER IT EXPLODES,
AND THAT'S WHAT PEOPLE NEED TO BE
LOOKING AT.



DOOMADGEE - Grief and Loss Support Group

Speaking about community response to Doomadgee's recent support initiative, Cynthia O'Loughlin, Court Coordinator for the Doomadgee Community Justice Group, tells 'Our Community Justice' about how an intimate support group has slowly become a pillar of shared understanding and emotional comfort in the remote town of Doomadgee.

Merely six weeks old, the Doomadgee Grief and Loss Support Group was started by Justice Group member Uncle Steven McNamee, Adriel O'Keefe from the Northwest Remote Health Wellbeing Centre, Anthony Newcastle, who runs a local men's group, and Cynthia O'Loughlin as part of her role as coordinator of the Doomadgee Community Justice Group, with assistance by Paul Denaro, a trauma counsellor.

Can you provide a small description of the group and the work it does?

'The purpose overall is to assist those families who've experienced a loss in the family group and to allow them a voice to speak about their loss. We don't hold sessions inside but outside, so people don't feel trapped. People want to feel a sense of openness and feeling free.'

'Within these sessions, after a member shares their feelings either Anthony or Paul will assist with giving context to those emotions.'

What does that look like sometimes?

'For accessibility, we make use of visual aids.'

Cynthia begins to draw a wavy line. 'At the beginning, Paul might say your emotions may feel like this – up and down, up and down, up and down'. Her pen traces the peaks and valleys of the squiggle. 'Then the emotion might vary in intensity depending on the day until you

reach the "flat" emotion.' She ends the curvy line with a straight line. 'You feel like you're going back to how you felt before the loss of your loved one.'

'He says, everybody is different. That the "up and down" of it all, some people might have that for a few years, you know? But, when you need to put your emotions in perspective one way of doing that is reaching out to others.'

'Something else we might do is talk through the stages of grief and display that as a visual aid. Or sending around handouts that display what the physical symptoms of anxiety looks like – we find that's very useful for our younger members. We've even recently sent Elders to receive mental health training.'

'When some members don't understand their feelings, that's when we see a strong response to the act of drawing. If Paul draws for instance feelings as "boxes" inside of a circle, maybe sometimes you take just one "box" outside of that circle to talk about it.'

You mentioned younger members; what is the age range of a typical group session?

'Not only has attendance been growing since we started – we've had sessions featuring almost twenty participants – but we see people from as young as fifteen to as old as seniors in their seventies.'

Would you say the role the group serves in your community is impactful?

'The role I believe is to reach out to community members who are grieving and would like to have a safe space to speak about how they are feeling, and how they can get some help if they need it, so in that sense, yes.'

When you're looking at ways to create a group or service that can respond to a pressing issue that's

happening in the community, how did this one come about?

'Well sadly there's been numerous losses in Doomadgee. At one stage, there was ten people waiting to be buried. They passed away one after the other. It's not just deaths but also suicides. Our group gives community members not just a sense of relief in being able to talk about how these things affect them but also it gives them a way to understand their feelings and what they're going through, either because they're talking openly about it or seeing someone else talk about a similar emotion.'

'One member told us she's never been able to express these feelings in the past. That they weren't able to tell their story.'

That inability to "tell their story" or express themselves, would you say that's because they've haven't felt a sense of safety to speak on that feeling?

'Yeah, it's really feeling that safety because there hasn't been this kind of setting before that's reinforced that. In getting feedback from the group, they tell us the people they're used to speaking with about this has mostly been within their family. I think what we offer them is a step-back from that and they find it freeing.'

'They know the group is non-judgemental, and this helps them feel safe.'

What's the feedback been like from Doomadgee?

'It's been so positive. People telling us directly they're looking forward to going to sessions. They just want to talk.'

For the full story, please visit the Archives page at ourcommunityjustice.org.

THE EXTRAORDINARY STAFF OF CJGS

Committed and competent staff are the foundation of successful CJGs, and the evaluation has heard a great deal of positive feedback in 2021 and 2022 about the extraordinary people who work for CJGs.

These staff are highly motivated to make a difference to their communities, but this does carry a risk of 'burnout', which is a key challenge for CJGs to manage.



WHAT MOTIVATES CJG STAFF

So just knowing that when we go to work each day, we're helping someone. And actually making a difference in someone's life. Even if we just help one person to have a better future. Then it's a job well done... My little fella, I don't want him to have to go through the stuff that I see on a day to day basis. So when I go to work, I'm not just doing it for my clients, but trying to set up a better future for my son... Our grandparents helped set up [this organisation]. So we know within our hearts that we're just building on their legacy, really, and trying to keep their vision alive.

(CJG WORKER, SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND)

I am doing this for the Elders that went before.

(CJG WORKER, SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND)

The job is tough. But the impossible makes it all the more rewarding... My strength [comes from] the people I'm surrounded with now, the foundation that I have, whether it's at home or here [at the CJG]. It's that overwhelming encouragement that I get...

(CJG WORKER, NORTH QUEENSLAND)

[I like] helping people achieve their goals and saying to me, 'You know, you've really helped me with this, thank you for helping me.'

(CJG WORKER, NORTH WEST QUEENSLAND)

[Working here] makes you feel like you are there for your community.

(CJG WORKER, NORTH QUEENSLAND)

I like helping people. Been doing this work for 30 years, but my parents brought me up that way. But it also helps me look after myself, because I used to drink but I haven't drunk for over 30 years, it keeps me sober, because I am doing something useful. Keeps me from going backwards.

(CJG MEN'S WORKER, NORTH QUEENSLAND)

The number of staff might not seem big – three – but the three that we have is very self-driven and motivated. [It's an example] for other people in the community: these three people can make this much of a difference and change.

(CJG WORKER, FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND)

[The CJG staff] are champions for the people. They're not like 'Well, I'm just here to do a job and I'm not going to take you to your probation things because it's not in my duty statement'.

(CJG WORKER, FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND)

I had a client in this morning and I was helping her with [funeral] assistance. And when we finished all the paperwork, we're just waiting for approval, she goes 'Can I give you a hug?' I said 'Of course you can... but why?' And she says, 'Because, if you weren't here, who would help me?' And she nearly made me cry, because it's like you don't think about it. You're just in the zone, you're doing it.

(CJG WORKER, FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND)



BURNOUT AND COPING: A STORY

Coordinator: Unfortunately, I did burn out. I found it hard at the beginning to let go of everyone else's trauma. I was taking it home with me. After about three and a half, four years, I burnt out. I was sitting out the back [of the office], having a coffee with ATSILS and I just broke. So I took some time off and that's when we approached [a new staff member]. We asked her if she could fill in for me while I was recuperating.

Evaluator: How long did you have off?

Coordinator: A good few months. I came back part time. Just a couple of days a week.

Evaluator: What drew you back again?

Coordinator: I love the job and I love helping – every job I've done has always been in that process of helping people... I had a big talk to the Elders and [the chairperson].

Evaluator: And since you've come back, do you feel like there's more places for you to debrief? Or more support now that [the CJG's] grown. Is there a difference?

Coordinator: Definitely. Because back then... I was down at [the office] on my own. I didn't have a lot of support in that sense. Completely different now.

But I also changed my mindset. So I've learnt not to take things home. I leave it at work. Back then I was answering the phones 24 hours a day to clients and helping clients 24 hours a day. So personally I've put a stop to that. At 5 o'clock I turn my phone off now. I don't deal with clients on weekends at 3:00am. There's no more of that. I kind of put a stop to that because I've got [my own children]... I've just put a block there now. I guess I've just stopped that absorption.

I think just being able to stay back, debrief and let go of it before you leave work is a big thing... I definitely think that the support in the debriefing has been a lot stronger. When I started I was pretty much sitting there on my own, working in my car... so I didn't have anyone to debrief with, and you try to go through it yourself... So I guess that support has been a big difference...

[And] just within myself, learning to let go.

PREVENTION, EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

With enhanced funding to broaden their activities beyond court support, many CJGs are focusing on prevention strategies, to keep people from coming into contact with courts in the first place.

The following are some leading practice examples from the evaluation to date.



WUJAL WUJAL - Targeted Youth Programs

In 2015, the Wujal Wujal CJG was funded only for a coordinator position to work with the volunteer Elders to provide court support. The group was frustrated with the lack of resources to work with people in the prevention space so it started applying for grants. As a staff member recalled, "The Elders were basically just on that merry go round of like helping people go to court and, you know, telling the magistrate what's going on, but not really having the resources to do much about it."

What the CJG really wanted to do was "take people out on country and go camping and do counselling out there in the bush with the Elders and all that good stuff." After several unsuccessful grant applications, the group received a small donation from a philanthropist organisation, which enabled hire of a vehicle and very limited staff wages to start the program. The group borrowed camping equipment from the Council and used a lot of their own resources and locals volunteered to run the camps. Participants included men on Probation and Parole orders, but the program was open to anyone that wanted to join in the activities.

In 2016, the CJG attracted funding from the Australian Government to continue these camps. The CJG discovered that the highest need was with children, especially young boys, starting from upper primary school age, right through to high school.

As a staff member recalls:

"We started noticing, with the males, a lot of our time was getting taken up by helping young boys and men. Often with young fellas, from 11, 12 years of age, it starts to sort of go off the rails a bit. And then by the time they're adults – it's not too late, it's never too late – but it's like if you catch them when they just start going off the rails, you can veer them back a bit easier. You know, like take them out camping. We did that a few times where we took some young boys that were getting in trouble and took them on a men's camp, with Elders and their uncles. And then they really got shown

love, but they also got talked to and told: 'Stop doing this bullshit. And come to these things instead of like trying to break in or break stuff.' And so what ended up happening is a lot of the time we were working with kids, which was fine because the funding was just to cover the whole community."

Through this work, the CJG was able to attract support for a targeted youth program, to complement the adults program.

The CJG faced some scepticism as to why the government should be funding camps on country to go fishing. However, the CJG was able to demonstrate that the camps were involving high numbers of participants who were on probation or parole orders, and men who were involved in DFV who other services were unable to engage.

The women's and men's groups and the camps on country were providing a space for the CJG's counsellors and Elders to work with them in a culturally appropriate way, so the clients felt comfortable to open up about their problems.

In 2017, the CJG was included in the DFVE program and received funding for its Men's Group and its Women's Group and to continue its Healing on Country Program. Funding support for the CJG's programs was expanded with the CJG funding enhancement from 2019.

A feature of the Healing on Country program has been the level of community participation and ownership. The funding has enabled community members to be employed to assist with the camps.

At first the camps were instigated by the CJG staff, but over time Elders themselves started coming forward and asking the CJG to organise a camp at a particular location where they wanted to show their young people how to dig for a particular food or resource.

"So it's led by the community, which is how it should be."





THURSDAY ISLAND - Fighting Fit

Zenadth Kes Boxing Club was established in 2017 by volunteers from the Thursday Island Justice Group. For a period of years, it was run by volunteers with the help of fundraising and local community sponsorship. The Club quickly attracted and has maintained a strong degree of community participation from young people and adults. The CJG coordinator reports that attendance at the club has been up 50-60 people a week for over 5 years. On Wednesdays, the Club runs public after school classes for children under 11 and youth over 12.

On Tuesdays, classes are for high school students and on Fridays, the Club collaborates with police and the school to run the Blue Edge mentoring and fitness program. The Boxing Club also runs beach camps with its boxing squad in the lead up to tournaments on the mainland several times a year. The Club has benefited from local partnership with Torres Health, which provides the use of a shed facility for the gym and obtained funding for a boxing ring.

The CJG Coordinator and the CJG Youth Programs Officer and his partner are the driving forces behind the club. Starting as a volunteer, the Youth Programs Officer position is now able to be funded out of the enhanced CJG funding that was available from 2019. The Club and the associated youth camps are part of the CJG's Community Specific Activities supported by the funding enhancement in the triennial service agreement.

The CJG sees the boxing club as more than just filling a gap in regarding the lack of recreational opportunities for Thursday Island youth and adults. According to the programs officer, the main things are "self-confidence, respect and discipline." The CJG sees the Club as a crime prevention program, by capturing kids at primary school and giving them the life skills and discipline to follow educational and sporting pathways. Over 5 years, they have seen participants develop as individuals and graduate from school and go on to university, becoming role models for younger children.

The CJG Coordinator sees the club as part of its DFV prevention work too: "It's a good blueprint for what kids should be experiencing in their own house. Sometimes they don't have that structure, so they get it from the club. That's why it's a safe place. That's where I could justify it in the domestic and family violence space – even though we don't pull up a big whiteboard to try and ask the kids about domestic and family violence issues, they're still getting that knowledge of structure and discipline and respect of the club, and the opportunities and the growth."

A feature of the initiative is that it was a community-driven initiative that did not fit any government program guidelines but provides opportunities for holistic, wraparound support for individuals and their families:

"Most organisations come to you with resources and how to do it, and blueprints to follow and boxes to tick to make it fit into that programme. This one is holistic and boxing is the tool that captures everything around it. It's not just a boxing club... Because the attention we give to one person, we give to the whole class. And it's that extra time after that - not just the kids, the family, the parents too, they get the positives out of it... If we didn't have this thing going, where would these children be?"

(CJG coordinator)

TABLELANDS - On Country Camps

Since 2019, Elders and staff from the Tablelands Community Justice Group have delivered on-country camps for youth from communities across the Atherton Tablelands. The Bringing Our Mob Back (BOMB) program targets youth involved already with Youth Justice (YJ) and youth who are at risk of offending.

The BOMB camps are intended to reduce youth offending. The idea emerged out of the CJG's frustrations that programs for youth were run during working hours, but offending tended to occur after hours, on weekends and during school holidays, often driven by boredom, lack of transport and lack of money.

The CJG describes the philosophy of the BOMB program as follows:

"By taking youth back on country with Elder involvement, reinvesting in Indigenous cultural values, traditions and lore, we can teach our youth to respect our Elders, other people and each other."

The CJG coordinator explains that the Elders are central to the BOMB Program's impact:

"The Elders were key. And they've always been the key to changing these kids' minds and giving them that cultural perspective, as well as the lore and everything else that they don't have in their lives at the moment or in their homes."

The camps are delivered at various stations and properties around the region. The length of camp varies, from 5 days, a weekend, or a day trip. Local Traditional Owners are involved in some camps, teaching language, sharing cultural knowledge of local sites, and introducing the youth to bush foods and medicines. Activities

include fishing and hunting and storytelling.

The BOMB camps were started by the CJG coordinator using her own vehicle and her own funds, with support from families. The camps are now funded as a Community Specific Activity under the CJG's Service Agreement with DJAG. However, the costs are not fully funded by the CJG program, so the CJG partners with a number of other organisations to share costs and equipment, including community health services, Youth Justice, Probation and Parole, and Mission Australia, which is funded by YJ to work with young offenders. In the past, the CJG has also attracted sponsorship for the camps – for example, from Suez Community Grants.

The CJG is exploring how to attract funding to deliver training at future camps. The CJG is also seeking a permanent base to host the camps on a regular basis.



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EDUCATION AND AWARENESS THROUGH YARNING CIRCLES

"Yarning Circles are effective in educating men about lifestyle changes to minimise re-offending. On-country activities engage men to spend time away from communities when there is trouble between families etc.

Men's Group meetings give men in the community an opportunity to get together and discuss issues that may be affecting their lives or the local community."

(Stakeholder)



"AND THIS IS JUST ME. I SEE JUSTICE AS THAT
PREVENTION BEFORE COURT OR BEFORE THE
POLICE OR BEFORE BEING CHARGED.

I THINK THE JUSTICE [GROUP] SHOULD BE
WORKING ON THAT."

(INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY MEMBER/SCHOOL PRINCIPAL)



EARLY INTERVENTION AND DIVERSION

To keep people out of the justice system, many CJGs are also prioritising activities that seek to intervene early and help people who are at-risk of deepening their contact with police, courts and potentially prison or youth detention.

The following examples show how effective these strategies can be.



GOONDIWINDI - Heal country, heal people

"The Goondiwindi Town Common project involves the CJG coordinator working with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are subject to fines clearing and rejuvenating the Town Common and removing obnoxious weeds. Under the SPER Hardship Program, participants can pay off their State Penalties Enforcement Register (SPER) debts at an hourly rate by participating in a Work and Development Order. The CJG has registered as a SPER Hardship Partner to supervise these orders.

Stakeholders have reported that clients of the CJG who have been helping clear the land have been taking their families to the common and meeting the CJG coordinator there for a cup of tea and a yarn. Some people have come back to participate as volunteers, even after they have paid off their SPER debts. The project has connected people to country and provided them with a space of their own.

The CJG Coordinator explained its impact as follows:

"We paid back quite a significant amount of money and stopped a lot of licenses from being lost. So that's been huge."

The CJG believes that providing meaningful activities such as the Town Common project and assisting people to access opportunities such as training and employment has contributed to less re-offending:

"So in the beginning, we had anywhere from 20 to 30 Aboriginal people in court. The range of offences was from drink driving to domestic violence to general nuisance charges, just trespass and things that don't even warrant a court case.

So over the past twelve months, I've mitigated a lot of the issues that we've had as far as trespass goes and

that there was just nothing here to do... I put into place the Town Common Project, which has been very successful. We've cleared up 180 acres. We've lowered reoffending to, at the moment, there's probably four on the court list."





WE'VE MADE IT KNOWN THAT IF THE POLICE NEED HELP WITH ANYTHING, THEY SHOULD, THEY NEED TO COME TO THE JUSTICE GROUP

POLICE AND CJG WORKING TOGETHER TO INTERVENE EARLY

In a remote Indigenous community, a new Officer in Charge (OiC) from Queensland Police and Indigenous staff from the CJG have forged a strong relationship to manage justice issues in the community. The OiC's arrival coincided with a period of unrest caused by friction between local families. The CJG and police quickly identified the importance of regular contact with each other.

"It was just an important thing for [the CJG coordinator] and I to [communicate] with each other... We did that every Friday. Just networking. Just to make sure that the police and the Justice Group are on the same page."

(OiC)

Although the CJG coordinator has connections to a local family, the OiC appreciates that "she bends over backwards for all, and she tries to be independent from the different families in town, and does it pretty well." For police to work well with the CJG, the key things are "independence and transparency":

"So that makes my job easier if I need to speak to people or if the Justice Group need to speak to people, we can usually work together around that." (OiC)

From the CJG perspective, they are appreciative of QPS' willingness to work with them and through them when engaging with the community:

"[QPS] have been good. We've made it known that if the police need help with anything they should - they need - to come to the Justice Group...Because we've asked the community before, how do you want the proceedings between the police and the community to be handled, and the [role of the] justice group? Well, at the moment they said, 'Well, we want everything to

go through to the Justice Group' because some locals here had bad experiences with the police, and the police know that. And so we said to [the OiC] last year 'it's not you personally, it's just the police. So we need you to work with us more than ever.' And it's been good. We've been having a well-connected working relationship. There are things that we still need to do. [We tell them] 'if you want to engage with these locals, then you're going to have an issue with them. So come to us and then we'll relay the message or we'll try and get them to work with you instead of you barging into places.'"

(CJG staff member)

The CJG was grateful for QPS support during the period of family unrest in the community. The police and the CJG worked together to engage with families and discuss mediation:

"[Police] have been really good, like with the unrest. There were some families that... well, I've got to put my safety first [when dealing with them]. And the police actually came and worked with me to deliver letters to each household." (CJG staff member)

The CJG staff have also appreciated that police have been willing to be involved in CJG activities.

"They've been part of a DV Awareness Day and Awareness March. They get fully involved in any activities and programmes that we are involved in." (CJG staff member)

The CJG staff are conscious that the arrangement is built on personal relationships and trust and they have to be proactive in doing that with any new police.

"We will have to re-educate the next sergeant who comes in... that this is the community standard and this is how we like to operate with the police."



MEDIATING CONFLICT TO PREVENT CONTACT WITH THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Whilst conducting a local evaluation in the town of Doomadgee, our evaluator uncovers the vital strength of Community Justice Groups to small social eco-systems and the invaluable role they play in managing mediation between families.

In the small community of Doomadgee, the local Community Justice Group often finds themselves playing from strength to strength in navigating the intense social eco-system of the town.

Comprised of a group of Elders, an important part of the Justice Group's role in the community is to help facilitate the resolution of disruptions or disturbances between family groups, and any other conflict within the community, in order to pre-empt and ultimately negate police involvement. Consequently, the service they find themselves frequently involved in is mediation.

"Mediation is probably the biggest thing that I've had to do with the Justice Group", a local police officer tells our evaluator. "Where there are feuding families or something where the Justice Group is involved and facilitates mediation between the parties. They're also a good source of information within the community... particularly [in dealing with] the emotional side of things [and community] angst."

In balancing the authority of their position alongside their standing as members of the community, the Doomadgee Justice Group is well placed to understand the anger often directed towards the police. This culturally and emotionally-informed approach underpins their relationship with both the police and families.

With reoffending juveniles, their families may not always understand what's happened, or they have difficulty believing their kids have been involved. That is where the

Justice Group is able to help come in and support those families, explaining what's unfolded and how the justice process works going forward.

Occasionally their response to a family situation will involve a more hands-on approach and collaboration with the police.

During the evaluation, one standout interaction involved two girls feuding from different families that required facilitation. The conflict had become violent and the priority for the Justice Group was avoiding arrests during the mediation process as well as preventing bullying.

"...inevitably, the families get involved", a community member tells our evaluator. "They hang on to the smallest thing and they expect if they don't get an apology, it's never gonna end."

Justice Groups are fundamental in making everyone feel heard. To achieve a successful mediation, the Justice Group advocated for a support person for each side, in order to counteract group intimidation or bullying, which can jeopardise successful outcomes. Laying out a process for future conflict management helped build self-sustainability in their community, reducing the reliance on police services.

A core role of the government-funded Justice Groups is providing support to community members within the court process. But our evaluator notes that Justice Groups aren't promoting the extent of the work they perform outside of the formal justice system. Reflecting on an exercise at a workshop, they tell us "One of the things I've done with Justice Groups in workshops was ask them to sort the work that they performed into these ten different domains. Basically, it's an exercise of asking them to think of their time as twenty units and then organize them into different quadrants."

"I was surprised by the amount of time they were putting into early intervention."

"Any form of mediation, just talking to people and settling things down – the extent of what they do, the importance of that work, [has not been captured]. I asked them, 'What should you be doing in the future?' And there were two answers to that: one is they identified we need more training, but the other thing that they identified strongly was reintegration, when people are coming back to the community. How do we manage the period of post-imprisonment? ... Everybody seems to think that's a legitimate role for the Community Justice Groups to be involved in."

The role of a Justice Group shines most in their ability to be an informal intermediary due to their pre-existing relationships within the community, work that local police have described as otherwise "impossible" without the assistance of the Justice Group.

Both the police and Community Justice Groups agree that not all interactions can or should be police-led. Our evaluator concluded: "I agree we need a notion of formal mediation in terms of what they're doing but I also think the Justice Group is just [getting on with it informally without being noticed]. A lot of people just think of it like they're just generally talking with the Elders. If they're given more opportunities to do these [formal] mediations, the more respect they will gain in their role."

"And then they'll be more effective for their communities."

For the full story, please visit the Archives page at ourcommunityjustice.org.

POLICE DIVERSION TO ADDRESS UNDERLYING ISSUES



"We have a few people [here] with mental health issues... This one gentleman... we put him in contact with [the Coordinator] there at the Justice Group. And we sort of came to a little bit of an agreement that the charges that we initially preferred... we dropped them or we changed into something much lower, because it was established that he didn't quite understand his medication and therefore wasn't compliant with it. This was affecting his mood and everything. We informed the victim, [and] they were happy to have the charges changed... And then it turned out there was a fairly small fine, but I think a conviction was recorded.

The initial charges were quite serious and the Magistrate wanted to make sure that... nothing else further happened, similar [to the incident]. And so the Magistrate was wanting this person to stay on their medication because we can't really enforce that... The gentleman is back on his medication. He is certainly, his attitude in general [has] improved... I think it worked well because I suppose in the last six months the relationship between [the CJG] and the police service has improved quite noticeably. And [the CJG Coordinator] can see that we're willing to work with him on some matters."

(QPS OFFICER)



MURRI COURT

Around the State, Murri Courts currently operate in 15 locations and for youth only, in 3 locations (Mackay, Rockhampton and Cairns).

The evaluation has consistently heard positive feedback about how Murri Courts are having a positive impact in changing people.



THE KEY INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESS IN THE MURRI COURT

Strong relationships of respect between Magistrates, CJGs and Elders

"For the Rockhampton Justice Group, a good news story is the relationship with the coordinating Magistrate. And he was tough, he was so tough [before]. And to see him now sitting around the stakeholder table, and talking with the Elders, embedding actions out of the RAP. Last year, he took the Elders to Christmas lunch... He can now see it working because you've got people that are just pushing the program forward and really keeping stakeholders accountable, defendants accountable, keeping everybody up to date with what's going on."

(Government stakeholder)

"All the rapport that we've had with all of the Magistrates... it's just awesome to go in there [to court] and it's not like back in the day when you go into an institution, you know, you got this fear, like you're going to get into trouble. But because of all the breakdown of these barriers that have been inside the court, it's awesome to walk in there now because everybody [the court participants] comes up and says, 'Hey Aunty' – they call us all aunty and uncle."

(Murri Court Elder)

"I fell in love with the process at the start because the Murri Court is just totally different. The judge actually sits down with you on eye level he's not sitting up at the gallery or anything like that, looking down. Seems like, you know, they're not looking down on you... He actually sits there and has a conversation with [participants] and he genuinely wants to help them."

(CJG member)

Committed and well organised coordinators

"There's probably loads of unspoken work that [the coordinator] does, but I can imagine her pouring over the paperwork pretty much every night of the week to be able to get us ready for each fortnight for the Murri Court."

She gets all the Elders organised. Getting all my paperwork together. Give me the rundown on what's happening. She does intake so she'll sit down here and go over everything, we start from the start. What was your childhood like? What was your high school like? What's home life like? You know, and find out each little individual factor that could be, that could amount to what's happening in a person's life. She becomes a mother, you know, for these young kids."

(CJG member)



HOW MURRI COURT CHANGES PEOPLE

It encourages people to take responsibility and be accountable for their actions

"The idea I like about the Murri Court is it puts the responsibility back onto clients and making them responsible to ensure that they're doing this or that or whatever they're being asked to do."
(NGO stakeholder)

"When an Elder was disappointed in the lack of progress from a client and spoke to that in court... you could see that the client could feel what looked like they had been seen, made visible, by the Elder – that they couldn't hide from their actions or their lack of participation in the programs or the services that they were referred to by the Elder..."

And the victim is sitting in court as well. That impact was felt by them in terms of them feeling like someone else can see what is happening in their situation. And so subsequently, they feel supported. They feel seen. They feel valued by the Elders."
(Court stakeholder)

It provides the time and the opportunity for people to get help and to change things

"The other thing about the Murri Court model is that they can be in the court for many, many months. DJAG like them to get in and out in three months, but three months is simply not enough time to one, be assessed and two, require them to utilise these opportunities and, for example, get used to reporting – not reporting to police, but reporting to the court, reporting for yarning circles... Given that we find that essentially all of them

have significant trauma, they need time. And also the Elders say that, in terms of their involvement, it's about trust, relationships, so if things were to be turned over in 3 months, the Elders might have no more than one contact with them given the roster arrangement. So this way, I think I've sentenced people who have been in the court for 2 years."

(Member of Judiciary)

"We've got an older lady in court at the moment. And for the first time she's had support around the things that, you know, she really needs"

(Murri Court Elder)

It strengthens people by re-connecting them with culture and kinship networks

"I think the power of Murri Court is that when you've got the Elders there, and they bring to the participant's attention who they really are and where they come from, their heritage. And Uncle James will say to one of them 'your grandfather was a hero back in such and such.' And there's this boy didn't even know nothing about it..."

That's the whole thing about the Elders, they are able to empower them or give them a sense of belonging. And we've seen that with that young girl. You know, she came in a mess, then she finds out her parents, her grandparents are great leaders of Woorabinda, you know, worked with our mothers and fathers. She knew nothing of that. And that's the heritage. And that's what we bring to the table with our young people."

(Murri Court Elder)

It shows people care and compassion

"I think it's the fact that they come in and for the first time somebody cares about them and what's going to

happen. I think that changes a lot of their mindset, because they see a group of people who care about them."

(NGO stakeholder)

"When we go to court, I speak as if they were my own kids, you know, and encourage them and let them know that there is the support there, even when they come out of court [and] come down here to the Coordinator... We show them compassion, they're probably not getting all that stuff at home."

(Murri Court Elder)

A STORY OF SUCCESS IN THE MURRI COURT



"So one of the Murri Court clients I've been working with [is] a younger person, just aged 24. He's had... a period in custody for a month due to selling drugs and using and paraphernalia. [Now] he's been put on probation and parole. He's been working with us now for well on eight months and is [keeping] abstinence from all drug use. He's changed his life, thanks to Murri Court support, along with my support and Probation and Parole, he's been able to access a psychologist for his grief and loss and trauma histories. He's had a very prejudicial childhood as most of our cohort has. And him and his partner have also been able to regain their children's custody from DOCS...

So it's remarkable what he's been able to achieve, putting his family back together and securing housing and also part time employment, which should lead to fairly full time employment for him. He's a regular attender at the [CJG] men's support group, and regularly links in with the Elders... when he needs a little bit of extra support. So I think he's a really good role model for the young people of his age group. So I think that would be a highlight story for me. And you know, without Murri Court support, he would have potentially been in custody for 3 to 5 years. So he wouldn't have got to see his son grow up at all."

(CJG STAFF)



COURT SUPPORT



Even in locations where there is no Murri Court, CJGs play an important role in providing cultural reports to courts dealing with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander defendants.

These reports help Magistrates and judicial officers make more culturally informed decisions in relation to bail and sentencing of adults and young people.

Feedback from lawyers, Magistrates, prosecutors and defendants themselves has highlighted how important this is to ensure just outcomes for Indigenous people in the courts.



HOW CJGS HELP THE COURT

"[The CJG] just impressed me. A particular person, who really just had some very bad things happen. And he was an adult so he wasn't getting treated in the juvenile court system. But [the CJG] engaged, helped, sent for counselling, found counselling, did that wraparound as a justice group and then rolled it all up. And [his issue] was something, I think it was DV, that I wouldn't have understood. But I completely understood it because they spent hours spelling out over six or seven pages exactly what the history of the situation was. And it was, 'can I give you a hug rather than a penalty?' in the end. From something that was quite serious to start with. And that, to me, is what a community justice group can do – it's that 'this is what it looks like to you because you're from southeast Queensland, but this is actually what's really going on'."

(Magistrate, North Queensland)

"But the reason that the [...] Justice Group is exceptional is because of, first of all, the interaction. So [the Coordinator] speaks to the Magistrate in regards to when sentencing is being determined. She's very concise about the role that the Justice Group provides to the community in regards to programs for people who are recidivist offenders, if they have substance abuse or if they have anger management or with juveniles, if there's lack of supervision and so forth, she makes the court aware of the different programs that are available. So then... in my role, the Court can take my submissions into consideration and I will make the submission if I think that an offender would be more appropriately monitored, say, on a community based order with the access to the Justice Group for assistance instead of a suspended sentence."

(QPS prosecutor, Cape York)

"We have a lot of people that English is their second language... Having the Community Justice Group

involved and ... spending a lot of time with people getting their personal information from them, I think that that is sometimes bridging the gap in the cultural awareness that some [legal] practitioners have. Because we have a transient workforce out here, transient professionals would come out here as well, and I think that what I've observed is that having a functioning Community Justice Group means that I'm actually getting the histories of people more. I'm getting their antecedents more.

So people are getting represented more and their information and stories are before the court, which they wouldn't be if I didn't have that resource for this area... I can think about whether they are candidates for supervision, whether they need support in the community. There's such a breadth of sentencing information that comes from someone being able to properly communicate with someone and hear their stories in a way and talk to them because [they have that] level of trust in the community. It doesn't exist necessarily with the professionals that come in and out."

(Magistrate, North Queensland)



**BUT [THE CJG] ENGAGED, HELPED,
SENT FOR COUNSELLING, FOUND
COUNSELLING, DID THAT
WRAPAROUND AS A JUSTICE GROUP
AND THEN ROLLED IT ALL UP.**





ASSISTING PEOPLE TO GET THE HELP THEY NEED

CJGs play a vital role in helping community members to navigate the service system and get the help they need. This works best where the service system is coordinated. In Mackay, the number of Indigenous young people involved in the court has fallen steeply in recent years, and many people commented that this is because the CJG and the other Indigenous services are working well together to support community members in a holistic way.

MACKAY - Community Reference Group

"A few years ago... [a DATSIP staff member] got all the [Indigenous] community organisations together in a community reference group, because it's probably the same story in a lot of communities: we've got all these really deadly organisations who do absolutely tremendous work, but they're not linked. They're individual cog teeth on a wheel, where you need all those teeth meshing together to be able to, you know, better provide for community. Because it seems like a lot of organisations just wanted to hold on to whatever clients they could get and they weren't letting them out because that's what the funding is based on – how many people you've got to service within your service. So, you know, everyone wanted to keep the clients and also they didn't want them going anywhere else... So it was getting all these services together, putting that on the table: 'What do you have to offer?'

And this is where I like to use [that reference group] for the Pioneer Murri Court, because now I know everything that's going on in the community. And if there's a tailored need for any of these kids, I can go, 'hey, come on mate, I'm going to go take you to this mob.'... And the great thing is I'm related to most people anyway, so I can say 'hey, let's go see me cousin.'"

(CJG member)

"[It works] because we have Aboriginal mob working with Aboriginal mob, we have Torres Strait Islanders working with Torres Strait, [South Sea Islanders] with the islanders. We also work from our perspective. We know what it's like as an Aboriginal woman. I know what family looks like. I know when I come to work, I'm working with some of my mob... And that's why it works for us. So we're not looking at them from that white man's point of view. We're not looking at them with those colonised eyes. We're not looking at them thinking that they're incapable and they can't do anything. We know they can, and we just have to push them, we just have to encourage them, we just have to find a way to get them to know that they are deadly, and they are strong."

(CJG partner)

HELPING PEOPLE DEAL WITH DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE



“We rely heavily on male counsellors, which we don’t get often here. We’ve had to adapt to just go back to basics and back to culture. You know, some of these boys, they just prefer to be out of the house anyway amongst other fellows, yarning, sitting by the fire or even just... next week we’re going to go get some spear handles... It’s more connected when we do cultural activities. Because we’re not going to sit here and wait for a male counsellor to come.

We’ll just take them out bush... we don’t even have to talk about the mental health stuff... just have a normal yarning circle and they end up talking. A good fireplace helps, you know... Just kind of healing to that fire.”

(CJG WORKER)



ASSISTING PEOPLE WHO ARE IN CUSTODY OR UNDER SUPERVISION

A CJG role that many people are not aware of is assisting community members who are in watchhouses, prisons or youth detention centres.

ELDERS' VISITS TO PRISONS

"I just think that [CJGs] are very much underrated for what they undertake. You know, if you look at the Community Justice Groups that go into the [correctional] centres. In the lead up to them going in – the Elder visits – the behaviour in the centre's good. Whilst they're there, the behaviour's really good.

For a couple of weeks after they've been there, the behaviour's good. So surely from a QCS point of view, you can say... those Elders can actually control the behaviour and make it a safer environment for QCS staff and prisoners. So, you know, it's those unseen things that hold great value as well."

(QCS officer)



"THE ELDERS WHO VISIT PEOPLE IN CUSTODY TO PROVIDE MORAL, CULTURAL AND PRACTICAL SUPPORT. THE ELDERS ATTEND SPECIAL EVENTS SUCH AS NAIDOC AND ALSO PROVIDE THOSE IN CUSTODY SUPPORT WITH SORRY BUSINESS. AN ELDER MADE A CONNECTION WITH A PRISONER WHO WAS DUE TO BE RELEASED SOON. THE ELDER WAS ABLE TO LINK THE CLIENT WITH MEN'S GROUPS AND COUNSELLING WHEN HE RETURNED TO COMMUNITY. THE CLIENT HAS NOT REOFFENDED AND ATTENDS MEN'S GROUP WEEKLY."

(CJG REPRESENTATIVE)

"WHEN WE GO THERE [TO LOTUS GLEN PRISON] AND SEE THEM FACE TO FACE, THAT'S WHEN THEY ARE CLEAREST. THAT'S WHEN THEY'VE GOT THE DRIVE. THEY'VE SAT DOWN, THEY'VE THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT THEY WANT TO DO, HOW THEY'RE GOING TO CONTRIBUTE WHEN THEY COME OUT. THEY ARE ALL FULL OF BEANS. AND WE HAVE TO BE PART OF THE TRANSITION SO WHEN THEY COME OUT, WE MEET THEM AND WE ASK HOW YOU WANT TO CONTRIBUTE BACK TO THE YOUTH OR YOU KNOW, WHEREVER YOU CAN, SO YOU MAKE YOUR JOURNEY BACK HOME SAFELY, SO YOU CAN REINTEGRATE BACK IN WITHOUT BEING BRANDED, AND WITH THE SUPPORT THAT YOU NEED FOR HOUSING, [OTHER] HELP."

(CJG STAFF)



STORIES OF SUCCESS

HOW CJGS ARE HELPING PEOPLE STAY OUT OF THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

The following examples from the evaluation shows the difference that CJGs are making at the individual level, person by person. The final year of the evaluation, 2023, will be focusing even more on measuring the impact that CJGs have, in addressing local justice challenges and keeping Indigenous people out of the justice system.

A COMMUNITY WORKER'S STORY

We had one of our young fellows come through. This young boy is very traumatised, hasn't had a lot of family connection around him. And it's thank you to the Murri Elders Group that he's actually been connected. I ring [the Elders coordinator] and say, 'Hi, sis, what can we do? Can you come and talk to such and such, you know?' She rings them when they're in Cleveland [Youth Detention Centre], you know... And that young boy, he was in a bad way. But because our Elders are here, he just seems different. I see him all the time. I see him every week just about and I've noticed a change in him. It's just, I don't know, he's just connected. He belongs. And it's really nice to see because this little boy went through a lot of stuff. It's really good. And it's good to see that everybody is slowly working together, because before we were all disconnected.

(Indigenous NGO worker, Mackay)

A LAWYER'S STORY

Well, I had a client who was very close to going to jail. He was actually in the watchhouse when I reached out to Aunty [X], who was the previous [CJG] coordinator. She knew the client quite well and was willing to, in the first instance, come to court for his bail application and say, 'look, I'll support him if he's released on bail, I'll make sure he gets to his bail address, I will check in on him all the time and he can

rely on me to support him for things as he goes through the Murri Court process.' So I guess the Coordinator being there from day one, being able to sort of say 'I'll be on board with helping him to comply with his bail conditions.' And then through beyond that... it's the follow through, I suppose. So he was referred to domestic and family violence counselling, drug and alcohol counselling, he was able to get some support in relation to his housing and also in relation to getting his partner off the lease –because they couldn't live in the same house anymore.

And yeah, ultimately, he didn't go to jail. So he was able to go through the Murri Court process... in the end, it was about a six month process for him, possibly longer. We also actually in the process of that linked him in with legal representation for his child protection matters so that he could get access to his children again, which was a huge thing that was preoccupying his concerns... The Coordinator of the Justice Group was involved in that referral process as well.

So, yeah, it was a really good outcome for him because in the end, he ended up in a much, much more stable place – out of the relationship that had become very toxic and also back seeing his kids, hopefully on the road to reunification... and not in the correctional centre.

(Defence lawyer, Rockhampton)

A FORMER OFFENDER'S STORY

Female Elder: So we are very proud of you to be becoming a father and you turned your ways around.

Young person: Yeah, I turned my life around, instead of being a badass little gang fan, little gangster... [I'd] probably be in jail... That's what I keep telling all my mates, all them young ones, just like, 'keep out of trouble and just keep doing, like if you got orders from... the courts, just do your orders and smash the time and

get it done and so you don't have to go back there...' I just stuck to myself and yeah, didn't want to get in trouble no more, just wanted to stay good and continue, my life has been good...

It's not worth it... It's just, you know, like in that life situation, life is pretty much pretty hectic. And yeah, as much as you want to be a criminal, but just don't. You basically, you're wasting your life getting locked up. Instead, learning about your history and your future, like learn about your history and your culture, all that stuff. Instead of like, wasting your time getting locked up, getting out on bail and just doing the same crime and shit over and over again. You just get sick of it. And yeah. So just turn around or get killed or hurt...

Yeah, the habit. The people that own the items and stuff like, the criminals that like to take it, which I used to be one, but yeah, I did my sorry business and that to them – just help them and helping the community, giving back to the community. Yeah, I said sorry to them.

Male Elder: You know you're one of our good luck stories. Say to yourself, you know, long after we're gone, seriously I'd like to see you sitting in our chair and doing what we're doing. Being an Elder. The way you talking now, you show a lot of wisdom coming out of you from a young age.

Young person: Spins me out like, my age, like, things that I've done and grew up and learned. And yeah. I've been told and listened and learned, yeah it's been good. From my past year, yeah, [the Elders] have helped me out a while... But it is up to them, it's up to the young ones, if they want to go see the Elder. Just like, it was my choice to go see them because I wanted to. And not only that, it was just... it was respect. And they didn't judge me.

Male Elder: And just listening to you talk now and you got a lot of confidence now compared to a couple of

years ago. I remember going into court and the magistrate and the prosecutors wrote him off, they wanted to lock him up. Look at you today.

A MAGISTRATE'S STORY

I received a report at the end. It was written about a child I sentenced in youth Murri Court last Friday, and it did provide a bit more information about their family situation, how they were connected with some of the Elders in the Justice Group and to [home]. It did really help, I have to say, when it came to determining the sentence for that young boy. But, more importantly, the work the Justice Group had done with that boy, I think has really made some amazing changes. Only connected with them for about eight weeks.

And this boy showed such amazing respect. He stood up at the end and he thanked them. He hugged them all. So I think he made some really good connections with family that he felt he would be ashamed to meet with, but ultimately they made it a really great experience for him. And we're hoping that that sort of continues on with two more girls to be sentenced soon. [The Justice Group] managed to get them back at school, one of them's got a job, so it's kind of some really good behind the scenes stuff that they're doing there.

(Magistrate)

EVALUATION FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO DATE

PART: C

WHAT THE EVALUATION HAS FOUND SO FAR

CJGS HAVE A VERY WIDE RANGE OF ACTIVITIES

Across the justice system

- Prevention, education, awareness
- Early intervention
- In the court process
- In custody and community supervision
- Coming back to community from prison

Supporting government agencies and service providers

Community support and access to social justice e.g. helping people with forms and getting social services

Internal to the CJG

- Administration
- Training
- Governance

The evaluators invited the 11 CJGs doing local evaluations to estimate the time they spend on each activity. See how much time they report spending on each activity on the next page.

SUPPORT FOR CJGS

DJAG funds the CJGs and provides support and training with Indigenous Justice Officers but there is a very high level of unmet need for training and help with organisational management.

COMMITTED AND COMPETENT STAFF

The foundation of successful CJGs:

- Diversity of skills and experience
- High regard for their competence and dedication
- Passionate and community minded
- Motivated to help and improve their communities
- Cultural Guidance

Cultural governance is led by the Elders and Respected persons who make up CJG membership. They bring wisdom, expertise, integrity and passion to the group's work.

FRAMEWORK FOR STRONGER CJGS

The Framework for Stronger CJGs developed with CJGs in 2019 reflects the holistic role that CJGs play in the community across the whole justice spectrum including:

- Addressing causes of offending to prevent contact with the justice system
- Supporting people at high risk from offending
- Helping people who have already offended to avoid reoffending

WHAT CJGS NEED

- **More staff especially in remote areas**
- **More CJG members – Elders and Respected Persons**
- **More involvement of Elders in CJG services and activities**
- **More options for training**

- capacity building, coaching and mentoring.

WAY FORWARD

What would a program-wide CJG Capacity Development program focus on?

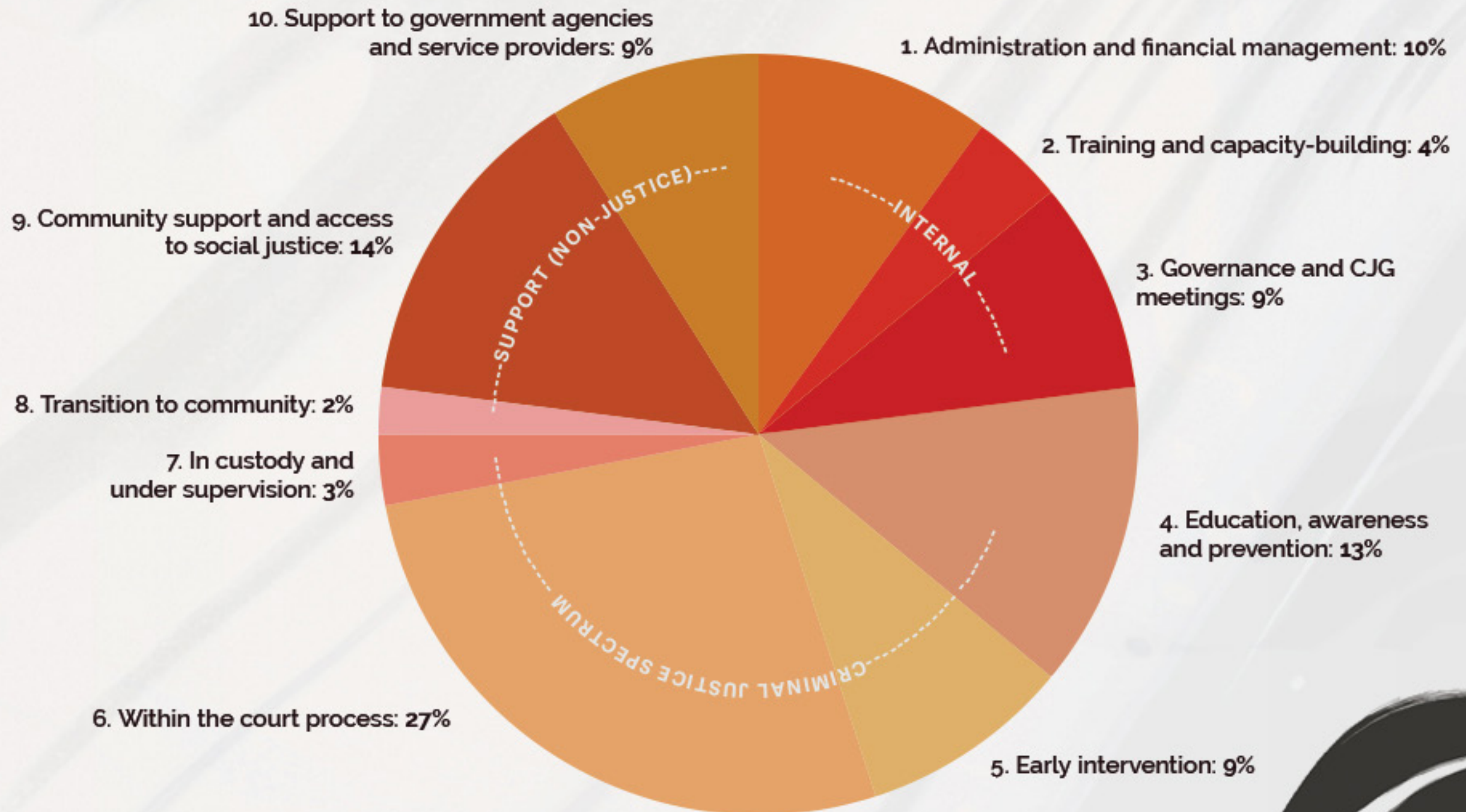
- Structured, targeted process to support CJG development
- Help with policies, procedures, systems?

What would a body to build capacity and support CJGs look like (e.g. a peak body, a service provider)?

What would it do?

- Develop resources
- Deliver training and/or create a model so CJGs could choose their trainer and training they need build organisational capacity

ACTIVITY MAPPING WITH CJG STAFF — ALLOCATION OF TIME IN PAST MONTH



- The figures here represent averages from the responses by CJG staff at 11 CJG locations across Queensland. Staff estimated the proportion of their time on CJG-related work (both paid and unpaid) across the 10 activity domains.

- advocate for CJGs and communities
- research

PREVENTION, EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

Activities to help prevent people from coming into contact with the justice system. What does this include?

- Cultural events
- Awareness-raising
- Elders visits to schools
- Men's and women's groups
- Cultural camps
- Pro-social youth activities
- DFV: awareness

CJGs interviewed say they want to deliver more of these activities – especially for young people.

CJGs want to develop:

- Youth drop-in centres with cultural mentoring of Elders to divert young people from offending
- Healing centres – respond to trauma – counselling – could be on country e.g at outstations

Cultural strengthening approaches that address trauma, low self-esteem, loss of cultural connectedness or pride, attitudes towards relationships and violence

See examples:

- Thursday Island Justice Group: Zenadth Kes Boxing Club p. 24.
- Wujal Wujal – Healing on country camps p. 23.

CJG Concerns: Are these activities sustainable? Many are delivered after hours, on weekends and they are resource intensive.

EARLY INTERVENTION AND DIVERSION

Activities target people at risk of entering the justice system and aim to intervene early and divert people to alternatives to the formal justice system. This includes:

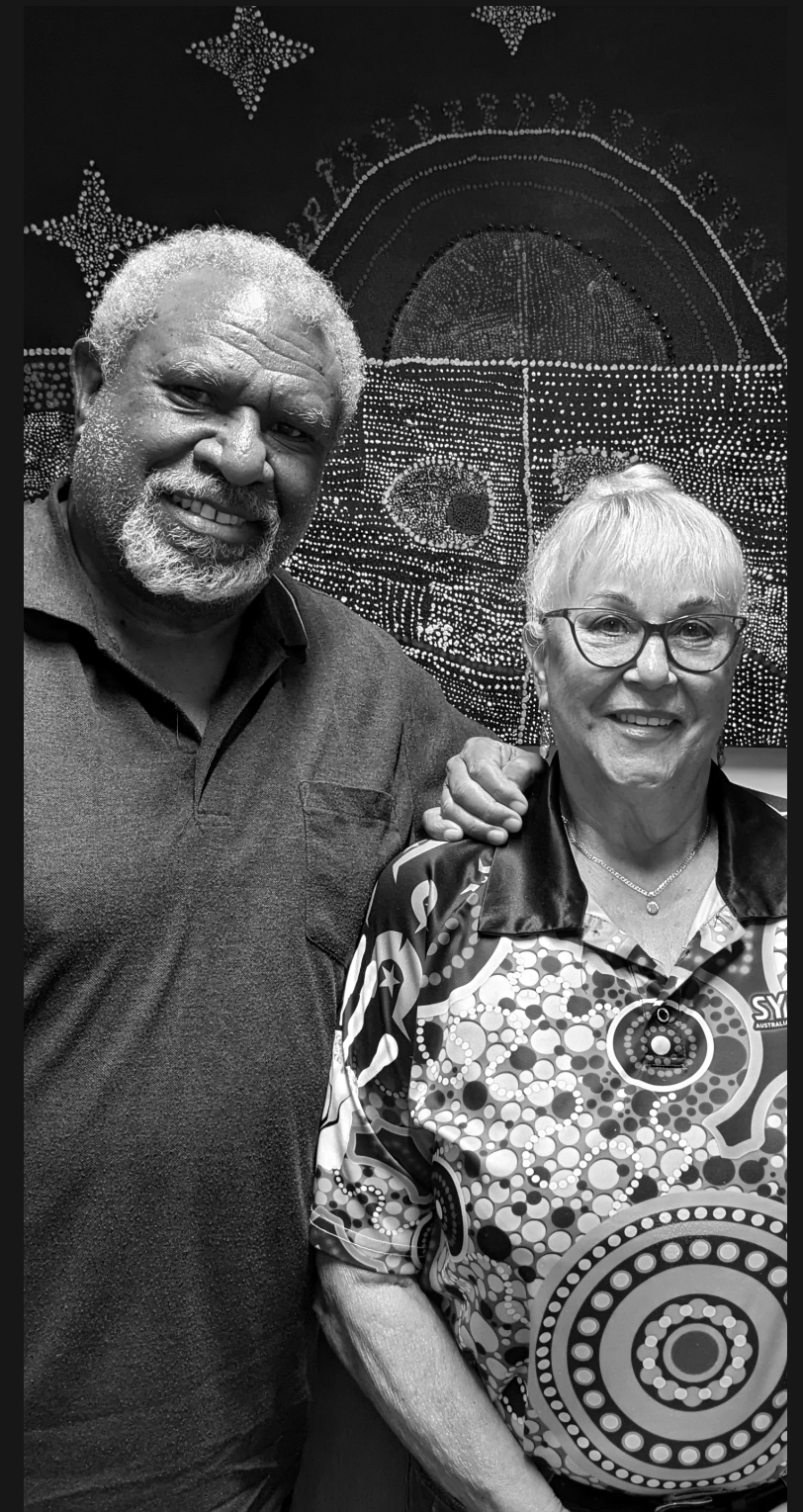
- Mediation/peacemaking
- Restorative Justice Conferencing with youth
- Cultural mentoring and support for people diverted by police and others
- Men's and women's groups
- Domestic and Family Violence supports

Examples

- Mornington Island: Junkuri Laka CJG's Quick Response Model
- Thursday Island cultural mediation support for couples or families at risk of DFV escalation
- Cherbourg's Muran Djan Centre

CJGs want to develop:

- Men's shelters – men at risk of DFV can be diverted to cool off and get support.
- Healing centres, on country programs and mediation services.
- Child and youth counselling and behavioural support services (currently do not meet community needs).
- Perpetrator programs. Drug and alcohol counselling rehab facilities.
- Outreach services, home visits, street patrols.



CJG Concerns: A lot of people need support in the court process, which limits time available to develop early intervention activities.

COURT SUPPORT

What CJGs do:

- support people to understand and participate in the court process
- give cultural advice to court to make more culturally appropriate bail and sentencing decisions
- refer offenders and victims to get services that can help them with issues that lead to offending.

This is a core funded activity for CJGs.

In 2021/22, in 52 communities 15,062 people appeared in court on 92,672 charges with an average of 473 people a week.

CJGs made:

- 231 bail submissions
- 444 sentence submissions
- 1840 referrals re non DFV matters
- 277 defendants in DFV matters

In CJG sites with a DFV enhancement, CJGs made:

- 860 offender referrals
- 128 victim referrals for DFV matters.

Stakeholders highly value:

- cultural reports CJGs prepare for bail and sentencing
- Murri Courts
- the support CJGs give to community members.

CJGs help:

- people to understand the court process
- the court to understand cultural issues
- the defendants to be treated more fairly
- to make sure conditions on DV orders can be done
- to know what DV orders mean
- to help people vary DV orders.

CJGs told the evaluation the most important support they provide in the courts is explaining DV orders to participants, providing advice to the courts, assisting parties with variations to orders, and referring people to programs or support.

To be successful supporting people in court, CJGs need:

- enough suitable services available
- easy referral pathways

Referrals work best when there are:

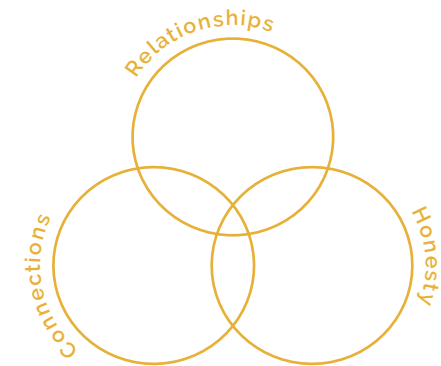
- strong CJG networks and partnerships
- robust referral and information-sharing processes
- culturally appropriate programs and services
- relationships between clients and service providers
- referral staff with real-world experience of the issues clients face
- respect, empowerment and choice for the client
- programs that are activity-based rather than just talk
- trauma-informed approaches.

Gaps in services: DFV perpetrator programs, men's shelters, healing programs/ centres, drug and alcohol counselling, rehab.

Using the \$81,000 for Community Specific Activities in the 2021-23 Service Agreements, CJGs have set up yarning circles, men's groups, women's groups,

on-country camps, healing programs and other initiatives.

The CJG DFV support gives a more culturally appropriate and holistic response. The DFV staff work with whole family units involving men, women and children rather than working with victims or perpetrators in isolation.



IN CUSTODY AND UNDER SUPERVISION

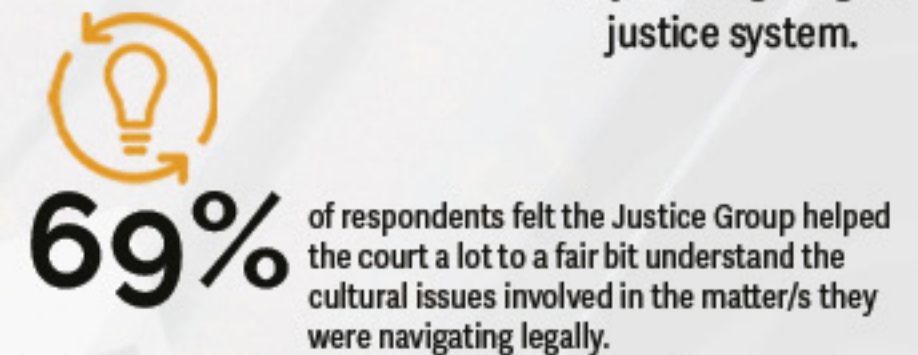
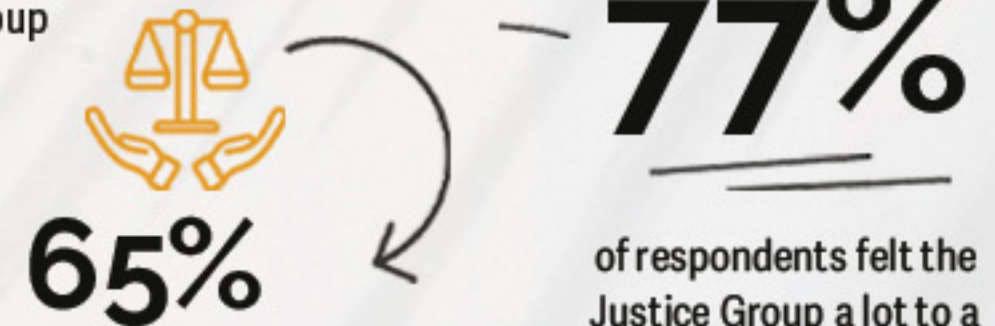
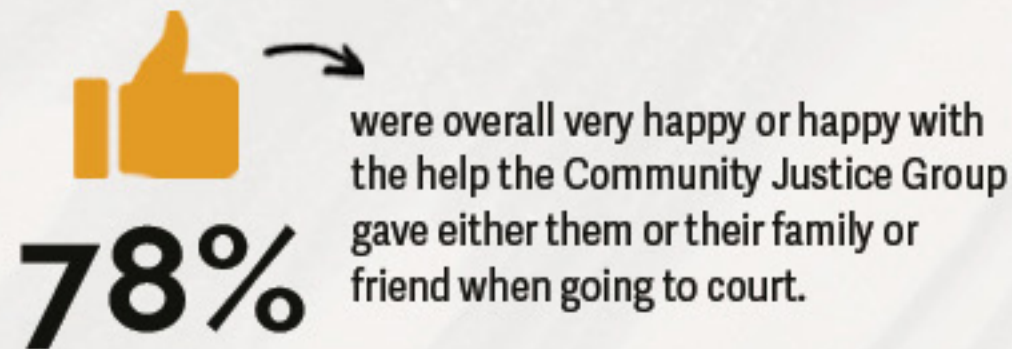
Activities to support community members when they are in custody or under supervision in the community

What CJGs do:

- visit watchhouses, prisons and youth detention centres
- advising correctional authorities about issues surrounding planned releases
- liaising with families of prisoners (especially around sorry business)
- organising assessments for parole applications.

CJGs reported that these services represent a small part of their workload at present; however, the services are highly valued by stakeholders, who report they improve outcomes such as:

SURVEY SNAPSHOT



- These figures are snapshots from a survey of community members about CJGs administered in 11 locations. There were 216 responses to these surveys across the CJG locations. The figures represent the average response at the 11 locations, rather than the aggregate response for respondents at all locations.

- saving considerable time and expense for correctional authorities and the parole board
- reducing incarceration by helping offenders meet reporting requirements through better understanding the conditions of their orders (especially for DFV matters).

TRANSITION TO COMMUNITY AND RE-INTEGRATION

Activities to assist people returning to their communities after being in custody.

What CJGs do:

- transport community members from adult or youth custody
- support people when they come back into the community
- finding employment, housing nearby
- structured transition support (Mount Isa and Thursday Island)
- visiting people in custody and keeping connected.
- providing support for DFV offenders to reintegrate into the community

A few CJGs participate in Queensland Corrective Service's pilot project to work on culturally-supported re-entry to community.

To be successful CJGs need to know in advance when people are being released

Many CJGs would like to do more.

For example, pairing a released prisoner with an Elder or community member as a buddy or mentor to help them with reintegration.

CJGs can support people in custody and transitioning back to community as a Community Specific Activity within their DJAG funding or seek funding from another

government agency.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT, ADVOCACY AND ACCESS TO SOCIAL JUSTICE

CJGs play an important advocacy role as representatives of the community, **due to the skills, knowledge and cultural authority of Elders and respected persons** who make up their membership.

What CJGs do:

- proactively advocate on the community's behalf when there are community concerns about service issues.
 - this includes discussions around the Local Thriving Communities (LTC) reforms, which aim to ensure Indigenous peoples have greater local decision-making authority regarding service delivery
- wide range of support for individuals (including outside the justice system):
 - filling gaps in service delivery
 - performing the role of another agency (eg if a community member does not feel comfortable approaching directly)
 - the support includes assisting with paperwork, transport, and helping members access government services.

CJGs do this to help the members in their communities, because their philosophy is to not turn away anyone in need of help. CJGs cannot simply 'learn to say no' and their support is highly valued by their communities.

CJGs **want greater understanding of why these gaps exist** and greater **recognition** of, and support for, all the extra work that CJGs do to fill these gaps. Some of the gaps exist **because Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people do not always feel 'culturally safe' in mainstream services.**

ASSISTANCE TO GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

As grassroots community organisations with strong local networks and cultural knowledge of their communities, CJGs are an important source of information and assistance for an array of government and non-government agencies and service providers working in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Many agencies would have difficulty delivering their services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people without the work of CJGs, who facilitate agencies' community outreach and provide important logistical support.

What CJGs do:

- support agencies to build their Cultural Capability: deliver cultural awareness training, provide cultural leadership and give staff advice
- provide advice and community input into policy, program and service design –through consultations, workshops, participation on reference groups, committees and inter-agency forums
- assist agencies to contact and engage with clients or a community
- assist agency staff to work effectively and in a culturally sensitive manner with community members
- assist with practical service delivery such as use of facilities, equipment or vehicles
- CJGs in discrete communities have a formal, legislated role in providing advice to government on certain topics such as alcohol management.

CJG facilities are used for program and service delivery as these are **safe cultural spaces where agencies find it easier to engage community members.** Several CJGs

have used funding enhancements to develop a 'hub' model, that hosts visiting services to provide programs and support to CJG clients.

Because of their networks and relationships CJGs play a role in coordinating and navigating across agencies and services. This leads to better integration of support for Indigenous people in the justice system or the broader service system. CJGs help clients navigate the system and help agencies work in a more coordinated way. For example, CJGs play this role through hosting Murri Court stakeholder networks.

Way Forward

Agencies need to work out better arrangements to access CJG services and provide better support and remuneration for the work CJGs do.

CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation has found that CJGs deliver a broad range of outputs. The question is what local justice responses should CJGs focus their efforts and limited resources on?

From 2010 to 2017 CJG funding was focussed on court support but since then additional funding has opened up possibilities to expand the range of funded CJG activities. This has been welcomed by CJGs who have continued programs that were previously unfunded and have established many new programs.

The evaluation has heard that:

Stakeholders	CJGs
value CJGs delivering outputs across the entire justice spectrum	value the work they do in the courts
recognise equally the contribution that CJGs make in the courts and in prevention and early intervention	aspire to do more (and perceive that the community wants them to do more) in the prevention and early intervention space
recognise that funded activities have prioritised court-related functions	want to focus more on guiding and empowering young people, strengthening cultural identity and delivering healing programs for families and individuals.
see value in directing greater focus towards prevention and early intervention	

For the whole CJG Program

Overall, stakeholders and CJGs consider there is a need for:

- targeted CJG Capacity Development Program (recommended 2021)
- better managing demands on CJGs (including through the Framework for Stronger CJGs)
- creative solutions to properly resource new initiatives in non-court areas

For the DFVE program

Government DFV policy meant that this DFVE funding led by DJAG supported CJG work to strengthen justice system responses to DFV. CJGs also play an important role in community-led activities aimed at keeping families out of the justice system for DFV matters in the first place.

In their DFV response models, some CJGs have focused on responses that:

- initiate early intervention,
- address underlying issues such as social norms towards violence and the impacts of inter-generational trauma, and
- empower and heal communities and individuals.

The evaluation recommends that as the DFVE program evolves, DJAG explore with CJGs the opportunity to re-orient DFV response models to accommodate their aspirations to strengthen primary prevention and early intervention responses.

THE EVALUATION'S RECOMMENDATIONS TO DATE

Detailed recommendations are in the Annual Reports for Phases 1 and 2 of the evaluation. In summary:

- Develop a comprehensive CJG Capacity Development Program, exploring suitable models in consultation with CJGs (for example peak body, capacity development service provider, central training fund).
- Increase participation by CJGs in the CJG Program governance arrangements
- Review DJAG program staffing to enhance support for CJGs (consideration of increasing IJO positions, locating them closer to CJGs, reviewing classification level and reviewing IJP division of responsibilities, specialisation and classification).
- Revise and update Program Guidelines and Service Agreements to better reflect the refocused CJG model and its broader suite of outputs.
- Expedite the introduction of a new grants management system.
- Develop a strategy to assist CJGs with membership challenges, such as succession plans, recruitment of new members, and dispute resolution.
- Empower CJGs with data and good practice information they can use in planning their responses to justice issues and promoting their work.
- Work with other departments to review the data and consider strategies to mitigate sustainability impacts on CJGs as a result of:
 - (a) assistance provided to agencies to deliver their services
 - (b) assistance to community members where service gaps exist.
- Work with CJGs to revisit, review and refresh the co-designed DFV service models funded under the DFVE Program, with a priority on locations where capacity challenges or changes in the service environment have significantly affected the efficacy of the DFV response.
- Explore with the CJGs the opportunity to re-orient DFV response models to accommodate any CJG aspirations to strengthen primary prevention and early intervention responses to DFV (either delivered by CJGs or leveraged through CJG advocacy or participation in co-design with third parties).

For more information visit this website to read the Annual Reports:

<https://www.courts.qld.gov.au/services/court-programs/community-justice-group-program>



APPENDIX

CJG ACTIVITIES



THE JUSTICE GROUP PROVIDED
SUPPORT IN COURT AND A SAFE
PLACE TO TALK AND HELP ME WITH
MY ISSUES

I WORK AS A SOLICITOR. THE CJG IS AN
INCREDIBLE HELP WHEN MAKING
CULTURAL BASED SUBMISSIONS
BEFORE A MAGISTRATE.

TO THEIR CLIENTS AND FAMILY.

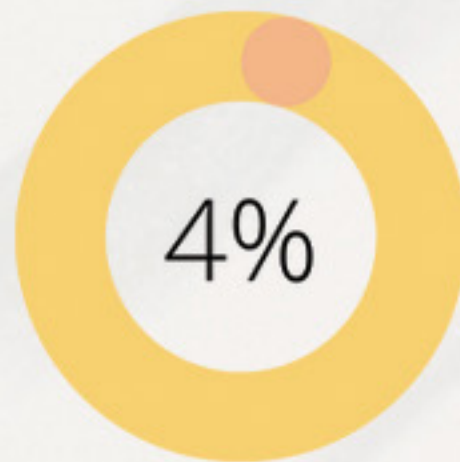
I'D LIKE TO THANK EVERYONE [AT THE
JUSTICE GROUP] WHO HAS BEEN THERE TO
HELP SUPPORT ME THROUGH NOT ONLY
COURT BUT TO BE THERE AS A LISTENING
EAR AND TO KEEP ME SAFE THROUGH MY DV.

OUR JUSTICE GROUP HAVE NEVER
BEEN MORE EMPOWERING. THEY
BRING SO MUCH CARE AND RESPECT

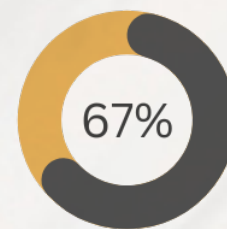
I GOT A REDUCED FINE AND
HELPED ON COUNTRY PROJECT TO
PAY THE FINE

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ADULTS IN CUSTODY IN QUEENSLAND

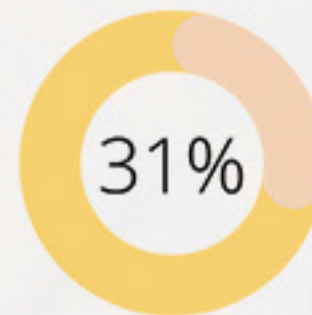
Average daily number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons in prison in Queensland = 2,815*



Percentage of Queensland's total population

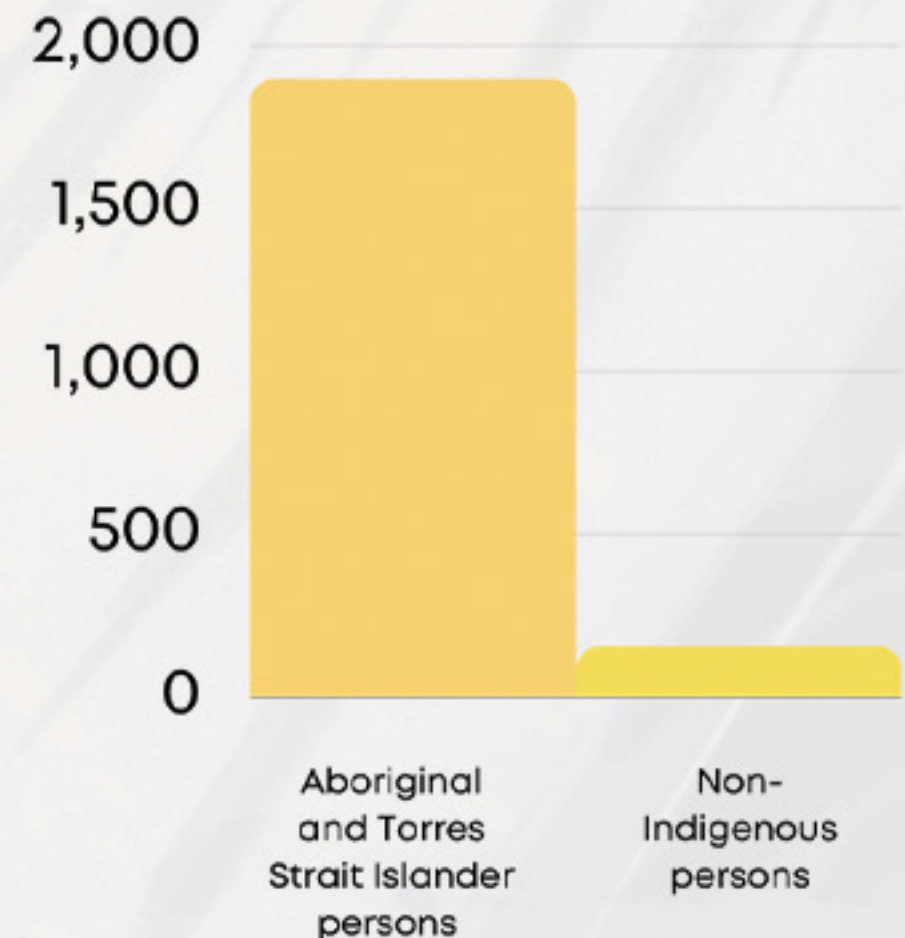


Indigenous proportion of youth detention population

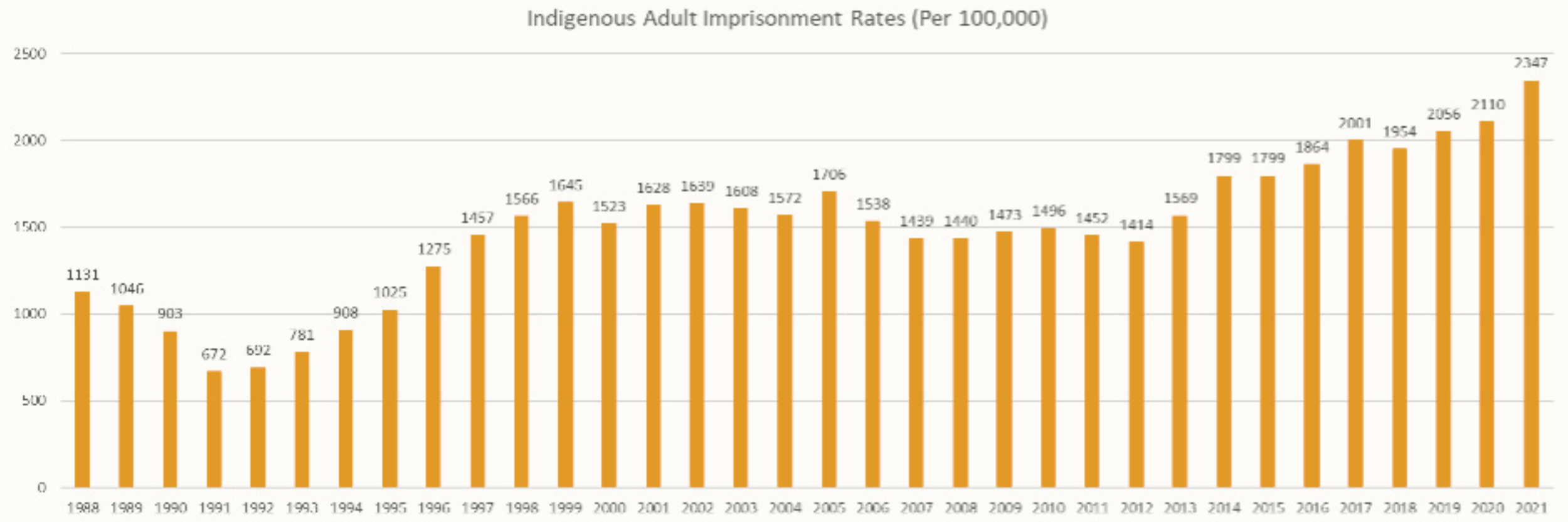


Indigenous proportion of adult prison population

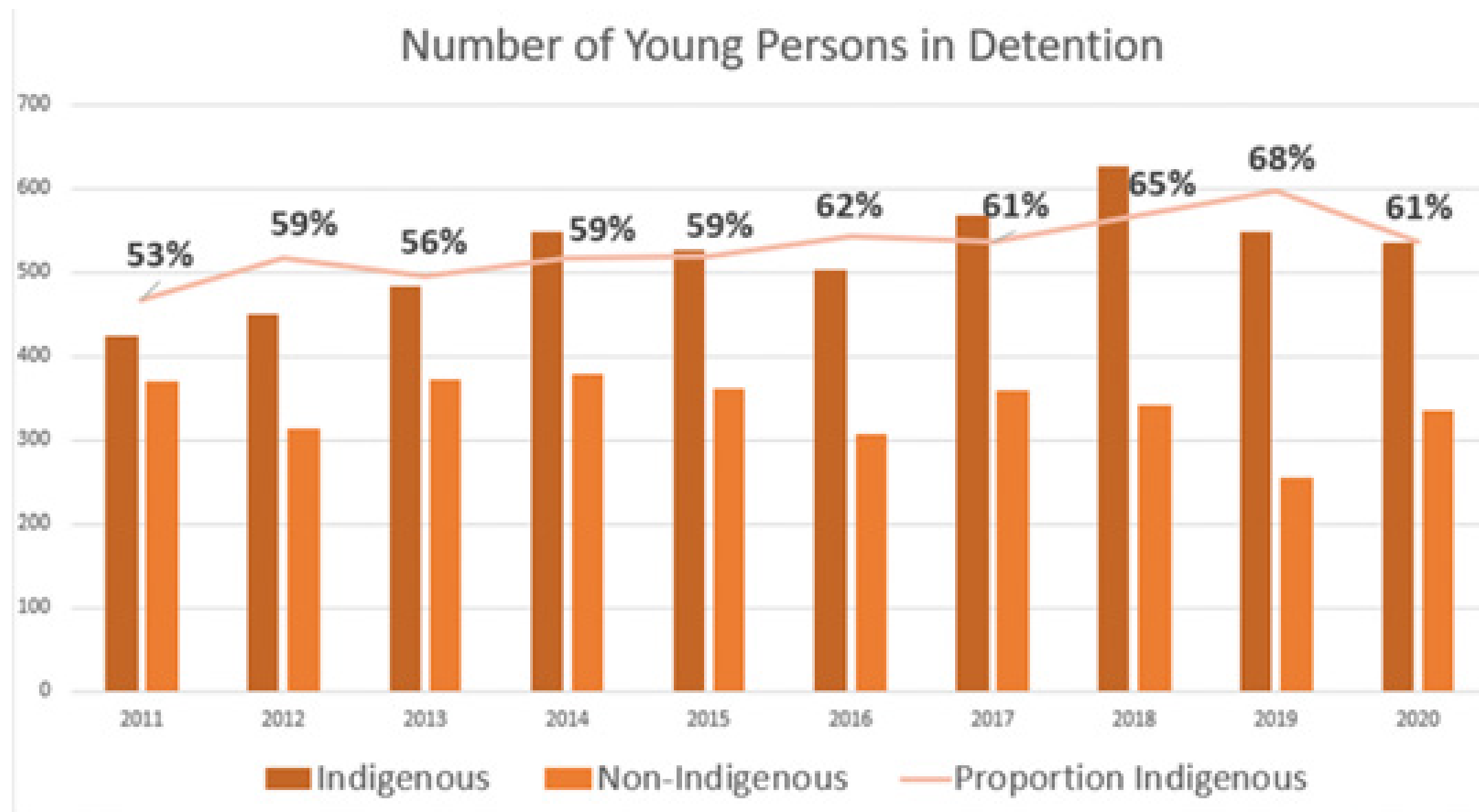
Rates of Imprisonment (per 100,000 people)



- Australian Bureau of Statistics, "Corrective services, Australia", 2021, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/corrective-services-australia/latest-release#persons-in-custody>
 - Australian Bureau of Statistics, "Corrective services, Australia", 2019, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/corrective-services-australia/jun-quarter-2019#history-of-changes>
 - Carlos Carcach, Anna Grant, & Rowena Conroy, "Australian corrections: The imprisonment of Indigenous people", <https://www.aic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-05/tandi137.pdf>
 - Queensland Government's Statistician's Office, "Prisoners in Queensland, 2020", <https://www.qgso.qld.gov.au/issues/2951/prisoners-qld-2020.pdf>
 *2021 figure. At 30 June 2022, the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons in Queensland prisons was 3410.
 - Source: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/prisoners-australia/latest-release#aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-prisoners>



¹Weatherburn, D. and Rahman, S. (2021). The Vanishing Criminal: Causes of Decline in Australia's Crime Rate, Melbourne Univ. Publishing.



- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, "Youth justice in Queensland 2017-18", https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/29525c16-7dbd-458f-8458-6baf491305ad/Factsheet-YJ_2017-18_Qld.pdf.aspx
 - Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs, "Youth justice annual summary statistics: 2015-16 to 2019-20", <https://www.cyjma.qld.gov.au/resources/dcsyw/youth-justice/resources/yj-annual-summary-stats-courts.pdf>
 - Queensland Government Statistician's Office, "Justice report, Queensland, 2019-20: Criminal justice statistics", <https://www.qgso.qld.gov.au/issues/7876/justice-report-qld-2019-20.pdf>

END

