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Policy Insights Paper



Investing in Aboriginal-led justice solutions

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Acknowledgment of Country

The Australian Public Policy Institute acknowledges the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation and the Ngunnawal people upon whose ancestral lands our Institute stands.

We pay respect to Elders both past and present, acknowledging them as the traditional custodians of knowledge for these lands. We celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of Australia.

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Authorship

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Executive summary

Aboriginal imprisonment in NSW continues to rise, while public expenditure on prisons and the wider criminal justice system has increased substantially. Current policy and investment settings are not delivering the outcomes government has committed to under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, nor are they effectively addressing drivers of Aboriginal over-representation within the criminal justice system.

Both the NSW Government and Aboriginal people in NSW identify justice reinvestment (JR) as a practical, positive approach to the shared goal of reducing Aboriginal over-representation. To support delivery of this goal, further innovation in funding approaches is necessary to implement JR as a framework rather than a program.



Justice reinvestment

A practical, positive approach to the shared goal of reducing Aboriginal over-representation

Aboriginal communities in NSW have already demonstrated leadership through JR that is responsive to local priorities, builds self-determination and targets causes of over-representation. However, current funding arrangements remain too short-term, fragmented and government-controlled to support continuity and the scale of change required.

Though many JR initiatives are funded across Australia, no jurisdiction has implemented reinvestment. There is no methodology in place for calculating JR savings, nor a mechanism by which these savings can be returned to JR initiatives to sustain and build on their success. First Nations communities identify this as a crucial gap in implementation of the JR framework.

This paper explores how the NSW Government can establish a durable investment model for JR, backed by long-term funding, Aboriginal decision-making and shared accountability for results.

Proposing several immediate and staged actions for implementation, the paper describes the essential underpinnings of a finance and governance reinvestment model that shifts public investment towards prevention and prioritises community authority, mutual accountability and evidence-informed action.

For government, this model provides a fiscally responsible way to invest in prevention while managing risk. It draws on both existing innovations in NSW Government budgets and financial management, and NSW investment infrastructure, to enable the government to identify and track the fiscal, economic and social benefits of JR over time. For Aboriginal communities, it provides the certainty, authority and capability needed to build local solutions, strengthen cultural governance and participate in shared evaluation on terms that reflect Aboriginal priorities and knowledge.

This work offers an opportunity for NSW to invest in Aboriginal-led solutions that prevent harm, strengthen communities and deliver better public value. Acting now to support Aboriginal-led JR will help meet Closing the Gap commitments on over-representation, reduce avoidable justice system costs, strengthen Aboriginal self-determination and demonstrate national leadership in shifting public investment from punishment to prevention.

Policy opportunities – at a glance

1

Establish a new reinvestment model within NSW's existing state investment fund architecture to provide secure, long-term resourcing for justice reinvestment.

This model should have three core components:

- NSW Government investment in a dedicated justice reinvestment fund to support JR activities in Aboriginal communities. Returns generated by the fund should be used for investment and reinvestment activities.
- Agreement between Aboriginal communities and the NSW Government regarding funding arrangements, systems reform priorities and how to measure justice reinvestment outcomes.
- Reinvestment through a) ongoing investment in Aboriginal communities following completion of an initial foundational agreement and b) the transfer of ownership of the justice reinvestment fund from the NSW Government to Aboriginal communities over time.

2

Support the establishment of a Justice Reinvestment Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation.

As an independent, self-determining body, a Justice Reinvestment ACCO could provide strategic leadership, strengthen coordination across communities and stakeholders and support the long-term sustainability of justice reinvestment in NSW. The Organisation could also play an important role in supporting systems reform by working with government to strengthen relationships with Aboriginal communities and advance community-determined priorities.

3

Commit to maintain current NSW Government justice reinvestment funding while a reinvestment mechanism is implemented in NSW.

Establishing a reinvestment mechanism is likely to take time. Maintaining existing NSW Government funding for justice reinvestment in the meantime is essential to sustain community-led initiatives, preserve momentum and support successful transition to a dedicated reinvestment mechanism in NSW.

Foreword by Daniel Daylight
Mounty Aboriginal Youth & Community Services

Justice reinvestment in NSW did not start in a government office or in a policy paper. It started because Aboriginal communities had enough of watching our people, our families and our young ones being pulled into systems that were never built for us.

I want to acknowledge the community of Bourke, the Bourke Tribal Council, Maranguka and Alister Ferguson.

They were the ones who helped show this country what JR could look like when it is led by community, grounded in culture and built from the strength that already exists in our own places. That leadership matters. Bourke did not just give us a model. Bourke gave a lot of us courage. It gave us language for what many of our communities already knew. That if you back people early, if you listen properly, if you let community lead and if you stop pouring all the money into crisis and punishment, then different outcomes are possible.

For me, JR has always been about more than a program. It is about self-determination. It is about Aboriginal people having the authority to name what is happening in our communities and to lead the response. It is about systems reform, but not in a way that just moves words around on a page. It has to change who holds power, who makes decisions, where money goes and who gets to say whether something is working.

There is still confusion about the word reinvestment. Sometimes people hear JR and think the reinvestment part is just a neat add-on. It is not. Reinvestment is the part that makes JR real.

Without reinvestment, communities can be asked to do all the hard work without the power or resources to match. We can build trust with young people, sit with families, hold the hard yarns, bring services together, support people through court, school, grief, housing and crisis, and still be expected to do that work off short-term grants and uncertain funding.

Real reinvestment means moving resources away from the systems that keep catching our people when things have already gone wrong and putting those resources into Aboriginal-led solutions that stop the harm earlier. It means backing culture, family, healing, practical support, local jobs, youth leadership and community governance. It means giving communities the certainty to plan properly, employ our own people, build trust over time and stay with the work long enough for change to happen.

In Mount Druitt, we have seen what that looks like in practice. When young people are listened to properly, they tell us what needs to change. When families are backed early, things can shift before they reach crisis. When culture and relationships sit at the centre, young people who have been spoken about as risks or statistics become leaders, workers, advocates and teachers for the next ones coming through.

That is why this paper is important. It helps move the conversation from the idea of JR to the practical work of how NSW can actually fund, govern, and be accountable for it.

This has been a long journey. Communities have been pushing this work for years. There have been hard conversations, unfinished conversations to get to the point where government is willing to talk about a real reinvestment model. That matters. A model gives us something to work from. It does not answer everything, and it should not be treated as the final word. It needs more conversation with communities and government. It needs to be shaped by the people who will live with the decisions.

But it is a step forward.

Every community is different. What Bourke has built will not be exactly the same as what is needed in Mount Druitt, Moree, Kempsey, Dubbo or anywhere else. But the principles carry across: community authority, cultural governance, long-term investment, good data, shared accountability and a willingness to shift resources from punishment to prevention.

JR cannot sit on the side as a small project or a short-term trial. It needs to become part of how government does business. Not because it sounds good, but because the current approach is not working.

Our people know what keeps our children safe. We know what helps families hold together. We know the cost of systems that come too late and leave too much damage behind. We also know the strength that sits in our communities when we are trusted to lead.

The question now is whether NSW is ready to properly invest in that strength.

Daniel Daylight

CEO
Mounty Aboriginal Youth &
Community Services

Background

NSW faces a growing policy challenge: Aboriginal contact with the criminal justice system continues to increase despite substantial and rising public expenditure on prisons and corrections.

From June 2016 to June 2026, NSW saw:

↑ 52.8%

increase in **number of Aboriginal adults held in custody**, driven by a

145 per cent increase in those **on remand.**

In March 2026, the number of Aboriginal adults in custody reached a **record high**, accounting for

34.5% **of the NSW prison population**

despite representing only 3.3 per cent of the general population.

The number of **Aboriginal young people in detention** has fluctuated over the decade.

Although the latest data shows a decline from 2016 levels, this number has doubled since the end of the Covid-19 pandemic.

51.4%

Aboriginal young people made up 51.4 per cent of the **youth detention population** in June 2026 and

77.9%

of those young people were **held without a sentence**.[1]

JUN 2016 — JUN 2026

In 2014-15, total net prison operating expenditure and capital costs in NSW equated to $0.95 billion. In 2024-25, this figure had risen to $2.2 billion.[2]

Historically, governments have justified significant public expenditure on the justice system as a necessary response to crime and community concerns about public safety. However, high rates of return to prison in NSW and elsewhere in Australia suggest that more punitive approaches like incarceration do not necessarily increase public safety. Instead, they can exacerbate rather than address the reasons why people interact with the criminal justice system in the first place, particularly for those with higher rates of interaction. Nationally, in 2024-25, 76 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in prison had a prior period of imprisonment.[3]

First Nations people bear significant costs associated with their over-representation in the justice system. These include school and work disruption; dislocation from family, community networks and culture; and negative intergenerational health and wellbeing outcomes. A further cost is the continued undermining of self-determination of First Nations people in their relationship with government.[4] These and other costs represent social, cultural and political determinants that influence the extent of First Nations contact with the justice system.[5]

> I think the key word is early prevention. A lot of fellas that go to jail, they're more likely to reoffend and it'd be a continuous pattern for a while. And by the time they finish or come to terms with - I've done a lot of jail - they get out with just no sense of anything … And they're so far behind, when the world's out here moving forward, they're just on pause in there.
>
> ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

First Nations people have consistently challenged over-reliance on the criminal justice system to ensure community wellbeing and safety, instead prioritising approaches centred in self-determination, culture, early intervention and prevention, and other factors essential to positively shifting Aboriginal outcomes. Over the past two decades, they have strongly advocated for and implemented justice reinvestment (JR) as a better alternative to what they see as costly and ineffective justice responses.

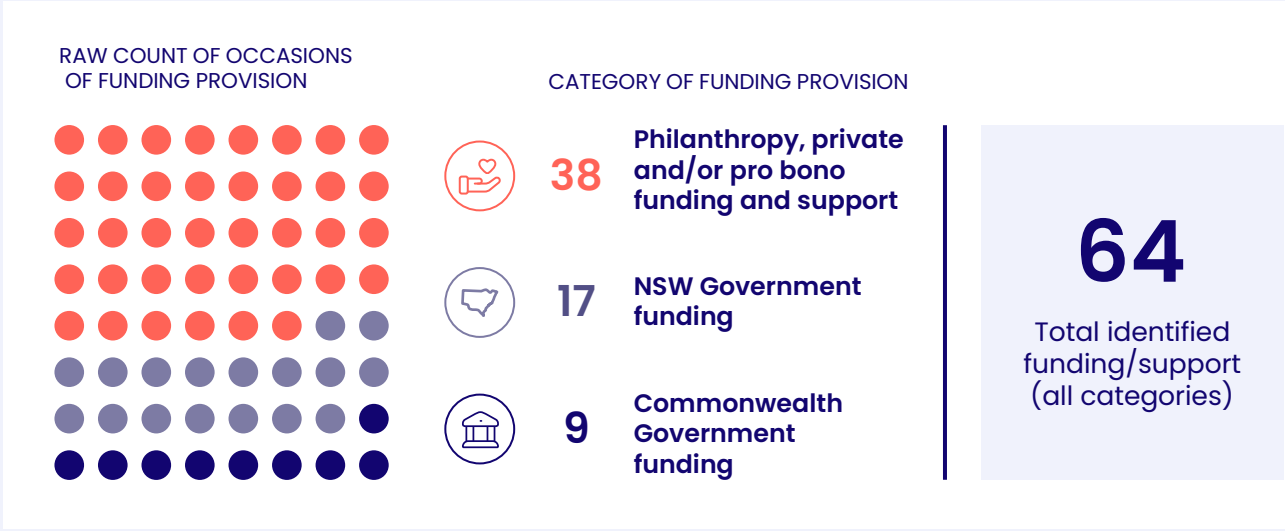
Initially supported by philanthropy, JR has now also been funded by governments, reflecting increasing institutional recognition of its capacity to reduce First Nations over-representation.

At the Commonwealth level, in 2022, the Albanese Government made an initial commitment of $81 million to establish and operate a national JR coordinating body and to support up to 30 JR initiatives through its National Justice Reinvestment Program.[6] It also committed $20 million per annum as ongoing funding for JR initiatives.[7] A change in federal government may impact this funding.

Current NSW Government funding commitments for JR are shorter-term and more uncertain. In 2022, the NSW Government committed $9.8 million to JR initiatives. $2.5 million of this was initially allocated to Just Reinvest NSW, a state-level supporting body for JR, to expand JR in two Aboriginal communities. In 2024, up to $7.5 million was provided directly to Aboriginal-led JR initiatives in four communities through the NSW Justice Reinvestment Grant Program.[8] JR funding is due to end in June 2027 with no announcement yet of ongoing commitments.

At present, 10 Aboriginal communities in NSW are currently receiving funding for JR and aligned activities from philanthropic organisations, and from NSW and Commonwealth Governments, as detailed in Figure 1.[9]

Figure 1 | Type of funding source for NSW JR initiatives[10]



A review of the Paul Ramsay Foundation JR funding portfolio in NSW and elsewhere in Australia identified several key impacts:

- JR is diverting young people from incarceration. From 2021-2025, 73 children and young people would have returned to detention were it not for JR funded activities.
- JR is both more effective in reducing youth re-offending and more cost effective than youth detention.
- Aboriginal-led governance and self-determination and other aspects of community readiness for JR have been enhanced, with potential for long-term positive impacts. However, government readiness for JR also needs to be improved, in part incorporating a shift in resources towards community-led prevention and diversion.[11]

Reinvestment: the "missing piece" for JR in NSW

Reinvestment is grounded in the proposition that stronger outcomes are delivered when government investment is directed toward prevention rather than incarceration in communities impacted by disproportionately high rates of return to prison.[12]

Constant cycles of incarceration demonstrate that the justice system can do little, or only so much, to address underlying drivers of over-representation. Greater economic and social benefit comes from diverting resources to local interventions with stronger capacity to target these drivers, such as local employment, health, housing and other supports.

When JR first emerged in the US around 25 years ago, funds were to be directed from correctional budgets to provide ongoing resources for JR initiatives demonstrating "success" as capacity to generate budget savings from reduced reincarceration.[13]

> "[Think of all the money going into locking young people up.] This was the whole justice reinvestment thing from the start … If you were able to utilise that funding in community, you could be proactive … [and] out there having those yarns with them kids or their families. Because that's what you need. The 12-year-old kid now who's getting into trouble, I think most people could have picked that five years before.
>
> ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

This economic rationale was emphasised by early Australian proponents of JR, including Professor Tom Calma when serving as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner:

> "Justice reinvestment is a model that has as much in common with economics as social policy. Justice reinvestment asks the question: is imprisonment good value for money? The simple answer is that it is not. We are spending ever increasing amounts on imprisonment while at the same time, prisoners are not being rehabilitated, recidivism rates are high and return to prison rates are creating overcrowded prisons … [A] scarcity of public funds might be just the pragmatic opportunity we need to shift governments away from a law and order, tough on crime mentality. Framing the problem of Indigenous imprisonment as an economic issue might be more strategic than our previous attempts to address it as a human rights or social justice issue.[14]
>
> PROFESSOR TOM CALMA

While many JR initiatives are funded across Australia, no jurisdiction has implemented reinvestment. There is no methodology in place for calculating JR savings, nor a mechanism by which these savings can be returned to JR initiatives to sustain and build on their success. First Nations communities identify this as a crucial gap in JR implementation.[15]

Aboriginal communities in NSW have led exploration of how to advance reinvestment, calling on the NSW Government to partner with them in this work. In 2018, the Bourke Tribal Council put forward a case for reinvestment to the NSW Government, using a cost-benefit analysis to demonstrate the economic value of their 'Maranguka' initiative. It was estimated that Maranguka generated a gross positive impact of $3.1 million in 2017.[16]

In 2022, Just Reinvest NSW worked with Aboriginal-led JR initiatives to define reinvestment from an Aboriginal perspective.[17] Reinvestment was identified as securing long-term resourcing to support prevention, but more fundamentally as enabling a shift in relationships of power. Advocating for its progression through a NSW JR strategy, reinvestment was defined as the following:

- **More sustained funding for JR, over which Aboriginal communities have greater control and decision-making power.** Communities want a say over funding decisions impacting local Aboriginal outcomes, particularly to enhance resourcing for community-led interventions targeting drivers of Aboriginal contact with the criminal justice system.[18]
- **Shared government-community accountability for outcomes, including through systems reforms**. Reforms in this context include new data and evaluation approaches to measuring outcomes tied to JR funding, as well as policy and law reforms necessary for JR success.

Aboriginal communities in NSW welcome current government investment in JR. However, without any announcement of ongoing support for NSW initiatives, it is unclear if or when reinvestment will take place. Communities indicate that unless existing funding models are transitioned to a reinvestment approach, there is a significant risk that JR will not reach its potential in terms of positive impact.

> We say, 'justice reinvestment', but [without reinvestment] there is no actual changing of anything. It's just using the words justice reinvestment. It's funding the same thing, but with a different name attached to it.
>
> ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

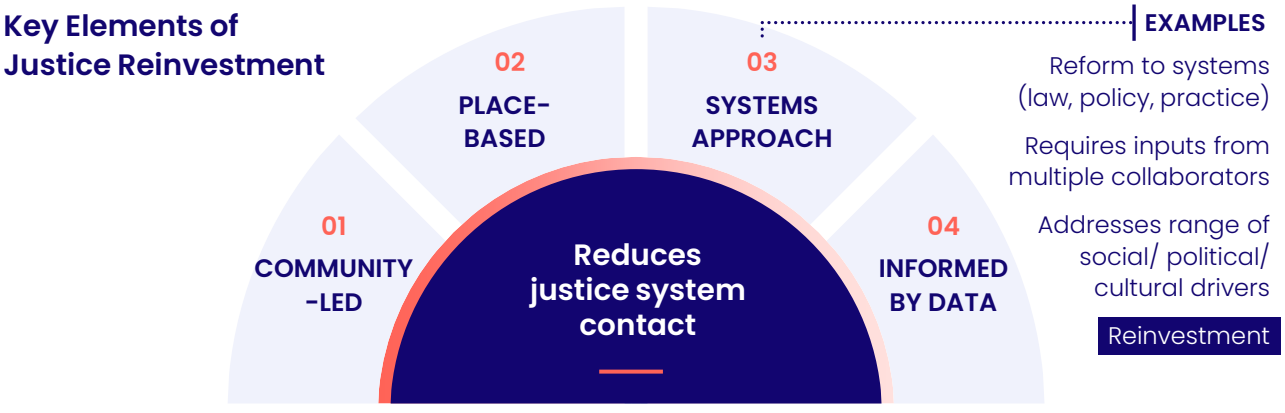


Baawan & Baaka River, Ngemba Country
Photo credit | Lucy Tierney

Key elements of JR funding approaches

Communities emphasise that JR's innovation is that it builds on the long-standing calls from Aboriginal people for new ways of working in and with government, carrying this forward for implementation through a multilayered strategy. As such, **JR is not a program but a framework consisting of five interlocking elements**. It provides a solution to the complex problem of over-representation only when all these elements are coordinated.

Figure 2 | Key Elements of Justice Reinvestment[19]



All of these elements should work together to reduce First Nations contact with the criminal justice system, but through its multiple layers of intervention, JR serves as a pivot around which multiple positive outcomes are delivered.

01
COMMUNITY-LED

JR must be community-led. This centres self-determination, important in its own right and underpinning implementation of all other JR elements, in recognition that First Nations people hold knowledge, expertise and solutions to reducing over-representation and driving long-term change.

02
PLACE-BASED

JR has a place-based focus. This supports First Nations communities in identifying and implementing self-determined solutions to over-representation, including through local First Nations decision-making and community-led and community-based interventions.

03
SYSTEMS APPROACH

JR's systems approach responds to the necessarily complex nature of JR implementation, given the breadth and depth of issues (drivers) within its scope. It incorporates JR's early intervention/prevention focus on targeting causal factors of over-representation[20] and the essential contributions to JR required of multiple different collaborators. Policy, law, and other reforms across government systems are a focus, including funding reform (reinvestment).

04
INFORMED BY DATA

JR is informed by data. This recognises the importance of implementing evidence-based approaches to reducing over-representation, including prevention. First Nations-led decision-making about data (evidence) and its use in planning, implementing and evaluating JR is a focus.

EXAMPLE

The Bourke Tribal Council adopted the Growing up Our Kids Safe Smart and Strong Strategy, developed by Maranguka as backbone (using collective impact methodology), centring a life course approach and relevant data to progress key areas for change, including change led by men in Bourke.



Men of Bourke (Role of Men Working Group)
Photo credit: Men of Bourke, Maranguka

Aligning government and community priorities

JR aligns closely with the NSW Government's commitments under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. The NSW Department of Communities and Justice has explicitly linked working collaboratively with Aboriginal communities through JR to achieving Targets 10, 11 and 13, which focus on reducing over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults and young people in the criminal justice system and reducing family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children.[21] Progress against these targets remains limited. National reporting shows a worsening trend for adult incarceration and no improvement in youth detention outcomes, highlighting a need for new approaches.[22]

The NSW Government has positioned JR as a key mechanism for addressing these challenges, describing it as an innovative, evidence-informed approach that empowers communities to design and implement local solutions and work in partnership with government agencies to remove barriers to reforms required to shift Aboriginal outcomes.[23]

JR also aligns with Closing the Gap Priority Reform Areas. These reforms require governments to share decision-making with Aboriginal people (PR1), strengthen the Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisation sector (PR2), transform government institutions (PR3) and reform government data approaches (PR4). The NSW Government has committed to an additional Priority Reform Area (PR5) focused on advancing economic self-determination by supporting the long-term economic wellbeing of Aboriginal people, families and communities, access to jobs and strengthening Aboriginal-owned businesses. Strengthened implementation of the Priority Reforms is recognised as essential to reaching Closing the Gap Targets.

While the NSW Department of Communities and Justice has indicated that it is exploring links between JR and the Priority Reforms, the relationship remains largely undeveloped in policy and practice.[25] **Aboriginal communities identify this as a significant opportunity**. Strengthening partnerships between government and communities through reinvestment could provide a practical mechanism for advancing the Priority Reforms while progressing shared goals for improving Aboriginal outcomes.[26]

> "Fundamental change is required … It is too easy to find examples of government decisions that contradict commitments in the Agreement, that do not reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's priorities and perspectives and that exacerbate rather than remedy, disadvantage and discrimination. This is particularly obvious in youth justice systems.[24]
>
> PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION

Exploring reinvestment in NSW

The invitation from Aboriginal communities to collaborate on advancing reinvestment, if accepted by the NSW Government, could deliver significant benefits to the Aboriginal and broader NSW communities, and also provides an opportunity for NSW to exemplify innovation and leadership in government responses to over-representation.

Aboriginal communities have already progressed work to define new funding approaches for JR in NSW. This project builds on that work.[27] It has sought to confirm what communities see as the key directions for reinvestment in NSW and to develop a reinvestment model informed by these key directions (Annex B).

The project has been a collaboration between academics, Aboriginal communities and community-controlled organisations and government and non-government stakeholders. Stakeholder participation has been important for understanding existing government approaches and testing new ideas (see further Annex A). Importantly, Aboriginal perspectives have been centred throughout.

To advance reinvestment modelling and implementation in NSW, further conversations among Aboriginal communities, the NSW Government and other stakeholders will be required. Cross-sector collaboration that prioritises Aboriginal community voices will again be essential to this process.

Key directions for reinvestment in NSW

This section details stakeholder and community insights on the key directions for a reinvestment mechanism in NSW. These insights confirm points of connection in the implementation of new funding approaches, the JR elements and the Priority Reforms.

They define First Nations understandings of reinvestment as incorporating the following:

KEY DIRECTION 1

Sustained funding required for effective prevention approaches.

KEY DIRECTION 2

Embedding self-determination through increased Aboriginal control of funding.

KEY DIRECTION 3

Advancing systems reform through shared accountability for outcomes.

KEY DIRECTION 4

Innovating JR evaluation approaches to centre Aboriginal perspectives.

KEY DIRECTION 5

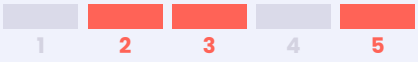
Building coordination and collaboration.

These components of reinvestment must work at both place-based and jurisdictional levels, in keeping with JR's place-based element.

KEY DIRECTION 1

Funding approaches need to provide JR with sufficient time, space and resourcing to enable its meaningful contribution to shifting Aboriginal outcomes.

SUPPORTS NATIONAL AGREEMENT PRIORITY REFORM AREAS



2 (building the community-controlled sector),
3 (transforming government organisations), and
5 (advancing economic self-determination)

PRIMARILY ALIGNS WITH

JR's systems approach (prevention)

Extending existing NSW Government funding for JR is vitally important to its development locally and as a broader model. However, current funding levels and timelines do not adequately address the scale and complexity of JR. Currently, funding is provided on a short-term basis (until mid-2027) and is also subject to political risk, including election cycles.

> "[Reinvestment is] not just about [getting more] money … It's about the alignment and redirecting a lot of the resources and existing funding and [ensuring] our communities are incentivised, based on [JR] results and outcomes.
>
> ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

JR is tasked with addressing entrenched, wide-ranging issues that contribute to over-representation. JR initiatives implement an expansive set of activities simultaneously and given their focus on prevention, often in different areas (such as health, education, justice). JR also innovates by testing and adapting interventions over time. There is important early work for JR initiatives in building strong foundations for long-term implementation, such as strengthening governance structures and establishing data approaches.

Aboriginal communities identify a lack of commitment to ongoing funding as limiting their capacity to maintain and build momentum, and to undertake long-term planning necessary for sustained JR outcomes. They see reinvestment as an important mechanism embedded within JR methodology for locking in, incentivising and building on "what works", ensuring that investment and the success of positive JR interventions are effectively scaled up over time. Communities contrast current approaches to funding JR with what appears to be more secure and readily expanded government resourcing of the criminal justice system.[28] One Aboriginal community participant identified that in the absence of reinvestment, "Though we've done a lot of good stuff over the years [with JR], the money keeps just flowing into the prison to lock fellas up".

Some government participants saw the absence of ongoing funding as a standard approach to mitigating risk while evidence of JR success is being collected.[29] They suggested that staged implementation of a reinvestment model may be useful in this context. The Victorian Department of Treasury and Finance's Early Intervention Investment Framework (EIIF) is an example of how staged government investment in early intervention initiatives can be embedded in budget processes to enhance social and fiscal outcomes.[30] Several elements of the Framework align with priorities identified by NSW Aboriginal communities for future JR funding approaches, including:

- Reliance on evidence and data measuring "impact" to scale up investment in and continuously improve innovative prevention interventions.[31]
- Building government capability to innovate through the Framework processes, including working collaboratively cross-portfolio.[32]
- Exploration of opportunities for joint investment and responsibility between the Victorian and Commonwealth Government.
- Collaborations and partnerships, with community voices informing "what works" as early intervention.[33]

A Cultural Safety Framework, developed with Victorian Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations, informs implementation of the Investment Framework to improve outcomes for First Nations people specifically.[34] This requires government departments to evidence how they are progressing in areas such as investment in Aboriginal-led data and evaluation approaches, working with communities to co-design "meaningful" initiative outcomes,[35] and exploring new types of funding arrangements, including longer-term agreements.

KEY DIRECTION 2

Reinvestment should embed and strengthen self-determination. This can be done by enhancing community capability to lead JR and by increasing Aboriginal-led control of funding.

SUPPORTS NATIONAL AGREEMENT PRIORITY REFORM AREAS

1 2 3 4 5

1 (shared decision making),
2 (building the community-controlled sector),
3 (transforming government organisations), and
5 (advancing economic self-determination)

PRIMARILY ALIGNS WITH

JR's community-led element.

> [T]he missing pieces to the puzzle have always been the cultural authority and the cultural governance component. I think there's a real opportunity [through reinvestment] to … strengthen that and put visibility on what that really means. And being much [clearer] around the preparation readiness for that. Because in communities, as we all respect and appreciate, there are different levels … I think that we've got a real opportunity to really refine that so it doesn't leave anyone, [n]or is perceived as leaving anyone behind.
>
> ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

Undermining of self-determination is identified as a key driver of over-representation. Addressing this important issue, including through funding mechanisms, is a significant focus for Aboriginal-led JR.

Aboriginal community participants highlighted mechanisms, for instance, that grow funding independence for JR,[36] build Indigenous Data Sovereignty capabilities,[37] and strengthen Aboriginal-led governance mechanisms, including those supporting new funding approaches. Bringing Aboriginal people together locally and across NSW to make decisions, collectively advocate for systems reform, and negotiate agreements with government on shared approaches to evaluation was identified as challenging but pivotal work for JR success.[38] Reinforcing of state-wide Aboriginal-led JR coordination and representation was an identified priority.

Communities also identified a need to move beyond shared decision-making about funding to Aboriginal control and ownership of JR resourcing.[39] Some stakeholders suggested that current government funding models could be retained and further revised for JR (for instance, government-led funding opportunities could be made available to communities for longer periods).[40] However, for Aboriginal communities this does not sufficiently recognise self-determination and a lack of funding independence is seen as impacting community capacity to challenge government systems.

Emerging from the Victorian Treaty process, the Self-Determination Fund (SDF) in Victoria offers an innovative model for embedding self-determination in funding.[41] Aligned with Aboriginal community priorities for reinvestment, following initial capitalisation of $65 million from the Victorian Government, the Fund is held and controlled by the First Peoples' Assembly in Victoria (now referred to as Gellung Warl). It is embedded in legislation, which both communities and stakeholders identified as necessary to secure reinvestment in NSW, and is characterised by strong cultural and financial governance mechanisms.[42]

The Fund centres Indigenous agreement-making, with Aboriginal Victorians making decisions on funding priorities and distribution. Again, aligned to community perspectives in NSW, these priorities currently centre building First Peoples' economic independence (through returns on fund investments) and their capacity as self-governing entities to negotiate and agree on Treaty with the Victorian Government. There is flexibility in what can be funded to support Traditional Owners (for example, building of governance structures, cultural-strengthening activities and Treaty education).

Priorities for subsequent phases of funding are to be determined through ongoing Victorian Treaty negotiation processes.

KEY DIRECTION 3

The success of JR depends on communities and government sharing accountability for outcomes.

SUPPORTS NATIONAL AGREEMENT PRIORITY REFORM AREAS

1 2 3 4 5

1 (shared decision-making), and 3 (transforming government organisations)

PRIMARILY ALIGNS WITH

JR's systems approach (systems reform)

> [Through JR, we as a community are making] a courageous attempt to start implementing a lot of reform and transformation … [I]n terms of the reinvestment component … [for government, it's not] just funding and walking away. They've got to really roll their sleeves up too, to get in there.
>
> ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

> We need government to be incorporating arrangements into funding deeds and contracts to have the services behave and operate much differently to what they're currently doing. Because they're confined by their key performance indicators, which we know are completely out of context from what communities really need.
>
> ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

JR is appropriately centred around Aboriginal-led solutions. However, Aboriginal communities identified carrying a high burden in terms of demonstrating JR benefits and success.

Many participants saw relative limitations in government commitments to supporting JR through new ways of working as the single greatest risk to JR success. Participants recognised that government actions have the potential to either strengthen or significantly undermine community-led JR efforts to address over-representation. One example discussed was "tougher" bail laws introduced by the NSW Government in response to community safety concerns that have increased numbers of Aboriginal young people being remanded.[43] Aboriginal participants attributed disproportionately negative Aboriginal justice outcomes to failures across multiple government systems, all of which are therefore accountable for solving problems and repairing harm associated with over-representation.[44]

Suggested mechanisms for embedding shared accountability include regular review of progress of reinvestment as a systems reform model[45] and, in particular, different forms of agreement-making.

One example discussed was government funding agreements with NGOs that use Key Performance Indicators to increase NGO accountability and align with community agendas.[46] Extending this approach, JR funding agreements between Aboriginal communities and the NSW Government could embed outcomes that communities identify as the government's responsibility. One example discussed by Aboriginal community participants is that measures of "successful" policing are currently determined by the NSW Government. They see an opportunity to contribute to decisions about how police should support JR goals and objectives, including through demonstrated increases in levels of cultural competency, to be assessed by Aboriginal communities.

In South Australia, the Kungun Ngarrindjeri Yunnan Agreement strategy (KNYA – listen to Ngarrindjeri speaking) demonstrates how high-level agreements between Aboriginal people and governments can embed shared accountability that relies on building Aboriginal capacity, responsibility and authority, essential to delivering lasting Indigenous justice outcomes.[47] The challenge in this instance was understanding and mitigating the negative consequences of a major drought in the Murray-Darling Basin. This drought was having catastrophic impacts on the environment, the Ngarrindjeri nation and the broader non-Indigenous community. Ngarrindjeri leaders and the South Australia Government were looking for a new way for all levels of government and other sectors to work together to respond to this challenge.

In response, the Ngarrindjeri-led KNYA strategy was developed as a legally sound, high-level framework that supports the central role of First Nations people in caring for their lands, waters and people through establishing a new productive relationship with the state. Rather than relying on deficit-based interventions, the KNYA approach establishes shared goals, agreed priorities, mutual responsibilities for achieving outcomes and new forms of collaboration and partnership.

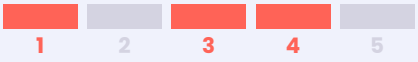
Project planning, resources, and institutional effort prioritise strengthening Ngarrindjeri capacity and governance to improve Ngarrindjeri wellbeing and self-determination.

Ngarrindjeri have now brought this KNYA approach to JR to support the development of a Commonwealth funded Ngarrindjeri regional justice strategy. The Ngarrindjeri nation's peak body is leading this initiative arguing that building Ngarrindjeri capacity, prioritising co-ordinated regional planning and strong agreement making will lead to long-lasting positive sector transformation.

KEY DIRECTION 4

New funding approaches should support development of shared methods of JR evaluation that reflect Aboriginal community priorities and pace of work while ensuring systematic, coordinated measurement of impact.

SUPPORTS NATIONAL AGREEMENT PRIORITY REFORM AREAS



1 (shared decision-making), 3 (transforming government organisations) and 4 (shared access to data and information at a regional level).

PRIMARILY ALIGNS WITH

Aligns with all JR elements

According to US definitions, sustained government investment in JR is justified when an initiative has demonstrated "success" as cost savings generated through reduced incarceration.

Key challenges in achieving this include:

- The monitoring and evaluation of JR in NSW is not yet designed to consistently measure JR outcomes and impact. There is no standardised mechanism for assessing JR's economic benefit or identifying savings that could be reinvested in communities.[48] This is partly due to the diversity of funding arrangements for JR in NSW. Each government and non-government funder has its own reporting requirements and expectations for evaluating JR success.[49] The alignment of monitoring and evaluation approaches in NSW, including through any established reinvestment mechanism, will support JR objectives.[50]
- Data capabilities vary between communities. Newer JR initiatives, for instance, are less likely to have established data approaches or capacity to generate and demonstrate savings.
- JR is inherently a long-term strategy. Many stakeholders said that JR's broad objectives are especially difficult to demonstrate within shorter time frames, and that too much focus on delivering economic benefit through reduced incarceration does not fully reflect its intent.[51] Over-reliance on population-level measures in general is seen as somewhat problematic, including given how long it takes to positively (and consistently) shift outcomes at scale.
- Achieving outcomes is dependent on government inputs, including systems reforms and provision of data. Concerns were raised by stakeholders about government responses to Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Governance Principles, including, but not limited to, problematic data access that impacts the capacity to track JR success and savings generated.

First Nations Investment Framework (NSW)

NSW Treasury's First Nations Investment Framework is a best practice guide to embedding culture across all stages of government-funded projects impacting First Nations people, from design to evaluation. The Framework recognises the importance of culture as both an essential project input and outcome. As an example, Aboriginal community-led decision-making is identified in the Framework as having potential to increase community cohesion and connection to culture.

The Framework provides advice and case studies for how policymakers and investors might incorporate culture across project development, implementation and evaluation. These describe an ongoing process of negotiation and collaboration with First Nations organisations and communities as project partners. Examples include:

- working with First Nations partners to develop outcomes and their measurement, recognising First Nations aspirations and priorities for success.
- shared understanding of who is accountable for what outcomes and actions, to be incorporated in (formal) agreements and monitoring and evaluation approaches.

To address these challenges, new funding approaches should support the development of shared methods for JR evaluation, agreed upon by communities and government. These methods should reflect local priorities and pace of work while ensuring systematic, coordinated measurement of impact. They should also innovate current JR evaluation methodology, aligning it with Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Governance Principles.

Participants noted that applying Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Governance Principles broadens conventional definitions of outcomes and impact within JR. This includes incorporating qualitative data (alongside quantitative data) and strengths-based approaches within JR evaluation. Aboriginal communities identified outcomes such as stronger community cohesion, increased Aboriginal leadership, enhanced connection to culture and improved youth and community wellbeing as important indicators of JR success.[52]

Participants also emphasised that shared evaluation approaches should account for government policies and actions that affect over-representation and other JR outcomes, even where those policies and actions sit outside JR itself.

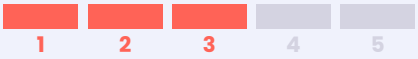
Aboriginal communities want to work with government on assigning economic value to all of the above outcomes, both positive and negative, for use in economic appraisal of JR.[53] This includes quantifying the cost to communities of continued or increased over-representation.[54]

The NSW Treasury's First Nations Investment Framework innovates data and evaluation approaches in ways that align with Aboriginal community priorities for JR.[55] The Framework assigns economic value to culture, to be applied in evaluation of initiatives impacting First Nations people in NSW.[56] Culture in this context incorporates Aboriginal-led and shared decision-making, Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Governance Principles, shared accountability and capability building, all elements of new funding approaches for JR in NSW.

KEY DIRECTION 5

Collaboration and coordination can be improved by better aligning policy, relationships, accountabilities, governance structures and other relevant mechanisms within the JR-adjacent ecosystem.

SUPPORTS NATIONAL AGREEMENT PRIORITY REFORM AREAS



1 (shared decision-making,
2 (building the community-controlled sector),and
3 (transforming government organisations)

PRIMARILY ALIGNS WITH

JR's systems approach (collaboration)

Limitations in coordination across communities and government and other stakeholders pose a further risk to JR's success. Lack of shared understandings of JR and approaches to evaluation are examples discussed earlier in this paper.

> When you look at ... impacts on some of our community members that are in and out of the system, there's lots of trauma. There are a whole lot of health-related, family and housing issues. So, it's a collective of the whole social justice and social service system that needs to be part of this conversation and the funding reallocation, not just justice. Because it impacts on different levels all the time.
>
> ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT

State-level JR coordination should be reinforced to strengthen connections between JR communities, Aboriginal-led bodies such as the NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations and other relevant stakeholders.[57] Participants also noted the potential for a reinvestment mechanism that coordinates enhanced investment across different Aboriginal-led initiatives positively impacting over-representation in NSW, in addition to JR.[58]

Sharing accountabilities and responsibilities for addressing over-representation across the entirety of the NSW Government and with federal and local governments was a further focus. As one Aboriginal community participant stated, "having three tiers of government really dialled in to this work will help a lot".

One Aboriginal community participant suggested that a NSW Cross-Sector Collaboration Group could be established, similar to the Cross-Sector Leadership Group currently working with Maranguka and the Bourke Tribal Council. This group would authorise new ways of working in government, including by addressing barriers to community priorities for systems reform.[59] Both communities and stakeholders could be represented on the group, with membership drawn from different areas of government at sufficiently senior levels.

This project has identified that advancing a reinvestment model in NSW contributes to achieving Closing the Gap commitments and Targets.[60]

There is a significant opportunity for implementation of the National Agreement in NSW to more actively support JR.

Ways in which this might be achieved, as identified by participants, include the following examples:

- **Strengthening connection between reinvestment and existing Closing the Gap structures** such as the NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations
- **Embedding JR within the five NSW Priority Areas**, where stronger alignment could reinforce both JR and Closing the Gap as mechanisms for improving outcomes for Aboriginal communities.

Aboriginal community participants highlighted wanting to work with government through JR to identify and scale up best approaches to achieving Targets 10 (adult incarceration) and 11 (youth detention), in particular. They identified this as providing important learnings about what works to reduce over-representation of benefit at both a NSW and national level.

NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations is signatory to the National Agreement in NSW alongside NSW Government.

Opportunities for progressing justice reinvestment in NSW

NSW has the opportunity to move beyond short-term program funding by establishing a reinvestment model that provides a sustainable funding base for JR while embedding community-led decision-making and long-term partnership with Aboriginal communities.

The opportunities below align with the key directions identified by stakeholders and communities in this project.

OPPORTUNITY 1

Establish a reinvestment model within NSW's existing state investment fund architecture to provide secure, long-term resourcing for JR.

The NSW Government has the opportunity to establish a sustainable funding model for JR by creating a dedicated reinvestment mechanism within the state's existing investment fund architecture. Any such model must consist of three core components:

a) An investment by the NSW Government to support foundation building in JR communities through the transfer of capital to a dedicated JR fund. Net returns generated by the fund would provide finance for investment and reinvestment activities.

b) Agreements between Aboriginal communities and the NSW Government regarding funding arrangements, systems reform priorities, JR outcomes and evaluation.

c) Reinvestment through:

- ongoing investment in Aboriginal communities following completion of an initial foundational agreement; and
- the transfer of ownership of the JR fund from the NSW Government to Aboriginal communities over time.

A proposed model of what this could look like is outlined in Annex B.

OPPORTUNITY 2

Support the establishment of a JR Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (JR ACCO).

NSW Government has the opportunity to strengthen JR in NSW by supporting the establishment of an ACCO to coordinate JR at a state level. As an independent, self-determining body, a JR ACCO could provide strategic leadership, strengthen coordination across communities and stakeholders and support the long-term sustainability of JR in NSW.

To fulfil this role, the JR ACCO would require adequate and ongoing funding. Aboriginal communities should lead or, in some cases share, decision-making with the NSW Government regarding the organisation's functions, governance arrangements and funding model. Options for resourcing could include a combination of government and non-government funding provided directly or through a dedicated JR fund.

Consistent with JR's place-based approach, the JR ACCO would support, represent and be accountable to JR communities. Its functions could include:

- building connections and coordination across the JR sector, including supporting alignment with Closing the Gap commitments and facilitating partnerships across government and non-government stakeholders;
- gathering and sharing information on JR implementation, evaluation findings, evidence of impact and examples of effective practice;
- supporting increased community capability in data and other relevant areas of JR implementation.

A key role for the JR ACCO is supporting systems reforms, working with government to strengthen relationships with Aboriginal communities and advance self-determined priorities. This includes supporting local-agreement making and other mechanisms that enable shared decision-making in implementation of reinvestment in NSW.

OPPORTUNITY 3

Commit to maintaining current NSW Government JR funding while a reinvestment mechanism is implemented in NSW.

As an immediate priority, the NSW Government should commit to maintaining existing JR funding while a dedicated reinvestment mechanism is developed and implemented. This funding currently supports community-led initiatives, local capability and infrastructure. Establishing a reinvestment mechanism is likely to take time.

Maintaining funding during this transition period is essential to avoid disruption to existing activities, preserve community trust and momentum and ensure that successful initiatives can continue to generate evidence and impact.

Conclusion

While JR initiatives are underway throughout the state, reinvestment is lagging. Having already demonstrated the leadership, knowledge and determination required to reduce over-representation and strengthen local futures, communities are calling for the implementation of a new model for JR funding and governance that addresses this gap, realising their hopes and expectations for meaningful change.

For Aboriginal communities, reinvestment supports implementation of JR as more than just a short-term program layered onto existing systems. With appropriate government support, JR has potential to be a framework capable of genuinely transforming how government works with Aboriginal people and communities.

> **A new model of JR must do more than simply provide long-term funding certainty for JR.**

...though this is also essential. It needs to embed Aboriginal authority and self-determination, require government to share responsibility for the policy, legal, budgetary and system settings that shape Aboriginal justice outcomes and enable government to invest in what works.

The proposed approach to reinvestment provides a practical pathway to shift public investment towards effective preventative and Aboriginal-led solutions to continued high rates of Aboriginal over-representation. In doing so, it directly aligns with Closing the Gap Priority Reforms, including PR5. It also provides NSW with an opportunity to demonstrate national leadership in developing a JR mechanism that is not only community-led in principle, but structurally capable of sustaining Aboriginal-led change over the long term.



Road into Bourke, Ngemba Country
Photo credit | Lucy Tierney

Annex A. Project methodology

The project has been brought together over the past 18 months by a team consisting of Aboriginal community representatives from Moree and Mt Druitt, academics with different areas of knowledge and expertise (including justice, economics, public policy and nation-building) and staff from the NSW JR supporting body, Just Reinvest NSW.

We want to thank the project Steering Group, drawn from government and non-government organisations and communities working with JR in NSW. Steering Group members have given up considerable time to participate in conversations that have guided the project and its outcomes.

- Aboriginal representatives of JR initiatives in Bourke, Kempsey, Mt Druitt and Moree
- Just Reinvest NSW
- Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT)
- Department of Aboriginal Affairs
- Premier's Department
- NSW Treasury
- Department of Communities and Justice (Justice Programs)
- Paul Ramsay Foundation
- Dusseldorp Foundation
- NSW Police

Our sincere thanks extend to other stakeholders who have helped inform the model design and how best to progress it. Stakeholders have informed development of a reinvestment model through interviews, focus group/ yarning sessions and briefings. The above organisations and community representatives have participated in these conversations, with in-person community sessions also held in Mt Druitt and Moree. Further JR community engagement was undertaken at an in-person roundtable brought together on site at the Jumbunna Institute, UTS (Sydney) and at a NSW JR Community of Practice gathering held in Bathurst.

Additional stakeholder participants are as follows:

- NSW Treasury (in addition to NSW Treasury representation on the Steering Group)
- Department of Communities and Justice (Transforming Aboriginal Outcomes, Strategic Policy/Commissioning, Family and Community Services Insights, Analysis and Research)
- Justice Reform Initiative
- Justice Reinvestment Network Australia
- Commonwealth Attorney General's Department (Justice Reinvestment)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner
- NSW Land Council
- Taylor Fry
- NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations
- NSW Aboriginal Land Council
- Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (NSW)

We would especially like to acknowledge contributions from Aboriginal participants. Aboriginal people have been represented on the project Steering Group and team and participated in interviews and yarning or focus group sessions. The project has worked alongside Aboriginal representatives from government and non-government organisations, communities implementing JR in NSW and Aboriginal community-controlled organisations aligned with this implementation. Aboriginal participants have brought forward essential perspectives grounded in culture, sovereignty and ongoing resistance to colonisation.

Annex B. Establishing a reinvestment model for NSW

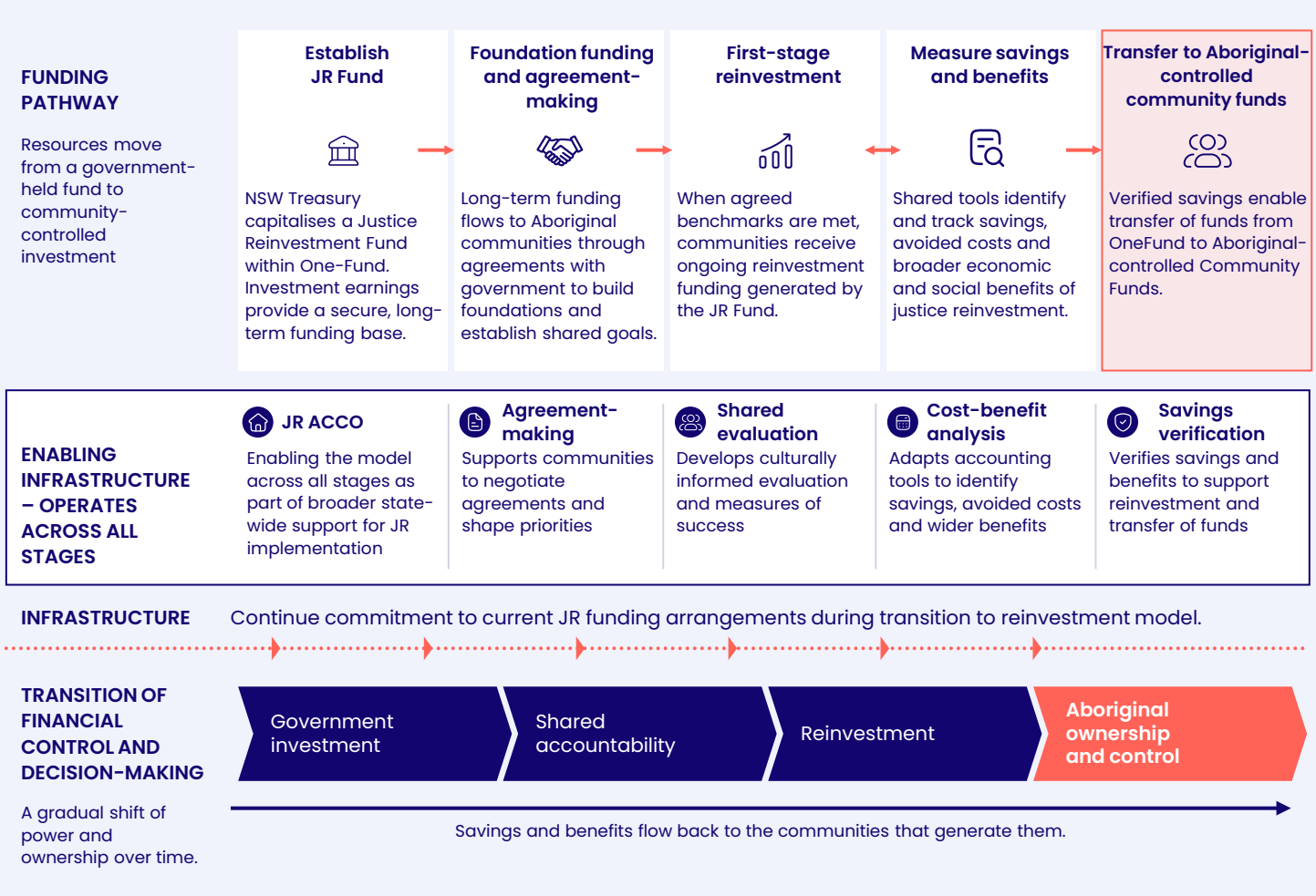
The following presents a proposed model for reinvestment in NSW. The project approach has ensured that the model is:

- community-informed;
- evidence-based;
- fiscally sustainable;
- outcomes focused; and
- practical and implementable.

Consistent with the principles of self-determination and shared decision-making, elements of the model's design remain to be determined through further engagement with Aboriginal communities. This provides an opportunity to ensure that key decisions regarding governance, implementation and accountability are shaped collaboratively and reflect community priorities.

By establishing a JR Fund, supporting agreement-making between Aboriginal communities and government, strengthening a state-level JR ACCO and developing shared evaluation and cost-benefit tools, NSW can build the infrastructure needed for genuine and impactful JR.

Over time, this model can move from government investment to Aboriginal ownership and control, ensuring that savings and benefits generated through community-led prevention are returned to the communities producing them.



Step 1: NSW establishes a new Justice Reinvestment Fund (JR Fund) within NSW's existing state investment fund architecture to provide secure and long-term resourcing for JR.

An initial capital investment could be made through NSW Treasury into OneFund, the NSW Government's consolidated investment fund, to establish a Justice Reinvestment Fund (JR Fund).[61] Earnings from the JR Fund (minus costs for borrowing and administration) would provide a secure funding base for JR initiatives. This funding would support both the establishment of Aboriginal community-led initiatives and longer-term reinvestment to sustain and build on JR success.

The JR Fund would sit as an additional fund managed under the OneFund. The administration costs of adding the JR Fund into the existing OneFund structure will be low, and the JR Fund will benefit from OneFund's existing successful investment strategy, which has outperformed its targets since inception.

Using investment returns from the JR Fund to finance JR initiatives would ensure secure and long-term funding for JR communities beyond yearly budget cycles. As OneFund operates according to a ten-year investment strategy, with the backing of the NSW Government, it is able to guarantee funding for JR over this period, smoothing out volatility in market returns. Risk is also managed as the capital in the JR Fund is the property of the NSW Government and remains so until a second stage of reinvestment is implemented (Step 5).

The proposed model is based on an initial capitalisation of $350 million. This amount could be adjusted, including by scaling it according to the number of JR communities being supported.

JR communities require, on average, $1.2 million in investment each year.[62] Assuming a 4.5 per cent real annual investment return, minus 1 per cent administration costs, financing investment for ten JR communities at this level on an ongoing basis would require a capital investment of $350 million. Supporting a lesser or greater number of communities will reduce or increase the capital investment required proportionally.

Step 2: The JR Fund provides sustained base funding for community-led JR initiatives. This funding is linked to agreement-making with government and to the development of shared evaluation frameworks, including benchmarks of JR success.

Returns from the JR Fund would provide funding to support communities to build the foundations needed for successful long-term JR implementation.

Funding would be provided via agreements negotiated between Aboriginal communities and the NSW Government. These agreements establish a funding relationship between the parties but should also align with Indigenous agreement-making.

The detail of agreements would be determined by the relevant parties. As one example, while Department of Communities and Justice could be the primary (government) signatory, agreements may need to respond to regional or cross-border issues or issues outside the Department's remit and require engaging more than one government and/or community party.

Agreements should set out shared goals, contributions required of both government and communities to deliver positive outcomes and shared approaches to evaluating JR "success".

Agreements should also provide funding for a ten-year period. This secures investment for activities that require time to establish, including strengthening governance, testing 'what works', forming agreements with government and developing agreed evaluation approaches. Where a community demonstrates agreed indicators of success within a shorter period, it could transition earlier to ongoing reinvestment funding.

Agreements should be flexible enough to incorporate Commonwealth and possibly local government commitments to JR. Consideration should also be given for how philanthropic and corporate funders might participate in this new funding approach to increase coordination and further reduce government fiscal cost and risk, noting that Aboriginal communities in NSW currently receive JR funding from a range of sources.

A state-level JR ACCO, supported by government, will provide strategic leadership, and play an important role in supporting communities to make agreements with government. It might also share in or support government in decision-making on communities to prioritise for funding, and, at a minimum, should participate in determining what criteria are applied to this decision-making.

Step 3: A first stage of reinvestment will provide Aboriginal communities with ongoing funding for JR once benchmarks of success (as agreed with the NSW Government) have been achieved.

The threshold for moving each JR community from base funding to the first level of reinvestment is that success has been demonstrated against the shared understandings and evaluation framework set out in agreements made under Step 2.

Once a JR community and the relevant agreement signatories agree that initial indicators of success have been achieved, the NSW Government makes a pre-determined additional financial investment into the JR Fund, consistent with the terms of the agreement negotiated with that community. There may be learnings drawn from the initial period of funding that impact the quantity of additional investment made into the JR Fund.

Rather than reinvestment being triggered by demonstrating a specific level of fiscal savings tied to reduced incarceration, this recognises that JR success encompasses a broader range of outcomes (including savings) defined jointly by communities and government through the agreement-making process.

The additional capital investment increases the resources held within the JR Fund and generates additional returns, providing an ongoing and secure source of funding for the successful JR community. The community continues to work with government under the terms of its agreement but without needing to repeatedly demonstrate its eligibility for funding.

This transition also frees up base funding that can be redirected to support a new community to establish a JR initiative, allowing the model to expand over time.

Overall, this approach gives communities the time and flexibility needed to develop new ways of working. It allows success to be assessed against outcomes shaped by the priorities of those most affected by the criminal justice system.

Various organisations and JR initiatives already exist that need to be incorporated into the model in different ways. These include Just Reinvest NSW and longer-standing JR initiatives such as Bourke, Moree and Mt Druitt. These initiatives could be grandfathered into this first level of reinvestment, based on work already completed.

Step 4: The JR ACCO and NSW government develop shared cost-benefit and accounting tools to track economic and budget impacts of JR initiatives, as well as the costs of business-as-usual approaches. These tools should be consistent with Indigenous evaluation methodologies.

The JR ACCO works with NSW Treasury, with input from the Department of Communities and Justice and potentially other areas of NSW Government, to adapt existing government evaluation and budgeting tools that will support the implementation of a second stage of reinvestment in NSW (Step 5).

Through this process, social, economic and fiscal benefits from JR efforts are tracked and quantified to identify where savings are being generated within the NSW budget, helping to make the budget case for further reinvestment.

Shared models for JR evaluation and success (including as developed in Steps 2-3) and other expanded understandings of costs and benefits should inform this process and its outcomes.

Aligned with its systems reform focus, the JR ACCO could identify and quantify the impacts of criminal justice and related laws and policies on First Nations people in NSW, including both the costs of harmful system settings and the benefits of effective reform. These impacts could be incorporated into cost-benefit analyses of JR, alongside benefits accruing to the Commonwealth Government, to provide a more comprehensive assessment of JR's economic and social value.

Step 5: As JR initiatives register ongoing savings to NSW, a second stage of reinvestment in which ownership of JR funds is transferred to Aboriginal communities via the JR ACCO should take place.

As a final stage of reinvestment, ownership of the underlying funds that have been financing JR communities will eventually be transferred by NSW Treasury to Indigenous control through individual JR Community Funds.

These Community Funds can be managed by the JR ACCO on behalf of each JR community or by communities themselves. Appropriate governance mechanisms for managing Aboriginal community-controlled JR Community Funds will have been established within the JR ACCO by this point.

This transfer would occur only following evidence application of agreed budget and evaluation tools to identify JR related economic benefits and savings (Step 4). Once savings and avoided costs have been identified to fully write-off JR funds held by OneFund for a relevant community the equivalent amount is transferred to JR Community Funds rather than being captured by the NSW Government and allocated to other priorities. As such, benefits and savings are shared in a budget neutral manner with the individual JR communities that delivered them.

As new communities are funded on a rolling basis over time, this transfer would be staged, with additional funds placed within OneFund being written off and transferred community by community.

The NSW Government and wider NSW community continue to benefit from JR by fully capturing ongoing budget savings and reducing debt levels, while communities gain financial autonomy to grow JR independent of government finance.

The cost-benefit analysis of Maranguka completed in 2018 identified $2m of budget savings per year from $600k investment. To increase this investment to $1.2m per year the JR Fund would need about $35 million invested per community (assuming 4.5 per cent real return minus 1 per cent management fees). Assuming the same rate of return to the budget from JR, the initial capital investment could therefore potentially be paid for in around 10 years. This indicates that the transfer of ownership (for initial communities) could happen in a ten to 15 year time horizon.

Endnotes

[1] NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, "Custody Dashboard," https://bocsar.nsw.gov.au/statistics-dashboards/custody/custody-dashboard.html (updated 19 August 2026; accessed 14 September 2026). See also NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, "Record remand numbers drive growth in NSW prison population", 12 February 2026, https://bocsar.nsw.gov.au/media/2026/mr-custody-dec2025.html (accessed 19 August 2026).

[2] Productivity Commission, *Report on Government Services 2016,* Part C: Justice (Canberra: Australian Government, 2016); Productivity Commission, *Report on Government Services 2026,* Part C: Justice (Canberra: Australian Government, 2026).

[3] Australian Bureau of Statistics, Prisoners in Australia, https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/prisoners-australia/latest-release (accessed 20 August 2026).

[4] Fiona Allison, *Redefining reinvestment: an opportunity for Aboriginal communities and government to co-design justice reinvestment in NSW* (Sydney: Just Reinvest NSW, 2022).

[5] Daryle Rigney, Simone Bignall, Alison Vivian and Steve Hemming, *Indigenous Nation Building and the Political Determinants of Health and Wellbeing* (Melbourne: Lowitja Institute, 2022).

[6] An interim national JR Unit currently sitting with the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department will shortly be transitioned to an ACCO-led national JR body.

[7] The Commonwealth made an additional commitment of $10 million in funding over four years to support JR in Central Australia, see Attorney-General's Department, Justice Reinvestment, https://www.ag.gov.au/legal-system/justice-reinvestment (accessed 1 September 2026).

[8] See detail at NSW Department of Communities and Justice, Justice Reinvestment in NSW, https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/legal-and-justice/strategies-and-plans/justice-reinvestment.html#NSW4 (accessed 1 September 2026). Note that originally, this entire funding package was to be provided to Just Reinvest NSW to expand JR into additional NSW communities. Currently, funding for two JR initiatives in NSW is provided via Just Reinvest NSW as a Human Services Agreement while the remaining sites have funding agreements with the NSW Government linked to the NSW Justice Reinvestment Grant Program.

[9] Aboriginal communities working with JR in NSW receive government funding from multiple sources for JR and JR aligned activities (such as backbone operations), including from the NSW Premier's Department, across the Department of Communities and Justice (from Children and Families, for instance), and the Department of Social Services (DSS) Stronger Places, Stronger People funding. See Department of Social Services, Stronger Places, Stronger People, https://www.dss.gov.au/stronger-places-stronger-people (accessed 1 September 2026).

[10] Data provided by Just Reinvest NSW for inclusion in this paper.

[11] Paul Ramsay Foundation (2025) *Justice Reinvestment Portfolio Review*. Available at https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/661f556bbce30a1afe4ad03c/69c1ab8460c2b20675057d1d_JR-Portfolio-Review-updated-Mar-2026.pdf (accessed 10 September 2026).

[12] This argument was used to convince more or less conservative politicians of the value of JR implementation in the US, given rising costs of mass incarceration. See, for instance, Susan Tucker and Eric Cadora, "Justice reinvestment", *Ideas for an Open Society* 3:3 (2003), 2-5.

[13] In reality, savings generated through JR in the US have commonly been reinvested back into the US criminal justice system. See, for instance, Christopher W. Dollar, "A new coat of paint: The bluewashing of justice reinvestment and realignment to community reinvestment", *Sociology Compass* 17:3 (2023).

[14] Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, *Social Justice Report 2009* (Sydney: Australian Human Rights Commission, 2009), https://humanrights.gov.au/__data/assets/file/0024/45636/Sjr_2009_web.pdf.

[15] See, for instance, discussion of national level community calls for funding reform in Fiona Allison, *Design of the National Justice Reinvestment Program* (Sydney: Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research, University of Technology Sydney, 2023). The need for reinvestment in the ACT context to be more directly aligned with First Nations perspectives is discussed in Chris Cunneen, Fiona Allison, James Beaufils, et al. *Independent Review into the Over-Representation of First Nations People in the ACT Criminal Justice System, Final Report* (Sydney: Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research, University of Technology Sydney, 2025). It is worth noting that the economic component of JR arguably sets it apart from other place-based and collective impact approaches. Reinvestment could potentially be incorporated into the JR framework in Australia as an additional (sixth) element.

[16] KMPG, *Maranguka Justice Reinvestment Project: Impact Assessment* (Maranguka and Just Reinvest NSW, 2018).

[17] Fiona Allison, *Redefining reinvestment: an opportunity for Aboriginal communities and government to co-design justice reinvestment in NSW* (Sydney: Just Reinvest NSW, 2022). Annex A identifies a history of Aboriginal-led advocacy for reinvestment in NSW from early 2019. See also Gareth Bryant and Ben Spies-Butcher, "From marketisation to self-determination: Contesting state and market through 'justice reinvestment'", *Environment and Planning A: Economy and space* 56:1 (2022), 216-234.

[18] Communities in 2022 and presently identify having greater input into decisions about funding locally as incorporating decisions about expenditure on mainstream programs and services (for instance, in health, education, housing) to ensure delivery of positive Aboriginal outcomes likely to help reduce over-representation. In 2022 communities sought to incorporate into a JR Action Plan a commitment from government to a process for establishment of shared decision-making about resource allocation at the local level. See, Fiona Allison, *Redefining reinvestment: an opportunity for Aboriginal communities and government to co-design justice reinvestment in NSW* (Sydney: Just Reinvest NSW, 2022).

[19] These elements of JR were developed through broad community input into design of the National Justice Reinvestment Program. A total of 44 communities were engaged throughout the design process. See, Fiona Allison, *Design of the National Justice Reinvestment Program* (Sydney: Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research, University of Technology Sydney, 2023).

[20] As an example, a community-led intervention might focus on supporting young people to re-engage with learning outside of a school setting to help avert their contact with the criminal justice system. See discussion of this type of approach and its likely contribution to enhancing health and wellbeing in, for instance, Deloitte Access Economics, *The social, economic and determinants of health and wellbeing and the sustainability of health, aged care and human services systems* (Brisbane: Deloitte Access Economics, 2024).

[21] NSW Department of Communities and Justice, Justice Reinvestment NSW, https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/legal-and-justice/strategies-and-plans/justice-reinvestment.html#NSW4 (accessed 1 September 2026).

[22] Australian Government Productivity Commission, Closing the Gap Information Repository Dashboard, https://www.pc.gov.au/closing-the-gap-data/dashboard/ (accessed 1 September 2026).

[23] The NSW Government recognises the framework of JR as having potential to break new ground. The NSW Justice Reinvestment Grant Program is identified as a "commitment to finding innovative ways to break the cycle of Aboriginal over-representation" and as embedding "transformative change by funding communities to … create initiatives that can make real change", including through "new thinking" based on evidence and data. See, NSW Department of Communities and Justice, "$7.5m Justice Reinvestment Aboriginal Grants Program now open", 23 January 2024, https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/news-and-media/media-releases/2024/-7-5m-justice-reinvestment-aboriginal-grants-program-now-open-.html. There is also a commitment from the NSW Government to creating "deeper relationships with local

service providers or government agencies to support" JR initiatives and/or to "remove barriers that may get in the way of reform." See NSW Department of Communities and Justice, Justice Reinvestment in NSW, https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/legal-and-justice/strategies-and-plans/justice-reinvestment.html#NSW4 (accessed 1 September 2026).

[24] Australian Government Productivity Commission, *Review of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap* (Canberra: Australian Government, 2024). The most recent NSW Closing the Gap Implementation Plan also recognises "embedding the Priority Reforms into the systems, behaviours and practices of government" as the "foundation of how government works in partnership with Aboriginal people" and the "real work of transformation". Aligned with the aims of reinvestment discussed in this paper, also emphasised in the Implementation Plan is "bringing together existing pieces of work, identifying what's missing, and building an evidence base for what works", setting out a "path to fundamentally change the way government operates – how decisions are made, how funding is negotiated and distributed, how success is defined, and how accountability is shared with Aboriginal communities". See, NSW Aboriginal Affairs, *2025-2028 NSW Implementation Plan for Closing the Gap* (Sydney: NSW Government, 2025). The previous NSW Implementation Plan also included a government commitment to "undertake ambitious systemic reform actions to embed the Priority Reforms at all levels of NSW Government through tangible and measurable actions". NSW Aboriginal Affairs, *2022-2024 NSW Closing the Gap Partnership Agreement* (Sydney: NSW Government, 2024).

[25] Department of Communities and Justice is identified as linking JR implementation to the Closing the Gap Priority Reform Areas, without further detail provided. See, NSW Department of Communities and Justice, Justice Reinvestment in NSW, https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/legal-and-justice/strategies-and-plans/justice-reinvestment.html (accessed 1 September 2026).

[26] Justice and other targets may be progressed in this context; for instance, Targets 5, 7, 8, 12. These targets refer (respectively) to students achieving their full learning potential, youth engagement in education or employment, strong economic participation and development of people and communities and reduced over-representation in the child protection system.

[27] Also relevant is a discussion paper outlining technical considerations for reinvestment modelling: Talia Hagerty, Emma Whitnall, Ben Spies-Butcher et al., *Designing a Justice Reinvestment Mechanism for New South Wales: A Discussion Paper* (Sydney: Just Reinvest NSW, 2025).

[28] Expansions to more punitive legal interventions were identified by Aboriginal participants as having disproportionately negative impacts in Aboriginal communities, exacerbating harms they associate with Aboriginal over-representation in the criminal legal system.

[29] Aboriginal participants in particular emphasised, however, that Aboriginal people have been implementing JR in NSW for well over a decade. Both the NSW and Commonwealth Governments have recently introduced monitoring and evaluation frameworks for their respective JR programs. See, Australian Government Attorney-General's Department, Measurement and Evaluation Framework for the National Justice Reinvestment Program, https://www.ag.gov.au/legal-system/publications/measurement-and-evaluation-framework-national-justice-reinvestment-program (accessed 1 September 2026). See also Paul Ramsay Foundation (2025) *Justice Reinvestment Portfolio Review*. Available at https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/661f556bbce30a1afe4ad03c/69c1ab8460c2b20675057d1d_JR-Portfolio-Review-updated-Mar-2026.pdf (accessed 10 September 2026).

[30] Victorian Government, Early Intervention Investment Framework, https://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/early-intervention-investment-framework (accessed 1 September 2026).

[31] Impact in the context of the EIIF refers to the difference an initiative makes for service users and the system in return for its investment. Avoided costs may include, for example, reduced justice system contact, but also gains or improvements for both individuals and communities (such as increased social cohesion or engagement with education). Initiatives that are evidenced as successful are scaled up through the EIFF, while others may be adjusted or discontinued if not achieving their intended impact.

[32] Cross-portfolio collaboration to work with linked data and identify impact are supported through the EIIF, for instance. The Investment Framework is identified as responding to "temporal and cross-portfolio dimensions" of early intervention, given that longer-term benefits may take time to realise and benefits may arise across different government portfolios. A program that reduces homelessness is identified as potentially positively (economically) impacting justice, health and education portfolios, for example. Government data capability is also increased through the development of and support in application of systems and tools for quantifying benefits/avoided costs to ensure consistent, systematised approaches under the EIIF. Victorian Department of Treasury and Finance, Early Intervention Investment Framework, https://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/early-intervention-investment-framework (accessed 1 September 2026).

[33] Victorian Department of Treasury and Finance, Co-design and the Early Intervention Investment Framework: Guidance Paper (Melbourne: Victorian Government, 2024).

[34] Victorian Department of Treasury and Finance, EIIF Cultural Safety Framework, https://www.dtf.vic.gov.au/eiif-cultural-safety-framework (accessed 1 September 2026). The Cultural Framework identifies three domains through which government departments can address existing barriers to reform of existing approaches. Barriers identified include a lack of investment in evidence building within ACCOs and of Aboriginal-led decision-making in budget processes, along with systemic government failure to implement commitments to self-determination. Evidence of actions taken by government departments under the above domains are used in DTF assessment of business cases.

[35] "Meaningful" outcomes in this context incorporates cultural determinants and other benefits that supplement existing Investment Framework quantification requirements.

[36] Examples discussed included the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation funding program, Australian Government Indigenous Land and Sea Council, People. Country. Opportunity., https://www.ilsc.gov.au (accessed 1 September 2026). A further example is the South West Native Title Settlement between the Noongar People and the State of Western Australia. See, Noongar Advisory Company, Noongar Boodja Trust, https://www.noongarboodjatrust.info (accessed 1 September 2026). See also discussion in this paper of the Victorian Self-Determination Fund.

[37] Strengthening of community and jurisdictional level JR governance structures that can implement Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Governance principles was one example shared, alongside upskilling of communities in data use and establishment of Indigenous governed place-based and jurisdictional level data systems, including to enable real-time monitoring of JR outcomes.

[38] The Bourke Tribal Council is one place-based example of such mechanisms. See Mark Riboldi, *The Maranguka Cross Sector Leadership Group: A case study of government and non-government organisations aligning policy and resources towards an Aboriginal community-led agenda* (Sydney: Sydney Policy Lab, The University of Sydney, 2021).

[39] This distinguishes reinvestment from other approaches like Aboriginal-led commissioning, as generally understood. See, for instance, AbSec, *Commissioning Framework: Commissioning for better Aboriginal child and family outcomes* (Sydney: AbSec, 2021).

[40] Current NSW innovations in government funding approaches that increase Aboriginal participation in decision-making and/or access to funding include the NSW Treasury review of and revisions to the Aboriginal Procurement Policy. See, NSW Ombudsman, *NSW Aboriginal Procurement Policy: Implementation Assessment* (Sydney: NSW Ombudsman, 2026). Also relevant is shared decision-making within the NSW budget process for funding of Closing the Gap initiatives as a partnership between Department of Premier, NSW Treasury and NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations. See, NSW Government, *Closing the Gap Review, Submission 32: NSW Government Submission Australian Productivity Commission review of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap* (Sydney: Australian Government Productivity Commission, 2023).

[41] Self-Determination Fund, Empowering Victoria's First Peoples, https://www.selfdeterminationfund.org.au (accessed 1 September 2026).

[42] The Self-Determination Fund has been legislated under the *Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Act 2018* (Vic). The Fund is identified as having "strong cultural governance processes, high standards of good governance and financial responsibility" and as "transparent and accountable to Community in its operations". Self-Determination Fund, *Self-Determination Fund Strategic Plan 2023-26* (Victoria: Self-Determination Fund, 2023).

[43] In February 2025, BOCSAR identified an increase of 32% in numbers of young people on remand overall (and a 22% increase in numbers of young Aboriginal people on remand) across a 12-month period (December 2023-December 2024) following amendments to the *Bail Act NSW* (2013) that limited the granting of bail for certain young persons in relation to certain serious offences. NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, "Youth custody numbers in NSW up by almost a third since December 2023", 18 February 2025, https://bocsar.nsw.gov.au/media/2025/mr-custody-dec2024.html. See also relevant discussion in Amy McDonald, Merran McAlister and Samantha Bricknell, *Bail and remand across Australia*. Indigenous Justice Clearinghouse, (Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology, 2026).

[44] While participants identified that community-led efforts to shift Aboriginal prison populations can be (fairly rapidly) counteracted by NSW Government changes to criminal laws, this also occurs outside of a criminal legal context. There is potential for government policy, law and practice *in multiple non-criminal areas* to similarly impact JR outcomes (both negatively and positively), with child protection and education a particular focus for community participants.

[45] One suggestion by an Aboriginal community participant was for a review body jointly constituted by government and Aboriginal JR practitioners, while others discussed as precedent reviews completed by bodies such as the NSW Ombudsman, Productivity Commission or NSW Audit Office. Participants questioned the extent to which existing Commonwealth and NSW Government JR monitoring and evaluation frameworks will effectively evaluate systems reforms outcomes.

[46] Fiona Allison, *Redefining reinvestment: an opportunity for Aboriginal communities and government to co-design justice reinvestment in NSW* (Sydney: Just Reinvest NSW, 2022).

[47] Demonstrating the effectiveness of the model, in 2015, the Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority and the South Australian Government received national recognition, winning the prestigious Australian *Riverprize* for their groundbreaking Ngarrindjeri-led water and environmental management of the Murray River, Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth region. See further Daryle Rigney, Damein Bell, Miriam Jorgensen et al., *Indigenous Nation building in Australia*: *Resistance, Resilience, Resurgence* (London: Bloomsbury, 2026). Steve Hemming and Damien Rigney, "Ngarrindjeri futures: negotiating a future through Caring for Ruwe/Ruwar (lands, waters and all living things)" in Penelope Figgis, James Fitzsimons and Jason Irving (eds.) *Innovation for 21st Century Conservation* (Sydney: Australian Committee for IUCN), 186-191.

[48] Government stakeholders indicated that NSW Department of Communities and Justice intend to develop approaches to cost-benefit analysis of JR in further developments of the NSW JR Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.

[49] NSW and Commonwealth Government monitoring and evaluation frameworks operate alongside one another rather than as a joined-up, consistent approach for NSW JR. Philanthropic funders are also making assessments of JR success in NSW. Just Reinvest NSW is in the process of developing a monitoring, evaluation and learning framework to sit across its work with communities too.

[50] Given that different sources for government funding are being utilised by Aboriginal communities in NSW for JR and JR aligned work, how to increase collaboration beyond JR-specific funders may also need consideration. Positive examples of philanthropic and government collaboration around funding include the Investment Dialogue for Australia's Children, identified as responding to the complex needs of children through longer-term and collaborative approaches to funding. See, The Investment Dialogue for Australia's Children, About the Dialogue, https://www.investmentdialogue.org.au (accessed 1 September 2026).

[51] In this context, government stakeholders suggested expanding criminal justice system JR outcome measures to encompass, for example, time passed between periods of incarceration. They also identified that contributions to avoiding downstream criminal justice system related costs associated with having to attend court and accessing government subsidised legal supports could be used in cost-benefit analysis of JR. One Aboriginal community participant stated that *only* measuring JR success as keeping young people out of detention would mean a community could be pushed to work solely with those at higher risk of re-entry into custody. This is not a preferred approach, as the following comment indicates: "There's not that much funded [locally], but the things that are funded [are for] when you get into trouble" … "We want to be holistic. We don't want to turn no one away.'"

[52] See for instance, Tiraapendi Wodli, *Tiraapendi Wodli: Keeping strong as we grow* (Port Adelaide: Tiraapendi Wodli, 2025).

[53] See as an example of an Indigenous focused cost-benefit analysis, Ann Daly and Greg Barrett, *Independent Cost Benefit Analysis of the Yuendumu Mediation and Justice Committee* (Canberra: University of Canberra, 2014). A further example of innovative Indigenous-led approaches to evaluating economic and other benefits of Indigenous-led collective impact initiatives is provided by the Whanau Ora Commissioning Agency in New Zealand. This approach demonstrates, for instance, that social and economic values can be attributed to impact and outcomes ordinarily seen as 'unmeasurable' in monetary terms. See, Sneha Lakhotia, Elica Mehr and Cate Mentink, Whakainea te Whakaaweawetia O Te Whānau Ora. Measuring Impact for Whānau Wellbeing (New Zealand: Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency, 2019).

[54] An earlier suggestion during the 2022 NSW reinvestment project was for imposition of a levy on government. NSW Government would be required to deposit resources into a fund if they moved levers (law, policy) in ways that increased Aboriginal incarceration. One issue identified with this approach at the time was that as Aboriginal incarceration is reduced, the size of the JR funding pool decreases. This is problematic if this is the only method of implementing reinvestment. See Fiona Allison, *Redefining reinvestment: an opportunity for Aboriginal communities and government to co-design justice reinvestment in NSW* (Sydney: Just Reinvest NSW, 2022).

[55] NSW Treasury, *First Nations Investment Framework: a guide to design, economic appraisal and evaluation of First Nations initiatives* (Sydney: NSW Treasury, 2024).

[56] Culture is identified in the Framework as an economic asset to be leveraged through government investment to generate positive impact for First Nations people and the NSW Government. It has a quantifiable value, for application across the entire investment lifecycle, including in cost-benefit analyses completed for business cases and evaluations. The importance of culture to achieving positive outcomes is also discussed in NSW Treasury, *Valuing First Nations Cultures in Cost Benefit Analysis* (Sydney: NSW Treasury, 2024). The Framework is identified as a response to existing NSW Government commitments under PR3, specifically, and as progressing all Priority Reforms. It identifies that the National Agreement similarly embeds culture as an input that helps achieve all Targets, but is also an important outcome itself (Targets 14, 15, 16).

[57] We note that the NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations has had some focus on funding reform under Closing the Gap. NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations (CAPO), *Priority Reform 1.3. Report of Preliminary Findings* (NSW: NSW CAPO, 2024).

[58] The NSW initiative, Local Decision-Making (LDM) in Aboriginal Communities, was one example discussed in this context. See NSW Government, Local Decision Making in Aboriginal communities, https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/aboriginal-affairs-nsw/about-ochre/local-decision-making (accessed 1 September 2026).

[59] Mark Riboldi, *The Maranguka Cross Sector Leadership Group: A case study of government and non-government organisations aligning policy and resources towards an Aboriginal community-led agenda* (Sydney: Sydney Policy Lab, The University of Sydney, 2021).

[60] While Closing the Gap is clearly a key JR-aligned strategic policy, one Aboriginal participant identified a range of other relevant policy and advocacy areas their community is trying to 'consolidate and interpret' through JR. These include Stronger Places Stronger People, Closing the Gap, Local Decision Making, shared decision making and self-determination, Aboriginal-led commissioning, and the Royal Commission into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Deaths in Custody.

[61] OneFund is the NSW Government's consolidated investment fund. It was created in 2024 by bringing together a number of existing funds with different policy objectives. OneFund is managed by TCorp, NSW Treasury's investment manager and borrowing authority. It holds $70 billion in assets and makes investments that target a return on CPI +4.5 per cent per annum over a rolling ten-year period.

[62] The figure of $1.2 million has been drawn from a 2019 pre-budget submission prepared by Change the Record and Justice Reinvestment Network Australia, with some adjustment (including for inflation). Change the Record and Justice Reinvestment Network Australia, Federal Pre-Budget Submission: National Support for Justice Reinvestment (Justice Reinvestment Network Australia, 2019).

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