

MEDIA RELEASE



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ANTaR backs call for Justice Reinvestment inquiry

ANTaR supports the call for a parliamentary inquiry to explore the potential for Justice Reinvestment to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in prisons and create safer communities.

“A Federal parliamentary inquiry would provide an opportunity to explore in detail the potential benefits of a Justice Reinvestment model in Australia,” said Jacqueline Phillips, National Director.

Justice Reinvestment is an innovative fiscal framework involving a shift in the focus of criminal justice spending from prisons to prevention. It is about smart investment in programs and services shown to reduce imprisonment rates. The model has been adopted with considerable success in a number of states in the US.

“By reviewing available research, inviting submissions from across the community and considering jurisdictional differences, a parliamentary inquiry could significantly deepen public and political understanding of the model and its application in Australia.”

The *Doing Time: Time for Doing* report released last year by the House Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs declared the stark over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in our nation’s prisons a “national shame”. The report also indicated support for the principles of Justice Reinvestment and recommended further research into the application of the model in Australia.

ANTaR has today written to the Senate Constitutional and Legal Affairs Committee requesting that it inquire into the application of Justice Reinvestment in Australia.

“This is an opportunity to build on the excellent work of the House Standing Committee, by inquiring more deeply into Justice Reinvestment as a vehicle for achieving the sort of change the *Doing Time* report identified as necessary and urgent.”

“The application of Justice Reinvestment in Australia raises important, complex and urgent questions which warrant consideration by a dedicated parliamentary inquiry.”

“Community support for Justice Reinvestment is growing around the country, with community campaigns in a number of states and territories. Now is the time to take the next step.”

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More information about ANTaR’s justice campaign is available at: <http://antar.org.au/campaigns/justice-campaign>