



# IMPROVING JUSTICE IN THE ACT

## Reducing crime & supporting victims

Our \$11.2 million plan to keep people out of prison and make our community safer.

The ACT Greens believe that if we want safer communities we need to invest in addressing the causes of crime, not just lock people up.

If we want safer communities, it is time for new thinking in Australia. Justice reinvestment is a smarter approach to criminal justice: reducing crime by directing resources into stronger, more caring communities, not just locking people up.

### **The ACT Greens will:**

- » Establish a specialised ACT Drug and Alcohol Court to reduce drug abuse, crime and drug related harms in the ACT
- » Provide \$3million in additional funding for the ACT's Community Legal Centres to improve access to justice – especially for disadvantaged groups – and make the justice system more efficient.
- » Reduce recidivism by 25% by 2025 by investing \$3.5 million in 'justice reinvestment';
- » Improve access to justice by increasing ACT Court funding, including ACAT;
- » Introduce 'right to appeal' laws to ensure people imprisoned for serious crimes can make a new appeal where fresh and compelling evidence emerges that should be examined in the interests of justice;
- » Legislate for a Charter of Victims' Rights to assist victims of crime in the ACT, especially by highlighting their needs and their status in the justice system.

### **> Alcohol and Other Drug Court**

An alcohol and other drug court is a specialist court empowered to direct drug dependent persons charged with certain criminal offences to treatment and rehabilitation programmes, with a view to reducing or eliminating their dependency on or propensity to misuse drugs, and reducing related criminal activities. Alcohol and Other Drug Courts improve communities by addressing addictions, preventing drug-related crime, reducing impaired driving, achieving better social and family outcomes, and saving money for the taxpayer by reducing prison populations.

The ACT Greens will:

- » Establish an AODC which operates to best-practice standards to reduce drug abuse and crime in the ACT;
- » Introduce legislation and guidelines to establish and govern a best practice AODC for the ACT, including key elements such as eligibility and court procedures;
- » Provide resources to establish the new court, including for an additional magistrate and cultural adviser; and

crime, reducing recidivism and better targeting rehabilitation and therapeutic funds.

» Provide an additional \$1 million a year in funding to suitable treatment providers to collaborate with the court and ensure people receive appropriate treatment.

### > **Fund Community Legal Centres**

Canberra's Community Legal Centres improve access to justice, especially for vulnerable Canberrans. Their frontline delivery and advocacy saves costs further down the line. An independent economic cost-benefit analysis of Community Legal Centres determined that every \$1 the Government spends on CLCs returns \$18 of economic benefits accrued to society. These include financial, social and health benefits as well as removing pressure on the court system.

Despite this, CLC funding has been significantly cut by the Federal Government and the ACT Government has failed to adequately protect them.

The ACT Greens will:

» Invest an additional \$3 million to protect ACT Community Legal Centres from cuts and bolster their ability to deliver crucial services.

Funding will go to CLCs including the Women's Legal Centre, Canberra Community Law, Street Law and the Environmental Defenders Office.

### > **Justice Reinvestment**

We know that that more can be done to improve community safety and reduce criminal behaviour. The ACT Greens believe we must invest in preventing

By using Justice Reinvestment principles, and continuing the Justice Reform Strategy, the Greens are aiming for a 25 % reduction in recidivism by 2025.

The ACT Greens will:

» Provide an additional \$3.5 million over three and a half years towards Justice Reinvestment initiatives aimed at preventing and reducing crime;  
» Continue the existing Justice Reinvestment trial working with families of detainees; and  
» Explore a dedicated Indigenous Extended Through Care Unit.

### > **Better Funding for our Courts**

The ACT justice system is facing genuine pressures. Justice delayed is justice denied - for all parties, including victims. The ACT Greens will ensure our courts run effectively and efficiently by improving resourcing for ACT Courts.

The ACT Greens will:

» Provide an additional \$450K for ACT Courts to meet immediate pressures; and  
» Conduct an independent review to explore the resourcing required to run an efficient Supreme Court, ACAT and Magistrates Court - including the Coroner's Court. This review will identify resource requirements in the future as well as efficiency and administration improvements.

## **> Justice for the Innocent**

The ACT lacks appropriate 'right to appeal' laws to help address instances of wrongful conviction. Right to appeal laws allow a person who has been found guilty of a serious crime to make a new appeal where fresh and compelling evidence emerges that should be examined in the interests of justice; for example where new DNA evidence shows that the person convicted did not commit the crime.

The ACT Greens will:

» Introduce legislation to the ACT Assembly to create a 'right to appeal' law in the ACT. The law will establish a simple process for a convicted person to appeal, when fresh and compelling evidence comes to light, that begins with an initial judicial hearing of a single judge.

## **> Charter of Victims' Rights**

Victims of crime and their families and friends often suffer ongoing harm and difficulties as a result of the crime, and as a result of their engagement with the criminal justice system. The ACT Greens will put the community first by introducing an ACT Rights of Victims of Crime Charter.

The Rights of Victims of Crimes Charter will spell out the rights of victims of crime, the obligations that agencies and others have when dealing with victims of crime, and establish a complaints resolution process for situations where the charter is breached.