



Draft ACT Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2026-2031

When a child or young person breaks the law, or someone believes they have broken the law, they go through the youth justice system. This can involve police, courts and youth detention centres¹.

The ACT Government is writing the next ACT Youth Justice Strategic Plan. This is a plan for improving youth justice over the next 5 years. The Plan brings together actions, priorities and promises about youth justice from across government in one place.

The Plan supports children and young people who are at risk of breaking the law or already involved in the youth justice system. The Plan is for the whole youth justice system, including:

- community programs before young people are involved in the system
- police
- court and court-related processes
- supervision in the community
- youth detention
- young people returning to the community after detention or court orders.

The Plan involves:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- people across ACT Government
- people and organisations who advise the government
- people who provide services and work in organisations related to youth justice.

The Plan links work across justice, health, education, housing, child protection and community services. This will help to make sure that:

- work is consistent
- duplication is avoided
- everyone is focused on the same goals
- we deliver on promises we have already made.

¹ A youth detention centre is a place where young people may have to go to if they have broken the law. In the ACT, this is also known as Bimberi Youth Justice Centre.



The Plan is guided by a rights-based and healing approach to youth justice. It recognises that some young people are more at risk of being involved with youth justice. This includes young people who:

- are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- have disability
- are involved in child protection
- are victims of domestic, family and sexual violence.

There are 6 focus areas in the Plan:

1. Provide support earlier.

Make sure young people and their families get the right support before things get worse.

2. Make sure young people don't enter the youth justice system.

Prevent young people from entering the system and support them to stay out of the system if they do.

3. Promote fairness and stop unfair treatment.

Make improvements so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are treated fairly and supported properly.

4. Use a caring and healing approach.

Focus on young people's needs and experiences, not just their behaviour.

5. Respect young people's rights.

Make sure youth justice practices protect and promote the rights of all young people.

6. Help young people return to the community.

Provide support for young people leaving youth detention so they can have a fresh start and rebuild their lives.

Each focus area has a list of activities that have already started happening or will happen in the future.

The government recognises that change needs strong, ongoing effort and real partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The government will work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other groups to deliver these activities. This will create change and help children and young people, their families and community.

The Plan will be reviewed every year. A report will be created to make sure the Plan is doing what it says it will do.

