

## Research Priorities and Principles at CRC

April 2025

### What are CRC's research principles?

All of CRC's research adhere to high ethical standards, informed by:

- the [National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research](#) developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)
- the [AH&MRC Health Ethics Guidelines](#) developed by the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW.

We encourage all research collaborators and independent evaluators to conduct their research in alignment with these guidelines.

### ***It is important to acknowledge the unique considerations for First Nations people in our research***

The overrepresentation of First Nations people in Australia's prison system is a national shame. We recognise the harm caused by these systems and the tireless advocacy of First Nations individuals, families, and communities to reduce the criminalisation of their kin.

Given the significant proportion of Aboriginal people in the criminal legal systems (and the high proportion of CRC's clients who are Aboriginal), it is crucial that any research overseen by CRC actively centres the voices and expertise of First Nations people.

All research should be informed by the following key principles outlined by the [AH&MRC Ethical Guidelines](#), in particular:

- Net benefits for Aboriginal people
- Aboriginal Community Control of Research
- Cultural Sensitivity
- Reimbursement of costs
- Enhancing Aboriginal skills and knowledge

As an example of implementing these principles in the CRC context, CRC works to establish or support an Aboriginal Reference Group to guide the research process.

Decolonial research methodologies and the principles of [Indigenous Data Governance and Sovereignty](#) should also be considered and incorporated into research involving CRC.

### ***People with lived experience provide invaluable contributions to our research***

CRC strives to ensure that all research projects give specific regard to people with lived experience of the criminal legal system (CLS), such as:

- Fostering empowerment and [co-design and/or co-production](#) of research by people with lived experience of the CLS

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- Acting with respect and dignity (for instance, by adhering to CRC's [language guide](#))
- Opportunities (such as co-authoring, presenting, and the development of other skills) for people with lived experience

All research participants who are not employed by CRC are expected to receive remuneration for the time they spend contributing to the study, preferably in cash rather than vouchers.

## What are CRC's research priorities?

It is important that the research we do aligns with CRC's values and principles. We aim to conduct and contribute to research projects that are aligned with seven key research priorities.

1	To explore the effectiveness of, and good practice in <b>community-based through-care and post-release programs</b> which support people to build meaningful pathways out of the criminal legal system, including the following:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Transitional support (including housing support, AOD support, family, and domestic violence support), and other through-care and post-release support programs</li><li>✓ Programs or support for specific cohorts of people who are underserved or excluded from most services (First Nations, women, people with complex health needs including mental illness, cognitive impairment, and intellectual disability).</li><li>✓ Transformative activities for people in contact with criminal legal system (arts and music programs)</li><li>✓ Gaps and opportunities in service provision for people who are being released from prison or are at risk of contact with criminal legal system</li><li>✓ Other community or prison-based programs that can inform and improve CRC practice</li></ul>
2	To understand the needs and experiences of <b>people with lived experience of the criminal legal system</b> , including people who are more broadly impacted, such as <b>families and communities</b> , including:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ First Nations people</li><li>✓ People who are currently in prison (particularly regarding access to education, training, and genuine work opportunities)</li><li>✓ People who leave prison (including breaking the cycle of imprisonment and homelessness when in the community)</li><li>✓ People who have had complex health and social trajectories and multiple levels of disadvantage</li><li>✓ People who have histories of victimisation, resistance to violence, and trauma</li><li>✓ staff who work with people in community-based transition programs (CRC staff and staff with lived experience of incarceration in particular)</li><li>➤ family members and friends of people in prison (particularly regarding visits, respectful treatment, and access)</li><li>✓ community receiving people from prison and assisting them in their reintegration.</li></ul>

3	To explore the <b>drivers</b> and the means of <b>reducing</b> , the <b>over-representation of marginalised and disadvantaged people</b> who are impacted by the <b>criminal legal system</b> (particularly First Nations people), including:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ First Nations people</li> <li>✓ People with mental illness</li> <li>✓ People with physical and/or intellectual disabilities or cognitive impairments</li> <li>✓ People who have experienced family violence, disadvantage, trauma, and social exclusion</li> <li>✓ People who use substances</li> <li>✓ Culturally and racially minoritised communities</li> <li>✓ LGBTIQ+ communities</li> <li>✓ Parents/carers, families, and communities</li> </ul>
4	To ensure that people with <b>lived experience of incarceration</b> are given a voice in research pertaining to the criminal legal system and related social disadvantage, including:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Research being co-designed by people with lived experience</li> <li>✓ Inclusion of subjective perspectives and qualitative accounts of people with lived experience</li> <li>✓ Development of good practices in using language to transform the discourse around people affected by criminal legal system</li> </ul>
5	To investigate the <b>costs and cost-effectiveness of community programs</b> and alternatives to incarceration, with a particular focus on:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Longevity of funding that can ensure stability for both clients and staff</li> <li>✓ Medium to long-term support to clients that enables meaningful change</li> <li>✓ Development and use of relevant performance indicators that reflect on the type of support and realistic outcomes</li> </ul>
6	To explore the means of <b>reducing the prison population</b> , including (but not limited to):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Systemic drivers for offending and recidivism and means of dismantling these</li> <li>✓ Programs that provide alternatives to incarceration, including abolitionist approaches and transformative and restorative justice</li> <li>✓ Diversionary pathways from custody into community</li> </ul>

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**To conduct research that will likely benefit people who access CRC's services.**

- ✓ This includes, but is not limited to, communities overrepresented in the prison system
- ✓ Research is in alignment with CRC's aims of decarceration and addressing the social drivers of incarceration