

IMPACT REPORT

2025

*A report on the impact of advocacy work by the Advocacy,
Research and Policy Unit at Community Restorative Centre*

February 2026



Acknowledgement of Country



The Community Restorative Centre (CRC) would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional custodians of the land on which our offices stand, their Elders past and present, and all First Nations peoples.



The overrepresentation of First Nations people in the criminal legal system¹ across this continent is a national shame. We recognise the harm caused by these systems and the tireless advocacy of First Nations peoples to reduce the criminalisation of their communities. Ultimately, incarceration is not part of First Nations cultures, and First Nations people have had, and continue to have, systems of accountability outside of the colonial carceral system.

¹ We use the term 'criminal legal system', as opposed to 'criminal justice system' to reflect that the 'justice system' in Australia has been imposed on First Nations communities without their consent through settler colonialism. The term 'criminal legal system' also highlights the way the system, including police, courts and prisons, frequently fail to deliver justice. This is evident, for instance, in the fact that First Nations people in Australia have the highest imprisonment rate in the world, are racially targeted by police, and experience a lack of accountability from the 'justice system' when First Nations people die in custody.



About ARPU

The Advocacy, Research and Policy Unit (ARPU) provides the rigorous evidence-based foundation for all of CRC's work, from service delivery to systemic advocacy. The Unit exists to exert influence and effect systemic change to achieve better outcomes for people impacted by the criminal legal system. The lived experience of the people with whom we work, as well as CRC staff, the wider NGO sector and other academic and expert partners, informs the advocacy, research and policy work we carry out. ARPU is funded by the Paul Ramsay Foundation.



What's in this report and thank you

We're excited to share the impact of CRC's advocacy work across 2025 in this report.

A massive thank you to our funding body and those we collaborated with, including organisations, groups, and people with lived experience of the prison system, who made this work possible.



Engagement with politicians and international officials

We had **32** x engagements with politicians and international officials.

Example 1

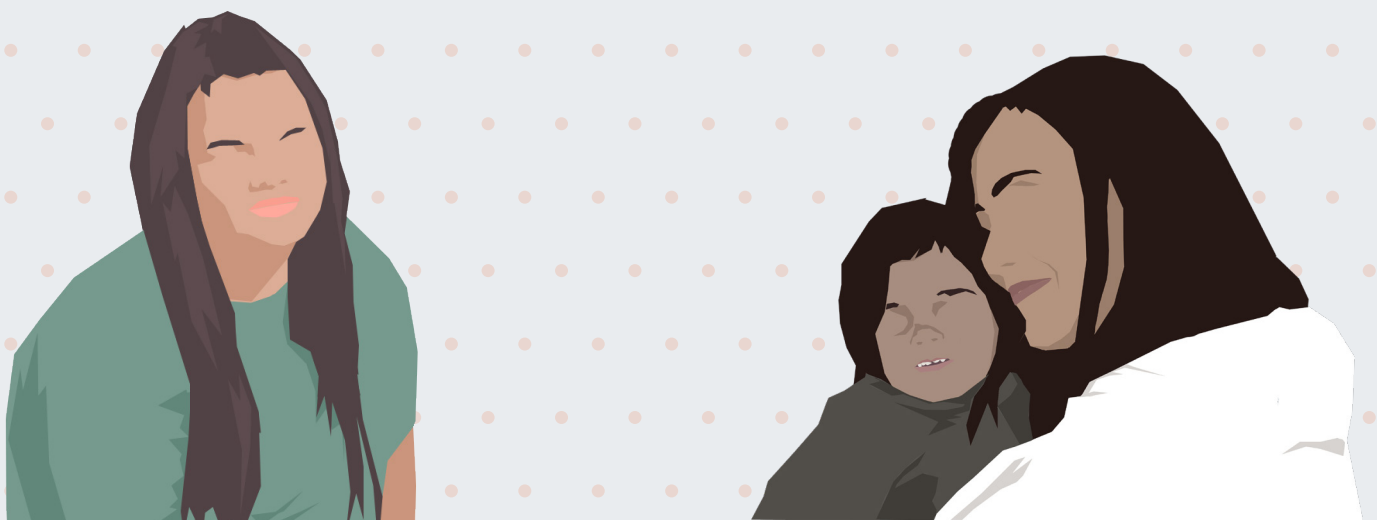
We wrote letters to **23** x politicians across Australia, campaigning for the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in Australia.

Example 2

We had **4** meetings with politicians, including meetings with Senator David Shoebridge, the federal justice spokesperson for The Greens and Melissa McIntosh, Shadow Minister for Women.

Impact

- Alongside others, we kept UNDRIP implementation on the agenda for high-level decision makers.
- We developed politicians' understanding of the experiences and challenges of people with criminal legal system involvement.



Submissions and feedback on government strategies

We prepared **9** x submissions to government bodies and parliamentary committees.

Examples

Our submissions included:

Feedback on the NSW Homelessness and Housing Strategy (February 2025)

A submission to the NSW Sentencing Council Inquiry into Good Character Considerations in Sentencing (February 2025)

Measuring Outcomes for First Nations Communities by the NSW Parliament (March 2025)

Submitting to the independent Review of the Operation of Doli Incapax in NSW for Children Under 14 by Geoffrey Bellew and Jeffrey Loy (June 2025)

Submitting to the Anti-discrimination Act Review by the Australian Law Reform Commission (August 2025)

Submitting to the NSW Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy consultation by the NSW Mental Health Commission

Providing feedback to the National Health and Medical Research Council (NH&MRC) survey for a targeted call for research (TCR) regarding First Nations health (September 2025)

Doing a Pre-visit submission to the United Nations Working Group Against Arbitrary Detention ahead of their planned visit to Australia (November 2025)

Submitting to a review of the Electoral Laws (Restoring Electoral Fairness) Amendment Bill 2025 consultation in Queensland (December 2025). This bill sought to roll back the right of incarcerated people to vote in QLD.

Impact

- We raised awareness about the impact of unjust law and policy on incarcerated communities.
- We contributed to the united voice advocating to raise the age of criminal responsibility to at least 14 in NSW, and to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in Australia.

Training and consultation

We conducted **7** x training and consultation sessions for stakeholders for practice development.

Example

We ran specialist training for **90** workers across **6** training sessions on 'Working with people impacted by the prison system'. This training included content on demystifying the prison system and its impacts, the key challenges people experience when returning to the community after prison, and best practice models for supporting people leaving prison.

Impact

- **98%** of participants reported that their knowledge level had increased as a result of the training.
- **99%** of participants rated the training excellent or very good.

Comments from attendees:

“

I am of lived experience and truly appreciate an organisation having a voice on such a traumatic time in someone's life.

”

“

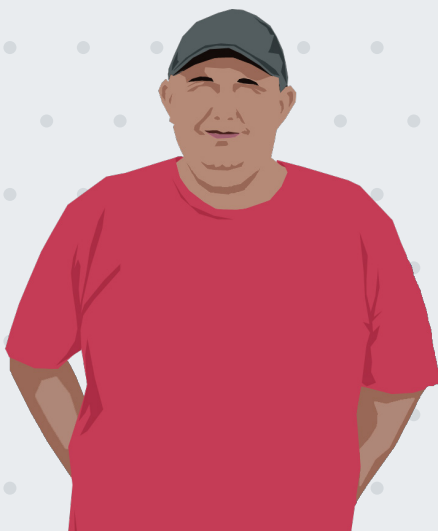
Probably one of the best deliveries I've ever had the pleasure of attending.

”

“

I have a lot more compassion and understanding, it has inspired thoughts about a possible career change to working closer with the justice system.

”



Developing educational resources

We developed **7** x educational resources to inform parties like community workers and government decision makers.

Examples

Resources we developed included:

Practitioner Fact Sheet: Children and young people in conflict with the law.

Practitioner Fact Sheet: Housing and Homelessness.

Practitioner Fact Sheet: Families and Imprisonment.

An updated version of CRC's Language Guide. The guide promotes respectful language for people involved with the prison system.

'Outcomes of a community sector model of reintegration for people with complex needs: a mixed-methods study', a peer reviewed publication in the journal *Health Justice*, Vol.13, article no. 49 (2025) by Ruth McCausland, Rebecca Reeve, Mindy Sotiri, Lucy Phelan, Vendula Belackova and Sophie Russell.

'Evaluation of the Reintegration Housing Support Program'. This resource is an evaluation of CRC's Reintegration Housing Support program and can be used by NGOs to advocate to decision makers for housing first approaches and sustainable funding for non-government, specialist homelessness services.

An internal literature review on best practice approaches to supporting behaviour change for men who exhibit violence.

Impact

- Developed community sector workers' understanding and competence in supporting communities who have experienced incarceration.
- Contributed to an evidence base demonstrating the need for non-government reintegration services and housing first approaches.

Conference and webinar presentations

We gave **4** x conference and webinar presentations.

Example

We presented at the Reintegration Puzzle Conference in June 2025 in Mparntwe/Alice Springs on the power of community sector-led research and advocacy.

Impact

- We developed the advocacy and research capacities of community sector organisations.

Joint campaigns

ARPU made **8** x contributions to, and endorsements of, campaigns.

Example

We supported the Freedom on the Line campaign by Yung Prodigy to make phone calls free to designated numbers in NSW prisons.

Impact

- Yung Prodigy reports: 'the Minister and Commissioner for Corrective Services announced a reduction in prison phone call costs, signaling recognition of the issue and the power of our collective advocacy' ¹.

1 Yung Prodigy. (2025). Yung Prodigy Impact Report. <https://yungprodigy.org/reports>, p.4

Research work



We engaged in or supported **15** x research projects.

Example

We performed a mixed - methods evaluation of the Reintegration Housing Support Program (RHSP), a CRC project. RHSP aims to connect people who are leaving custody and are at risk of homelessness to suitable accommodation, as well as wrap around psychosocial support.

The evaluation found that RHSP is highly effective in achieving housing and well-being outcomes for people exiting prison who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness.

Impact

- We demonstrated the efficacy of, and the need for ongoing government funding for, specialist, non-government diversionary programs for people impacted by homelessness and incarceration. For instance, the evaluation showed the program was effective in securing long-term housing for people leaving prison and supporting them in not returning to prison.

Specifically, the report showed:

- A net benefit of **\$43,162** per individual when accessing the CRC service, compared to homelessness services.
- A saving of **\$6,424** per individual when accessing the CRC service compared to private rental assistance.
- **46%** of people were able to secure long term housing and of those only **2%** returned to prison.



Addressing the on-the-ground advocacy concerns of staff and people we support

We actioned **34** x advocacy concerns from service delivery.

Example

We undertook research on advocacy concerns of significance to CRC workers and people CRC supports with respect to the prison system. We thematically analysed and reported on this data in an internal report.

One reported concern was discrimination faced by people we support based on their criminal record when seeking work. We actioned this issue by advocating for 'irrelevant criminal record' to be added as a protected attribute to the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1977* (NSW). We did this via a submission and at an in-person consultation session about the review of the Act by the Australian Law Reform Commission.

Impact

- We raised awareness about the effects of irrelevant criminal record discrimination amongst those working in law reform.
- We demonstrated the popular interest in legislating irrelevant criminal record protection in anti-discrimination legislation, by standing alongside a slew of other organisations advocating for this change.



Where can you learn more about CRC's advocacy work?

Check out our website to read our publicly available work from 2025, including submissions, research outputs, fact sheets and more: <https://www.crcnsw.org.au/advocacyresearch/advocacy-research-policy-unit/>

You can also follow us on social media!



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