

## **ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES INVITE GOVERNMENT TO CO-DESIGN “REINVESTMENT” TO REDUCE INTERACTIONS WITH CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND OVER IMPRISONMENT**

Monday, 31 October 2022: Today Just Reinvest NSW (JRNSW) said that for the first time in Australia justice reinvestment (JR) will be defined and implemented. A new report by JRNSW, ***Redefining Reinvestment – An Opportunity for Aboriginal communities and government to co-design justice reinvestment in NSW*** outlines how Aboriginal communities are reaching out to the NSW Government to co-design “reinvestment” and to take the next steps to implement a justice reinvestment mechanism.

“The report represents an exciting opportunity because this is the first-time justice reinvestment is going to be defined, which enables it to be done, in NSW. This will bring about real change in Aboriginal communities already exploring JR strategies and could be used in other communities across Australia who put up their hand to develop their own JR plans,” said Mr. Geoffrey Winters, CEO of JRNSW.

This new Report comes on the back of the Albanese Government’s announced \$81.5 million dollars for justice reinvestment initiatives in the budget, and six months after the NSW Attorney General pledged \$9.8 million for new justice reinvestment pilots. Despite these welcomed financial commitments, there is no agreed understanding of what ‘reinvestment’ means in this context or how it can be done.

The Report reconfirms how the criminal justice system fail Aboriginal communities, with the average daily number of Aboriginal adult prisoners in NSW increasing by 36.4% over the last decade. At the same time, NSW prison expenditure increased by 31.9%.

As one community member from Moree quoted in the report said: “They just come out of [prison] worse off. It’s like setting them up for failure... Like it doesn’t fix it at all. Do you know anyone that’s gone to jail and come out and been good, like better?”

Over a decade ago the Aboriginal community of Bourke was the first to develop a justice reinvestment strategy in Australia. In Bourke, ‘Maranguka’ meaning ‘caring for others’ in Ngemba language, remains Australia’s pioneering Aboriginal-led place-based model of justice reinvestment.

“Maranguka continues to pioneer justice reinvestment in Australia by asking the NSW Government to co-design a financial mechanism that will shift resources away from systems that harm into the hands of the community - driven by data - in areas such as education, health, care and child protection. This is the first time ‘reinvestment’ could be implemented in Australia,” said Mr. Winters.

Next week community representatives from Bourke, Moree and Mt Druitt are coming together in Sydney to discuss their perspectives on ‘reinvestment’ with senior NSW and Australian Government bureaucrats in light of the Report.

“In this Report, and at the Reinvestment Forum, Aboriginal communities are committing to a process of co-design to find an answer to the question: how can we do ‘reinvestment’? This is an invitation to government to partner with the communities already exploring justice reinvestment as a solution to the over incarceration of Aboriginal people in NSW,” said Mr. Winters.

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The report can be downloaded [here](#)

Just Reinvest NSW supports Aboriginal communities to explore and establish justice reinvestment initiatives and advocates for systemic changes that build safer and stronger communities. Our goal is to reduce Aboriginal incarceration in NSW. We work alongside Aboriginal communities to support place-based, community-led and data driven approaches to inform local solutions, such as devising local ‘justice circuit-breakers’.