



Australian Association
for Restorative Justice

Mailouts to AARJ members through 2023

From 2014 through 2018, the Committee of the *Victorian* Association for Restorative Justice distributed several *newsletters* annually to Association members.

In 2020, following the formation of the *Australian* Association for Restorative Justice (AARJ), the Committee distributed an annual *Review of Current Practice* to Association members.

Association members requested more regular mailouts, providing information on relevant:

- *Job vacancies* for restorative practitioners and program managers, and
- *Events* offering awareness-raising and restorative skills development.

Since 2021, regular mailouts from the AARJ Committee have also included longer reflective pieces, with links to relevant resources.

The following reflective pieces were distributed to AARJ members through 2023:

UK Podcasts on RP

13th December 2023



At our recent AGM, some members asked that we provide more links to podcasts on matters restorative – and so we shall! This week, we draw your attention to [3 recent podcasts](#) from the UK Charity [Why me?](#)

[Why Me?](#) describe themselves as delivering and promoting Restorative Justice for people affected by crime and conflict. They deliver [a Restorative Justice service](#) with a team of facilitators, campaign for better implementation of restorative practice within the criminal justice system, and run projects to demonstrate good practice. The three episodes of their [Restorative Talks](#) ask:

- [What is restorative justice?](#)
- [How restorative Justice changed my life?](#)
- [What does the future look like for people affected by crime?](#)

The [second episode](#) provides insights into why many victims of crime feel the need to set relations right. The episode focuses on the experience of someone who survived an attempted murder and chose to meet with the man who stabbed her.

The [first](#) and [third](#) episodes address the broader question of how restorative justice can transform the lives of people affected by crime, and considers even broader issues of governance and politics. The statistic that, in 2023, only 6% of victims are aware of restorative justice programs seems extraordinary - and these podcasts ask '*how to get the message across*', when UK restorative justice programs are currently spread across *42 police services, 152 YJ services, and some custodial facilities.*

A *Victims and Prisoners Bill* is currently progressing through the UK parliament. By creating an obligation on criminal justice system agencies to improve services for people affected by crime, the Bill should support restorative reform. Those of us involved in restorative reform should [watch carefully the progress of the UK Victims and Prisoners Bill.](#)

Another report on youth justice in Queensland: The continuing need for regional service reform

12th December 2023



Australian Association
for Restorative Justice

Luke Twyford is Chief Executive and Principal Commissioner of the **Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC)**. He wrote recently:

'In all my conversations with Parliamentarians, judicial members, department representatives, frontline workers, children and families, I haven't met anyone who thinks that detaining children in watch houses is effective or appropriate; yet despite this overwhelming consensus, [Queensland is] still detaining children at higher rates than anywhere across the country.'

And furthermore: *'First Nations children are [more than 20] times more likely to be held in youth detention than are non-Indigenous children, meaning Queensland's increasing use of watch houses is grossly and disproportionately affecting First Nations children.'*

Early this year, Luke Twyford called a review into Queensland's increasing use of watch houses to detain children. That report has now been published:

[**Who's responsible: Understanding why young people are being held longer in Queensland watch houses**](#)

Its core finding is the same as countless other reports into youth justice systems:

failures of governance compound social problems.

Most young people placed in Queensland watchhouse have families that are struggling to support them and/or don't have safe accommodation, yet:

the separation of responsibilities across government agencies and oversight bodies means no one is directly responsible or accountable for the time a child spends in a watch house nor the impact this has on their wellbeing.

The report suggests that key drivers of the increasing use of watch houses to detain children are a lack of bail options, the inefficiency of courts, the impact of bail reform, the ineffectiveness of current detention regimes in reducing reoffending, and a lack of transparency and accountability for the wellbeing of children. To address these drivers, the report recommends improving cross-agency collaboration, more transparent record-keeping and public reporting, and reducing unsentenced detention.

Cross agency collaboration is easy to say, hard to do - but the basic principles are clear enough. Cross agency collaboration requires **coordination** to ensure that agencies don't work at cross-purposes, and **capacity-building**, so that frontline service providers gain the skills to support effective collective decision-making. So, effective **regional service reform** requires a designated **coordinator**, and one or more **principal practitioners**, who can provide clinical supervision for colleagues as they learn restorative practices on-the-job.

Our Association is supporting and expanding the [communities of restorative practice](#) that make possible these long-term improvements in practice.

The AIC report on ACT RJ Phase 3: Findings and recommendations

7th November 2023



Further to yesterday's report on reform in the ACT, the Institute of Criminology Report is now publicly available:

[*Restorative justice conferencing for domestic and family violence and sexual violence: Evaluation of Phase Three of the ACT Restorative Justice Scheme*](#)

Some of the report's **key findings** relate to the **effectiveness of the program and process**:

- 1: There was **broad overall support** for the use of RJ as an alternative justice pathway for DFV and sexual violence matters, and an identified need for this program
- 2: There were **high levels of satisfaction** with Phase Three processes among participating persons harmed and persons responsible
- 5: Phase Three was **able to meet many of the justice-interests** identified by persons harmed
- 6: There was little evidence that persons harmed were pressured or manipulated into participating in the Scheme, or felt unsafe during the process
- 7: Suitability assessment involves **balancing** person responsible **readiness** with **informed decision-making** and the **justice-needs** of the person harmed

Other findings relate to areas for improvement in **administration** and in **understanding**:

- 3: There were significant delays associated with the **allocation of matters** to Convenors
- 4: The **referral** of sexual violence matters was much **lower than anticipated**
- 8: Very **few matters were referred post-sentence**, despite considerable support from stakeholders
- 9: The engagement of persons responsible in **support services** was a key component of Phase Three, but **accessibility** was limited
- 10: A key barrier to the referral of matters was **the perception that RJ was a 'soft' option**

In short, most of these challenges result from a lack of the requisite understanding and/or skills within *other agencies* - so improvements need to involve the whole justice system.

The Report's **recommendations** relate to these **areas for systemic improvement**:

- 1: The RJU should take steps to **increase their capacity** and shorten the wait-times to access the service
- 2: Stakeholders should be provided **ongoing training** in the delivery and operation of Phase Three
- 3: Perceptions that RJ is 'soft justice' should be challenged and addressed among referring entities
- 4: The development of **referral guidelines** and **eligibility criteria** beyond offence type and stage of CJS should be considered
- 5: Clearer **guidelines and training** should be developed to improve understanding about the relationship between RJ and sentencing
- 6: The RJU should work with relevant criminal justice agencies to increase post-sentence referrals to Phase Three
- 7: Investigate options to work with communities to encourage buy-in to Phase Three from **First Nations and other culturally diverse participants**
- 8: The RJU should develop **formal disengagement processes** to support participants during the post-conference period
- 9: RJU staff should be provided clear guidance about **how to work with clients where there is an intervention order**
- 10: The RJU should continue to collect data to facilitate **ongoing evaluation and improvement**

Ultimately, this is a very positive and significant evaluation. It reflects the result of hard work over several decades by many dedicated professionals. A consistent theme is that effective service reform requires a shared *mindset* about the nature of restorative work and a solid, evidence-based *skill set* among service-providing agencies. The work of the ACT RJU and other key agencies is demonstrating a better way to manage some of our most pressing and distressing social challenges.

Raising awareness about incarceration

Seriously Social Podcast

9th October 2023



Our colleagues at the [Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia](#) have brought our attention to the latest edition of [Seriously Social](#), a monthly podcast featuring insights and research from prominent social scientists.

In [Who does Australia lock up?](#), journalist [Ginger Gorman](#) speaks with criminologist [Professor Eileen Baldry](#) and youth justice advocate [Justen Thomas](#) about the damaging impacts of incarcerating young people.

Eileen Baldry suggests a range of policy changes to reduce rates of incarceration for young people and simultaneously provide a better start for young people at risk and for the wider community. There will be few surprises here for members of our Association:

- Raise the age of criminal responsibility to 15
- Ensure that all children have the option and access to early childhood education
- Provide support for parents who are struggling
- Do not treat challenging behaviours in schools as crime
- Police should not be the sole first responders to people with disability

As a criminologist, Eileen Baldry notes:

'We know how to support kids, but just don't do it in highly disadvantaged, poor places, remote places, places where Aboriginal kids are growing up.'

As a journalist, Ginger Gorman notes:

'This message doesn't sell [...] many newspapers or attract [...] many clicks.'

Together, these observations remind us that pursuing reform primarily through *raising awareness* – whether via traditional or social media - may not be the most effective strategy for change.

As we noted last month in response to [calls for reform in Queensland](#), the most direct way to increase the effectiveness of front-line support services is to **increase the effectiveness of frontline support services**.

When reform projects extend restorative facilitation skills to workers in multiple agencies:

- frontline service providers can better **support struggling families**,
- schools can better **manage challenging behaviours**, and
- police can more readily be part of a **public health response**.

Restorative Practice in Queensland

The need for regional service reform

26th September 2023



Readers of *The Guardian Australia* may have seen recent reporting by Ben Smee and Nino Bucci on **youth crime in Queensland**, and the state government's counterproductive policies to address this challenge.

As the *Guardian* reporters note, media coverage of youth crime generally focuses more on the aftermath than on possible causes. On Monday, [Smee and Bucci reported on Operation Uniform Kalahari](#), in which Queensland Police have been investigating allegations of young people in Cairns allegedly being preyed upon by people who were providing them with drugs, sexually abusing them, then actively encouraging them to further offend. In short, the same young people are both alleged offenders and alleged victims.

As one of the officers involved in the investigation reflected: "*I'm not saying it excuses [crime], but it can explain it.*" The investigating police have tried hard to create a sense of safety for alleged victims of grooming and exploitation, but these same young people are still being dealt with under policies expressly designed to imprison more young people.

Many of our Association members are familiar with this phenomenon of **agencies working at cross purposes**. The latest Far North Queensland manifestation involves divisions within the same agency working at cross purposes. The *Guardian* team reflect that '*It is far too early to tell whether our reporting could lead to a more compassionate understanding of the issues driving youth crime.*'

Here, Smee and Bucci seem highly optimistic. Their implied model of change is *awareness-raising*, followed by change within the *political system*. But *institutional inertia* and a *lack of political will* for genuine reform have a system logic: managers working within organisational hierarchies, and politicians working within electoral cycles, judge the short-term costs of improving systems to outweigh longer-term benefits. To change the effectiveness of front-line services: **change frontline services!** When service providers work more effectively with each other, they can also work more effectively with citizens, to set relations right.

Some of our Association members have been working on projects that demonstrate how restorative practice can achieve this sort of regional services reform. As we articulated in our 2021 [Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the Victorian Criminal Justice System](#), when workers from different agencies undertake the same foundational restorative practice skills training, they can then:

- learn-on-the job, with the clinical supervision of a **senior practitioner**, and
- coordinate their work, via a **regional consortium coordinator**.

Our Association will continue to support and expanded the [communities of restorative practice](#) that are helping to make possible these long-term improvements in practice.

Award-winning movie on circle time

Restorative Practice at this year's Italian Film Festival

15th September 2023



Our cinephile members may have noted that the **Italian Film Festival** commences in State and Territory capitals and Byron Bay next Tuesday, September 19th. Among this year's movies is [Il Cerchio](#) (*The Circle*), the second documentary from French-born director Sophie Chiarello. *The Circle* has already been awarded best movie at this year's Trieste Film Festival and best documentary at the Academy of Italian Cinema's David di Donatello Awards.

For five years, Sophie Chiarello followed the pupils of a class at Daniele Manin primary, in Rome's multi-ethnic Esquilino neighbourhood, as they used **circle time** for non-judgmental listening and sharing. The official publicity for *The Circle* describes the movie as '*disarming and genuine: not a documentary about children, but rather a reflection on the formation of our society*'.

(Some of our members may have seen [a counterpart mini-documentary](#), made in the early 2000s, in which our colleagues from Baltimore's Community Conferencing Center use circle time or the '[Daily Rap](#)' in Maryland schools in support of a better society.) Of course, a key restorative practice such as circle time is most effective when the *whole school* is guided by a coherent philosophy of non-judgmental listening and sharing.

ABC Radio National's [Saturday Extra](#) recently talked with Nick Lovering, Principal of **Katherine High School**, who took on the role two years ago, after the former Principal and a third of the school's teaching staff walked out due to safety concerns. A teaching philosophy of relationship-based education has now dramatically changed for the better how Katherine High operates, and the outcomes that students achieve.

Restorative options in cases of sexual assault

The *Age* and *Sydney Morning Herald* report

3rd April 2023



In [last weekend's \(April 1st\) *Good Weekend Magazine*](#), *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Age* journalists **Melissa Fyfe** and **Jacqueline Maley** examine how sexual assault cases are dealt with in Australia's criminal legal systems. Their feature article notes that complaints relating to sexual assault have increased greatly in recent years, but that convictions remain low and that 'the legal process is brutal for complainants.' They note that calls for change are coming from victim-survivor advocates, from legal circles, and recently also from **Katy Gallagher** and **Tanya Plibersek**, two senior ministers in the current federal government.

Fyfe and Maley note systemic challenges, including the high standard of proof, the accused's right to silence, the lack of appropriate direction to a jury, and jury bias. They also note a related factor: the reluctance of jurors to convict because they worry that the label rapist will damage a person's future, without necessarily providing healing for the victim.

Fyfe and Maley cite [Patrick Tidmarsh](#), an Australian criminologist now working in the UK with [Operation Soteria Bluestone](#): "*If any business had the success rates of the adversarial system of justice for sexual crimes, it would no longer exist.*" They also cite Harvard Medical School professor of psychiatry **Judith Herman**: "*The legal system is designed to protect men from the superior power of the state but not to protect women or children from the superior power of men.*" However, the article does not cite Professor Herman's more recent conclusion, in [Truth and Repair](#) (2023): justice systems must incorporate elements of restorative justice.

The *Good Weekend* article focuses on recommendations by legal practitioners for reforming the legal system. Legal remedies are important, but do not necessarily address the various needs of victims.

Federal court judge **Tony North** chairs the **Victorian Law Reform Commission** (VLRC), which has made 78 recommendations to the Andrews government relating to how the legal system manages complaints of sexual assault. (13 of these recommendations have already been implemented.) The VLRC recommends: more

education for police, lawyers, and judges; funding complainants to take an alleged rapist to court in the civil jurisdiction, with its lower standard of proof; providing victims with personal advocates to help them navigate the system. **Victorian Victims of Crime Commissioner Fiona McCormack** advocates that state-funded lawyers should be available to represent victims at trial, so that they are “equal to, but not in opposition with, the accused,”

In a submission to the VLRC, **Victoria’s Office of Public Prosecutions** raises concerns about the “low bar for the communication of consent,” which renders it “very difficult” to prosecute many cases. The head of the **NSW Police sex crimes unit** suggests a new “negligent sexual assault” offence, to be dealt with by lower courts, which might encourage more offenders to plead guilty. Other suggested system reforms include: abolishing committal hearings; judge-only trials; screening jurors for their belief in rape myths.

The *Good Weekend* article highlights the individual case of Holly, a Monash University Law Student, assaulted by a former fellow student from secondary school during her first year of university. Holly’s mother persuaded her to take the case to Victoria Police’s specialist **Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team (SOCIT)**, after which Holly dropped the complaint, thinking that the young man who had assaulted her ‘would take the situation seriously’. When she heard the following year, through friends, that he was denying responsibility, she reopened the case. The **Director of Public Prosecutions** decided to take the case to court, where it was prosecuted unsuccessfully. Five years on, Holly is asking: “*What on earth was the point of all that? I literally put myself through hell for years for nothing, essentially.*”

Towards the end of their article, Fyfe and Maley note that Holly believes restorative justice is worth pursuing. Indeed, they write that this idea *enjoys widespread support across Australia: from police, prosecutors, courts, victim advocates, criminal barristers and the VLRC*. They describe restorative justice as *a healing process that brings the victim and offender together in a facilitated environment, often after receiving counselling and support from trained professionals*. This is essentially correct, but misses several key points about restorative processes: they involve not only of professionals, but also communities of care; each process is tailored to accommodate participants’ needs; there is a choice of different meeting formats, and so on.

The article describes the case of someone with the pseudonym Lou, who has become passionate about restorative justice after an unfacilitated meeting with an acquaintance. In the absence of suitable formal options, Lou took matters into her own hands, and arranged the meeting herself – and fortunately, their conversation went well. However, these brief case studies can wrongly imply that the key is simply to meet and chat.

Unfacilitated encounters that occur with little preparation, and outside the context of any program, run the risk of harm, and of missed opportunities for healing. South African journalist **Liz McGregor** provides an example in her 2022 book [Unforgiven: Face to Face with My Father's Killer](#), which centres on a deeply dispiriting encounter with the man who murdered her father:

'In my blind rush to confront, I had ignored reality. [...] Despite all the grand words in the [South African] constitution and in the legislation, the lofty ideals of restorative justice that theoretically underpin our system are just that – ideals. [To make it work will require] efficient, ethical governance.'

An efficient and ethical restorative program *can* minimise the risk of doing further harm, and *can* maximise the likelihood that participants manage to work together to set relations right - whatever that might involve in their case.

The *Good Weekend* article concludes by noting that the ACT now [provides restorative justice for adult sex offences as part of the formal legal system](#). However, the article doesn't engage with administrators or facilitators from **the ACT RJ Unit**, nor with participants - who could have helped to explain *how* restorative options for victims of sexual abuse actually provide healing.

The ACT is still the only Australian jurisdiction that provides restorative justice in cases of sexual assault, although it appears that Queensland may soon also offer this option. It is already available in New Zealand, the UK, and parts of Europe. Unfortunately, as we recently noted, knowing *about* is running well ahead of knowing *how* to.

More than ever, we need effective [communities of practice](#), which can support *facilitators* to develop the necessary skills to facilitate in diverse and complex cases - and can increase the requisite knowledge of *policy-makers, program administrators, researchers / evaluators*, and perhaps also of *journalists* interested to report in detail on these important developments in our field.

More restorative cinema: A new French film release

30th March 2023



French director [Jeanne Herry](#), who previously directed [Pupille](#) (2018), on the subject of adoption, has now produced [Je verrai toujours vos visages](#), a movie on restorative justice.

Je verrai toujours vos visages joins a growing list of European movies on this topic. It was officially released in French cinemas yesterday (March 29th), and seems initially to have been very well-received. The title translates literally as *I will always see your faces*, but the movie is apparently to be distributed to English-speaking audiences as ***All your faces***.

[Restorative justice has been legislated in France since 2014](#). That legislation emphasises the rights of victims of crime. In an [interview with AlloCiné](#), Jeanne Herry explains that she encountered the idea of restorative justice in a podcast on *France culture* - which has now completed the circle with a very [positive report on her movie](#), and the restorative practices it promotes. Herry's cinematic representation shows different types of meeting convened post-sentencing:

- a group of people-harmed meeting with a group of people-who-have-caused-harm, but in different cases, and also
- meetings between people directly involved in the same case.

Movies like *Je verrai toujours vos visages* can increase awareness, and public support for restorative practices. They also increase our sense of urgency to bridge the gap between **knowing about** restorative practices, and **knowing how to** facilitate restorative processes.

For the sake of participants in each case, and the movement as a whole, facilitators need a mindset and skillset that can ensure we *do no further harm* and *work with people to set relations right*. The facilitators and volunteers in *Je verrai toujours vos visages* explain:

'We don't suggest anything, we don't speak on their behalf, we listen. We leave room for thought. No judgements, no diagnoses.'

Unfortunately, there also seems to be not much agreed underlying theory, beyond '*people release emotions when they talk*'. Psychologically and socially complex cases, in particular, require a clear **process structure**, and facilitators with **specific skills** to *invite* people to participate and *prepare* them to participate *effectively*, and to *question* for story and support participants to *negotiate* strategically within the group meeting.

Our Association's [communities of practice](#) are helping to ensure that experienced facilitators *do* have the requisite mindset and corresponding skillset to support participants in these complex cases to *set relations right*. But *as* awareness of the power of restorative practices grows, so does the urgency of bridging the gap between knowing *about* and knowing *how to*!

More lessons on Visible Learning

Schools as effective learning communities

29th March 2023



For the professional educators among our members – and the rest of us, since we are all interested in learning about learning:

In an article in [The Conversation](#) this week, Professor **John Hattie** from Melbourne University discusses his just-published [Visible Learning: The Sequel](#). As the title suggests, this is a sequel to Hattie's 2008 book, [Visible Learning](#), which sought to explain the factors that most help students to learn.

The original Visible Learning was based on 800 meta-analyses. There have since been more than 1,300 additional meta-analyses. Perhaps not surprisingly, they confirm that the strongest in-school effect on student learning is high-impact teaching. Hattie emphasises the fundamental importance of how teachers think about what they do, starting with having high expectations for all students:

“Every child is a learner, is teachable, can grow, and can be taught to love learning. Students have expectations, and the educator’s role is to help students exceed what they think is their potential. Students need to be taught to take on challenges, with safety nets when they fail.”

That *mindset* then requires a complementary *skillset*. As Hattie notes, much discussion in the public domain [focuses on school failures](#), when the more useful focus would be how to scale-up success.

Systems for increasing collective teacher efficacy are a key for success within schools, supporting teachers to focus on the impacts of their teaching, and to work with colleagues to improve practice, and make classrooms and the school inviting and psychologically safe places for learning.

With the support of more than 2000 meta-analyses, we can say with confidence that students’ achievement levels are affected negatively by:

- boredom;

- [over-reliance on their teacher](#); &
- corporal punishment.

Conversely, student's achievement levels are affected positively by:

- “phonological awareness”: foundational reading teaching that helps students to *recognise and manipulate parts of words and sentences*;

For anyone who missed the ideological struggles over methods for teaching reading, this podcast provides an excellent overview:

[Sold a Story: How Teaching Kids to Read Went So Wrong.](#)

- students being taught *how to rehearse and memorise content*;
- “[cognitive task analysis](#)”: teaching students how to think about *how to problem solve*;
- the “[jigsaw method](#)”: involving both *individual and group learning* to solve a problem.
- teachers *outlining and summarising learning materials*;
- “[flipped learning](#)”: providing [students the content to learn before they come to class](#);
- computer tutoring that provides immediate feedback, particularly when using artificial intelligence.

However, the overall effects of technology on learning *per se* remain low, where technology is used as a substitute for *papier mâché*, pens, and work sheets. Technology is most useful when used to support students to *learn from each other*, and in providing *multiple opportunities to learn*. Social media can help teachers to *hear what students are thinking*, but might not articulate directly to teachers or peers.

Parents are “first learners” - and the home needs to promote a “language and love of learning”. Parents should enjoy the struggle, failures and successes of learning together, and should set fair boundaries for increasing challenges and learning safely.

A consistent theme running through all of this literature is the vital connection between learning and positive, supportive *relationships*. [Restorative practices in schools](#) provide both a mindset and skillset for *establishing, maintaining, deepening*, and, where necessary, *resetting relations* – and so helping schools to function as effective learning communities.

How to fix a justice system that punishes disadvantage

A paper on Victorian criminal justice from the Justice Reform Initiative

22nd March 2023



[The Age today reports](#) on the release of a paper from our colleagues at the [Justice Reform Initiative \(JRI\)](#):

STATE OF INCARCERATION: INSIGHTS INTO IMPRISONMENT IN VICTORIA.

[The Age article](#) is entitled "**how to fix a justice system that punishes disadvantage.**" As we have noted in recent years, the increase in the number of adults in prison in Victoria actually reached a peak of just over 8000 in 2018, largely due to the increased use of remand. The number of people in Victorian prisons is now back to 2017 levels of less than 6 800, and apparently still falling. The report authors note:

*There are multiple promising community-led programs in Victoria that are already doing remarkable work in breaking cycles of disadvantage for justice system impacted individuals. [...] There is clear evidence about the effectiveness of **specialist courts** in diverting people from the justice system, the effectiveness of **pre-charge and other kinds of diversion**, the effectiveness of shifting legislative frameworks in reducing re-offending, specific diversionary programs, including diversionary programs for at-risk children and **restorative and transformative justice.***

*While Victoria is at the forefront of some positive trends within the Australian justice landscape, it still falls behind comparable international jurisdictions in terms of evidence-based criminal justice policy. [...] This is the time for the Victorian Government to invest in programs that provide opportunities for people who are trapped in the cycle of incarceration to rebuild their lives in the community. We need to embrace a criminal justice model that genuinely relegates prisons to a position of last resort, and instead centres **community-led interventions** that really work to break cycles of disadvantage, reduce reoffending, and build safer communities. [...]*

This is a summary of **what** needs to be done. Then there is the question of **how**. 'Community-led' can be an empty phrase without **programs** that provide **processes** consistent with this principle. Our Association is committed to establishing vibrant [communities of practice](#), to ensure that *program administrators* and *process facilitators* have the requisite skills to support effective sense-making and decision-making at all stages of the justice system, and in restorative practices in schools and many other communities. We anticipate that future JRI papers and AGE coverage can then report on how these demonstration projects provide *interventions that really work and provide opportunities for people trapped in the cycle of incarceration to rebuild their lives in community*.

Thanks again to all of our members for your continuing support of restorative practices. Collectively, we *are* making a positive difference!

Truth and Repair: A sequel to Trauma and Recovery

17th March 2023



Many members of our Association will be familiar with psychiatrist **Judith Herman**'s 1992 [*Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence — From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*](#), now widely considered a classic text. Herman is a professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, and founder of the Victims of Violence program at Cambridge Hospital.

Judith Herman noted in *Trauma and Recovery* that the trauma responses of soldiers to war, and of women and children to domestic terror, were fundamentally the same. She proposed the now widely-accepted diagnosis of “complex post-traumatic stress disorder” (CPTSD), and identified a pattern of three stages underlying recovery:

- SAFETY and agency;
- STORY - reviewing events, grieving, and making meaning;
- SOCIAL reconnection with community.

Now, in [*Truth and Repair: How Trauma Survivors Envision Justice*](#) (2023), Herman introduces “JUSTICE”, involving truth and repair, as a fourth stage of recovery, and she argues for justice systems that incorporate elements of restorative justice.

Herman emphasises that healing is more than a “private, individual matter”. Victim-survivors often feel unsupported by their communities, and seek a justice system that does not motivate the accused to “deny, deny, deny” and attack the reputation of complainants. Her extensive interviews with victim-survivors of traumatic violence reveal a consistent quest for acknowledgment, apology, and amends. However, the ways in which justice is currently delivered continue to reflect broader social relationships of dominance and subordination:

- *“Even the most innovative models for repairing the harm of sex crimes and rehabilitating offenders are much in need of further development.”*

Crime & Restorative Justice Part 2

Hints of evidence-based policy

24th February 2023



Earlier this week, we noted the [current bipartisan commitment to retrograde criminal justice policy in Queensland](#). In Victoria, meanwhile, we have noted the steadily rising rate of incarceration and near-doubling in the number of Aboriginal inmates through the past decade. The state Labor Government's current infrastructure spend includes well over \$1 billion to upgrade and expand five existing prisons, and build the new Cherry Creek youth justice centre. Now we note some encouraging steps in Victoria towards bi-partisan evidence-based criminal justice policy.

Premier Daniel Andrews has indicated that criminal justice reform will be a key focus during his Labor government's third term. The new state Liberal leader John Pesutto has appointed Brad Battin as opposition criminal justice reform spokesperson. As [Benita Kolovos reports in today's Guardian](#), Brad Battin has worked in prisons and in policing, and agrees that community safety *can* be prioritised while more effective options than jail are implemented. Our [Justice Reform Initiative](#) colleague Mindy Sotiri has welcomed Brad Battin's measured comments.

We are now confident that more recommendations from our Association's [2021 Submission to the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry](#) into the criminal justice system will be implemented.