



The evidence shows that “tough on crime” talk is actually weak, ineffective and financially unsustainable. Justice reinvestment is a smarter approach to criminal justice: reducing crime by re-directing money away from new prisons and into stronger communities.

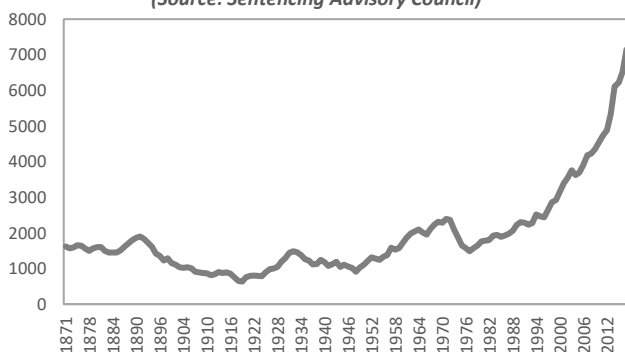
## THE COST OF THE LOCK-UP CULTURE

We will always need prisons, as well as sensible bail and parole rules to protect the community from serious and dangerous offenders. However, prison is by far the most expensive type of sentence, so when it doesn't keep us safer, it offers a bad deal for Victorians.

The number of people in prison in Victoria has nearly tripled since 1990, and yet people don't feel any safer.<sup>i</sup>

Prison Population of Victoria, 1871 to 2017

(Source: Sentencing Advisory Council)



It costs \$127,100 to house a single prisoner each year, and over one billion dollars in total. Victoria's contracts with two private prisons alone will cost taxpayers \$4.5 billion.<sup>ii</sup>

But the real price of higher rates of incarceration is not just the cost to taxpayers of building and operating more prisons, but the long-term way that imprisonment entrenches a criminal lifestyle on a prisoner, their family and their community.

Corrections data shows that nearly 44 per cent of Victoria's prisoners will return to prison within two years of their release, so at best imprisonment offers only temporary solution to crime.<sup>iii</sup>

Prisons don't break the cycle of crime because they do not address the underlying causes of criminal behaviour, have little deterrent effect, and help to facilitate lifelong re-offending.

Many women prisoners have themselves been victims of crime, and the children of prisoners are six times more likely to be imprisoned than their peers.<sup>iv</sup>

Prisons should not be storing houses for people with mental health issues, trauma or other vulnerabilities. There are less costly and far more effective ways of rehabilitating these people.

## OUR PLAN

### The Greens' will:

- **Stop building new prisons and redirect the funding towards establishing an Independent Centre for Justice Reinvestment and \$80 million in crime prevention programs.**
- **Build two new drugs courts in regional Victoria to target substance abuse and related crime.**
- **Expand specialist court services to people on bail, including the Courts Integrated Services Program (CISP), cultural, addiction, and mental health services.**
- **Introduce Justice Impact Tests so that government has to consider the effects of new laws on the entire justice system.**



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## A SMARTER APPROACH

The data shows we must find ways to reverse the escalating social and economic costs of imprisonment.

*Justice Reinvestment* is a smarter, more cost-effective approach to criminal justice which has been successful internationally and will pave the way for safer, stronger Victorian communities.

Research shows that a large number of offenders come from, and return to, a small number of disadvantaged neighbourhoods – 50 per cent of prisoners come from just six per cent of low-income Victorian postcodes. People who are unemployed, did not complete school, have alcohol or drug dependencies, have a disability or mental illness, or have suffered abuse, are also all vastly over-represented in prison statistics.<sup>v</sup>

Justice reinvestment invests in carefully developed programs and services in these communities, preventing crime from occurring or reoccurring at a lower social and economic cost to reactionary, punitive policies.

Justice reinvestment reflects the logic that prevention is better than cure. More effective crime prevention means fewer people inside or returning to costly prisons, with the money saved re-directed towards ongoing investment in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, preventing crime over time.

Less crime means less people in prison, fewer victims and safer communities.

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## AN INDEPENDENT CENTRE FOR JUSTICE REINVESTMENT

Independent advisory bodies have been critical to the success of justice reinvestment overseas, shifting the focus away from politically motivated decisions towards what actually works.

Justice reinvestment needs scrupulous data collection, analysis, consultation and evaluation to identify at risk communities and evaluate programs. An *Independent Centre for Justice Reinvestment* will provide this quality information and research.

We will also introduce *Justice Impact Tests* to ensure government must consider the full effects of new laws on the justice system.

The Greens' smarter proposals will end the short-term, politicised thinking on justice, and direct resources to where they will be most effective.

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## THE JUSTICE REINVESTMENT GRANT PROGRAM

It is more effective to spend money addressing the causes of crime than on prisons.

This is why we're proposing a Justice Reinvestment Grant Program worth \$80 million over four years to support communities, organisations and representative bodies initiate local justice reinvestment programs across Victoria.

Grants will fund locally-owned initiatives such as family support, early childhood intervention, housing and employment support, and drug and alcohol services.

Patterns of criminal behaviour are entrenched in communities over decades, not an election cycle. The grant program will ensure that programs are tailored to the specific needs of each community to deliver long-term benefits.

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## SUPPORTING PROGRAMS THAT WORK

Overseas experience shows justice reinvestment reduces crime at a significantly lower cost to imprisonment.

In the eight US states where justice reinvestment policies have been in place for more than a year, reduced prison populations are expected to result in total projected savings of around \$4.6 billion.<sup>vi</sup>

Justice reinvestment has seen Kansas reduce its prison population by 7.5 per cent and Texas reduce growth in its prison population by around 9,000 people.<sup>vii viii</sup> At the same time violent crime rates dropped by 13 per cent and 4 per cent in Kansas and Texas respectively.<sup>ix</sup>

The limited justice reinvestment programs currently operating in Victoria are also proving effective.

Victoria's two drug courts sentence and supervise the treatment of offenders with a drug and alcohol dependency, improving community safety by focusing on the rehabilitation of offenders and their reintegration into the community.



The CISP program provides bail support to accused with physical or mental disabilities, drug or alcohol dependency or inadequate social, family or economic support.

Independent analysis of the Drugs Court and CISP initiatives show they deliver significant benefits to Victoria over traditional methods – the Dandenong Drug Court reduced imprisonment by 4,492 days over two years by lowering reoffending, saving around \$1.2 million, while for every \$1 invested in CISP, the economic benefit to the community is \$2.60.<sup>x xi</sup>

The Green's smarter approach to criminal justice means investing more in the programs proven to lower crime and reoffending.

Victoria's crime prevention strategy and ensure that prevention initiatives are targeted and effective.

- \$80 million over four-years to fund new whole of government initiatives to fund programs to address the underlying causes of crime in disadvantaged suburbs.
- \$78 million for the creation of two new drugs courts in Melbourne's West and regional Victoria, where the ice problem is most prevalent.
- Up to \$15 Million over four years to expand the Courts Integrated Services Program (CISP) to provide adequate services, such as addiction and mental health services, to people released on bail.

## COST

The Greens will invest the following to build communities not prisons:

- \$25 million over four years to establish and run a Crime Prevention Agency to coordinate

<sup>i</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2017) *Prisoners in Australia*, Cat. No. 4517.0

<sup>ii</sup> Auditor General (2018) *Safety and cost effectiveness of private prisons*

<sup>iii</sup> Victorian Budget 18/19: Service Delivery

<sup>iv</sup> Victorian Ombudsman (2015) *Investigation into the rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners in Victoria*.

<sup>v</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>vi</sup> Federation of Community Legal Centres Victoria (FCLC) *Smart Justice Factsheet Justice Reinvestment: investing in communities not prisons*, accessed on 2 September 2018. [http://www.smartjustice.org.au/resources/SJ\\_JusticeReinvest.pdf](http://www.smartjustice.org.au/resources/SJ_JusticeReinvest.pdf)

<sup>vii</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>viii</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, The Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee (2013) *Value of a justice reinvestment approach to criminal justice in Australia*, June 2013.

[https://www.aph.gov.au/parliamentary\\_business/committees/senate/legal\\_and\\_constitutional\\_affairs/completed\\_inquiries/2010-13/justicereinvestment/report/index](https://www.aph.gov.au/parliamentary_business/committees/senate/legal_and_constitutional_affairs/completed_inquiries/2010-13/justicereinvestment/report/index)

<sup>ix</sup> FCLC (2018)

<sup>x</sup> KPMG (2014) *Evaluation of the Drug Court of Victoria* <https://www.magistratescourt.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/141218%20Evaluation%20of%20the%20Drug%20Court%20of%20Victoria.pdf>

<sup>xi</sup> Coghlan P (2014) *Bail Review Second Advice to the Victorian Government* <https://s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/hdp.au.prod.app.vic-engage.files/4414/9419/8013/Coghlan-report-2.pdf>