



A CAUTIOUS APPROACH TO JUSTICE REINVESTMENT

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1. What is Justice Reinvestment?

2. Reasons for caution:

- a. Lack of theoretical or normative framework
- b. Limitations in the US experience

3. Lessons for the Australian context



Justice Reinvestment in 4 Steps

1. Analyse data to map neighborhoods that are home to large numbers of people under criminal justice supervision; collect information about the needs in those communities for addressing underlying issues causing offending;
2. Develop policies to reduce spending on corrections and to reinvest those funds into the focus communities;
3. Implement the new policies;
4. Evaluate them.



What is JR really?

Towards a theoretical underpinning

SOCIAL DISORGANISATION THEORY

- High incarceration rates (and concentrated re-entry cycling between prison and community) contribute to the destabilisation of poor neighbourhoods and lead to increased crime.
- The effects on the individual prisoner/ex-prisoner are ecologically important - prison touches almost everyone in the neighbourhood.
- high rates of concentrated incarceration impacts on communities as a whole and effects human and social capital, families, community infrastructure, economic life and public safety.

(Clear 2007)



What needs to be done?

To address the problem of crime and the individual and community problems generated by mass imprisonment community justice must be a starting point: community well-being must be a central objective of our penal system.

1. Focus on high incarceration places
2. Attention to norms and values
3. Improve schools, jobs and housing

Justice reinvestment is the way to fund community justice initiatives and to repair to the damage caused by mass imprisonment

Limitations of justice reinvestment in the USA



Reasons that JR has not achieved the dual objectives of sustained reductions in prison populations and stronger safer communities (Austin et al (2013)).

1. Savings generated in the corrections budget have not gone to high incarceration communities, but rather gone back into general revenue or have gone to community corrections or law enforcement.
2. local advocates and reformers have often been marginalized from the JR process – yet local organised support for community initiatives is a core part of the justice reinvestment concept.



Lessons for the Australian context (Aboriginal Specific)

We should guard against unrealistic expectations of justice reinvestment as a panacea:

- i. True devolution of authority and 'localisation'
- ii. Place based models
- iii. Creating stigma?



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