

# ELEMENTS OF JUSTICE REINVESTMENT

Justice Reinvestment is **not** a program. Justice reinvestment is a **way of working** that shifts power and decision making to First Nations communities to self-determine the best way to improve justice outcomes in their community.

## FIVE ELEMENTS OF JR - SUMMARY

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-led

JR initiatives must be led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people connected by place. This leadership is fundamental to JR and the process of building community support and buy-in around a JR strategy. It is a key driver of change and progress in JR.

While leadership might involve traditional owners or young people, for e.g., as 'leaders', JR has been described as a 'community movement' and as involving 'collective leadership'. Leadership is evident in JR governance structures. It is also evident in programs that are community-led, in community-designed JR plans or strategies, and in Indigenous data sovereignty and governance principles that guide JR data work.

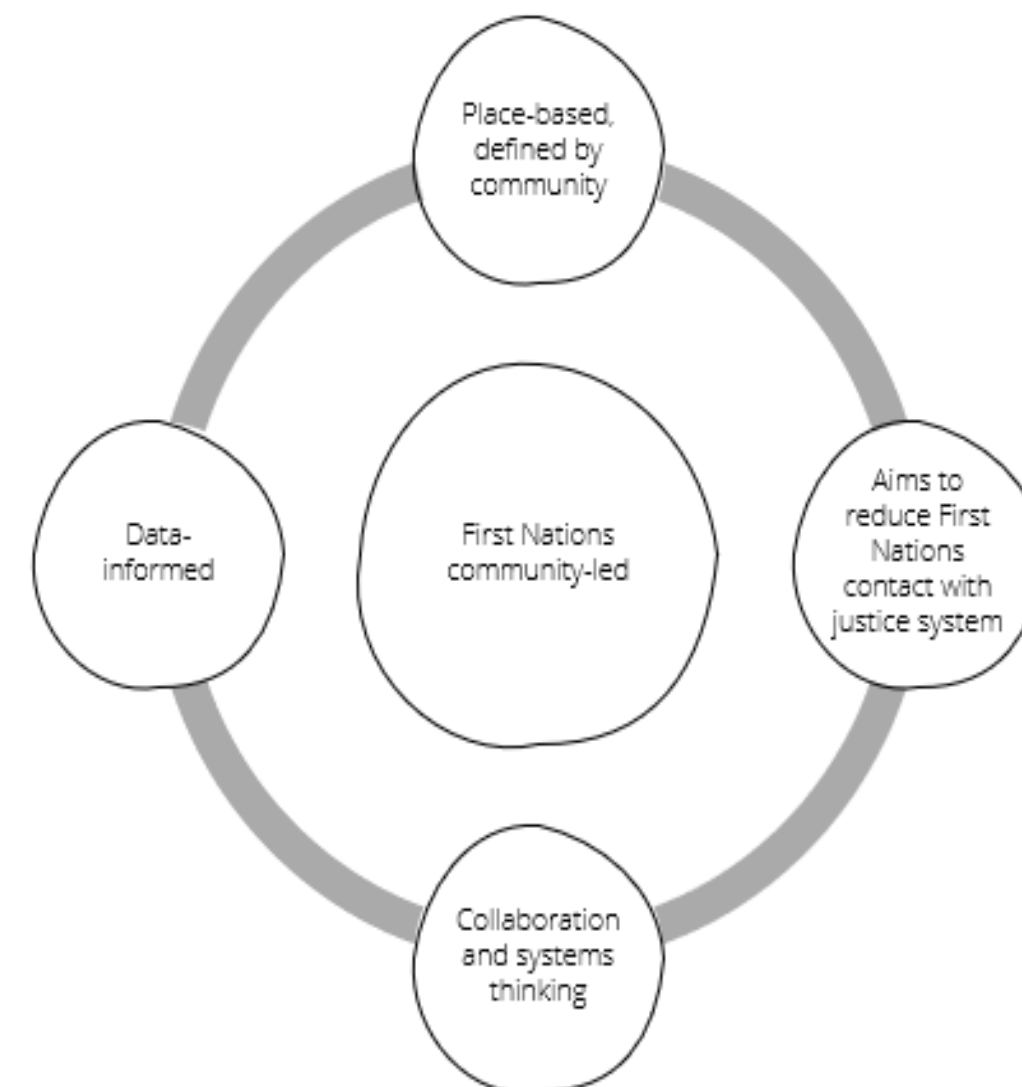
### Place-based, defined by community

JR's place-based approach means both bringing about change in a particular place or community and that First Nations people leading and driving JR are connected to this same place or part of this community. How an initiative describes 'place' and the community seeking change will shape its approach to JR and who will be involved. Place could be defined, for example, as a Local Government Area, suburb in a city or a town. A JR initiative could focus on a region, involving multiple different places and communities, or bring together an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nation/language groups.

### Aims to reduce Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people coming into contact with the justice system

The starting point for exploring and working with JR is generally a deeply-felt concern at a community level about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander criminal justice outcomes and a strong desire to see these outcomes change. JR is a mechanism that centres around achieving this goal, with potential to reduce both first contact with and reentry into the justice system.

Within JR justice outcomes are ultimately a pivot around which a range of other outcomes might be achieved, however. This is because JR aims to improve justice outcomes by addressing underlying drivers of contact with the justice system. This gives JR a broad scope, with improved access to post-release support, health services, education and housing, as well as a strengthening of families, culture and self-determination potential issues that a single JR initiative may focus on.





## Collaboration and systems thinking

Reducing contact with the criminal justice system is very complex work. For this reason, JR uses a collaboration and systems approach, requiring 'systems thinking' as different issues and people are brought together through JR.

There are many different but often interconnected issues driving contact with the criminal justice system. These might include the examples above of housing, health and education. Law, policy and practice of government, problems in local service provision, and community not having sufficient control over local solutions may also contribute to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander over-representation in the justice system.

A JR approach requires a community to come together to consider and develop a joined up response to these different and interconnected issues to reduce contact with the justice system, including as these issues impact across generations. For this reason JR has been referred to as a 'life-course' or 'whole-of-community' approach and as focused on 'building communities, not prisons'.

While community leadership is essential to JR, collaboration and partnerships with multiple stakeholders and organisations are also crucial. Reform to government and non-government systems at different levels is also required (e.g., to local policing and state/territory criminal law policy and legislation). As a further example, there is also a call within JR for the reinvestment of existing government funding (including justice system funding) to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to resource community-led decisions about and implementation of solutions through JR.

## Data-informed

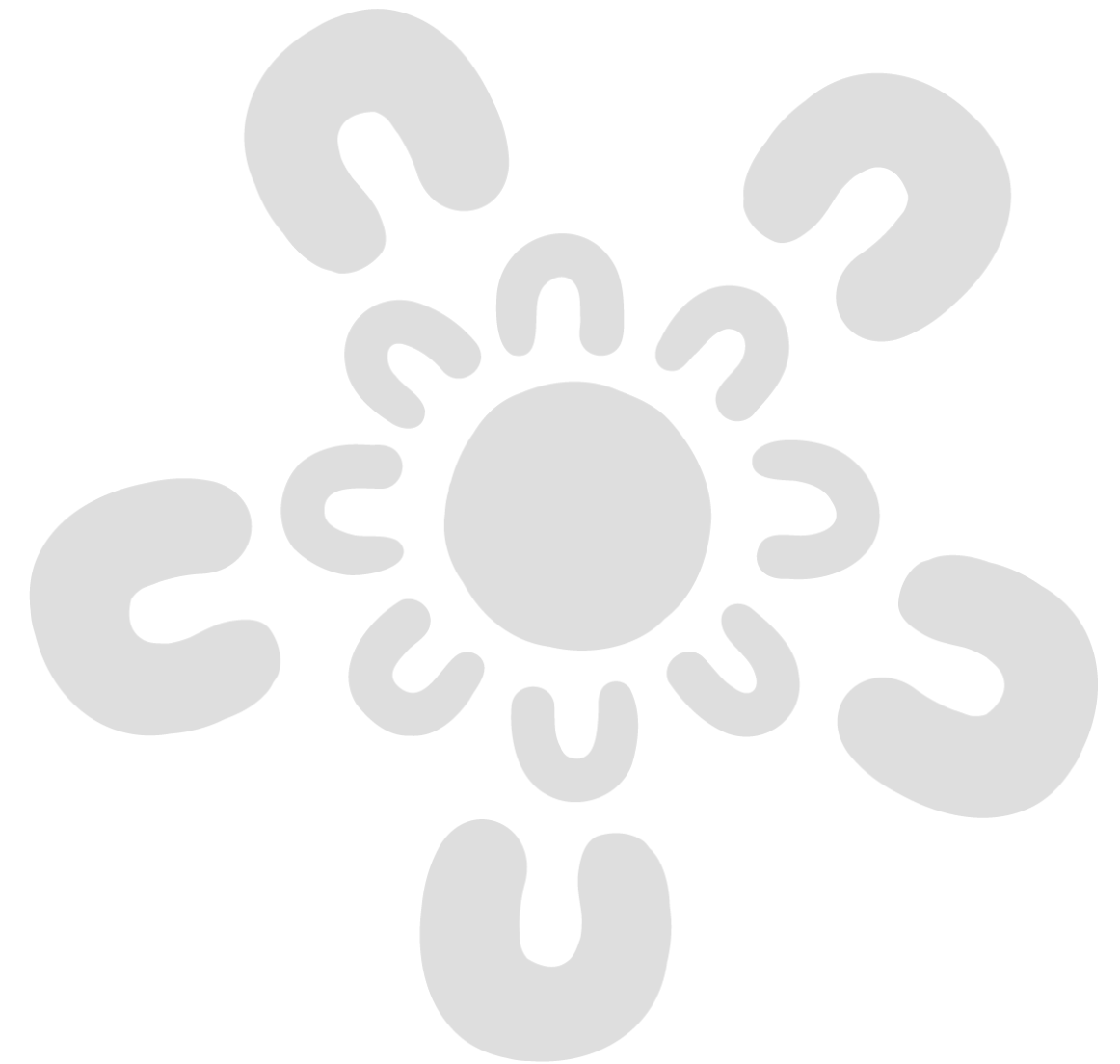
Data has many uses in JR, including as a mechanism for self-determination. JR data work is framed by Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Data Governance Principles. These focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people having more control over data, including what it looks like and how it's used. Examples of data used in JR include government or administrative data and 'community data', or data created by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This data is often prioritised by communities over administrative data, in keeping with Data Sovereignty principles.

Data might be used to:

- Provide information on what is causing high rates of contact with the justice system
- To identify whether government service delivery in a community is delivering good outcomes
- To monitor and evaluate whether a JR approach is working in a community
- For community-led decision-making about what that JR approach might look like
- To advocate for changes to the way others are working that impact on local outcomes, including justice outcomes
- As a conversation starter between community members and to ensure their participation in a JR initiative.

*These elements of justice reinvestment in Australia have been drawn from community consultations completed by Jumbunna Institute, with further detail available in their report: [Design of the National Justice Reinvestment Program \(June 2023\)](#) available [here](#).*

*For more detailed information on the elements of justice reinvestment, videos and other resources, visit the Justice*





Reinvestment Network Australia page [here](#).