

Report of the Indigenous Justice Clearinghouse 1 July 2007-30 June 2008

1. Introduction

The Indigenous Justice Clearinghouse (IJC) pilot website was launched in November 2006 to provide Indigenous justice policy makers in Australia and New Zealand with a centralized information resource on Indigenous justice. The site is a joint project between the NSW Attorney General's Department (NSW AGD) and the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC).

2. Functions

During the year the pilot website was fully operational. The website included:

- 421 key publications and evaluations including published evaluations and reports and forthcoming evaluations
- 41 programs and research projects that are currently being undertaken and projects that were published in 2004-2005
- papers and presentations from the 3rd National Indigenous Justice Forum held in November 2007
- a news page highlighting significant events in Indigenous justice
- weblinks to centres involved in research on Indigenous justice
- descriptions of 16 national datasets relevant to Indigenous justice and
- a series of Research Briefs which summarise research findings for policy makers.

3. Outcomes in 2007-08

A review of the pilot website was undertaken in November 2007 to ascertain if the website is meeting the needs of policymakers and to determine how the Clearinghouse can be further developed. The review consisted of interviews with policy makers from each jurisdiction, an online user survey, an email to discussion forum members, and a review of dissemination activities, web links, and web traffic statistics.

The major findings were that:

- Policy makers have made good use of the site. For example, there were almost 7000 requests for pages on the site in August 2007 alone.
- the IJC fulfills a particular niche in drawing together information and research resources on Indigenous justice.
- the site is user friendly with the graphics and layout appreciated
- policy makers found the research briefs the most valuable part of the site and requested a series of briefs

The Clearinghouse review and its recommendations were considered by the National Justice CEOs at their November 2007 meeting and by Ministers at the March 2008

meeting of the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General. All the Review Recommendations were endorsed. It was agreed that:

- the IJC be continued, with funding made available for another 2 years (July 2008-end June 2010);
- the NJCEOs will contribute funding to cover the cost of dissemination, contracting out of research briefs to experts and coordination of the website; and,
- enhancements be made to the website in line with the findings of the review including introduction of an email notification system and changes to the Forum facility.

4. Research Briefs

Two research briefs were produced for the Indigenous Justice Clearinghouse during 2007-2008 and were widely disseminated. The first research brief was produced by a research assistant employed by the NJCEOs, and the second brief was produced by a student on placement at the NSW Attorney General's Department. To maximize awareness of the Research Briefs and the work of the IJC, email alerts were sent out and hard copies of research briefs were sent to selected policy makers, practitioners and researchers. An Advisory Group including Indigenous, government and non-government representatives was set up to advise on the initial development of the Clearinghouse. This group had the opportunity to comment on each research brief developed.

Sex offender treatment programs: the effectiveness of prison and community based programs in Australia and New Zealand This brief examined whether programs designed to treat sex offenders in Australia and New Zealand are effective in reducing sexual recidivism. The review of the evaluation findings indicates that the vast majority of programs are effective in reducing sexual recidivism. Further evaluation work is needed in the Australian context including examination of the effectiveness of programs for Indigenous sex offenders.

Bail support in Australia From a review of the Australian and international literature, principles of best practice are presented and current bail support programs for adults and juveniles in Australia are outlined. It was found that there are very few Indigenous specific bail support programs.

5. Governance

In the forthcoming year, the website will remain a joint project of AIC and NSW AGD; support for information technology and library services will continue to be provided by the Australian Institute of Criminology while the part-time project officer position, which will commence in mid 2008, will reside within the NSW Attorney General's Department.