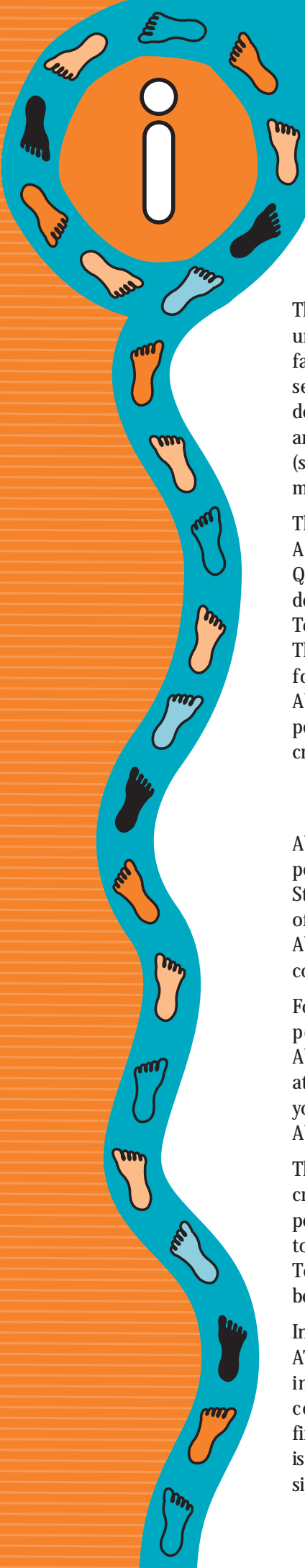


# Justice

## Information Sheet 3



There are eight key areas to be addressed under the Ten Year Partnership: justice; family violence; reconciliation; human services; service delivery; economic development; community governance; and land heritage and natural resources (see separate information sheets for more detail).

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory board (ATSIAB) and the Queensland Government are currently developing a Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Agreement. The major goal of the Agreement is to focus on reducing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people coming into contact with the criminal justice system.

### Background

About three per cent of Queensland's population are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. Compared with the rest of the population, a high percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples come into contact with the law.

For example, at June 1998, almost 23 per cent of adult prisoners were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and at March 1999, almost 59 per cent of young people in detention centres were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

The problem is seen in all phases of the criminal justice process, from young people getting into trouble with police, to greater numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people coming before the courts and being sent to prison.

In preparing the Justice Agreement, the ATSIAB will convene community forums in late 2000 to ensure maximum community input prior to the finalisation of the Justice Agreement. It is expected that the Agreement will be signed off by the end of 2000.

The underlying issues that contribute to the high numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people coming into contact with police, the courts, detention centres and prisons are also being addressed in the other key areas of the Ten Year Partnership.

### The proposed goal

- A fair and more equal justice system which will assist in reducing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who come into contact with the criminal justice system.

### How we can monitor what we do

- The percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in prison;
- The percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in contact with police and the courts; and
- The percentage of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in youth detention centres.

### Case Study - Community Justice Groups

A number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have established Community Justice Groups to develop local solutions for dealing with people who offend or get in trouble with the law.

Community Justice Groups work with young and adult offenders, for example, counselling offenders, assisting offenders through the court process, and advising Magistrates on sentencing and helping to supervise community service orders.

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The Community Justice Groups can also use traditional punishment such as shaming, "growling" by Elders and removal from the community, generally to an outstation.

They can also take on crime prevention activities such as night patrols, camps for cultural and spiritual regeneration, and teaching life skills.

For example in North Queensland, one Community Justice Group made a court submission on behalf of a young adult charged with assault who was facing jail. The offender received a community order after the group offered to monitor the offender's conduct.

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