



Australian Government

Australian Institute of Criminology

Corporate Plan

2019–20

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Director foreword

As the accountable authority of the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC), I am pleased to present the 2019–20 corporate plan, as required under 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*. The plan is prepared in accordance with the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014.

This corporate plan reflects the functions of the AIC, as set out in the *Criminology Research Act 1971*, and the AIC's objectives and performance measurement framework.

The plan has been prepared for the 2019–20 reporting year and covers the four year period from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2023.



Michael Phelan APM

Director

Australian Institute of Criminology

Mission statement

The Australian Institute of Criminology informs crime and justice policy and practice in Australia by undertaking, funding and disseminating policy-relevant research of national significance; by generating a crime and justice evidence base; and by establishing a national knowledge centre.

Purpose

Role

The Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) is Australia's national research and knowledge centre on crime and justice. We undertake and disseminate crime and justice research and provide policy advice.

Outcome

The AIC's outcome for 2019–20, as stated in the Portfolio Budget Statement, is to inform crime and justice policy and practice in Australia by undertaking, funding and disseminating policy-relevant research of national significance; and through the generation of a crime and justice evidence base and national knowledge centre.

This outcome is achieved by:

- undertaking impartial, policy-relevant research to inform policy and practice in the crime and criminal justice sectors;
- working cooperatively with the Department of Home Affairs, portfolio and other federal agencies, and state and territory government and policing agencies as the Australian Government's national research centre on crime and justice;
- administering an effective and efficient annual Criminology Research Grants (CRG) program that results in policy-relevant research of value to the nation; and
- actively disseminating research findings to policymakers, practitioners and the general public, across Australia and internationally, in a timely manner.

Functions

To perform its role and achieve its objectives, the AIC undertakes its functions as set out in the *Criminology Research Act 1971*, which are:

- (a) to promote justice and reduce crime by:
 - (i) conducting criminological research; and
 - (ii) communicating the results of that research to the Commonwealth, the States, the Australian Capital Territory, the Northern Territory and the community;
- (b) to assist the Director in performing the Director’s functions;
- (c) to administer programs for awarding grants, and engaging specialists, for:
 - (i) criminological research that is relevant to the public policy of the States, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory; and
 - (ii) activities related to that research (including the publication of that research, for example).

The functions of the Director include:

- conducting criminological research, including the collection of information and statistics on crime and justice matters;
- communicating the results of that research, including through the publication of research material and seminars and courses of training or instruction;
- providing information and advice on the administration of criminal justice to the Commonwealth Government and state and territory governments; and
- collaborating both within and outside Australia with governments, institutions and authorities, and with bodies and persons, on research and training in connection with the administration of criminal justice.

Environment

Crime and justice environment

The AIC conducts and disseminates crime and justice research that is characterised by:

- *Evolving crime problems*—Some traditional forms of volume crime are declining while new and emerging crime problems become issues for the future. The AIC continues to shape its research program to address these emerging problems;
- *Multiple criminal justice systems*—The AIC serves the needs of both the Commonwealth and the states and territories. While many crime and justice issues are important from a national perspective, the information available on such issues is often collected by state and territory agencies operating within their own criminal justice systems and subject to their own legal systems. This shapes how the AIC addresses research questions by negotiating access to relevant information from each criminal justice system. At the same time, this offers opportunities for innovation at the state/territory level that can be examined through AIC research;
- *Access to data*—Access to crime and justice data is often restricted and only released on limited terms. As an independent Commonwealth Government research agency, the AIC has negotiated access to data not otherwise available to the academic sector; and
- *An expanding academic criminology sector*—Criminology as an academic discipline has grown considerably in recent years, offering opportunities for the AIC to identify, fund and disseminate high-quality, applied criminological research through its grant programs and publication series.

Relationship with the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission

The AIC works closely with the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC). The Chief Executive Officer of the ACIC is also the Director of the AIC, and although the AIC remains an independent entity, AIC staff were transferred to the ACIC under a Machinery of Government process in 2015.

Stakeholders

The AIC works with stakeholders both nationally and internationally to bring together a research knowledge base that is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. The AIC relies upon data provided by the Commonwealth and state and territory governments in order to undertake much of its research activities. Stakeholders include:

- the Australian Government—national law enforcement agencies, regulatory agencies, and justice agencies;
- states and territories—state and territory law enforcement agencies, regulatory agencies, and justice and corrections agencies;
- international agencies—the AIC is a member of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme Network of Institutes; and
- the private sector—academia, non-government organisations, and the general public.

Governance

The AIC is accountable to the Minister for Home Affairs and is part of the Home Affairs portfolio.

The Criminology Research Advisory Council (Advisory Council), representing Commonwealth and state and territory justice agencies, is responsible for providing advice to the Director of the AIC on strategic priorities for research and priorities for communicating research results.

AIC research is also subject to ethical standards which are governed through the oversight of an ethics committee, in accordance with National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) requirements.

Planned performance

Strategic priorities

The AIC's priorities are based on key issues of national concern and are set in consultation with the Criminology Research Advisory Council, which consists of members representing the Commonwealth and all state and territory governments.

The AIC's research priorities that will drive planned performance for 2019–20 are:

- Illicit drugs
- Child exploitation material
- Transnational serious and organised crime
- Criminal justice responses to family and domestic violence
- Indigenous over-representation in the criminal justice system
- Youth crime

These priorities will be reviewed by the Advisory Council prior to 2020–21.

The AIC will also host a series of roundtables, workshops and other forums to promote and disseminate crime and justice research of national importance. Some of these events will occur annually, while others will take place based on research findings or stakeholder requirements.

AIC achievement against its purpose will be measured against the AIC performance criteria as described in the AIC Portfolio Budget Statement. It is anticipated these will apply for the duration of this plan. Performance against these criteria will be reported in the Annual Performance Statement, contained in the AIC Annual Report.

Performance Criteria	Target	19–20	20–21	21–22	22–23
Trends & Issues (T&I) papers and Research Report series are peer reviewed. This ensures the quality of the AIC’s research outputs	100%	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reports produced for each of the monitoring programs are issued according to schedule, annually or biennially	On schedule	✓	✓	✓	✓
Peer-reviewed T&I and Research Report papers are prepared for publication	25	✓	✓	✓	✓
Other publications—including statistical reports, statistical bulletins, briefs, journal articles, consultancy reports et cetera—to be published each year	25	✓	✓	✓	✓
Roundtables, workshops and other forums to be held annually	At least 10	✓	✓	✓	✓

Capability

Research services

The AIC conducts timely and policy-relevant research on crime and justice issues for the Australian Government and other key stakeholders. The Deputy Director manages the research team and research functions of the AIC. The work involves a mix of statistical monitoring of crime and justice trends, research on the key priorities and consultancy research for stakeholders.

Communications and information services

Communications

The AIC publishes high-quality publications, including the peer-reviewed Research Reports and *Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice* (T&I), as well as other material based on its research. The AIC's work is disseminated in a range of ways, including through the website, email subscriber lists, social media, conferences and occasional seminars.

Information services

The AIC hosts a substantial collection of criminal justice and related materials. The collection is housed in the AIC's JV Barry Library and is made available online, through the AIC website and via the CINCH electronic database, to inform and assist in the development of evidence-based policy and programs.

The Crime Statistics Australia website provides research and information in a new and visual way to assist stakeholders to use the valuable crime and justice information collected by the AIC. There are currently five statistical series available—Australian crime: Facts and Figures, the National Homicide Monitoring Program, the National Deaths in Custody Program, the Drug Use Monitoring in Australia program and the Illicit Drug Data Report.

Corporate services

The AIC corporate services functions are provided by the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) and the AIC is co-located with the ACIC.

Risk oversight and management

The AIC's operating environment is not inherently high-risk. However, key risks for the AIC relate to the safety and welfare of researchers undertaking their duties, the integrity and quality of the research produced, and ensuring that the agency is operating within the Commonwealth, state and territory legislation that impacts its national program of work.

The Institute is vigilant in identifying and treating risks—the AIC operates within sound processes that protect staff, and its work is monitored through committees (see below) as well as peer review. The activities are subject to internal audits. As the ACIC provides the AIC's corporate functions, consideration of AIC risk and audit issues are supported through ACIC functional managers in consultation with the AIC Executive and the AIC Audit Committee.

The Director of the AIC is supported in his oversight and management role by the Deputy Director.


The AIC Executive considers strategic advice on research directions from the Criminology Research Advisory Council and oversees the management of the agency's budget and risk-management activities. The Director also receives reports from other subordinate management committees.

- The AIC Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has been operating since 1992. Its eight members have backgrounds in law, religion, social work and research, as stipulated by the NHMRC guidelines for ethics committees. The HREC's role is to advise the Director whether approval to proceed should be granted for proposed research involving human subjects. The HREC regularly reviews proposed projects to ensure that appropriate safeguards for the conduct of the research are in place to ensure its consistency with ethical standards.
- The Research Managers Committee considers both strategic and operational aspects of the AIC research program and provides advice to the Senior Executive Committee on research priorities and risks.

The AIC Audit Committee is established in accordance with section 45 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (Cth). The committee's objective is to provide independent advice to the Director on the Institute's financial and performance reporting, risk management and internal controls.

As the ACIC provides the AIC's corporate functions, consideration of AIC risk and audit issues are supported through ACIC functional managers in consultation with the AIC Executive and the AIC Audit Committee.

While the AIC's operating environment is not inherently high-risk, the Institute is vigilant in identifying and treating risks, with key focuses on the health and wellbeing of staff and the reputation of the Commonwealth.



Australia's national research and
knowledge centre on crime and justice

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