

# RESTORATIVE JUSTICE CONFERENCING

## INFORMATION FOR TERRITORIANS



Restorative Youth Justice Conferencing is based on restorative justice principles and uses a problem-solving approach to respond to youth offending. It aims to balance the needs of victims, young people and the community by encouraging dialogue between those who have offended, those who have been offended against and others affected by crime.

### VICTIM SUPPORT SERVICES

Victims of Crime NT (VoCNT) is a community organisation working to assist people and communities impacted by crime across the Territory. We are committed to supporting and guiding victims who decide to participate in a youth justice conference through the entire process. Participation in the process is voluntary. A Victim Support Officer is allocated to assist with preparation, participation and follow-up. They are available to respond to all concerns and queries and provide ongoing information and emotional support.

Our Victim Support Officers can also provide a range of other services, including:

- Crisis counselling, information and advocacy
- Referrals to additional services
- Assistance to complete applications for financial assistance (CVSU), where applicable
- Assistance with preparation of documentation such as victim impact statements
- Court support
- Property Crime support including financial assistance for residential and business resecures and vehicle resecures, and free home security assessments

**For more information, please contact us:**

**Darwin/Katherine**

08 8941 0995

Freecall: 1800 672 242

**Alice Springs/Tennant Creek**

08 8952 4466

[www.victimsofcrime.org.au](http://www.victimsofcrime.org.au)

### RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IN THE NT

#### Pre-Court Restorative Justice Conferencing

Under the Youth Justice Act, Police must consider diversion for any young offender between the ages of 12-17 years. Offences that may be considered for diversion include home or business break-ins, vandalism and theft, among others. These conferences are facilitated by a Police Officer and aim to encourage the victim and the young person to share their story about the incident and discuss who has been affected and how. The discussion works towards repairing the harm and minimising further harm. It also identifies supports that will assist the young person to develop skills for future behaviour change.

## Pre-Sentence Restorative Justice Conferencing

A court can adjourn sentencing for youth aged 12-17 years so that a Youth Justice Conference can be held and a report prepared for the court. The court may do so if the young person has entered a plea of guilty and voluntarily agrees to the process. These conferences are facilitated by a trained convener and is a structured process that brings together the victim(s) and their support person(s) and the young offender and their support person(s) to discuss the harm done and provide the young person with the opportunity to make amends. An outcome plan is agreed upon by all at the conference outlining activities for the young person to complete in conjunction with their sentence.

### For Victims

- Active participation in the justice process
- Safe and structured space to have their voice heard
- Opportunity to address their hurt and fear as a result of the crime
- Chance to accept the young person's apology
- Opportunity to hear the young person's story
- Designated Victim Support Officer

### For Young Offenders

- Encourages offenders to take responsibility for their actions and accept the consequences of their behavior
- Promotes understanding of the impact offending has on the victim, their family and the community
- Provides the opportunity for the expression of remorse
- Interrupts negative behaviour patterns and influences positive behaviour change for the future

## THINGS TO NOTE

Participating in Restorative Justice Conferencing is not an easy option for the young person.

Many young people find it more confronting to face their victim directly than to face court. Participating in a conference requires the young person to come to terms with the true impact of their offending behaviour and take practical steps to repair the harm they have caused.

Restorative Justice Conferencing does replace the court process in some instances. Conferencing provides a restorative intervention that can enhance the effectiveness of the normal judicial process. The young person's participation in the conference and the progress towards their outcome plan will be considered by the Judge when determining an appropriate sentence.

The effectiveness of Restorative Justice Conferencing in reducing re-offending is evidenced by: KPMG (2010) Review of the Youth Justice Conferencing Program, and Australian Institute of Criminology (2017) Impact of Restorative Justice.

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### For more information on Restorative Justice Conferencing:

#### Victims of Crime NT

Freecall: 1800 672 242  
www.victimsofcrime.org.au

#### Jesuit Social Services

08 8941 5235  
jss@jss.org.au  
www.jss.org.au

### For more information about pre-court conferencing available through the NT Police Youth Diversion Program, please contact:

youthdiversionunitdarwin@nt.gov.au  
08 8936 4854

youthdiversionunitalicesprings@nt.gov.au  
08 8951 1734