**Australian Government**

**Australian Institute of Criminology**

# Corporate Plan
# 2015–16

# CEO's foreword

As the accountable authority of the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC), I am pleased to present the 2015–16 to 2018–19 corporate plan, as required by section 35(1)(a) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (Cth). This plan has been prepared in accordance with the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014.

The 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 2015–16 reporting year and covers the four-year period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2019.

Chris Dawson APM
Director (Chief Executive)
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; and through the generation of a crime and justice evidence base and national knowledge centre.

# Contents

# Purpose

## Role

The Australian Institute of Criminology is Australia's national research and knowledge centre on crime and justice, compiling trend data and promulgating and disseminating research studies and policy advice.

## Objective

The AIC's outcome as stated in the 2015–16 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 Attorney-General's Department, 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;
- actively disseminating research findings to policymakers, practitioners and the general public, across Australia and internationally, in a timely manner; and
- providing effective corporate services that not only deliver on the governance and legislative obligations of the organisation but also support and enhance the delivery of the preceding objectives.

## Functions

To perform its role and achieve its objectives the AIC undertakes the functions 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, in summary, 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 research within a crime and justice context that is characterised by:

- *Evolving crime problems*—Crime in Australia is constantly changing, with some traditional forms of crime 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 seeks to serve the needs of the Commonwealth and of 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 the way in which 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 been able to negotiate access to data not otherwise available to the academic sector. Further work is necessary to negotiate increased access to Commonwealth law enforcement data in order to expand the AIC's research program and capability; 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.

## Organisational environment

### Strategic policy environment

The work of the AIC directly supports and informs the Australian Government's strategic research priorities. AIC research falls mainly under the priority **Securing Australia's place in a changing world**. There are two key elements of this priority, and the AIC addresses these in the following ways:

- *Improve cybersecurity for all Australians*—AIC research identifies ways to improve cybersecurity for individuals, organisations, businesses, government and national infrastructure.

- *Manage the flow of goods, information, money and people across our national and international boundaries*— AIC research identifies risks and prevention strategies in areas including cybersecurity, international crime, and international and transnational legal and regulatory frameworks.

- The AIC also contributes to the Australian Government strategic priorities **Living in a changing environment**, specifically in the outcome area *Manage risk and capture opportunities for sustainable natural and human systems*, and Promoting population health and wellbeing, in the outcome areas of *Maximise social and economic participation in society* and *Improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people*. AIC research has identified and will continue to identify strategies to maximise social and economic participation, particularly in relation to key life stages, intergenerational disparities and socioeconomic disadvantage.

## Strategic priorities

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

The AIC's broad research priorities include:

• crime prevention;
• criminal justice responses;
• substance abuse and crime;
• transnational and organised crime;
• violent crime; and
• vulnerable communities.

## 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 provision from the Commonwealth and state and territory governments  in order to undertake a large range 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 Justice and is part of the Attorney-General's portfolio.

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

## Machinery of Government changes

A merger between the AIC and the ACC has been proposed.

While the decision is considered, the AIC and ACC will work together to identify and explore specific issues on which they might collaborate more closely. On 13 July 2015 Mr Chris Dawson APM, CEO of the ACC, was appointed as acting Director of the AIC to support this collaboration.

# Performance

AIC outcomes are measured against the following criteria.

## Key Performance Indicators

The AIC's Key Performance Indicators, or KPIs, are agreed with the Minister for Justice through a Statement of Expectations. Targets are published in the Portfolio Budget Statement and performance against these targets is reported in the Annual Report. The agreed KPIs are that:

- 100 percent of Trends & Issues (T&I) papers and Research and Public Policy (RPP) papers are blind peer reviewed. This ensures the quality of the Institute's research outputs;
- reports produced for each of the monitoring programs are issued according to schedule, annually or biennially;
- 23 peer-reviewed T&I and RPP papers are published each year;
- 38 other publications—including Research in Practice (RIP) papers, Technical and Background papers (TBPs), briefs, journal articles, consultancy reports et cetera—are published each year;
- at least 10 roundtables and other forums are held annually; and
- there is greater than 90 percent stakeholder satisfaction with AIC research, according to project mid-term and/ or completion surveys.

## Strategic values

The AIC's performance is also measured against its strategic values, which define the way the Institute conducts its business and drive the way staff conduct their work. The AIC's eight strategic values are as follows.

- *High quality*—Informed crime and justice policy and practice requires a foundation of high-quality, reliable research. The AIC therefore places great importance on conducting and disseminating research that is world-class. By employing highly skilled staff and applying rigorous quality-control mechanisms, the AIC ensures its output is of the highest possible standard.
- *Independent*—The AIC's work should be seen to be free from political or other dynamics so that users of its research are assured of accessing impartial evidence based on facts.
- *Collaborative*—The AIC seeks to work closely with key stakeholders at every stage of the research process, from establishing research priorities to defining research questions, developing methodologies, conducting fieldwork and producing reports.
- *Applied*—Research undertaken by the AIC is developed with the intention of informing policy and practice. It is intended to be practically applicable, support decision-making and drive change in crime and criminal justice matters.
- *Proactive*—The AIC seeks to identify emerging crime problems and new criminal justice initiatives at an early stage so policymakers, practitioners and the public can be informed. This can involve undertaking new and innovative research in a timely way.
- *Innovative*—The AIC strives to find answers by developing new methodological approaches to ensure that policy and practice are informed by cutting-edge research.
- *Expert*—The AIC employs staff with specialist expertise in a range of areas associated with crime and criminal justice matters, who are available to provide evidence-based, impartial advice.
- *Ethical*—All work is undertaken in accordance with the highest ethical standards. In particular, research conforms to the standards required by the AIC's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC).

# 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 (Research) manages the research team and research functions of the AIC. The following teams meet its strategic research priorities.

### Crime Prevention and Evaluation (CP&E)

The work of the CP&E team reflects the AIC's commitment to promoting research, evaluation and knowledge exchange among crime prevention and criminal justice practitioners and policymakers in Australia.

### Violence and Exploitation (V&E)

The V&E team enhances and promotes knowledge of homicide and other violence, including family violence and alcohol-related violence. The team also focuses on human trafficking and slavery.

### Criminal Justice Monitoring and Analysis (CJMA)

The CJMA team monitors key aspects of the criminal justice system, including deaths in custody and police custody management. It also collects data from police detainees through the Drug Use Monitoring in Australia program.

### Transnational Organised and Cyber Crime (TOCC)

The TOCC team provides information on and analyses the causes, extent, prevention and control of transnational criminal activity, economic crime, cybercrime, and other complex and sophisticated criminal activity.

## Communications and Information Services

### Communications

The AIC publishes high-quality publications, including the peer-reviewed Research and Public Policy (RPP) series and the Trends & Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice (T&I) series, as well as other material based on its research. The AIC's communications team ensures new research and information is provided to AIC stakeholders, criminal justice practitioners and the general public and facilitates the communication, transfer and adoption of findings into policy and further research.

### 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.

## Corporate Services

Corporate Services provides substantive functions to deliver AIC outcomes, as well as more traditional corporate support services. The Corporate Services section consists of three teams organised around Human Resource Management and Administration, Financial Management, and Information Communications Technology.

# Risk oversight and management

The AIC's management committee structure is headed by the Senior Executive Committee, chaired by the Director and comprising the two senior executive officers.

The committee 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 committee also receives reports from a number of subordinate management committees.

- The 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 assurance and assistance to the Director on the Institute's risk, control and compliance framework and its external governance responsibilities.

- 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 National Health and Medical Research Council 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 Corporate Services Managers Committee considers both strategic and operational management aspects of Corporate Services functions and provides advice to the Senior Executive Committee on financial and budgetary matters, ICT, workforce planning, work health and safety, administration and risk-management matters.

- The ICT Committee provides advice to the Senior Executive Committee on strategic direction for, and emerging issues around, technology-related risks.

The AIC undertakes a regular review of its risk-management priorities. Regular reports are provided to the Senior Executive Committee on key risks and remedial strategies. An annual risk management plan is provided to the Audit Committee, with progress reports made at each meeting.

While the AIC does not operate in an inherently high-risk environment, it is vigilant in the identification and treatment of 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

**aic.gov.au**