



**Australian Government**

**Australian Institute of Criminology**

# Corporate Plan

## 2016–20

# CEO foreword



As the accountable authority of the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC), I am pleased to present the 2016–17 to 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 2016–17 reporting year and covers the four year period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2020.

**Chris Dawson APM**

Director (Chief Executive)

Australian Institute of Criminology

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Chris Dawson', written over a horizontal line.

## 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.

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# Purpose

## Role

The Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) 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 2016–17 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 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*—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 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. Further work is necessary to negotiate increased access to Commonwealth law enforcement data 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.

## Machinery of Government changes

A merger between the AIC and the ACIC has been proposed and on 13 July 2015 Mr Chris Dawson APM, CEO of the then Australian Crime Commission (ACC), was appointed as acting Director of the AIC to support collaboration between the two agencies. On 8 October 2015, staff of the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) were transferred into the ACC under a Machinery of Government process. Legislative amendments are required to facilitate the merge of the AIC into the ACC, now known as the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission. Until the legislation is passed, the AIC remains a legal entity.

# 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 states and territory governments.

The AIC's research priorities for 2016–17 are:

- improving criminal justice responses to family and domestic violence;
- exploring the futures of crime and justice;
- examining the links between volume crime and organised crime; and
- reducing demand for prison.

## 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 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, general public.

## Governance

The AIC is accountable to the Minister for Justice and is part of the Attorney-General's portfolio.

The CRAC, 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.

# Performance

AIC outcomes are measured against the following criteria.

## Key Performance Indicators

The AIC's KPIs are that:

- 100 percent of publications in the Trends & Issues (T&I) and Research Report series are 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 Research Report papers are prepared for publication;
- 38 other publications—including statistical reports, statistical bulletins, briefs, journal articles, consultancy reports et cetera—are published each year; and
- at least 10 roundtables, workshops and other forums are held annually.

Performance against these targets is reported in the Annual Report.

# 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.

## Corporate services

The AIC Corporate Services functions are provided by the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) and the AIC is collocated with the ACIC.

## Strategic values

The AIC's strategic values define how the Institute conducts its business and drive the way staff conduct their work. The AIC's eight strategic values are:

- *high quality*—Informed crime and justice policy and practice requires a foundation of high quality, reliable research. The AIC therefore places high importance on conducting and disseminating research that is world class. By employing highly skilled staff and employing rigorous quality-control mechanisms, the AIC ensures its output is of the highest possible standard;
- *independent*—The AIC's work should be seen as free from political or other dynamics so that users of its research can be 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; and
- *ethical*—All work is undertaken in accordance with the highest ethical standards. In particular, research will conform to the standards required by the AIC's Human Research Ethics Committee.

# Risk oversight and management

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 CRAC and oversees the management of the agency's budget and risk-management activities. The Director also receives reports from other 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 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.

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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