The Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JACS) will progress the Justice Reform Strategy (the Strategy) to:

- inform community based sentencing alternatives to imprisonment and how sentencing legislation and practice can improve outcomes and reduce recidivism; and
- guide the development of proposals for Government reforms to sentencing and related laws and programs designed to support the principles of sentencing.

JACS will be assisted by an advisory group which will be invited to participate in the Strategy by the Attorney-General and Minister for Corrective Services.

Members of the advisory group will include representatives from the Community Services and Health Directorates, the Victims of Crime Commissioner, the ACT legal profession, ACT Policing and researchers with expertise in the sentencing law, criminologists and/or social scientists.

The Strategy will report to Ministers in two stages. The Strategy will draw on targeted research activities and will engage with key legal stakeholders and the community to inform its reports to Government.

The first stage report will provide recommendations on legislative and other measures for a new community based sentencing alternative to imprisonment. These recommendations will be aimed at supporting the ACT’s move away from periodic detention as a sentencing option.

In recommending a new community based sentencing alternative to imprisonment, the Strategy will consider the need to ensure that sentencing courts are provided with adequate options and discretions.

The first stage report will be given to Ministers by 31 March 2015.

The second stage report will provide the ACT Government with recommendations on legislative and other options to reform sentencing laws and practice in the ACT including options that relate to restorative justice and therapeutic jurisprudence.

Although not an exhaustive list it is expected that the Strategy will consider:

- current sentencing principles in the ACT and whether they are appropriate for adult and young offenders;
- innovations in sentencing nationally and internationally;
- the need to ensure community safety and the needs of victims;
- the principle that imprisonment should only be used where no other penalty is appropriate;
- that imprisonment should only be used as the last resort with respect to young offenders;
- how restorative justice can be expanded in the ACT;
- how principles of therapeutic jurisprudence can be supported in the criminal justice system;
- how young offenders and young people may have particular needs related to their age and state of development that should be considered in identification of new sentencing options and evaluation of existing ones;
- the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the justice system; and
- any relevant recommendations made by the ACT Legislative Assembly Justice and Community Safety Committee Inquiry into Sentencing.

The second stage report will be given to the Ministers by 31 July 2016.