

Funding bid for ‘Developing a data collection to measure juvenile recidivism: stage 1’

History

The funding bid for the development of a data collection to measure juvenile recidivism was developed by the AIHW and endorsed by the JJ RIG out-of-session in August 2011. It was provided to AJJA via the secretariat in August 2011.

Background

The Australasian Juvenile Justice Administrators (AJJA) funded the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) to explore options for measuring juvenile recidivism on a comparable basis across states and territories (Richards 2010 *Recidivism outcomes for juveniles in Australia: a national research project*).

The report outlined the measures currently used by states and territories and identified a number of possible measures of juvenile recidivism (Richards 2010:51). Richards also noted that ‘it is important for jurisdictions to collect data that extend beyond those relating to the recommended Counting Rules...[t]his report does not, therefore, recommend that jurisdictions limit their collection of data to only those required by the recommended counting rules.’ (2010:28).

At the Juvenile Justice Research and Information Group (JJ RIG) meeting held 31 March – 1 April 2011, the RIG discussed the benefits of implementing a unit record collection rather than an aggregate collection. These benefits would include:

- Recidivism could be measured across different time periods rather than only within a fixed time period.
- Recidivism could be measured across jurisdictions, that is, recidivism by young people who reoffend in jurisdictions other than the index jurisdiction could be captured.
- Recidivism could be measured by the specific type of order beyond whether the order was a community-based order or a detention order.
- Recidivism could be measured by the level of contact with the juvenile justice system.
- The collecting agency would be able to validate the data at a unit-record level.
- Data on juvenile recidivism could be linked with data on adult recidivism if such data are available at a later stage.

At this meeting, the JJ RIG agreed that the recidivism data collection project would progress in a number of stages:

Stage	Responsibility
1. Analyse recidivism using currently available JJ NMDS data	AIHW
2. Develop and pilot additional data items for the JJ NMDS	AIHW and jurisdictions
3. Develop and pilot adult data	AIHW and jurisdictions
4. Develop and pilot offence seriousness	RIG

The RIG requested that the AIHW prepare a project proposal for the development and implementation of a recidivism data collection. This proposal was presented to AJJA at its May 2011 meeting. AJJA has since requested that a CDSMAC funding bid be prepared (below). Please note that stages 1 and 2, as detailed above and in the project proposal, have been combined for the purposes of this funding bid.

Title of project

Developing a data collection to measure juvenile recidivism: stage 1.

Objective

The objective of this project is to commence development of a data collection that can be used to measure juvenile recidivism on a comparable basis across the Australian states and territories. The project will be guided by the principles outlined in Richards (2010) *Recidivism outcomes for juveniles in Australia: a national research project*.

This first stage will involve testing and refining the principles and data specifications developed by Richards (2010), evaluating the usefulness of the existing Juvenile Justice National Minimum Data Set (JJ NMDS) for measuring recidivism, and developing and piloting additional data items for the JJ NMDS.

Later stages will include developing data on young people who progress to the adult criminal justice system and on offence seriousness to enable the analysis of the severity of recidivism. Separate funding will be sought for these stages, subject to results of stage 1.

Outcomes to be achieved

The main outcome of this project will be:

1. a unit-record data collection that will enable the analysis of juvenile recidivism as it occurs within the juvenile justice system
2. an understanding of the additional data items required to more fully measure and analyse juvenile recidivism, including recidivism where young people have 'aged out' of the juvenile justice system and the severity of recidivism.

The main output will be a report containing an analysis of juvenile recidivism using the data items piloted as part of this project and a list of recommendations for future stages.

What benefits are to be derived from the proposed outcomes and how does this relate to the priorities of the CDSMAC and CDSMC?

Recidivism is one of the key indicators of the effectiveness of juvenile justice interventions (Richards 2010). This project would contribute to an understanding of the performance of the juvenile justice system and provide valuable information for effective service delivery.

Draft work program, milestones and timeframes

Month	Action
Jul-12	Analyse recidivism using existing JJ NMDS data and identify data requirements
Aug-12	Interim report
Sep-12	Develop data items
Oct-12	Pilot data items
Dec-12	Analyse pilot data
Jan-13	Final report

Funding allocation sought

Funding requested for 2012–13: \$88,750 (excluding GST).