

# RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

## Forum Sentencing

**Dr Meredith Rossner from the Justice Research Group and Dr Jasmine Bruce from University of New South Wales will seek to understand why and how Forum Sentencing works and to develop a best practice model of how Forum Sentencing can effectively respond to the harms caused by crime. This project is funded by the New South Wales Department of Attorney General and Justice.**

'Forum sentencing brings together victims, offenders and other stakeholders in a crime to collectively address the harm caused by a criminal offence', says Dr Rossner. 'It is a type of restorative justice and a recent innovation in the NSW criminal justice system for adult offenders. Forum sentencing deals with offences handled in the NSW Local courts. A forum provides the opportunity for the offender, victim, support people, a police officer and other participants to hear what happened, find out about how people have been affected by the offence, and develop an intervention plan for the offender to repair the harm. This project documents the emotional and ritual dynamics of forums, identifying the features that result in successful justice processes. It will develop best practice guidelines to train facilitators in running forums.'

The team will use multiple strategies to explore the process of Forum Sentencing to identify how and why it can be successful. It further develops a methodology established for analysing the dynamics of restorative justice, and for examining the role of practitioners. This includes systematic observations of forums, interviews with key stakeholders, and participant observation of the staging of a forum. This research will provide practical steps for improving Forum Sentencing.



The proposed research outcomes will identify the key features, procedures and events that contribute to a successful Forum Sentencing process. It will provide an over arching framework to understand how and why it works.

**Project Title:** Research on Forum Sentencing  
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