

Author biography and selected research

Dr Amanda Clarke

Submission to the Productivity Commission
Review of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap 2026

Dr Amanda Clarke works for Corrective Services NSW, where her work brings together research, evidence and lived-experience perspectives to inform correctional policy and practice. She contributes to consultation and research examining institutional barriers and the experiences of people in custody. Her interests include rehabilitation, fair decision-making and the relationship between policy intentions and everyday custodial experience.

Her first doctoral research, undertaken for a Doctor of Policing and Security at Charles Sturt University, evaluated Australian Drug Courts and examined measures of program success beyond reoffending. This research established her interest in how justice systems define success, support rehabilitation and respond to the experiences of those who move through them.

Her second doctoral research project, undertaken for a Doctor of Philosophy at Charles Sturt University, is titled *Serving the sentence and beyond: A study on the sentencing experience; from the perspective of those in a correctional centre within New South Wales*. It examines how people understand and experience the purposes of sentencing, exploring the relationship between judicial intentions, custodial practice and opportunities for change. It extends her earlier research interests by placing sentenced people's perspectives at the centre of the inquiry.

Amanda brings 28 years of prior service with the New South Wales Police Force, including experience as a Drug Court Police Prosecutor. She also holds a Master of Leadership and Management (Policing) and a research master's degree in Criminal Intelligence.

Her contribution to the Productivity Commission's 2026 review of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap draws on this research and professional experience, with a focus on institutional barriers, opportunities for rehabilitation and how the experiences of people affected by justice policy can inform meaningful change.

This submission is made in a personal capacity. The views and interpretations expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the position of Corrective Services NSW.

Selected research

1. Clarke, A. (2018). [Justice, rehabilitation and reintegration: evaluating the effectiveness of Drug Courts in Australia](#). Doctor of Policing and Security thesis, Charles Sturt University. The university record provides access to the full thesis.
2. Clarke, A. (2020). [What, Besides a Lack of Reoffending, Indicates Successful Completion of a Drug Court Program](#). SSRN paper, posted in 2021. Examines rehabilitation and broader measures of Drug Court program success.
3. Clarke, A. (2022). [The definition of 'violent conduct' for Drug Court program access](#). *Alternative Law Journal*, 47(4), 273-278. Examines eligibility rules and barriers to accessing Drug Court programs.