



Solutions Focused Justice Symposium 20-21 February 2026

Gadigal lands/Sydney, Australia



What was the point of the symposium?

To engage in discussion with and hear from:

- Thinkers and practitioners of solutions focussed justice about ways to move from the periphery to the centre.
- Practitioners of solutions focused justice as to what they do and why.
- To create a community of interest.



Key messages

- It is possible and necessary to create circumstances for the delivery of solutions focused justice in each of our jurisdictions
- Those examples of solutions focused justice should be documented as proof of concept
- Real change at a systems level will only occur when notions of punitive justice are abandoned for mainstreaming of solutions focused justice.



Te Ao Marama - District Court of NZ

- “Mai te pō ki te ao mārama” literally means **“from the night to the world of light”**
- Chief Judge Heemi Taumamuna is both visionary and diligent in his pursuit of a fairer justice system. Chief Judge Taumamunu showed this video
- [Te Ao Marama](#)



Te Ao Marama

Important takeaways from Chief Judge Taumaunu's presentation were:

- He had no budget to establish Te Ao Marama but set the platform for reform with volunteer law student interns and researchers who reviewed all the data from the courts and enabled evidence-based comparison with the non-specialist courts.
- He focused on the notion of “justice for all”.



Other Highlights

- PNG Village Courts 14,4986 covering 90% of the country
- Elders' session with Damian Beaufile
- Factoid from Tony FitzGerald, Judge in the NZ New Beginnings Court
- Peer Mentors in the Drug Court, Victoria
- Energy and passion of all speakers eg Kofi Barnes



2026 Solution Focused Justice Symposium

Statement of Principles

Article 1: Dignity and Respect

All persons shall be treated with dignity, compassion, and cultural respect throughout every stage of the justice process.

Article 2: Voluntariness and consent

Participation in solution focused, therapeutic and restorative justice mechanisms shall be based on the informed, voluntary, and ongoing consent of all parties involved.

Article 3: Participation and empowerment

Mechanisms shall empower individuals, families and communities through active participation, dialogue, and shared decision-making.

Article 4: Holistic well-being

Outcomes shall prioritise the mental, emotional, physical, cultural, social and spiritual well-being of individuals, families and communities.

Article 5: Accountability through rehabilitation, restorative processes and healing

Accountability shall be framed not solely through punishment but through acknowledgement that accountability includes reparation of harm and meaningful engagement to rehabilitate and engagement in restorative processes.

Article 6: Inclusivity and non-discrimination

Therapeutic justice programs shall be accessible and inclusive, without discrimination on the basis of race, gender, age, ability, culture or status.

Article 7: Respect for culture and embracing local knowledge and solutions

Justice processes shall recognise and incorporate First Nations peoples and their culture, voices, customs, traditions, and healing practices within solution focused, therapeutic and restorative justice mechanisms.

Article 8: Restoration

Justice approaches shall focus on restoring and strengthening relationships of individuals with their families and communities.

Article 9: Capacity building and resources

At Federal and State level, governments and institutions shall ensure sufficient resources, training and support to uphold the integrity and sustainability of solution focused, therapeutic and restorative approaches to justice. This includes supporting the capacity of First Nations controlled organisations to design and deliver support services to First Nations people. Government support shall extend to regional and remote communities.

Article 10: Support for judicial officers and others working within justice systems

Judicial officers should be supported and provided training to be equipped to practice and conduct their courts in a trauma informed and culturally safe way. That support and education should also extend to members of the legal profession and other services involved in the criminal justice system.

Judicial officers should be supported to improve the information available to them to inform judicial decision making. This includes information about:

Solution Focused Justice Framework 2026-2028

- Developed for NSW and ACT but adaptable and informed by:

the 2026 Solution Focused Justice Symposium
Statement of Principles;

Aotearoa's Te Ao Marama best practice
framework;

the information and expertise shared at the
Solution Focused Justice Symposium 2026;

research and evaluations relating to solution
focused approaches; and

the knowledge and experience of the SJF Working
group



Solution Focused Justice Framework 2026-2028

The Core Question:

What has brought this person
before the court and what can be
done about those issues in these
proceedings?



Solution Focused Justice Framework 2026-2028

7 Ways Courts can enhance the capacity of the system to answer the core question:

1. Making court proceedings more accessible and easier to understand
2. Provide and encourage training on ways to make courts more trauma informed and culturally safe
3. Improving listing practices and establishing deferral lists
4. Improving connections with community services and supports
5. Support the judiciary to utilise quality information to inform judicial decision making
6. Provide safe and meaningful involvement of victims in proceedings where safe and appropriate to do so
7. Building connections for judicial officers



Solution Focused Justice Framework 2026-2028

For any practitioners interested learning more about the SFJ Framework and being supported to implement the framework in your community, please register your interest using the QR code.

Signing up will also give you access to a free education program by members of the judiciary, people with lived experience and other experts on each area of the framework.

Open to lawyers, academics, social workers, health professionals and others working in the justice system.



Where to find out more?

- [Solution Focused Justice | Bugmy Bar Book](#)
 - Symposium Program
 - Bench TV

Thanks to the Symposium organising committee including Rebecca McMahon (Forbes Chambers), Justice Dina Yehia (NSWSC), Crystal Triggs (Bugmy Bar Book), and Damian Beaufils (Black Chambers)

And Lloyd Walker (Bidgegal) & Keith Quayle (Barkandji)

