

## **Submitting a Conference Abstract: What You Need to Know**

Your abstract is a pitch: it needs to convince reviewers your work deserves a place on the program and give delegates a reason to show up.

### **Choose the right category**

- **Policy and Practice** is for papers from industry, NGOs, or practice settings that offer critical analysis of crime and justice issues, innovative responses, or reflections on policy and practice. Work doesn't need to be research-focused; well-argued practice experience and culturally informed perspectives are equally welcome. Presentations are 15 minutes plus 3 minutes for questions.
- **Lightning Talks** suit research or policy and practice evaluations that are in progress. Presentations are 5 minutes.

### **Before you write**

- Check the submission guidelines carefully: themes, word count, format, and deadline.
- Check out the program and/or read a few accepted abstracts from previous years to get a feel for the standard.
- If anything is unclear, contact the organisers: [contact@anzsoc2026.com](mailto:contact@anzsoc2026.com).

### **What to cover**

A strong abstract usually outlines what the work is about, why it matters, how you approached it, what you found or developed, and what it means for practice or policy. You don't necessarily need separate headings – you can weave these elements into a coherent piece of writing if you prefer. For a Lightning Talk, keep the scope tight and the takeaway clear.

### **How to write it well**

Plain language can be more effective than complex academic jargon. Be specific rather than vague. Let some genuine enthusiasm come through – reviewers respond to work that sounds interesting, not just competent. Read it aloud once to make sure it flows.

### **Before you submit**

Proofread carefully or ask someone else to. Share a draft with a colleague if you can – a fresh pair of eyes catches things you've stopped seeing. Give yourself enough time to do at least one revision. That's about it. The fundamentals aren't complicated: follow the guidelines, make your work sound as interesting as it actually is, and don't rush it.

## **Example Abstracts**

### **Example 1 – Research paper (Policy and Practice stream) Word count=193**

*"They just want to be heard": Understanding victim experiences of restorative justice conferencing in Victorian Magistrates' Courts*

**Background:** Restorative justice conferencing has been increasingly adopted within mainstream court settings as an alternative to adversarial proceedings, particularly for low-to-mid range offending. However, evidence on victim satisfaction and longer-term wellbeing outcomes in court-referred conferencing remains limited in the Australian context.

**Aim:** To examine victim experiences of court-referred restorative justice conferencing in Victoria and identify practice and system factors that shape outcomes.

**Methods:** A mixed-methods study comprising analysis of post-conference survey data (n=214) and in-depth qualitative interviews with victims (n=28), facilitators (n=12), and magistrates (n=8).

**Results:** Victims who felt adequately prepared and supported prior to conferencing reported significantly higher satisfaction and sense of procedural fairness than those who did not. Key barriers included inconsistent referral practices, inadequate pre-conference preparation, and limited post-conference follow-up. Facilitator skill and neutrality were consistently identified as central to positive outcomes.

Conclusion: Court-referred restorative justice conferencing can deliver meaningful outcomes for victims, but realising this potential requires investment in consistent referral pathways, facilitator training, and victim support before and after the process. Implications for court practice and program design will be discussed.

### **Example 2 – Program implementation (Policy and Practice stream) Word count=225**

*From crisis response to coordinated care: Implementing a multi-agency vulnerability triage model in a metropolitan local government area*

Background: People presenting repeatedly to local services – including council, police, housing, and health – often fall between agency mandates, receiving fragmented responses that address immediate risk without resolving underlying vulnerability. The City of X identified a cohort of high-frequency service users whose needs were not being met by any single agency acting alone.

Objective: To design and implement a multi-agency vulnerability triage model enabling coordinated, person-centred responses to individuals cycling through crisis.

Approach: Following eight months of co-design with agency partners, a fortnightly case coordination panel was established in early 2023. Led by council's community safety team, the panel includes representation from Victoria Police, housing, mental health, and outreach services. Referrals are triaged against a shared vulnerability framework, and a lead agency is assigned for each case. Progress is reviewed at subsequent panels.

Findings: In the first six months, 43 individuals were reviewed. Of these, 31 received a coordinated support plan within two weeks of referral. Agency partners reported improved information sharing and reduced duplication. Three individuals who had previously generated significant emergency service demand were successfully transitioned to stable housing.

Conclusion: Structured multi-agency triage can shift responses from reactive crisis management to coordinated early intervention. Lessons from implementation – including what nearly derailed it – will be shared openly.

### **Example 3 – Interim program evaluation (Lightning Talk stream) Word count=150**

*The Friday Afternoon Problem: what a needle and thread taught us about community safety*

A council-run sewing group was not, on paper, a community safety initiative. But over eighteen months, it became one of the most effective early intervention touchpoints our team had ever worked with.

This lightning talk reflects on an ongoing evaluation about what happened when the City of Y embedded a community safety lens into an existing social connection program targeting isolated older residents in a high-density housing estate. Attendees – predominantly migrant women – began disclosing concerns they had never raised with police or council directly: about their neighbours, about their grandchildren, about things they had seen and felt afraid to name.

What followed was a process of careful relationship-building, quiet referrals, and some hard conversations internally about what "community safety" actually means when the community doesn't trust the institutions delivering it.

This talk will offer a practice reflection on why the most effective safety work sometimes looks nothing like safety work.

Note: The three examples above are illustrative only and do not represent real programs or research.

We look forward to receiving your submissions for ANZSOC 2026!