

# NEWS RELEASE



**The Hon. Graham West MP**  
Minister for Juvenile Justice  
Minister for Youth  
Minister for Volunteering  
Member for Campbelltown

**Tuesday 9 December 2008**

## **NEW EDUCATION PROGRAM AIMS TO REDUCE REOFFENDING AND BOOST SKILLS FOR YOUNG OFFENDERS**

A new partnership between the NSW Government and TAFE gives young offenders better access to education and reduces the risk of reoffending, Minister for Juvenile Justice, Graham West.

The Youth Pathways to Education, Employment and Training program, facilitated by TAFE Outreach and the Department of Juvenile Justice, held a graduation in Petersham today to recognise nine students who successfully completed the course, adding to the 39 young people already graduated since the program's pilot launch in June 2007.

Mr West said the Youth Pathways to Education, Employment and Training program helps young people reduce their risk of re-offending through positive engagement and participation in education, creating a pathway for future employment.

"The program provides hands-on education for young people on supervision in the community who are not participating in mainstream education," Mr West said.

"Education levels are commonly low in young people that have had contact with Juvenile Justice and three-quarters of detainees leave school before finishing Year 9.

"More than 90 per cent have been suspended at one time or another."

"The Youth Pathways to Education, Employment and Training program has proved a great success with 83 per cent of young people completing the course requirements."

The Youth Pathways to Education, Employment and Training program is a hands-on learning environment and is more supportive than traditional settings.

The partnership between the NSW Government and TAFE provides ongoing support to students who wish to continue their studies.

Mr West said today was the graduation of the sixth pilot program.

"22 students from the first four pilots have engaged in further TAFE education, such as hairdressing and carpentry courses and eight graduates have achieved part time or casual employment."

"Education gives young offenders the confidence and skills to successfully integrate back into mainstream society and reduces their reoffending behaviour," Mr West said.

**Media Contact: Cara Davis 0407 219 944**