

NEWS RELEASE



The Hon. Graham West MP
Minister for Juvenile Justice
Minister for Youth
Minister for Volunteering
Minister Assisting the Premier
on Veterans' Affairs

Saturday 30 May 2009

YOUNG OFFENDERS ASSIST AT CANTEEN CAMP

At a CanTeen camp today in Toukley, a group of young offenders from Frank Baxter Juvenile Justice Centre gave a demonstration of 'Frankie' and 'Baxter,' two Labrador puppies being trained by the young offenders to become assistance dogs, Minister for Juvenile Justice, Graham West, said today.

Mr West said the young offenders are part of the Justice Pups program, a world-first initiative where young people in custody train puppies to become Assistance Dogs for people with disabilities.

"The Justice Pups program is a great example of how the state's juvenile justice system can work together with the community to provide valuable services," Mr West said.

"The program enables young people in custody to improve their self-esteem and develop a sense of responsibility. They must be committed to training the puppies for 16 months at the centre.

"At today's CanTeen camp run by Australia's leading cancer charity for young people, the young offenders demonstrated what they had taught the puppies, and explained how the program has helped them in their rehabilitation.

"The CanTeen event is just one example of how young offenders can give back to the community.

"The Justice Pups program is a win-win: young offenders develop skills that may assist in their rehabilitation, the puppies become assistance dogs, and the recipients - people with disabilities - gain much needed assistance and companionship," Mr West said.

Assistance Dog Australia's Jenny Reid spoke to teenagers about the Justice Pups program, the Assistance Dogs organisation and how to get involved. There was also an opportunity to socialise with the dogs.

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