

NEWS RELEASE



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

Monday 20 July 2009

GOVERNMENT TO REVIEW NSW JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

The commencement of the first review of the NSW juvenile justice system in 16 years will aim to improve policy and practice in an effort to reduce the state's reoffending rates, said Minister for Juvenile Justice Graham West.

"The purpose of the independent review is to ensure that the juvenile justice system in NSW is reducing the cycle of crime by providing the best possible assistance to young offenders to become positive members of the community.

"The review gives the Government an opportunity to evaluate measures that are working in other states and overseas for young at risk, and put programs in place in NSW based on the best evidence available," said Mr West.

Independent consultant, the Noetic Group, will start the review immediately with results to be delivered to the Government in December 2009 and will be made public.

"Despite research showing that young people diverted from custodial sentences are less likely to reoffend, NSW has one of the highest rates of incarceration in Australia.

"By reviewing current policies and investigating effective diversionary methods used by other states and countries, the Government is aiming to reduce reoffending rates, which not only saves money for the community but saves young people from a life of crime," said Mr West.

"The review will focus on groups of young people overrepresented in the state's juvenile justice system, including Indigenous young offenders who can represent more than 50 per cent of those serving a custodial sentence."

Mr West said the last review of the NSW juvenile justice system was in 1993.

"Since the last review 16 years ago, both international and local research on the risk factors behind juvenile offending behaviour has grown rapidly.

"Noetic Group, in consultation with Government agencies, partners and non-profit organisations, will review that research in order to provide feedback to the Government on the best measures available to rehabilitate young offenders and reduce their offending behaviour."

"The NSW Government is committed to reducing youth crime and rehabilitating young offenders to reduce juvenile reoffending," added Mr West.

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