

Media Statement

WEDNESDAY, 11 June 2008

Auditor-General's Report: Services to Young Offenders

A report by **Auditor-General, Des Pearson**, titled *Services to Young Offenders*, was tabled in the Victorian Parliament today. The audit examined youth justice services delivered by government that aim to:

- divert young offenders from entering the youth justice system
- better rehabilitate high-risk young offenders
- reduce the likelihood of reoffending among those released from custody, through better pre-release transition and post-release support programs.

This audit examined the extent to which diversionary and rehabilitative services that the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Magistrates' Court of Victoria (MCV) provide to young offenders, maximise diversion from the criminal justice system, reduce the risk of reoffending and improve rehabilitation and reintegration into the community.

Mr Pearson stated that among the staff and agencies providing youth justice services, this audit identified a high level of commitment and effort toward achieving improved outcomes for young offenders, and DHS had good practice with respect to needs identification, case management and the reintegration of young offenders back into the community. Mr Pearson also commented that MCV's delivery of the Criminal Justice Diversion Program was well managed.

However, Mr Pearson stated that DHS and MCV could not demonstrate that the services they deliver were effective in reducing youth reoffending and improving rehabilitation, and there were some important areas needing attention:

- develop outcome measures, performance measures and targets that link to key youth justice strategic, operational and service initiatives
- embed outcome-based performance measurement to assess reoffending rates, the diversion of offenders from the justice system and the extent to which behaviours of offenders are modified.

Importantly, a number of recommendations highlight the need for the development of an integrated, 'whole-of-government' approach to the planning, delivery and reporting of services to young offenders.

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Direct link to report: <http://www.audit.vic.gov.au>

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