

MEDIA RELEASE

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\$14.5 MILLION TO HELP BREAK CYCLE OF CRIME

Minister for Corrections David Elliott today announced \$14.5 million would be spent over three years to expand a highly successful early intervention program for young offenders.

Almost 90 per cent of young people who have completed the Youth on Track program have either stabilised or reduced their contact with Police, and 53 per cent reduced their offending after three months.

The 2016-17 Budget will fund the expansion of the program to three new areas - Central West, Coffs/Clarence and New England. It will also fund the continuation of Youth on Track at existing sites in Blacktown, the Hunter and Mid North Coast.

Under Youth on Track, Police and teachers refer young people aged 10-17 who they consider at risk of long-term involvement in the criminal justice system. After an assessment, the young person receives one-on-one case management and personalised assistance.

The majority of participants who completed the program have had improvements in family functioning, behaviour, and engagement with school or employment.

"The rate of recidivism among young offenders is a concern and this program aims to break that cycle and stop them from returning to the juvenile system or graduating to the adult correctional system," Mr Elliott said.

"Youth on Track has been extremely successful since its inception in 2013 and the six sites will cover 13 Police local area commands with 310 young offenders expected to participate each year.

"This is not about diverting young people from the legal process after they have been charged with a crime. This is about improving community safety by turning young people away from crime as early as possible and getting them back on track."

A competitive tender process will occur for all six sites with the program to be rolled out to the additional three sites by the end of this year.

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