

Monday, 28 July 2008

BREAKING THE CYCLE

Attorney-General Michael Atkinson and Minister for Families and Communities Jennifer Rankine today declared that good progress has been made carrying out Monsignor David Cappo's *To Break the Cycle* report into serious repeat youth offending in South Australia.

As Commissioner for Social Inclusion, Monsignor Cappo's report was published in August last year, making 46 recommendations on how to tackle youth offending.

All 46 recommendations were accepted by the Government.

Mr Atkinson says that 32 of those recommendations have already been met with the remaining 14 well underway. Thirteen of the most urgent recommendations identified by Monsignor Cappo have been carried out.

"So far we've granted almost \$15 million to fund new ideas and to improve existing practices. These steps are already making a difference to these young people's lives," Mr Atkinson says.

In line with the recommendations the Rann Government has:

- Strengthened the *Young Offenders Act 1993* to consider community safety in sentencing (Rec. 2) and allow serious young offenders to be tried as adults (Rec. 7);
- Introduced an aggravated charge for adults committing crimes in front of young people (Rec. 8);
- Funded Prof. David Kennedy to design tailored solutions to youth crime (Rec. 3);
- Provided criminogenic assessments for all Operation Mandrake youths that are under supervision (Rec. 4) and given them priority access to services (Rec. 5);
- Provided intensive supervision and case management for Operation Mandrake youths that are in the community (Rec. 6);
- Provided transitional plans for young people leaving secure care (Rec. 11); and
- Put in place processes for information sharing between agencies working with young offenders (Rec. 17).

The 14 recommendations still being completed have also attracted much funding, including:

- \$4 million is being spent on setting up Youth Justice teams; and
- \$5.6 million allocated for the Community Protection Panel. Both will be in place by the end of the year (Rec 1 & 23).

Minister for Families and Communities Jennifer Rankine says the Government has also invested in programs that will engage young people at risk of becoming involved in crime such as the Power Aboriginal Cup football competition, Operation Flinders and the Kurruru Indigenous Performing Arts program (Rec. 39, 28 & 25).

“We’re also in the process of rolling out an electronic case management system that will help to ensure young people progress through programs and are effectively rehabilitated,” (Rec. 21) Ms Rankine says.

“We’re tackling youth crime on all fronts. We’re reforming the law and changing the way we do things. We’re funding the rehabilitation of young offenders and diverting those at risk from a life of crime.”

“But most of all we’re trying to keep the public safe from those few juveniles that pose a threat,”

“Tackling youth crime is a priority for the Rann Government. I met with Monsignor Cappelletti within days of taking up the portfolio and will continue to meet with him regularly,” Ms Rankine said.

Last month’s, Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows crime levels in South Australia have declined for the fifth straight year. Compared to 2002, crime has fallen by a massive 33.6 per cent.