



Media release

21 March 2011

New accommodation service to support Aboriginal young offenders

Aboriginal young offenders with a history of homelessness will be a key focus of a new accommodation support service to be delivered across NSW, said John Hubby, Chief Executive, Juvenile Justice, Department of Human Services NSW, today.

“The Supported Accommodation Service is aimed at helping young offenders with a history of homelessness gain independent living and stay out of custody.

“The service will be delivered in the Mid and Far North Coast by YP Space MNC and Northern Rivers Social Development Council, in the Riverina Murray region by Mission Australia, and in South West Sydney by CatholicCare.

“It will reach young offenders aged 13 to 18 years with complex needs and young people leaving detention, particularly Aboriginal young offenders.

“The four organisations were selected after a thorough tender process. They provided excellent value for money and demonstrated vast experience and expertise in delivering similar services for homeless young people.

“In total, the contracts provide the organisations with more than \$4 million for the next three years,” said Mr Hubby.

“The most recent survey of young people in custody revealed that six per cent were residing in unsettled accommodation or had ‘no fixed place of abode’, with young women representing 18 per cent. More than one-quarter (27 per cent) had moved two or more times in the six months prior to custody, and this was more for Aboriginal young people at nearly a third (32 per cent).

“The organisations will provide accommodation support, including long term independent living options and social housing. They will develop individual case plans with the young people addressing offending behaviour, and deliver support services to improve their integration back into the community.

“For young people under the age of 16 years who may not be eligible for social housing, the organisations will provide alternative family, fostering or kinship care options, especially for young Aboriginal people,” said Mr Hubby.

Support services include:

- Improving a young person’s social and community living skills;
- Providing vocational, educational and training opportunities;
- Linking young people to counselling; and
- Active involvement in the young person’s family and support network.

“Accommodation services for Aboriginal young offenders with a history of homelessness will help to reduce the risk of them coming in and out of the criminal justice system,” said Mr Hubby.

The Supported Accommodation Service is an initiative of the NSW Homelessness Action Plan. It is funded through the Commonwealth Government’s ‘National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness’ whereby Commonwealth and States and Territories are working together to significantly reduce homelessness by 2013.

Funding:

- Approximately \$1.1m for the next three years to CatholicCare for South West Sydney
- Approximately \$1.4 million for the next three years to YP Space MNC and Northern Rivers Social Development Council for Mid and Far North Coast respectively
- Approximately \$1.5 million for next three years to Mission Australia for the Riverina Murray

To access the NSW Homelessness Action Plan, visit the Housing NSW website:
www.housing.nsw.gov.au

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