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Minister for Corrections
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MEDIA RELEASE

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INNOVATIVE PROGRAM GETS YOUTH ON TRACK

Police and teachers will refer young offenders to early intervention services as part of a \$14.5 million program to help break the cycle of crime.

Minister for Corrections David Elliott today announced the successful tenderers for the Youth on Track program, designed to coordinate services for 10–17 year olds at risk of long-term involvement in the criminal justice system.

Youth on Track will be expanded to Coffs Clarence, New England and Central West from December, following its success at sites in Blacktown, Hunter and Mid North Coast. About 310 young people will participate in the program across NSW each year.

The successful tenderers are:

- Mission Australia to service sites in Blacktown, Central West, Hunter, and Mid North Coast
- Social Futures to service Coffs Clarence
- Centacare NENW to service New England

As part of the program, teachers and Police can refer young offenders believed to be at high risk of reoffending to support services, such as behavioural and family, to address the underlying causes of their criminal behaviour.

Almost 90 per cent of young people who have participated in Youth on Track have either stabilised or reduced their contact with Police and 53 per cent reduced their offending risk factors after three months.

“Research shows young people who come into contact with the criminal justice system at a very young age are the most likely to offend for a longer time and at a greater frequency and most likely to receive a custodial order,” Mr Elliott said.

“Unless young offenders receive targeted individualised intervention, like Youth on Track, to address the causes of their involvement in crime they are likely to continue offending into adulthood.”

Juvenile Justice received bids from 33 organisations to deliver the program. The three successful tenderers demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of the difficulties young offenders face in desisting from crime and proposed innovative interventions to help them get back on track.