



Speech by


Hon. Jarrod Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Juvenile Justice, Boot Camps

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (10.22 am): The Newman government is committed to breaking the cycle of youth crime and getting juvenile justice under control in Queensland. The former Labor government created a legacy where approximately one-third of all young offenders in detention had served there five times or more—a statistic no-one should be proud of. This government will take action to reduce the number of repeat offenders and give these young people a better chance of turning their lives around.

I am very pleased to announce that this government will trial two youth boot camp programs for 80 young offenders available at different points of the justice system—a sentenced youth boot camp in the Cairns region and an early intervention youth boot camp in the Gold Coast region. Two different types of boot camps will be trialled to test which approach is the most successful at reducing reoffending rates. The boot camp proposal proved overwhelmingly popular throughout the state, and we received significant input from community groups and government agencies during the consultation process.

The government will continually monitor and review the outcomes of the boot camp trial and, if successful, it is the government's intention to broaden the scope of the trial to other areas around the state. Both programs will adopt a similar approach, including a camp component that will provide discipline, structure and physical training. The programs will also involve family skilling, community participation, education and training. Both programs will aim to address the causes of offending behaviour and re-engage the young person in learning or help them get a job. A longer-term mentoring component will help to guide the young person in the right direction. The key difference will be in the intensity and length of the programs.

The sentenced youth boot camp will be implemented in the Cairns region and will divert 40 young people over the next two years from detention into boot camps. It is clear from the data that Cairns will benefit significantly from a program that diverts young offenders away from detention. I will be amending the Youth Justice Act 1992 so that a boot camp order becomes a sentencing option for courts in the Cairns area. Judges in this area will be able to offer young offenders facing a custodial sentence a chance to turn their lives around through a boot camp order.

The early intervention youth boot camp will be implemented in the Gold Coast region and will focus on stopping 40 young people over the next two years from entering the youth justice system. In South-East Queensland there are a significant number of young people entering the justice system, and therefore there is a strong demand for an early intervention youth boot camp. The young people targeted for this camp will be those identified by police, schools and allied professionals as being on a path heading towards a life of crime if they do not receive intervention to divert them away from crime and give them new opportunities.

A procurement process to contract appropriate service providers will commence this week, and details will be available on the department of justice website. The announcement of this procurement process demonstrates that this government is well on track to fulfilling our commitment contained in the six-month action plan to engage service providers for boot camp trials before December this year. Following the procurement process, both youth boot camps will commence in early 2013. For interested service providers, information sessions will be held in Cairns on 29 August and on the Gold Coast on 30 August. These sessions will provide an opportunity for interested parties to obtain further detail about the programs and the government's expectations.

The former Labor government created a revolving door of crime and juvenile detention. We need to change how we respond to these young offenders because if we do not help them now it will cost taxpayers \$250,000 per offender per year to keep them in youth detention. That is why the Newman government has committed \$2 million to this trial—to give young people the opportunity to learn values and respect and to take responsibility and get their lives back on track.