




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Youth Justice

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (10.02 am): I am pleased to outline to the House the important contribution this government is making towards reinstating diversionary courts. These programs, many of which were axed by the former LNP government, are a key feature of the Palaszczuk government's commitment to investing in the justice system to achieve better outcomes. This government has allocated \$32.3 million over the next four years to get diversionary courts back up and running. These courts help to change lives, and in doing so they help to make Queensland a safer community. Rebuilding specialist courts will help to address the underlining causes of offending and divert offenders from prison by creating opportunities to address offending behaviour.

Yesterday, I had the pleasure of opening the Queensland youth justice forum. I had the chance to meet a group of people who have dedicated their lives to stopping the cycle of youth offending and who are working on a blueprint plan of action to give vulnerable young people the helping hand they need to navigate the criminal justice system. I commend them for their work, and that is why I am so pleased that \$23.6 million was allocated in Tuesday's budget to bring back court referred youth justice conferencing. I am committed to this important aspect of our youth justice system. This crucial conferencing process will give young people greater opportunities to take responsibility for their criminal offending and its effects on victims. It will also give victims the opportunity to be heard and give them some closure.

Putting children in jail will be a last resort under this government. This government has allocated \$8.7 million to honour its election commitment to reinstate the Murri Court and the Special Circumstances Court Diversion program. The Murri Court was established in 2006 in response to the growing number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who were being incarcerated. After its abolition by the former government, the Indigenous sentencing list has played a vital role in trying to bridge the gap that was left. I am committed to bringing the Murri Court back. I believe a community based approach can result in more positive outcomes for people and their communities. These programs have demonstrated what can be achieved when the courts, the government and local communities work together. This government is staunch in its commitment to support these initiatives and build on them in consultation with the Indigenous community and other justice system representatives.

Our commitment to bringing back diversionary courts goes hand in hand with our commitment to consulting and developing best practice in this space. We will not simply pick up what was there and put it back again. We will look at the lessons learned and adapt the courts based on feedback from the judiciary, the legal profession and community groups. I am very proud to be part of the Palaszczuk government that is committed to reducing crime by investing early. This is what our courts, the legal profession, the police and the community want from a government, and we will work with Queenslanders to deliver on this commitment.