




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 16 February 2017

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Justice System, Parole Review

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (9.46 am): The Palaszczuk government is delivering on another election commitment by reinstating the Drug Court, as also recommended in the Sofronoff parole board review report released today. These courts were cut by the LNP for ideological reasons alone, with no consideration of evidence, no understanding of the link between addiction and offending or, in fact, any basic understanding of the court. We will reintroduce them using the best and most cost-effective model for Queensland.

The government engaged expert consultants from Monash University, the ANU and the Australian Institute of Criminology to determine the best model. They considered how existing specialist court and court diversionary programs can best work together to address underlying issues associated with criminal offending and other problematic issues and behaviours, such as alcohol and drug misuse, mental health issues, homelessness and domestic violence.

We will adopt the model recommended by this drug and specialist courts review. The Palaszczuk government is committed to intervening in these high-risk cases because we know that the best outcome for both the individual and the broader community is to tackle addiction, turn people away from crime and create a safer community for everyone.

The new Drug Court will be operating out of the Brisbane Magistrates Court and will accept offenders onto the program by the end of the year. It will include support and referral services which will be rolled out to other locations across the state. The reinstatement of the Drug Court will again position Queensland as a leader in justice system reforms that are evidence based and have proven effective in breaking the cycle of offending. Where drug and alcohol dependency is concerned, this is extremely challenging but the potential benefits to the community are significant.

We know that diversionary programs have a better chance of changing behaviour, which is why we have a targeted, well-designed model. The court will target those offenders who are at the highest risk of reoffending who have a drug dependency as it is these offenders who require the type of wraparound services and support and intensive treatment and supervision to address their drug problem. Importantly, drug courts are not an easy option. For participants the program will be challenging. They will have to confront their addictions and offending and seriously address these issues.

The Sofronoff review also recommended no-body no-parole legislation in Queensland. This government wants to help families of victims achieve the closure that comes with a proper farewell to their loved ones. We can do this by providing a strong incentive for offenders to cooperate with authorities. We will introduce this legislation this year after consulting with stakeholders on a preferred model going forward.