

Question on Notice

No. 367

Asked on 21 May 2013

MR JUDGE asked the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice (MR BLEIJIE)–

QUESTION:

With reference to government statistics showing that 33.3 per cent (1,351) of young people found guilty in Queensland courts committed 78 per cent of the total proven offences – just 0.03 percent of the state's youth population—

Will the Attorney-General outline whether boot camps are designed to reduce offending by this cohort and, if so, what evidence-based strategies are being applied?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Yeerongpilly for his question.

The Queensland Government has implemented the Sentenced Youth Boot Camp program as part of its *Safer Streets Crime Action Plan*.

This trial program targets prolific young offenders who would otherwise be sentenced to detention. This program is designed to target this cohort and reduce their offending behaviour.

The program is designed to teach the young offender to take responsibility for their behaviour, address the core reasons for their offending as well as increasing their supervision to improve community safety.

To participate in the Sentenced Youth Boot Camp program a young person must be sentenced to a Boot Camp Order by the Court. This trial aims to have 80 young people across two years from Cairns and Townsville areas participate in the program.

An evaluation of the trial is occurring and an analysis of the rate of re-offending post boot camp is a key part of this study.

With respect to the evidence-based strategies that have been incorporated, it should be noted the development of the youth boot camp program involved the review of existing literature and consultation with key interested parties, boot camp providers and experts in criminal justice.

I personally consulted with boot camp providers as well as criminal justice experts in two roundtable discussions. A number of organisations and people represented at the roundtable meetings also provided me written submissions for consideration. The submissions outlined key elements that should be incorporated into the program to make it successful.

Research clearly tells us that youth boot camps are most effective if they provide structure and discipline; allow for improved decision making through testing physical activities; address the causes of crime; involve families and provide ongoing support and mentoring to young people after they return to the community.

I listened to the experts to ensure that the youth boot camp program included all the critical elements to make it a success.