



# Hon Greg Smith SC MP

Attorney General  
Minister for Justice

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **DRUG TREATMENT PRISON, SECOND SYDNEY DRUG COURT**

The Attorney General, Greg Smith SC, has announced the Government will deliver on an election commitment to set up a second Drug Court in Sydney and establish 300 beds for the treatment of drug-addicted prisoners.

Mr Smith said the John Morony Correctional Complex at Berkshire Park, in Sydney's north-west, would run the rehabilitation program – to be rolled out in stages from next February.

He added that a second metropolitan Drug Court initially would sit at the Downing Centre one day per week and involve 40 participants per year.

Mr Smith said both facilities were important steps in the Government's commitment to reduce recidivism through meaningful rehabilitation.

"The Government will be tackling the underlying causes of crime and it is sad fact that many offenders are led into a life of crime because of their addiction to drugs or alcohol," Mr Smith said.

"There can be no doubt that prisoners are less likely to reoffend if they leave prison free of drug dependency."

Corrective services data indicates that on any given day, more than 4500 inmates with a medium to high risk of reoffending need some intervention to address alcohol and other drug-related needs. Of these more than 1000 have severe problems which require intensive intervention.

Of the 15,000 people received into custody in 2007-08 in NSW, almost 60 per cent were under the influence of drugs or alcohol when they committed their most serious offence; 71 per cent had committed drug-related crimes (including alcohol); 54 per cent had a history of injecting drug use; and 36 per cent were injecting drugs around the time of their offence.

"Unfortunately, I am advised that there should be no difficulties in identifying suitable candidates for participation in the program," Mr Smith said.

The Attorney General said the 300-bed Metropolitan Drug Treatment Facility at the John Morony Correctional Centre (JMCC), would offer an Intensive Drug and Alcohol Treatment Program (IDATP) for male and female inmates

The first phase will involve a 62-bed unit for male inmates at John Morony, to open in February 2012. Further units will open in July 2012 and then in July 2013. The unit at Dilwynnia Correctional Centre for women will open in July 2014.

Once fully implemented, there will be 250 beds for male inmates at JMCC and 50 beds at Dillwynnia. The male unit will include a 10-bed non-compliance unit to accommodate those inmates displaying anti-social behaviour or non-participation in programs

Eligible offenders will be sentenced inmates with a documented history of problematic drug and/or alcohol use, with a minimum non-parole period of six months still to serve and a minimum or medium security classification.

Male offenders convicted of sex offences will be excluded as they have specialised programs available to them as sex offenders. Inmates will also be excluded if they have non-association alerts with other inmates already undertaking the IDATP.

The second metropolitan Drug Court will be operational from next May and complement existing Drug Courts at Parramatta and Toronto.

In addition, there will be a urine test facility, registry support and a collaborative workspace for the different agencies involved – the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Police, Legal Aid and Corrective Services.

Mr Smith said the Drug Court, led by Senior Judge Roger Dive, had turned many lives around.

“Many of the participants would be in jail, were it not for Judge Dive and his team’s extraordinary efforts to address the causes of their offending and drug abuse, such as psychological problems, family dysfunction and inadequate education.”

The Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research has found the Drug Court is more cost-effective than prison in reducing the rate of re-offending among offenders who had committed drug-related crime. Its 2008 study also found offenders who completed the program were 37 per cent less likely to be convicted of an offence than offenders who did not enter the Drug Court.

The positive outcomes at the Parramatta Drug Court since 2000 led to the opening of a second Drug Court at Toronto in March to service the Hunter region.