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Gary Humphries MLA

Australian Capital Territory

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SUPPORTING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE IN TIMES OF NEED

The Department of Justice and Community Safety will administer three new support programs for young people as part of the Building Social Capital initiatives being brought forward by the Government in this Budget, Minister for Justice and Community Safety, Gary Humphries, announced today.

Mr Humphries said \$2 million over the next four years will be made available to fund the initiatives, which will target areas affecting young people in need of help, and aim for earlier intervention to prevent problems setting in for the long-term.

“The **Indigenous Supported Accommodation** initiative, will provide a much needed accommodation option for young indigenous people. \$185,000 per year is made available for this program.

“Young indigenous people are grossly over-represented in the criminal justice system and figure largely in multiple court appearances. Stable accommodation supplemented by supervised and supported daytime activities will assist in reducing the imbalance of young indigenous people in our justice system.

“The **Intensive Youth Support Scheme** will provide additional support and services to a small number of young offenders with acute needs and will be funded at \$130,000 per year.

“Such intensive intervention is necessary to address offending behaviours that may be accompanied by serious alcohol and drug issues, mental health concerns, exposure to domestic violence and lack of suitable accommodation options for this group of young people.

“Intensive intervention will provide robust service interventions, intensive case management, assertive case management, continuity of care, and to improve access to appropriate interventions and services for high risk offenders.

“The scheme aims to reduce the risk of repeat offending, minimise exposure to the criminal justice system and facilitate family and community re-integration of young offenders.

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“The **Young Sex Offender Programs** initiative involves the identification and purchase of specific and scientifically-evaluated sex offender programs designed to address unacceptable sexual behaviour of young people subject to probation supervision. \$200,000 per year is being made available for this initiative.

“This program is most important to ensure young people displaying unacceptable sexual behaviour are the subject of the earliest available intervention and assistance to overcome their difficulties and reintegrate into society.

“Research and evaluation of identified sex offender programs will occur to identify best-practice nationwide. During delivery of the program, on-going evaluation of its effectiveness will occur over the next three years.” Mr Humphries said.

Mr Humphries said these initiatives would build on the services available to young people who run the risk of coming into conflict with the justice system.

“If we can effectively target our programs to intervene early enough to prevent sociological or psychological problems leading to criminal behaviour, we have a better chance of helping these young people. If we leave it too late, prison won’t help them and we’ll have missed an opportunity to improve the quality of life of people who need our help most,” Mr Humphries said.

Statement Ends