More than $3.5 million Budget boost for rehabilitation

More than $3.5 million is being spent on 18 new dedicated Community Corrections Officers and new electronic surveillance equipment to track parolees in the community in the upcoming Budget 2011.

Minister for Correctional Services, Gerry McCarthy said the funding would bolster the Northern Territory Community Corrections unit with extra resources to implement Community Custody Orders and Community Based Orders under the Territory Government’s New Era of Corrections.

“Community Custody Orders and Community Based Orders are a key part of our New Era of Corrections and ensure offenders undergo rehabilitation, education and training, and work programs,” Minister McCarthy said.

“The Northern Territory Community Corrections is a specialised unit dedicated to the supervision of offenders in the community - this Budget includes a direct investment of $3.6 million into providing 18 new Community Corrections Officers and new surveillance equipment to track offenders in the community.

“This is a $3.6 million investment into this Government’s commitment to building a safer Territory.

“We’re committed to delivering real rehabilitation avenues for inmates and breaking the cycle of reoffending.

“These new resources will support Community Custody Orders and Community Based Orders to be introduced later this year.”

Budget 2011 includes:
• $1.9 million to deliver 18 new Community Corrections Officers;
• $1.46 million to deliver new electronic surveillance equipment to track parolees in the community, including 30 electronic anklets; and
• $200,000 on investing in training for staff to provide skills in managing offenders on the new orders and use of new surveillance equipment.

“This investment is in addition to the planned multimillion investment to build new prison facilities with a key focus on rehabilitation, including the new Darwin corrections precinct and the new Katherine Prison Farm. This will build on the investment in the Barkly Work Camp,” Minister McCarthy said.

New Era of Corrections delivers:
• New sentencing options – Community Custody Orders and Community Based Orders – giving courts the power to order offenders into rehabilitation, education and training, and work programs;
• Electronic surveillance transmitters and voice recognition security to allow Corrections to monitor the behaviour and location of offenders on community orders, home detention, and parole;
• An extra 45 alcohol and drug treatment beds, including the construction of a new centre in Alice Springs;
• Improved reintegration and post release support; and
• Construction of new prison facilities, including the new Darwin prison precinct and a new Katherine Prison Farm.

Community Custody Orders will be a new sentencing option for non violent offenders facing an imprisonment period of less than 12 months. Under these new sentences, Courts can order offenders to serve their custodial sentence outside prison under strict supervision by corrections and require them to attend rehabilitation and training programs and participate in employment and community work.

Community Based Orders will be available to courts dealing with low level offenders not facing an imprisonment period.

Both Community Based Orders and Community Custody Orders will allow Courts to mandate offender participation in education, training and treatment programs.

For more information visit www.safeterritory.nt.gov.au or email newera@nt.gov.au.

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