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Driver Education to reduce re-offending

A new program aimed at reducing re-offending amongst prisoners convicted of driving offences was officially launched at the Alice Springs Correctional Centre today.

Justice Minister Dr Peter Toyne said the Driver Education Training Program will have a real impact on reducing re-offending amongst these type of offenders, which form a significant part of the prison population.

"Over the past financial year 295 people were sentenced to jail for driving offences with 264 of those indigenous people."

"At the Alice Springs prison alone 65% of prisoners have a current or prior driving offence on their record and a large number of these have never held a driver’s licence."

"Rehabilitating these prisoners by providing driver education and training is a practical and relatively simple example of crime prevention."

"It is unbelievable that these measures have never been taken in the past and our actions are an indication of our commitment to providing rehabilitation as a crime prevention tool."

"By providing training and the means to gain licence these prisoners are less likely to commit driving offences when they are released into the community."

"For those indigenous prisoners from remote communities this program provides access to training and the ability to gain a licence, which is much more difficult to access in a remote locality."

The program was developed through collaboration between the Alice Springs Correctional Centre management and education and programs staff, the Motor Vehicle Registry, Tangentyere Council, Hanson Training Services, the Road Safety Council and Drug and Alcohol Services, Alice Springs.

The training vehicle was donated by the Superintendent and made roadworthy and converted to dual control by prisoners.

Tangentyere Council has provided training place funding for 20 prisoners through Hanson Training Services.

The Road Safety Council has provided $5000 to construct a practical instruction site with signage and traffic lights as well as road safety courses.

282 prisoners have expressed an interest in the program and 265 of those
will need to complete a drink driving course. Negotiations are currently underway to establish a drink driving course for prisoners.