

MINISTER FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE

OVERVIEW

<i>Agency</i>	<i>Budget 1999-2000 \$m</i>	<i>Budget 2000-01 \$m</i>	<i>Variation %</i>
Department of Juvenile Justice			
Total Expenses	88.4	104.3	18.0
Asset Acquisitions	9.3	2.3	(-) 75.3
Total, Minister for Juvenile Justice			
Total Expenses	88.4	104.3	18.0
Asset Acquisitions	9.3	2.3	(-) 75.3

DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

The Department of Juvenile Justice has responsibility for ensuring the provision of quality community and custodial services to maximise the capacity and opportunity of juvenile offenders to choose positive alternatives to offending behaviour.

EXPENDITURE TRENDS AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Implementation of the Youth Justice Conferencing Scheme (which seeks to ensure that police are encouraged to use the least intrusive and most appropriate responses to offending behaviour by young people in every instance) has been a major focus of the Department. This Scheme commenced in April 1998 under the *Young Offenders Act 1997*. Under the initiative, young people are held accountable for their behaviour in conferences through a facilitated meeting with the victims of their offences. The harm is healed through apology, reparation and work for the victim or the community.

In 1999-2000 the Department received additional funding to implement recommendations made by the Drug Summit.

During 1999-2000 new detention centres were opened at Grafton (Acmena Juvenile Justice Centre), Gosford (Frank Baxter Juvenile Justice Centre) and Dubbo (Orana Juvenile Justice Centre). Following completion of Frank Baxter and Acmena Juvenile Justice Centres, Minda Juvenile Justice Centre was closed in October 1999. Closure of Worimi Juvenile Justice Centre was also announced in April 2000.

In addition, during 1999-2000 the Department completed the upgrade of its information system and information technology infrastructure. This will improve the quality of information available to staff and communication within the Department.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

In January 1999, the Department released its "Juvenile Justice Beyond 2001" corporate plan. Implementation of the initiatives in the corporate plan has been a major focus for the Department.

In 1996-97, the Department commenced implementation of its capital works plan to upgrade the overall standard of accommodation in juvenile justice centres. Stage one of the program was completed in 1999-2000 with construction of new facilities at Dubbo, Grafton, Mt Penang and Cobham. This will ensure that juveniles are accommodated in facilities that meet national standards for detention centres. The capital program addresses accommodation issues raised by the 1996 Ombudsman's *Inquiry into Juvenile Detention Centres*.

In 2000-01, the Department will expand its induction training for all new staff, provide training for frontline staff to enable them to manage the most difficult clients and competency based training will be continued. These training programs will ensure ongoing improvement in the quality of services provided to juvenile justice clients and their families.

Juvenile justice community based support services will continue to be a major emphasis for the Department. These services include post release support schemes, the Aboriginal and generic mentor scheme, additional services for young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, and the statewide expansion of alternative placement programs for young offenders who cannot live with their parents or families.

On 1 July 1999 the Department introduced the Mincom Integrated Management system which has allowed the Department's corporate services to be rationalised and moved towards current best practice in line with the Government's corporate service reform agenda.

2000-01 BUDGET

Total Expenses

The Department's total expenses for 2000-01 are expected to be \$104.3 million. Expenses will be higher than in the 1999-2000 Budget, reflecting the Department's commitment to enhancing training of its front line staff and implementing recommendations made by the Drug Summit.

An additional \$1.9 million has been provided for training in 2000-01 and \$4.4 million has been provided under the Government Plan of Action on Drugs.

Drug Summit initiatives include 10 alcohol and other drug counsellors, introduction of medical detoxification services at Cobham and Yasmar, and the establishment of two residential drug rehabilitation services in Dubbo and Coffs Harbour.

Further funding has been allocated in 2000-01 for the continued implementation of a range of community based initiatives to break young people out of their offending behaviour cycles.

Funding has also been allocated for the continuation of the Youth Justice Conferencing Scheme.

Juvenile offender psychological and psychiatric services will continue in 2000-01 as will the operation of programs for young violent and sexual offenders.

Funding has also been provided for the Government's graffiti removal initiatives.

Asset Acquisitions

The department's forward capital budget will be revisited after consideration of a report on the Department by the Council on the Cost of Government.

The construction and upgrading of centres is part of a capital strategic plan developed by the Department to improve the standard of accommodation for juveniles held in detention and to address the various concerns raised in the Ombudsman's Report. Stage 1 of the capital works was completed in 1999-2000.

The major information technology and telecommunications plan which commenced in 1998-99 was completed in 1999-2000. This technology will result in improved efficiency.

A new initiative stemming from the Drug Summit will facilitate the purchase in 2000-01 of two properties to house drug rehabilitation programs.

The Department's minor capital works allocation will continue the asset replacement program.