



Hon Greg Smith SC MP

Attorney General
Minister for Justice

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW DRUG COURT JUDGE WINS PRIME MINISTER'S AWARD

Attorney General Greg Smith has congratulated NSW Drug Court Senior Judge Roger Dive on receiving the prestigious Prime Minister's Award at the 2011 National Drug and Alcohol Awards in Sydney tonight.

"I can think of no more worthy recipient of this award, which recognises the difference Judge Dive has made to the lives of hundreds of Drug Court participants who have overcome serious substance abuse problems," Mr Smith said.

"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."

Judge Dive was involved in the development and implementation of the Youth Drug and Alcohol Court, which opened in Parramatta in 2000. In 2005, he was appointed Senior Judge of the adult Drug Court. He has presided over the court during a period of success and growth.

In 2008, the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research found the Drug Court was more cost-effective than prison in reducing the rate of re-offending among offenders who had committed drug-related crime. The 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 achieved by Judge Dive and his Parramatta-based team resulted in a second Drug Court being opened at Toronto in March to service the Hunter region.

Mr Smith said the NSW Government will establish an additional Drug Court in the Sydney metropolitan area, which will include detoxification facilities, drug testing, monitoring and treatment.

"The expansion of the Drug Court is a key component of the Coalition Government's plan to reduce recidivism by increasing prisoner access to rehabilitation programs," Mr Smith said.

"I look forward to discussing the proposal for a new Drug Court with Judge Dive and utilising his knowledge and expertise."

The National Drug and Alcohol Awards are held annually to celebrate achievements in preventing and reducing alcohol and other drug use and harm in Australia. The Prime Minister's Award is the highest honour given at the ceremony.

While Judge Dive was unable to attend the ceremony, members of the Drug Court team accepted the award on his behalf and delivered his acceptance speech, in which he said:

"I would like to thank and acknowledge all the dedicated individuals and organisations who have worked alongside me at the Drug Court, the Youth Drug and Alcohol Court, and at our Compulsory Drug Treatment Correctional Centre.

"It is only by virtue of their continued efforts and skills that the programs have been such a success.

“These are exciting times for innovative programs and problem-solving courts, as governments across Australia, and across the world, recognise the success and cost effectiveness of proven programs.”

Judge Dive established a ‘Courts as Solutions’ group of magistrates and judges across Australia in 2010. He is also a board member of the International Association of Drug Treatment Courts.

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