



**Greg Smith SC MP**

Attorney General  
Minister for Justice

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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**10 December 2012**

### **PUPS IN PRISON –TENTH ANNIVERSARY**

Attorney General and Minister for Justice Greg Smith SC has thanked participants in the Pups in Prison program, which today celebrated its ten year anniversary.

Pups in Prison is a program under which inmates in the state's correctional centres help raise and train assistance dogs for people with physical disabilities. The dogs eventually help their recipients with everyday tasks such as opening doors, picking up objects, paying at the shops and pressing the button at traffic lights.

The joint initiative between the Department of Attorney General and Justice, Corrective Services NSW and Assistance Dogs Australia started in November 2002

Mr Smith said: "It is a win-win initiative: more dogs are trained while some inmates gain valuable employment and life skills."

"Since the beginning of Pups in Prison, more than 50 dogs have been trained inside our correctional facilities - dogs which have given people with physical disabilities freedom and independence," he said.

"While the Labrador and Golden Retriever pups look cute and cuddly, there is work involved in caring for them and training them, and inmates gain important skills."

The aim of the program is to give selected inmates valuable employment and life skills and increase their chances of finding jobs and leading law-abiding lives after their release.

The inmates learn responsibility, patience and communications skills. By working closely with the volunteer dog handlers they also learn about teamwork and build a relationship with a mentor and positive role model.

"Our participation in this program is driven by the positive impact on rehabilitation, and by the skills inmates can gain through it. It is an extra bonus that the initiative allows inmates to give back to the community and helps a not-for profit organisation provide more assistance dogs to needy recipients."

Assistance Dogs Australia ceo Richard Lord said: "The Pups in Prison program began as a way for Assistance Dogs Australia to train more dogs to help people with physical disabilities, while helping offenders serving time in corrective centres along the way," said.

"But, most importantly this program allows these guys to give back to the community, with these dogs eventually giving freedom and independence to someone with a physical disability" Mr Lord said.

Since 2002 the program has been expanded to correctional centres in Queensland, Victoria and Tasmania. Similar programs are also run overseas.

In NSW, the Pups in Prison training program currently runs at the Bathurst and Junee Correctional Centres, while a similar program, named Justice Pups, is operating at Frank Baxter Juvenile Justice Centre.

A birthing facility was opened at Emu Plains Correctional Centre earlier this year.