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MEDIA RELEASE

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GRANT TO HELP YOUNG OFFENDERS GET BACK ON TRACK

Byron Bay will soon be better equipped to tackle youth crime and reoffending through a \$250,000 grant from the NSW Government to Byron Youth Service, Attorney General Mark Speakman and Nationals Parliamentary Secretary for Northern NSW Ben Franklin announced today.

Mr Franklin said the Byron Young First Offenders Program will take on anti-social behaviour at crime hotspots during festivals and schoolies season, as well as educate school students about appropriate behaviour.

“The program will offer restorative justice circles for first time offenders referred by police, schools or youth workers to help build on the offender’s positive relationships, repair harm caused by the offence and address negative behaviours,” Franklin said.

“It will also target first time offenders who have committed drug and alcohol offences, disorderly conduct, non-domestic violence related assault or intimidation, stalking and harassment.

“This funding will allow Byron Youth Service to take advantage of their existing relationships in the region with high schools, community organisations and local police officers.

“Byron Youth Service is a well-known organisation in the Northern Rivers with a strong track record in the community helping vulnerable young people get back on track,” Mr Franklin said.

Mr Speakman said the program aims to curb youth offending through early intervention in schools, community pop-up youth services, restorative justice circles for first offenders and intensive case management support for youth at risk of reoffending.

“The program improves safety within the Byron Community through a multi-faceted approach to guiding low-level offenders and at-risk young people towards useful and fulfilling lives,” Mr Speakman said.

“The NSW Government is providing Byron Youth Service with funding under the fourth round of its Community Safety Fund program, which is delivering \$10 million in community grants over four years.

“The NSW Government recognises that local people understand local crime problems and, through the Community Safety Fund, can play an important role in addressing them,” Mr Speakman said.