



MEDIA RELEASE

Intensive programs help put female inmates' lives back on track

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A new unit dedicated to the needs of female inmates on short sentences is making great strides in rehabilitation and preparation for reintegration into society.

The unit at Dillwynia Correctional Centre in Sydney's north west is purpose-built to help the inmates get their lives back on track, and is one of 10 High Intensity Program Units planned for seven correctional centres across the state.

Minister for Corrections David Elliott said it was part of a four-year strategy that demonstrated the NSW Government's commitment to reducing recidivism.

"This program targets inmates on short sentences who often have limited or no access to rehabilitation while in custody and all eligible inmates will be expected to participate," Mr Elliott said.

"It is based on a set of behaviour change programs and strategies that has shown to be the most effective in reducing a person's chance of reoffending and increasing their ability to reintegrate successfully into the community."

The 40-place unit at the Berkshire Park centre, known as a HIPU, will focus on delivering treatment, education and programs to female inmates.

Priority will be given to those serving sentences of less than six months but those serving up to 12 months will be eligible for a place in the program.

Commissioner Peter Severin said the four-month program linked inmates to local support services that could address their individual health or social issues to deal with the reasons that lead to them reoffending.

"The HIPU focuses on pre-release planning from day one, including access to children, local mental health services and family visits. This provides the offender with the skills to make a real difference to his or her life and creates a safer community," Mr Severin said.

Over 80 new roles have been created across the state to implement the new strategy.

CSNSW State-wide Programs Director Danielle Matsuo said the program targets offending and anti-social behaviour related to addiction, aggression and domestic abuse and that inmates had shown an enthusiasm to participate.

"It is designed to help participants understand the factors that led them to offend and to develop the skills they need to reduce the risk of offending again," Ms Matsuo said.

"HIPU inmates have been positive about their experiences with some sharing what they have learnt with non-participating inmates. These programs offer a real opportunity to break the cycle of re-offending."

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