



Mark Speakman

Attorney General
Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence

Sarah Mitchell

Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday, 10 September 2019

BACK TO SCHOOL: COURTING EDUCATION SO KIDS STAY OUT OF TROUBLE

A Children's Court program designed to help young offenders get their lives back on track by encouraging them to finish their education is now operating at five locations across the state.

Attorney General Mark Speakman and Minister for Education Sarah Mitchell announced the NSW Government was investing \$845,000 over two years to fund education liaison officers at Parramatta, Surry Hills, Campbelltown, Port Kembla and Broadmeadow Children's Courts.

The expansion follows a successful trial in Parramatta that launched in November last year.

"Young people who come in contact with the justice system are often at a distressing and traumatic point of their lives, so they need extra support to help rebuild their lives and reduce the chances of reoffending, which includes reengaging with learning," Mr Speakman said.

"We have already seen some positive results coming out of the trial at Parramatta with more than 500 youth receiving assistance and benefiting from follow-up support to keep them focused on education and training."

Ms Mitchell said the best way to stop the cycle of crime is for children and teenagers to finish their schooling.

"Education is the stepping stone to a brighter future and is crucial in keeping young offenders out of trouble," Ms Mitchell said.

"These education officers work closely with schools, alternative education settings and vocational and training providers to help young people find the right learning environment to achieve their goals."

The President of the Children's Court, Judge Peter Johnstone, said he campaigned for education officers because he was seeing too many children in court who had dropped out of education and training.

"I am delighted the NSW Government is supporting this initiative because education is the key to helping youth achieve their full potential and will reduce their involvement in the justice system in the longer term," Judge Johnstone said.