



# Hon Greg Smith SC MP

Attorney General  
Minister for Justice

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### BACK TO SCHOOL FOR JUVENILE OFFENDERS IN WESTERN SYDNEY

The Attorney General and Minister for Justice Greg Smith commended NSW Juvenile Justice staff and NSW Department of Education and Communities teachers for their dedication to young people in custody, as detainees at Cobham Juvenile Justice Centre in St Marys returned to school for the new school year.

“Around 35 detainees at Cobham Juvenile Justice Centre are returning to classes at the school in the centre for the 2012 school year.

“Detainees are not typical students, and are considered the most troubled teenagers in the state. They are often disengaged from school and many detainees have learning difficulties.

“The most recent survey of young people in custody revealed that more than half (65 per cent) left school before commencing Year 10, 60 per cent have not attended school regularly, and nearly 90 per cent have been suspended.

“Staff work extremely hard to mentor young offenders on the benefits of education. They motivate detainees to have a positive attitude of school, and explain that their active participation can reap rewards, from improved literacy and numeracy skills to potential employment when they return to the community.

“I commend staff and teachers for reengaging detainees in education, and to the volunteers who visit Cobham Juvenile Justice Centre to assist in ongoing educational activities.

“Education is essential to a young offender’s rehabilitation in custody,” said Mr Smith.

“More than 1,800 young people were enrolled in education courses while in custody last year. One hundred and fifty nine detainees were enrolled in school certificate courses and 42 detainees in higher school certificates courses.”

“Former detainees have continued their education and found employment, which is an excellent result for teachers and juvenile justice staff,” said Mr Smith.

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