

## Fact Sheet

# Youth Justice Services and Youth at Risk

### Achievements in 2008-09

- Significant progress with the major review of the *Youth Justice Act 1997*. This has involved extensive consultation including major consultation with young people themselves as well as magistrates, police and the wider community. Amendments are expected to be introduced to Parliament later this year.
- Important improvements made at the Ashley Youth Detention Centre include:
  - A Resident Advocate has been appointed to work on issues and concerns raised by residents and ensure that the residents have a voice;
  - There has been a 25% increase in the amount of time available for residents to access school and the school is now operating 48 weeks of the year;
  - The behaviour management system is being reviewed with help from Victorian Youth Justice Services;
  - Additional staff training and development linked to the adolescent development and the effects of poverty and disadvantage has been provided to operational staff; and
  - An Adolescent Forensic Psychiatrist now visits on a six weekly basis from Victoria.
- Regular meetings of the independent Ashley Youth Detention Centre Advisory Committee which includes representation from all relevant government agencies, the Commissioner for Children and community members. The Advisory Committee monitors the safety and well being of young people at Ashley and works on improvements to services.

### Key areas for 2009-10

- Completion of the review of the *Youth Justice Act 1997*, with amendments to be introduced to Parliament later this year.
- A new over-arching *Youth at Risk* framework and supporting strategies for release during 2009-10, focusing on three major priority areas:
  - Youth Justice
  - Targeted Youth at Risk support
  - Homelessness and accommodation
- Other initiatives to be developed during 2009-10 include:
  - Identifying young people at risk of entering the youth justice system at the time a police caution is delivered, to prevent future offending;
  - Integrated case management for young people who move in and out of Ashley Youth Detention Centre so that there is continuity in their management when they move between the community and custody.
  - Linking services for assessment and support of young people at risk to the Gateway Service and Integrated Family support Services.
  - Working on 'wrap around' comprehensive homelessness services for young people as part of the state's homelessness plan.