

Media Release

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JESUIT SOCIAL SERVICES CHALLENGES GOVERNMENT TO AXE STATUTORY MINIMUM SENTENCING LAWS

Jesuit Social Services has called on the State Government to abandon its proposed statutory minimum sentencing laws, following the release of a Sentencing Advisory Council study today showing that jail is unlikely to deter criminals and encourages reoffending.

Jesuit Social Services Chief Executive Officer, Julie Edwards said that the study shows that statutory minimum sentencing should be axed as it will fail to reduce crime rates and, instead, increase the likelihood of people reoffending.

The Sentencing Advisory Council research shows that imprisonment 'has, at best, no effect on the rate of reoffending and often...results in a greater rate of recidivism... compared with offenders who receive a different sentencing outcome'.

"If the State Government is seriously committed to reducing crime rates in Victoria, then it must listen to this research and base its law and order policies on facts rather than fear and myths.

"The Victorian community would be better served if the Government increased its investment in diversionary and preventative programs which are proven to reduce crime rates.

"A KPMG report found that Community Group Conferencing- which brings offenders face-to-face with their victims- is successful with more than 80 per cent of young people involved in the program not reoffending within two years.

"We are very pleased that the Minister for Crime Prevention, Andrew McIntosh is attending the Jesuit Social Services' National Justice Symposium next week, where a cross-section of sector leaders will have an informed conversation about issues such as crime prevention and diversion, sentencing and restorative justice, the role of the prison system, and post release support

"This is an opportunity for the Government to be part of genuine discussion aimed at reducing crime and improving community safety with high profile experts and the broader community," Ms Edwards said.

Jesuit Social Services works with over 500 young people a year, the majority of whom are high risk young people with complex and multiple problems and needs; such complex needs include mental health problems, disability (including intellectual disability), drug and alcohol misuse, homelessness, and health problems.

Jesuit Social Services CEO, Julie Edwards is available for comment.

For all media enquiries and further information about the Justice Symposium, please contact Stephanie De Campo (Media) on 0432 828 004