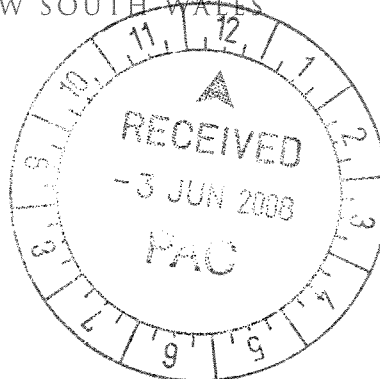


THE AUDIT OFFICE
OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Mr Paul McLeay MP
Chair
Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Assembly
Parliament House, Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000



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30 May 2008

Dear Mr McLeay

**Examination of Auditor-General's Performance Audit Report
Addressing the Needs of Young Offenders.**

We have reviewed the submissions provided by the NSW Police Force and the Department of Juvenile Justice concerning the recommendations in the above performance audit report. Attachment 1 lists the report's recommendations.

Following tabling of the report, we were pleased that the Commissioner of Police indicated he accepted eight of the nine recommendations relating to the NSW Police Force, and the Director-General indicated she accepted the eight recommendations relating to the Department of Juvenile Justice.

The latest submissions from the Commissioner of Police and the Director-General of the Department of Juvenile Justice show the progress being made in implementing the recommendations. We have not substantiated either submission. Our assessment of whether the responses address the issues raised in the original report along with an assessment of progress against the original timeline is provided in attachment 2 for the NSW Police Force, and attachment 3 for the Department of Juvenile Justice.

The approach taken by the NSW Police Force and the Department of Juvenile Justice to monitor the implementation of recommendations is generally consistent with our better practice standards. The status report identifies the outcome that the changes are intended to achieve, gives progress against milestones, and assigns responsibility for implementation. NSW Police Force's audit committee has monitored the implementation of recommendations. The Department of Juvenile Justice has monitored the implementation of recommendations through a new committee that reports to its audit committee.

I plan to forward a copy of this correspondence to the Commissioner of Police, and the Director-General of the Department of Juvenile Justice, for their information.

I am happy to provide any further assistance the Committee may need in completing its examination.

Yours sincerely

A T Whitfield
Deputy Auditor-General

attachments

Recommendations

- | | | |
|--|----|--|
| Improve outcomes for young offenders who participate in youth justice conferences | 1 | <p>We recommend that by January 2008 the Department of Juvenile Justice, in regard to youth justice conferences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ implement a checklist to identify the needs of each young offender and rate their risk of reoffending as either low, moderate or high (page 21) 2 ▪ require convenors to document the results of this review (page 21) 3 ▪ require convenors to ensure conference participants consider interventions and rehabilitation programs consistent with the young offender's needs and reoffending risk, which could be included on conference outcome plans (page 28). |
| Improve outcomes for young offenders who receive cautions | 4 | <p>We recommend that by January 2008 the NSW Police Force, in regard to young offenders receiving a caution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ implement a checklist to identify the needs of each young offender and rate their risk of reoffending as either low, moderate or high (page 22) 5 ▪ require Youth Liaison Officers to document the results of this review (page 22) 6 ▪ implement a process of referral for young offenders who have a moderate to high risk of reoffending which will assist them if they choose to attend support services or programs to address their needs (page 31) 7 ▪ and who reoffend, require Youth Liaison Officers to follow-up on referrals (page 32). |
| Address cross-agency issues | 8 | <p>We recommend that the Department of Juvenile Justice and the NSW Police Force refer problems they face in accessing services or exchanging information, to the Cross-Agency Management of Young Offenders Senior Officer Group or its successor to resolve as part of its strategic cross-agency approach to managing young offenders (page 36).</p> <p>We recommend that by June 2007 the Department of Juvenile Justice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9 ▪ complete its review of Multisystemic Therapy, a family-based treatment model, regarding its suitability as a response to young offenders with complex needs and whose families are clients of many agencies (page 37) 10 ▪ report its findings to the Cross-Agency Management of Young Offenders Senior Officer Group or its successor (page 37). |
| Better reporting of results | 11 | <p>We recommend that the Department of Juvenile Justice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ monitor results for both one and two year follow-up periods as used in the State Plan (page 38) 12 ▪ report on trends in reoffending for each young offender group commencing with their 2006-07 annual report, both against the State Plan target and using the one and two year follow-up periods (page 38). |

We recommend that the NSW Police Force:

- 13 ▪ adopt the State Plan target to reduce reoffending by ten per cent by 2016 (page 38)
- 14 ▪ monitor results for both one and two year follow-up periods as used in the State Plan (page 38)
- 15 ▪ report on trends in the number and proportion of young offenders diverted from the Children's Court commencing with their 2006-07 annual report (page 38)
- 16 ▪ report on trends in reoffending for young offenders receiving cautions commencing with their 2006-07 annual report, both against the State Plan target and using the one and two year follow-up periods (page 38).

Attachment 2 - NSW Police Force

Recommendation	Action steps address issue?	Reported progress
4	Yes. Reported outcome consistent with intent of recommendation.	Delayed to December 2008. No explanation of the delay has been provided.
5	Yes. Reported outcome consistent with intent of recommendation.	Delayed to December 2008. No explanation of the delay has been provided.
6	Yes. Reported outcome consistent with intent of recommendation.	Completed.
7	The initial proposed action was consistent with the intent of recommendations. However, progress has not been reported in the latest submission.	Progress has not been reported in the latest submission.
8	Yes. Reported outcome consistent with intent of recommendation.	Satisfactory. Pending resolution of the future of the Senior Officer Group by the Criminal Justice CEO cluster.
13	Yes. Reported outcome consistent with intent of recommendation.	Completed
14	Yes. Reported outcome consistent with intent of recommendation.	Completed
15	Yes. Reported outcome consistent with intent of recommendation.	Completed. However, it was not able to be implemented for the 2006-07 Annual Report.
16	Yes. Reported outcome consistent with intent of recommendation.	Recommendation rejected. NSW Police Force does not intend to report on reoffending rates for young offenders receiving cautions. Instead, it is working with the Department of Corrective Services in developing appropriate indicators for reporting against the State Plan Priority R2 to reduce reoffending.

Attachment 3 - Department of Juvenile Justice

Recommendation	Action steps address issue?	Reported progress
1	Yes. Reported outcome consistent with intent of recommendation.	Satisfactory. The recommendation has two parts. A checklist to identify needs and a rating of the young offenders' risk of reoffending. DJJ has implemented the checklist. The ranking tool is being developed.
2	Yes. Reported outcome consistent with intent of recommendation.	Completed.
3	Yes. Reported outcome consistent with intent of recommendation.	Satisfactory.
8	Yes. Reported outcome consistent with intent of recommendation.	Satisfactory. Pending resolution of the future of the Senior Officer Group by the Criminal Justice CEO cluster.
9	Yes. Reported outcome consistent with intent of recommendation.	Completed.
10	Yes. Reported outcome consistent with intent of recommendation.	Completed.
11	Yes. Reported outcome consistent with intent of recommendation.	Completed.
12	No. The intent of this recommendation is to report progress towards achieving the State Plan targets, as well as reoffending trends, in the Department's annual reports.	Not complete. The Department will rely on reoffending rates and trends being reported via the State Plan R2 monitoring. It will not be reporting progress towards achieving the State Plan targets, or reoffending trends, in its annual reports.