



**Legislative Council  
Standing Committee on Law and Justice**

**REPORT ON THE INQUIRY INTO COMMUNITY BASED SENTENCING  
OPTIONS FOR RURAL AND REMOTE AREAS AND DISADVANTAGED  
POPULATIONS**

The Chair of the Standing Committee on Law and Justice, the Hon Christine Robertson MLC, today released the Committee's report into community based sentencing options for rural and remote areas and disadvantaged groups.

Ms Robertson said, "The Committee undertook a thorough examination of the complex issues raised by the terms of reference, focusing on community service orders, bonds, periodic detention and home detention. We received submissions and oral evidence from a wide range of individuals and organisations and conducted hearings and public forums in Sydney, Bega, Griffith, Brewarrina, Bourke and Inverell," she said.

"There are many individuals and organisations across the State who are doing excellent work in relation to community based sentencing," she said.

Ms Robertson said, "The Inquiry revealed that there are considerable gaps in the coverage of community based sentencing options throughout the State and that disadvantaged offenders are often excluded from community based sentences due to restrictive eligibility criteria or the lack of appropriate support."

"Community based sentencing options have many benefits for offenders, their families and communities. They are also more cost effective and more successful in rehabilitating offenders than full-time imprisonment. With the prison population rising nationally, the Committee's Inquiry is a timely examination of the availability of alternatives to full-time incarceration for appropriate offenders," she said.

She said, "For the benefits of community based sentencing to be felt as widely as possible across New South Wales additional resources and innovative solutions are required."

Ms Robertson said, "The Committee recognises the difficulty in ensuring equitable access to community based sentencing in areas where the offender population is scattered and backup resources are not necessarily available."

"It is essential, however, that equity of access to community based sentencing options be improved where practical. The Committee has made 49 recommendations with a view to expanding the availability of community based sentencing options in rural and remote areas and making them more accessible and effective for offenders from such areas and for disadvantaged offenders," said Ms Robertson.

The Executive Summary or the full report can be obtained from the Committee's website at: [www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lawandjustice](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/lawandjustice) or by telephoning the Secretariat on 92303311.