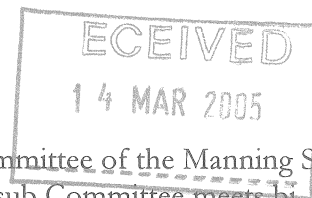


**INQUIRY INTO COMMUNITY BASED SENTENCING
OPTIONS FOR RURAL AND REMOTE AREAS AND FOR
DISADVANTAGED POPULATIONS**

Organisation: Greater Taree City Council
Name: Ms Laura Henson
Telephone: 6592 5285
Date Received: 14/03/2005

Theme:

Summary:



The Greater Taree Crime Prevention Plan Sub Committee is a sub committee of the Manning Social Development Committee (a section 355 Committee of Council). The sub Committee meets bi-monthly and is charged with responsibility of monitoring progress with implementation of the Taree Crime Prevention Plan 2004-2007. The Committee also discusses other matters relevant to law and order as they arise.

The Taree Crime Prevention Plan Sub Committee includes representation from State Government departments, community based organisations and community members.

At the last meeting of the Taree Crime Prevention Plan Sub Committee, held 15 February 2005, the issue of community based sentencing options was discussed in response to the Parliamentary Standing Committee for Law and Justice call for submissions.

The particular issues facing regional communities as discussed by this Committee included:

1. Community Based Sentencing should be meaningful and properly supervised.

In regional areas where there is limited access to varied opportunities it is felt that community based sentencing options are organised as a matter of course rather than with positive outcomes in mind. With a limited variety of community work orders available clients are often mismatched with an order that affects no meaning and therefore no change in behaviour.

Limited resources, often means that community order projects are not always well supervised, Many regionally based community organisations are not equipped, either with the resources or professional staff, to adequately supervise projects on a day to day basis and community orders become, on occasions, organisational assistance to complete menial day to day business.

2. Transport and Isolation

Because of the scattered pattern of villages and housing settlement, transport is a significant problem for those people who do not own cars.

There are bus companies that provide weekday services to the urban areas of Taree and Wingham, however the most common form of public transport for rural residents is the school bus system. The general public may use this service providing there are available seats. Access is therefore, very limited. The routes are rarely the most direct and timing may not suit the traveller. There is minimal convenient interconnection of services.

Traditionally men are not high users of public transport, preferring personal modes of transport such as bicycles, motor bikes and motor vehicles. In particular, males are less likely than any other target group to use the school bus system which doubles as the public transport system in Greater Taree.

Urban areas of Taree and Wingham have access to direct taxi services. However, Harrington, Hallidays Point and Old Bar CPAs are serviced from Taree. The distance travelled to these rural areas often makes taxi utilisation cost inhibitive.

Transport issues that affect men more so than other target groups, are appropriate and safe infrastructure for the use of bicycles as a form of transport and affordable motor vehicle registration, enabling road use of vehicles. Organisational support workers advise that men are more likely than women to own and drive an unregistered vehicle.

3. Sole Parents

With the increasing number of sole parents, in less expensive regional areas, community based sentencing options provide suitably flexible means of punishment without the major disruption, of incarceration, to children.

G:\MSDC 2005\Crime Prevention Plan Sub Committee 2005\Miscellaneous\Community Based Sentencing Options Submission.doc