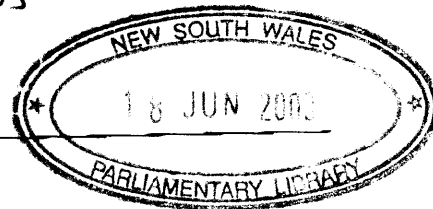




NEW SOUTH WALES

ATTORNEY GENERAL
MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Bob Debus



NSW Sentencing Council begins work

NSW Attorney General Bob Debus formally launched the NSW Sentencing Council in Parliament House today.

Chaired by retired Supreme Court judge The Hon Alan Abadee, the ten-member council includes victims rights advocates Ken Marslew, Martha Jabour, Howard Brown and Maitland resident and community volunteer Jennifer Fullford. The Council also includes DPP Mr Nicholas Cowdery, Commander John Laycock (NSW Police), Senior Public Defender Pater Zahra, Professor Larrisa Behrendt and retired Supreme Court Judge The Hon John Slattery.

"The Council has a very broad brief and, given the strong personalities represented, is bound to come up with ideas and recommendations that are as controversial as they are interesting," Mr Debus said.

"Judge Abadee on behalf of the Council has already raised with me a number of references that the Council wishes to pursue and I have readily agreed.

"The Council wants to undertake research on alternatives to custodial sentences of less than six months.

"This issue has already been raised in an Upper House Report chaired by John Ryan and is not without controversy. The Committee recommended that the Attorney General commission research to investigate the impacts of abolishing sentences of six months or less in NSW and table the research in Parliament.

"I can't promise the government will embrace each and every suggestion that is put forward, but I can promise the reports and recommendations of the Council will be given the serious and detailed consideration they deserve.

The Sentencing Council is based on similar models in the UK and North America and is a first for Australia. It was established as part of the Government's new sentencing regime that became law Feb 1, 2003.

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