



Committee to commence interstate public hearings on Indigenous juveniles and young adults in the criminal justice system

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs will travel to Melbourne, Sydney and Dubbo this week for public hearings and site inspections in relation to its inquiry into the high level of involvement of Indigenous juveniles and young adults in the criminal justice system.

The Committee will hold roundtables in both Melbourne and Sydney to hear from retired and serving judges, non-government community organisations, representatives from Victorian and New South Wales Government departments, legal centres and associations, and youth representatives. The Committee will conduct site visits to a Koori Court in Melbourne and to Australia's only female juvenile justice centre, Juniperina, in Lidcombe, Sydney.

Following the public hearings, the Committee will travel to Dubbo for private meetings with community organisations and groups that promote measures to divert young Indigenous people from the criminal justice system. A second site inspection will then be undertaken at Orana Juvenile Justice Detention Centre.

The Committee is investigating how Commonwealth and state jurisdictions can better coordinate diversionary measures as well as the provision of services for Indigenous juveniles and young adults.

The Hon Bob Debus MP, Committee Chair, said, "Indigenous juveniles are highly over-represented in Australian imprisonment and recidivism rates, and it is important to identify those programs that act as circuit-breakers for Indigenous youth involved in the criminal justice system. We know that there are many good programs operating around the country, but there are also areas where there are no appropriate intervention services for Indigenous youth."

Public hearing program:

Wednesday, 3 March, 9.00am - 12.45pm, Koorie Heritage Trust Cultural Centre, 295 King Street, Melbourne

Thursday, 4 March, 8.30am - 1.00pm, National Centre for Indigenous Excellence, 180 George Street, Redfern, Sydney

For background information, contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 62774559 or atsia.reps@aph.gov.au or see the Committee's website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/atsia>

For more details of the Committee's **interstate public hearing program**, check the website at: <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/atsia/sentencing/hearings.htm>