



Sarah Mitchell

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MEDIA RELEASE

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SMART REFORMS TO LOWER ABORIGINAL INCARCERATION

The NSW Government's criminal justice reforms will address the underlying cause of offending behaviour, especially for Aboriginal offenders.

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Sarah Mitchell welcomed the reforms which include new sentencing options, an overhaul of the early guilty plea model to bring offenders to justice earlier and amendments to the decision making process for granting parole.

Ms Mitchell said these reforms will help address the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in the NSW justice system and the higher rate of reoffending amongst Aboriginal offenders.

"Aboriginal Australians make up around 3 per cent of the population of New South Wales, but currently account for a quarter of the state's prison population. As Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, I am supportive of anything that will lower this rate," Mrs Mitchell said.

"We know supervised community-based sentences and rehabilitation programs have a more positive effect on addressing the causes of offending behaviour than short prison sentences, and the changes to sentencing will mean Aboriginal offenders have better access to community-based sentences as an alternative to short prison sentences."

Amendments to the early guilty model will mean justice will be dealt more quickly, letting victims move on with their lives faster.

The NSW Government has consulted closely with Aboriginal stakeholders and victims' advocacy groups, as well as legal stakeholders, in developing these reforms.

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