

In reply please quote: 2002/09756

Your reference:

M/- R Hart
10 Dempster Street
TOOWONG QLD 4066

Dear M/- Hart

Your petition, received in the Legislative Assembly on 4 December 2002 relating to the *Summary Offences Bill* and related indigenous issues has been forwarded to me.

The majority of the matters raised in your petition fall within the portfolio responsibilities of the Honourable Tony McGrady MP, Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Carpentaria Minerals Province. I have therefore taken the liberty of forwarding your petition to Mr McGrady with a request that he respond to you directly.

At paragraph (b), your petition requests that the House establish properly funded court diversion systems for indigenous communities. You may be aware that under the *Drug Rehabilitation (Court Diversion) Act 2000*, a Drug Court pilot program commenced in South-East Queensland in June 2000. I have recently introduced legislation into Parliament providing for the expansion of the Drug Court pilot program to North Queensland.

On this program eligible offenders facing jail for particular offences are placed on an intensive drug rehabilitation order (IDRO) that requires them to participate in a designated treatment rehabilitation program. Although sentenced to a term of imprisonment for the offences, the offender is able to remain in the community whilst getting the benefit of drug rehabilitation. Breach of conditions of an IDRO will result in sanctioning and/or termination of the IDRO. Termination of an IDRO will result in an offender being sentenced for the original offence/s and serving an actual prison sentence.

It is envisaged that the expansion of the Drug Court to North Queensland will serve as an effective diversionary process for many indigenous offenders.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

Rod Welford MP

Prepared by: J Hughes
Telephone Number: 039 3143
Submitted through: Barry Ryan
Date: 1 December 2002
Document Name: DOCS/JHughes/Ministerial/09756-petition.police.doc