



Hon Greg Smith SC MP

Attorney General
Minister for Justice

MEDIA RELEASE

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COMMUNITY VIEWS SOUGHT ON LAWS FOR CHILD OFFENDERS

NSW Attorney General Greg Smith SC has invited public comment on whether changes are needed to key laws for juvenile offenders.

Mr Smith today released a consultation paper that forms part of a review of the *Young Offenders Act 1997* and the *Children (Criminal Proceedings) Act 1987*.

“The review will determine whether the laws are effective and consistent with the NSW Government’s commitment to reducing recidivism among young offenders,” Mr Smith said.

“It is also important that the laws are in line with community standards and I encourage members of the public, including victims of crime, to have their say.”

The issues raised include whether:

- any changes are needed to the laws governing the issuing of warnings and cautions and the directing of young offenders into youth conferencing;
- the Children’s Court should be responsible for hearing all traffic matters involving juvenile defendants (currently young people must face the Local Court if they were old enough to legally drive at the time of the incident);
- the Young Offenders Act and the Children (Criminal Proceedings) Act should be amalgamated.

“The consultation paper gives the community the facts about youth offending and the law so that it can make up its own mind about the issues raised,” Mr Smith said.

The Young Offenders Act enables children who commit certain offences to be dealt with outside of court through the use of warnings, cautions and youth justice conferences. The Children (Criminal Proceedings) Act governs the age of criminal responsibility, the jurisdiction of the Children’s Court and the penalties that apply to children for criminal offences.

The Department of Attorney General and Justice is conducting the review, with assistance from legal groups, criminologists, experts in young offending and advocates for victims of crime and people with a disability.

The consultation paper is available at: www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lpd. Submissions can be sent to lpd_enquiries@agd.nsw.gov.au and must be made by 9 December 2011.

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