



Dr Peter Toyne

MINISTER FOR JUSTICE AND ATTORNEY-GENERAL

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ELDERS PARTNER GOVERNMENT

Indigenous elders will play a greater role in the rehabilitation and reintegration of indigenous inmates following an historic meeting in Darwin.

Justice Minister Dr Peter Toyne joined Yilli Rreung Regional Chair Kimberley Hunter and the Chief Magistrate Hugh Bradley to the open meeting of Indigenous elders and government representatives.

The Elders Orientation meeting is a significant step towards the pilot Elders Visiting Program – an initiative which will see Indigenous elders visiting inmates at Northern Territory correctional facilities.

“The Elders Visiting Program is a pilot program which recognises that cultural contact with elders can improve reintegration prospects and maintain links to culture while an offender is in prison,” Dr Toyne said.

“Elders will also help to develop release and rehabilitation strategies which cater for the particular difficulties individual prisoners will face following release.

The pilot program underpins the government’s Building Safer Communities framework on crime prevention and community safety.

“The framework identifies a need to engage Aboriginal culture and communities,” Dr Toyne said.

“The program helps us do just that.”

Originally an initiative of the Yilli Rreung Regional Council and the North West Regional Governing Council, the program will be implemented in both Darwin and Alice Springs Correctional Centres.

“It’s one of five programs being implemented under the Department of Justice-ATSIC partnership,” he said.

“It’s a real example of our working partnership and one I’m very proud to be part of it.

“It’s a pilot program at this stage and it will be assessed on its suitability and success.

The Elders Orientation meeting will discuss Correctional Services programs and protocols. The pilot Elders Visiting Program will be implemented in stages throughout the year.

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