

MEDIA RELEASE

DATE: TUESDAY 5 DECEMBER, 2006

TASMANIA LAW REFORM INSTITUTE



UNIVERSITY
OF TASMANIA

ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

Today the Tasmania Law Reform Institute released its Research paper No 2:

The Establishment of a Drug Court Pilot in Tasmania

This research paper brings together statistical and other material about drug use, the rationales behind and the characteristics of drug courts in other jurisdictions and information about the level and type of drug treatment services available in Tasmania. A drug court is a court, or a division of a court, which is responsible for sentencing and supervising the treatment of offenders with drug problems, who have committed an offence under the influence of drugs or to support a drug habit. The courts aim to offer solutions to the cycle of drug use, crime, imprisonment and re-offending.

Tasmania is the only Australian State not to have trialled or established a drug court. However, a two-year trial of a court mandated drug diversion program was announced by the Attorney-General in September 2006. The government is currently working on the detail of this pilot program which is to be introduced early next year. The release of this research paper is therefore very timely. It is hoped that it will assist in the implementation of the government's program and provide background and context to an understanding of the appropriate responses to drug-related crime in Tasmania in the short and longer term.

This paper:

1. Provides a synthesis of the statistical evidence about illicit drug use in Tasmania and the extent of drug-related crime;
2. Examines and reviews the current criminal justice responses available in Tasmania for dealing with offenders with drug problems, including the support services currently in place for dealing with such offenders;
3. Surveys the various drug court models that have been established in other Australian jurisdictions;
4. Analyses the outcomes of these drug court initiatives;
5. Examines the capacity of current treatment and support services in Tasmania to integrate and collaborate with a drug court pilot; and
6. Assesses the benefits and appropriateness of a drug court for Tasmania.

The Institute acknowledges the financial support of the Law Foundation of Tasmania for this project, which was prepared for the Institute by Victor Stojcevski.

Research papers provide background information relevant to particular or emerging areas of law reform, but are not intended to reflect the Institute's views and do not contain policy recommendations.

FURTHER INFORMATION/INTERVIEWS: Kate Warner 6226 2067

Kate Warner is a Professor in the Faculty of Law, and the Director of the Law Reform Institute.

The Report can be downloaded from www.law.utas.edu.au/reform/
Tasmania Law Reform Institute
Private Bag 89, Hobart, TAS 7001
phone (03) 6226 2069 fax: (03) 6226 7623

law.reform@utas.edu.au