



John Barilaro

Deputy Premier

Dominic Perrottet

Treasurer

Mark Speakman

Attorney General

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 17 June 2021

DRUG COURT EXPANDS TO DUBBO

The Dubbo region will benefit from a \$31.5 million investment in drug rehabilitation and access to justice.

Deputy Premier John Barilaro today announced the NSW Government will invest \$27.9 million over the coming four financial years to expand the [NSW Drug Court](#) to Dubbo, on top of the recent \$3.6 million upgrade to the city's courthouse.

“This is a win for the bush and will give our communities, brought to their knees after the devastation of drought, bushfires and COVID-19, the tools and resilience they need to combat illicit drugs,” Mr Barilaro said.

“The Drug Court is a tried and tested silver bullet to help address the abuse of highly addictive and dangerous illicit drugs that continue to cripple our communities.”

The Drug Court, currently at Sydney, Parramatta and Toronto, is a multi-agency response to drug-related offending. The court is proven to be [more efficient at driving down crime and the](#) intensive rehabilitation that it provides costs less than sending offenders to prison.

Participants undergo a 12-month program, including mandatory detoxification in jail and drug testing up to three times a week in the community, while receiving interventions to address the underlying causes of drug dependency and offending. Violent or sex offenders are excluded from participating.

Treasurer Dominic Perrottet said the investment aimed to safeguard NSW from the social impacts of an economic downturn following the combined effects of drought, bushfires and the pandemic.

“We know drug use and crime hurt the economy. Every dollar we spend today on rehabilitation could save double that on band aids for social and economic pain in the future,” Mr Perrottet said.

“The Government is building a fence at the top of a cliff now, so we don't need an ambulance at the bottom later.”

Attorney General Mark Speakman said the expansion of the Drug Court will help break the cycle of drug dependency.

“This program helps participants address the root causes of their problems, and ultimately overcome their addiction to make a positive contribution to the community,” Mr Speakman said.

“The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over, expecting different results. We know that sending problem drug users to prison and throwing away the key doesn’t solve drug addiction. If we’re going to tackle addiction and address drug use, a health response, not just a criminal justice response, is required.”

Member for Dubbo Dugald Saunders said the Drug Court will offer long-term solutions to keep the Western Plains safe.

"It's no secret that there are significant drug issues in our communities. We have an opportunity to change lives for the better," Mr Saunders said.

“This is also the largest upgrade of the Dubbo Courthouse for more than a decade. Not only did the project create jobs locally, it delivered fit-for-purpose facilities.”

Senior Judge of the Drug Court Roger Dive said the program uses an innovative, therapeutic approach to help hardened offenders with entrenched behaviours.

“This program saves lives, reunites families and has lasting positive impacts on individuals and the community,” Judge Dive said.