



Prevention and early intervention critical to reducing Indigenous youth crime rates

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs will hear from Indigenous Community Volunteers (ICV) on Thursday, 11 March, as part of its inquiry into the high level of involvement of Indigenous juveniles and young adults in the criminal justice system.

ICV states that intervention with children and youth at risk is critical to ensuring that they achieve their full potential and make a positive contribution to society. The ICV submission argues that good quality early intervention programs with youth at risk represent a cost-effective investment of public monies.

The Chief Executive Officer of ICV, Mr Gregory Andrews will discuss with the Committee the relationship between community development and reduced Indigenous offending. ICV is engaged in diversion from the criminal justice system of Indigenous youth by creating enabling environments in communities through broad-based community development projects that harness Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's assets to overcome disadvantage and dysfunction.

The Committee is investigating how the development of social norms and behaviours for Indigenous juveniles and young adults can lead to positive social engagement.

The Hon Bob Debus MP, Committee Chair, said, "Indigenous youth are highly over-represented in juvenile and youth detention centres and prisons. It is not enough that young Indigenous people simply avoid contact with the criminal justice system. We need to ensure that they are given every opportunity to positively contribute to not just their communities but Australian society as a whole."

**Public hearing program:
12.15pm, Thursday 11 March 2010
Committee Room 1R2 Parliament House
Indigenous Community Volunteers**

To listen to the public hearing on your computer, go to <http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/>

For background information, contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 62774559 or atsia.reps@aph.gov.au or see the Committee's website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/atsia>

For details of the Committee's upcoming **interstate public hearing program**, check the website at: <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/atsia/sentencing/hearings.htm>