

Law Reform Commission of Western Australia



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Treasurer Announces Funding for a Mental Health Court Diversion Program

Mr Richard Douglas, Acting Chair of the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia today commended the Treasurer for the allocation of \$6.7 million in the State Budget 2012-13 for a diversion program at Perth courts for adults and young people with mental illness.

Mr Douglas said the funding was timely and reflected the Commission's Recommendations 23 and 25 from its Final Report on Court Intervention Programs, Project 96.

He said that the Commissioners were also "*pleased to see that \$18 million (over four years) has been set aside to establish two centres to provide secure accommodation for people with an intellectual or cognitive disability who have been accused of a crime but are unable to plead as a result of their disability*" as this has been "*a source of concern for the Commission for many years and discussion has featured in two references, the **Aboriginal Customary Laws Final Report**, Project 94 and the **Homicide Final Report**, Project 97.*"

Mr Douglas explained that "*where practical and just, it is desirable to divert offenders from custodial sentences, particularly where the reasons for offending include persisting cognitive impairment. Successful diversion results in reduced rates of re-offending, reduced costs for custody, a better prospect of rehabilitation and a more just outcome for those with impaired responsibility. Ultimately, this makes for a safer and more just State.*"

All the Commission's reports are available to be downloaded from the Commission's website at www.lrc.justice.wa.gov.au.

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