

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – APRIL 13, 2018

Restricting use of Community Correction Orders a dangerous precedent: Jesuit Social Services

The Victorian Government's plan to further restrict the use of Community Correction Orders sets a dangerous precedent, with little evidence it will reduce re-offending, says Jesuit Social Services.

"A Community Correction Order is issued with conditions, such as engaging with drug and alcohol services or participating in behaviour change programs, which ultimately support people to address the underlying issues behind their offending. This is vital in people being able to turn their lives around and make a positive contribution to the community.

"It is disappointing that our political leaders are looking solely to punitive responses to crime instead of the evidence which shows that that keeping people out of the prison system is the best way to prevent re-offending," says Jesuit Social Services CEO Julie Edwards.

Ms Edwards says it is worrying that the Victorian Government is seeking to further limit judicial discretion.

"There should never be a 'one size fits all' approach to justice, and a healthy and effective criminal justice system is one which allows magistrates and judges to consider the relevant facts of a particular case before handing down a sentence.

"Evidence from Australia and around the world shows us that the best way to keep the community safe is to prevent people from having contact with the justice system in the first place.

"The passing of this legislation will increase Victoria's already ballooning prison population which is currently more than 7,000. We know our prison system is under serious strain, and should be doing everything possible to ensure that detention is only ever used as a last resort."

"Building bigger and 'better' detention centres won't make us any safer. In fact, it's the opposite."

"The use of CCOs allows people to be monitored and supported in the community, where it is deemed appropriate by the judiciary. Restricting use of these sets a dangerous precedent and does not improve community safety."

Media enquiries – Kathryn Kernohan, 0499 901 248 or kathryn.kernohan@jss.org.au