**MEDIA RELEASE 27/5/2016**

**New Northern officer for youth justice court program welcomed**

The Commissioner for Children, Mark Morrissey has welcomed the State Government’s decision to fund an education officer for the Specialist Youth Justice Courts (SYJC) program in Northern Tasmania.

“I have been advocating for the employment of a Department of Education officer for the SYJC program in the North and I am very pleased the government has responded positively and has committed to funding this important work,” Mr Morrissey said.

Mr Morrissey said officers working with young people in the court system to support their engagement with education and training played a vital role in helping them get their lives back on track.

“Early intervention with young offenders can give them the opportunity and skills for a better future and reduce the chance of them coming back to the courts,” Mr Morrissey said.

The State Government has committed $70,000 funding per year for four years for an additional education officer to expand the Specialist Youth Justice Courts Program in the Northern region.

The role of this officer will be to focus on rehabilitation and early intervention, providing opportunities for young offenders to engage in positive behaviours, such as education and employment, and reduce the likelihood of future offending.

This is in addition to the existing officer provided by the Department of Education in the Southern region of the SYJC program.

**Catherine Clemens**

Manager Communications and Participation

Commissioner for Children (Tas)

E:  catherine.clemens@childcomm.tas.gov.au

Phone: (03) 6233 4920

Mobile: 0427 008 268

Web: [www.childcomm.tas.gov.au](http://www.childcomm.tas.gov.au/)