

Letter to the Editor

Published: 21 June 2010 in Sydney Morning Herald

I extend my sympathies to the family of Ian Klum. Your article stated I "made no apology". That comment was not made in relation to that case.

Driving offences are serious and after community concern was recently expressed in relation to Brodie Donegan's loss, I referred driving penalties to a former Supreme Court judge for review.

This has been the way I have approached my tenure as Attorney General. I have referred over 20 areas of law to expert bodies like the Sentencing Council. Advice has been sought from the DPP, Legal Aid and the courts. Hundreds of recommendations have been acted upon.

The Government has increased some penalties but we haven't denied individuals the opportunity to rehabilitate.

Last week I announced that the Drug Court, which refers addicts into treatment, would be expended to the Hunter.

The CREDIT program was established last year and refers defendants into training and other assistance.

And recently the Government introduced Intensive Correction Orders, an alternative to imprisonment whereby offenders participate in rehabilitation programs.

The inference that the Government's sentencing regime is excessively punitive is wrong. The Shadow Attorney General's claim to end the "auction" has not meant he has stopped calling for harsher penalties, including imprisonment for the possession of "any knife" and "putting fear into the lives" of graffiti offenders.

**John Hatzistergos
NSW Attorney General**