

D'Ath gives youth camps the boot

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THE boot has firmly been put into an old LNP plan to tackle youth crime during Attorney General Yvette D'Ath's visit to Cairns.

LNP leader Tim Nicholls and LNP corrective services spokesman Tim Mander last year expressed disappointment the Labor government scrapped the boot camp strategy for young offenders.

Tackling youth crime in Cairns is also set to be a key

focus for the LNP's local candidates in the lead up to the next state election.

But Mrs D'Ath, in Cairns yesterday to announce an increase in funding for the city's community legal centre, said there had been no evidence to suggest the Beyond Billabong Lincoln Springs boot camp near Ingham had reduced recidivist crime rates.

The camp was closed in late 2015 after independent auditor KPMG found the cost of keeping a youth there was \$2350 a day, compared to \$999 for

youth detention with no measurable improvement.

"What the KPMG report and the auditor general's report showed us was it was an extremely expensive policy that led to no reduction in recidivism," Mrs D'Ath said.

"In some cases I know some of the youth had been to boot camp on a number of occasions.

"A number of these youth have been abused, have been sexually abused, have drug and alcohol abuse, have mental health issues, if you don't look

at those factors, work with the families, which is what we're doing, conduct intensive case management with the families, nothing changes."

LNP candidate for Cairns Sam Marino said he personally supported a mentorship approach.

"What we're discovering is it's a mix of a number of reasons where juvenile crime is fostered from inside the home," he said.

"The cycle needs to be broken ... it's a generational problem, a cultural problem."