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### **Govt open to teen work camp idea for vandals. 18/01/2006. ABC News Online**

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**Last Update:** Wednesday, January 18, 2006. 11:27am (AEDT)

## **Govt open to teen work camp idea for vandals**

South Australia Premier Mike Rann says he sees merit in a plan by state Independent MP Bob Such to force vandals into work camps.

Dr Such says vandals should be made to attend camps where they would fix damaged bus shelters or train stations, or carry out environmental work and attend seminars.

He says his surveys of city councils have found they are spending as much as \$750,000 on repairs because of vandalism.

Mr Rann says the idea requires investigation but he says a similar offenders program where young people remove graffiti appears to be working.

"We've actually got a pilot program down in the south, and I think there's about 12 sites which have now currently got teams of young offenders now working on them - cleaning up graffiti on 12 SA Water sites, on TransAdelaide sites, so there's actually a pilot program currently under way," he said.

But SA Justice Minister says Michael Atkins there need to be more scrutiny of the plan proposed by Mr Such.

Mr Atkins says it is a good idea but the plan would have to be budgeted for and well supervised.

"We have had difficulty with the community service program, about whether the work is worthwhile," he said.

"Some offenders respond well to community service but other offenders sometimes wouldn't work in an iron lung."

Dr Such says his proposal would be focussed on making the punishment fit the crime.

He says says penalties in South Australia need to be tougher but fair.

"The penalty for the offenders should relate to the offence, and it would encompass both work groups in the metropolitan area and country towns where, under supervision, they repair it - it could be signs, it could be things in the recreation parks, playgrounds and so on," he said.

Dr Such taking a young person out of their environment might make them think more about the consequences of their actions.

"As I say, not a boot camp - I'm not talking about marching around in ever-diminishing circles, I don't think that achieves anything, but a focus on physical work coupled with seminars, lectures, talks," he said.

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