

Corrective Services (Promoting Safety) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 8
Submitted by: Cairns Regional Council
Publication: Making the submission and your name public
Attachments: See attachment
Submitter Comments:

29 February 2024

Committee Secretary
Community Safety and Legal Affairs Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Via email: CSLAC@parliament.qld.gov.au.

Dear Committee Members,

Re: Cairns Regional Council Response - Inquiry into the Corrective Services (Promoting Safety) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024.

Cairns Regional Council (Council) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the above inquiry, conducted by the Queensland Parliament's Community Safety and Legal Affairs Committee.

Local Government is a key player in enhancing and maintaining community safety. As a public space manager, the role of Local Government spans from community-based crime prevention, including providing monitoring and intelligence, city-wide and site-specific safety planning and place-making, to setting protocols for behaviours and building social capital. Consequently, Council has a significant interest in ensuring the corrective services system effectively contributes to the remit of protecting public safety.

Council's Community Safety Plan 2022-2026 outlines its approach to working with all agencies to increase levels of community safety, amenity, and wellbeing in the Cairns LGA (CRC, 2023). Within this focus Council supports any measures that strengthen policing, judicial and custodial processes to protect the safety of the general population. This includes improving levels of recidivism and supports that address the often complex and significant underlying health or social barriers that effect successful reintegration of offenders back into society.

Council seeks to highlight several areas of failing of current discharge to liberty processes that do not adequately support a released individual. These areas include:

- The volume of daily releases prevents primary responders (Re-entry Services Teams) to adequately meet the needs of those persons being released.
- This does not include the service gap created whereby re-entry case managers are primarily responding to those individuals that have a release date stipulated by the Courts and have completed mandatory training requirements.
- There is no provision in place for persons attending Court via Videolink who have a same day (or in close proximity) release with no support plan established.
- There are no funded provisions for halfway housing to transition persons leaving custody at short notice. (In Cairns, historically this was supported by the Quigley Street Hostel, but that servicing has now ceased due to change of circumstances).

- Persons are exiting custody into a housing crisis. The Cairns rental vacancy rate currently sits at 0.7%, which is exacerbating barriers to access the rental market (SQW, 2024). Council's City Safe street-based outreach teams regularly report previously incarcerated persons being released into homelessness on a weekly basis.

In this regard, Council advocates for increased investment for return to liberty arrangements such as transition programs that repatriate those released from incarceration back into family and community settings, including supported housing options as identified in Council's H&H Plan and specialist programs that prevent re-offending. This includes calls for a wider range of specialist domestic violence perpetrator programs, mentoring and peer support and mental health supports. In addition, Council supports those measures as identified in the Bill that aim to strengthen the voice of victims and their advocates in decision-making processes and program/support service development.

We thank you for your consideration of the recommendations above and we would welcome the opportunity to discuss the matters outlined in more detail. Should you have any further enquiries or require additional information, please contact [REDACTED], Director Lifestyle and Community, on the phone number above.

Yours sincerely



Mica Martin
Chief Executive Officer