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The Community Support and Services Committee
Parliament House George Street Brisbane Qld 4000
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Re: Submission on the Criminal Law (Raising the Age of Responsibility) Amendment Bill 2021

Dear Committee

I write as a paediatrician with many years' experience in working with children and adolescents up to 18 years of age in Mackay and rural Queensland. I urge you to support the Criminal Law (Raising the Age of Responsibility) Amendment Bill 2021.

Children 10 -13 years should not be incarcerated in prisons. The children in this age group who encounter juvenile justice have neurodevelopmental conditions which need multidisciplinary assessment and therapy. These conditions include attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD), foetal alcohol syndrome disorder (FASD), intellectual disability, and autism spectrum disorder (ASD). They have almost all had significant adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) which at an early stage cause long term harm. This is on a background of inter-generational medical, social, and economic disadvantage, especially seen in the indigenous community.

I urge that you take expert advice from those who work with such developmentally immature children, paediatricians, child therapists and child health nurses, to gain a better understanding of their conditions and needs. We have a moral obligation to address their conditions and support therapeutically, not incarcerate them.



Dr Michael Williams

1/10/2021