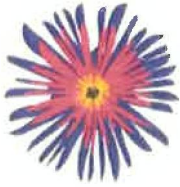


STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY SAFETY BILL 2023

Submission No: 25
Submitted by: Mareeba Shire
Publication: Council

Attachments:

Submitter Comments:



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24 February 2023

Council Ref: AT:AD

Committee Secretary
Economics and Governance Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Sent by email: egc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary,

Queenslanders, especially those who are subjected to the youth crime crisis on a daily basis, are rightfully demanding the scales of justice be recalibrated in favour of victims.

It is abundantly clear the current youth crime laws, programs and solutions are not having their desired effect.

This is reflected by the increase in the level and frequency of youth crime and anti-social behaviour in our community.

This is having a significant psychological impact on our community and has certainly resulted in unnecessary financial burdens for victims dealing with the impacts of youth crime.

This situation is not unique to Mareeba. Sadly, it is happening across the entire state.

The crime crisis is causing fear and division in our communities and change is needed.

Furthermore, community sentiment is that the current consequences for youth offenders are minimal and serve as no deterrent.

Mareeba Shire Council welcomes any proposed legislation that will keep people safe in their homes and reduce fear and division by upholding community standards and expectations.

Only time will tell whether the proposed reforms under the Strengthening Community Safety Bill 2023 will have the desired effect.

However, the Bill provides a solid starting point at addressing community concerns by focusing on recidivist offenders.

Mareeba Shire Council recognises youth crime is often a manifestation of socio-economic disadvantage experienced by young people and their families.

Council is doing all it can within its powers to improve community safety through collaborative action with local stakeholders and agencies, including through its *Collaborating for Community Safety Meetings*.

These meetings have already resulted in an increased capacity to respond to what is often a very dynamic environment.

The efforts to-date are expected to result in greater outcomes than could ever have been achieved working alone.

But in saying that, locally led initiatives cannot replace the Queensland Government's responsibilities regarding youth justice and community safety.

Council strongly believes it is time to start thinking outside the box with regards to youth justice to identify new solutions that will have a long-term impact on reducing offending.

That is why *Mareeba Shire Council introduced a motion at the 2022 LGAQ Annual Conference* calling on the Queensland Government to introduce diversionary facilities on more remote state-owned properties where young people who have started falling foul of the law can be sent to gain both social and technical skills rather than be sent to youth detention facilities.

With a focus on training, this sentencing option would give them a chance to learn both social and technical skills so when they are released, they can pursue meaningful employment and become a productive member of society.

However, Council certainly appreciates not all young offenders would be suited to this environment and hardened and recidivist young offenders who have no interest in changing certainly belong in detention facilities.

Mareeba Shire Council once again calls on the Queensland Government to explore this option as a potential solution to addressing the state-wide crime crisis.

While not diminishing the devastating effects youth crime and anti-social behaviour is having on our community, and more importantly victims, there needs to be a firm focus on, and the actual resources, to address the root causes of offending.

This means adopting a holistic approach, in conjunction with tough legislation and strong deterrents, to help young offenders become contributing members of society.

Mareeba Shire Council welcomes the initiatives and deterrents contained in Strengthening Community Safety Bill 2023, but they can only be viewed as a starting point in beginning to address the crime crisis gripping the state.

Yours sincerely,



CR ANGELA TOPPIN
MAYOR

