

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY SAFETY BILL 2023

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“SUBMISSION STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY SAFETY BILL 2023”

INCREASED MAXIMUM PENALTIES

Increased Penalties is over reacting. This is a knee jerk reaction from the government.

SOCIAL MEDIA

If social media does not co-operate then Government needs to legislate

OFFENDING DAY OR NIGHT

Makes no difference. Most crime happens at night in Cairns.

THREATENING VIOLENCE

We need new legislation when an offender uses violence or threaten violence and pretend to be armed and makes threatens to damage property.

BREACH OF BAIL

Absolutely it must be an offence for breach of bail conditions.

TRIAL OF ELECTRONIC MONITORING

This is just window dressing. We are sick of trials.

ALLOW POLICE TO CONSIDER ALTERNATIVES TO ARREST

I believe Police should be allowed to consider alternatives. They are well trained they are at the scene and they should be allowed to make and an informed decision.

BAIL HISTORY

Absolutely a child's history should be taken into account when sentencing.

CREATE THE ABILITY OF SENTENCING

We believe the community should be protected from repeated serious offenders and the child should be protected from themselves.

CONDITIONAL RELEASE

Due to the privacy provisions in the legislation, we have no idea of the terms that exists now under conditional released.

SUSPENDED TERM.

If a child is released on parole and reoffends, they should be made to complete their sentence.

EXPAND THE LIST OF OFFENCES

Overhaul the Youth Justice Act. It is over 30 years old.

ENABLING TRANSFER OF PERSONS WHO TURN 18

Anyone that turns 18 while in the system should be transferred to an adult prison.

MULTI-AGENCY COLLABORATION

None of this is actually happening. The kids appear to be neglected by all agencies.

POLICING IS A HUGE PROBLEM.

Who will be responsible for monitoring?

We DON'T have enough police now so how are they going to monitor conditional release orders or breach bail conditions?

Bail checks & curfews are difficult to enforce. At present this is being done by Police on overtime. Not home tick.

Police are leaving the force in droves.

How can we make informed decisions when all the detail is protected by privacy provisions.

Human rights legislations seem to protect them and not us the community.

Ms Perri Conti



5th March 2023

Good morning Mr Power

I hope this letter finds you well.

How has it come to this and how have we allowed this to happen? We are all guilty as human beings and I plead to your humanity. I pleade with you to consider this when you next vote on these new Youth Crime Bill.

I believe a personel visit would provide a better understanding of the situation in Cairns and I would like to personally invite you to sit with a small group of community members.

I implore you to take charge of this matter and show that you understand what we are going through in the Far North.

This crime needs your urgent attention

Overhaul the Youth Justice Act which was written in 1992 It is over 30 years old and out of date. Society has changed dramatically. Ice addiction, gambling, alcoholism is part of our society now. We already have a long list of offences we do not need to add to them. You are just trying to make it more complexing when it just needs to be simple.

MULTI-AGENCY COLLABORATION_none of this is happening. The kids appear to be neglected by all agencies and these are a small number of issues they face.

- We have kids being released from Cleveland who are under the care of Child Safety arriving in Cairns from Detention with no placements, no one collecting them from the Airport. Child Safety need to start issuing clothing vouchers and food vouchers by doing this it would stop them stealing food and clothing at the local shopping centres. I personally went and bought had a young boy clothing after fighting Child Safety for 3 weeks to give him a clothing voucher and the child is under their care and living in a Residential Care House.
- As much as I do not like these kids being on Centre Link and would rather, they have employment opportunities it does give these kids some stability and it teaches them budgeting skills.
- They are unable to log into My Gov (by the shitty phone give to them by Child Safety) or unable to attend Centre Link in person for some reason as they have no money because their payments have been stopped. If they have no payments, they are unable to meet their daily requirements and this leads to stealing from shops, breaking into your homes, and stealing your car. Having a regular income gives a person self-respect and would make these kids believe that society cares for them.
- We have a 12-year-old being dropped at his grandparents' house by the Co Responders after being released from detention full well knowing the grandparents were in Brisbane. This kid was unsupervised for 3 days which lead to him committing more crimes. He is now in hospital with serious injuries after losing control of the vehicle and smashing the car into a light post.

- **We have a 11-year-old child under the care of child safety and she is pregnant.**
- We had a 14-year-old child under the care of child safety again whose life was cut short because he was killed whilst in a stolen car. He was living on the streets and taking drugs.
- We have a 15-year-old child under the care of child safety who is a chroming and was also in the stolen car where a young boy was killed. She is in stolen cars every day.
- **We have an 11-year-old child prostituting here self so she able to go to school. Every child is entitled to an education. This absolutely broke me when I meet her.**
- **A 15-year-old girl living on the streets of Cairns. She works fulltime. Why do we not have a safe place for her to live?**

I could go on and on and on. Where is Child Safety's duty of care. You need to **STOP** listening to these agencies that only tell you what they think you want to hear. They are **NOT** telling the truth.

Residential Care – the process removes the child, access the child, find next of kin, is not being met. Residential care houses are being the first resort. It is easier to do a referral to their internal placement unit.

- Eleven different providers offer residential care services and we have 73 homes in Cairns. It is an expensive disaster at a cost of \$56.7m during 2021/22..One child costs \$1.5 million a year for around-the-clock government care. It is like a bidding war for these organisations and the kids are being put up for auction like cattle. The only qualification needed is a three-day online course and a requirement to intension to enrolled in a TAFE-run youth work certificate. The government has spent so money with no positive outcomes. The government is using strict privacy provisions which prohibit the identification of the children in care to avoid public scrutiny of problems within the sector. Residential Care Housing is a failed model.
- After talking with numerous CSO'S in Residential Care Housing I would have to say it is appalling to what is going on with our Residential Care Houses and the care these kids receive.
- Horrific child-on-child abuse currently taking place behind locked doors of the residential care home system.
- It is common knowledge of teen girls prostituting themselves for ice while in the residential care system.
- Kids are not made to go to school, not made to go to TAFE or get an education.
- They steal from the local shops.
- They go out at night and break and enters & steal cars.
- There is a huge inhalant abuse (chroming).
- Younger kids are being placed in these houses with older sexual predators this will lead to massive law suits against the government in years to come.
- There are shocking failures, with kids in care that have been routinely raped by peers.
- Predators being placed into with other children when their file is stamped never to be placed with other children.
- The death of **14-year-old** [REDACTED], that was placed in residential care but was living on the streets and was on drugs.
- Introduced to drugs and learning how to make bongos.
- 10-year-olds smoking cigarettes.

- Staff enabling a 13-year-old addicted to porn by buying him a phone and kept putting credit on his phone
- CSO buying them cigarettes because it makes their shift easier. It is called “Buying your Shift.”
- These kids are being schooled in crime & destroying the rented properties with a cost to the tax payers.
- Kids stealing CSO cars
- Most of these kids have serious mental health issues which are not being addressed and accessed.
- CSO are given \$200 a week to feed these kids. So many complaints have been made by the CSO’s and have been told to do the best they can. I have been told by ██████████ that food was a priority and NO child shall go hungry.
- We have 16/17-year-old being placed in a house with 10/12-year-old kids. (They have nothing in common and this results in them being insecure, unhappy and leads them to living on the streets). This is a never-ending cycle.
- A 10-year-old child under the care of Child Safety living in a Residential House walking the streets of Cairns stealing from shops and pulling knives & scissors on staff. He robs tourists. Ask his carers where he is and they do not know.
- We have cases of kids leaving the Residential (not) Care Houses and go to stay with responsible adults that they feel safe with but Child Safety do not allow them to do this. This is considered a breach of their conditions and they can be removed and sent back to the Detention Centre. Where is the logic? If the child’s is happy and is staying out of trouble because they have a caring responsible adult in their live, I do not see why they see the need to remove them.
- If any staff member tried to challenge the employment conditions they were threatened with legal action and fired.
- There is that many Youth workers that just come and go, because they are assaulted.

These providers are putting profits before the child’s welfare and failing the region’s young people in need. They are not open to public scrutiny and it proves to be a heavy layer of protection. The state government is being warned to brace for an avalanche of sexual assault compensation claims because of horrific child-on-child abuse alleged to be taking place behind the locked doors of the residential care home system.

We need to find a better solution like “Cottage Homes” or a better Foster System. This is a never-ending cycle. I am not talking about all kids but the kids that just want a fair go. The only people that benefit from Residential Houses is the organisations that line their own pockets. When are you going to start listening to the kids and the community in regards to what is happening in Residential Care instead of protecting these Providers There is no KPI’S (performance indicator) and no accountability. We need a better system then Residential Houses for these kids.

We are spending billions of \$\$\$ funding Church base ENGO’S, Indigenous Organisation & Residential Care Providers that have no accountability and no KPI’S.

Many of these kids in their late teenage are illiterate and cannot even write their own name. How can these kids have any future in our society if we do not step up and get these kids on the right track.

Many of these kids have multiple health issues especially in the far north like Alcohol Foetal Syndrome, Aspergers, Conduct Disorder just to name a few. These kids are often incarcerated without ever being assessed correctly and if they are they are never given the appropriate treatment for their conditions which makes rehabilitation struggle.

All we hear from the government constantly saying that it is a complex issue but what is actually lacking is common sense. Why does the government need to make it complicated? Don't you think the community and these kids deserve better.

We are unique in the Far North with our large indigenous population. What works in the South East will not work here.

What is not understood in Brisbane is the demographics between north and the south east.

Trauma is personally defined,"

The justice system is failing to preserve public safety. Our 'justice system' has failed victims of crime, and is upholding the rights of offenders and providing them with minimal or no consequences.

There are groups of children and youths in Cairns and surrounds who are 'out of control'. Crime has become so frequent in our neighbourhoods that we are becoming over vigilant in our own homes. Community members are desperate for effective action to address serious criminal offending in Cairns, and are standing up as victims of crime in our community and want to be heard by public servants in Government who are making decisions on our behalf.

We are aware that the children and youth who have been caught by the police many times, are still receiving bail, and offending again. We know that some of these offenders are of a very young age, have complex issues in their lives or have been traumatised themselves. We acknowledge that the out-of-control crime issue we are facing, is part of a much broader issue for Queenslanders, as offenders are often welfare dependent, have been or are clients of the Child Safety and/or Juvenile Justice system, and/or being 'supported' by community services that are failing them and us as community. Our community just want to see better outcomes in our community.

I strongly believe these new "Youth Justice Laws" that the Labor Government will introduce into Parliament are a start point.

The Labor Government has continued to try and convince us that their laws, "Child Safety, Residential Care & Co Responders and all the others were working and that we were wrong. This will not cost the government anymore money. We need to defund the organisations that are not performing and use those funds for new programs that will work.

THIS IS WHAT WE ARE ASKING FOR.

We need a Rural Educational Learning Centre / Detention based on the Missouri Model. Located between Mareeba & Kuranda.

We need a Drug & Alcohol Rehabilitation Centre for kids.

We need Mental Health, Medical checks with assessments, hearing and eye tests.

We need Court Appointed Guardians.

We need a safe place for school kids to live. Maybe boarding schools attached to public schools.

We need a place for young working kids to live and feel safe without their belongings being constantly stolen by family members.

We need an In Home Family Support Program.

We need in school one on one mentoring.

We need a better Foster Care System so we can abolish Residential (not) Care Houses.

We need a class room where these kids can get caught up in school and then integrated into mainstream classes.

I asked the kids what do you want and they said they just want a safe place where their parents cannot visit. They want to go to school and have a good life and contribute to society. I do not think that is too much to ask.

I am aware that we will have 10% of kids that will become life criminals.

We need to introduce give up your kids give up your rights. I am being very clear on this point. NO child shall be removed from a loving foster family and placed back with parents with addictions where the child gets abused. We need to do what is in the best interest of the child and not the parents.

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I am looking forward to your thoughts and not just a standard government letterhead response. I just wish you could see what we see that this can be easily fixed.

Regards

Perri Conti

On behalf of the Cairns Community

Ph [REDACTED]