

Expanding Adult Time, Adult Crime and Taking a Strong Stance on Drugs and Anti-Social Behaviour Amendment Bill 2026

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Submission to the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee

Inquiry into the Expanding Adult Crime, Adult Time and Taking a Strong Stance on Drugs and Anti-Social Behaviour Amendment Bill 2026

Submitted by:

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1. Introduction

The Australian Multicultural Action Network (AMAN) appreciates the opportunity to provide a submission regarding the **Expanding Adult Crime, Adult Time and Taking a Strong Stance on Drugs and Anti-Social Behaviour Amendment Bill 2026**.

AMAN is a national multicultural civic network that works with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities across Australia to promote social cohesion, inclusive governance, and community-centred policy solutions.

While AMAN is based in the ACT, **many of our members have strong social, family, and business ties in Queensland**, and several have long-standing investments, employment, and community engagement in the state. As a result, policies that affect community safety, youth justice, and drug diversion in Queensland resonate deeply across our membership.

Our submission reflects both:

- **community perspectives, and**
- **policy insights grounded in lived experience and civic engagement.**

AMAN recognises the Government's responsibility to ensure public safety and respond to community concerns about serious offending. However, we believe effective criminal justice policy must also be **forward-looking, balanced, evidence-based, and socially cohesive**.

This submission therefore offers **constructive perspectives and practical policy ideas** that can strengthen both safety and community wellbeing.

2. Recognising Community Concerns About Crime

AMAN acknowledges the legitimate public concern regarding youth offending and community safety that has driven the development of this Bill.

The Bill seeks to:

- expand the **Adult Crime, Adult Time** framework,
- introduce a new **Illicit Drug Enforcement and Diversion Framework**, and
- strengthen police powers within **Designated Business and Community Precincts (DBCPs)**.

Expanaind Adult Crime - Explana...

Community safety is a shared priority across all communities in Australia.

Multicultural communities in particular value:

- safe neighbourhoods,
- respectful public spaces,
- strong family environments, and
- opportunities for young people to thrive.

However, community members also frequently express concern that **justice responses should not unintentionally deepen cycles of disadvantage or disengagement among young people.**

This submission therefore encourages policymakers to pursue **both safety and long-term prevention simultaneously.**

3. Expanding “Adult Crime, Adult Time” – A Balanced Reflection

The expansion of offences subject to the **Adult Crime, Adult Time framework** represents a significant shift in youth justice policy.

Under the Bill, additional serious offences would attract adult sentencing penalties when committed by young offenders.

Expanaind Adult Crime - Explana...

From a community perspective, this proposal raises important considerations.

3.1 The importance of accountability

AMAN recognises that serious violent offences require accountability.

Victims deserve justice and protection.

Communities must feel confident that the justice system responds decisively to serious harm.

3.2 Youth development realities

At the same time, international evidence consistently shows that:

- young people’s cognitive development is still evolving,
- impulsivity and risk-taking behaviour are higher in adolescence,
- early criminalisation can increase long-term offending.

For this reason, youth justice systems globally aim to **balance accountability with rehabilitation**.

3.3 Recommendation

AMAN recommends that Queensland consider:

1. Independent evaluation of the Adult Crime, Adult Time expansion within three years.

Such evaluation should examine:

- recidivism rates,
- community safety outcomes,
- impacts on rehabilitation pathways.

Transparent evaluation will ensure the policy achieves its intended objectives.

4. Illicit Drug Enforcement and Diversion Framework

The Bill proposes replacing the existing Police Drug Diversion Program with a new framework that:

- limits diversion opportunities,
- introduces penalty infringement notices for minor drug offences,
- provides diversion only once for certain offences.

Expanaind Adult Crime - Explana...

AMAN believes this element of the Bill presents both opportunities and risks.

4.1 Drug use as both a criminal and health issue

Community organisations across Australia increasingly recognise that drug misuse is often:

- linked to trauma,
- connected to mental health challenges,
- associated with social disadvantage.

A purely punitive approach rarely solves underlying causes.

AMAN therefore welcomes the Bill's continued provision of **diversion pathways**, but emphasises the need to ensure these pathways remain meaningful and accessible.

4.2 Cultural and community considerations

CALD communities often experience unique barriers in accessing support services.

These may include:

- language barriers,
- stigma surrounding addiction,
- lack of culturally appropriate treatment programs.

Without culturally informed diversion services, some individuals may fail to access support even when diversion is offered.

4.3 Recommendation

AMAN proposes:

Culturally responsive diversion programs

These could include:

- bilingual counsellors,
- culturally appropriate rehabilitation programs,
- partnerships with community organisations.

Such initiatives would improve outcomes and strengthen trust between communities and law enforcement.

5. Designated Business and Community Precincts

The Bill introduces **Designated Business and Community Precincts (DBCPS)** where police may exercise enhanced powers to address anti-social behaviour.

Expanded Adult Crime - Explana...

AMAN recognises that:

- business districts must remain safe,
- public spaces must be welcoming.

However, careful safeguards are important.

5.1 Importance of community trust

Effective policing relies heavily on **public trust and cooperation**.

Where communities feel unfairly targeted or misunderstood, trust can erode.

This is particularly important in multicultural communities, where some individuals may come from countries where police-community relationships were historically strained.

5.2 Recommendation

AMAN suggests that DBCP implementation include:

- regular community consultations,
- public reporting on outcomes,
- community advisory input.

This will ensure the framework remains both effective and fair.

6. Preventing Youth Crime Before It Begins

While the Bill focuses primarily on enforcement, AMAN strongly encourages the Committee to consider **prevention strategies**.

Prevention delivers the most powerful long-term results.

Across Australia, communities consistently identify key drivers of youth crime such as:

- school disengagement
 - family instability
 - unemployment
 - lack of positive role models.
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6.1 Innovative prevention strategies

AMAN encourages government investment in:

Community mentorship programs

Linking young people with:

- community leaders
- business mentors
- skilled trades professionals.

Youth employment pathways

Early access to employment and skills training significantly reduces offending risk.

Cultural identity and belonging programs

Programs that strengthen identity and belonging reduce alienation and improve social outcomes.

Multicultural youth initiatives have demonstrated strong success in building resilience and leadership.

7. Strengthening Social Cohesion

Social cohesion is one of Australia's greatest strengths.

Policies that maintain safety while fostering community unity produce the strongest long-term outcomes.

AMAN believes criminal justice policy must aim to:

- protect victims,
- deter crime,
- rehabilitate offenders,
- strengthen communities.

When these four goals operate together, societies become both safer and more compassionate.

8. A Vision for the Future

Australia's multicultural communities want the same things as every other citizen:

- safe streets
- opportunities for young people
- strong families
- hopeful futures.

The challenge for policymakers is not simply to respond to crime, but to **shape the conditions that prevent crime from occurring in the first place.**

The Expanding Adult Crime, Adult Time Amendment Bill addresses legitimate public concerns.

However, its impact will ultimately depend on how well enforcement measures are balanced with:

- prevention,
- rehabilitation,
- community partnership.

9. Conclusion

The Australian Multicultural Action Network respectfully offers this submission in the spirit of constructive engagement.

We believe Queensland has an opportunity to demonstrate national leadership in developing a justice system that is:

- firm where necessary,
- fair in its application,
- compassionate in its rehabilitation,
- visionary in its prevention.

AMAN and its members — including those with deep ties to Queensland — stand ready to support government, communities, and policymakers in advancing solutions that make Australia safer, stronger, and more united.

Submitted respectfully,

Ravi Krishnamurthy JP

President

Australian Multicultural Action Network (AMAN)