

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

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To: Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee
Queensland Parliament

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback regarding the Expanding Adult Crime, Adult Time and Taking a Strong Stance on Drugs and Anti-Social Behaviour Amendment Bill 2026. I support the direction of these reforms and believe strengthening deterrence and accountability for serious criminal behaviour is necessary to improve community safety and maintain public confidence in the justice system.

A justice system must balance rehabilitation with meaningful consequences. When serious or repeat offences attract minimal consequences, the deterrent effect of the law is weakened and public confidence declines. Laws should clearly communicate that serious criminal behaviour will result in serious penalties in order to protect victims and the wider community.

I particularly support measures aimed at addressing serious youth offending. While young people should generally be treated differently from adults in the justice system, serious crimes committed by youth can pose the same level of harm and threat to the community as those committed by adults. Young people aged 10–17 are often physically capable and fully aware that their actions can cause significant harm. Victims experience the same trauma and consequences regardless of the offender's age.

Turning 18 is not a "magic switch" where a person suddenly gains the ability to understand right and wrong. Children and young people—particularly teenagers— are able understand the consequences of serious criminal behaviour. There is also concern that some offenders may believe crimes committed before adulthood will attract reduced penalties. Ensuring that serious offences carry appropriately serious consequences regardless of age strengthens deterrence and community safety.

I also support reforms that improve the safety of police officers and emergency service personnel. Police perform an essential and often dangerous role protecting the community. When repeat offenders are quickly returned to the community after serious crimes, it places officers at ongoing risk and undermines the effectiveness of their work. Stronger consequences for serious offences, particularly those involving violence or offences against police, help ensure officers are properly protected and supported.

Maintaining firm consequences for serious criminal behaviour is also important for preserving safe communities. Examples abound internationally (and sometimes in Australia) that prolonged periods of weak enforcement or limited consequences leads to increased antisocial behaviour and declining public safety. Queensland should avoid these outcomes by maintaining a justice system that prioritises accountability and community protection.

At the same time, rehabilitation and prevention programs remain important, particularly for young offenders. Education, rehabilitation, and support services should continue alongside a justice system that imposes meaningful consequences for serious crimes. A balanced approach that combines deterrence, accountability, and rehabilitation offers the best chance of reducing long-term offending.

In summary, I support the intent of this Bill and believe strengthening deterrence and accountability for serious criminal behaviour will contribute to safer communities, improved protection for victims, and greater confidence in the justice system.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on this legislation.

Sincerely,

Joel Allen