

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

Submission No: 185

Submission By: Birgit Machnitzke

Publication: Making your submission and your name public

From: [Birgit \[REDACTED\] Machnitzke](#)
To: [CommitteeOffice](#)
Subject: Submission to Expanding Adult Crime, Adult Time and Taking a Strong Stance on Drugs and Anti-Social Behaviour Amendment Bill 2026

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Birgit Machnitzke
[REDACTED]

Submission: Strengthening Youth Justice, Bail Reform and Community Safety in Queensland

I make this submission as a member of the public & a victim of crime who believes the current system, despite recent reforms, is still failing to protect the community.

Queensland has already introduced significant changes, including:

- “show cause” bail provisions for repeat youth offenders
- treating certain serious offences as “adult crime, adult time”
- allowing criminal history to be considered in sentencing

However, despite these changes, the reality on the ground remains unchanged: repeat offenders are still being released too easily and too quickly.

I recommend the following changes:

1. Reduce Magistrates’ Discretion – Make Detention the Default for Repeat Offenders

Queensland has introduced stricter bail laws, including reversing the presumption of bail for some repeat offenders. However, Magistrates still retain broad discretion, which continues to result in repeat offenders being released.

This must change.

Introduce mandatory bail refusal for repeat offenders beyond a defined threshold

- Limit judicial discretion to truly exceptional cases only
- Make community safety the overriding principle

The current system still allows too much interpretation—and that is where it fails.

2. Learn from Northern Territory (Darwin) Reforms

The Northern Territory has taken a significantly stronger approach:

- Expanded presumption against bail for repeat and serious offenders
- Removed the principle that detention must be a “last resort”
- Made community safety the primary consideration in bail decisions

Queensland should adopt a similar model.

The certainty of detention reduces repeat offending.

3. Make Criminal History the Deciding Factor

While Queensland now allows criminal history to be considered, it must go further.

- Repeat offending should trigger automatic escalation in consequences
- Introduce mandatory minimum sentences for repeat offenders
- Ensure prior offences are the primary factor, not one of many

A small group of offenders commits a disproportionate amount of crime. Policy must reflect this reality.

4. Exponential Penalties for Repeat Offending

Current sentencing increases are not strong enough to deter repeat offenders.

- Introduce exponentially increasing penalties for each subsequent offence
- Ensure repeat offenders face mandatory detention, not optional detention

Without clear escalation, there is no deterrent.

5. Target Ringleaders and Chronic Offenders

A small number of individuals drive organised and repeat offending.

- Identify and prioritise known ringleaders
- Impose longer mandatory detention periods
- Prevent rapid release cycles that encourage further offending

Allowing these individuals back into the community quickly fuels the cycle of crime.

6. Introduce Curfews for Repeat Offenders

Queensland has previously introduced strict bail provisions for organised crime groups. Similar principles should apply here.

- Implement mandatory curfews (e.g. after 8pm) for repeat offenders
- Immediate detention for breaches

Queensland already restricts gatherings under the Vicious Lawless Association Disestablishment Act 2013 for bikies — the same principle can apply here.

This is a practical, enforceable measure to reduce night-time offending.

7. Incentive-Based Bail System

Bail should be earned.

- Require participation in education, employment training, or learning a trade
- Only those demonstrating effort toward rehabilitation should qualify for bail

This creates accountability and encourages behavioural change.

8. Reduce Police Paperwork and Speed Up Charging

Police are being slowed down by administrative processes.

- Streamline procedures to allow faster charging of offenders
- Reduce paperwork requirements
- Increase time spent on frontline policing

9. Use Social Media as Evidence

Many offenders openly publish their crimes online.

- Ensure social media content is clearly admissible as evidence
- Remove procedural barriers that prevent its use

10. Strengthen Self-Defence Rights (Castle Law)

When the justice system fails to protect citizens, they must have the legal right to protect themselves.

- Introduce castle law protections for defending one's home
- Ensure individuals acting in genuine self-defence are protected from prosecution

11. Legalise Practical Self-Defence Tools (Pepper Spray)

Currently, self-defence tools such as pepper spray are restricted in Queensland.

- Legalise pepper spray for personal protection, with appropriate safeguards
- Align with jurisdictions where such tools are permitted under controlled conditions

Law-abiding citizens should not be left defenceless.

12. Faster Courts and Immediate Consequences

Delays undermine deterrence.

- Increase court capacity
- Reduce time between arrest and sentencing
- Ensure consequences are swift and certain

13. Refocus the System on Victims and Community Safety

Recent reforms have begun shifting focus toward victims, including allowing greater visibility in court processes.

However, more must be done.

- Make community safety the primary objective
- Ensure victims' rights outweigh offender convenience
- Restore public confidence in the justice system

14. Increase Capacity in Youth Detention

If youth detention is "full", create capacity. Bulk beds if necessary. It's detention, not a holiday camp. This only involves increased and upgraded sanitary facilities, plumbing and bedding.

Conclusion

Queensland has already taken steps to address youth crime. However, those steps have not gone far enough.

The system continues to prioritise discretion and rehabilitation over certainty and deterrence.

The solution is clear:

- * Reduce discretion for repeat offenders
- * Increase certainty of detention
- * Introduce escalating consequences
- * Empower both police and citizens

The public is losing confidence. People no longer feel safe in their homes.

If the justice system cannot provide that safety, it must be reformed until it does.

And for the do-gooders — you can work on rehabilitation once the offenders are off our streets and the community is safe.

Thank you for considering this submission.

Best Regards,
Birgit Machnitzke

