

Making Queensland Safer Bill 2024

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Mr Peter Russo MP
Member for Toohey

Dear Mr Russo,

Congratulations on your appointment to the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee.

Change the Record writes in relation to the Committee's inquiry into the Making Queensland Safer Bill 2024. **We urge you to immediately seek an extension of time for the reporting date, and to reconsider sentencing ten-year-old children to grow up in police watch houses and prison cells.**

Queensland already locks up the most children in Australia. It is mainly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are jailed, in overflowing watchhouses and prisons in well-documented awful conditions. Imprisoning children does not work and is discriminatory. It speaks volumes that the Crisafulli Government has shut down the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry while progressing the very type of legislation that the Inquiry had the mandate to consider.

If the Government is going to progress this backwards, harmful and ineffective Bill, there must be proper parliamentary scrutiny, with a Committee reporting date of at least six weeks.

It is undeniable that the legislation has significant practical implications that need to be worked through.

These practical implications include resourcing considerations for community organisations, legal services, the courts and government agencies, including detention facilities and watchhouses. In addition, as for any Bill, thorough stakeholder feedback is critical to reduce the chance of unintended consequences.

The current Committee timeframes are manifestly inappropriate for stakeholders to review the Bill in detail and provide feedback, and for the Committee and Government to meaningfully consider that feedback – especially given the gravity and length of the Bill, and its lack of consistency with legislation of other jurisdictions.



Smarter Justice. Safer Communities

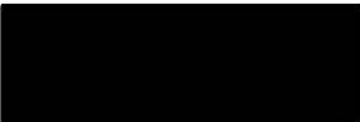
It is undemocratic, short-sighted and risky (legally, financially and reputationally) for the inquiry to proceed on its current timeframes.

Last week, stakeholders raised concerns about timeframes with the Crisafulli Government before the Bill was introduced, and recommended the Committee's reporting deadline should be at least six weeks. We request your support in calling for an extension.

Ensuring proper scrutiny and debate for such substantial reform is the bare minimum expected in our democracy. If the timeframes for the inquiry are not extended, this sets a dangerous precedent for the standard of stakeholder engagement that can be expected over the next four years.

We note that the only reason the Government has put forward for passing the Bill urgently is the Government's promise to pass the Bill by Christmas. This is not a justifiable reason. Queenslanders who truly support the Bill would accept Government efforts to ensure that significant legislation achieves its policy intent.

Regards,



Blake Cansdale
National Director, Change the Record