

## **Making Queensland Safer Bill 2024**

**Submission No:** 31  
**Submitted by:** Peter Barrett  
**Publication:** Making the submission and your name public  
**Attachments:** See attachment  
**Submitter Comments:**

## **Submission in relation to “Making Queensland Safer” laws**

My submission is based upon two issues:-

1. That there is a current problem with juvenile crime, and
2. That there will be continued generational problems with this unless positive action is taken in the immediate future.

My suggestion is based upon the community accepting that community action can make a difference – in both the short (current problem) and the long (next generations) time frame.

### **1. Current Problem**

Queensland currently has in excess of one thousand youngsters who are known to Queensland Police. That is, they are regular offenders of a (usually) minor nature. Some half of those are what might be called “hard core”. They are the ones who have been abandoned from birth, brought up in a multitude of households, abused, malnourished and worse; have had little education and have no respect for people or property. Some one third are aboriginal, while less than one fifth are female. Their friends are those of similar ilk – either ones with whom they have associated during their growing up years, or those they have met in detention. It is this group who are the constant offenders – the ones who, immediately upon being granted bail, steal a car to get “home”. It is between hard and impossible to change that peer group. This group includes youngsters who, if challenged, will just say “I’ll kill myself”, and they will.

Yes, locking them up is a solution – it gets them out of the way. “Boot Camp” actions can also remove them; but the fact remains that this “peer group” mentality will still continue with each individual. It is difficult for an individual to break out of that group, that cycle. That is why so many re-offend. We have all heard of their claim, that they don’t mind being in the watchhouse or “juvi”, because they can sleep unmolested. A sad state of affairs. It is not possible to “blame” the parents – they just don’t have them.

### **2. Future generations**

If nothing is done about the underlying issues associated with the background, the parenting and the education of future generations of youngsters who are the subject of the above para, this type of conduct will be perpetuated. Does our society accept this?

### **Possible solution.**

My suggestion is one based upon community. In a simplistic way, it has similarity to the adage “It takes a village to raise a child”. It also has some connection to Neighbourhood Watch. Let me explain.

A week ago I met a person who had lived on Bribie Island – population about 20k – for sixteen years and who had never met her neighbours and said she would not recognise them if she saw them in the street. A very sad state of affairs – in my opinion. This is not a high-rise suburb where such may be more common. It is an ordinary suburban street. My point is, that

if we “know” our local neighbourhood, and the people who live therein, there will be less opportunity for villainy to develop because people are recognised. Their names are known. Their faces are known. No longer are people anonymous when out in public. Even with a hoodie, they can be known. You don’t have to intrude to know who your neighbour is. They may also be a villain – but if they know that you know who they are, they may be less likely to commit local harm.

To have a community accept that knowing who is living in their neighbourhood will help everyone – maybe just a little bit – avoid the dread of their kids growing up knowing that all they have to look forward to is a life of trouble and detention.

Kids are our future – perhaps it is up to the community as a whole to recognise that collectively we can make a difference for the future, and one that will not impose a cost on them. The long-term savings would be very significant.

I could say more, but the essence is outlined above. None of it is new, but this is a low (or no) cost option and may just help diminish the problem in the future.

Peter Barrett