

## **Making Queensland Safer Bill 2024**

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Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee  
Queensland State Parliament  
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Dear Chair,

The National Retail Association confirms its support for the Crisafulli Government's ***Making Queensland Safer Bill 2024***, aimed at imposing stronger consequences for serious offenders who are causing significant harm in our community.

The National Retail Association considers that the proposed reforms are necessary for enhancing the safety and security of our community, including frontline workers and customers in retail precincts, and we believe they will have a significant impact on reducing crime rates.

The comprehensive policy approach proposed by the Queensland Government alongside these reforms, including the construction of new youth detention centres and the implementation of high visibility police patrols, shows a proactive stance in addressing the root causes of crime and preventing future offences.

When crime is out of control, it becomes a cost-of-living issue. The costs of crime worn by businesses – not only from stock losses, but from the real impacts on violence and attacks on frontline workers and property – are ultimately passed on to customers through higher prices.

Businesses are frequently targeted by various forms of crime, including youth crime, which can have devastating effects. The following key factors explain why businesses often fall victim to crime, and the subsequent consequences:

1. **Employee Safety:** Ensuring the safety of employees is a major concern for retailers. High crime rates can lead to difficulties in retaining staff and attracting new talent, further impacting business operations.
2. **Consumer Behaviour:** High crime rates can deter customers from visiting certain areas, impacting local businesses. Consumers may avoid areas perceived as unsafe, leading to reduced foot traffic and sales.
3. **Economic Crimes:** Businesses are prime targets for economic crimes such as fraud, theft, and embezzlement. These crimes can lead to substantial financial losses, sometimes even resulting in the closure of businesses.
4. **Direct and Indirect Costs:** The financial impact of crime on businesses includes both direct costs, such as stolen goods and damaged property, and indirect costs, such as increased insurance premiums and loss of customer trust.
5. **Operational Disruptions:** Crime can disrupt business operations, causing downtime and reduced productivity. This disruption can significantly affect the overall efficiency and profitability of a business.
6. **Psychological Impact:** The psychological effects on business owners and employees can be profound, leading to stress, fear, and a sense of insecurity. This can affect employee morale and productivity in addition to the significant personal psychological impacts.

For the reasons above, retail crime – especially the costs associated with high-harm, repeat offenders – is putting significant upward pressure on prices in a number of States and Territories across Australia.

The National Retail Association works closely with retailers and the police when it comes to crime reporting and intelligence sharing. Our evidence shows that 10% of offenders are causing over 65% of the harm in Queensland. That is why we consider that the focus of these proposed reforms – targeting the most serious and recidivist offenders – is the right approach to significantly reducing the harm caused by crime, in Queensland.

The National Retail Association's Retail Crime Committee has developed an industry plan that focuses on four pillars:

1. **Consequence** – The enforcement of penalties and deterrents
2. **Technology** – Improved use of technology and review of the *Privacy Act*
3. **Prevention** – Adapt and improve through training and target hardening
4. **Intelligence sharing** – Industry collaboration and reporting

Understanding these pillars, and how they are interrelated, is crucial for developing effective crime prevention strategies and supporting businesses in crime-affected areas.

Addressing these issues together will not only help businesses thrive but will also contribute to the long-term safety and well-being of our communities.

The National Retail Association considers that the proposed reforms are consistent with these priorities, and we urge the Queensland Government to continue its work by considering further changes aligned with these pillars. Our society deserves to feel safe, and these legislative measures are an important step in achieving that goal.

The ***Making Queensland Safer Bill 2024*** takes significant steps to address public safety concerns, particularly through stricter penalties for youth offenders and expanded victim rights. We understand the proposed measures aim to deter crime, enhance accountability, and create safer communities.

The introduction of mandatory life sentences for youth criminals who commit murder, as well as increased penalties for other serious offenses, is a necessary step towards ensuring justice and deterring potential offenders. The "adult crime, adult time" pledge reflects a necessary shift in our approach to handling severe crimes, particularly those committed by repeat offenders.

Moreover, the proposed legislation to double the maximum sentences for assaults, break-ins, and dangerous operations of vehicles demonstrates a strong commitment to protecting law-abiding citizens. The proposed, harsher penalties will not only serve as a deterrent but also ensure that offenders who commit such crimes are held accountable for their actions.

At the same time, we encourage the Queensland Government to continue to focus on a longer-term comprehensive approach that does not stop at penalties and deterrence but goes far enough to deliver long-term community safety improvements. As the Government itself has noted, addressing immediate concerns about offender accountability is a start, but that does little to tackle the root causes of crime, such as socioeconomic inequality, including food insecurity and exposure to abuse, lack of education, and mental health challenges, which are critical to reducing reoffending.

The proposed reforms, including prioritising victim impact over community rehabilitation, may improve short-term safety however, risks perpetuating cycles of criminal behaviour. Without sufficient investment in preventative measures, including intervention programs, community support, and restorative justice initiatives, the reforms may fall short of creating sustainable long-term outcomes. While the Bill demonstrates progress and commitment, its effectiveness will be maximised with a more holistic approach that combines enforcement with targeted preventative strategies.

## **Sentencing**

Concerns around magistrates not sentencing offenders in line with community expectations often stems from a perceived leniency in the judicial system. Many people believe that harsher sentences are necessary to ensure justice and deter future crimes. This perception is fueled by high-profile cases where the public feels the punishment did not match the severity of the crime. However, it is important to recognise that sentencing is a complex process that involves balancing multiple objectives, including punishment, deterrence, rehabilitation, and community protection.

Judges and magistrates must consider a wide range of factors when determining sentences. These include the nature and severity of the offence, the offender's criminal history, and any mitigating or aggravating circumstances. Subsequently, this often leads to sentences that may appear lenient given the circumstances of the case.

To bridge the gap between judicial decisions and community expectations, it is crucial to enhance public understanding of the sentencing process. This can be achieved through better communication and education about how sentences are determined and the rationale behind them.

Additionally, involving community representatives in discussions about sentencing reforms can help align judicial practices with societal values, ensuring that the justice system remains both fair and responsive to public concerns.

## **Workplace Protection Orders (WPOs)**

Effectively banning repeat offenders from shopping centres is an emerging strategy to maintain a safe and pleasant environment for both customers and staff.

This approach targets individuals who repeatedly engage in disruptive behaviour, including theft, vandalism, harassment, or other behaviours that compromise the well-being of others. By removing such individuals, retailers and shopping centres aim to foster a secure atmosphere where customers can shop without fear of intimidation or harm. Workplace Protection Orders (WPOs) in the form of a ban, not only deters potential offenders, but also reassures law-abiding customers and employees that their safety is paramount.

Workplace Protection Orders would also significantly reduce onerous regulatory burdens on businesses in the aftermath of a crime by covering an entire workplace rather than just one individual. Retailers are also calling for an increase in specialist roles specifically dedicated to WPOs, which would provide greater access to justice and law enforcement.

## **About the National Retail Association**

The National Retail Association is Australia's most diverse and representative retail industry organisation, servicing some 75,000 stores and outlets nationwide. We are a not-for-profit organisation built on strong relationships with our members and non-members.

The National Retail Association helps retail businesses succeed and grow within an ever-changing regulatory environment. Our role is to identify emerging regulatory issues, influence government policy towards more commercially aware outcomes and keep public debate focused on the key issues to support the retail and business sector.

The National Retail Association has established interjurisdictional retail crime committees across the States and Territories with our partners in Shopping Centres, Unions, Convenience, Fuel and Griffith University.



In Queensland alone, our successful retail crime committee has ensured we work collectively with landlords, Industry experts, retailers from a range of categories, Police and justice representatives, and unions, to support businesses and the excellent work of the Queensland Police, and to discuss the challenges of retail crime, loss prevention and increasing safety for customers and employees.

On behalf of the National Retail Association, we thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the ***Making Queensland Safer Bill 2024***. Should you have any questions, or wish to discuss this submission, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at [REDACTED]

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



**David Stout**  
**Director of Policy**  
**National Retail Association**