

Making Queensland Safer Bill 2024

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Submitter Comments:

I do not support the Making Queensland Safer Bill 2024. I believe that this bill will do anything but make us safer. Already the minimum age of criminal responsibility in Queensland at 10yo is one of the lowest compared to similar nations around the world. Children this young should never be treated as adults - they do not have adult rights (such as voting, drinking, and soon access to social media) because they are seen as not mature or responsible enough to access these rights. How can they then be considered responsible as adults under the criminal justice system? The Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld) ('the Human Rights Act') outlines a child's right to treatment that is appropriate to the child's age when they are convicted of an offence (see Section 33, Subsection 3). The Government has acknowledged in their Statement of Compatibility that these laws are not compatible with human right (<https://raisetheagequeensland.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/241129-Guidance-on-Making-Queensland-Safer-Bill-2024.pdf>). I find it unconscionable that the human rights of the most vulnerable members of our society are abrogated so carelessly. Many studies demonstrate that children do not have the same decision-making capacity as adults (hence the limits to their rights) and many young offenders have additional limitations such as traumatic life experiences and mental and physical disabilities. These children need community support and mental and medical help however these services are increasingly difficult to access, especially by the most vulnerable. This bill will not make our communities safer, they apply after the crime has been committed, they will not deter young people from committing crimes as they are not able to reason as adults and cannot clearly understand the consequences of their actions. Instead of spending large amounts of money in punishing children after a crime has been committed, I believe it would be more effective to spend that money in prevention - before the crime is committed - by spending resources working with the communities where children are most at risk and investing in programmes that engage the young and build their capacity to become integrated members of the community. The Adult Crime, Adult Time proposal is a step in the wrong direction, it will not make communities safer and is not consistent with Queensland's human rights obligations to children, nor international best practice.