

## Making Queensland Safer Bill 2024

**Submission No:** 132  
**Submitted by:** Judith Andrews  
**Publication:** Making the submission and your name public  
**Attachments:** No attachment

### Submitter Comments:

Firstly, I would like to point out the impossibility of writing a comprehensive submission in such a short time and this submission comprises a few brief comments rather than a closely argued detailed submission supported by carefully selected research and statistics. This is not a sound basis for making fundamental changes to laws and lives. While properly gathered and collated statistics should drive decisions what in fact drives public opinion is media coverage whipping up moral panic augmenting a law and order auction of which this proposed legislation is the latest regrettable iteration. What is unquestionable is that the cohort of young offenders and the families surrounding them live with multiple deficits and disadvantages. Indeed, many of these children have been removed from their families because of such circumstances and have the state in loco parentis. Families' failure to provide support and supervision for children is a common topic of discussion and criticism but the state as parent escapes this censure. This lack of oversight helps promote the care to custody path. and custody renders these children invisible apart from occasional reports of their appalling treatment in appalling surroundings like police watchhouses or their occasional outbursts of violent resistance. What is missing is comprehensive support and development of community support programs for children and their families from infancy, with effective attention and assistance for potential problems such as infant health, sensory, learning, social, neurological or psychological issues and familial difficulties including housing, unemployment, addiction and domestic violence. Most programs focus on the children themselves and only when they offend, or programs cater for clients in targeted situations such as homelessness or DV or addiction rather than the needs of each family. There is ample research showing that a little intervention early in a child's life can have benefits throughout their life and that of their family, including reduce interaction with the criminal justice system. A recent follow-up to a 1999 research program Pathways to Prevention by Ross Homel et al showed that preventative programs had broad positive results in crime prevention as well as other indicators. Incarceration has been shown to have negative impacts on the incarcerated and the wider society, recidivism rates being just one example. The proposed legislation with it's increased sentences and treating children as adults will simply create a cohort of children who are effectively cemented into crime and incarceration for a lifetime without the off-ramp of lesser and more flexible sentences with judicial discretion. Rather than making communities safer, this Adult Crime Adult Time will merely pander to the worst impulses for vengeance in the interests of political populism. At the same time this ill-conceived legislation means Queensland will be violating UN Charters and incurring well deserved international opprobrium. At the risk of futile entreaty, I urge the government not to pass this legislation which will damage children who are already damaged by life's circumstances. Yours sincerely, Judy Andrews M Soc Sci (crim)