

## **Making Queensland Safer (Adult Crime, Adult Time) Amendment Bill 2025**

**Submission No:** 28  
**Submitted by:** HUB Community Legal  
**Publication:**  
**Attachments:** See attachment  
**Submitter Comments:**



15 April 2025

Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee

Parliament House

George Street

Brisbane QLD 4000

By email: [JICSC@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:JICSC@parliament.qld.gov.au)

Dear Committee Secretary,

**Re: Making Queensland Safer (Adult Crime, Adult Time) Amendment Bill 2025**

**About us at Hub Community Legal**

We are a Community Legal Centre situated in Inala, Brisbane, Queensland. Whilst we are primarily a generalist legal centre, we have operated a specific youth legal service since 2006. Our youth legal service represents children and young people across a broad range of areas including criminal law and youth justice matters.

We are opposed to the amendments contained in this Bill.

**Amendments being made ad hoc and piecemeal**

It is submitted that continual amendments to the youth justice laws do not encourage confidence in the legal system. An ad hoc and piecemeal approach is not what is needed. Changing the law in response to individual incidents does not result in good laws.

**Number of children and young people in custody**

Queensland already locks up more children than any other State. In the 2023–2024-year, Queensland locked up an average of 318 children every night.<sup>1</sup> By contrast NSW locked up an average of 217 children

---

<sup>1</sup> Australian Government: Australian Institute of Health & Welfare, Youth Justice in Australia 2023–2024 Web Report accessed on <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/youth-justice/youth-justice-in-australia-2023-24/contents/about>,

per night and Victoria an average of 93 children per night. Queensland locks up more children per night than both NSW and Victoria combined, in spite of the fact that these States have considerably higher populations.

Notably these statistics predate the commencement of the first *Adult Crime, Adult Time Laws* in December 2024.

### **Costs of implementing these changes**

An increase in the maximum penalties for offences committed by children will inevitably increase the number of children in detention and young adults who will be transferred to adult jails. It will also increase the number of children subject to other orders including supervised release orders, conditional release orders and probation orders.

Furthermore, the current system is already overloaded. Children already in detention are regularly subjected to lock down procedures because there are not enough staff for them to do programs (including schooling and rehabilitation programs). Children continue to be held in watchhouses. Whilst the new remand facility has opened, it is a facility designed for short term remand and not long-term periods of detention. There are not enough workers and not enough facilities to manage the current number of children in the system.

Furthermore, every dollar that is spent on keeping a child in custody is a dollar that could be used to prevent crime, provide rehabilitation services or be used for other purposes such as schools or hospitals. We know that locking children up does not reduce crime in the longer term. It is submitted that the government needs to consider alternatives to detention and imprisonment that are evidence based and will deliver long term benefits.

### **Lack of rationale for inclusion of particular offences in the Adult Crime, Adult Time scheme**

It is of concern that there does not seem to be any particular rationale for determining which offences constitute an "*Adult Crime*". The new amendments include some offences (s69, s75 & s 355 of the *Criminal Code*) which have a maximum period of imprisonment of 2 to 3 years for adult offenders. These offences are towards the lower end of criminality and are routinely dealt with summarily. These offences are certainly in a very different category to some of the other proposed offences where the maximum penalty for adults is life imprisonment.

The lack of rationale can be clearly seen where the offence of *Threatening Violence* in section 75 of the *Criminal Code* has a maximum penalty (for an adult) of 2 years imprisonment or if an aggravating factor exists the maximum penalty is 3 years. Yet the offence of *Threats* in section 359 of the *Criminal Code* has a maximum penalty of 5 years or up to 10 years (if certain aggravating factors exist). However, the Bill proposes that only the lower offence in section 75 is to be considered an *Adult Crime*.

### **Further limitations on restorative justice options**

Restorative justice programs are evidence based and used internationally due to the known benefits for both offenders and victims. In making more offences "*Adult Crimes*" there will be additional offences excluded from Restorative Justice Orders and pre-sentence referrals.<sup>2</sup> Restorative Justice programs should not be further limited in their applicability.

### **Evidence based**

Queensland needs evidence-based programs to effectively deal with children and young people who commit offences. The cost of the current '*tough on crime*' approach is significant in both financial and human terms and is not working.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed Making Queensland Safer (Adult Crime, Adult Time) Amendment Bill 2025. Please don't hesitate to contact the writer should any additional consultation be beneficial by email to [REDACTED] or by phone on (07) 33727677.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]

**Carolyn Juratowitch**

*Principal Lawyer*  
**Hub Community Legal**

---

<sup>2</sup> Section 175A(8) YJA excludes *Adult Crime* offences from section 175(1)(da) and (db).