

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

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Parliament House  
George Street  
Brisbane Qld 4000

*Submitted via online portal*

**Submission from the Australian Workers' Union of  
Employees, Queensland to the Justice, Integrity and  
Community Safety Committee of the 58<sup>th</sup>  
Queensland Parliament**



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

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## **Our Coverage:**

The Australian Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland (AWU) has industrial coverage of operational workers (including Detention Youth Workers) who work in Queensland's Youth Detention Centres.

The vast majority of Detention Youth Workers in Queensland are active members of the AWU.

## **Introduction:**

By virtue of our industrial coverage, the AWU's major stake in this inquiry into the Making Queensland Safer Bill 2024 (the Bill) relates to the functioning of Queensland's youth detention system.

This Bill adds a further 20 offences (including three where only certain aggravated forms of the offences are prescribed) to the existing 13 offences that attract 'adult time' for 'adult crime' for youth offenders in Queensland.

This will mean more young people serving longer sentences in youth detention, which has the potential to significantly impact the youth detention system.

This submission will focus on this.

## **Influx of young people entering the youth detention system**

The AWU recognises the significant personal cost faced by victims of crime in Queensland, and as Queenslanders, we share the community's concern about reducing the prevalence and impact of youth crime.

That is why AWU members who work in our youth detention system get out of bed every morning, put on their uniform and work to rehabilitate young people in these often-violent workplaces.

This Bill will increase the number of offences that attract 'adult time' for 'adult crime' for youth offenders in Queensland.

These changes aim to deter serious youth offending, ensure justice for victims, and physically separate violent individuals from the wider community.

While the AWU supports these goals in principle, we are concerned these reforms may shift violent crime off our streets and into our members' workplaces without the necessary staffing or infrastructure to accommodate it.

Queensland's Youth Detention Centres are running at constant capacity. Our members do not currently have the staffing resources to safely run these facilities day-to-day, let alone provide consistent access to education or meaningful rehabilitation programs.

With this Bill set to increase the number of young people in the system carrying longer sentences, we foresee a surge in detainees entering a system that is already stretched to its limits. This raises a series of concerns about how the Queensland Government plans to accommodate this influx.

This may lead the Government to considering double and triple bunking in Youth Detention Centres. This would be a disaster for staff and the rehabilitation outcomes of youth offenders.

AWU members strongly oppose the practice of double or triple bunking in Youth Detention Centres, as it leads to a higher risk of physical and sexual violence among detainees. Such conditions are fundamentally at odds with both safety and effective rehabilitation.

Housing multiple detainees in a single room also increases the risk of violence toward staff, as young people can coordinate assaults, riots, and other disruptive behaviour, threatening the good order and safety of the facility.

Forcing the overcrowding of our Youth Detention Centres would also further erode staff morale, increase absenteeism, and worsen retention - creating a cycle that undermines safety and rehabilitation efforts.

This issue will also not be solved by outsourcing the critical work of Detention Youth Workers to the private sector.

The AWU believes that victims of crime deserve justice. However, we also believe that rehabilitation and justice can, and must, coexist. Effective rehabilitation reduces reoffending and, ultimately, the number of future victims – the most important metric of success when it comes to youth justice policy.

The only way to provide meaningful rehabilitation is through the work of directly hired, professional Detention Youth Workers. Our members are more than guards – they are central to delivering the rehabilitation outcomes the system is designed to achieve.

Detention Youth Workers who work for the Department of Youth Justice and Victim Support have a working knowledge of the *Youth Justice Act 1992* and the complex legal and regulatory framework that surrounds the detention of children.

Their work cannot be effectively outsourced to private providers of adult correctional services, and our members are concerned about the poor health and safety outcomes for staff in these workplaces who may have to rely on undertrained contractors working on casual contracts for a fraction of the remuneration.

Outsourcing this work for new or existing services will lead to a further reduction in rehabilitation quality in these centres, leading to higher recidivism rates and more Queenslanders becoming victims of crime in our community.

The Queensland Government must carefully consider the future policy direction on how they will house this influx of young people entering Youth Detention Centres in a manner that does not compromise the wellbeing of our hardworking public servants or the rehabilitation of youth offenders.

The AWU and our membership are prepared to constructively engage with the Queensland Government in good faith to find common ground on these issues. The safety of our members and the broader Queensland community depends on it.

## Conclusion

The safety of AWU members is the paramount concern of our union, and we believe it should also be the paramount concern of Government when they are making decisions relating to the youth detention system.

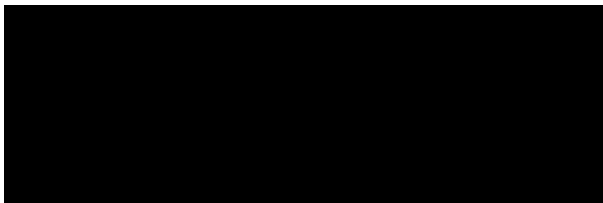
This Bill will increase the number of offences that attract 'adult time' for 'adult crime' for youth offenders in Queensland.

It will also lead to an influx of youth offenders entering a youth detention system that is already incredibly unsafe and at capacity.

Resorting to double or triple bunking or outsourcing the work of Detention Youth Workers will be counterproductive to the Queensland Government's aim of reducing the number of victims of crime in our community.

Our members are prepared to engage with the Queensland Government in good faith to discuss these issues and find solutions that are beneficial to staff, the Government, young people in the system and the Queensland public at-large.

Regards,



**Stacey Schinnerl**

Secretary

The Australian Workers' Union of Employees, Queensland

15<sup>th</sup> April 2025