



- > Homeless Services
- > Outreach Services
- > Drug & Alcohol Treatment Program
- > Residential Services
- > Aboriginal Services
- > Centres for Youth
- > Accredited Schools
- > National Education Programs
- > Early Intervention Programs
- > Integration & Transition Programs

Peter Russo MP
Chair, Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee
Queensland

24 June, 2019

Dear Chairman,

Written submission into Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019

At the outset, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and all the committee members for the opportunity to submit a brief written statement for your consideration while deliberating on the Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, 2019.

I've spent most of my time since I arrived in Australia on a humanitarian visa in 2017, volunteering as youth and community leader mainly within the South Sudanese community in Queensland. I've also been working as a Program Manager at Youth Off The Streets Ltd – Logan Outreach since 2013, with our organisation's head office based in Sydney. Our service runs a transitional goals-setting program inside the Brisbane Youth Detention, and after-hours BBQs and engagement activities at Crestmead Skate Park, Argonaut Skate Park in Woodridge, Beenleigh Children Courthouse, boxing program and evening youth drop in centre at Logan Central. My team also does a lot of family visits to provide an ongoing support for the youth at risk and their families.

In early 2018, I was given a task by our CEO, Father Chris Riley, to travel to Melbourne to conduct community consultations and need-based analysis in response to the issue of African youth crime in Victoria. I was given a greenlight to establish similar outreach program in Wyndham, Victoria and was appointed to manage it until March this year when I handed over to a new manager while I focus my attention on our Queensland's programs.

I sit on a newly created Queensland's Police – African Strategic Working Group, a body that mainly work around south Brisbane region. I also got elected recently as the Vice President of the Queensland African Communities Council (QACC).

Throughout the course of my experience in the youth crime prevention and engagement over the past five and a half years, I've seen so much and only wish I had more and adequate resources to create and run more programs to support vulnerable youth and young offenders.

For the purpose of this amendment bill, I would like to make a few comments on the following clauses and sections:

- 1- Part 2 Amendment of Youth Justice Act 1992 – 263A, Recordings in detention centres and use of body-worn cameras

There was unconfirmed report that young offenders, particularly the ones who came from Victoria and got locked up at Brisbane Youth Detention Centre (BYDC) in Wacol, were using the phone inside the detention centre to call criminal dealers outside to discuss their release date. Some parents mentioned that that young people locked up inside the detention centres should only be allowed to contact their family members, guardians or lawyers. This is to minimize the risk of potential drug dealers and other criminals trapping young people in their networks.

- 2- Clause 7 Amendment of Sch 1 (4) item 16, Charter of Youth Justice Principles

The bill should direct the government of the day to:

- Provide a transitional practical assistance that engage not only a young person at risk, but the whole family to ensure that the child did not reoffend deliberately simply as a way to escape unsafe environment at home
- Focus more resources to fund specific early intervention programs to support children and families who've been identified as at risk of falling into crime or drop out from school, for example, family parenting support and empowerment through liaising and facilitating positive and regular communications between schools, Child safety, police, families and young people
- Create strategically and specifically targeted programs that are culturally appropriate to help youth and families from specific backgrounds who're reportedly and increasingly being overrepresented in the justice system.

Yours sincerely,

Beny Bol – Program Manager – Logan Outreach

Youth Off The Streets Limited

3-4/84 Logan Central QLD 4114

Mobile: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Web: youthoffthestreets.com.au