



Queensland Association of Independent Legal Services Inc

Youth Justice (Boot Camp
Orders) & Other Legislation
Amendment Bill 2012
Submission 029

Our ref: 110.2012

8 November 2012

Research Director
Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

By email only: lacsc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Director

Consultation re *Youth Justice (Boot Camp Orders) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012*

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the tabling of this Bill. I am writing to endorse the Youth Advocacy Centre's submission to this consultation.

The Queensland Association of Independent Legal Services Inc (QAILS) is the peak body representing the 32 funded and unfunded community legal centres (CLCs) across Queensland. As you may know, CLCs are independently operating not-for-profit, community-based organisations that provide legal services to the public, focusing on the disadvantaged and people with special needs. Some CLCs are generalists, serving a particular region; others are specialists in a particular area of law. The Youth Advocacy Centre is one such CLC and is a QAILS member.

Due to other commitments at the moment, QAILS is unable to provide its own submission to this consultation. However, I have read the submission by the Youth Advocacy Centre and endorse it in its entirety.

In particular, we echo the following important sentiments:

1. The public perception (due to media and other public statements) of an increase in crimes committed by young people can and should be addressed by government wherever possible, and every effort should be made by government to accurately portray the decrease in crimes committed by this group over time;
2. The underlying causes of criminal activity by young people should be addressed systematically, holistically and using the best evidence available as to what works. This is not only because it will improve outcomes for young people and the community generally, but because it is a better use of scarce public funds;
3. The intersection between the child protection and youth justice systems should not be forgotten in any policy formulation for young people;
4. The over-representation of indigenous young people in the youth justice system must be borne in mind when making policy decisions in this field, and consultation with indigenous people in relation to possible solutions must be genuine and ongoing;
5. In relation to the implementation of boot-camps themselves, any overly militaristic style of physical activity would not seem appropriate and may in fact be counter-productive;

6. Disqualifying offences should take into account the safety of the young person being recommended for boot-camp and their peers who will also be in attendance, rather than making a blanket disqualification for certain offences.
7. Youth justice conferencing both at police-referred and court-referred stages can be of benefit in terms of a young person understanding the consequences of their actions, and both options should remain available. Any short-term cost-savings from the cutting of court-referred conferences will be outweighed by longer-term losses in terms of outcomes and costs to the system more broadly.

Please do not hesitate to contact this office if we can be of further assistance.

Yours faithfully



Cristy Dieckmann

Director