

From: [REDACTED]  
To: [Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee](#)  
Subject: Queensland Youth Justice Bill  
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Research Director  
Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee  
Parliament House

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I am alarmed at the changes The Queensland Government is intending to make to the laws on juvenile offenders. Before committing us to a return to ineffective and oppressive treatment of children who, for the most part are victims of intellectually and culturally poor, as well as often violent family and social backgrounds, I would like our elected lawmakers to consider the following:

- The threat of punishment, no matter how severe, does not deter people from committing crimes. Juveniles in particular are convinced they won't get caught.
- Prisons are schools of crime and creators of resentment and anger against society. Everyone who enters comes out with the ability to be an even worse criminal as well as socially inept, and increasingly violent against family. The only inmates who don't become recidivists, are those whose backgrounds were not too bad to start with.
- A socially aware and concerned government would seek to improve the social circumstances of everyone at risk, so that their children do not become criminals. Surely they are alarmed that 60% of the juvenile prison population comes from the most disadvantaged 6% of the population—Indigenous people! These kids haven't a chance! What we should be doing is taking them away from their social setting and placing them in a secure, organised, safe environment, teaching them social skills, reading and writing, preparing them for a trade, then finding employment for them when they are released...meantime treating them with gentle firmness, kindness, consideration, thoughtfulness and even love, using positive reinforcement—**never** cruelty, threats, punishment. If they have never been treated decently, how can they learn to become decent? They will never learn it in a prison—there they will only learn to become worse...or is that what the government wants? Create employment for prison guards and social workers?
- If you name and shame juvenile offenders, you are making it impossible for them to ever rehabilitate themselves. Their sole survival means will then be to develop a hard, 'don't care' attitude that will make them even more likely to offend again—after all, what will they have to lose?

You've destroyed their hopes of living a normal life in society!

- Seventeen year old kids are still children. They may act tough, do adult crimes, but they're still able to be turned onto the 'right' path. Put them with adults and you are making their lives hell. Everyone knows they will probably be sodomised, terrorised, turned into calloused adults incapable of anything except sharing their sense of injustice, misery and brutality.
- Offences by juveniles are usually innocent of malice. To bring these up years later when they have done something wrong as adults, is vicious.

When we have reached the point that indigenous juveniles represent only 6% of the prison population, then let the Attorney consider harsher penalties, but while there is enormous evidence of basic inequality and disadvantage among members of that social group, to compound this by punishing the people who are already being punished because of their birth is vile indeed. Like the U.S.A., it seems the Queensland Government prefers to violently punish wrongdoers rather than attempt rehabilitation, despite reams of studies that tell us clearly that what this bill is proposing will have the opposite effect to what the Attorney General reckons he wants. It will create more criminals who are not merely thoughtless of others, but also violently resentful of society, and will further disrupt and alienate the very people in desperate need of assistance, the indigenous population whose just grievances, and the injustices they have received from successive state governments, have never been addressed. We should take heed of the U.S.A., which has more of its citizens in jail than any other country on earth, and one of the highest violent crime rates. We do not want to go down that road.

Yours faithfully,  
Peter R Taylor