

Greg Manning



26 February 2014

The Honourable Jarrod Bleijie MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice
Level 18, State Law Building
50 Ann Street,
Brisbane, 4000

SUBMISSION ON YOUTH JUSTICE REFORM

Dear Attorney-General,

The British settlement that has become Brisbane city was originally linked to the goal of preventing crime. As a 'secondary punishment facility', the message of 'getting tough on crime' rang out from this place loud and clear. Given our long history of experience with getting tough on crime, I hope we in Brisbane have gained some wisdom on the relationship between law enforcement and law and order.

Brisbane's role as a 'secondary punishment facility' was abandoned in 1839, at a time when Herman Merivale was delivering his influential 'Lectures on Colonization and Colonies' to Oxford University. My daily view of the Merivale Bridge (i.e the railway bridge), constantly reminds me of his assertions over 150 years ago that advocates for theories of prison discipline should present the evidence supporting their ambitions. 150 years is a long time to gain wisdom and skill in understanding the relationship between prison discipline and law and order. I wonder what lessons you are drawing upon as you introduce your Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014.

I want to know what evidence have you relied on to show that your proposed changes will reduce offending and lead to other good outcomes for the community.

I am particularly concerned about the potential impact of this legislation on young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders. I understand that 66% of the young people in detention in Queensland are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, though they comprise only 6% of the State's population aged between 10 and 17. This alarming over-representation of specific demographics in Queensland prisons demands careful scrutiny of policies which will further increase the imprisonment of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Therefore, I want to know what consultations took place with elders of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Queensland before formulating the legislation?

Yours sincerely,

Greg Manning

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Manning'.