

Committee Secretary
Legal Affairs and Safety Committee
Parliament House, Brisbane 4000

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Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendments Bill 2021 - "Have Your Say" submission

Thank you for inviting me to contribute my submission about the above Legislation Amendments Bill.

The Queensland Government has a duty of care to safeguard ALL Queenslanders. Please ACT NOW and expedite urgent legislative amendments to STOP MORE CARNAGE by recidivist youth offenders.

Following months of deteriorating lawless behaviour, Townsville residents endured relentless misery. A public meeting was held in this city in February 2020 to try to curb "spiralling, out of control" youth crime. State Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliament, Qld Police Commissioner and Senior Police including the President of the Police Union, met with Victims of crime and concerned residents to discuss the urgent need for action and effective crime reduction solutions. I attended this meeting to provide moral support to three retired friends whose homes were burgled twice and cars and property stolen by juveniles. Victims provided alarming impact of crime details. From June 2020 to February 2021 eight (8) Queenslanders were killed in road accidents involving mainly stolen cars driven recklessly.

PROMPT REMEDIAL ACTION IS NEEDED NOW. Please strengthen youth bail laws URGENTLY and provide appropriate penalties and consequences for repeat youth offenders.

After reading the proposed above Amendments Bill of 2021, I am concerned regarding its Youth Justice Act Amendment recommendation - Clause 26 Insertion of New Section 52AA 1 (a)

Court may impose tracking device condition. It recommends "the child is at least 16 years." This age requirement needs to be lowered due to the seriousness of crimes now being committed in this city by some recidivist juveniles aged 13 and 14. They roam freely or drive erratically through local streets and public places day and night armed with knives and replica guns. Other young teenagers have used stolen cars as weapons to "ram" innocent drivers and target Police. February 2021 was a month of reckless, dangerous criminal activity in Townsville. There was a tragic and senseless road death, two Police cars were rammed by juveniles with one Police Officer requiring hospitalisation. A mother and her two young children were hospitalised after her car was also smashed by a stolen car driven on the wrong side of the road by a juvenile. This LIFE ENDANGERING BEHAVIOUR MUST CEASE immediately. Repeat youth offenders involved with stolen cars and weapon use crimes should remain in custody until they are considered "safe" before their release. They then need to adhere to curfew and Court order conditions.

Please provide support and justice to innocent crime victims and State Police who are often placed at risk. Many victims now suffer trauma as a result of this carnage. Present Youth sentencing laws do not reflect community expectations. More Government run Prisoner Rehabilitation programmes are required. The use of a former school camp facility at Mackay is a positive initiative jointly operated and administered by the Queensland and Federal Governments. Here returned soldiers will train and work as mentors for troubled youth. Respected Elders may wish to be employed to provide their valuable cultural knowledge, skills and talents. Study, behavioural management and technical training will benefit young offenders and prepare them for entry into the workforce. Please consider establishing additional Government operated Youth Correctional facilities throughout regional Queensland.

A review of State Penalties Enforcement Registry is required to ensure crime victims receive Court ordered compensation in a just and timely manner. These innocent crime victims have suffered anguish, substantial loss of money and time. Court orders need to be enforced by SPER. Offenders, regardless of age, have potential to earn or receive future income. Their monies can be used to pay off their crime debts on a payment plan. Victims of Crime have a right to justice which must be upheld by Courts and not ignored by offenders.

Parents and carers of youth offenders need to take responsibility for their children's actions, education and welfare while they are in their care. At present many students are truant and roaming streets and shopping centres during school hours. Governments are paying educational allowances so all primary and secondary students can be educated. These financial entitlements should be used - not abused.

Please give consideration to my ideas to make Queensland safer and curb this State's youth crime epidemic. Today three stolen cars are driving in convoy across Townsville and local streets are now becoming unsafe again. ACT NOW AND DECISIVELY before more innocent Queenslanders' lives are callously and needlessly lost.

Regards

Erin Robino
Townsville born Senior resident.

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