

From: Julene Verkooijen [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, 7 March 2021 3:07 PM
To: Legal Affairs and Safety Committee
Subject: Youth Justice

Categories: Submission

Dear Mr Russo

My name is Julene Verkooijen and I am a life time resident of Townsville (over 66 years). All of my family (husband, children and grandchildren as well as sibling, cousins etc) and all of my lifetime friends also live here. Over the past 6 years I have experienced the youth crime progressively getting worse and the good people of Townsville are now afraid both inside their homes and having to drive on our streets. We lock up our houses and possessions every night, and lock our doors when we are in the car. (I remember about 20 years ago a South African couple told me how frightening it was to live in South Africa and how good it was to know that you did not need to look behind you in fear someone would attack you in Townsville). Now, it seems we are as good as South Africa. The current activity we are putting up with at the moment is young offenders stealing cars, ramming cars, burning cars, and deliberately driving on the wrong side of the road at high speed. We have already seen deaths in this regard and do not want to see any more innocent people harmed.

We always used to believe the law was there to protect innocent people from harm, instead of living in fear, or being left with financial problems or emotional problems through juvenile offenders who take away their freedom and livelihood. Over the years, we have seen band aid approaches to reduce the level of offences as the jails were overcrowded. It always resulted in a waste of millions of dollars as none of the policies put in place stopped the problem. In essence, the young offenders now think that they are invincible and no one can harm them.

As a first step, PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE make breach of bail an offence as we are seeing the same offenders do more and more dangerous crime again and again. It is just a revolving door. Some police have picked up the same offenders 33 times for the same offence who were always let out on bail which was breached. No consequences.

I know you will say that jails are overcrowded and the young youth need a stable life outside of jail, which I understand, but what I don't understand is that the Queensland Government appears to be focussed on the young offenders and have no concern whatsoever for the safety of the innocent people in the community they represent. Surely our lives matter and the time has now come for our safety - both physical and mental - to be paramount in the actions of the Queensland Government. Townsville deserves better than what is getting from the Queensland Government at this stage.

PLEASE, PLEASE make breach of bail an offence so that these young offenders do not think they are invincible and can do whatever they like. The people of Townsville say they have had enough. What the Government is proposing with the bail laws will only work if the young offenders have a stable family environment, but a great percentage of these young ones are the way they are because they have no stable family who are accountable.

I do apologise for my "waffle" but immediate action is now called for. More police will not be a solution if the legal system is not changed to protect innocent people.

Thank you for reading my email.

Regards

Julene Verkooijen

Townsville