

Youth Justice Reform Select Committee inquiry into youth justice reform in Queensland

Submission No: 9
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Committee Secretary
Youth Justice Reform Select Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE, QLD 4000

Via Email: youthjustice@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Committee Members,

YOUTH JUSTICE REFORM IN QUEENSLAND INQUIRY

A strategic priority for Mareeba Shire Council is an active, safe and healthy community and Council's role includes advocating and promoting community safety and other community services.

It is Council's goal that people feel safe, included and proud to live in their community and there is a reduction in crime, anti-social behaviour and vandalism.

However, in saying that, I am acutely aware the impact of youth crime is having in my community on businesses, victims, neighbourhoods and individuals, particularly the elderly.

I hear it first-hand every single day.

Queensland Police Service statistics show in 2022/23, across the Mareeba and Kuranda policing divisions, approximately 57 per cent of property crime, which includes unlawful use of a motor vehicle, break and enter, fraud, wilful damage and other theft, was committed by offenders aged between 11 and 17.

More alarmingly, the figures show, the age of offenders is getting lower and they are now starting to commence offending at 11 and 12.

It is accurate to say my community is absolutely fed-up with youth crime and the impact it is having on their lives and the Shire's liveability.

My community, like countless others, is demanding the scales of justice are recalibrated in favour of victims and the community.

They do believe the current system favours young criminals over victims.

That is why at the recent LGAQ Annual Conference, all 77 councils in Queensland, adopted a nine-point action plan calling for immediate action to address the youth crime crisis affecting our communities.

Local Government is the closest level of government to the community. We are at the coalface.

One point from the LGAQ nine-point action plan I would like to see implemented is increased support and/or compensation for victims of crime.

All too often victims of crime are also forced to carry the financial burden through no fault of their own.

Whether it is the small business owner who has to replace shopfront glass for the second, third or fourth time, or the person assaulted at the shops who has to take time off work to recover or the resident who has to pay increased insurance premiums because their car was stolen.

That is why there needs to be an immediate review of the impact of crime on small businesses and individuals and develop and implement compensatory and supportive strategies that meet identified need and gaps in the current structure.

This can be done by establishing a local government-funded program derived from the Criminal Proceeds Confiscation Act 2002 to fund initiatives that prevent or minimise criminal activity and support the victims of crime.

Finally, it would seem from the Youth Justice Reform Select Committee's Terms of Reference, once again the focus is squarely on the rights of youth offenders and what further can be done to help, assist and support them.

While this is important, it is worth noting the real victims, the victims of crime, are only mentioned twice.

A shift in focus would certainly start to address the perception the system favours young criminals over victims and the community.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute the Community Support and Services Committee Inquiry.

I look forward to hearing about the next stages and outcomes of the inquiry.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of this submission with me personally, then please do not hesitate to contact me on 1300 308 461 or info@msc.qld.gov.au

Yours faithfully,



ANGELA TOPPIN AM
MAYOR