

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

Submission No: 61
Submitted by: Hayley Larter
Publication: Making the submission and your name public
Attachments: No attachment

Submitter Comments:

My name is Hayley Larter. I was assaulted by 1/2 girls who were stealing alcohol from Liquorland [REDACTED]. I was punched in the head repeatedly when I had tried to stop them stealing alcohol. I didn't work at Liquorland for very long before this incident and I didn't work there for very long after. I had noticed an issue for a while before the incident of children robbing the store. It was a known issue and we were always told to just report it in Auora, and give a police report if necessary. No security preventing it from happening and no extra staff members despite it being shown to reduce these thefts. The store doesn't care enough to put extra staff or security on after this incident- they claimed it was too expensive and not worth it. They have completely disregarded that these kids are not just stealing the alcohol and that's it- there is a greater issue here. They are being ALLOWED to steal it. No repercussions, nobody even trying to stop them. This is fuelling the fire for youth crime- they are going on to commit more crimes and feeling more carefree because they are ALLOWED to commit these crimes. They laugh in our faces because nothing is ever done to them. They know they are protected and always will be. I understand the course of action you are trying to take by giving them chances to enter the community again- but surely after repeat offences and minimal time served you must understand what you are doing is not working. The girl who assaulted me was 14. I found out she had 16 assault charges against her in the year beforehand- so how did releasing her help? She was found guilty of 4 other crimes after this, 3 including her attacking more people. She actually broke someone else's arm while robbing their store. She was let out in 7 months and made to serve 9 months. I have no idea what will happen to her- but I do not believe that she will go and live a good life. I believe she will be allowed back into the community, under the eye of parents who clearly don't care what she does, with care plans from over-worked, under-funded and under-staffed social workers. I can't even get in contact with youth reform to try and create a plan with them that I feel is suitable. The time served isn't the issue to me- it's the lack of force for them to become a better person. Allowing these offenders to enter the community with zero change being made is only allowing them to re-offend. I could talk about this for hours, but it only makes me numb and empty knowing nothing will change. My input for what needs to change to try and reduce the re-offenders is this: don't allow these kids to go back to the environment they were in when they committed these crimes. Boarding schools exist, force them into a community that is trying to better themselves. See that they can be a better person. Every single offender needs to give back to the community. Community work such as cleaning parks, planting trees, picking up rubbish. They need to earn back what they have stolen from society. Fund social workers and youth workers more. They need it- they are dealing with this first hand every single day. Create programs to push these kids back into schools. Zero tolerance for re-offenders. Immediate 1+ years served if they re-offend within 12 months of a prior conviction. Things won't change if things don't change. Look into HOW these kids are offending. Why are liquor stores not being made to explain themselves when kids are stealing from them? Why are they not being made to ensure the safety of their staff by providing security in high risk areas? Why are the staff being told to just let them steal rather than bother with preventing these issues from occurring? They are not helping the problem. Where are the parents in these re-offending cases? Why are they not also being charged and outed? Are they forced to go to counselling, is any investigation done towards the parents? Lastly, support your victims. I am disappointed in the entire Victims Assist team. I still haven't had any access to funds to help me get counselling. There isn't anyone I can talk to about this. It has been the most isolating time of my life. I have never felt so alone.