

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

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From: [REDACTED]
To: [Youth Justice Reform Select Committee](#)
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Dear Ms Sandy Bolton MP and the Youth Justice Reform Select Committee,

I am concerned to read about comments regarding the reintroduction of youth boot camps. I know you are aware of the dismal and expensive outcomes of QLD's last attempt at this: [Final report for the evaluation of Queensland's youth boot camps](#)

QLD needs approaches to reducing recidivism that actually do good, not just sound good. I implore you to make informed and educated decisions.

Research shows that programs intended to target young offenders should centre on rehabilitative and reintegrative approaches, rather than punitive approaches intended to punish. The second refers to post-program support. In this regard, young offenders should be supported throughout the process of reintegration in order to reduce their likelihood for further offending. Subsequently, a rehabilitative approach might apply a more positive label, rather than negative, which according to labelling theory, the young offender should internalise and behave in accordance with that positive identity.

Recidivism rates for those who participate in boot camps are high. They are not effective at reducing recidivism, although may be temporarily good at winning elections. Adolescents do better in activities that they choose for themselves rather than one forced on them by society. Youth that have entered the criminal justice system should be provided with some guided involvement as to options with respect to their own sentences. By enabling young people to be involved in determining an appropriate response to their offending, the young offender is more likely to take responsibility for their actions.

Additionally, even labelling boot camps as “boot camps” create perceptions and stigma attached with those being something used to punish deviants although, in the military is considered a training exercise. The reinforcement aspect where being sent to a boot camp reinforces the label of deviant who should be punished. So ‘boot camps’ are possibly a counter-productive term given the desired outcomes of such programs being to divert the young offender away from deviancy, not reinforce this label/identity within the young offender, which increases their likelihood for further deviancy.

I'd request you familiarise yourself with the below articles;

[Queensland media blaming 'crime waves' on youth since mid-1900s, history suggests - ABC News](#)

[Data suggests Queensland's crime rate decreasing despite reports of surging youth offences - ABC News](#)

Please influence positive meaningful policy and do not be drawn into harmful catchy three word slogans.

Regards,

Jessica Watson

