

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

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I hope this meets in time. I may be a little late. I thought my thoughts and experiences of working in youth detention for 24 years was valid. Youth Justice is focused on keeping the community safe and to have deterrents to stop young people from engaging in criminal behaviour. Other factors are the rehabilitation focus. Since my time with the department, I have furthered my studies to be an effective Human Services worker and to understand the human condition. This opportunity has been a journey to further highlight my passion in working with this group of people and allowed me to share evidence-based ideas. Many of these ideas are disputed by staff and at times I have been belittled with my own personal beliefs backed by evidence. John Bowlby for instance and his worked with attachment theory. The detention centre has many short falls. Many of the people in senior Management positions I have worked with on the floor. This astounds me as they would have seen some of the shortfalls I have seen. But we have an increased population incarcerated and a high recidivism rate. I did not seek employment opportunities in middle management as I believed I could make a change on the floor. I worked in many roles not only as an operational staff member, but I worked in programs and restorative justice. My current practice framework has attachment theory and trauma informed care at its core. I currently work as a Circle of Security facilitator in the community while also working with family's engage with child safety. I can see without the supports that are required and so difficult to harness in some regions, many of the children I work with could have blemishes with the youth justice system. To have come from a background of disadvantage where young people have not had their basic needs not met as well as being exposed to poverty and violence shudders me. These young people enter a youth detention centre with their care provided by staff that at times have only had a 6-to-8-week course and limited insight. The only significant component that is strictly assessed is a Protective Actions Continuum course that relates to safely managing young people's behaviour through physical intervention if needed. Admittedly de-escalation verbal techniques are used but most of the content is based on the physical side. Since my time I have seen an exodus of experienced workers through burn out, work cover and or lack of confidence with management and processes. Initially the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre opened with at times only 60 young people. In current times the population of young people in Southeast Queensland incorporates two centres and new section additions to the pre-existing youth detention centres of a new current population of 180. You could say triple the amount of young people incarcerated. Yet Southern Queensland's population has not tripled, and when I commenced the centre did admit young people from Rockhampton. This does not occur anymore, yet our area has reduced but numbers of tripled and the region's population hasn't. Programs on weekends have reduced yet the population has increased. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders represent 60% to 70% but the current identified staff is less than 10%. In addition, sections are continually locked down which inhibit educational activities, access to programs and specialist health services such as group work with psychologists etc. The centres are understaffed and at times sections that do have a core group of people that turn up regularly are forced to move to another section, whilst their section is on lockdown. Here we have a complex problem met with a system that does not have the capacity to effectively work with the complex issues that need to be addressed. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. But how does he know that the Government's inability to address the issues with the young people whilst in their care is not contributing to their issues. Could a more effective system then the current one, assist in delivering safer communities. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. Does [REDACTED] feel the need to visit one of our Detention Centres to view some of the deficits that may be attributing to the current juvenile justice system. In summary a system that has limited staff, a revolving door of new recruits possibly a thousand in the last 10 years, lack of training or staff cohesion, reduction in programs, significantly bullying of staff, excessive absenteeism, members of a management team

some with a direct line to the minister who have worked on the floor but still do not have answers, constant lockdowns and significantly high workers compensation list.