

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

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Please raise the age for children to be placed in jails to a minimum of 14 years, because:1. The human brain does not mature after teenage years - some reports as late as mid twenties for front lobe (the decision-making part of the brain). Even 14 is too low, but better than 12 or 10. Every day a child spends in prison can cause lifelong harm to that child's growth and development. The medical evidence is clear - children who are arrested by police, sent to court or locked away, are more likely to develop mental illness, disengage from school, become homeless and even die prematurely.2. Jailing children is a waste of public money because it causes more harm - yes something must be done - spend money on programs more likely to work. 3. Making children do a structured program IS making THEM take responsibility for their actions, NOT letting them off the hook. It's not about blame - it's about being responsible to direct them away from a life of crime.

This is not saying that all children should continue to be free to harm others. Rather that if they are to be locked away, then the environment and programs need to aim to assist youngsters to be become more mature and responsible citizens. 4. Punishing people like some think worked in "good old days" - like a "quick fix - is NOT taking responsibility for young people in your electorates. It may have worked on some in the past, but there is far more evidence that jail does far more damage to most children.5. Once adults these children damaged by prison are likely to move around the Country and thus cause harm in states and territories outside Queensland. Thank you for your work for our democracy. Kindest regards R Goold