

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

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I believe there is an absolute need to bring penalties for youth offenders and the penalties to be sufficient to deter future offences.

History and Evidence.

Approximately 50 years ago, governments listened to "experts" and acted on the advice that punishments should not occur - "There is always another way".

For 2 generations now, we have had the population believing that punishments are bad, the fault lies with the people in charge believing that "there is always another way".

Corporal punishment in schools. This was stopped in 1980 and what is the evidence we see today. Almost all schools (certainly the one near me) have now enacted multiple short term suspensions. My closest school has 250 short term suspensions for a 500 school population. This means one suspension on average every school day. Clearly short term suspensions are not working

Corporal punishment in schools. During the promotion by the people against corporal punishment, the constant argument was that recipients would believe that violence is the way to resolve issues. However, 40 years later, this has not happened. If corporal punishment leads to violence, the majority of the baby boomers should be these offenders. This is clearly not the case as the "baby boomers" are not the leading cause of offence. The **threat** of the cane worked.

Corporal punishment in Singapore. I remember a repeat offender, a US citizen, who spray painted 9 cars. (yes a repeat offender). He was sentenced to caning which was administered. He publically vowed that this is not the way to treat tourists and he will never come back to Singapore. The penalty worked.

Financial penalty. I remember in the days of secondary allowance to year 11 and 12 students one secondary school principal advised about truancy. The effect was that truants would lose one day's allowance for every truant day. Absenteeism dropped remarkably. This worked.

Jail penalty. Streaking. Most people will not have been involved in the massive amount of "streaking". There was even a song about it which made the hit parade. Most "streakers" were caught and the fine was \$100 (currency today). I can imagine friends saying "your turn today, we'll chip in for your fine". What brought it to an end was the 5 day jail time handed out by a brave magistrate. "Streaking" stopped overnight. It worked.

Softly softly approach. I remember about 40 years ago, a young offender held up a jewellery shop and a shot was fired. The offender was caught and faced justice. His penalty (because he was remorseful) was a 9 month suspended sentence. It is unlikely that this particular offender did reoffend but what was the message given out. **Everyone is allowed one armed holdup, there is no penalty for a first offence.**

Softly softly approach today. Last thursday (8th March) the courier Mail outlined the

activities of a young person who had just turned 18. From age 13, he had 50 offences of car stealing but the comment was that these multiple offences cannot be used against him because he is now an adult. Fifty car stealing means fifty families are deprived of their vehicle. Fifty offences while a teenager means almost one per month. Obviously no removal from society. At what point does the government say enough is enough, you will receive the maximum penalty.

Third strike. New York imposed the 3 strike rule to solve their crime problem and indeed it worked. We need something similarly. If an offender is convicted for the third time, breached bail for the second time or breaches probation twice, the maximum penalty for removal from society should be enforced.

Open courts. The concept of protecting juveniles who are repeat offenders needs to be **terminated**. If it is deemed necessary to close a court for a first offender, then allow video taping to be shown the next day. At the moment, we can all imagine a magistrate or judge saying "Tut tut, you have been a bad person. go away and don't reoffend". Maybe this doesn't happen but when laughter is seen by repeat offenders leaving court, it is no wonder there is no public appreciation of the court system.

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