

## 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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Good Afternoon

Firstly thank you for coming to Toowoomba and thank you for a highly run meeting! I loved that it was kept to the agenda.

I have only been living in Toowoomba for the past six years and I have noticed that the crime has got so much worse in this time. Especially since Covid!!!! I think the youth got bored and decided to express their energy into crime!

There were a few topics that I would like to comment on and in the process, shed light on some things that the public are not aware of.

**SUBJECT:** It was mentioned that it is hard to get youth into residential care 14 yr olds etc.

I have recently resigned from working with youth in residential care here in Toowoomba. I found it extremely interesting that "Child Safety"/ Docs can find homes to rent for 12 yr old to 18 yr olds , but families with kids are living in their cars!!! Some of the homes were brand new and had an ensuite attached to each bedroom. Some were 4 bedroom homes, which were damaged on a daily basis , with no regard for property. Same that families with kids aren't offered the same sort of housing. Not all the houses were like this but some three bedroom houses only had one child living in it!

**SUBJECT:** Choice & Consent of minors.

The children that I had been exposed to in the age bracket of 12-18 yr olds that I had been supporting were "not made" to take the medication that had been described by either a GP/Psychologist/Psychiatrist, as it was their choice not too. I questioned "why" as the prescribed medication by professionals was not enforced as this was the only thing that was helping control their behaviour. Or in fact because the kids weren't encouraged to take it for their sake, the support workers were copping their bad behaviour, by being in some instances being attacked physically and verbally . We were not allowed to retaliate. It is the law that we cannot respond only defend ourselves.

On several occasions and sometimes twice a night or day we had to call the police to the houses as we were under attack. This is a waste of Police resources as they could be out catching the criminals instead they are being called to these residential homes or out in the public because these youths are having escalations!. I have since found out that it costs \$2000 per call out of an ambulance that leaves the station! My personal experience has been that this can happen sometimes three times a day. The escalations are happening in most cases because the prescribed medication by a professional is not being administered as the youth are allowed to make this choice. So I ask myself if they can make a choice about medication then they are making a choice about committing crimes. Shouldn't they be made accountable?

**SUBJECT:** Victims should have a say and be present in court on sentencing day.

My view is that when a crime or invasion has been committed it is like a "funeral/death/ or suicide" in the family. Something has been lost /taken in an invasion or when a crime is committed. It leaves unbearable pain and a lot of questions that need to be answered. So when a crime /invasion has been committed why can't the victims be present in court to present their side of things. Suggest that the youth is behind a partition so their faces are not exposed but the victims need to be telling their story to the criminals in the hope that they may rethink their criminal behaviour . There is nothing to be lost by doing this and a lot to gain in both sides. Like death/suicide/funerals there is a lot of mental health issues from these things happening in lives. The same mental health issues arise when there has been a crime/invasion committed.

Why does it have to take so long for some people to be able to get to speak to a professional

/psychologist/psychiatrist . Can the government have these sort of professionals on standby and only used for the invasion/crimes in the towns. We all know that the government can provide assistance for fire and flood victims at short notice so why not offer the same for victims of crime. People shouldn't have to wait up to 3 months to be able to get in to see a professional. We need to be able to talk about what has happened to us immediately. Some people cannot get into see their GP's for about a week and then to have a Mental Health Care Plan done , then to actually find a professional that they can get into see urgently. I personally know I have a family member with an addiction and for her to get seen has been a six month wait!!!!

SUBJECT: Restraints.

In my role as a youth worker it is common knowledge that restraints of any sort is illegal!!! I personally know of one house I worked in , where we had to lock every door and every gate as this youth would try to run away at every opportunity. It was noted/reported that this was happening to Child Safety only because this person would run out into the main road and walk in the middle of the road with cars going all around her and the support staff had to put their lives on the line to protect her as best they could. She was one who refused her medication!!! She put the lives of her support workers in jeopardy every day!! The police and the ambulance and the hospital knew her and in the end they all put their hands up and said don't call us , don't bring her to the hospital as there is nothing any of them could do for her. Yet she was not accountable for her actions !!! Medication wise and risks to support staff lives.

SUBJECT: Models that have worked in different states?? Rachele Patterson ??

I thought I heard one of the speakers mention that there had been models that had worked successfully somewhere else. Why is Qld not using this now!!!!!! What are the Youth Participation Programs suggested by Wade Collins Indigenous Speaker???? The company I had worked with were not aware of anything I don't think ! As most of our clients are indigenous maybe he should be informing all the support companies in Toowoomba who he is and what he can offer ??? Communication is lacking with Support companies and Indigenous Support Companies. The company I worked with provided good training with FADs and Therapeutic Crisis Intervention but when it comes to putting things into practice the LAWS have restrictions !!

SUBJECT: Behaviours and Consequences

I am 68yrs old and I was brought up to respect my elders. I was also brought up to know that my behaviour had consequences. Could this not be a subject at schools starting in primary school. I know there was a government program that was going around schools showing car accidents and was the consequences were of that. I suggest that a police liaison officer/indigenous preferably as this would reach a particular group of criminals, go into the schools with a power point presentation and also have a victim of crime give their side of the story, a bit like Daniel Morcombe 's mum and dad do in the schools but relating to crime and home invasions.

I would be happy to answer any questions and I am also happy to offer my services if I can be of any assistance.

Kind regards

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