



Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women
Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence

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Mr Neil Laurie
Clerk of Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Neil'.

I refer to the e-Petition (2914-18) sponsored by Mr Shane Knuth MP, Member for Hill, in relation to crime concerns in regional Queensland, particularly youth crime in coastal and western areas such as Cairns, Townsville and Mount Isa.

Youth crime is a serious issue. All Queenslanders have a right to feel safe in their homes and communities, no matter where they live, and children and young people who commit offences must be held accountable for their behaviour and for the impact they have on their victims, families and the broader community.

The Queensland Government does not support relocation sentencing as a viable sentencing option because removing a young person from their community disrupts their positive connections to family, other supportive adults in their lives and essential support services and networks. This significantly impacts their rehabilitation and long-term wellbeing.

When a young person's offending is so serious that they have to be removed from their home, they are provided with access to education, vocational training matched to their individual skills, interests and job aspirations, and therapeutic programs to address the underlying causes of offending. Relocation sentencing does not provide this comprehensive and individualised range of measures that aimed to support and progress the young person's rehabilitation.

The Queensland Government does not support the re-opening of the Petford Training Farm. The *Evaluation of the service provided to young people through the Petford Training Farm (Aboriginal Corporation)* (the 1998 Daffen report) and the *Commission of Enquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions* (the Forde Inquiry) both highlighted clear risk factors identified for the institutional abuse of children at Petford.

Responses to offending must be swift and firm, but they must also be evidence based to avoid further entrenching criminality. Evidence shows that young people are less likely to reoffend when they are connected to school, training or employment, have strong relationships with family and other positive role models, and are receiving help from support services to deal with issues such as family dysfunction, violence in the home, mental health, and misuse of alcohol and other drugs.

The Queensland Government is using a number of initiatives to address youth offending, and is investing in evidence-based programs and services, such as the Transition to Success (T2S) program that are achieving these outcomes, and reducing offending behaviour. An independent evaluation of the TS2 program is currently underway, with early indications that T2S graduates are gaining stable employment and not reoffending.

Additionally, the Queensland Government's Advancing Queensland Priorities include an outcome to Keep Communities Safe and reduce rates of youth reoffending by five per cent by 2020-21.

Please be assured that the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women is committed to continuing to do all it can to reduce youth crime state-wide and in regional Queensland, including working with our partners at all levels of government and the community. You may be aware that as part of the 2018-19 State Budget, the Queensland Government announced that the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women will develop a Youth Justice Strategy by the end of 2018 that will provide a whole-of-government roadmap for preventing and responding to youth crime in Queensland. This Strategy will aim to:

- reduce the number of children and young people remanded in custody
- reduce reoffending by children and young people
- address the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander children and young people in the youth justice system.

I trust that the information provided is of assistance to you, but if you require any further assistance in relation to this matter, please contact Ms Noela Quadrio, Chief of Staff in my office on 3719 7330.

Yours sincerely



Di Farmer MP
Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women and
Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence