



Minister for Children and Youth Justice
Minister for Multicultural Affairs

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Our reference: CYJMA 01493-2023

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Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
ClerksOffice@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to petition 3837-22, tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 28 March 2023, titled 'Youth crime – punishment'.

I would like to assure the petitioners that community safety is a key priority of the Queensland Government. All Queenslanders have the right to feel safe in their homes and communities. The Queensland Government has listened closely to Queenslanders, has understood the concerns in local communities about youth crime and has made it clear through amendments to the *Youth Justice Act 1992* and wider reforms that community safety comes first.

Diversionary and rehabilitation programs are effective for the majority of young people, noting most young people who enter the criminal justice system do not reoffend. However, there is a small group of serious repeat offenders who are continuing to offend and endangering community safety by committing serious offences such as unlawful use of a motor vehicle and burglary.

The Queensland Government passed the *Strengthening Community Safety Act 2023* in February 2023, which includes the following suite of measures:

- introducing breach of a bail condition as an offence;
- extending the maximum term of a conditional release order from three to six months, allowing additional supervision and rehabilitative programs to be undertaken;
- strengthening conditional release orders whereby serious repeat offenders are more likely to serve out their detention when they breach a condition;
- empowering the Court to declare certain young people as 'serious repeat offenders', so that tougher sentencing principles to protect community safety must be applied;
- making it more difficult for serious repeat offenders to get bail by expanding the list of offences with a presumption against bail;
- harsher maximum penalties for unlawful use of a motor vehicle offences if the person is armed, uses violence or where the offending is published on social media; and
- clarifying to police that they do not need to consider alternatives to arrest if a young person is breaching, or likely to breach, a condition of their bail.

Alongside these tougher measures, the Queensland Government is investing more than \$100 million into diversion and rehabilitation programs that are evidence based and proven to make a difference. Some of these programs include:

- expansion of Intensive Case Management, which targets chronic young offenders aged 13 to 17 years and their families to help break the cycle of crime;
- expansion of Youth Co-Responder teams, which are dedicated teams of police and youth justice workers who provide 24/7 coordinated response to young people who are at risk of committing offences including young people on bail;
- investing \$4 million into On Country programs providing culture-based rehabilitation for First Nations young people; and
- more investment in grassroots early intervention, working with communities on programs that work.

The government is supporting community safety by assisting Queenslanders with crime prevention and providing support to victims. These measures include investing:

- \$17 million into joint flying squads, for police and expert youth workers, to work together in targeting high-risk youth offending and provide specialist support;
- \$15 million into a trial helping senior citizens with the cost of securing their homes in three trial locations across Queensland;
- \$10 million in a trial to help subsidise the cost for Queenslanders to install vehicle immobilisers in their vehicles in trial locations; and
- \$9 million for enhanced assistance to victims of property crime where violence or threat of violence is used.

The government continues to boost the capacity of the Queensland Police Service to tackle youth crime, by investing a further \$25 million into high visibility police patrols and proactive policing. There are more than 12,000 police officers in Queensland.

A young person who is in a youth detention centre undertakes a structured day which includes evidence-based programs to reduce their likelihood of re-offending. International research and Queensland's own experience indicates that boot camps are not the best way to change young people's behaviour and in some cases can do harm.

In 2015, the previous government's boot camp initiative was independently evaluated by KPMG. KPMG found the program to be an ineffective sentencing option to reduce reoffending, with 73 per cent of young people who completed the Sentenced Youth Boot Camp program between 2012 and 2015 having reoffended by March 2015.

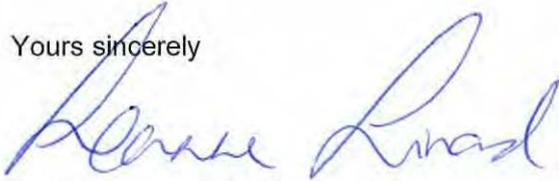
KPMG also found there was no significant decrease in the seriousness of their offending. When compared to the Transition 2 Success program, which engages a similar cohort of young people to the previous boot camps and has contributed to more than half of their graduates not reoffending after completing the program, it is evident that boot camps were not a justifiable use of taxpayer funds.

Instead, the government's record investment to reform youth justice focuses on addressing the causes of crime as well as responding in effective, evidence informed ways to those who commit crime.

We know there is no quick fix and there is always more work to be done. While we will continue diverting young people away from crime through evidence-based programs and services, we know the community is demanding tougher penalties and we are delivering on this.

Please be assured that I have taken the concerns of the petitioners very seriously. The *Youth Justice Act 1992* will continue to be reviewed to ensure it provides the most effective framework, governance and evidence base in addressing youth crime and keeping communities safe while ensuring young people are held to account for their offending behaviour.

Yours sincerely



Leanne Linard MP
Minister for Children and Youth Justice and
Minister for Multicultural Affairs