



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

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1 William Street Brisbane 4000  
Locked Bag 3405  
Brisbane Queensland 4001 Australia  
Telephone +61 7 3719 7330  
Email [childsafety@ministerial.qld.gov.au](mailto:childsafety@ministerial.qld.gov.au)

16 DEC 2019

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

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to Petition 3248-19 and e-Petition 3192-2019 tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 26 November 2019 titled *More police to be stationed in Yeppoon*.

In 2017-18, youth justice data shows that 10 per cent of young offenders committed 44 per cent of all proven offences which demonstrates that a small number of young people are responsible for majority of offences committed across Queensland.

The Queensland Government is implementing the most significant reform of the youth justice system ever to be undertaken. The Queensland Government's approach to addressing youth crime involves a significant investment, which focusses on what the evidence says works to reduce reoffending and keep the community safe.

There is a strong body of evidence which shows that harsher penalties do not work to reduce youth offending or make our communities safer. Any Government which adopts an excessively or exclusively punitive rather than a preventative approach to youth offending is guilty of wasting taxpayer money. That is why the Government has made its record investment in reforming youth justice, focusing on addressing the causes of crime as well as responding in effective, evidence informed ways to those who commit crime, and holding young offenders accountable.

In late 2018, the Government launched *Working Together: Changing the Story Youth Justice Strategy 2019-23* (the Strategy) which aims to reduce youth offending and reoffending. The strategy is based on the 'four pillars' recommended by Mr Bob Atkinson AO APM in his 2018 *Report on Youth Justice*. The four Pillars are: Intervene early; keep children out of court; keep children out of custody; reduce re-offending. The Strategy and Atkinson report can be accessed online at <https://www.youthjustice.qld.gov.au/reform/youth-justice-strategy>.

On 30 April 2019, the Queensland Government announced its second tranche of youth justice reforms and record investment of \$350 million over four years to implement the Strategy.

This was followed by the Premier announcing the creation of a standalone Department of Youth Justice, to ensure a powerful focus on addressing youth offending and delivering the Queensland Government's reform program.

On 25 July 2019, the Government released the *Youth Justice Strategy Action Plan* (Action Plan), which outlines the actions being taken across the whole of Government to implement the Strategy. There are a number of initiatives under the Strategy and Action Plan to address youth offending and deal directly with the issues that lead young people to committing crimes.

The initiatives are based on current evidence from research both in Queensland and internationally, designed to be the most effective in reducing youth crime and keeping the community safe. These include:

- Continuing Project Booyah's 'Framing the Future' leadership and mentoring program which will continue to support young people to reduce offending through adventure-based learning, decision making/problem solving exercises, resilience training and family inclusion to help young people aged 15 to 16 years make better life choices. Project Booyah is a Queensland Police Service program which won an Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Award – Gold in 2016. This includes the RESPECT Program completed at the Yeppoon State High School in the first half of 2019 with 15 local youth completing the course.
- Expanding the successful Transition to Success (T2S) program to 10 further areas across Queensland. T2S re-engages young people in education, training and therapeutic services so that they make positive changes to their behaviour and gain skills to find and keep a job. A recent evaluation by Deloitte Access Economics found positive outcomes in relation to recidivism and engagement in education, employment or training including 75 per cent those who completed a T2S course did not reoffend within six months.
- Continuing Restorative Justice Conferencing which brings young people and victims of crime together to hold young people accountable and repair the harm caused by their offending. A recent evaluation found positive outcomes in relation to recidivism and, significantly, positive outcomes for victims including that 77 per cent of young people who completed a restorative justice conference either did not reoffend or showed a decrease in the magnitude of their reoffending within six months.
- Providing intensive support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families who have children at risk of entering, or already in contact with, the youth justice system. New workers will be employed by existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing Services across Queensland.
- Operation Regenerate is an intensive juvenile community supervision bail program with the Capricornia District being chosen as one of the trial hubs throughout the state. The aim of the program is to deliver intensive community supervision to high risk young people on bail and connect them to specialist support where required.

The Strategy involves many more local programs aimed at reducing youth crime. These are delivered in Yeppoon and Rockhampton by the Rockhampton Youth Justice Service Centre. These include: community service order activities; conditional bail programs and conditional release order activities; youth empowerment programs; family wellbeing services; rules for relationships program; integrated case management; motor vehicle offending program; aggression replacement training (ART); and navigate your health program.

These programs target education and employment opportunities, reintegration programs (including cultural connection), and supporting young people to attend community programs facilitated by community organisations such as PCYC and Darumbal Youth Services.

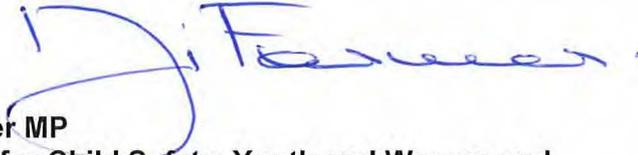
The Government is focussed on the work that is still left to do to address youth crime, and is acutely aware that a proportion of those crimes being committed by children are very serious. The range of measures outlined above will continue to be implemented and evaluated by the Government to better prevent youth crime and to steer young people onto positive pathways to keep the community safe.

The Strategy is now being implemented statewide and in Yeppoon it is being led through the Rockhampton Youth Justice Service Centre.

With regards to police numbers in Yeppoon, I can advise that the allocation of police resources is determined by the Police Commissioner following a detailed assessment of area growth and any new or emerging issues. The Police Commissioner makes this decision, free of any political interference, which is as it should be. This ensures a fair and equitable service is provided. As such, the Police Commissioner will continue to monitor police numbers in the Yeppoon area to ensure the policing needs of the community are met and maintained now and into the future.

I thank the petitioners for bringing their concerns to the attention of the House.

Yours sincerely



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