



Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services

Our Ref: QCS-04764-2018

15 November 2018

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

1 William Street Brisbane
PO Box 15195 City East
Queensland 4002 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3035 8300
Facsimile +61 7 3220 6229
Email police@ministerial.qld.gov.au
ABN 65 959 415 158

Dear Mr Laurie

I write in relation to Petition No. 3013 about prison expansion and privatisation in Queensland tabled on 16 October 2018.

The Palaszczuk Government is committed to the safe and humane treatment of Queensland's female prisoners. The transfer of female prisoners from the Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre (BWCC) to the Southern Queensland Correctional Centre (SQCC) has resolved severe overcrowding.

I am advised that female prisoners have access to purpose-built facilities at SQCC, including a mothers and babies unit, a large medical centre to cater for the needs of female prisoners and a purpose-built safety unit next to the medical block, which enables a collaborative care approach for women with high needs or who may be at risk of self-harm.

The government is currently considering the best operating model for prisons in Queensland. As such, the tendering process for the two privately-run prisons has been placed on hold. In the meantime, we are working with all stakeholders so that together, we can achieve an outcome that is in everyone's best interests.

Further, I can advise that the Honourable Jackie Trad MP, Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, has asked the Queensland Productivity Commission to undertake an inquiry into imprisonment and recidivism. The inquiry will consider a broad range of issues from early intervention to post-prison support.

The Palaszczuk Government continues to invest in evidence-based prevention and early interventions that focus on addressing the causes of offending. We are also delivering sweeping reforms to the parole system and have invested \$265 million over six years to implement recommendations of the Sofronoff Review. Key reforms include enhanced rehabilitation for prisoners to address the underlying causes of offending so that when they are released they are better placed to make a positive contribution to community life. Other strategies include pre-release programs and re-entry services to better support offenders to successfully transition back to the community. Implementation of these important reforms will enhance community safety and the supervision of offenders.

This Government is also investing in strategies to reduce the remand population by providing \$3.9 million over three years to expand the Supreme Court Bail Program. Funding of \$2.9 million has been allocated in 2018-19 to enhance service delivery for prisoners with a disability or mental illness.

QCS is working closely with other government departments to identify and implement broader solutions to reduce recidivism, such as the Department of Housing and Public Works Housing strategy for women on parole.

The government has invested in a number of initiatives and programs to enhance the current Youth Justice system, including the transition of 17 year-olds from adult custody to youth justice, the Transition to Success program, Trauma Informed Practice within detention, establishment of the First Nations Action Board, Restorative Justice and Transition from Detention. This strategy and initiatives and programs falls under the portfolio of the Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence.

The Report on Youth Justice by Mr Robert Atkinson, AO, APM, Special Advisor to Di Farmer MP, Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence (the Atkinson Report) was released on 13 July 2018. The Atkinson Report made a number of recommendations (68 to 70) regarding the minimum age of criminal responsibility. The Queensland Government has not yet responded to these recommendations.

The Queensland Government has committed to developing a youth justice strategy by the end of 2018 that will build on the findings of the Atkinson Report.

I would be pleased if you would arrange for the tabling of this letter in response to the Petition in accordance with Standing Order 31 by 15 November 2018.

I trust that this information has been of assistance to the petitioners.

Should your staff have any further enquiries, please contact Ms Ellen McIntyre, Chief of Staff, on (07) 3035 8300.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Ryan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

The Honourable Mark Ryan MP
**Minister for Police and
Minister for Corrective Services**