



Minister for Children and Youth Justice
Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Our reference: CYJMA 02215-2021

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20/05/2021

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

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to petition 3465-21 tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 20 April 2021, requesting a revision and reform of the youth justice system and relevant Queensland Legislation to better reflect the needs and expectations of the public.

All Queenslanders deserve to be safe in their homes, workplaces and communities and that is why we have invested well over half a billion dollars since 2017 to better protect the community and reduce youth crime.

This record investment is delivering the *Working Together Changing the Story: Youth Justice Strategy 2019-2023* and subsequent Five Point Plan. There has been a continued decrease in the number of unique youth offenders over the past few years.

There remains a small group of recidivist youth offenders who present a genuine risk to the community and to themselves. In recognition that more needs to be done, legislative amendments to the *Youth Justice Act 1992* passed in Parliament on 22 April 2021, aim to improve community safety by increasing the accountability of serious recidivist youth offenders and strengthening the youth justice bail framework. The amendments include a 12-month trial of electronic monitoring devices in five Queensland locations — Townsville, Moreton, north Brisbane, Logan and Gold Coast — to better monitor and manage this cohort.

A further \$98 million is being invested by the Queensland Government for new measures that focus on serious, repeat offenders and the continuation of existing programs showing positive results. The new funding package delivers resources to implement the electronic monitoring trial, more resources for frontline workers to intensively monitor and supervise serious, repeat offenders and enhanced capacity to support their families. It includes funding for the expansion of joint police/youth justice co-responder strike teams in north Brisbane and the Gold Coast, bringing the total locations for these teams to eight across Queensland.

The Queensland Parliament's Legal Affairs and Safety Committee (the Committee) was tasked with considering the policy to be achieved by the new legislation and whether the Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 (the Bill) had sufficient regard to the rights and liberties of individuals. The committee visited a number of regions during its inquiry into the Bill, holding public hearings in Mount Isa, Cairns, Townsville, Brisbane and the Gold Coast, providing an opportunity for communities to share their points of view and suggestions for how to tackle the problem of youth criminal activity. A key message that came out of the written submissions and at the committee's multiple public hearings is that there is no one simple solution.

Information about the Committee process and the published report is available at www.parliament.qld.gov.au/work-of-committees/committees/LASC.

DCYJMA is committed to embedding an ethical and transparent culture that recognises the importance of reporting and managing staff concerns. The department provides opportunities for staff members to share their insights and suggestions in a safe and supportive environment. There are many avenues available for staff to express their views, including through the annual Working for Queensland Employee Opinion Survey and through various internal staffing forums

In respect of public interest disclosures, public sector employees who disclose wrongdoings within an organisation and meet certain conditions relating to public interest receive protections under the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013*. Further information regarding a public interest disclosure can be found at www.legislation.qld.gov.au.

Please be assured that the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs has taken the concerns of the petitioners very seriously. It is committed to the ongoing review of youth justice policies and programs to ensure they are directed at keeping communities safe and holding young people to account for their offending behaviour.

If you require any further information or assistance in relation to this matter, please contact Dr Lisa Pollard, Senior Executive Director, Portfolio Management and Youth Justice Policy, Strategy and Legislation, Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs on 3097 8618.

Thank you for taking the time to make me aware of your concerns.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Leanne Linard', is positioned above the printed name and title.

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