

MEDIA RELEASE

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QLD MISSING THE MARK ON COMMUNITY SAFETY

The peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, SNAICC -National Voice for our Children is joining the groundswell of support to amend the Making Queensland Safe laws introduced by the Crisafulli Government.

SNAICC CEO Catherine Liddle said the Bill in its current form will not make Queensland communities safer.

“Criminalising and locking up children does not address youth crime rates or result in safer communities,” Ms Liddle said.

“Evidence indicates that the younger you lock a child up, the more likely they are to reoffend. “These laws will do the opposite to what they claim, risking an increase in crime by exposing children to the juvenile justice system at a younger age.”

Children who are first sentenced to the youth justice system between the ages of 10 and 12 are more likely to reoffend than those sentenced at an older age. For example, the six-year reoffending rate for those first sentenced at age 10–12 is 86 per cent, compared to 33 per cent for those first sentenced at 19–20.

“Everyone wants to live in safety, including children, but this Bill fails to meet that standard. “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are already over-represented in the juvenile justice system in Queensland – this legislation will only make that worse.

“We know that over 90 percent of children who leave detention in Queensland will return to the system within the year.

“What makes the difference is early intervention, diversion and rehabilitation programs that are proven to interrupt the cycle of reoffending.

“The Queensland Government has talked about these interventions but while they rush to lock children up, they are not putting in place the support and diversion programs.

“The concept of ‘adult time for adult crime’ is grossly unjust.

“The Queensland Government wants to treat children as responsible adults when it comes to crime, but not when it comes to enjoying basic human rights.

SNAICC has made a submission to the Queensland Government advocating the Bill not be passed in its current form but be amended to protect children's rights and embed policy and reform that addresses the drivers of youth offending.

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