

A HUMAN RIGHTS AGENDA

FOR THE NEXT QLD STATE GOVERNMENT

Human rights are the basic freedoms and protections that belong to every single one of us. All human beings are born with equal and inalienable rights and fundamental freedoms. Australian governments have an obligation to protect rights and freedoms according to our international commitments under human rights treaties.

Amnesty International Australia calls on the next State Government to protect the rights and freedoms of all Queenslanders by making the following commitments.

YOUTH JUSTICE

The horrors exposed in Cleveland Youth Detention Centre must not be repeated. These abuses are mostly happening to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids, who are 27 times more likely to be imprisoned than non-Indigenous kids in Queensland. It is vital for the next Queensland Government to have a strong youth justice agenda that is based in evidence and ensures children's rights are protected. We call on the next Queensland Government to:

- **Support children, families and communities to stay strong and together** through holistic, Indigenous-run family support and services by implementing the 20-year Our Way plan. The plan is a generational strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families and was launched in 2017. It aims to reduce high rates of Indigenous children in prison due to the close connection between incarceration and removal of kids from their families. To best guarantee the success of the plan, we call for a continued commitment to self determination, and for Family Matters to lead successive action plans to complement the Our Way plan.
- **Continue to support and expand community-led justice reinvestment projects in Queensland**, including funding programs and services designed and run by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, tailored to children's needs such as girls and kids with disability.
- **Raise the age of criminal responsibility to at least 12 years**, and preferably to 14 years in line with international standards. Locking up kids as young as 10 is damaging for their development, places severe limitations on them reaching their potential and is a clear breach of international law.
- **End the abuse of children in prison and improve care facilities** by committing to timely implementation all recommendations of the Independent Review into Children in Queensland Detention (2017) and establishing an independent inspector of custodial services, one that is separate to government and in line with the Optional Protocol of the Convention against Torture.
- **Keep children not yet tried or sentenced in community care.** Queensland's remand rates for kids are the highest in Australia, but these kids should not be in prison: there are community-based alternatives.



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- **Research the prevalence of children with neurodevelopmental disorders** including including Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder in prison and ensure that children have access to culturally-appropriate diagnosis and treatment.
- **Move 17-year-old children out of adult prisons.** International law is clear that children under 18 years must not be in prison with adults. Parliament passed legislation to right this 60-year wrong in 2017 and the next Government must commit to moving 17-year-olds out of adult prison as soon as possible.
- **Provide transparent and regular data on Youth Justice** to inform policy solutions and public debate, disaggregated by Indigeneity, gender, age and disability.
- **Set targets to end the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in prison** that are measured annually and reported against to ensure accountability and ensure robust measures of progress.
- **Commit to ensuring that youth justice policies are evidence-based and meet human rights standards**, including ensuring the imprisonment of children is a last resort and that policies of the past like bootcamps, mandatory sentencing, naming and shaming and separate offences for breach of bail are not entered into.

QUEENSLAND HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

A Human Rights Act for Queensland provides the means through which the Queensland Government can adequately ensure the human rights of all people in Queensland are protected and promoted. It would enshrine in legislation enforceable legal rights and obligations, promote a rights-based culture within our society and provide a foundation from which the state can better foster fairer and more inclusive communities.

As set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the right to self-determination as well as the right to participate in decision-making in matters which affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own Indigenous decision-making institutions.

Amnesty International is a global movement of more than 7 million people that campaigns for human rights for everyone. Over 260,000 Amnesty supporters live in Australia, including more than 20 active community groups with thousands of supporters in Queensland. We're ordinary people from all walks of life, standing together for justice, freedom, human dignity and equality.

Amnesty International is independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion to ensure we can speak out on human rights abuses wherever they occur.

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