



QUEENSLAND: KIDS DON'T BELONG IN PRISON CELLS

To the Government of Queensland,

Right now kids are already being locked up in prisons that are far too young. Young kids belong in classrooms, not in prison cells. Our communities will be safer in the long term if support and diversion programs are properly funded.

Putting kids in prison leads to compounding trauma and disadvantage, it fractures families and communities and removes children from their culture.

Putting kids in jail cells does not change their behaviour or make our communities safer, instead it pushes them down a path that often leads to adult prison.

There is an overwhelming amount of medical and psychological evidence that shows us children's brains are still developing, especially the parts that regulate judgement, decision-making and impulse control. This means that kids cannot foresee the consequences of any action and cannot fully understand the criminal nature of their behaviour. Whether sentenced or unsentenced, children can not navigate the full weight of their actions and do not belong in prison.

I'm calling on you to reduce the number of Indigenous children incarcerated and ensure their ongoing protection by committing to not lower the age of criminal responsibility to below 10, and instead, raising the age of criminal responsibility to 14, in line with international human rights standards.

Recently, adult watch houses have been used by Queensland Police for the detention of young children. These watch houses are no place for kids and this practice of unsentenced detention deeply harms kids in the long term and must end.

It is also critical for you to fund Indigenous led diversion programs that address the root causes of trauma and disadvantage, and uphold the principles of self-determination. These programs will cost less than putting kids in jail cells and keep our communities safer in the long run.

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**CHALLENGE
INJUSTICE.**

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