

MEDIA RELEASE

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‘Adult Crime Adult Time’ policy whilst undoubtedly well intentioned on the part of the government, will not make our communities safer.

The Crisafulli Government has introduced ‘Adult Crime, Adult Time’ as part of the broader ‘Making Queensland Safer’ Bill yesterday in Queensland Parliament. The heavily politicized ‘Adult Crime Adult Time’ catchcry disregards the substantial evidence base on what is effective in addressing offending behaviour.

These laws will result in the incarceration of more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and indeed vulnerable children from all backgrounds, who are already disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system. As we process the detail of the bill, it is clear a longer timeframe is needed for adequate community and sector consultation.

As a society we must remember that we are dealing with children, and we have an obligation to uphold and protect their human rights.

It is a sad statistic that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth in Queensland are 26 times more likely to be incarcerated than non-Indigenous youth. This alarming trend continues to worsen each year. The root causes of offending include childhood trauma, socioeconomic disadvantage, disengagement from education, mental health issues, and substance abuse.

“Research consistently demonstrates that incarcerating children, particularly without effective rehabilitation programs, fails to reduce youth offending. Instead, it often exacerbates trauma and facilitates association with other more serious offenders, further entrenching and often escalating criminal behaviour in youth offenders. This approach will not enhance the safety of our communities,” said Mr. Shane Duffy, CEO of ATSILS.

“ATSILS calls for more culturally informed justice reinvestment practices to address youth offending and increase community safety.”

The Crisafulli Government must engage more effectively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and we urge them to put more focus and funding towards prevention and early intervention programs. These initiatives should be designed and delivered On Country by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, ensuring they are culturally appropriate, and community led. Such programs offer the best chance of success in supporting our youth to break the cycle of offending and fostering safer communities.

We call on all stakeholders to join us in advocating for evidence-based prevention, intervention and diversionary solutions that prioritise the well-being and future of all Queensland children.

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