

NICK DAMETTO
Member for Hinchinbrook



MEDIA RELEASE

August 2nd, 2022

Raising the age of criminal responsibility a hall pass for youth offenders

With the number of Queensland's serious juvenile offenders between the ages of 12 and 16 increasing, Deputy Leader of the Katter's Australian Party (KAP) and Hinchinbrook MP, Nick Dametto is urging the Palaszczuk Government not to consider raising the age of criminal responsibility in the weeks ahead.

The Hinchinbrook MP's calls come in preparation of a Private Member's Bill that is expected to be debated in State Parliament in the coming weeks by Green's member for Maiwar, calling for the State Government to raise the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 14 years of age.

Mr Dametto said the Government needed to come clean on their position ahead of the debate in Parliament.

"North Queensland communities are quite literally under siege by recidivist juvenile offenders and Labor supporting this woke Green's move would be an utter slap in the face for those suffering under the Labor Government's crime epidemic," Mr Dametto said.

"The Criminal Law (Raising the age of responsibility) Amendment Bill 2021 aims to raise the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 14 years old, while taking away what little powers Police officers still have in charging, holding at risk youths and keeping evidence collected from someone under the age of 14."

Mr Dametto said sadly for many at risk kids in North Queensland, being in detention is a getaway from the realities at home or in residential youth care homes.

"Most of these kids who are out there breaking the law don't have a great, supportive network of family and friends looking out for them, in many cases their parents have failed them and so has the Government," Mr Dametto said.

"Simply letting these offenders off the hook just to reoffend tomorrow night isn't the answer.

"At 10, 11, 12 and 13 these kids know what they're doing, at 14, they're just going to know how to do it better.

"The fact the Queensland Police Union rejected calls to raise the age of criminal responsibility speaks volumes."

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He said if the Government wanted to take real action to address youth crime, they would address the problem at the heart, which was the State's failing child safety department.

"No one is saying the State's youth crime epidemic is an easy fix, but we need to start acknowledging the real, deeply engrained social problems and the homes that these kids are being brought up in," he said.

"Addressing those concerns properly, and actually having the best interest in children's safety and futures and not just reunification with family is going to be far more beneficial than another bleeding heart woke ideology which would take away the only level of preventative measure we have left."

Under the KAP's relocation sentencing policy offenders as young as 10 would have the opportunity to learn and develop life skills at a remote property at Lake Julius near Mt Isa.

"Relocation sentencing can break the cycle of youth crime before offenders become hardened criminals, a stint out west will give these kids a purpose, skills and the ability to learn respect for themselves and others," he said.

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Image: State Member for Hinchinbrook and KAP Deputy Leader, Nick Dametto.

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