



youth affairs network qld

MEDIA RELEASE

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Youth Peak Body Demands Transfer of Children out of Adult Prisons

Youth Affairs Network of Queensland (YANQ), the Peak body for youth issues in Queensland is calling on Queensland Labor Government to act immediately to transfer all children out of adult prisons.

Mr Siyavash Doostkhah, Director of YANQ expressed serious concern that the state government is refusing to acknowledge there are major problems in the state's youth justice system "the Labor Government back in 1992 made a commitment that in the not too distant future 17-year-old children will be included in the Youth Justice System" he said.

"It beggar belief that the Queensland Premier came out yesterday saying this is not a priority. We have waited 24 long years and the community is sick of these lame excuses while children are being abused in adult prisons" said the YANQ Director.

Mr Doostkhah also refuted claims by the Attorney General earlier today that "this is a complex issue". I simply invited the Attorney General to pick up the phone and call Mr Rob Hulls who was Victoria's Labor Attorney General in 2004 when they made the necessary changes so 17 year olds were treated as a child in Victoria's Justice System. Mr Hull has repeatedly offered to provide advice to Queensland Government assuring them that the change is very simple and that sky did not fall when the change was implemented.

Separation of children from adult has been clearly articulated in international standards. Article 37 (c) of Convention on the Rights of the Child (CROC) requires that [e]very child deprived of liberty shall be treated with humanity and respect for the inherent dignity of the human person...In particular, every child deprived of liberty shall be separated from adults unless it is considered in the child's best interest not to do so...

As the peak body representing young people and youth services in Queensland YANQ find it absolutely unacceptable that the Queensland Government continues to put children in harm's way and demands immediate action by Labor Government to follow through with the commitment they made 24 years ago. YANQ also calls on the LNP opposition to fully support this change in order for the bipartisan approach to speed up the process of ensuring we meet our obligations and duty of care to Queensland children.

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