



MEDIA RELEASE

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LNP Policy to Boost Youth Crime

Youth Affairs Network of Queensland (YANQ) is appalled by the manner in which LNP is, once again, approaching a state election by campaigning on youth crime.

YANQ's Director, Mr Siyavash Doostkhah, said "We have a situation whereby some of the conservative media outlets are fueling the flames of a youth crime wave creating fear in our community. LNP is then responding to this manufactured fear by pointing the finger at Labor as being soft on crime. Labor in turn has been back-pedaling and reversing some of the slow incremental progress that has been made to shift public expenditure from punishment to prevention."

"In all if this, young people and the community at large are the big losers. More of our tax money will be spent on outdated policy strategies which have been proven to be utter failures. This will only serve to make our communities less safe, and all of this just for short term political gain" said Mr Doostkhah.

In recent years we have seen the Queensland Labor Government being forced to take regressive steps, mimicking the LNP. One example is the way they have expanded Queensland's youth prison system. This is despite credible research indicating that prevention is a much more cost-efficient way to deal with youth offending and will also result in creating safer communities. The Government knows this but as always, in particular before an election, it has been taken hostage by the conservative parties and media.

Mr Doostkhah has been observing the developments in the Queensland Youth Justice system for the past three decades. He is concerned that without a significant public education campaign we will continue to repeat the same mistakes and waste millions of dollars of our public tax revenue manufacturing hardened criminals. "The young people who are committing the bulk of crimes are used to being neglected and abused. Harsher penalties will in no way deter them from what they are doing. What they need is something different in their life, something that has been missing and that is genuine love and care."

It not as if we haven't had the LNP in Government before and when you look at the statistics you will see that there is hardly any difference to the crime rates with changes of Governments. That's because more or less all sides of politics continue to repeat the same mistake, over and over, campaigning on being tougher than the other side on crime.

Investment in youth work to support young people across the state has stagnated at around \$20 million for many years. At the same time, we have hundreds of millions of dollars invested in youth prisons. At some stage, as a community, we should have an objective look at this situation and demand from our Governments that they invest our tax money in putting these young people on a different trajectory rather than putting them in youth prisons which serves as a training ground for a criminal career.

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