

MEDIA RELEASE: For immediate release Wednesday 19 March 2014

Newman Government's Juvenile Injustice Proposals

Australian Lawyers for Human Rights (ALHR) today criticised the Newman Government's proposed juvenile justice laws.

Queensland Convenor Benedict Coyne stated this morning:

"The Newman Government's proposals are inconsistent with various human rights obligations under international instruments including the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child which Australia was one of the first countries to ratify in December 1990.

Australia's basic human rights obligations to the international community also include: the use of the child's best interests as a guiding principle; the use of detention as a last resort only; non-publication of a juvenile's details at all times; and diversion from formal court processes where possible.

Additionally, there is mountainous empirical data that the proposed reforms, including mandatory detention, naming-and-shaming and boot camps, simply will not work. There is strong evidence that naming-and-shaming a child will severely diminish any prospects of rehabilitation as it may lead to exclusion of that child from the community and may affect their potential to obtain employment, which are widely recognised as key risk factors for recidivism.

Mandatory sentencing of juveniles has been shown to be ineffective, the tough on crime approach fails to reduce rates of recidivism, and the naming of young offenders will not assist rehabilitation or reduce crime.

Once again these legal reforms by the Newman government comprise another potential massive waste of taxpayers' money in its purported "tough-on-crime" agenda.

A more responsible and cost effective approach would be the introduction of proven and effective early intervention programs and the re-introduction of restorative justice approaches previously cut by the Newman Government.

Australian Lawyers for Human Rights strongly encourages the Newman government to reconsider the facts and the voluminous evidence and to shelve the proposed reforms and re-implement proven early intervention and prevention remedies.

For the former Smart State, that would be a much smarter use of taxpayers' dollars."

Media Contact: Benedict Coyne (ALHR Qld Convenor & National Committee Member)

M: 0434915713

E: alhrmedia@gmail.com

ALHR (Australian Lawyers for Human Rights) is a network of Australian lawyers active in practising and promoting awareness of international human rights standards in Australia. ALHR has a national membership of nearly 3000 people, with active National, State and Territory committees.