

# Juvenile crime in Queensland



Every Queensland community deserves to be a liveable one



Community suggestions to address juvenile crime in Queensland

Many Queensland communities are feeling the impact of juvenile crime. Councils are calling for immediate action and partnership with the State Government to ensure our state's unrivalled reputation as a safe place to live, work and visit is preserved.

Queensland's 77 councils want immediate, evidence-based action to urgently address these pressing law and order issues. In 2022 and 2023, councils united to pass several resolutions at the LGAQ Annual Conference to curb crime. The below nine points comprise a Local Government Action Plan that offers constructive solutions that directly address the concerns of Queensland communities.

1

**Local diversionary strategies designed and implemented** to keep young people out of the juvenile justice system.

2

**Audit of all existing place-based youth justice programs**, including diversionary and other specific initiatives to ensure they are responsive to local needs, meeting intended outcomes and are fit-for-purpose.

3

**Development of place-based, culturally appropriate pre-vocational, employment** and further education pathways and outcomes.

4

**A local government 'seat at the table' to inform engagement strategies** that capture and support young people who are disengaging or have disengaged from the education system or other relevant institutions.

5

**Increased support for victims of crime**, including the establishment of a State Government funding program where money and property forfeited as proceeds of crime is reinvested into impacted communities.

6

**The establishment of a collaborative taskforce** to facilitate a coordinated and consistent response across State Government stakeholders.

7

**The provision of additional State Government operational, maintenance and capital funding** for CCTV infrastructure, upgraded high-definition colour CCTV for existing facilities and Wi-Fi nodes in all tourism hotspots and vulnerable communities.

8

**Funding to enable local government and the Queensland Police Service (QPS)** to work in partnership to implement place-based crime prevention strategies.

9

**Better State Government support for the Indigenous Recruit Preparation Program** to increase the numbers of fully sworn Indigenous police officers and implement a community policing model in all First Nations council communities.

**Local government does not have law and order responsibilities. These sit with the Queensland Police Service (QPS). However, local leaders strongly wish to represent the concerns of their communities and be constructive in partnering with the State Government to offer ideas to address these concerns.**

Member councils of the LGAQ have proposed these solutions, informed directly by their grassroots observations, as a set of urgent priorities to bolster the safety of communities across our state.

As the level of government that is closest to the community, councils are acutely aware of the impacts of youth crime – on victims, business owners and neighbourhoods across Queensland.

Local government leaders stand ready to support initiatives that recognise the proven value of early intervention and other diversionary programs, but they must be place-based.

Direct consultation with First Nations communities is vital to ensure culturally appropriate solutions – and policies that do not disproportionately impact First Nations communities.

The challenges in Mount Isa are different to those in Townsville, or in Brisbane, and understanding this dynamic within a statewide policy framework is fundamental to effectively responding to the broader issue.

**Local diversionary strategies designed and implemented to keep young people out of the juvenile justice system.** Resource and expand the reach of culturally appropriate, place-based diversionary programs to engage young people and divert them away from the juvenile justice system.

**Audit of all existing place-based youth justice programs, including diversionary and other specific initiatives** to ensure they are responsive to local needs, meeting intended outcomes and are fit-for-purpose.

**Development of place-based, culturally appropriate pre-vocational, employment and further education pathways and outcomes.** Fund youth specialist workers within, and supported by, councils to enable the creation of local solutions. Support this measure with the allocation of appropriate resources to expand the capacity of local service providers – via tools like Local Government Community Safety Plans (CSPs), allowing them to design and implement local solutions that empower and provide young people with opportunities to be actively engaged in their futures.

**A local government 'seat at the table' to inform engagement strategies that capture and support young people who are disengaging or have disengaged from the education system and/ or other relevant institutions.** Fund and allocate resources to implement statewide, wraparound support systems for students who are 'at risk' or actively disengaging from the education system.

**Increased support and/or compensation for victims of crime.**

Undertake a review of the impact of crime on small businesses and, accordingly, develop and implement compensatory and supportive strategies that meet identified need and gaps in current structures. Consider the establishment of a local government-funded program derived from the *Criminal Proceeds Confiscation Act 2002 (CPCA)*, to fund initiatives that prevent or minimise criminal activity or support the victims of crime.

**The establishment of a collaborative taskforce to facilitate a coordinated and consistent response across State Government stakeholders.**

Work collaboratively and in partnership with key stakeholders to review and streamline the current youth justice framework and judicial responses to youth crime in order to establish a coordinated and consistent whole-of-government response at the State and local levels, including a review of the *Youth Justice Act 1992*.

**The provision of additional State Government operational, maintenance and capital funding for CCTV infrastructure,**

upgraded high-definition colour CCTV for existing facilities and Wi-Fi nodes in all tourism and hotspots and vulnerable communities. This will boost and promote safety, whilst also improving visitor amenity and opportunities

**Funding to enable local government and the QPS to work in partnership to implement place-based crime prevention strategies,** encompassing funding for councils to employ youth development officers to work with a diversity of stakeholders on reducing youth crime and its long-term impacts upon communities.

**Better State Government support for the Indigenous Recruit Preparation Program to increase the numbers of fully-sworn Indigenous police officers and implement a community policing model in all First Nations council communities.** This will pave the way for increased QPS engagement with communities, and improved relationships between the QPS and First Nations community members through positive role models for First Nations youth – and more community members adopting positive views of the role of police officers.

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## Cairns Regional Council

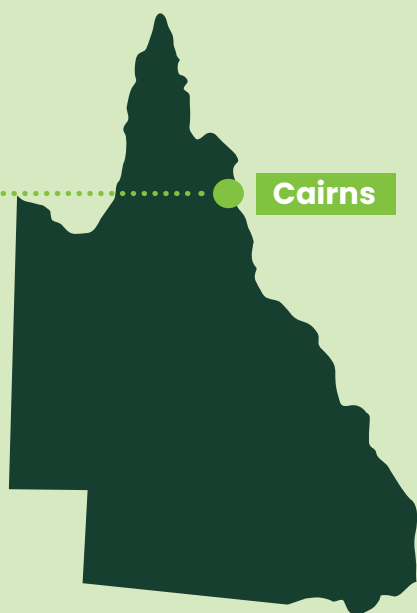
### Youth focus in Cairns CBD safety pilot

Cairns Regional Council's Community Safety Plan - CBD Pilot 2022-2026 is providing a framework for Council to proactively engage with service providers to connect with young people and address at-risk behaviour in its CBD.

Cairns' unique combination of factors stemming from its location, demographics and positioning as a tourism hotspot make it vital that place-based solutions are considered and implemented.

The pilot aims to strengthen the Cairns CBD as an inviting place where people feel safe, amenity encourages visitation, and economic activity and diversity is supported.

It encompasses, in part, a focus on informal engagement via funded service providers, with the implementation of place-based and mobile Police Liaison Officers engaging with all at risk groups including young people in the Cairns CBD.



## Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council

### Palm Island night patrol finds success with local solution

A community night patrol engaging with local youth at risk of anti-social behaviour has found success reducing incidents of property crime on Palm Island.

The community-driven solution has seen Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council partner with residents to deploy a team of locals, including local elders, to patrol the town centre and surrounds, talking with young people out of home and moving them on.

Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council Mayor Mislam Sam said the initiative's success showed what happens when community voices are heard and local solutions implemented.

"The success we've had with our night patrol shows greater community control works."

"We as a community have been calling for greater support for grassroots solutions like these - it's the only way to address the root cause of some of these issues our young people are facing."



## Townsville City Council

### Commitment to a Safer Townsville

Townsville, like many other cities and towns across Queensland, has not been immune to the prevalence of property-related crime in its communities.

Townsville City Council has taken the stance that locally targeted and practical solutions are necessary to tackle these types of crimes – even though addressing this issue does not fall within the legislative authority of local governments.

In recognition of the significance of fostering a safe and secure environment for its residents and visitors, Council has embarked on an ambitious journey with their 'Safer Places Townsville Action Plan'.

The initiative focuses on several key areas, including a Community Safety Advisory Committee which includes representatives from Council, the Queensland Police Service (QPS), Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) and various state agencies and NGOs – and community safety audits.

Key outcomes of community safety audits have included investment in programs and opportunities tailored to youth offering positive outlets and opportunities, improved street and park lighting and optimising the use of public spaces for community benefit.



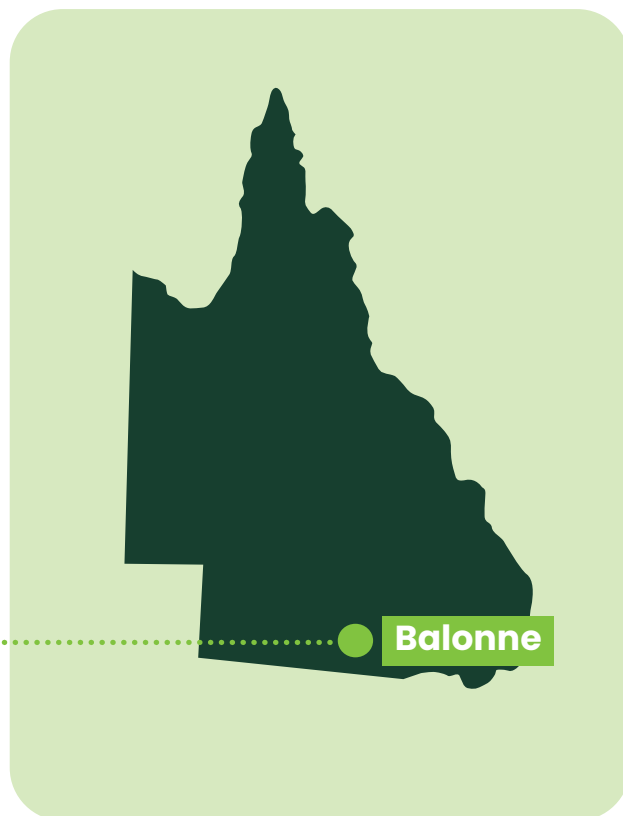
## Balonne Shire Council

### Balonne builds capacity and opportunity for local youth

A push to drive reform in local primary and secondary schools via a proactive partnership between Balonne Shire Council and Education Queensland has led to increased resourcing and a focus on behaviour management in the outback shire.

Council's proactive approach to curbing poor behaviour and anti-social activity in the student population has also led to the establishment of the Country University Centre.

The Centre employs an Indigenous advisor to engage with the next generation of First Nations leaders and encourage further education opportunities.



## City of Gold Coast

“ Our lifestyle and liveability on the Gold Coast is our calling card – and what attracts our millions of visitors each year from Australia and across the globe to our shores. We need to ensure we protect our iconic liveability now – and well into the future – by listening to the voices and concerns of our communities around the drivers and impacts of youth crime. Local solutions must be heard and supported if we are to see lasting change.”

- Mayor Tom Tate

## Toowoomba Regional Council

“ The safety and security of our community is of paramount importance. As the closest level of government to the people, councils see firsthand the impact youth crime has on the liveability of our cities and towns. A State Government crime forum held earlier this year in Toowoomba showed the scale of the problem – and its impact on victims and our residents. As a result of the forum, we have seen positive results from implementing local solutions. Additional support and greater collaboration is welcomed to tackle the root cause of our issues with young people.”

- Mayor Geoff McDonald

## Mareeba Shire Council

“ Council provides secretariat support for ongoing community collaboration with the inaugural meeting convened with Assistant Commissioner for Police, Cheryl Scanlon, and community and government service agencies. The ‘Mareeba Collaborating for Community Safety’ network is focussed on improving co-ordination between agencies, pooling resources to fill gaps (especially for night-time diversionary program) and identifying other gaps and finding collaborative solutions.”

- Mayor Angela Toppin



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