



Minister for Police and Corrective Services and  
Minister for Fire and Emergency Services

Ref No: 2023/11305 (C28559) JK

**30 OCT 2023**

Ms Anne Walker  
National Executive Director  
Catholic Religious Australia  
[nationalexec@catholicreligious.org.au](mailto:nationalexec@catholicreligious.org.au)

1 William Street Brisbane  
PO Box 15195 City East  
Queensland 4002 Australia  
Telephone +61 7 3035 8300  
Email [police@ministerial.qld.gov.au](mailto:police@ministerial.qld.gov.au)  
ABN 65 959 415 158

Dear Ms Walker

I refer to your correspondence of 20 September 2023.

Community safety is a priority for the Queensland Government and we continue to invest in comprehensive, long term strategies and programs to prevent, disrupt and respond to youth crime. There is no one size fits all solution. However, the government's investment of \$332 million will help to boost police resources and tackle the complex causes of youth crime, while also supporting community safety.

The Queensland Government is to increasing youth detention centre capacity so that young people who need to be detained are in age-appropriate facilities. Further, as announced on 5 October 2023, a new state-of-the-art youth remand facility will be fast-tracked and built at Wacol to boost capacity and lead to better outcomes for young people in detention.

The Queensland Police Service (QPS) is working closely with the Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training to ensure the facility is fit-for-purpose and incorporates Human Rights design principles for people held in custody. Between 50 and 70 young people will be accommodated at the facility with large cell sizes, common exercise areas and access to educational, medical and therapeutic capabilities at the adjacent detention complex. The facility will be operated by the Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training and house young people in detention exclusively until the new youth detention centres open in Woodford and Cairns.

Watchhouses are custody facilities that are designed for the temporary accommodation of young people and adults who the court has remanded in custody and awaiting acceptance and transfer to a Youth Justice or Corrective Services detention facility. When it is necessary for young people to be held in watchhouses, the QPS has an active visitor's program that is delivered by local services dependent on need, and provides young people with access to cultural, social and limited education support through various community agencies and groups who run prisoner advocacy programs.

The QPS also work with Queensland Health (QH) to ensure that the physical and mental health of all people in QPS custody are prioritised and appropriately managed. This includes access to watchhouses by QH mental health teams and continuous access to healthcare providers through the virtual emergency department, contracted watchhouse nurses, or Queensland Ambulance Service paramedics.

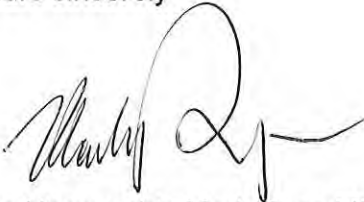
Where appropriate, suitable young offenders can be fitted with electronic monitoring devices as alternatives to custody and a Fast Track Sentencing Trial currently underway has resulted in young people being dealt with more expeditiously, resulting in reduced times in custody.

To complement prevention and disruption activities, youth co-responder teams consist of police and youth justice staff who patrol the streets and other areas where young people congregate, engaging with young people, their families and the wider community. They also provide practical support to children, including exploring ways to divert children from the youth justice system. Youth co-responder teams have been progressively established in Queensland since 2020, with more than 64,000 interactions. This is one of many programs currently being rolled out by the Queensland Government in addition to legislative changes.

When it comes to targeting criminal offending, everyone, including the government, is on the same page. We all want a safer community, and we all want offenders held to account for the crimes that they commit in an environment that is safe and age-appropriate.

Should your office require further information, Mr Paul Keene, Chief of Staff, is available on 3035 8300.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Ryan', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

The Honourable Mark Ryan MP  
**Minister for Police and Corrective Services and  
Minister for Fire and Emergency Services**