



# Human Rights Agenda

## FOR THE NEXT QLD GOVERNMENT

Human rights are the basic freedoms and protections that belong to every single one of us. All human beings are born with equal and inalienable rights and fundamental freedoms. Australian governments have an obligation to protect rights and freedoms according to our international commitments under human rights treaties.

**Amnesty International Australia calls on the next State Government to challenge injustices and protect the rights and freedoms of all Queenslanders by making the following commitments during the 2020 Election:**

### Challenge Injustice

**Strengthen the Queensland Human Rights Commission:** The Commission must be structured and funded so that it can hold public entities accountable for violating the Human Rights Act, as well as investigating complaints.

### Youth Justice

**Raise the age of criminal responsibility from ten to at least fourteen years old:** Locking up children as young as 10 is damaging for their development, places severe limitations on them reaching their potential and is a clear breach of international law.

**Legislate so that children cannot be held in police watch houses overnight:** Police watch houses aren't designed to hold children. There is no valid reason for a child to be held in a watch house. Overnight stays in police watch houses harms children.

**Support and expand, including through long-term funding arrangements, Indigenous-led justice reinvestment programs:** Justice reinvestment is working across the country, it keeps children out of prison. The programs and services should be designed and run by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and tailored to children's needs such as girls, and kids with disability.



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**Establish a new, independent Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services:** Independent oversight of Queensland's prisons is desperately needed. A body separate from government and in line with the Optional Protocol of the Convention against Torture will go a long way towards protecting children-in-care.

**Keep children not yet tried or sentenced in community-based alternatives to prison:** Queensland's remand rates for kids are the highest in Australia, but these kids should not be in prison: there are community-based alternatives.

**End the use of solitary confinement on children:** Solitary confinement can cause severe mental pain, and for children it can be torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

**Commit to ensuring that youth justice policies are evidence-based and meet human rights standards:** The imprisonment of children should always be the last resort, children should have the right to bail and breach-of-bail should not be a crime, and a child should never be mandatorily sentenced.

**Don't let any more children in the care of the government die:** In one year, 58 children died who were already known to Queensland's child safety department. Case workers should have a caseload of no more than 15 children.

## LGBTQIA+ JUSTICE

**End conversion practices completely by expanding the legislation to include informal settings outside of healthcare:** In a majority of cases, conversion practices happen outside of healthcare, in informal settings such as religious groups and pastoral care. The current legislation does not go far enough and leaves people vulnerable.

**Allow for individuals to self-identify their sex or gender on birth certificates without the need for 'sexual reassignment surgery':** International human rights law says that our laws should respect self-identification, Queensland does not.



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### PROTECT PROTEST

**Allow for peaceful protest:** Queensland's anti-protest laws are inherently disproportionate and could potentially criminalise peaceful protest. The incoming government should repeal provisions of the Summary Offences and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2019 which unduly restrict freedom of expression and assembly.

### COVID-19 RECOVERY

**Increase technology-enabled mental health services to help overcome isolation:** The rates of mental health issues and isolation are rising. Apps, telehealth, and online treatment for mental health is an efficient and practical means of delivering treatment to keep people well and safe.

**Prevent domestic violence:** Domestic violence has escalated during COVID-19. Ensuring women's safety is imperative: additional social housing, emergency housing, and targeted promotion of services is a way forward.

**Strengthen environmental protections:** The pandemic can't be used as a cover to weaken environmental protections. Our right to a clean environment must be upheld.

**Protect renters from eviction during the pandemic:** A re-introduction of the moratorium on evictions is needed to protect renters during this challenging time, and to ensure that they have a roof over their head post-pandemic.