



18 January 2021

Cr Eli Melky
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Dear Councillor Melky

RE: PROPOSED CURFEW FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN ALICE SPRINGS

I am writing regarding your successful motion in December for the Alice Springs Town Council to back escalated measures by the government to counteract antisocial and criminal behaviour, including a possible curfew. **Youth curfews and other tough on crime approaches do not solve the issue of youth offending.**

A curfew on children and young people will only entrench cycles of disadvantage, poverty, poor health and racism. Enforcing such a curfew will see police station cells and detention centres overflow. Furthermore, it will affect the most marginalised children in Alice Springs who need support, and only get more children trapped in the quicksand of the youth justice system.

A curfew on children and young people may also breach international law. The *UN Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency* notes that curfews 'stigmatise, victimise and criminalise young people'.¹

The Committee on the Rights of the Child² and the *UN World Report on Violence Against Children*³ has called for the abolition of status offences - such as youth curfews - to achieve equal treatment for children and adults. Australia is a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child - we all must take our obligation to uphold it seriously.

I urge you to drop your proposal for a youth curfew in Alice Springs and instead pursue solutions such as justice reinvestment and Indigenous-led prevention and diversionary programs that address the cause of offending and keeps children and young people out of prison.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this with you and your council colleagues.

¹ United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (1990):

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/PreventionOfJuvenileDelinquency.aspx>

² United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, *General Comment No. 10 (2007)*:

<https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/AdvanceVersions/GeneralComment10-02feb07.pdf>

³ Pinheiro, Paulo Sergio, *World report on violence against children* (2006): <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/587334?ln=en>

For further information, or to discuss and organise a meeting, please contact Joel MacKay at joel.mackay@amnesty.org.au or 0424 242 112.

Yours sincerely,

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