



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AUSTRALIA MEDIA QUOTE

May 15, 2020

INDIGENOUS KIDS IN PRISON: AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL DISGRACE

Despite a slight dip in the number of Indigenous children in the youth justice system according to today's figures from the [Australian Institute of Health and Welfare](#), the statistics show Australia continues to fail its First Nations peoples.

"After the Northern Territory Royal Commission and all the evidence that diversion is much more effective, it's hard to believe Indigenous kids make up 50% of those under youth justice supervision, but just [5.9%](#) of the population of Australian children," Amnesty International Australia Strategic Campaigns Advisor, Joel Clark said.

"What this tells us is that the need to raise the age of criminal responsibility is more urgent than ever. Until this happens, there must be a moratorium on arrests for children under the age of fourteen."

Key findings of the latest report include that On average, Indigenous young people entered youth justice supervision at a younger age than non-Indigenous young people; 15.5% of kids in detention on an average day were 14 or under and that 24.7% of kids in detention overall were 14 or under.

"It's particularly alarming that of those in detention, 63% were unsentenced," Clark said.

"This was the issue in Queensland watch houses where children were housed with serious offenders while on remand - bearing in mind that most of those on remand would later be found not guilty of any offence. Children on remand should immediately be released.

"We have failed Indigenous kids and we must as a matter of national urgency raise the age and commit to justice reinvestment, which all the evidence shows is vastly more successful and enables kids to go on and lead happy, healthy and productive lives.

"Australian State and Territory Attorneys-General have a unique opportunity to profoundly change the trajectory of so many young lives when they meet at the Council of Attorneys-General next month. I hope they read and acknowledge the tragedy written in these figures."

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For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact Amnesty International Media on +61 423 552 208 or media@amnesty.org.au

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