



NTCOSS CONDEMNS GOVERNMENT YOUTH JUSTICE LEGISLATION

The Northern Territory Council of Social Service (NTCOSS) today condemned the NT Government's decision to rush through its dangerous, ineffective, costly youth justice reforms.

NTCOSS CEO Deborah Di Natale said incarcerating more children will not reduce crime.

"This legislation will reduce access to diversion programs and impose electronic monitoring on young people prior to conviction. It does not break the cycle of crime. It entrenches it.

"The evidence is overwhelming that Government needs to address the real causes of youth offending.

"The Government is ignoring that it is initiatives like victim offender conferencing, drug and alcohol rehabilitation and family support services that make the community safer.

"NTCOSS was not briefed on the new legislation before it was introduced to Parliament. It is clear they have not consulted with the agencies working on diversion and other supports. They have not based their new legislation on anything but rhetoric and poor politics.

"The Opposition began blaming the changed bail laws for increased crime one week after they were introduced.

"Policy should not be driven by fear and anger. Policy should be based on data and expert advice.

"The NT Government has failed the community by not staying the course on the recommendations from the Royal Commission into the Detention and Protection of Children and expanding investment in diversion, therapeutic and restorative programs.

"As former NT Police Commissioner Mick Palmer said yesterday on the ABC, it's not that he thinks the laws being put in the Territory won't work. He knows they won't work.

"It takes leadership, courage and decency to deliver a genuine reduction in crime for the community.

"That is not what we have seen today."

Background

The Northern Territory Council of Social Service (NTCOSS) is the peak body for the Social and Community Sector in the NT and an advocate for social justice on behalf of people and communities in the NT, who may be affected by poverty and disadvantage.

The sector employs more than 10,000 people, and contributes more than \$3 billion to the Territory's economy.
<https://ntcoss.org.au/news/value-of-the-not-for-profit-sector-2020/>

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