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**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AUSTRALIA
MEDIA RELEASE**

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**NT Government must protect more kids and raise the age of criminal
responsibility to 14**

Amnesty International Australia acknowledges the NT Government's announcement today that it will introduce legislation to raise the age of criminal responsibility in the Northern Territory from 10 to 12, but it must go further to protect children by raising the age of criminal responsibility to at least 14.

"While this announcement today will have a significant impact on the lives of every 10 and 11 year old in the NT's criminal justice system, it is not enough for all the other kids subjected to harm in Don Dale and other vile places of youth detention," said Associate Indigenous Rights Campaigner Kacey Teerman.

"We know, as do the health, legal, advocacy, community experts and the NT Government, that the reality of exposing a child to police, prisons and the criminal system leaves them with irreparable trauma and harm. Governments should be doing everything possible to invest the millions they spend on locking kids up into community-driven programs that actually work.

"The NT Government has shown that they have the appetite and ability to make changes that prioritise the lives of our babies, but they have compromised on 12. They can, and must do more than play politics with the lives of our kids.

"It's been five years, almost to the day, since it was recommended that Don Dale close, and instead, the NT Government is expanding it instead of investing in community-led support systems and alternatives." said Teerman.

Background:

The 2017 [Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory](#) found that detention centres were 'not fit to accommodate, let alone rehabilitate, children and young people' and that 'children were subject to verbal abuse,

physical control and humiliation, including being denied access to basic human needs such as water, food and the use of the toilet'.

Following the Royal Commission, the NT's Gunner Government accepted the recommendation to both close Don Dale and to raise the age of criminal responsibility.

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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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