



Land council chair applauds raising of age of criminal responsibility

The chair of the Central Land Council warmly welcomes the Northern Territory Government's efforts to shut the revolving prison door on Aboriginal children and adults.

"Lifting the age of criminal responsibility to 12 years of age means that the cruel practice of jailing 10-year-old children ceases," CLC chair Robert Hoosan said.

"It's a long-overdue and welcome step on the way to raising the age to 14 years, in line with more enlightened and civilised societies."

"I hope the next NT budget will back this important reform with the resources for prevention, therapy and diversion needed to make it a success."

The legislation introduced today delivers on a key recommendation of the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the NT.

"We should all be proud to become the first jurisdiction in Australia to not just pay lip service to, but actually legislate, raising the age of criminal responsibility," said Mr Hoosan.

The CLC also applauds the repeal of mandatory sentencing for some offences.

"Our members have opposed this unfair, wasteful and ineffective legislation for a quarter of a century," he said.

"A smart justice system takes individual circumstances into account and offers alternatives to jail to offenders who can be rehabilitated.

"This reform will make the Territory a fairer and safer place if it is backed by effective and well-funded behavioural change programs."

Among the legal changes introduced into the NT Legislative Assembly are anti-vilification measures and a positive duty to eliminate discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation.

"These anti-discrimination reforms will avert harm from all Territorians and benefit Aboriginal people in particular," said Mr Hoosan.

"I commend Attorney-General Chansey Paech for listening to our members and pushing these reforms through against strong opposition."

13 October 2022