

**Submission
No 150**

COMMUNITY SAFETY IN REGIONAL AND RURAL COMMUNITIES

Name: Ms Marjorie Henzell

Date Received: 31 May 2024

I have lived in Armidale for 30 years. Prior to that I served three years in the Australian Parliament as the Federal Member for Capricornia(1993-6). I served on the parliamentary Committee for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and chaired a Committee of Inquiry into the Response to the Royal Commission into Deaths in Custody.

Since moving to Armidale I have worked as a Senior Social Worker at Tamworth Hospital and Centrelink as a Senior Social Worker until my retirement.

I worked on the YES campaign and joined ANTaR Armidale Branch.

I want to make the following brief points :

- * The age of criminal responsibility should be raised to at least 14 years.
- * Prevention programs to address issues of early signs of potential criminal behaviour need to be effectively funded and staffed by Aboriginal workers.
- * Alternatives to custodial sentences and judicial process such as Circle Sentencing need to be urgently initiated without removing there need for young offenders to face their responsibility.
- * School retention should be a priority and effectively funded/supported.
- * Victims of crime need more effective support from community services.
- * More effective community education about the reasons for local crime and up to date statistics need to be provided.
- * I recommend the Committee include Armidale in their public meeting schedule to hear first hand from local Aboriginal leaders.