

Disturbing images from Qld underscore the need to review youth detention Australia-wide

Reports and images of alleged mistreatment in Townsville's Cleveland Youth Detention Centre and Brisbane Youth Detention Centre emphasise the pressing need for all jurisdictions to conduct independent, arms-length reviews of their juvenile detention systems.

The disturbing images were aired on ABC and taken from internal government reports by the Queensland Government's Youth Detention Inspectorate.

The Law Council has previously called for a thorough examination of youth detention in all Australian jurisdictions and an intergovernmental strategy to address high rates of Indigenous youth imprisonment, following revelations of apparent mistreatment of youth detainees in the Northern Territory Don Dale Youth Detention Centre.

Law Council of Australia President Stuart Clark AM said the new images and allegations underlined the need for broad, independent reviews of youth detention in all jurisdictions.

"It is commendable that a Royal Commission has been established to investigate the juvenile detention system in the Northern Territory. However, these most recent reports demonstrate that there is also an urgent need to shine a spotlight on other jurisdictions," Mr Clark said.

"These reviews must be at arms-length from government and preferably conducted by a judicial officer or senior lawyer, either in the form of a Royal Commission or other independent review.

"Independent state and territory based reviews can enable swift and comprehensive examination of all juvenile detention systems.

"It is well known that youth detention and criminal justice practices disproportionately affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

Mr Clark said that "Detention of young people should only occur where absolutely necessary, to ensure their safety and the safety of others in the community.

"The community must also be confident that children are protected from harm while under the care and supervision of the State.

"Further independent reviews are crucial to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of young people in detention, who are under the care and custody of government."

Patrick Pantano

P. 02 6246 3715

E. Patrick.Pantano@lawcouncil.asn.au

Anil Lambert

P. 0416 426 722

E. anil@hortonadvisory.com.au