NATSILS
National Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander Legal Services
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# PM must act as Queensland passes new bail laws which will make communities less safe and harm children

## Media release

## 2 November 2026

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (NATSILS) is urging the Prime Minister to respond immediately to the Queensland Government's dangerous "Breach Bail, Go to Jail" laws, which passed on Thursday and will increase crime rather than reduce it.

With mandatory jail time and no requirement for police to consider a caution before charging a child, the new laws will put more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children behind bars and keep them there longer.

"This move by the Queensland Government flies in the face of evidence about what reduces crime. It is clearly driven by what the Premier thinks will win votes, not by what will actually make the community safer," said Nick Espie, Executive Director of NATSILS.

"The evidence is absolutely clear: when a child spends time behind bars, they are more likely to become trapped in ongoing cycles of criminalisation and imprisonment.

"Making it easier to lock up children and making it easier to keep them there longer makes the community less safe and hurts children.

"The Premier is well aware of this, but it seems he's more concerned about what will sound good as a soundbite than he is with what works."

Since the Bill was introduced to Parliament, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, child psychiatrists and legal experts have all criticised the government for ignoring the evidence on what reduces crime, and for driving up the mass incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

"Once again, we're seeing a state leader putting politics ahead of the evidence, community safety and children's wellbeing. We urge the Prime Minister, who has remained silent on the matter, to use his legal standing to intervene nationally," said Mr Espie.

"If the Crisafulli Government really cared about reducing crime, it would invest in community-led prevention and early intervention, not jail cells that cut children off from effective rehabilitation and trap them in cycles of trauma and violence.

"Governments have a responsibility to keep communities safe, and clearly, we can't rely on the states and territories to do that. The Prime Minister has the legal standing and the moral obligation to stop states and territories from harming Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

"We're urging him to call a national emergency summit on youth justice, so that leaders from all states and territories can come together to listen to the experts about what actually works to make communities safe." said Mr Espie.

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