

18 September 2015

The Hon Troy Grant MP
Minister for Justice and Police
GPO Box 5341
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Minister

Young Indigenous People

I write to request your action to address the disproportionate incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people when compared to their non-Indigenous counterparts.

According to Amnesty International Australia's report on Indigenous incarceration, "A Brighter Tomorrow", Indigenous young people are 32 times more likely to be incarcerated in NSW than non-Indigenous young people.

The report says that resources should be diverted away from imprisonment and put back into local communities, local community solutions and early intervention to prevent the need for custodial sentences. I share community concern that specialised Indigenous support and legal services are funded in NSW, and have supported ongoing resources for community legal centres and the Aboriginal Legal Service. These specialised services are essential in ensuring that Indigenous young people are supported in their own community, especially while they are on bail and once they have been released from prison.

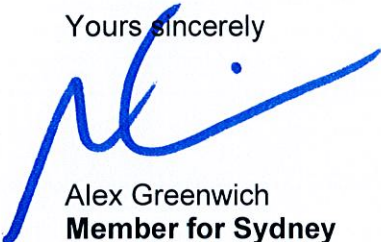
The "A Brighter Tomorrow" report identifies that young Indigenous people may be detained with adults and there is a significant gap in the provision of bail accommodation, and bail laws do not give priority to bail for young people.

According to the Amnesty report, Indigenous children are held to be criminally responsible from the age of 10, when the Convention on the Rights of the Child says this should be 12 years of age. The report also says that there is no agreed COAG targets for justice within the Closing the Gap negotiations.

My May 2015 Private Members Statement raised concerns about the need to expand prevention, early intervention, diversion and rehabilitation programs, and help integrate offenders back into their families and communities, maintain a home and get work. I share community concern about the need to prevent as many young people as possible from a crime career and imprisonment.

Could you please inform me what action the government is taking to reduce the rates of Indigenous youth incarceration and detention?

Yours sincerely



Alex Greenwich
Member for Sydney

