

Qld breaches international standards on youth detention: Amnesty finds

By Stefan Armbruster

THE Amnesty International report has called on the state to reform laws and end practices it says are out of step with Australian and international standards.

It follows a slew of recent allegations of children being mistreated in the state's juvenile justice system.

Queensland is the only state in Australia that jails 17-year-olds as adults. Also detained are children as young as 10, at the highest rate in the nation.

The report, *"Heads held high"*, says this is not only wrong, but what happens while they're inside is even more disturbing.

National Director Claire Mallison released the report at Parliament House in Brisbane.

"From our research these detention centres are using force, strip searching people, having to squat and we are seeing use of dogs."

Amnesty International estimates more than 200 children under the age of 18 were detained in Queensland in the 2014-15 period, and Ms Mallison says there is a disturbing trend.

"Here in Queensland Indigenous kids make up just eight per cent of the population, but make up two-thirds of those that are locked up."

The head of Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service, Shane Duffy, says it is just a continuation of decades of government neglect.

"I think it's damning in relation to a lot of public policy and legislative failures in the way they deal with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Queensland."

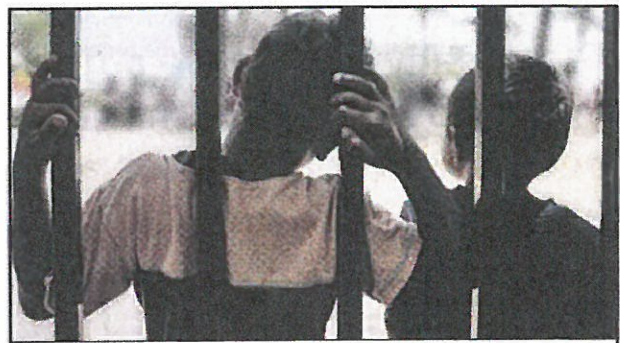
The report comes after the release of footage of a detained 17-year-old being handcuffed and masked in prison.

Amnesty's Claire Mallison says it is one more disturbing case.

"When we did a Freedom of Information request we got thousands of pages which detailed abuse."

Amnesty says Australia is breaching international standards it has signed up to but does not recognise as law. That's as Australia bids for a seat on the United Nations Human Rights Council.

Continued Page 7. >>



The Australian Human Rights Commission President says Queensland has added to Australia's international shame over its treatment of children in detention after the release of an Amnesty International report.

Qld breaches international standards on youth detention: Amnesty finds

From Page 3

Australian Human Rights Commission President Gillian Triggs says the revelations are disturbing, after international criticism of Australia at its most recent Universal Periodic Review of human rights at the UN.

"It's, of course, deeply embarrassing. This is something that is very much on the radar internationally and it would be at least surprising were it not to have some impact on the willingness of states to vote for Australia as a member of the Human Rights Council."

Amnesty's 21 recommendations for Queensland include an end to the jailing of 17-year-olds as adults, raising the minimum age for detention from 10 to 12 years old, and programs to reduce disproportionate Indigenous detention rates.

Queensland's Attorney-General, Yvette D'Ath, responded to the report in parliament - saying action is being taken.