



MEDIA RELEASE

Church calls to raise the age of criminal responsibility

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The Anglican Church of Australia has backed a campaign to raise the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 14 in a bid to reduce the number of children in juvenile detention.

“It’s our view that the child at 10 is too young to take responsibility for criminal activity, that there needs to be other measures put in place to assist young people to move away from crime into more healthy, productive lifestyle,” says the church’s National Aboriginal Bishop, Chris McLeod.

The Church’s “parliament” General Synod, will press federal, state and territory attorneys-general to change the law that falls disproportionately on Indigenous children.

“Raising the age is incredibly important,” says Bishop McLeod. “It will help young people who may have gone off the rails amend their lives and move in new directions.”

A similar motion to increase the age of criminal responsibility had been adopted by South Australian Anglicans last October.

Bishop McLeod says the move is not about being soft on crime.

“It’s not about letting anyone off.

“Young people need to take responsibility for their actions but putting them in prison is not helpful in the process of turning away from crime into a productive life.”

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