

Transcript of PeakCare's Facebook Page post



On Thursday evening on 8th July 2021, the Australian Government appeared before the United Nations' Human Rights Council to formally respond to the 5-yearly peer review of our nation's human rights performance – a process termed the Universal Periodic Review.

The Australian Government was required to respond to recommendations made by other countries in January of this year about improvements needed to our human rights performance. This included a call made by over 30 member nations for Australia to raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility from 10 years of age.

When appearing before the Committee, Australia's Permanent Representative to the UN did not formally accept this recommendation, noting instead that that this was a decision for each State and Territory to make. It seems that **our Representative gave a lesson to the UN about the Australian art of buck-passing.**

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has been calling on Australia to raise its minimum age of criminal responsibility for over 15 years. Last Thursday evening, Australia was again shamed on a world stage, and yet the majority of our governments – Federal, State and Territory – continue to procrastinate. To date, only the ACT has introduced legislation to raise the age of criminal responsibility to 14, while a NSW Parliamentary Inquiry has supported a similar rise.

Yes, children who are engaged in anti-social behaviours need to be responded to in ways that will curb this behaviour. No, incarceration and involvement in a criminal justice system is not the way to do this.

The medical evidence is clear – children under the age of 14 are undergoing significant growth and development, and their brains are not capable of understanding the consequences of their actions. Contact with the criminal justice system can cause lifelong harm and greatly increases the likelihood of children being placed on a trajectory into adult crime. **The Australian public wants and expects much more than that.**

The 30 countries that called on Australia to raise its age of criminal responsibility included Canada, Chile, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Moldova, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland (referring to 'the minimum age of detention'), Uruguay, Venezuela and Zambia.

Click [here](#) to find out more about Australia's #Raise The Age Campaign.

Click [here](#) to view the submissions lodged with the Australian Council of Attorneys-General on raising the age by organisations from across the country, including [PeakCare's submission](#).

Click [here](#) to view the list of organisations from across Australia that support the #Raise the Age Campaign and add your organisation to the list.

Click [here](#) to sign the petition to #Raise the Age of criminal responsibility from 10 to at least 14.