



## North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency

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### MEDIA RELEASE

#### **NAAJA urges Northern Territory Government to Rethink Regressive Youth Justice Laws.**

6 May 2021,

NAAJA strongly opposes the youth justice legislation introduced to Parliament yesterday that will see more young people refused bail, denied access to diversion and remanded in detention centres.

The Bill has been badly drafted and is being rushed through with undue haste. This law will have generational effects in criminalising children.

“There is still time for our politicians to step back from the brink and to make good laws that are considered and based on what we know works – Aboriginal led programs and services that provide support in the community for children and families”, said Priscilla Atkins, Chief Executive Officer.

“These laws are unprecedented. They will take away the court’s discretion to grant bail in some circumstances and refer a young person to diversion. This Bill will lead to skyrocketing numbers of Aboriginal children in a failed detention system that is outdated, not fit for purpose and that harms children. It is shameful” said Beth Wild, Managing Criminal Solicitor.

Our politicians say this law will make our community safer. It will not. This can only happen through looking at what works to reduce youth offending and supporting young people to succeed.

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