

Dear Committee Members

I am writing to lend my support to an educational approach to young offenders rather than a criminal offender approach. *KIDS BELONG IN CLASSROOMS, NOT COURTROOMS.*

*Through a Vocational Training and Employment Centre (VTEC) a holistic approach can be used to ensure our young people don't enter the criminal justice system. The [VTEC model](#) works for Indigenous people who have been long term unemployed – we can replicate this for Indigenous youth who are at risk of falling through the cracks.*

***The facts are:***

*On an average day in 2011-12 Indigenous youth were 31 times as likely to be in juvenile detention as non-Indigenous youth.*

*Aboriginal people are returned to prison at a higher rate than they are retained in either high school or university.*

*35.9 per cent of the Indigenous population is under the age of 15 – the time for action is now.*

*90 per cent of young Indigenous people that appear before the Children's Court go on to appear before the adult criminal court. Young Indigenous offenders are repeat offenders; small crimes turn into big crimes and the whole community loses. We can change that.*

I urge you to consider this model as you undertake your important work.

Regards

Pamela Romanis

(Information in italics care of Generation One)