



**MEDIA RELEASE
13 OCTOBER 2019**

INDIGENOUS AND HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS ATTEND PARLIAMENT IN SUPPORT OF PRIVATE MEMBERS BILL TO RAISE THE AGE OF CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY

A coalition of organisations working to reduce Indigenous incarceration will attend a media conference on Monday in support of the Private Members Bill being introduced by Centre Alliance MP Rebekha Sharkie to raise the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 14.

Change The Record Co-Convenor Cheryl Axleby said Australia must act to keep children, particularly Indigenous children, out of the criminal justice system.

“It feels like everyday there is a new expert calling on Australia to raise the age. A fortnight ago it was the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. This week it was High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet, and UN Expert Manfred Nowak.

“Australia’s archaic laws are taking children from their families, community and culture and abandoning them to concrete cells. We need true leadership to raise the age of criminal responsibility and prevent harm to vulnerable children,” Axleby said.

Amnesty International Australia Indigenous Rights Advocate, Joel Clark, will present Ms Sharkie with a petition of more than 30,000 signatures supporting the call to raise the age.

“The community has made their views clear on this issue. We must invest in preventing young people from being trapped in the justice system, rather than locking them up. Attorney-General Christian Porter can show national leadership by supporting this bill, giving his state and territory counterparts the greenlight to do the same.

“If you’re locked up before the age of 14, you are three times more likely to offend as an adult. We must stop these kids entering and getting caught in the quicksand of the justice system,” Clark said.

For more information or to arrange interviews with Cheryl Axleby or Joel Clark, please contact:

Danielle Veldre

Amnesty International Australia
+62 423 552 208
danielle.veldre@amnesty.org.au



Media team

| m. +61 423 552 208

| a. Level 1, 79 Myrtle Street Chippendale NSW 2008