




Speech By
Mark Boothman

MEMBER FOR THEODORE

Record of Proceedings, 22 April 2021

YOUTH JUSTICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Theodore—LNP) (3.40 pm): I, too, would like to add my comments and wish Mr Pegg, the member for Stretton, all the best. Over the many years of service he has given in this chamber it has been an honour to know him.

I rise to make a contribution to the Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021. From the outset I would like to thank the committee members, the secretariat staff and all those who took the time to contribute to the public hearings and voice their opinions on this very important matter. Obviously youth justice is a very emotional issue, especially for the families that have been directly involved, whether that be the families who have been victims of the crime which is enveloping our state or the families of offenders. Not all of these families are what you would call poor; some of them have had very successful careers and their children have followed a wayward path. We should remember that. I have spoken to plenty of families in my electorate who are at their wit's end and are desperate for help when it comes to their children.

Unfortunately, as a local member who tries to be out listening in my community on a regular basis doing my community roadsides, I can say that crime is a scourge on the northern Gold Coast and throughout Queensland. I regularly speak to residents about how crime has affected them such as an innocent tradie who had all his tools stolen from the back of his ute or another tradie who had saved his money and worked very hard to buy himself his dream ute only for it to be stolen. Seeing that car burnt out a few weeks later was a tragedy for him and heartbreaking considering all the effort and all the hours he put in to buy his dream vehicle.

I have also met with an elderly lady who ended up selling her property because she was sick and tired of being broken into by young people. She decided to move to a gated estate. She had lived in that house in Oxenford for many years. It is a tragedy that a person has to move to a gated estate in order to feel safe in this era.

As the member for Bonney alluded to earlier, we will never forget what the Beasley family has gone through. I want to say thank you to the Beasley family for their dedication and efforts and also to the Helensvale Hornets Rugby Union club for their dedication in getting behind the Beasley family to try to bring about systemic change in legislation to deal with knife crime. When it comes to knife crime I have to say I do feel that the use of these detection devices needs to be expanded to our major transport hubs. The Helensvale transport hub in the electorate of Bonney, just south of the electorate of Theodore, is one such ideal place, the reason being that this is an area where heavy rail, light rail and the local bus networks are all located together. This would be an ideal place to use these devices.

Furthermore, I have talked with families whose sons and daughters regularly go to Westfield shopping plazas where there have been incidents of assaults and attacks. It would be great if the precinct where these devices can be used could be expanded to these transport hubs. I ask the minister to review this because this is very important. This is a way to deal with the problem quickly. No matter where they come from, if they use the transport network we could stop them there. That prevents them travelling to these party precincts. It certainly makes sense.

The issue of youth crime has existed for many years. I was doing a little bit of research and I remembered an article I tabled back in 2016 about crime. The headline of that article was 'Gold Coast teens are out of control with four arrested in just 24 hours.' That was from 31 August 2016. It shows us that this problem has not gone away and it has not gotten any better. If we look at the stats from Queensland Police's own website, assaults on the Gold Coast have continued to increase. They have actually doubled since 2014. It is an indictment on the government for this to be happening in a tourism capital of Australia. It also shows we need more police resources on the Gold Coast.

On the subject of the unlawful use of motor vehicles, something that I do agree with is the adjustments to the type 1 and 2 motor vehicle offences and the reverse onus of proof. I agree with that. However, I have residents who continually ring the Queensland Police Service. One gentleman lives in fear in his house—and rightly so; he lives on the side of a rather steep hill and there is a lot of hooning activity on his local street. He is terrified that a car will go straight through his living room because they regularly do burnouts and race up and down that local street. He rings the police on a regular basis only to be told that there are no units available. We need more officers for the northern Gold Coast.

The paperwork that officers have to complete when dealing with these hoons can be extensive. Even if residents have the evidence, the officers are still tied down with paperwork. That needs to be streamlined to make it a lot more efficient.

When it comes to GPS tracking devices, many residents told me that they do not feel this will make any difference whatsoever. They feel that some type of punishment that actually deals with these individuals' behaviour is crucial—punishment that ensures they understand what they have done wrong, and that ensures they are put back on the straight and narrow.

There are a lot of programs out there such as Blue Diamond Youth. It is a fantastic network that delivers corrective education for these young people. These are the types of programs that are needed. They are needed to address these young people's offending. Many of my residents feel that this bill—and I have spoken to them about it—is only a bandaid for a festering wound. They feel it needs to go further and we need to address the core of the problem.

If the government is seen to be doing something, it can get out there and get some media headlines. Fundamentally, most residents are becoming very despondent. They understand it is not the fault of the police. They blame the law courts for releasing these individuals and they blame the members in this chamber for not implementing tougher laws that deal with the problem. It is as simple as that. We need to deal with the core of the problem and we need a system. As a good friend of mine said to me many years ago, society is made up of two parts: the fear of punishment and the hope of reward; take away one of those elements and society starts failing. It is as simple as that.

As I said, we need tougher rules. With regard to breach of bail, I wholeheartedly agree with the shadow minister in that we need to take this matter further. Unfortunately, we will be revisiting this situation in the next couple of years because this legislation will not solve it.