

## LAW &amp; DISORDER



# Boy, 16, to face carjack charges

SHAYLA BULLOCH

A TEENAGER who was released after an alleged stolen car rampage has been linked to a violent carjacking that left a middle-aged woman injured.

Townsville Police have charged the 16-year-old boy with an additional five charges, including armed robbery and assault, after he allegedly pulled a knife on the 55-year-old woman as she walked back to her car at a medical centre about 5pm on Thursday.

The same boy was charged with trespassing on Sunday after he allegedly fled from the wreckage of a stolen Volkswagen Amarok after it crashed at the front of Centrelink, Aitkenvale.

The Amarok was spotted travelling down the wrong side of the road, driven dangerously and was involved in a crash with a police car.

It eventually crashed in the carpark of the Elizabeth Street complex after smashing into a traffic light pole.

Four teenagers ran from the car, including two who allegedly hid under a nearby house. All of the suspects were arrested a short time later.

The boy was released from police custody on Sunday after he had been charged with trespassing.

He was allegedly involved in the latest incident four days later. That is when he is alleged to have assaulted the middle-aged woman in the car park of a Ross River Road medical clinic.

It will be alleged the boy got into her car and started it, but was stopped by a woman who intervened.

She was also assaulted.

The boy allegedly fled into a nearby park area with a teenage girl and police swarmed the area.

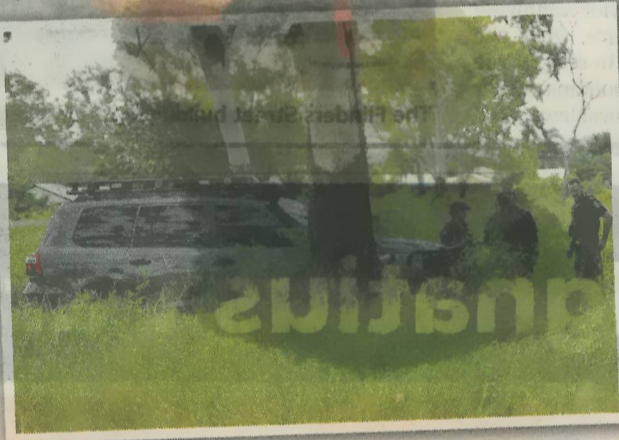
The teen was arrested a short time later, but the girl allegedly hid in long grass.

The dog squad was called in to find the girl, but she surrendered and was taken into custody.

The boy has been charged with armed robbery, assault occasioning bodily harm, stealing, possessing tainted property and possessing a knife in a public place.

He has been refused police bail and faced Townsville Children's Court on Friday.

The teenage girl was released without charge pending further investigations.



## Drunken man pocketed EFTPOS machine

INTOXICATED and pinned on the ground by security in front of the Mad Cow, Dene Andrew Cheeseman had an unusual object stashed away in one of his pockets.

Townsville Police were conducting patrols of Townsville's Drink Safe precinct at 12.20am on January 7 when they came across the 23-year-old. He'd just been evicted from the Mad Cow and allegedly became violent with a security guard.

A search by police officers of his left shoulder pocket revealed an EFTPOS machine he pilfered from nearby Molly Malones Irish Pub earlier that evening.

Cheeseman (pictured) pleaded guilty to charges of commit public nuisance within the vicinity of licensed premises and possessing tainted property.

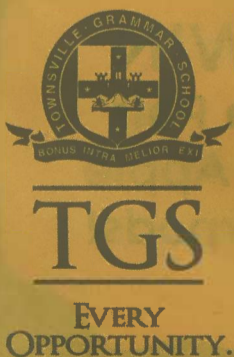
Given his high level of intoxication, he



remembered little of the night but accepted responsibility for his misbehaviour.

Recognising his young age, stable employment and lack of criminal history, Magistrate Cathy Wadley sentenced him to a \$300 recognisance order (under which he must not reoffend), operation-

al for six months with no conviction recorded.



## OPEN DAYS

### PRE-PREP - YEAR 12

WEDNESDAY, 10 MARCH  
3:30 - 6:00PM  
SECONDARY SCHOOL  
NORTH WARD

SATURDAY, 13 MARCH  
9:00 - 11:00AM  
JUNIOR SCHOOL  
ANNANDALE & NORTH SHORE

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# Laundry in clean-up

TONY RAGGATT

ONE of the town's eyesores is being cleaned up by a new owner.

The operator of Great Northern Laundry, Mark Bogiatzis, has acquired the building next door to his business in Flinders Street, which has been unsightly and derelict for years.

Records show it was previously owned by a company controlled by lawyer Barry Taylor.

Mr Bogiatzis said he had bought the property for future expansion.

He also believed making buildings like this more presentable was important to improve the look of the city.

"My plan is to restore it and make it good," Mr Bogiatzis said.

"It made perfect sense for me to take it on. I don't know what I will use it for exactly but it's very handy to have an extra 1000 sqm up your sleeve."

Mr Bogiatzis said vagrants had occupied the building in the past with incidents including a fire and a drug overdose.

"I'm more than happy to get rid of that problem next door to me," he said.

Readers of the Bulletin in 2019 highlighted the property, among others,

in a survey of buildings considered to be the city's biggest eyesores.

Mr Bogiatzis said he had been working diligently since signing the contract for sale "to make it not an eyesore".

The building's front wall has been boarded and painted, steel fencing has been removed and windows are to be installed.

It is understood the property sold for just over \$500,000.

Townsville City Council voted to enact a local law - Local Law No 8 (Unsightly Buildings) 2020 - in January, giving it powers to force building owners to clean up their properties.

Mayor Jenny Hill said this particular building had been a blight on the Flinders Street West precinct.

"Council received numerous complaints from the community about the state of the building," Cr Hill said.

"I encourage the new owners to invest in our city and clean up the site."

"Owners of other unsightly buildings in the CBD are on notice."

The new local laws include penalties of up to \$26,900 for not complying with a compliance notice, while the council also has power to recover the cost of work where a building owner has not complied with local law.



The Flinders Street building gets a makeover. Picture: EVAN MORGAN

## Bring kid crim talks north: MP

CAITLAN CHARLES

HINCHINBROOK MP Nick Dametto has called for public hearings on the state government's youth justice bill to be held in North Queensland.

The Katter's Australian Party MP said it would be unacceptable if the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee confined hearings to Brisbane given the youth crime crisis in Townsville.

"There needs to be a recognition of the extent of this problem with multiple hearings in our region," Mr Dametto said.

"I want people in Townsville, Cairns, Mackay, Mt Isa, Doomadgee, the Gulf and anywhere else where crime is out of control to be able to have their say."

"As far as I'm concerned, if the public hearings are confined to the southeast, the committee will give the impression they aren't interested in getting honest feedback on the merits of this bill."

Mr Dametto said he feared "do-gooders" and "bleeding hearts" would dominate the hearings if ordinary people, including victims of crime, weren't involved.

The committee is due to table its report on April 9.



## Ignatius Park College

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## Support bill hits \$28.6bn

MICHAEL WRAY

THE federal government's direct economic support to Queensland since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic has been equal to nearly \$5500 for every person in the state, according to new figures.

Unpublished Treasury data shows Queensland individuals and small businesses received a combined \$28.6bn from April 2020 to February this year with more than half coming from JobKeeper payments.

But despite the massive economic stimulus, which includes \$6.9bn in cash flow boost payments and \$4.4bn in coronavirus supplement payments, the looming end of JobKeeper on March 28 is creating anxiety in still-struggling sectors such as tourism.

Treasurer Josh Frydenberg arrived in Cairns yesterday to start a Queensland listening tour as the government finalises plans for support to the hardest hit industries after JobKeeper ends.

"We know that a number of Queensland families and businesses are still doing it tough and my message to all Queenslanders is that the Morrison government continues to have your back," he said.

"Our plan is focused on keeping businesses in business and Australians in jobs through measures such as tax cuts, business incentives, the JobMaker hiring credit, new infrastructure spending and a record investment in skills and training."

Opposition Treasury spokesman Jim Chalmers said his counterpart had arrived in Cairns but "hasn't packed a plan" to support about 8000 workers and 2600 businesses in the city relying on JobKeeper.

"We've known for almost a year that the Cairns economy has been particularly hard hit by the international border closure and that this pain will continue for some time," said Dr Chalmers.

Nearly 80 per cent of Queenslanders who were on JobKeeper in April have graduated off it, leaving 161,741 individuals and 57,546 businesses relying on the payment.

# Jail rapist wants out

CAITLAN CHARLES

A PRISONER who took part in the group rape and sexual assault of a "new, inexperienced" inmate multiple times will now be eligible for parole within 12 months.

Brooke Amanda Degn can now apply for parole 12 months earlier after the Court of Appeal found her sentence did not take into account the whole time she spent in prison.

Degn was sentenced in the Townsville District Court to six years in jail on July 23, 2020 for her involvement in

the rape and sexual assault of a fellow inmate.

In one incident, Degn and a co-accused forced the complainant to the ground and pulled down her pants.

"While the applicant (Degn) restrained the complainant, with her arm around her neck, the other inmate forced her legs apart and began to push the handle of a dustpan brush towards her vagina, giving rise to one count of sexual assault, and then digitally penetrated her, resulting in the count of rape," court documents reveal. "The co-ac-

cused then forced her fingers into the complainant's mouth; that was the final count of sexual assault."

When the assaults occurred in July and early August of 2018, Degn was serving a sentence for offences including supplying dangerous drugs, burglary and assault occasioning bodily harm while armed and in company.

Her initial parole eligibility date was set for January 30, 2018 but Degn had not been able to secure release before she was charged with sexual assault and rape.

Judge John Coker sentenced Degn to six years, with a parole eligibility date of February 13, 2023. But the Court of Appeal justices Catherine Holmes, Phillip Morrison, and Debra Mullins agreed that this eligibility date would mean Degn would have served two-thirds of a 12-year sentence.

"To require two-thirds of the period of imprisonment to be served might in some cases be warranted, but there is nothing to suggest that this is such a case or that the sentencing judge appreciated that consequence when he set the

parole eligibility date," Justice Holmes said.

She concluded that Judge Coker's sentence was "neither unjust nor crushing" but when taking into consideration the sentence Degn was already serving, the parole date needed to be adjusted.

Justice Holmes said the total period Degn spent in prison needed to be accounted for, not just the period Judge Coker imposed.

Degn is eligible for parole on February 13, 2022. Her previous eligibility date was set exactly 12 months later.



ELISABETH SILVESTER

HOPING to start a conversation around mental health is what a local food vendor is hoping to achieve while serving Townsville.

Mangiamo food truck owner Justin Bland is now sporting a colourful apron designed by TradeMutt Workwear.

The brightly printed clothing and accessories are designed as a 'social impact fashion' brand started by two tradies looking to reduce the rate of male suicide in Australia.

Mr Bland said adopting the new uniform was a way to encourage Townsville to bring mental health out of the shadows.

"When I saw TradeMutt and what

they do and represent, I knew it was something I wanted to be involved with," he said.

"The clothing line is a conversation starter and I thought I have a lot of direct exposure with people while serving so the aprons are right in your face."

Mr Bland said the response from his customers had been "fabulous".

"I have experienced suicide through my job in the hospitality industry over the years and it is tough knowing that if that person had spoken up it could have been a different outcome," he said.

"I have suffered from mental health before and it makes it easier to talk to people about it whether it be friends, my family or customers."

Mangiamo food truck owner Justin Bland will be wearing TradeMutt aprons to help start conversations about mental health. Picture: ALIX SWEENEY

# MY FIRST YEAR



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## Man arrested following audacious theft

LEIGHTON SMITH

THE brazen theft of a luxury Lexus from under the noses of the dealership's sales staff was not the only audacious theft a Vincent man was alleged to have perpetrated on Friday.

According to a police spokesman, a 24-year-old man entered the Lexus dealership in Garbutt on Friday afternoon and found a set of keys unattended on a salesman's desk.

He allegedly walked around the sales yard clicking until he found the right car and took off with it.

Police will allege the man

then went to Partington 4WD in the Bohle and asked to borrow a screwdriver.

Police will allege he went into the carpark and removed a number plate with the screwdriver and put it on the Lexus parked in a side street.

Partington 4WD owner Mike Abraham said it wasn't until 4.30pm that staff noticed the number plate theft and traced it on their CCTV (pictured) up until the point when the Lexus drove off, turning north on Ingham Rd.

After reporting the theft to police, Mr Abraham contacted the Lexus dealership who "at that point ... still didn't know it

was missing". Later that evening, Mr Abraham had a notification from his perimeter alarm, set off by a man police will allege was the Lexus driver who had returned to Partington 4WD, rattling the locks, believed to be seeking the matching number plate from the vehicle targeted earlier.

Mr Abraham called the police and the Lexus fled within two minutes of the police arriving.

At 11.30pm, the perimeter alarm went off again and Mr



Abraham spotted the man trying to jump the fence.

He called the police's rapid response team and soon after, the man was captured by police nearby.

The man appeared in watch-house court on

Saturday facing five charges of entering premises to commit an indictable offence, and single counts of unlawful use of a motor vehicle, possessing suspected stolen property and driving without a licence.

## YOUNG CRIMS

# I have had a gutful: victim

SAM FLANAGAN

IT has been revealed the young criminals behind the city's escalating crime crisis have a "pointsoring system" fuelling their actions, with "the ultimate points" coming if they take a life.

The news comes after a protest was held on Saturday by Take Back Townsville in Aitkenvale.

Residents protested what they believe is inaction on Townsville's crime front by the state government.

West End's Vickie Halvorsen said she attended the rally because she has "had a gutful."

"I was there with Clynton Hawks (NQ First party member), he invited me along because in the past week we have had our complex broken into twice," Ms Halvorsen said.

"The guy next door had the Amarok stolen that crashed into Centrelink."

"They tried to get into our place because we have a V8 but they couldn't get in. Another group went through the complex Thursday night and stole a heap of stuff."

"Everyone has just had a gutful of it."

Last month the *Townsville Bulletin* revealed more than \$25m worth of cars had been stolen in the city in just a two-year period.

That figure has been climbing steeply since, with Townsville police constantly keeping tabs on freshly stolen cars joy-riding throughout the city.

A victim of crime in Townsville, who wanted to remain anonymous, said the juveniles have a pointsoring system for their sinister acts.

"It's a game and they are pointsoring," they said.

"You get so many points to break into someone's house, to steal a car, do property damage and so on."

"The ultimate points is if you hurt someone. There's different groups going around doing it, it's just a game to them."

The source said it depends on the items stolen or risk involved in the crime.

"Taking a life is known as a 'value hit'," they said.

"They're just trying to get superiority over the other groups."

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## Another VW Amarok targeted by thieves

OPPORTUNISTIC Townsville car thieves swooped in to steal another VW Amarok, almost a week after a similar model left a trail of destruction right up to the doorstep of Centrelink in Aitkenvale.

The owner of a gardening business reported his silver 2019 VW Amarok with a trailer attached, stolen from a Gould St property in Kirwan around 12.30pm on Saturday - while he was mowing a lawn.

A police spokesman suspected the vehicle's keys had been securely stored.

The trailer was unhitched and dumped just around the corner on Paluma St before the stolen vehicle began a cross-

city rampage. The Amarok was spotted by witnesses at a number of locations around Townsville including a drive-by of the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre and Willow Shopping Centre.

Stolen items were found dumped in Kirwan's Belmon Park, off Kern Brothers Drive.

Around 9am on Sunday the vehicle was located in Kelso.

The owner has recovered the vehicle and said on social media that he had "got it back not in a good condition".

The car thieves remain a large.

The theft occurred just hours after a city protest called for action on crime.

# OUT TO 'SCORE POINTS' TO IMPRESS MATES

Protesters gather in Aitkenvale for the Take Back Townsville rally against crime.  
Pictures: EVAN MORGAN



## Residents can have their say: local MPs

LEIGHTON SMITH

ALL eyes were on how the region's state government representatives would respond after fed up locals took to the streets of Aitkenvale to protest Townsville's ongoing youth crime problem.

Townsville MP Scott Stewart, Thuringowa MP Aaron Harper and Mundingburra MP Les Walker, who were not present at Saturday's rally, released a joint statement on Sunday.

The trio came under fire from people involved in the Take Back Townsville rally with signs reading "Aaron Who?" and claiming the Labor Party were the "Kings of Crime".

The three MPs reiterated the government had introduced a package of youth justice reforms and said the community could have their say on the reforms through correct government channels.

"The state government has introduced a comprehensive package of youth justice reforms that will target hardcore youth criminals who repeatedly offend and put the community at risk," the statement said.

"It's important these measures are not looked at in isolation but rather as a suite of reforms targeting a small hardcore group of repeat offenders."

They said the new laws created a presumption against bail for youth offenders arrested for committing further serious indictable offences like unlawful use of a motor vehicle while on bail.

"We will always listen to the community. People can have their say on this new legislation now by making a submission to the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee."

## TOWNSVILLE PROTEST CALLS FOR ACTION ON CRIME WAVE

TOWNSVILLE residents have taken their fight against crime to the next level, calling out what they believe is inaction from the state government as the city's crime epidemic continues to spiral out of control.

Members of the anti-crime advocacy group Take Back Townsville gathered in force on Saturday morning to protest

at one of the city's busiest intersections.

The group, brandishing signs lashing out at local MPs and the justice system, stood on all four corners of the Nathan St and Ross River Rd intersection in Aitkenvale.

The rally went for an hour and caught the eye of thousands of motorists.

Organiser Julianne Wood said the protest went better than expected.

"It went really well. Everyone had a ball so I'm really happy," Ms Wood said.

"We had more beeps from the cars going past than we've had before. There were big trucks beeping away and a lot of traffic noticed us. It was the

perfect spot to have the protest."

Ms Wood said state MPs Dale Last and Nick Dametto were in attendance along with federal MP Phillip Thompson.

"It's really good to have them involved, we're all on the same side and agree the legislation we have is not right and not good enough.

"The government's five-point plan is rubbish; it is nowhere near what we need."

Ms Wood said the group had already begun planning its next public protest.

"We're looking at going in front of Aaron Harper's office," she said.

"It's what everyone wants to do so watch this space."



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