



Speech by

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CRIME RATES

Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—Lib) (12.00 pm): Both the Attorney-General and the police minister have failed the people of Queensland. This was highlighted most recently by *Courier-Mail* reports of a gang of youths holding a family prisoner in their own home for more than half an hour as they tried to break in and bash a teenager who had sought safety there and a second report of a young man aged 19 who was attacked and stabbed three times for seemingly no reason.

Both of these incidents were reported in yesterday's *Courier-Mail*. The first event involved a young person being chased by a gang of youths and that young person trying to find protection in the home of Chris Abraham and Carole Gamble. The frightening aspect of this matter is that, even though the person being chased was inside the house, the gang smashed windows trying to break in and demanded the teenager be handed over to them. All praise must be given to Mr Abraham and Ms Gamble because they refused to do so. As Ms Gamble said, it was like a scene out of *A Clockwork Orange* and the police arrived 20 minutes after being called. The result could have been horrendous if the police had been delayed or the youths had gotten into the house.

The second incident involved a 19-year-old man on his way home being stabbed for apparently no reason, and that is equally concerning. The newspaper report reads—

'One of them had a knife or something sharp and stabbed me, it was a sort of burning pain,' he said.

He received stab wounds to his abdomen, lower back and right forearm.

A local police officer heading to work found Mr Waugh unconscious on the side of the road shortly before 4.30am and called an ambulance.

What do we hear from the Beattie government? Nothing but rhetoric. We do not actually see any plans being put in place to curb juvenile crime, the incidence of young men and women being attacked and bashed, innocent people in their homes being assaulted, damage to property and ongoing violence which seems to be escalating to an epidemic proportion. Both the Attorney-General and the police minister have failed in their obligations to the state and to the people.

The police minister, for all her rhetoric, is simply not providing police numbers sufficient to cater for the problem. She can bleat all she wants, but the real situation is that police throughout this state are not in sufficient numbers on the ground and they are not properly resourced. There is barely a day that goes by that we do not pick up the newspaper and read that some person has been bashed, a home has been invaded or worse as a direct consequence of the inactivity of this police minister.

The Attorney-General has similarly failed in her obligation to deal with crime in this state. Her obligations include upholding the law, ensuring sentences are passed that are commensurate with crimes and ensuring that the attitude of the public is taken into account in sentencing procedures. This is not happening. She has not conducted herself or her ministry in a manner that is going to help the people of Queensland. She has failed in her obligations to the people of Queensland.

I turn specifically to juvenile crime and table a series of documents prepared by the Australian Pensioners and Superannuants League Caloundra in which 325 people were asked the question, 'Should under-age criminal offenders, if found guilty of their crime, have their identity released to the public?' Of

those who took part in the survey, 300 said yes and 25 said no. This is a strong indication that people throughout Queensland want something done about juvenile crime. To my knowledge, no name of a juvenile who has been convicted of a crime has ever been released. It is time to take this issue seriously. We need juveniles who commit serious offences or who are repeat offenders named, and there are two reasons for this. The first is to protect the public. The public has a right to know who these people are. Secondly, juveniles must be made aware that their actions have long-term and far-reaching consequences.

Both portfolios, as I said, have failed. Both the minister for police and the Attorney-General have not lived up to the requirements of their office. They are not taking heed of what the people of Queensland are saying and, as a direct consequence of that, we are seeing crime escalating, people are being hurt and criminals are thumbing their noses at the criminal justice system.

On 21 February an article appeared in the *Courier-Mail* reporting on police numbers in a study undertaken by Dr Colin Thorne of QUT. The article states—

The ratio of police per population is officially touted as one officer to 440 residents but in Brisbane's metropolitan north district, it is reported as one to 533 and on the Sunshine Coast it is one to 622.

That is a clear indication that the police minister has lost any concept of what is required in this state. When is this government going to realise that the people of Queensland need more than words? They need a determined government fixed on getting this problem solved. We are losing control of our streets. We are losing control of one of the basic tenets of our society. It is these two portfolios that have the main responsibility, and they have failed the people of Queensland.