




Speech by  
**Bill Byrne**

**MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON**

Hansard Wednesday, 30 May 2012

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## JUVENILE CRIME

 **Mr BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (11.03 pm): One of the recurrent themes evident in a number of the maiden speeches has been the state-wide problem of youth and young adult offenders. During the recent election campaign the issue was, let us say, topical with all parties offering views about how the problem could be addressed. The old news is that Labor lost that argument fairly convincingly. I will admit upfront that, despite considerable effort and investment, the previous programs did not deliver sustained improvements. On the surface, crime statistics suggested reductions in rates of offences and some very intense and targeted programs appeared to deliver moderately successful outcomes. However, in a gross sense the problem does not appear to have been alleviated to any great degree and that is certainly the view held by the communities that I represent.

Particular businesses are under constant assault and some elderly residents lock themselves in their homes owing to the fear present in the community. In fact, on the very first night that I was absent after the election, as part of being an elected parliamentarian, my home was subject to the attentions of an identified youth offender.

I was particularly pleased to hear the words of the member for Ipswich West regarding his intentions, as I hold very similar views on this matter. There is not a member of this parliament who is happy with what is occurring in our cities and towns. I believe that the behaviour of these youths cannot be allowed to continue. The government has a mandate and the executive responsibility to act. The time for point-scoring and navel gazing has passed. I can only say that our communities are clamouring for a dramatic change in the present situation.

Sensible, informed people understand that the solutions will not be easy. If they were, these problems would have been solved already. That does not represent an excuse for inaction. All citizens deserve to live their lives in relative safety, to conduct their businesses without a threat, and to focus their attention on the positive aspects of their lives.

I understand that recently the community representatives of Rockhampton have met the Attorney-General and other LNP members here in Brisbane. I know the Rockhampton people involved and each is a credible person of substance in their own right. I hope that their concerns are understood and accepted by the Attorney-General as genuine. As I said in my maiden speech, I am here to support good public policy and I look forward to the opportunity to make a contribution, particularly on that issue.

This matter is urgent, real and disrupting the lives of law-abiding citizens on a daily basis. Some lives are being turned upside down. I look forward to a frank debate and call on the government to accelerate a response to this dreadful and pervasive problem that is affecting so many communities.