




Speech by

Hon. Jarrod Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

Hansard Tuesday, 27 November 2012

YOUTH JUSTICE (BOOT CAMP ORDERS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (11.40 pm), in reply: Can I start by acknowledging all honourable members for their contributions to the House this evening, particularly the Liberal National Party members in government. In ordinary circumstances I would refer to the opposition leader's contribution tonight, but I wanted to depart from my usual practice and talk about the honourable member for Hervey Bay, Mr Ted Sorensen, who I think made the best contribution to this debate tonight.

Mr Crandon: It was passionate.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the member for Coomera. The member for Hervey Bay displayed passion when he was sticking up for his local constituency, and particularly Bob Davis, who runs the Hard Yakka program. I agree with the member for Hervey Bay that the member for Rockhampton, who has only been in here a short while and gets up in this place with a speech prepared by one of the 22 drones outside—the most overresourced opposition in Australia's history—has no idea what he is talking about but denigrates a man, Bob Davis, and a program that are getting results in the electorate of Hervey Bay. Do not look surprised and as if you do not know what we are talking about. It was in your speech, but, as I said, you did not write it so you probably have no idea. You probably cannot remember what you said.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! The Attorney-General will speak through the chair.

Mr BLEIJIE: Indeed and absolutely, Mr Deputy Speaker. The member for Rockhampton looks surprised—'I can't remember saying that.' He probably cannot remember because he did not write the speech. That is the problem with the Labor Party. Its members do not write their own speeches. They have no passion.

Mrs Scott: Rubbish!

Mr BLEIJIE: It is not rubbish.

Mrs Miller: It is! It is!

Mr BLEIJIE: I will take the interjection from the member for Bundamba. I will take the interjection from the member for Woodridge. It is not rubbish. You do not believe in what you say in this place because the drones outside are drafting all your documents.

Mrs MILLER: I rise to a point of order. I serve on a committee of a youth agency in my electorate and I find his comments offensive in regard to his saying that I have no knowledge in relation to this area and that my speeches are written by someone else. I am asking for him to withdraw the comments.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bundamba, I did not hear anything personally offensive in what he said.

Mrs MILLER: I found it personally offensive.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I did not hear anything personally offensive, however I will be listening very carefully to the Attorney-General and should he make any comments that you find personally offensive then that is a different matter. I call the Attorney-General.

Mr BLEIJIE: No doubt the member for Bundamba will, because I have another 28 minutes to talk about the member for Bundamba and her contribution to this debate tonight. But let me start with the member for Rockhampton, who came into this place tonight and denigrated Bob Davis and the Hard Yakka program. The member for Rockhampton has no idea about the Hard Yakka program that caused such passion from the member for Hervey Bay. That is the integrity of Liberal National Party members in this place. They can get up on their feet and defend a program that is operating in their electorate when it is so diminished by a person who has no idea about the Hard Yakka program. I ask the member for Rockhampton: have you seen the Hard Yakka program? Did you visit the Hard Yakka program?

Mr Byrne: No.

Mr BLEIJIE: I did. Did you? No.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Those on my left. Attorney-General, I have already warned you about speaking through the chair. I again ask that you speak through the chair and hopefully the debate can continue in a reasonably civil manner.

Mr BLEIJIE: I went and visited the Hard Yakka program at the invitation of the member for Hervey Bay and the member for Maryborough. I did it because we were not rushing into a policy decision; we wanted to see what was on offer and what was operating right across Queensland. The member for Rockhampton said there was a bunch of little kids in army uniforms. Those little kids were Indigenous Queenslanders from Cherbourg who are trying to get a second chance in their life. I think it is disgraceful that the member for Rockhampton would come in here and say they were little kids running around in army uniforms. They were little kids from Cherbourg who want to get a second chance in life. If Bob Davis and the Hard Yakka program can offer them a second chance, I say good on them.

The Labor Party not only runs the dirtiest campaign in Queensland's history; now it runs dirty campaigns about youth service operators trying to do the best for young Indigenous Queenslanders. I congratulate the member for Hervey Bay for getting to his feet tonight with passion and determination to fight against the champagne socialist opposite who know nothing of what he talks about. I would suggest that if the member for Rockhampton wants to denigrate young Indigenous Queenslanders, Bob Davis and the Hard Yakka program then he ought to go there and have a look at the program himself. Then he might have a better understanding of the situation.

Ms Palaszczuk: I won't miss you in the valedictory.

Mr BLEIJIE: Your valedictory? Whose valedictory? I think the opposition leader is talking about her valedictory. The member for South Brisbane is sitting very quietly. She did not contribute to the debate tonight. I can tell the Leader of the Opposition that the other six members will not miss her at her valedictory. They will force an early valedictory on her, guaranteed. When the member for Hervey Bay talked about the Hard Yakka program I could not help but notice the member for South Brisbane laughing, because there is a group out there in the community trying to change young people's lives. I heard tonight from those seven opposite about boot camps being terrible and that they do not work. Members will be interested to know that the group that got the tender at the Gold Coast, the Kokoda Challenge, were offered the same opportunity by Anna Bligh during the election campaign. I refer to a *Brisbane Times* newspaper article, 'Bligh pledges \$1 million for Kokoda Challenge', that states—

A Queensland Labor government would give \$1 million to help troubled teens take part in the Kokoda Challenge, but the Premier has denied it is her party's response to the LNP's boot camp for youth criminals policy.

We announced our boot camp policy, which was ridiculed by those opposite in the election campaign, and a week later they announced their own boot camp policy. The article goes on and it gets better. Anna Bligh states—

These programs give them the chance over a long term planned program to really turn their lives around.

So it's not about punishment, it's about opportunity.

When we have talked about boot camps in Queensland, we have talked about giving young people an opportunity. I know why the member for South Brisbane was so silent in this boot camp debate tonight. It is because it was her best mate, Anna Bligh, who announced it. Her best mate, Anna Bligh, took the photo. During the election campaign, Anna Bligh was happy to stand up with some young people and talk about the Kokoda Challenge. At that time the opposition leader was a member of cabinet. Did it go through cabinet? Did she support it at the time? Did the opposition leader support their proposal for boot camps? Did the opposition leader support her leader at the time having a photo taken with young people and talking about all the things that the Liberal National Party government has talked about in terms of boot camps?

I note that in their great contributions tonight they did not mention their alternative youth policy. That is because it was the same as ours. They were going to introduce youth boot camps and wilderness camps across Queensland and they were going to start with Kokoda Challenge. Incidentally, Kokoda Challenge won the tender for the Gold Coast boot camp. Again tonight we hear that the Labor Party, which is always negative, will be voting against giving young people opportunities, yet only a short six to seven months ago the Labor Party, according to its own media release, was going to give troubled teens the same opportunities that we are giving them. Usually, the Labor Party would say that we are copying their policy. We announced our policy about a week or two weeks earlier than this rushed policy was announced. They believed in it so much that they staked their election campaign on it, yet within six months it is gone. They do not believe in it anymore. They say it is not going to work and they ask why we are doing it. I ask the Leader of the Opposition: why was the government of the time going to invest \$1 million?

Ms Palaszczuk: No, we ask the questions of you. Why did you abolish youth justice conferencing?

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection. I spend five minutes talking about boot camps and I receive an interjection asking why I have abolished youth conferencing. The Leader of the Opposition does not get it. I am trying to point out to her that the boot camp policies were the Labor Party policies. The Leader of the Opposition was a member of cabinet and as such she should have known the Labor Party policy with respect to youth justice.

I will ramp it up a notch, if I may. Although I accept that the Labor Party's position was essentially the same as that of the Liberal National Party going into the election campaign, one thing I will not forgive the Labor Party for is the state of youth justice in Queensland. We have no-one to blame for that but the Labor Party. They cannot blame anyone else. They were in government for 14 years. Who else can they blame? There has to come a time when the Labor Party stops blaming Rob Borbidge and Joan Sheldon for the two years they were in government. In Queensland the Labor Party was in power for 14 years, yet it was someone else's fault; the juvenile crime issue that we have right across Queensland is someone else's fault.

The opposition leader talks about omnibus bills and how terrible it is that we have an omnibus bill. I lost count of the number of omnibus bills that the Labor Party introduced. Why is this different? Is it different because the Liberal National Party have introduced an omnibus bill? The Labor Party could do it and get away with it, but we cannot? What is the story here? What is right for the Labor Party in government is not right for the Liberal National Party? An omnibus bill is when you have succinct big policies of government. Boot camps is the policy in this bill. It contains small references to abolishing youth justice conferencing and there is a small amendment to the Anti-Discrimination Act, but you would not have a separate bill for those. The former Attorney-General, Paul Lucas, in his last bill introduced—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Berry): Order! Those on my left will cease interjecting.

Mr BLEIJIE: The last bill that the former Attorney-General, Paul Lucas, introduced into this parliament, which incidentally was not debated, amended some 30 pieces of legislation. This is called an omnibus bill and it amends about four pieces of legislation. His bill amended about 30 pieces of legislation, yet there is no problem with the Labor Party doing that.

I will address some of the other comments from honourable members. All Gold Coast members are particularly excited that the early intervention boot camp will be located in and around their areas. I think that is good for the Gold Coast, which has a particular problem that we are trying to address. The honourable Minister for Tourism, Jann Stuckey, talked about the Labor Party's culture of being soft on crime. If there is one thing that we have shown Queenslanders in the past six or seven years it is that this government is not soft on crime. We will not hesitate to introduce the laws necessary to keep our Queensland communities safe. We will not give in to the namby-pamby civil libertarians who are running around the world saying that there is a better way to do these things, because they had the ear of the Labor Party for 14 years and nothing changed. For 14 years those namby-pamby civil libertarians had the ear of the Labor Party and nothing changed.

The member for Bundamba can put her hand on her hip and whinge about what I am saying, but she was a member of the Labor Party government for 14 years and failed our young people in Queensland. She absolutely failed our young people in Queensland in terms of youth justice.

Mrs MILLER: I rise to a point of order. I find the words of the Attorney-General offensive to me, considering that I have been on committees and still am on a committee of a youth justice organisation—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mrs MILLER:—and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member has—

Mrs MILLER: I find it personally offensive—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member has no point of order.

Mrs MILLER:—and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member has been warned. Under standing order 253A the member has been warned previously. There was no point of order. I ruled there was no point of order, but the member continued. Under standing order 253A, the member will now take an hour out of the chamber.

Whereupon the honourable member for Bundamba withdrew from the chamber at 11.57 pm.

Government members: Night, Jo.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order.

Mr BLEIJIE: Now we may be able to participate in an orderly debate in this chamber. The member for Broadwater, whom I note was on the committee, talked in particular about the amendments to the Anti-Discrimination Act with respect to sex workers in Queensland. Her comments were pertinent in terms of believing the individual and businesses. Small business makes up the backbone of the Queensland economy. I table a copy of a submission to the committee from the Queensland Hotel Association, the QHA, dated 13 November 2012. It is a letter to me. It states—

Dear Minister

I am writing on behalf of Queensland's licensed accommodation providers to thank you for your recent intervention in relation to the question of the use of commercial accommodation in Queensland by sex workers.

The final paragraph states—

Thank you for your speedy and very helpful intervention in this issue, which is very much appreciated by Queensland's accommodation businesses and operators.

I table that letter.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 13 November 2012, from the President of the Queensland Hotels Association, Mr TH McGuire, to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Hon. Jarrod Bleijie, regarding use of commercial accommodation in Queensland by sex workers [1732].

We believe in tourism as a key pillar of the Queensland economy. We will stick up for small business operators across Queensland, no matter where they are, and that includes motel and hotel operators right around Queensland.

I turn to the address by the member for Mulgrave. I take personal objection to the contribution that the member for Mulgrave made tonight. The member for Mulgrave made a lot of accusations about the procurement process for the tender. I want to be very clear about the tender process. I had nothing to do with the tender process. A tender committee was set up and chaired by Steve Armitage, from my department, and included David Goodinson, the regional director of youth justice; Tom O'Donnell, the manager of the Atherton education unit in Far North Queensland; and Norm Ferguson, the regional director of DATSIMA. The process was overseen by a DJAG procurement officer as observer to the panel. They had a panel meeting in Cairns. They reviewed all the submissions and then they compiled a shortlist.

The recommendations that my department gave me for the Cairns youth boot camp, the centre's youth boot camp and the Gold Coast early intervention boot camp I accepted. There was no secret involvement with anyone. The member for Mulgrave was going on about Team Wild and how terrible it was, thinking Team Wild were LNP mates, they got short-listed. They did not get the tender. They did not win the tender.

But the member for Mulgrave talks very positively about Choice. He asked how it was that Team Wild were on the short list but Choice was not on the short list. But then he admits that the fellow from Choice—Todd—is a Labor mate. I do not know what the opposite is to cronyism. I do not know what the opposite is to nepotism. He whinges that the LNP mate did not get it, but he also whinges that the Labor mate did not get it. But if the LNP mate got it, there would be some sort of nepotism complaint. So for the member for Mulgrave, let me make it abundantly clear.

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: You asked the question. I am answering it.

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! Member for Mulgrave.

Mr BLEIJIE: The member for Mulgrave asked the questions. This is the opportunity for me to answer the questions. I am answering the questions.

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Mulgrave will cease interjecting. The Attorney-General has the call.

Mr BLEIJIE: The member for Mulgrave made serious accusations tonight about the procurement process. I am answering him by saying that the procurement process was fair dinkum. It was in line with DJAG procurement processes. The best people who tendered got the gig—not a Labor mate, not an LNP mate, the best people for job got the gig.

The member for Mulgrave then talked about the guy from Team Wild being up on fraud charges. I remind members that they did not get the tender. Who funded Team Wild—the one that the member for Mulgrave—

Mr Rickuss: He's just so used to giving it to Labor mates he can't understand why you didn't give it to an LNP mate.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the member for Lockyer. The person that he is saying tonight was the LNP mate was funded by the Labor Party. The former government funded Team Wild. The member for Mulgrave stood in here tonight and said, 'This guy committed a fraud 10 years ago. I can't believe Team Wild made it to the short list.' He accused the member for Cairns of involving himself in the procurement process. We did not give them the tender. The Labor Party funded that organisation. Maybe the real question—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members on my left will cease interjecting.

Mr BLEIJIE: Maybe we should look at the former Labor Party's procurement processes to see how an organisation with such accusations against them got money.

I make it absolutely clear that the procurement process was ridgy-didge. The best people, both in Cairns and on the Gold Coast, got it. I would have thought that the member for Mulgrave, representing that area, would talk positively about the people who got the tender and would want to work with them.

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I hear the interjection. He had his chance in his contribution. I know it was a limited contribution at best for his competence. Everyone rises to their level of incompetence. I know he did his best. I am trying to give the answers to the questions he raised as best I can. He made serious allegations. I am denying the allegations. I am saying that the procurement process was fair dinkum, ridgy-didge, overseen by a procurement officer in DJAG and the best people for the job won the tender.

Honourable members, would you not think that if you go through a tender process, there is a scoring mechanism, the department recommends to the minister a particular group because of X, Y, Z, the minister agrees with the recommendation the department gives them, that that is a full and frank disclosure regime and process? I think it is a pretty fair system. The best people got the job in Cairns, and I wish them all the best.

I am sorry that they have a member for Mulgrave who has denigrated the whole process tonight. By denigrating this process the member for Mulgrave has effectively denigrated the organisation that got the job. He is questioning whether they should have got it or not because he wanted his Labor mate to get the job.

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Manager of Opposition Business will cease interjecting. The Attorney-General has the call.

Mr BLEIJIE: I did not know this Todd fellow was a Labor mate. That was an admission from the honourable member for Mulgrave. When this government looks at procurement processes, it does not look at the politics and where people come from. We do it on the basis of the application the individual organisations make. That is why the two best organisations got the job. I look forward to working with them.

Ms Trad interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: The member for South Brisbane has found her voice at just past midnight. I think if the member for Mulgrave wants to make those accusations he should go outside this chamber and make those accusations in front of a TV camera and then see how tough and brave he is in this new world.

The member for Rockhampton always gives an interesting contribution considering he does not understand what he is reading. He did give an interesting contribution. He in fact whinged that it has taken us so long to get here—seven months. He was frustrated it took so long to get here. He is obviously forgetting the fact that the Labor Party had 14 years to do something like this and they did not. If the member for Rockhampton gets frustrated because it took the Liberal National Party government seven months to deliver something he wishes be delivered, God help him where he would have been with the former Labor Party government for 14 years! He would have been frustrated to disbelief waiting for them to get around to delivering for Queenslanders and getting on with these issues.

The contradiction the member for Rockhampton made was this: it has taken so long to get to this point to introduce this bill, but we are doing everything on the run. I do not quite get it. How can we be doing everything on the run, but then be taking such a long time to get here. I think taking six months in a three-year term is a pretty good innings.

In the first six months the government has introduced legislation to start boot camps in Queensland. It is a serious issue. That is why we have not rushed it. We have not wanted to rush it because we did not

want to get it wrong. It is a serious issue. I know those opposite play on the words 'boot camp'. I have, at every opportunity, said that this camp is not only about discipline and respect in the individual; it is about families, it is about education, it is about health, it is about getting these kids off drugs, it is about getting these kids off alcohol and, more importantly, it involves their families to make sure that we can get these kids a second chance in life.

That leads me to the member for Capalaba's contribution. Thank you for that contribution. It was a personal contribution about the experiences he had as a younger fellow. What was particularly pertinent in the member for Capalaba's contribution was giving kids a second chance. What really resonated with me was when he said if only he had had the opportunity to participate in something like this or other programs. I think the member for Capalaba has grown up to be a fine, outstanding citizen. He represents his electorate to the highest degree of integrity I have seen. Thank you for the contribution tonight. I thank the member for the support he gave me personally with the round tables and in developing this youth boot camp policy to get young kids' lives back on track.

I thank the member for Gladstone for her support. I do sincerely thank the member for Gladstone because she wishes the participants all the success for this program. This is what it is about. We want these 80 young kids in two years to succeed with flying colours. We do not want this trial to be a failure. I have had many members, particularly my honourable colleagues from Townsville, Thuringowa and Mundingburra, all wanting a boot camp around that area. I am hoping that this is such a success that we can start rolling these out right across Queensland. The letters that I have received from people wanting these boot camps—I know the member for Ipswich West talked about this tonight—

Ms Palaszczuk: How many letters have you received?

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the opposition leader about how many members. I suggest that the opposition leader talk to the 77 members here, and when they are in the elevator with the opposition leader they can tell her and her colleagues how their constituents support these boot camps. I would encourage them all to give feedback to the opposition leader and ask the opposition leader at the same time why her sudden change of heart—why six months ago they supported boot camps, getting \$1 million, and now they are not supporting them. Do you know why they are not supporting them? Because they have not got the guts to come in here and support the Liberal National government's initiative, because it was not their policy. It was not their initiative originally.

I thank the member for Gaven for his contribution. I congratulate the member for Gaven on his appointment to the high office of chairman of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee. I think he is going to make an outstanding committee chairman—certainly better than the former chairman, the member for Condamine. I look forward to the contribution that the member for Gaven will make to that committee. I certainly do keep that committee particularly busy.

I thank the member for Logan, who gave a great contribution in relation to the pathways and education. This is what it is about. This government is about changing the lives of young people. We realise—the Labor Party never did—that, to change a young person's life around, sticking them in a detention centre for a period of time and using it as a revolving door is not the answer. That was the answer for the Labor Party. Thirty-two per cent of young people in youth detention centres across Queensland have been in there five times or more—a statistic the Labor Party were happy to have when they were in government. I am not happy with that statistic. We do not want detention centres to be a revolving door. We want to get young kids contributing positively to society. We want them to get a job. We want them to get an education.

If the Labor Party were so interested in young people, why wouldn't they give it a go? Why wouldn't they support giving something else a go? Why denigrate people for having a different view on things or a different approach to things? This is why we are doing it, because what the Labor Party did for 14 years did not work. If the policies of the Labor Party worked, we would not have the member for Rockhampton recently saying in the *Rocky Morning Bulletin* that juvenile justice is out of control in Queensland. It did not become out of control in the last six months in Rockhampton; it became out of control over the period of Labor government administrations in Queensland. So the member for Rockhampton cannot blame us for that; he can blame the Labor Party. Look to the right, member for Rockhampton, and blame the people sitting to your right. They are ones who created the problems of youth justice issues in Queensland.

This is the only government that is going to try something different. We will try something different to give every young person a second chance and to give them an opportunity in life that they never had under the Labor Party. We will give them that opportunity.