



Speech by

Jason Costigan

MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY

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

Mr COSTIGAN (Whitsunday—LNP) (11.09 pm): I rise in the House to speak in support of the Youth Justice (Boot Camp Orders) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I say at the outset that there are communities right across Queensland where youth crime is out of control including our major provincial cities of Cairns, Townsville, Mackay and Rockhampton—places I am most familiar with, thanks to my previous life working across regional Queensland.

In my own electorate of Whitsunday, just a couple of weeks ago the community was outraged by one particular crime allegedly committed by juveniles. What was that crime? It was arson. I cannot speak too much about the incident, of course, because it is before the courts, but the alleged crime has many people in my home town on the warpath, venting their spleens in local newspapers and on talkback radio. The fire I speak of gutted several retail outlets on Mackay's north side, in the suburb of Mount Pleasant.

Mrs Menkens: A terrible fire.

Mr COSTIGAN: It was a terrible fire. I am sure most honourable members would recall seeing the media reports in relation to this terrible situation. It was a fire that left a damage bill well in excess of \$1 million—a fire that I happened to see with my very own eyes as I headed up the Bruce Highway to Calen to officially open a new synthetic green at the local bowls club. The same fire has left many hardworking people without a job, without an income in the lead-up to Christmas and without Christmas presents, given that one shop was in fact a toy store. Sadly, it and others are now in ruins.

Elsewhere, youth crime is sending people around the twist. Again I will speak with local knowledge in the case of publican Will Cordwell, a respected hotelier in Rockhampton.

Mr Young: Hear, hear!

Mr COSTIGAN: I am sure the member for Keppel is well aware of the situation there. It goes without saying that Mr Cordwell is sick and tired of having to deal with juveniles running amok, ripping him off, wrecking his pub and sucking his time. In years gone by, some of these kids who play up like second-hand lawnmowers would have got a good, old-fashioned kick up the backside. In Rockhampton, legendary police officer the late Jack Kelly, who served his community alongside the father of the member for Keppel, would have endorsed that approach and in those days he was not alone.

In Mackay we had our own version of Mr Kelly, the one and only 'Lofty' Wesener, whose big foot can still be remembered by people who had to take their medicine for doing the wrong thing but who, all these years later, are now extremely grateful for Lofty's old-school style of policing. Of course, those days of a kick up the bum are gone—a shame in the eyes of many in the community—but, nevertheless, this government is pushing ahead to curb youth crime.

The advent of these boot camps is something that I welcome as I genuinely believe that it will bring about good outcomes. I am not alone. Tonight I had the opportunity to converse with the inaugural president of the Mackay-Whitsunday retired police officers association, my old mate 'Kojak' Campbell.

Kojak, without batting an eyelid, I would have thought, was most adamant that we are well and truly on the right path here. He advises me that the majority of his members are very supportive of this government's move towards boot camps, and he commends the Attorney-General on his leadership in relation to these matters. If anything, Kojak says, 'Don't pussyfoot around.'

This bill is another example of the Newman LNP government delivering on its pre-election commitments—our pledge to introduce boot camps to stop the cycle of crime among our youth and give young offenders a real chance at rehabilitation and the opportunity to make positive life decisions.

Speaking of decisions, I am delighted to say that this bill also makes amendments to the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991. The people of Queensland, in particular those in the Mackay-Whitsunday region, would remember that recent case involving a motelier in our hinterland, in the mining town of Moranbah. The motelier was found to have contravened the aforementioned act by refusing accommodation to be used for the purposes of prostitution. It was enough to fire up people in my own electorate of Whitsunday who wrote to me outraged by the situation.

This bill inserts a new exemption in the act to protect businesses from that sort of complaint and to give them control over who exactly comes to their business and for what particular purpose. The exemption allows someone to lawfully discriminate against another person in relation to accommodation if they reasonably believe that that other person is using or intends to use it in connection with that person's work or another person's work as a sex worker. Put simply, ladies of the night should think again if they think they can rely on the local motelier, who previously had no choice but to cop it sweet. It goes without saying that I warmly welcome the new exemption. I am not alone. It is in line with community expectations—something this government is well aware of. In closing, I commend the bill to the House.