




Speech by

Mark Boothman

MEMBER FOR ALBERT

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

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Albert—LNP) (11.23 pm): I rise in support of the Youth Justice (Boot Camp Orders) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill—legislation that is long overdue and a piece of legislation that has been demanded by residents throughout Queensland. We are witness to the escalation in crime committed by individuals under the age of 18 years. These individuals have a complete disregard for society's expectations and find themselves in a perpetual cycle of crime from which they see no escape. We as representatives can no longer sit idly by whilst this situation continues to spiral out of control. Governments have a moral obligation to best serve all Queenslanders and create a proactive environment to give those who have strayed from a law-abiding path a far more productive and rewarding path. It has become an expectation that offenders are held accountable for their actions, with the goal of breaking the cycle of crime. Detention has proven itself ineffective in reducing future offending and incarceration has a limited effect on a small number of repeat offenders.

The residents of South-East Queensland are at their wit's end with youth offenders. We are subjected to these individuals' handiwork on a weekly basis through our newspapers and in person. Neighbourhood Watch groups throughout the electorate demanded action because they felt that the policies of the previous government failed. The Newman LNP team gave a firm commitment that change was upon us. I wish to thank the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice for his resolve in taking a proactive approach to delivering this legislation.

The bill will amend the Youth Justice Act 1992 to introduce a boot camp order which will provide the courts an option before detention. This gives the courts a clear alternative to help these youth find their way out of a life of crime. The boot camp program will entail one month of residential boot camp followed by at least two months or up to five months of intensive supervision in the community. This will give offenders guidance in how they should conduct themselves within the greater community and, where possible, this will include the involvement of the young person's family. It is crucial to involve the young person's family to ensure that difficulties within the family which may be partly responsible for the individual's actions can be addressed so they can refrain from further infringements upon completion of the boot camp program.

Young offenders will participate in a physical, health training, educational and offence focused program to address the causes of offending. The residential phase is designed to instil discipline and assist youths in turning their lives around. To be eligible for the program, an individual must be at least 13 years of age at the time of sentencing and reside in the area prescribed by regulation. I should note that young offenders who participate in sexual assault or serious violence will be ineligible to enter the boot camp program. Furthermore, if an offender is seen to be an unacceptable risk to boot camp employees or other children participating in the program, the individual will be ineligible to participate. If a young person breaches the boot camp order, there will be a number of options available to a court. This may include

serving a sentence in a detention centre or receiving a new boot camp order or a conditional release from the program.

This legislation is what the community has been crying out for. We need to break the cycle of crime in our communities. As I go around my Neighbourhood Watches, I hear that they are extremely pleased with this legislation—from Cedar Creek to Oxenford to Willow Vale. Well done to the Attorney-General on this fantastic piece of legislation. Well done! I commend the legislation to the House.