




Speech By  
**Hon. David Crisafulli**

**MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA**

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**CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)**

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience) (4.22 pm): Whilst I wish to start by saying I offer my wholehearted support to this bill in its entirety, I intend to focus my comments around the graffiti issue—the one that the Leader of the Opposition has spoken about. It would be wrong of me not to start by saying how bizarre it seems that people would rise in this place and almost seek to condemn a government for wanting to have the toughest laws in the nation. That is something that a government should wear with pride because we have seen the results of what happens when you do the opposite. We have seen the results of what happens when you allow criminals to be treated softly, when you continue to allow the judicial system to become a revolving door.

For the opposition to stand up in this place and say that they believe that the penalty for graffiti is too harsh shows that they missed the message that came out of the last election. In my electorate of Mundingburra, that was one of the key issues and it remains one of the key issues. When I have my fortnightly debate with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition on ABC Radio, I see him doing his best to put forward the view of his colleagues who obviously have more sway than him in saying that somehow our communities in regional Queensland feel the same way as the Leader of the Opposition just spoke now. But they are angry and they want tougher sentences, and that is a message I am receiving time and time again as I go around the state.

Unfortunately there are a handful who sit opposite who hold more sway than others. For those who believe that somehow graffiti is the work of poor, banished, unfortunate souls, that is not the case. Mr Deputy Speaker, do not allow yourself to buy this rubbish about confusing legal street art with graffiti. There is legal art where people provide a wall and endorse it. Then there is graffiti—the work of grubs, the sort of stuff that tears communities apart, and it does. It makes people feel unsafe. It makes communities feel less proud. And we should fight it. When we have an Attorney-General who has the ticker to stand up and do it, despite the criticism that will always come from those more aligned with the bleeding hearts than the realities that face us in our day-to-day challenges, I say more credit to him.

In my short contribution let me talk briefly about what graffiti means to the people in my electorate of Mundingburra. I do so with some knowledge about what this means to local government, indeed to councils. In my city of Townsville, last year ratepayers spent over \$100,000 on cleaning up graffiti, and that number is growing. That number is replicated right around the state. When I speak with councils—and I speak with people like Paul Pisasale in Ipswich, Graham Quirk in Brisbane, Pam Parker in Logan, and indeed even mayors in regional areas like the city that I represent and Cairns and Mackay and even other smaller regional councils—I know that it has become a real issue that they want to deal with.

Earlier this year we found out the cost of vandalism to state schools in Townsville. That amounted to about \$230,000 in less than three years. This figure does include things like repairs to property et cetera, but it still shows what happens when you are weak and allow people to continue to

reoffend. What this amendment does is turns the table on graffiti vandals and makes them think twice before they deface public property. It is always the law-abiding citizens—the mums and dads with mortgages and families, the pensioners and those who can least afford it—who are forced to foot the bill.

Not only do these amendments increase the maximum sentence from five to seven years, despite the opposition from the Labor Party; they also include a new mandatory community based sentencing order which will ensure that graffiti offenders, whether adult or juvenile, remove graffiti or undertake related work that contributes to its removal. There is nothing like getting somebody out in the hot sun to clean up their work, particularly these nocturnal creatures who normally seek to do their work at a time when the rest of us are sleeping before getting up and having to go to work and earn a living. It is wonderful to get them up and working around midday. And may I suggest North Queensland as a great location for some of these clean-ups, around midday in about January or February!

Before I conclude I want to briefly talk about GraffitiSTOP, an initiative which I am very proud of. We made a commitment that we would spend \$2 million tackling graffiti and assisting councils. When I see those opposite make out as though somehow graffiti is not a big issue, I will give them a little fact. We put up an initiative for councils to be involved with cleaning up graffiti. It is the first time in the time that I have been looking at local government that every single council accepted to be part of a program. It does not matter if it is graffiti on a prominent pedestrian footpath in Brisbane or if it is a bit of Nikko pen on a picnic table in Longreach, that hurts the community. We should be proud of wanting—

**Ms Trad** interjected.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** I understand the apologist from South Brisbane. I understand how this offends you. I get it. I understand that your group of people, your network, think that it is these poor, misunderstood youth—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Krause): Order! Minister, I ask you to refer your comments through the chair.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** I understand that it offends the member for South Brisbane, but perhaps I have a different view on the world which has been formed by seeing what occurs when we have a government that is weak. It is strange that the member for South Brisbane comes into this place as a new member and yet brings the same baggage as those who went before her. I will continue to support any move that gets tough on criminals and I will support any move that swings the pendulum back in favour of the mums and dads who go to work and pay their taxes. I will always put them ahead of the grubs who do this to our community.