




Speech By
Ros Bates

MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (7.52 pm): I rise to speak to the Criminal Law Amendment Bill (No. 2). This is a broad-ranging bill with a range of great initiatives, indicative of the Newman government's continued commitment to being tough on crime. Before the election, the LNP committed to allowing for the reading of a victim impact statement in court should the victim wish for this to occur; toughening the sentences for drug traffickers who target children; requiring drug traffickers to serve at least 80 per cent of their sentence before being eligible for parole; and requiring all graffiti offenders to remove graffiti and strengthening the maximum penalty for graffiti crimes. This bill delivers on those promises. Over the past two years the Mudgeeraba electorate has seen a year-on-year decrease in graffiti of around 75 per cent. That is an extraordinary achievement. Once again, I would like to place on record my appreciation of the efforts of the Mudgeeraba police, led by Senior Sergeant Mark Anderson, and the efforts of the Mudgeeraba Police Community Consultative Committee, led by Earle Hinschen, who, as a delegate from Mudgeeraba, will undoubtedly continue to make a significant contribution to the Queensland Plan not only in relation to local crime but also in relation to the arts.

As I have previously mentioned in this place, the PCCC's results have been extraordinary, but the residents of the Mudgeeraba electorate will not be satisfied until they see graffiti wiped clean from their area, both literally and figuratively. Requiring graffiti offenders—I refuse to call them artists—to remove graffiti themselves is a measure that sensible people have been calling for and I am delighted to see that today we have moved to make this a reality. It is the first thing someone raises when raising their own frustration with graffiti—'Why don't we make them clean it up themselves?' By amending the Youth Justice Act children aged from 10 to 16 years who are convicted of a graffiti offence will receive a new and mandatory community based graffiti removal order. In addition, under the act new mechanisms will see children made to remove graffiti without the need for the involvement of the courts. This bill increases the maximum penalty for wilful damage—graffiti from five to seven years imprisonment.

Part of the appeal for graffiti offenders is being able to show off their handiwork. In the past, for those people it was an article of pride that their vandalism could be seen by so many people and often the goal is to deface surfaces as high profile and easily visible as possible. With the advent and mainstreaming of social media, part of that goal can be achieved electronically through digital distribution. This bill provides that, for adult offenders, if the court is satisfied that a device—say a PC, mobile or digital camera—has been used to spread images of the graffiti, it can be confiscated. Main Roads does a great job in removing graffiti when on its property, such as on the sound barriers in my electorate along the highway, as does the Gold Coast City Council in conjunction with its distribution of graffiti removal kits to residents. But residents should not have to clean up the graffiti. Our taxpayer dollars should not have to be spent on cleaning it up. 'Make the vandals clean it up themselves,' is what the residents of the Mudgeeraba electorate have been telling me for years. This initiative will be incredibly well received in the community as being sensible, just and overdue, as are the initiatives within this bill that go to protect our children from those peddling drugs in our communities.

This bill increases the maximum penalty to life imprisonment for the supply of a schedule 1 drug to a child under the age of 16 and 25 years imprisonment for supplying a schedule 2 drug. Supplying drugs to minors when they are impressionable, when they are developing as people and when they are likely to be under greater pressure from their peers is truly a despicable act. When a child makes a decision to take illicit drugs, that child may be making a decision that will follow them for the rest of their lives and it may be the first step towards a lifelong dependency. It is right that suppliers are now subject to life imprisonment. They may be part of delivering a lifetime sentence to their juvenile customers. Today, the impact that drug suppliers can have on the lives of their customers is further acknowledged by ensuring that all drug traffickers who are sentenced to immediate full-time imprisonment are required to serve 80 per cent of their sentence before becoming eligible for parole.

In addition to these initiatives, today we move to give more power to victims of crime who can sometimes feel like the court system does not take their views and experiences into account, despite the fact that the accused is before the court due to the impact their actions had on the life of that victim. Today, we move to allow for victim impact statements to be read aloud in court and ask that the sentencing court takes that into account, along with the harm done to the victim. Of course, this is only if the victim wishes to do so. The bill also allows support for the victim to allow for CCTV or the presence of a support person as they go to read their statement in acknowledgement that this can be an extraordinarily difficult task for some victims. Again, that is a sensible initiative that gives voice to some who until now have felt silenced and powerless. The Newman government continues to show its commitment to combating crime in Queensland. I commend the Attorney-General and the bill to the House.