




Speech By
Hon. David Crisafulli

MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA

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YOUTH JUSTICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience) (2.41 pm): In rising to support the Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, I note that this place has passed some historic legislation in the last couple of years. We have got rid of a waste levy. We have made sweeping changes to the planning act to get things going in Queensland. The Vegetation Management Act, which has cruelled my part of the world for too long, has had some sensible amendments made to it. But there is nothing more important to the people I represent than what this bill will do. After having listened to what I just had to listen to from the member for Rockhampton—and I will be getting on to that later on, I can tell you—a man who represents a regional Queensland seat, I am going to be reminding those people of his words for a long, long time. I can promise him that, because the people that we represent are under siege because of this: gangs of youths out of control. Because of gangs of youths out of control, people are living like prisoners in their own homes; they go into their front driveway and some little thug with a knife carjacks them in the driveway of their home. So do not come in here and talk about political ideology. This is about protecting the people that we represent—the people whom you get paid to represent. So do not come in here pushing your green ideological inner-city South Brisbane view, Bill.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Cunningham): Order! Minister, I would ask that you direct your comments through the chair.

Mr CRISAFULLI: My apologies, Madam Deputy Speaker. When a young girl loses her life on a road in the area that I represent in a car full of kids who have been through that revolving door that is our youth justice system, something has to be done. So do not come to me with political ideology.

Mr Byrne interjected.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Madam Deputy Speaker, I am not taking the interjections at present, but I look forward to taking them shortly. I want to go through some of the changes contained in this bill and why they mean so much. The first change is to make juvenile criminal history admissible during sentencing of adult offenders. That is just so very important. It is so very important to break the cycle of the revolving door that is our youth justice system. The bill will allow repeat young offenders to be named through proceedings; open the Children's Court to the public to make things more transparent; and remove the principle of detention as a last resort.

Ms Trad: Disgraceful!

Mr CRISAFULLI: I will take the interjection from the member for South Brisbane, who said 'disgraceful', because if you ever leave GPO Box 4000 and go into the other part of the state and try to peddle that nonsense you will be ripped to shreds. The member for South Brisbane is completely and utterly out of touch—completely; completely out of touch.

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr CRISAFULLI: I will say one more time: when people I represent are scared to open their front door at night, that has nothing to do with political ideology. That has to do with safety. If a government is elected to do something, it does it. We said that we were going to get tough on this, and we are going to. I will remind the people of Queensland each and every day that those opposite came into this place and tried to make an excuse as to why this should not happen.

Mr Byrne interjected.

Mr CRISAFULLI: They are weak on law and order, and it will haunt you in regional Queensland, Bill, for a long, long time. What is particularly pleasing for me is that recidivist motor vehicle offenders who have been found guilty of two or more motor vehicle offences in the previous 12 months will be sentenced to a youth boot camp order in Townsville. I want to acknowledge the Attorney-General, who has understood that this is an issue right across the state but particularly in my home city. Having the member for Townsville here today means a great deal to me and I know that he will speak with passion on this debate, as will the member for Thuringowa. This is a real issue across the state, but nowhere is it more prevalent than Townsville—nowhere. I have looked at some of the submissions—the ones that the member for Rockhampton talked about. He said that these submissions reflect the views of Queenslanders. Let me start with the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties—that reflective, august body of the feelings of the everyday man. It says—

This is because children are morally different from adults as a result of the fact that they do not have the same judgment skills, self-control and ability to know right from wrong.

So that means that when one of these young thugs gets a knife and decides to go and put it at the throat of somebody and take a car, they are apparently not able to determine if that is right or wrong. So when the families I represent shudder inside while some bugger has a screwdriver jimmying open a door, they can say, 'I didn't know. Nobody told me that that was not right. I just thought that was just the way that you go about getting belongings from somebody else.' Right from wrong is something that everybody knows. When you take something that someone else has worked for, you know that that is wrong—in the same way that the person who is inside the house knows what they are doing to them is wrong. Every Queenslander knows right from wrong. Suggesting that that is a reason why we should not get tough on these offenders is laughable.

The other submission that the member for Rockhampton referred to is the submission from Amnesty. It says that these changes 'represent regression away from well-established best practices in youth justice'. We have seen these well-established best practices, and do members know what is happening? It is a disaster. It is an absolute disaster. Everything that we are talking about—the apologists opposite me—is the result of 20 years of inaction, of doing absolutely nothing, of saying, 'Oh, poor little Sammy's had a really bad childhood so, as a result, Sammy, you can just keep doing that.' That is the problem. We are living with the problem now. This is the start of turning around a culture of saying to people, 'It is okay because you've done it a bit tough. It's okay because we don't want to offend you. It's okay because you don't know right from wrong.' This is the beginning of a turnaround, and a turnaround for the people that I represent. The irony is that it is a turnaround for the people that the member for Rockhampton represents—the very people who put him in this place. But do members know what will be amazing? The member for Rockhampton will attempt to walk both sides of the street. He will come down here and, to try to keep the powerbroker sitting behind him happy, he will come in here and say, 'This is so terrible and we've offended the good people from Amnesty. We've made them all really, really upset, and the Council for Civil Liberties. This is horrendous!' The member for Rockhampton will come in here and say how terrible it is and then he will go back to Rocky and say, 'Yes, you know, it's really tough. Yes, we're going to clamp down on this.' The member for Rockhampton cannot walk both sides of the street on this issue. He simply cannot. I make the point that the Labor Party has learned absolutely nothing. This was the key issue in the election campaign in regional Queensland.

Mr Byrne: You didn't have a policy. You didn't know what you were doing.

Mr CRISAFULLI: We did have a policy and it included removing detention as a last resort. It included allowing repeat offenders to be named and shamed. It included breaking the back of a generation of limp-wristed, useless, weak, inept policies.

In the very short time that I have left can I conclude by saying the following: the changes have been made. The vehicle is in place for change. I put a call out to our legal system to please reflect the community views in sentencing. The tools that have shackled them have been removed. This nonsense of not being able to have criminal histories admitted is gone. This nonsense of detention being a last resort is gone. I say to the legal fraternity, I say to our judicial system, to please reflect the views of Queenslanders, because today in this place the Labor Party sure as hell has not.