




Speech By  
**Hon. David Crisafulli**

**MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA**

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Record of Proceedings, 5 August 2014

**CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience) (3.02 pm): I might start by saying that I will be speaking in support of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill. I do not intend to go into it in depth. I think the chairman of the committee did an outstanding job in summarising the valuable work that his committee did in ploughing through the detail. I do wish to speak to one part of it, and that is the changes that remove any doubt and extends the offence of stealing by looting to include stealing committed in an area post its declaration as a disaster zone. As someone who has lived and breathed those sorts of conditions for a large part of my time in public life and certainly in my current role as Minister for Community Recovery, I really want to make a contribution to this and applaud the Attorney as well as the committee for pushing ahead with this, boots and all. When we are in a disaster situation or are recovering from a disaster situation, we see the very best of the Queensland spirit. We see the very best of community spirit. We see the very best of our emergency services, of neighbours helping neighbours, strangers helping strangers, but we also see the very worst of mankind from a very small portion of the community. I have a couple of things in my mind that I always remember.

Those members in this House will remember well that, after the 2011 floods in South-East Queensland, over 10 people were found to have offended in terms of looting. I remember several examples in Bundaberg including one person from Millbank. I certainly will not call him a gentleman. There are many other terms I would like to use, but they are unparliamentary. When somebody goes and steals a refrigerator, which is the only piece of working equipment, from somebody's house and they take it when it is the only thing that is still running because they see some value for themselves in being a leach, in being a parasite, at a time when the owner is in their hour of need, that is disgusting and we as a community must act. I saw the best of mankind during this disaster of 2013 and the one in 2014. I saw SES volunteers who were prepared to leave their houses to the wrath of Mother Nature while they went and helped their fellow man. To know that there were those whose own property was high and dry but who chose to prey on their fellow man, quite frankly, is a disgrace.

These changes give people like that nowhere to hide. There is a penalty of 10 years imprisonment that already applies to stealing and looting. That is punishment in special cases, proposed new section 13, but this bill extends the offence of stealing by looting to include stealing committed in an area that is, or was immediately before the offence was committed, a declared area for a disaster situation. This clears up any ambiguity. It sends the clearest of messages, and the message is simple: we as a community will rally behind the vast majority of people who are there to get on with their lives, but we will be prepared to come down like a tonne of bricks on those who do the wrong thing.

In closing, I will say that the government has done a fantastic job in the 2½ years it has been in office in reversing the record of the previous government of being soft on crime and soft on law and order. We have changed the Youth Justice Act. We have made several changes to make sure that the scales of justice have swung back towards the innocent, away from the criminal. This bill does further good work in that space. I throw my wholehearted support behind the Attorney-General's bill.