



Speech By  
**Hon. Jarrod Bleijie**


**MEMBER FOR KAWANA**

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Record of Proceedings, 20 May 2014

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Boot Camp, Tender Process; Beyond Billabong**

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (12.37 pm), by leave: Part of this government's strong plan for youth justice is a trial of boot camps across the state, aimed at reducing the pool of young people at risk of entering the youth justice system and giving those already entrenched in the system an opportunity for a brighter future. Allegations were made in the House this morning by those opposite regarding the boot camp tender process. I rise to set the record straight. It is clear that Channel 7 was manipulated by the Labor Party as part of a deliberate smear campaign by the opposition which allowed Queensland's youth justice system to spiral out of control. Rather than supporting an organisation which is delivering real results to young Queenslanders, the Labor Party has made a disgraceful attempt to undermine the integrity of the boot camp and its provider.

We have been upfront with Queenslanders the entire time. As I said in parliament on 17 October 2013, over six months ago, contemporary experience in dealing with high-risk young people was the essential factor when selecting the boot camp provider. To that end, this government placed greater emphasis than did the evaluation teams on the experience demonstrated by the potential service providers. This resulted in the selection of providers—some different from those recommended by the evaluation team—who have a proven track record on delivering boot camps in Queensland. This was based on advice from my director-general on 21 August 2013 that, following provision of documentation relating to the tender process for each boot camp, he was unsatisfied with the recommendation flowing from the procurement process.

While the procurement process was appropriate and the procurement guidelines were complied with, he was not satisfied that the recommendations flowing from that process were optimal. I table a copy of that advice from the director-general in August 2013.

*Tabled paper:* Email, dated 21 August 2013, from Mr John Sosso, Director-General, Department of Justice and Attorney-General, to Mr David Fraser regarding Boot Camps [\[5131\]](#).

He also confirmed that it would not be inappropriate for the minister to independently assess the applicants and reach his own view. I now want to address inaccuracies raised in the House this morning.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Berry): Order! I warn the members on my left.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The opposition raised serious allegations this morning which I am now addressing. Channel 7 relied on the Labor Party in its research and, unfortunately, there was selective and incorrect reporting. There have been, in fact, 20 young people who have attended Lincoln Springs and nearly 100 young people who have attended our four boot camps, which are all achieving great success.

Further to this, the reporter failed to report that even the evaluation team recognised this fact, indicating that Beyond Billabong was rated as the service provider which had the highest level of demonstrated ability to achieve outcomes for young people with complex needs, something which the sentenced youth boot camp specifically targets. They also failed to appreciate that the amount tendered by Beyond Billabong was to run both the Cairns and Townsville boot camps, and to deliver their program to more than the number of offenders which was initially required by the brief.

The opposition leader was concerned about whether the right provider was selected. This is dubious given that her government in 2007 awarded Boyd Curran the then Premier's Reconciliation Award for Employment and Training for the excellent outcomes they achieved with young Indigenous youth employment at the Lawn Hill and Riversleigh Pastoral Holding Co. in north-west Queensland. I am pleased to report that Beyond Billabong has now built on this foundation and the results speak for themselves. Honourable members will know that one of the first phone calls that Beyond Billabong received after winning the tender and achieving the government's objective to deliver a tough boot camp was from the member for Mulgrave himself. These stories relay the real results that the camps are achieving right now—not just numbers but stories of the lives of young people and their families which are being irrevocably changed by Beyond Billabong and the sentenced youth boot camp.

As pictures are worth a thousand words, I also wish to table a number of photographs which depict young offenders at the sentenced youth boot camp. Prior to entering this camp, these young people could not engage with programs or education. Now they have had the opportunity to mend fences, muster sheep, tag cattle and learn other skills vital to the agriculture industry—one of the key pillars of the Queensland economy. It is clear this government has chosen the best provider for the job. I have every confidence that the sentenced youth boot camp run by Beyond Billabong and Boyd Curran, along with the early intervention camps at Hervey Bay, Rockhampton and the Gold Coast, will continue to give young Queenslanders the opportunity at a brighter future, one which could have never been achieved under a Labor government. I now table for honourable colleagues the photos of young Queenslanders re-engaging in work, re-engaging in education and re-engaging with communities.

*Tabled paper.* Bundle of photographs regarding Queensland Boot Camps [\[5132\]](#).

The Labor Party knows in their heart of hearts that the right provider was chosen for the job. I have every confidence in the process that was undertaken. What would the Labor Party say to these young Queenslanders whom they have turned their back on? They turned their back on these young Queenslanders who were living a life of crime. We, on the other hand, take a positive approach to youth justice reforms in this state. Yes, young people have to be responsible for their actions, but we want to give every young Queenslander a second chance at life—a second chance to turn their life around and get back on the right track. If there is one thing that will be positive for every Queenslander, it is to have young Queenslanders having a job and education, and not committing crimes against our fellow citizens.