




Speech By
Hon. Jarrod Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Youth Boot Camps

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (9.53 am): This government has a strong plan for a bright future for all Queenslanders, including our most valuable resource and foundation for the future, our young people. Under Labor, young offenders were in and out of court and detention, some over five times, whilst a small percentage committed the majority of offences. This government is not content with containing offending, but is stopping offending and giving young people opportunities to get back on track, get a job and an education. In this way, we are building safer communities for our most vulnerable, whilst making Queensland the safest place to live, work and raise a family.

The youth boot camp trial was a key election commitment to begin to address the high rates of youth crime affecting the state. Commencing in 2012, there are now three early-intervention camps targeting young people most at risk of offending. Those are located on the Gold Coast, the Fraser-Sunshine Coast and in the Rockhampton region. In Cairns and Townsville, now young offenders entrenched in a life of crime can be sentenced to a youth boot camp designed to turn their lives around and to turn them into law-abiding good citizens.

By the end of the 2013-14 financial year, \$7 million had been invested into the youth boot camp trial. This included \$4.1 million in relocatable infrastructure. The clear benefit of these boot camps is that they address the underlying issues causing offending behaviour. As at 30 July 2014, 130 young people had commenced in the boot camps. If those young people had been held in detention for the three-month duration of a boot camp order, it would have cost taxpayers over \$15 million.

For young people participating in early intervention programs, we have successfully seen 91 per cent diverted from entering the youth justice system. For young offenders who were sentenced by the courts to a youth boot camp, 63 per cent have not committed a further offence. That is a significant achievement, as only approximately 20 per cent of young offenders leaving detention centres do not commit further offences. That is an increase of 43 per cent.

The youth boot camp programs not only will reduce crime but also will set the cornerstone for a safer way of life for all Queenslanders into the future. A formal evaluation to determine the effectiveness and cost benefit of the trial will be undertaken. However, early indications from all boot camps are that the young people are turning their lives around. The figures paint a good picture for what can be achieved when you invest in young people, but their individual stories and those of their families show the real impact, as I said in the House earlier in the week. Even the critics are changing their minds. For the benefit of all honourable members, I table a recent editorial from the *Bulletin*, written by Frazer Pearce, who stated—

I feared it would be a swift-kick-up-the-backside program that may have done more harm than good.

But it turned out to be a tough-love initiative built more on rehabilitation than punishment.

...

When you consider how much chaos a few dozen juvenile delinquents have caused in the Rockhampton region in the past few years, this is a great success story.

If only the local member for Rockhampton held the view of the writer of that editorial.

Tabled paper: Article from the Rockhampton *Morning Bulletin*, dated 30 July 2014, titled 'Initiative turns lives around' [\[5650\]](#).