




Speech By
Michael Hart

MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH

Record of Proceedings, 18 March 2014

YOUTH JUSTICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (9.00 pm): I rise to speak to the debate on the Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014. It is very important for me to speak to this bill. On the Gold Coast we have a youth problem. Like a lot of this state, we have a youth problem. It is no good hiding your head in the sand and denying that there is a problem, because there is a problem. Those opposite seem to be ignoring that fact.

Mr Cox: They have their head in the sand!

Mr HART: You are right, member for Thuringowa; they have their head in the sand. Action had to be taken, and I commend our Attorney-General for being the best Attorney-General in the country at this time. He is taking a tough stance on—

Mr Bleijie: Say that again?

Mr HART: He is the best Attorney-General that this country has at this time.

Mr Newman: What about Brandis?

Mr HART: As I said, Premier, he is the best Attorney-General that we have at this time. George Brandis has not yet proved himself. I am sure that he will make a fantastic Attorney-General, but as an Attorney-General he has been in that seat for a short period of time.

I think the member for Toowoomba North said it best tonight when he said that this is about making our state a safe place in which to live and bring up our children. This is about making our houses safe from those people who would enter them and take our goods. This is about people who would break into your car and take it so that you would never see it again. They would set fire to it or use it in a ram raid—they would do all sorts of things to it. Tonight we heard that 60 per cent of offenders in the youth justice system have been there five times or more. You have got to ask yourself if that is the case—if 60 per cent of people appearing in our courts are there for the fifth or more time—then this system was just not working. It was broken, and our Attorney-General is doing something to fix the system. We also heard that 30 per cent of the people in the justice system are committing 75 per cent of the crime, so you can see that it is a relatively small group of people that are committing all of the crime. We have to take some sort of action against that.

As I said earlier, those opposite have their heads in the sand. We heard from the member for South Brisbane tonight that we should be treating our offenders with world's best practice, that we should be informed by the best learning in the world on how to deal with these offenders, and that in a modern civil society we do not do what this government is proposing to do. Well, in a modern civil society we take care of people. We make people feel safe in their homes and in the streets so that when they go out at night, they do not have to have a policeman walking with them or standing on every corner to feel safe.

I have to agree with the member for South Brisbane—and a lot of members would be surprised that I would agree with anything that the member for South Brisbane would say—that unemployment

and poverty are some of the main drivers of criminal activity. Would you not be surprised to learn that the member for South Brisbane has been behind the Labor Party for the last 20 years while they sent this state broke? The member was behind the Labor Party on a federal level while they sent our federal government spiralling towards \$670 billion worth of debt and this state spiralling towards \$85 billion worth of debt, and we all know that that is costing us \$453,000 an hour. How many extra policemen could we have hired for that \$453,000? Many! Those extra police would make a lot of difference to crime and it might allow us to do some of these namby-pamby things that those opposite would have us do. Those namby-pamby things they have been doing for the last 20 years have not worked and they were never going to.

We heard the member for Gaven say 'The system is not broken, so don't fix it.' How wrong can he be? The system is broken. Every night on our TVs we see on the Gold Coast and in other parts of the state that the same people are showing up at our courts. On Channel 9 just about every night they are pushing and barging their way out of the Southport watch-house, spitting at the TV cameras, pushing reporters and sticking their fingers in the air. They are thumbing their noses at authority because they know that there is no comeback and they know that the justice system has not addressed that particular issue. We have to do something about that, and I again commend the Attorney-General for doing that.

One of the important things to come out of this particular bill is that we have created a new category of order for vehicle offences is that recidivist vehicle offenders will be sent to boot camps. The members for Broadwater, Albert and I went out to Boonah last year to the boot camp that was being trialled out there—

Mr Crandon: Me too!

Mr HART: And the member for Coomera. Sorry, I missed that. Of course the member for Coomera was there as well. We saw the impact that the boot camp was having on those young offenders. It was raining the day we were there, but we were okay because we were under cover. We had an umbrella, didn't we, member for Broadwater? But those young offenders did not and it was freezing cold. They had been up on the hill for a couple of hours, and they were steaming as they came down. They sat down with us around the fire and explained some things about their lives, and we heard some really sad stories. But they told us that the boot camp was really helping them and they had completely changed their ideas and the sorts of things that they had been doing with their lives.

I would like to comment about the member for Yeerongpilly, who was formerly a policeman. This must be very disappointing to his colleagues who are still policemen, because they are out on our streets defending us and our families and these young people spit at them, kick their cars and are completely disrespectful. They have lost respect for their elders, their teachers and they have particularly lost respect for police officers. We need to give respect back to those young people. They need to have respect for the people who take care of us and keep us safe. We have issues on the Gold Coast. I have one particular service station that has problems with a lot of kids hanging around. I had a discussion with my local OIC today about a particular issue in one of my suburbs, and that is to do with young people hanging around after school getting into trouble and just generally causing issues.

Those in the Labor Party had 20 years to fix this and other problems in this state, and they have abjectly failed with the law and order situation in this state. We have to fix it. They have made it worse; we have to fix it. We have an Attorney-General—and a Premier, for that matter—who is doing a wonderful job at fixing all of the issues that are occurring in our state and on the Gold Coast. Can I say, Premier and Attorney-General, that the people of Burleigh absolutely love you. You have got rid of the bikies on the Gold Coast, and that has made a big difference. We have to thank members of the Labor Party for voting for that bit of legislation, so they helped us to get rid of the bikies down there. When the bikies went, so did many of the youth problems that we have because a lot of those problems are associated. I commend the Attorney-General for his efforts in bringing this bill to the parliament, and I fully support this legislation.