




Speech By
Peter Russo

MEMBER FOR SUNNYBANK

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, Report

 **Mr RUSSO** (Sunnybank—ALP) (5.08 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Appropriation Bill 2015. In particular, I refer to the estimates hearing held on 20 August 2015 of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee. I am passionate about the betterment of Queensland's juvenile justice system and that is why I stand here to acknowledge the hard work the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills and her staff have carried out since the election of the Palaszczuk Labor government and praise her for making the seminal decision to terminate the previous government's unproven and unsound youth boot camp program. I commend the Palaszczuk Labor government for abandoning this retrograde and regressive program and for committing to developing a youth justice system based on the principles of restorative justice and a diversionary approach to youth offending.

The Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills stated in the estimates hearing on 20 August 2015 that the independent evaluation completed by KPMG found that the youth boot camps do not break the cycle of youth reoffending and that the rates of reoffending of participants in the sentencing boot camps were no different to offenders in areas such as the youth detention centres. She stated that the report found the total cost of the trial had skyrocketed to \$16.7 million over three years, well exceeding the promised cost. It was further stated that the trial was an expensive failure cooked up by an Attorney General who measured success by the amount of media interest he generated. The Attorney-General said that the latest data showed that of the 74 young people who had gone through the sentenced boot camps, 47 had reoffended, which was on par with the number of reoffenders in youth detention centres. The KPMG report found the average cost of keeping a youth in the camps was approximately \$2,350 a day compared to about \$999 for youth detention, with no substantive improvements.

When will the LNP realise that its tough-on-crime stance is not working to improve our youth justice system? This tough-on-crime approach does nothing but show the failures of the LNP to carefully consider appropriate measures to address youth reoffending. I support the current government's decision of an early interventionist approach to youth crime. The Attorney-General importantly stated at the estimates hearing that the introduction of strong penalties by the previous government has been ineffective in reducing offending. She stated that the LNP's stance on crime—

... is inconsistent with the substantial evidence showing that increasing the severity of punishment is an ineffective means of reducing relapses to undesirable behaviour, particularly in relation to young people.

It was further stated—

The evidence tells us that intervening early to address the underlying causes of a young person's offending is essential to preventing further offending and a life of crime. Equally, engaging in families and other major stakeholders, such as education and health, is essential to addressing the risk factors that cause the offending.

Report 13 of the Queensland Audit Office, *Procurement of youth boot camps*, published in April this year criticised the lack of accountability of the former government's decision making. This is yet another example of the failure of those on the other side of the House to implement sound programs based on proper and adequate research. Time and time again, the LNP has proven that it rushes into major projects hastily without proper consideration of the consequences.

(Time expired)