




Speech By  
**Dale Last**

**MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN**

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Record of Proceedings, 14 September 2016

**MOTION: CRIME**

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (5.57 pm): I move—

That this House condemns the police minister for blaming victims of crime rather than keeping them safe.

The headline says it all—and here it is—‘Crimewave is your fault’. I table that.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. We are aware of the rules in relation to props. That has now been tabled.

**Mr LAST:** What a disgrace it is for the police minister to lump the blame for the rampant crime in Townsville on its residents, on the families who are going about their business to make our city a great place to live, on the people who are doing the right thing by locking up their houses and their cars but are still victims of crime. Let me say that again—victims of crime. I am a proud North Queenslander and I have called Townsville home for the last 16 years, so it hurts me to say that Townsville is the crime capital of Queensland. It is not a tag that we want, and it is certainly not a tag that we want to keep. The headlines keep coming—‘City now tops state for key crimes: Crim reality’. I table that.

Today’s paper has this headline—‘City’s worst young crims’. I table that.

*Tabled paper:* Bundle of media articles, dated September 2016, relating to crime in North Queensland [[1526](#)].

The statistics speak for themselves. For the last 12 months, there has been a 43 per cent increase in homicides, a 17 per cent increase in assaults, a 29 per cent increase in robberies, a 27 per cent increase in unlawful entry and a massive 67 per cent increase in unlawful use of a vehicle. The residents of Townsville have had a gutful. I received a call last week from a gentleman who had his car stolen and he was threatening to take matters into his own hands. That is what it has now got to in Townsville. We are now having people talking about becoming vigilantes, and that is the last thing we need. Why have we got to this? It is because this do-nothing government has taken a soft approach on crime and failed to look outside the square when it comes to options for dealing with these young offenders.

Last week we read the story of a young family who had to hire a car because their family car was stolen and trashed. Crime is rampant in Townsville and, despite the best efforts of our hardworking police officers, it continues to rise to unacceptable levels. We have senior police now saying that their resources are stretched to the limit trying to deal with this issue, yet they are locking up increasing numbers of offenders. Why is crime spiralling out of control in Townsville?

Together with the member for Everton I attended a crime forum back in June when all sorts of promises were made by the Attorney-General and the police minister. Here we are three months on still waiting on the response as to how we are going to stop these young offenders breaking into houses and stealing property.

What has our police minister done? First of all, he went out and blamed the victims of crime. He blamed those people who are minding their own business in their own homes for this crime wave. Is it any wonder the community is up in arms? Instead of focusing on apprehending and locking up these

young criminals, the focus has turned to a doorknocking campaign by police recruits—recruits, I might add, who have no powers of arrest and are already stretched to the limit completing an intensive training course.

The time for action is now. Is it not ironic that, after intense lobbying and highlighting of this issue from the members on this side of the House, the Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland has finally announced today some action to address the crime issue in Townsville? It is about time, because the people of Townsville are sick of waking up to find their car has been stolen or their house has been broken into. They are fed up with having the privacy of their own home violated by juvenile offenders who continue to thumb their noses at the law. They deserve better than to have a police minister come into town and blame them for a crime rate spiralling out of control.

Last week we were told by the minister that everything was in hand. Now we have a community advisory committee and a five-point plan to address this issue. Obviously the minister's doorknocking plan was seen for what it was: a knee-jerk reaction, a bandaid approach to an issue that is biting deep in the Townsville community.

I certainly hope that it contains programs aimed at getting kids to school and making parents take responsibility and that it gives our police officers the tools and the framework they need to address the crime that is going on in Townsville at the moment. The minister is responsible for policing in this state and the people of Townsville and Queensland expect results, not blame.