




Speech By
Jennifer Howard

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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YOUTH JUSTICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2015; YOUTH JUSTICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2016

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (11.57 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. In doing so, I commend the Attorney-General and all of the cabinet ministers for their commitment to reversing the previous LNP government's youth justice measures. The Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 will reverse these measures, which were unduly punitive, lacked evidence based decision-making and, most importantly, were ineffective.

Repealing the reforms that were made to the Youth Justice Act in 2014 makes sense. These reforms were not supported by any of the submitters to the parliamentary inquiry, including the Queensland Law Society, the Bar Association of Queensland, the Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland, the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties and Amnesty International. Repealing these reforms and supporting the Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill will achieve real outcomes for the perpetrators and victims of youth offending.

We know that increasing the severity of sentences for young offenders is a blunt and ineffective tool for changing behaviour. We know that evidence based responses will always work better than populist rhetoric and gimmicks. That is why these reforms will work.

The reforms will make youth offenders take responsibility for their actions. They will do this by bringing back youth justice conferencing, which brings youth offenders face to face with their victims. Youth justice conferencing will empower victims and it is a proven and effective tool in changing the behaviours of youth offenders.

It is known that youth offenders are often vulnerable and seriously disadvantaged. Many of them have experienced significant trauma. That is an important point to remember. It is important that, as a government and as a society, we do not turn our back on them. In fact, we need to do the opposite. We need to support them and to help them back on the path of becoming productive, contributing members of the community.

The support systems are already in place and I am so pleased to say that the Palaszczuk government is continuing to support these systems. I commend the Treasurer for the \$325,000 commitment that he has made to the youth of Ipswich. This funding will be used by the Ipswich Community Youth Service to support young people and the community in Ipswich. It will provide information, advice and referral and case management services.

The ICYS does fabulous work in my electorate of Ipswich and in the Ipswich surrounds. It provides direct assistance to approximately 6,000 young people across the Ipswich, Lockyer Valley, Somerset and Scenic Rim council areas. The information and referral program run by the ICYS helps young people navigate the complex and daunting youth support system and it helps Ipswich youth in our community to understand better the support that is available to them.

By continuing to fund programs like these the Palaszczuk government will assist youth in the community. These programs can assist youth offenders by supporting them back on the path to becoming contributing members of the community. We know from evidence based research that these programs reduce recidivism. By giving youth offenders skills and job placements it gives them skills to turn their lives around. That is what this bill is all about. It is about reversing harsh, harmful and ineffective youth justice measures. It is about replacing these measures with ones that are based on responses that will achieve real outcomes. It is for these reason and more that I support the introduction of this bill. I commend the bill to the House.