




Speech By
Julieanne Gilbert

MEMBER FOR MACKAY

Record of Proceedings, 3 November 2016

YOUTH JUSTICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION (INCLUSION OF 17-YEAR-OLD PERSONS) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (7.51 pm): This bill is important to bring 17-year-olds out of adult prisons and the adult criminal justice system. Seventeen-year-olds are considered children in every other area of law. This is the right thing to do. Children should not be incarcerated with adults. This bill will reduce exposure to adult criminals.

Stakeholders and submitters to the bill are supportive of these long overdue reforms. Queensland is the only jurisdiction in Australia that continues to treat 17-year-olds as adults. It is time that we treated our children as children. The opposition's statement of reservation stated—

Additionally, non-government members of the committee are concerned about the lack of vocational education opportunities available at youth detention centres and the impact this will have on recidivism rates of youth offenders.

Those opposite who are on the committee have spoken about going to the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre. I, too, have visited the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre in my previous work as an organiser with the Queensland Teachers' Union. I used to go there to visit the classroom teachers and the TAFE teachers. During my time as a union organiser, the teachers there were very distressed during the time of the Newman government. It was the Newman government that put measures in place that stopped them from being able to have TAFE teachers in their centre.

They have spoken about seeing the outboard motor covered in dust. Of course it is covered in dust because that lot over there, who are so concerned and know all about youth and vocational training and all the rest of it, did not care two hoots about those children at the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre. The then member for Townsville got on the media and said he was very concerned. He was going to make sure that TAFE teachers could still work at the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre. That information must have fallen on deaf ears, because he is no longer the member for Townsville. They have a member for Townsville now who will stand up for the teachers and the children at the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre.

It is a bit rich for members opposite to come in here and say that there is no vocational training in the detention centres when it was their measures that took it out. They stopped them from having those TAFE teachers go into the centre because of the way that they paid TAFE teachers and the way that courses were paid for. It made it impossible for the detention centre to keep those teachers on. I believe that those measures stopped the teachers going to the Stuart detention centre as well. They had no commitment to the rehabilitation of our young people. They should be quite ashamed of themselves standing up here today talking about vocational training in detention centres.

Those teachers rallied. They were on the media. Kevin Bates, the QTU president, came up. He tried to get a meeting with the education minister. Nobody wanted to listen. This situation in our detention centres is the making of those opposite and they should be ashamed of themselves. Now it is time to turn this around and stand up and vote for this bill.