




Speech By  
**Michael Crandon**

**MEMBER FOR COOMERA**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 August 2016

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL**

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (5.23 pm): I rise to make my contribution to the 2016-17 budget estimates report No. 34 of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee. The committee recommends the proposed expenditure be agreed to by the Assembly without amendment, but with a statement of reservation by opposition members of the committee. My particular interest and contribution today will be around youth justice, programs to reduce recidivism and the corrections area. I note in the statement of reservation by the opposition under Corrective Services we talk about the correctional centres increasing occupancy by eight per cent overall and nine per cent in high-security facilities. There has been a 265 per cent increase in prisoner on officer assaults, a 78 per cent increase in serious prisoner on prisoner assaults—a 51 per cent increase in prisoner on prisoner assaults in the past 12 months. I will table a separate copy of that statement of reservation for the benefit of the House. *Tabled paper:* Extract from Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 34—2016-17 Budget Estimates, pp 29-32 [1251].

As I said, my focus is on the area of corrections. What we seem to be doing at the moment, and it was something that was alluded to by the Attorney-General in estimates, is focusing on recidivist offenders but at the top end of those recidivists. She talked about 10 per cent of young offenders being responsible for 45 per cent of crime and they are doing some work around that.

In my experience, in the considerable amount of time that I have spent with people in the Corrective Services areas, not just in Queensland but in New Zealand and around Australia as well, across-the-board I get the feedback that we are spending too much money on that top end. We are putting in too much effort in that particular area and it is taking our eyes off the ball, so to speak, in relation to the bottom end and perhaps the low-hanging fruit—that is, recidivists at the bottom end of the spectrum who have committed lesser crimes and have lower terms of imprisonment. If we spend more time with those people before they start to have crime entrenched in their life cycle, before they become career criminals, then we will have a better chance of stopping the rot and stopping them coming through and ending up being in the same position as those particularly severe recidivist offenders at the other end.

Recently I was at a conference and I listened to one of the speakers in the legal fraternity who said words to the effect that she had spent many, many years spending her time fishing people out of the river downstream. She decided that it was time for her to change her trajectory and go upriver to where they were being thrown into the river and see what she could do there. That is where we should be putting our efforts when it comes to recidivism. We should be aiming at those areas of corrections that are the bulk of our corrections services.

Sixty per cent of our prisoners have a prison term of less than 12 months. We should be putting more effort into those people. We should be focusing on what I call the AEIOU when they come out. Earlier this month I visited Lotus Glen. They confirmed to me that one of the issues for them is that prisoners come out of jail late in the afternoon and where do they go from Lotus Glen? They end up in Cairns and guess what? If it was Friday afternoon, come Monday morning they are back in Lotus Glen

because they have just done the mill. They have not been able to get back to their communities. There are some issues around that that have to be dealt with.

To clarify the AEIOU, A is for accommodation—appropriate accommodation—E is for education, I is for integration, O is for occupation and U is for understanding. The U for understanding goes both ways. It is about us understanding where these recidivist offenders have come from and what crimes they are committing now. They were not born criminals, they became criminals as a result of what happened to them when they were younger people. We need to focus on that end. We do not need to focus so much on the top end. We need to put more resources into that bottom end and in the end we will have a turnaround in society. Change one life, change many lives and change our community.