




Speech By  
**Ros Bates**

**MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA**

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

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (11.11 pm): After the tirade from the member for Thuringowa, particularly about helicopter rides, I will talk about the 53rd Parliament. The member was not here then when Vicky Darling actually spent \$1,000 on a toilet seat, a luxury loo in her ministerial office, which was 170 times more than what it would have cost for anybody else to fix the toilet.

I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 as well as the Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. As the shadow minister for youth, I hold grave concerns about the impact of these bills on youth in Queensland. Once again, we see another Labor government introducing another Labor bill that at its core is soft on crime. After 18 months of this Labor government, Queenslanders know Labor is not serious about keeping our communities safe.

When the LNP came into government in 2012 we had a situation where youth crime was getting worse in Queensland. At the time we acknowledged that whilst there was not a higher percentage of youth offending, there was a concerning trend that young offenders were offending more often and their rehabilitation was not working. Put simply, young offenders were not learning their lessons. That is why, as the shadow Attorney-General has outlined, we introduced amendments to the Youth Justice Act in 2014 which provided an effective response to youth crime and which held young offenders accountable for their actions whilst deterring them from future offending. We wanted to break the cycle of youth offending so young people could see the error of their ways and make a meaningful contribution to society.

This followed the development of our crime action plan for youth justice, which sought community input into effective responses to youth crime. Our action plan was a comprehensive and broad review of this state's youth justice system. It was aimed at securing the rehabilitation and responsibility of young offenders and protecting our communities from repeat offences.

Out of this action plan came a range of proposals to stamp out youth crime in Queensland including a boot camp program, more effective sentencing, early intervention and better management of our youth justice systems and services. These suggestions resulted in the creation of our Blueprint for the Future of Youth Justice in Queensland, which provided a clear direction for a safer Queensland with fewer incidents of youth crime. Our pathway to reform was clear and came from significant community and stakeholder consultations and our laws should have been given a chance to work. Instead, we have a 'soft on crime' Labor government come into this place and, without adequate consultation, turn back the clock on youth justice in this state.

These bills are nothing more than a return to the failed policies of the past. These bills are a remainder of this Labor government's broken promise to be a government of consultation with no review having been conducted of our 2014 amendments. No matter the political spin from those opposite as they attempt to justify their hastily cobbled together amendments, there is no doubt that our tough approach to the issue is getting youth justice back on track. In fact, based on the latest figures, there was a decrease in 2014-15 both in terms of the number of juvenile defendants disposed of in Queensland courts and the number of charges against juvenile defendants.

On the Gold Coast in electorates like Mudgeeraba, we saw boot camp trials that were a tremendous success. Amidst rising community concern for the level of young offenders in our city, the LNP's reforms provided peace of mind for Gold Coast residents. In Mudgeeraba we had the annual Kokoda challenge, a 14-month program that involves physical training and mentoring, and participation in endurance events. In a partnership with this program, we saw a program launched for young offenders to get back on track. It aimed to teach young people the Kokoda values of courage, endurance, mateship and sacrifice, and incorporated both intensive training and community service.

In an independent KPMG evaluation of the LNP trial of youth boot camps, it was recommended that the Gold Coast youth boot camp be kept open as a trial site. Despite this independent evaluation, Labor closed the whole trial down, ignoring the independent evaluation for another illustration of cynical political revenge. I would like to put on record my heartfelt respects for Doug Henderson, who runs the Kokoda initiative and who was responsible for the boot camp until the trial was finished.

In regional cities represented by so many members on this side of the House we have seen city and community leaders coming out to express their concerns about the rise in youth crime. Their concerns are a reflection of the broader issue in regional Queensland where communities are grappling with youth crime and repeat offences from young people. In these bills today we have seen no alternative plan put forward by this Labor government to address youth crime or create a strong deterrent to ensure that young offenders do not commit more crimes. It is another 'soft on crime' bill from a 'soft on crime' Labor government who is asleep at the wheel which puts Queenslanders throughout this state and residents of my electorate of Mudgeeraba at risk.