




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR EVERTON

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

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (11.17 pm): I rise tonight to speak on the Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I will be speaking against the bill. It does not matter what this side of the House says—

Mr Byrne: 'Soft on crime'.

Mr MANDER: I take the interjection from the police minister. Yes, they are soft on crime. He has admitted it himself that they are soft on crime. He knows it, the people of Queensland know it and youth offenders know it. Their reputation goes before them and now with the reversal of the reforms that we brought in, we are going to see the bad old days coming back.

Let us just go back four or five years. The laws that we are changing tonight will take us back to the laws that were in place four or five years ago, and what was the result of that? We had record crime, particularly by young offenders. The member for Broadwater, who is at the moment Madam Deputy Speaker, mentioned the fact that the biggest issue that the MPs from Cairns, Townsville and regional Queensland constantly reminded this House of was the repeat youth offenders. These are not the people who make one mistake, not the people who make two mistakes, but the people who have stolen a hundred cars before they are 18, people who eight, nine, 10 or 12 times have thumbed their nose at the law. They have gamed the system. They have no respect for the law whatsoever, and that is why we brought in those reforms.

Mr Byrne: Failed.

Mr MANDER: I will take that interjection from the police minister as well. They have not failed; they were never given a chance. These reforms were never given the chance to actually see whether or not they were successful, yet the Attorney-General and the police minister have both said that they are all about evidence.

Let us look at the evidence. The November 2015 Childrens Court's annual report talks about a decrease in the number of juvenile offenders disposed of in Queensland courts and the number of charges against juvenile defendants, and that can only happen because of the reforms that the LNP brought in. There is evidence that youth crime was decreasing. It is only now, 17 months after the Labor government has come back into government, that we again have some problems, particularly in regional Queensland, with youth crime.

The Attorney-General also talked about the fact that we are not in tune with the public on this issue and that they have a mortgage on that. That is not what the people of Townsville think. In fact, the people of Townsville are so cheesed off about this that they have come together themselves to set

up groups like the Townsville Crime Alert and Discussion Group. These are non-political law-abiding citizens, and they want to see the youth crime rate in Townsville addressed properly. Again, this is not for the people who make one or two mistakes, but the people who are before the courts and gaming the system constantly. In the committee hearing in Townsville Tracy Bannerman said—

This government deemed that these reforms—

that is, the LNP's reforms—

did not work. How can the current government say something does not work if it has not been utilised properly? The government have been in power for 12 months now and during that time they have repeatedly said they would get tough on crime. In those 12 months they have not introduced any new policies or reforms in regard to combating juvenile crime.

No truer word has been spoken, and this Facebook page has thousands of people who have subscribed to it and there are tens of stories being posted every day.

Mr Costigan: Horror stories!

Mr MANDER: Horror stories! I take the interjection from the member for Whitsunday. In parliament a few months ago I mentioned Gary. Gary is a law-biding citizen who was accosted outside by two juveniles who demanded the keys for a car that was not his—so he could not give them the keys, of course, because it was not his car—and he was hit over the head with the butt of a handgun. He has lived in the city for 20 years and he said he has never seen anything like it. They are afraid to go out at night-time. They are afraid to go to sleep at night because they are wondering whether their cars are going to be stolen from the garage.

What did we get from those opposite? Let us go back to the old ways that did not work. Let us go back to the system which was gamed constantly. They talk about youth conferencing, but these repeat offenders treat it as a joke. When they get in there they put on their 'nice' act, but we have heard from victims of crime that when they get outside they give them the finger. These repeat offenders make fun of the victims after they have gone outside, and that is who I am talking about. These repeat offenders need to be treated separately. They need to be treated differently, and sometimes they need to be treated as adults because they know exactly what they are doing.

There has been a lot of talk about boot camps, and that side of the House has decried the concept of boot camps. It was interesting, because when I went up to the Townsville forum the very first speaker who got up was a very genuine, sincere lady who had had some problems with her son. She was very open about this, and she praised the boot camps. She said it was the best thing that had ever happened, but the only problem was that it was not long enough.

The boot camps were meant to be a trial. We were trialling a new system, and when you trial things you have to tweak and change them. Even in the committee reports there was only one submission saying that we should get rid of the boot camps. The boot camps were all about getting these kids out of their environment, and if we needed to tweak things to acknowledge the cultural differences then that is what we had to do, but you never gave it a chance. You have never given it a chance. We realised that things had to change, we had to break the cycle and this was the only way that it could happen. We went to this forum, but I have no idea why the police minister went. He was there with the Attorney-General—

Mr Costigan: The Premier paid for him to go!

Mr MANDER: I will take the interjection. I think he may have made one comment but I am not 100 sure. It was a talkfest with no outcomes. 'Let's tick the box that we have spoken to the public', and there was not one genuine new outcome that came out of that forum. We spoke to this Townsville group of concerned citizens afterwards and they were just shaking their heads. Everybody who was there was simply lobbying for their program. It was a lobbying exercise for people who wanted funding for their latest program and it was a total waste of time.

No matter what they say—and they are repeating it themselves now—this government is soft on crime and we are going to see a range of changes to the law over the next few months which will prove that fact. The people of Queensland know this. They have great confidence in the LNP when it comes to law and order. They know that we are serious about it. We know that repeat offenders deserve to be punished, and they need to be punished severely. We need to also break the cycle when the normal system is just not working.

I obviously speak against this bill tonight. When these changes to the laws come back in we will see absolutely zero change to the crime rate right across this state, and the only people who will be laughing is those repeat youth offenders who are just mocking the system at the moment.