




Speech By
Dale Last

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

Record of Proceedings, 24 May 2017

MOTION

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Crime

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (6.23 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the member for Everton. Haven't those opposite brought out their big guns tonight! That was an extraordinary diatribe from the member for Stretton, who could not even mention the word 'crime'. Another night goes by with the local residents of Townsville not only losing sleep but also losing their hard-earned possessions—their money and vehicles—due to the bumbling incompetence of those opposite.

I have been lucky enough to call Townsville home for 17 years, but the beautiful city of North Queensland is not the safe place it used to be. For example, in one 24-hour period this month there were 18 home invasions and six stolen vehicles; however, that is not unusual. That is just another day in a city that has been deemed the crime capital of Queensland. It is a tag we do not want. What are those opposite doing about it? Absolutely nothing.

Let's talk about the numbers that were put forward by the Minister for Police 10 minutes ago. I saw him over there getting legal advice and helpful hints from the member for Pumicestone, and I am sure they were well received. As of May this year robbery has increased by almost 29 per cent; unlawful entry has increased by nearly 40 per cent; and car thefts have increased by a staggering 32.7 per cent. It would be fair to say that the residents of Townsville have had an absolute gutful. We heard the police minister stand up in this place earlier today and announce his tough-on-crime stance. He said that the numbers would speak for themselves, and they certainly do. On behalf of north Queenslanders I say to the minister that he has gone past 'F' for fail and reached 'H' for hopeless. An online poll in the *Townsville Bulletin* showed that 69 per cent of the people surveyed said that they were affected by Townsville's crime wave. That is an extraordinary statistic and a damning indictment on this government and its law-and-order platform.

Crime is rampant in Townsville despite the best efforts of our hardworking police officers, and tonight I also acknowledge the hard work that they do. Crime continues to rise to unacceptable levels. Even senior police are now breaking ranks—and you have no idea what they are doing when they break ranks—to talk about the hopelessness they feel in terms of fighting this escalating crime problem. Only last week Gus Dalle Cort, who runs the Kalamia Hotel in Ayr, came to my office and told me that he had been belted in the head with a shovel by a juvenile offender when he refused to sell him alcohol in his bottle shop. That is right: a shovel. Is he angry? You had better believe it! It is my fear that honest hardworking citizens are going to start taking the law into their own hands because they have lost faith in this government. They have lost confidence in this government to do something about the spiralling out-of-control crime rate, particularly in North Queensland. These are the same residents who are sick and tired of screaming at their state members to wake up and smell the burning car bodies before it is too late. They want action, and they want it now.

Even when these young crims are locked up, this inept and hopeless government cannot even run our detention centres in a safe manner. The crims are running riot on the outside and they are running riot on the inside. You can have a review, and a review of the review, and hide behind the findings, but it does not change the fact that this government has lost control of the juvenile prison system in this state. How many riots do we need? How many more of our staff have to be injured before something is done? You can host all the round tables, the forums, the workshops and the summits that you like, but it does not hide the fact that every single day in Townsville houses are being broken into, cars are being stolen and people are being assaulted.

Almost a year ago the member for Everton and I attended a crime forum in Townsville where all sorts of promises were made by the Attorney-General and police minister. Almost 12 months on we are still waiting for a response as to how we are going to stop these young thugs from breaking into houses and stealing property. What about the police minister do? Diddly squat. First of all he decided to blame the victims of crime. Is it any wonder the community is up in arms? The comment, 'Only the Palaszczuk government has tried to address the causes of crime,' is absolute garbage. In fact, it is insulting not only to the LNP but to the hardworking locals of Townsville.

There is clear evidence that under the previous LNP administration crime rates were falling. We had a plan and it was working, and when the LNP is returned to government we will strengthen bail laws, review the no-pursuit policy, provide more resources for police and bring in tougher penalties for repeat offenders. The LNP will hold criminals to account.

(Time expired)