




Speech By
Robbie Katter

MEMBER FOR TRAEGER

Record of Proceedings, 3 May 2018

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Youth Crime

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (2.12 pm): I rise to speak about a burning issue in my electorate, particularly in Mount Isa—I believe it is also a burning issue in Townsville and Cairns—that is, youth crime and some of the proposed solutions. There has been much publicity around the problems and statistics in Townsville and Cairns, but I am aware that they are much more acute in Mount Isa. Upwards of 100 new permanent police officers went to Townsville and Cairns, yet none have come to the Mount Isa region. That is very disappointing. That is not the only part of the problem and is not what I want to speak about.

The problems go much deeper than just the kids themselves. You have to follow the problems back to their heart. That is where the solutions lie. One of the solutions is the relocation sentencing policy, which we believe in very strongly. We think there is a third option for kids coming out of Mount Isa. It is not back onto the streets and it is not straight into Cleveland Youth Detention Centre. Those kids could go to a centre in a very remote area. The security requirements in a remote area are much lower. My experience on the ground, particularly with Indigenous kids, is that when you get them out in those remote areas, whether it be in very remote communities or towns or on cattle stations, they are much easier to deal with and you have a real chance of starting to get them back into the system and becoming valuable members of society. It is a good idea if that sort of institution can start re-engaging kids. We have had some meaningful discussion with the minister in that respect.

What are the other things that should happen? That leads me to the issue of blue cards. In Doomadgee and Mornington, where a lot of these problems may stem from, kids are displaced from their homes because mum and dad do not have a job. Why do mum and dad not have a job? In many cases it is because they cannot access a blue card. Some 90 per cent of the jobs in Doomadgee and Mornington require a blue card, so many of them have problems. They are screaming out for a system that is not one-size-fits-all across Queensland, as it is at the moment. This is not lowering the bar; it is giving people a bit of autonomy to decide who should be working with their kids and who should not. A change would be welcomed and is desperately needed. It is not the only answer, but it is a practical solution that does not require any money and can be done right now to help those people to access the jobs. Getting people into meaningful employment, stabilising the family, is the way to start keeping those kids in the house and not on the streets, where they are vulnerable to practices not tolerated by society. We need relocation sentencing to address the acute problem of kids on the streets and re-engaging them, and we need the issue of blue cards to be addressed to help parents get back into work.

(Time expired)