




Speech By
Stephen Bennett

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

Record of Proceedings, 3 May 2018

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Burnett Electorate

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (2.37 pm): Recently I ran a Facebook survey for the people of Burnett to give them a real voice and tell me exactly what they want me to raise in this House. I thank those who took the time to respond to the survey for the invaluable feedback we got from most people. The top concern that people in my electorate clearly wanted me to raise was local crime, followed closely by increasing hospital wait times. This does not surprise me when we look at the statistics on crime.

According to the QPS Annual Statistical Review for 2016-17 which was released late last year, the overall crime rate across the Wide Bay-Burnett district is increasing when compared to the previous financial year—fraud offences increased by 88.4 per cent; unlawful use of motor vehicles was up 26 per cent; unlawful entry into houses was up 19 per cent; and the rate of offences against property was up 16 per cent. Given this disturbing rise in crime, forgive me for being somewhat confused as to why the Labor government thinks it is appropriate to cut resources from vital community based services, including our Neighbourhood Watch groups. Labor is gutting 85 per cent of funding from this vital community group, slashing it from \$500,000 a year to just \$75,000. We should be backing community spirited volunteers who play a major role in crime prevention and detection, not giving them a kick in the shins.

Further feedback through the online survey indicated that the people of Burnett are extremely concerned about increasing drug dependency in our community, which naturally contributes to rising crime. Insidious drugs like ice are taking a grip on the nation, and sadly our home town is not immune to the issue. Every week I hear stories about what this terrifying drug is doing to our young people—stories of families being torn apart, crime rates increasing and our police and hospital services struggling to cope. Ice does not discriminate; it is affecting families right across the spectrum. Those on the front line of the ice epidemic are crying out for more support to tackle the issue head-on.

The LNP is listening to these concerns and took a comprehensive ice strategy to the last election, but we do not pretend to know it all. That is why we hosted a series of regional forums across the state, including in Bundaberg, to hear directly from addicts, their families, community experts and everyday Queenslanders about what they think needs to be done to stamp out the ice issue. Unlike Labor, which sat on a draft ice plan for a year, the LNP is out talking to the community and taking action to take ice off our streets and provide safer communities.

Part of our comprehensive \$52 million action plan is to establish a dedicated multibed drug and alcohol treatment centre in the Wide Bay region to help people kick their drug and alcohol addiction and provide them with ongoing support. As the shadow minister for child safety and member for Burnett, I will continue to fight against the scourge of ice to protect our kids and our families.

I regret that I am running out of time to give the local health system the attention it deserves. However, I give the people of Burnett a commitment to highlight this important issue in the House at the next available opportunity. The people of Bundaberg and the Burnett region are clearly being let down by a government which continues to mismanage critical front-line services. Rest assured, I will continue to fight for the vital front-line resources our community expects and deserves.