




Speech By  
**Charis Mullen**

**MEMBER FOR JORDAN**

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Record of Proceedings, 21 August 2019

### **YOUTH JUSTICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (6.27 pm): I rise to make a short contribution to the Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. I commend the Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women for the work that she and her department are undertaking in these important reforms to the youth justice system. I strongly support our government's commitment to keeping our communities safe and also to changing the lives of young people in our justice system. We can only do that by breaking the cycle of offending and reoffending. That is an easy statement to make, but it is a very complex issue to resolve.

The bill before us ensures important legislative amendments are made with a key focus on how we alleviate demand pressure on the youth justice system. That includes changes to reduce the period in which proceedings in the youth justice system are finalised, removing legislative barriers to enable children to be appropriately granted bail and ensuring reasonable conditions are attached to grants of bail. It includes amendments to the Youth Justice Act and to a range of other acts of parliament, including the Bail Act 1980, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 and the Public Guardian Act 2014.

The bill forms part of our government's broader strategy to address youth justice issues and is backed in with record funding of \$550 million. That includes more than \$320 million to expand, build and staff new youth detention centres, ensuring that we have better and safer conditions for young people in detention and for our YDC staff.

Importantly, we are ensuring that our focus remains on reducing offending rates and preventing young people ever needing to be placed in detention. I am particularly pleased to see that we are providing \$28.7 million over the next four years to expand our Transition 2 Success program, which helps young people into the workforce or back to school, and a further \$27 million to expand restorative justice programs. We know these programs are working to prevent reoffending with data showing that almost six out of 10 young people who go through these programs do not go on to reoffend. These programs are not just cutting rates of reoffending, they are changing the story for these young people.

For my region in greater Ipswich, I am particularly pleased to see a newly funded community youth response initiative being undertaken by the amazing Ipswich Community Youth Service. Working alongside and in partnership with key Queensland government departments as well as important community and cultural organisations, the Ipswich community youth response will deliver after-hours diversion, intensive care management support and cultural mentoring to prevent at-risk young people from offending and reoffending. I have seen firsthand the amazing work that ICYS undertakes in the greater Ipswich region and I am so pleased to see them leading this community youth response.

We know that addressing issues within our youth justice system will not be a quick fix. We also know that we cannot continue to do the same thing in youth justice—locking young people up and throwing away the key—and expecting the results to be any different. We expect children and young people to be law abiding and respectful. If not, we expect them to be held accountable. Importantly, we also want children and young people to be brought up in safe homes so they can realise their potential and be valuable and respectful contributors to our community. I commend this bill to the House.