




Speech By
Jarrold Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

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MOTION

Business Program

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (11.19 am): We have not sat for some time, and I came to this week's Business Committee motion with a renewed sense of optimism and cooperation. I have been criticised somewhat for saying the same thing over and over again on the Business Committee motion and whingeing that the opposition and crossbench have not been given adequate time to address the important issues of the House, so I did come with a renewed sense of optimism and hope for the future. I was trying to give the Leader of the House the complete benefit of the doubt when she said she is genuine about listening to the opposition's hopes and dreams and all those things and I believed that would be given due consideration.

I left that meeting agreeing with the Leader of the House that we would hold over the Business Committee motion until today because the Leader of the House had given an undertaking that she would go and talk to the minister responsible for the important area of youth justice and come back to the House. I thought, 'Well, that's good. This finally might be what the government had intended.' However, I then got a text message from the Leader of the House and, as is the case today, the guillotine is on so all my sense of optimism and hope is absolutely down the drain and we are back where we were some years ago to the points I am now going to make again for the 300th time in this place.

The youth justice bill is an important bill. If we look at the unfortunate booming crime rates across Queensland, if we look at the children-in-watch-house catastrophe and crisis that has been overseen by the minister responsible for youth justice, if we look at the youth detention crisis, if we look at the debacle of putting 17-year-olds back into youth detention centres and if we look at the hundreds of millions of dollars the government is now having to spend to fix its own mess in the youth justice space, one would think the parliament would be given adequate time to address all of these issues in the debate on the youth justice bill.

The Leader of the House came in here just now and said that, because we did not use all the time in the first debate, there is additional time. For goodness sake, we saved 40 minutes, if that, yesterday on the one debate about the parliament funding. That will equate essentially to less than five hours of debate. If that is divided by two, it is 2½ hours, and then we take off the half an hour that the minister gets to reply. That is now about two hours of debate time for the opposition and crossbench to debate the youth justice crisis, children in police watch houses for days and days at a time—which is a terrible situation—and 17-year-olds being transferred to detention centres. That is not enough time to debate the important issues.

On Monday in the Business Committee, the Leader of the House gave an undertaking that she would go and talk to the powers that be and try to get us more time. I thought what would happen is that, if we did not finish the debate this Thursday, it would go over to the next sitting, and guess where we are sitting next, folks? We are in Townsville. Do members think this Labor government wants to

discuss youth crime in the heart of Townsville? I do not think so. That is why the guillotine is on. The government will not front the people of Townsville, who are adversely impacted by the youth crime rate across the state, and have all the drama central to the North and Far North Queensland region. They are too scared to front up to the Townsville community.

Mrs D'Ath interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the Leader of the House's interjection. We on this side are happy to talk about the crime rate in Townsville any day of the week. If they think stopping this bill being debated in Townsville will stop us talking about crime in Townsville, they have got another think coming. In fact, I have seen the program. We are organising a crime forum in Townsville, and I bet you, Mr Deputy Speaker Stewart, that will be well attended. More importantly, the three North Queensland members do not want to talk about the crime rate in Townsville. Just imagine legislation on youth justice and crime being debated in Townsville and the three North Queensland members not wanting to speak on that bill. They would be rightfully crucified by their local community and paper.

Despite the government saying, 'Let's talk. Let's go away. Let's suspend the motion for a day. Let's have a chat,' the reality is what the government wants, the government gets. That is the arrogance of the Palaszczuk Labor government. That is the arrogance we have seen. There is not sufficient time to deal with these important issues caused by the Labor government in Queensland.

(Time expired)