




Speech By  
**Joan Pease**

**MEMBER FOR LYTTON**

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Record of Proceedings, 22 August 2019

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

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (12.39 pm): I want a great life for our children and young people. I want them brought up safe and well so that they can realise their abilities and aspirations and fulfil their dreams so that they, too, can contribute and become strong community members. In response to the member for Caloundra's comments with regard to children being responsible and parents taking action, sadly not all children come from great backgrounds. All Queenslanders deserve to be safe in their homes, workplaces and communities. We do expect our children and young people to be law abiding and respectful. If they are not, we expect them to be accountable and to put things right.

Most children and young people do not commit crimes and most who do will grow out of it. However, sadly, some children and young people may suffer from mental illness or substance abuse, some become chronic or serious offenders, and some, as I said earlier, come from really tough backgrounds. Some do not graduate from school and, too often, some will transition into prison.

I believe that all Queenslanders are in this together and that it is time to change the story for our communities, children and young people who need a hand. That means working differently to do more of the things that address youth crime and keep our communities safe. The Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 delivers on the Palaszczuk government's commitment to Queensland's young people and our *Working together changing the story: Youth Justice Strategy 2019-2023* to commence a review into the Youth Justice Act 1992.

This bill will make priority legislative amendments to the Youth Justice Act, the Bail Act, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act and the Public Guardian Act 2014 that complement our initiatives to alleviate demand pressures on the youth justice system. The bill also will make other amendments to improve the operation of the youth justice system and improve outcomes for young people. These amendments will focus on three areas: reducing 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. These support our government's commitment that children and young people will not be detained on remand in Queensland Police Service watch houses other than for normal arrests and processing.

The over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the youth justice system was taken into consideration during the development of the bill. The bill includes a number of reforms that will help ensure these issues are taken into consideration. As such, the bill will enable a police officer or court to release an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child if it is not inconsistent with community safety, taking into consideration the desirability of maintaining the child's connection with community, family and kin. The bill also retains the requirement of the Youth Justice Act 1992 for a submission made by a community justice group in the children's community to be taken into consideration when deciding whether to remand a child in detention.

Children and young people who offend need to be accountable but, more importantly, they also need to be guided to change their behaviours and attitudes. Many children and young people are successfully diverted from the criminal justice system, but sometimes it just does not work. It is time to

change the story. We need to reduce youth offending, reoffending and remand levels and to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the system.

We need to work on the causes and the consequences of youth crime. We need to work together with children and young people. We need to work with families and communities, engaging them as part of the solution, and we need to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to prevent and deal with crime in their communities. We need to help design effective community-led initiatives to address youth justice issues. We need to improve the timeliness and effectiveness of justice and other responses. We need to work together as Queenslanders. It is time to change the story for our young people.