




Speech By
Michael Crandon

MEMBER FOR COOMERA

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YOUTH JUSTICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (4.48 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. I note the LNP do not oppose the bill. Indeed, there are some very good aspects to the bill that will be beneficial going forward. It is a small part of what needs to be done in relation to youth justice. There is plenty to do though.

We will be opposing clause 10, which substantially amends the bail decision-making framework. We also intend to move amendments to restrict the length of time children can be held in watch houses to 72 hours and to restore breach of bail as an offence.

I turn now to look at some of the stakeholder views. I see there were 28 submissions in relation to the bill before the committee. Stakeholders were generally supportive of the bill, as we are, including the Queensland Ombudsman, yourtown and Queensland Advocacy Inc. However, key statutory bodies including the Queensland Human Rights Commission and the Office of the Public Guardian and advocacy group Sisters Inside are seeking strict legislative time limitations in which children can remain in watch houses. There is that tick yet again. The Human Rights Commission is seeking a statutory prohibition on prolonged detention in watch houses which will ensure the average time for children to be detained in watch houses will not extend beyond 24 hours, but considered 72 hours as an absolute outside limit. The Public Guardian has recommended inserting a provision to ensure that a child should not be held in a watch house for more than 72 hours without the authority of a court.

With respect to body worn cameras, most stakeholders who commented on the matter were supportive of the introduction of body worn cameras and the capture of audio recordings through CCTV technology. The Office of the Information Commissioner mentioned that the amendments pose a number of privacy risks and agreed with opposition members of the committee that it would interfere with children seeking medical or legal advice. The OIC also recommended the establishment of robust guidelines to mitigate risks and minimise the privacy invasive nature of these technologies in youth detention centres.

On that point, when we are talking about youth offenders—yes, they are offenders—more often than not we are talking about very disturbed young people. These young people have been through the mill from when they were gummies to anklebiters and right the way through their life. We have to recognise the psychological impact of that and the psychological place they are in at the time they commit the offences as well as the psychological impact these privacy issues can have on them.

As I said earlier, the LNP oppose clause 10, which substantially amends the bail decision-making framework. We will be moving those amendments that I mentioned earlier as well.

As far as the length of time children can be kept in custody is concerned, children need to be detained in an appropriate facility such as a youth detention centre. I have spoken to people from child services off the record who saw what happened in the youth detention centre space when the laws were changed to bring 17-year-olds back into the youth justice system. Where there were previously

constant vacancies in capacity, all of that disappeared overnight and they found themselves forced to do what is now being done, and that is to use our watch houses to take these children on. In the watch house scenario the people managing those watch houses are not trained to look after youth in youth detention type facilities.

Under Labor, children as young as 10 have been held in watch houses for weeks on end while they wait for overcrowded detention centres, as I alluded to a moment ago. Since the revelation of children being held in watch houses, there has been significant concern around the length of time they are held there. The longest a child has stayed there has been 45 days. It is just unbelievable. Labor should be ashamed of the conditions in which children were held, including claims of a young girl who was placed in the same cell as two alleged paedophiles, issues with cell doors and numerous suicide attempts. It is just absolutely unbelievable that we would see that sort of thing. This is why the LNP will be moving those amendments to restrict the time that children can be held in watch houses to 72 hours.

I am going to wrap up now because we do have—

Mr Russo: Beauty!

Mr CRANDON: This is a pretty serious issue and I do not think it is appropriate for that sort of thing. Given that there are other speakers who want to make a contribution I am going to wrap up now. All members need to give serious consideration to supporting the amendments that the shadow Attorney-General seeks to move.