




Speech By
Patrick Weir

MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE

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YOUTH JUSTICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (5.10 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the debate of the Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. The LNP have stated that we will oppose clause 10, which substantially amends the bail decision-making framework. The LNP will also move amendments to restrict the length of time children can be held in watch houses to 72 hours and restore breach of bail as an offence.

As we know, there are several objectives of the bill: to reduce the period in which proceedings in the youth justice system are finalised; to remove legislative barriers to enable more young people to be granted bail; to ensure appropriate conditions are attached to grants of bail; to introduce a new information-sharing regime to assist government and non-government organisations to assess and respond to the needs of young people in the youth justice system; and to authorise the use of body worn cameras and the capture of audio recordings through closed circuit television technology.

I believe that there is not a one-size-fits-all approach to this matter, and we must start within our communities and at home. I myself am involved with the Oakey local level alliance. Local level alliances across Queensland are responsible for identifying the family support services that local communities need and how that need can be met—giving these young kids a network where they can reach out, with the main goal of helping kids before they possibly put not only their own lives at risk but also the lives of others. The alliances are a key element of Family and Child Connect services and are designed to ensure families are supported, with an integrated mix of services that respond to local needs and issues.

Members of the OLLA recently participated in Homeless for a Night, sleeping rough around Toowoomba, raising \$3,265 for Base Services. It is organisations like Base Services that give homeless youth a place to go, where they can possibly create a support group and they have the ability to turn their lives around.

Some 12 months ago the minister came out and visited with OLLA at the council chambers. OLLA is comprised of various members of the community, the schools, the principal of the high school—Danny Keenan, someone well known to you, Mr Deputy Speaker Kelly—the Police Service, Mercy services, child welfare and local government. They all come together and meet on a very regular basis. There is an old saying that it takes a community to raise a child. Oakey is really putting in that effort, going out to try to help themselves. I assist them as much as I can. I commend everyone who is involved in that process.

While early intervention is key, I also understand that sometimes it does not have the desired effect and children need to be detained, though we must ensure we are putting these youth offenders in appropriate facilities such as youth detention centres. It is more than concerning to hear that 10 per cent of juveniles were responsible for 44 per cent of all proven offences, as reported in the 2017-18 Childrens Court annual report, therefore making it all the more important that a balance is struck between holding offenders in appropriate facilities and keeping repeat offenders off Queensland streets.

This also means we must delve more deeply into bail arrangements, ensuring that suitable accommodation is found—where these offenders are surrounded by positive role models, where they have the opportunity to engage in positive activities and to help turn their lives in the right direction.

Recently across the Darling Downs and in the Condamine electorate, youth offending has been on the rise—young kids stealing cars and going on joy rides, some even unfortunately losing their lives as they are too young to even know how to properly operate a vehicle. The safety of the community is paramount. We should put community safety ahead of offenders, but we cannot have young Queenslanders putting themselves in these positions. We must guarantee that we are doing the right things to ensure these children are given every opportunity to become better citizens. Unfortunately, this is not affecting just one section of society, making it all the more important to create multiple channels of support while coming down hard on those who commit serious crimes.