




Speech By
Trevor Watts

MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH

Record of Proceedings, 14 May 2019

MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Law and Order

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (2.27 pm): I want to make something very clear to this House. The police budget is down and crime is up. Those are the facts here in Queensland under the leadership of this minister. I also want to make it clear because the minister said something in this House earlier today about our support for the police. Nobody supports the police more than the LNP. Whether it is through strong legislation, through giving them the resources they need or giving them the financial capacity they need to do the job, we will always support the police. I want to have that firmly on the record.

There are a couple of other things that need to be put firmly on the record. I will now address the South Brisbane crime forum—‘stop crime’, ‘enough is enough’. I was invited to attend this along with some Labor members, the member for Moggill and some other people to address a serious concern. This petition which, I will table today, shows clearly that that community have absolutely had a gutful of this weak Labor government.

Tabled paper: Nonconforming petition regarding crime [755](#).

We know they are soft on crime—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Unparliamentary—

Mr WATTS: I withdraw that comment, Mr Deputy Speaker. We know they are soft on crime. The people of Sunnybank know they are soft on crime and today they put their names on a piece of paper asking for support for their community to be made safer. There are a couple of other things that I need to put on the record as well. I have correspondence from me requesting to meet with the assistant commissioners of police. I want to put it on the record today because it took six months to get an answer out of the minister’s office as to whether or not I would be allowed to meet with them. Along with that I have communication regarding my request in November last year to visit the Brisbane watch house because I was hearing grave concerns about the safety of children in that watch house at that time.

I was blocked and not allowed to visit the watch house. I table that correspondence.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 17 October 2018, from the Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services, Hon. Mark Ryan, to the member for Toowoomba North, Mr Trevor Watts MP, in response to Mr Watts’s request to meet with all Queensland Police assistant commissioners [756](#).

Tabled paper: Emails, dated 20 and 23 November 2018, between the Toowoomba North electorate officer, Ms Elysia Ruttley, and Chief of Staff, Commissioner’s Office, Queensland Police Service, Superintendent Mark Wheeler, regarding a request for the member for Toowoomba North, Mr Trevor Watts MP, to visit the Brisbane watch house [757](#).

I also asked to go on a ride along in Townsville and Cairns so that I could understand what was happening on the streets in those places, but I was blocked from attending. I sent that correspondence in October last year. I table that correspondence.

Tabled paper: Emails, dated 24 October and 1 November 2018, between the Toowoomba North electorate officer, Ms Elysia Ruttley, and the Office of the Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services regarding a request for the member for Toowoomba North, Mr Trevor Watts MP, to do a ride along with the Queensland Police Service Townsville Rapid Action Patrol Group [758](#).

Tabled paper: Emails, dated 5 and 6 March 2019, between the Toowoomba North Electorate Office and Ministerial Liaison Officer, Queensland Police Service, Office of the Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services, Inspector Peter Stacey, regarding a request for the member for Toowoomba North, Mr Trevor Watts MP, to visit the Cairns and Townsville watch houses [759](#).

I have other correspondence that shows that I have tried to access information from the Police Service. My job as the shadow minister is to hold this government to account. I believe that the reason I have not been allowed to see or meet any of these people, visit the watch house or go on a ride along is that the minister is ashamed, embarrassed and, as we all know from what we see in today's media, incompetent. The minister is weak. He lost at the cabinet table and had his budget slashed. Not only did they underspend by \$36 million one year; the budget was slashed by \$44 million the other year. Who is paying the price? The people of Sunnybank know who is paying the price. That is why they are marching on the streets. The people of Cairns and Townsville know who is paying the price. Everybody in Queensland knows that Labor is soft on crime and cannot manage it.

There are a couple of other things going on. I would love to speak further about the watch houses but others have covered that. What happened at Palen Creek is an embarrassment to the government that needs to be seriously investigated. Who paid for this and where did the money come from? That is something that absolutely needs to be looked at. We know that this government is suffering a crime and detention crisis, because its soft-on-crime approach has landed its members exactly where they are today—embarrassed, with their heads down, unable to comprehend what they are doing to the community of Queensland and its children. Can you imagine the circumstances these children are being kept in? I tried to ensure that this minister spoke to people so that this would be looked after.

The buck must stop with this minister. The minister is responsible for the budget, for the outcomes and for what has happened in his departments. What has happened in his departments is embarrassing. I challenge the minister to come and visit, to allow me to go. Let us together look at the watch houses. Let us go together on a ride along in Cairns and Townsville. Then let us work out how we can solve these problems rather than just bury our heads in the sand and pretend they do not exist, because the people of Queensland know they exist. That is why they are marching on the streets, signing petitions and demanding some action from this government. What they see is zero action. It is time for the minister to stand up and be counted. He should come with me on these visits or resign.