



Speech By  
**Trevor Watts**


**MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH**

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Record of Proceedings, 3 September 2019

**MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**North Queensland, Crime**

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (3.16 pm): It is great to be back in North Queensland and here in Townsville. The only problem I have when I come to North Queensland is that I get to meet the people behind the statistics. Every time I come here I meet with victims of crime. I meet with their sons, their daughters and their grandparents. When I meet with them and hear their stories, some of the things people have to put up with are harrowing. Imagine waking up in your own bed, you open your eyes and there are three people standing above you. After robbing you, the last thing they do is move towards the door. They have the keys to your car and they drive off. These are the kinds of stories I hear when I come to North Queensland. The people of North Queensland want to understand why their home and car insurance is going through the roof. I can tell members why, because the statistics are very simple.

Under the Palaszczuk government, across the last five years there has been: a 113 per cent increase in robbery; a 42 per cent increase in burglary; a 52 per cent increase in unlawful use of a motor vehicle; a 35 per cent increase in assault; and a 33 per cent increase in serious assault. These are the statistics that drive me to come to North Queensland to meet victims and listen to what they are telling us. What they are saying is that they want law and order to be a priority for them. What do we see when we look at the budget? What we saw in this year's budget is an average across the five years of 3.98 per cent of the overall take for the Queensland government. That is what Labor has put in.

When the LNP was in government the percentage was 4.39 per cent. It does not sound like a big difference, but let me tell members what the number is. Over five years \$1,173,000 would have been allocated to the police budget if Labor had kept the average of the overall budget that the LNP had. That is one of the numbers that is critical for people to understand.

If it were a priority for the Labor government, it would allocate more budget to it but it does not. It allocates less. In fact, it is \$1 billion less over the last five years. That is damning. I see the heads drop on the other side because they know the truth and the people of Townsville know the truth because they are the ones who have people standing over the end of their beds and stealing their cars.

**Mr Harper** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Member for Thuringowa, you are warned.

**Mr WATTS:** Another statistic that people should understand and know is that when the LNP was in office there were 245 police officers per 100,000 people. It is now 233. That 12 does not sound like a lot per 100,000, but it works out to be 610 officers who are no longer here but should be here if that same percentage growth was maintained, but it has not been.

In addition to that, what do we see? We see legislation change where breach of bail for a juvenile does not mean they will be incarcerated. When that happens, we see the average number of crimes per juvenile drives up to 6.9. That is how many crimes they are committing. If they cannot get out after bail, they will commit fewer crimes and people will not have them looking at them at the end of their bed. Queenslanders should not have to put up with that.

There are other things as well. People's cars are getting stolen but the police cannot pursue because of the policies. What do we need? We need a helicopter up in the sky. We need a dedicated police helicopter that is designed to be able to track these people through the suburbs as they are driving off in your car, jumping over your neighbour's fence and trying to hide. The forward-looking infra-red camera can pick up where they are and direct the police on the ground to them. That is exactly why we need a dedicated police helicopter here. We need the legislation, we need the budget and we need the boots on the ground. That is why the people of Townsville are living in fear, that is why their house insurance has gone up and that is why their car insurance has gone up—because Labor does not care.

*(Time expired)*