




Speech By
Dale Last

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

Record of Proceedings, 15 July 2020

MOTION

Youth Crime

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (5.07 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by my colleague the member for Ninderry. Whilst the minister might like to dwell on the past, Mr Speaker, I can assure you that on this side of the House we are focusing on the future because we have a plan to address juvenile crime in this state. We have a plan that will actually get to the bottom of the problem and address the issues.

I can tell the House that the level of frustration in the Townsville community around juvenile crime is at unprecedented levels. Over the past four years, the city has had its heart ripped out. To say that residents have had a gutful of this incompetent Labor government is an understatement. The Premier, the Minister for Police and the three Townsville Labor members of parliament have all stuck their heads in the sand and denied that the problem exists. They have downplayed the issue, trotted out the spin doctors and tried to pull the wool over the eyes of North Queenslanders. As a proud North Queenslander, I can say that we are not going to fall for that trick. We are not going to stand by and watch this incompetent Labor government continue to flounder and dither when it comes to addressing crime issues in the north.

In the last month alone, we learnt that this government has been funding lawyers to find holes in the recently amended Youth Justice Act—that is, the amendments that the member for Thuringowa said would fix the revolving door on youth justice. As I revealed to the people of Townsville on Tuesday, this government has given up on crime in Townsville and the editor of the *Townsville Bulletin* agrees. It must be true when not one of the Townsville Labor MPs had the decency to respond.

I have good news for the people of Townsville: the LNP has listened and, unlike the sitting Labor MPs and at least one other candidate, we were not fooled by this government's belated and inadequate statements. I table page 6 of the *Townsville Bulletin* of 19 March to prove that this government succeeded in pulling the wool over the candidate's eyes.

Tabled paper: Bundle of media articles from the *Townsville Bulletin* regarding juvenile crime [\[1179\]](#).

When a judge describes the Department of Youth Justice in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* as 'talk, no action', it is time for something to be done, and that is exactly what the LNP will do. Unlike those opposite, we have listened to the people of Townsville, and that starts with our outstanding candidates for the upcoming election, like Glenn Doyle in Mundingburra, a current serving inspector of police. Hasn't he seen the debacle unfold in recent years in Townsville! Hasn't he seen the anguish on the victims' faces firsthand when he has been out and about as a serving police officer! The LNP candidate for Thuringowa, Natalie Marr, has an outstanding track record of standing up for the community in her role with Crime Stoppers.

From Cape York to Coolangatta, this government has failed on crime. It is the LNP that wants to introduce tougher laws and increases to penalties to hold these offenders accountable. It is the LNP that knows that young offenders on bail should be monitored 24/7. It is the LNP that will draw the line

in the sand and say, 'Three strikes and you are in detention.' Why? Because we know that people have had enough of waking up in the morning to check to see if their car is still there. We will stand up for victims. We know that if you are old enough to break into a house and steal a car, then you are old enough to take responsibility for your actions. We have these juvenile offenders running around Townsville. In one case that I know of, one of these young offenders has 225 offences in his criminal history. Let me repeat that: 225 offences for a juvenile offender. How many homes does that equate to—or vehicles stolen, or assaults in that community? These are serious offences. Offenders need to be held to account.

The minister might want to sit there tonight and call all of this fake news, but I can assure the minister that it is far from fake when you talk to the victims of crime in Townsville. They are living this nightmare every single day and every single night. We are hearing stories of people who have had their cars stolen on three, four and five occasions. They are in despair at the lack of action and the lack of commitment from this government to do something about it.

When a motion similar to this was moved in February, I provided the government with cold, hard facts, and those charges have continued to this day. There have been more than 12 unlawful entries a day. It is not good enough.

(Time expired)