




Speech By
Daniel Purdie

MEMBER FOR NINDERRY

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CORRECTIVE SERVICES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (6.55 pm): I rise this afternoon to start my contribution on the Corrective Services and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020. Almost two years ago, in December 2018, the Crime and Corruption Commission released its Taskforce Flaxton report, which examined corruption risks and corruption in Queensland prisons. Most notably, the CCC held that there were significant corruption risks in Queensland prisons and that the existing anti-corruption framework was not effectively preventing, detecting or dealing with those risks. This prompted the CCC in making 33 recommendations with the view to raise standards of integrity within Queensland corrective services facilities.

I note that the contents of this bill are designed to adopt some of those recommendations in the report, as well as implement recommendations from the Queensland Parole System Review and to improve operational efficiencies for Queensland Corrective Services and the Parole Board Queensland. I can confirm that the opposition will not be opposing the bill; however, there are aspects of this bill which the LNP will be opposing which I will address throughout my speech.

It is true that corruption is rife within Queensland prisons and it is true that Labor's inability to reduce overcrowding in prisons has only fuelled the corruption. There is no doubt that corruption lowers public confidence which then undermines the important principles that strike at the heart of democracy. Latest figures obtained by the LNP show the extent of the overcrowding in Queensland prisons. In August 2019, the majority of prisons were over capacity. Borallon Correctional Centre was operating at 133 per cent capacity, Capricornia Correctional Centre was operating at 122 per cent and Woodford Correctional Centre was operating at 137 per cent. If anyone thinks overcrowding is not still an issue, then let me read some lines which featured today in the *Australian*. It states—

Overcrowding in facilities has become so bad that solitary confinement is now viewed as a time to find some peace and quiet for prisoners who are forced to share a cell with a retrofitted bunk bed or mattress on the floor ... Long-serving prison officers say they have never seen so many assaults.

Obviously the government has done nothing to prevent overcrowding. In turn, it goes without saying that corruption will remain prevalent in Queensland prisons. The CCC warned the Palaszczuk Labor government of the signs of corruption. The CCC warned that overcrowding increases the risk of corrupt conduct through greater volatility in the correctional environment which reduces the capacity of custodial officers to maintain order and security, and increases the risk of excessive use of force to deter poor behaviour.

In March 2019, after the publication of the report, the police minister announced that the Palaszczuk Labor government would be taking back control of two privately run prisons—Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre and Southern Queensland Correctional Centre—in a bid to boost staff safety, at a cost to taxpayers of \$111 million. I question why we are seeing so much volatility in Queensland government run facilities nearly two years after the report was handed down. Queensland Corrective Services officers have continued to be victims of malicious attacks by prisoners.

On 10 June 2020 three prison officers at Borallon jail were injured by a prisoner just a day after a code black riot was called. On 16 June two prison officers were punched in the face by a prisoner at Townsville jail while they were trying to hand out medication. More concerning, on 3 July 2020 a prison officer was stabbed in the face with a shiv during a dramatic hostage situation at Arthur Gorrie. This happened two days after the Labor government took back control of the prison. I am advised that there have been seven assaults on corrections officers in Queensland in the past week. These stories are shocking and surely if the minister truly believed that one assault is too many then he would do something about this. Prison overcrowding does not mean more assaults, it means prisoners will be returned to the street.