




Speech By  
**James Lister**

**MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS**

---

Record of Proceedings, 20 February 2020

**COMMUNITY BASED SENTENCES (INTERSTATE TRANSFER) BILL**

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (12.26 pm): I rise to make a contribution on the Community Based Sentences (Interstate Transfer) Bill 2019. From the outset, I respond to the interjection that was made by the minister during the contribution by the member for Toohey. I am so glad that that interjection was taken because it gives me the opportunity to speak a little bit about the committee process. I saw the smug look on the minister's face when he was talking about how there was not a statement of reservation. Since when has this government ever taken note of a statement of reservation put in by the non-government members of the committee? Since when has this government ever failed to ride roughshod over the committee process when it suited their political ends? Since when have we ever had confidence that this government would not put an amendment into a bill without putting it through the committee process? The suggestion by the minister that somehow the absence of an administrative input from the non-government members of the committee means that we support this bill is nonsense. It is, in my view, quite hypocritical to contend that the committee process is so untarnished and so pure as the driven snow that we should rely on that alone. I stand squarely with my honourable friend the member for Toowoomba South—forgive me, Toowoomba North, the shadow minister, and his contribution.

**Mr Watts:** You can stand with us both.

**Mr LISTER:** I will stand with both of them. That is a good interjection and I take that one. This bill is a good one in a technical sense only and that is that it does prescribe processes for the adoption of an understanding amongst jurisdictions on interstate transfers of those on community based corrections orders and so forth. However, it does not take into account the overriding concern of Queenslanders about crime in this state. I know, having spoken to people in my electorate about this bill, as I do on most of the bills—I have a yarn with people when I am standing in the queue at the newsagent—that we have too much crime now. The first thing that people have said to me in most cases has been, 'Will we become a destination for criminals?' That is how they have put it. Queensland is the best state. We have the best weather and the best people—we are awesome. It is not entirely a mystery that those who have an opportunity to come to Queensland and could provide the grounds for doing so would wish to.

I note that we are currently a net exporter of those serving sentences under community based orders—probation orders, community service orders, graffiti removal orders, intensive correction orders, and drug and alcohol treatment orders. I would fancy that most Queenslanders would say that that is a good thing because we want fewer of those people in our community not more.

My honourable friend the member for Toowoomba North posed the question: would the minister provide an assurance that we would not become a dumping ground for offenders under this arrangement? Given that government members have been so sure that it is not going to be a problem, I wonder why the minister will not give that assurance. I do not think it unreasonable to expect. In my experience I believe that that is a question that the people of Queensland would expect us to be asking. I will be very keen to hear the minister's response to that question during the course of this debate.

In places like Townsville crime is a particularly sore point. People are tired of having their vehicles stolen and their houses broken into and witnessing assaults and petty crime on the streets. That applies in my electorate too. In towns in my electorate like Goondiwindi and Warwick there is crime and it hurts people personally. It is a bad thing for society. It is quite understandable that those who have been affected by crime personally, their friends and loved ones and the community more broadly would take a dim view of moves which potentially make the lives of perpetrators better without the corresponding support for the community. What I hear all the time is that the rate of crime is rising but people cannot see anything being done about it.

There is a perception in my electorate that offenders are let off too easily and there are not the consequences there ought to be in a society where people take responsibility for themselves. I understand that perspective. On occasions when I have been the victim of crime, I have certainly felt that way myself. I would caution us all to bear in mind those understandable feelings on the part of the Queensland community. For that reason, I think it appropriate that the minister, later in the debate on this bill, offer an assurance to the House that Queensland will not become a net dumping ground for offenders under this program. I cannot see a satisfactory assurance of that yet.

As the shadow minister said, the LNP can only support this bill if that assurance is forthcoming. I know I speak for my electorate—and I guess for most Queenslanders—in saying that that is a reasonable request given the implications of having a potential net flow of offenders into our midst. I will leave my contribution at that.