




Speech By  
**Scott Stewart**

**MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE**

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Record of Proceedings, 17 June 2020

### **COMMUNITY SERVICES INDUSTRY (PORTABLE LONG SERVICE LEAVE) BILL**

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (12.18 pm): I rise to join the debate on this legislation and to speak specifically on the Youth Justice Act. We all want crime to stop. We do not want families to have to deal with the tragic consequences of crime. We have been listening to victims. We have been listening to the community. We have heard their concerns over youth crime. We have also listened to the community on the issues of youth bail, which is why today we are toughening and simplifying the youth bail laws. In the community there is a perception that the legislation is not clear. These laws will make it crystal clear that if a young person is a danger to the community they must be refused bail. This legislation makes it clearer for the police. This legislation makes it clearer for the courts. This legislation makes it clearer for the community. The community must be safe and protected from offending.

The community also wants the government to address the causes of crime, which is why retired Major General Stuart Smith has written a report on the matter, having interviewed over 800 community members. He broke it down into three main areas: addressing the causes of crime, looking at breaking the cycle of crime and holding to account those who commit crime. We know that nearly 70 per cent of young people in detention have experienced domestic and family violence, about 15 per cent are suspected of having foetal alcohol spectrum disorder, nearly 40 per cent have a parent who has been held in custody and nearly 40 per cent have used ice.

That is why we have invested over half a billion dollars in new early intervention programs, new detention centre beds and programs which reconnect kids with education, culture and their families. We also now have more police on patrol. We have delivered 76 extra youth detention centre beds. In Townsville we are spending more than \$40 million on youth justice initiatives, including after-hours services, Transition 2 Success, intensive community supervision of high-risk offenders, and the introduction this month of co-responder strike teams. The trial of new on-country programs will be up and running next month.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural mentoring programs commenced on 1 November last year and have already engaged with 20 young people up to May this year. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing Services in Townsville and Palm Island have provided service to support 35 families from October last year to December last year—such a short period of time. Other services in Townsville include Queensland Youth Services and Specialist High Risk Youth Court. We are seeing these dividends are starting to pay off. We know that we now have a small group of hardcore young people, about 10 per cent of young offenders, who commit half of all those crimes.

The whole of government—that is Police, Youth Justice, Child Safety, Health, Education and the department of justice and community leaders—are all working together to target repeat offenders. Reducing youth crime is everyone's responsibility and we all need to step up and play a part. We will not turn around socially disadvantaged people overnight, but when we have the right programs in place to get the jobs done, this legislation will be vital so that victims and the community are safe while we work towards turning around damaged young lives and families.

My final words for today are that my thoughts and prayers go to the families and the communities of the four young people who died in the tragic accident in Townsville 10 days ago. I commend the bill to the House.