



Speech By
Trevor Watts

MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH

Record of Proceedings, 19 February 2020

MOTION

Crime

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (5.00 pm): I move—

That this House:

1. Notes:
 - (a) Queenslanders perceive crime to be out of control across Queensland, with reports Queenslanders feel unsafe in their own homes and communities;
 - (b) youth crime gangs actively terrorise communities across South-East Queensland on a daily basis;
 - (c) the Townsville community is a powder-keg, with families' homes being invaded, cars stolen and lawlessness out of control;
 - (d) criminal bikies and organised gangs are out of control, with increasing public acts of violence including shootings and fire-bombings;
 - (e) open expressions of concern from senior police about an 'absolute escalation of violence' between gangs;
 - (f) several violent incidents involving young people that have shone a shocking spotlight on the problem of youth crime on the Gold Coast;
 - (g) Labor's revolving door youth justice system, with 10 per cent of all young offenders committing 44 per cent of offences;
 - (h) media reports that the Premier insisted there was no crime problem in Townsville and her Labor members should stop complaining about it;
 - (i) violence on Cape York;
 - (j) media reports that the member for Rockhampton and member for Nudgee are concerned about crime in their electorates; and
 - (k) Labor's weaker youth justice laws, removing breach of bail as an offence.
2. Condemns the Palaszczuk Labor government's appalling record on crime across Queensland, with five years of failed policies and wrong priorities that have put community safety at risk.

Firstly let me add my congratulations to the Queensland Police Service for the job it is doing. Its officers do a fantastic job with a thin blue line but they need our help: they need resources and legislation. Let us talk about the Labor government and why they are soft on crime and what proves it beyond all doubt. As a percentage of the budget, percentage of the tax that they take off Queenslanders, they are spending less on law and order than was the average for the LNP—in fact, \$234 million less a year. Over five years, \$1.173 billion less has been spent on law and order as a percentage of the Queensland budget. In addition to that, when the LNP was in office we had an average of 245 officers per 100,000 people. Under the Labor government we now have 233 officers per 100,000 people. That is 610 less officers available for call for service around Queensland. When people do not think that crime is the responsibility of the government, that somehow there is some magic going on somewhere that is causing this problem, I say to them that it is the responsibility of the government. I table Steve Wardill's article in which the Premier says she does not think there is a problem with crime.

Tabled paper. Article from the *Courier-Mail*, dated 7 February 2020, titled 'Crime shaping as election issue' [290].

For her information, the member for Nudgee and the member for Rockhampton both think there is a problem with crime. In case the Premier has joined the Treasurer and is only interested in the real estate section of the newspaper I thought I would table some headlines so that she can catch up. The headline 'Shots fired at Moorooka home with four people inside' appeared in the *Courier-Mail* on 13 January. A news article from the ABC reads, 'Knife-related crimes on the rise in Queensland as police start campaign to educate young people'. This headline appeared in the *Courier-Mail*: 'Beenleigh jogger's killer Ratan Sandip gets three years' jail'. That is Brisbane. Let us jump up to Townsville. We have 'Operation Regenerate spends \$235,000 paying overtime to 248 police officers and liaison officers' appearing as a headline in the *Townsville Bulletin*. As reported by the ABC, 'Youth car crime surge in Townsville prompts police warning to "hide your keys".' I table those articles.

Tabled paper. A bundle of news articles relating to crime in Queensland [291].

I table an article from 9News titled "Townsville listed as one of the worst crime hotspots in the world". This is Queensland! What is going on? Another headline in the *Townsville Bulletin*, 'Demand on politicians to take action on Townsville crime.'

Ms Grace interjected.

Ms McMillan interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Weir): Order! Member for McConnel, that is enough arguing across the chamber. Member for Mansfield, return to your seat if you want to interject.

Mr WATTS: The best action the population of Townsville can take is to get some new members. We are very excited about our future members. I table another newspaper headline from the *Townsville Bulletin*: 'QLD Police Minister Mark Ryan silent on children bail trips'. Let us go to Cairns where they are having a terrible time. This headline appeared in the *Cairns Post*, 'Call for government action on city's youth crime crisis'. Also appearing as a headline in the *Cairns Post*, 'Cairns rated more crime riddled than Tehran.' On John Mackenzie's show, 'Resident speaks out about crime wave'. I table those articles.

The Premier and the Deputy Premier need to get their head out of the real estate section and see if they can find the news section dealing with crime. The headline 'Community rallies to fight crime wave' appears in the *Gold Coast Bulletin*. Also appearing in the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 'Youth crime Gold Coast: Youth Justice Minister defends State Government's policies'. It is the government's policies that are causing the problem with youth crime! Another headline is, 'Fears a Queensland bikie war could "spiral out of control" after numerous violent incidents'. These are the stories that the Premier needs to read so that she realises that there is a crisis. 'Northside gang "worse than bikies"' reads a headline from 9News. These need to be tabled.

If anybody is left in any doubt about the problems we have in Townsville, let me give them some statistics. It will just take up a few seconds. Robbery across Queensland is up 76 per cent since Anastacia Palaszczuk became the Premier; unlawful use of a motor vehicle is up 66 per cent—there are victims behind these numbers. These are the cars of real people. Shop stealing is up 49 per cent; assault is up 33 per cent; unlawful entry is up 28 per cent. They are the numbers from around the state. I call on this government to increase the budget of the police, to increase police numbers and to bring back breach of bail. This will drive crime down in Queensland. Only a LNP government will do it.