



Speech By  
**Amy MacMahon**


**MEMBER FOR SOUTH BRISBANE**

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Record of Proceedings, 17 November 2021

**MOTION**

**Caloundra, Youth Remand Centre**

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (5.36 pm): I rise to speak against the member for Kawana's motion and in support of the amendment moved by the member for Caloundra. I get to stand here and speak after the member for Whitsunday, who raved about the value of former police officers who serve in this House. As a former police officer who actually worked in watch houses throughout South-East Queensland and worked as a watch house keeper, I would like to turn the House's attention to the petition that the member for Kawana presented to this parliament.

I draw the House's attention to the motion before the House—which refers to the 6,000 residents who signed a petition against a youth remand centre—but if we look at the actual petition it calls on residents to say no to Labor's youth jail in Caloundra. I know the member for Kawana held the position of first law officer in this state, if not the gravitas that went with it, but surely he knows the difference between a jail and a remand centre. Please tell me that those opposite know the difference between a jail and a remand centre—the difference in staffing levels, the difference in access, the difference in programs and the difference in release conditions. Please tell me that those opposite will not follow the member for Kawana off the cliff of hypocrisy like lemmings if they continue to run this line.

The alternative is that, if the member for Kawana does know the difference, he has misled his local community. Imagine that—all in the name of fearmongering amongst his own community. I can understand that the layperson does not know the difference between a jail—because that is all I have heard the members opposite refer to it as today—and a remand centre, but if a former attorney-general did not know, well, that would be embarrassing. But, then again, the former attorney-general was labelled as an inexperienced, uneducated and incompetent attorney-general by a former Bar Association president, so I am not really surprised.

The member for Kawana's petition aside, let us have a look at this site in Caloundra. It has been assessed before. The previous assessment of the site found that the facility could be operated to safe and secure standards, that the site is close to police and ambulance services, that the site is situated near the Caloundra courthouse for bail applications and hearings and, most importantly, that the site could be used for a short-term weekend remand facility. Whose site assessment was this? That would be the former attorney-general's site assessment under his Youth Detention Centre Demand Management Strategy 2013-2023. The member for Kawana's own strategy identified the Caloundra watch house to be used as a remand facility.

We know that those opposite cannot be trusted to keep a single position on youth crime. Last term it started out with the usual cries: 'Lock 'em up! Lock 'em up!' They then found out that juveniles were being kept in watch houses. Then suddenly it was, 'Release them! We can't have them in custody!' Then by the time we come to the election it is, 'Lock 'em up! Lock 'em up! Lock 'em up!'

I will back this government's Youth Justice Strategy any day over the proposals and positions put forward by the LNP's incompetent former attorney-general. Who can forget pink jumpsuits? Who can forget the failed boot camp in Kuranda? I remember it. My family members who live in Kuranda

remember it. How much consultation happened with the people who lived in Kuranda? I will back a youth strategy that has been drafted in consultation with former QPS Commissioner Bob Atkinson. I will back his understanding of youth justice and youth justice reform.

It is not just about jails and remand centres. The four pillars we need are around identification, prevention, early intervention and bringing the family along for the ride to make sure that when youth offenders are released they have a support network. That is what will prevent further offences. It is not just, 'Lock 'em up! Lock 'em up! Lock 'em up!' A remand centre has a valuable place in our Youth Justice Strategy, and I support the member for Caloundra's amendment.