



Speech By  
**Dale Last**


**MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN**

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Record of Proceedings, 26 May 2021

**MOTION**

**Youth Crime**

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (5.00 pm): I move—

This House:

1. condemns the Labor government for losing control of youth crime and failing to keep families safe and secure; and
2. calls on the Labor government to restore the offence of breach of bail for youth offenders.

The front page of the *Townsville Bulletin* today says it all—“Military” style security to patrol the city: Boots on the ground’. I table that front page.

*Tabled paper.* Article from the *Townsville Bulletin*, dated 26 May 2021, titled “Military” style security to patrol the city: Boots on the Ground’ [721](#).

Encompassed within that article is the details of a security company offering services to the people of Townsville. The article states that they are going to ‘look like a SWAT team’, which proves once and for all that this government has completely lost control of juvenile crime in the city of Townsville. Townsville is a city under siege, and I do not say that lightly. It is a city at the mercy of a group of young offenders who are ripping the guts out of that city.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I think you will find that that language is unparliamentary. I ask you to withdraw.

**Mr LAST:** I withdraw. They are ripping the heart out of that community and those opposite are clearly powerless to do anything about it. For goodness sake, we are talking about Townsville, North Queensland. We are not talking about South Africa. We now have a security company dressed like SWAT officers doing patrols. Is that what we have come to in Townsville—where residents now have armed security guards out the front of their houses, security guards to take their kids to school and security guards to protect them? Surely not. In this day and age, the community should not have to put up with a crime problem which has spiralled out of control, and that mob opposite are powerless to do anything about it.

Cars are being stolen. They are being driven in convoys through the city. In the member for Thuringowa’s patch they are doing burnouts in the car park at the back of the Kirwan Police Station. They are ramming police vehicles. They are going down to the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre and doing burnouts outside the detention centre so their mates inside can hear them. And people wonder what is going on in Townsville!

When we have a look at Labor’s track record when it comes to juvenile crime in that city over the last five years we find it is abysmal. Think about the bail houses and what a failure they were. They ran for three years and 82 per cent of the young people in those houses reoffended. They claim they were not cost-effective when they were actually incubators for reoffenders. Between December 2018 and December 2020, 3,744 distinct young people reoffended.

We have 10- to 13-year-old criminals offending at sky-high rates. Let us have a look at that. Between 2018-19 and 2019-20 there were a total of 9,885 proven offences and this government has a plan to raise the age of criminal responsibility. Is that their answer to addressing juvenile crime in this state? Is their answer to raise the bar and raise the age of criminal responsibility so that that cohort all of a sudden are not captured?

I have to tell the House that a kid driving a car at 130 kilometres an hour through a school zone is just as capable of killing someone as a 15- or 16-year-old. A kid waving a knife in that community and doing a home invasion to steal car keys is just as capable of injuring or killing someone as an adult. There was the Church's Disposal Store break-in—the three Townsville members will know that one pretty well. Some 100 knives and machetes were stolen in that break-in last weekend. Where do members think they are going to end up?

What is this government going to say when those knives and machetes are used in home invasions? What position does that put the community in? More importantly, what does it do for our emergency responders? Think about the police officers who are going to be responding to incidents and then have a kid come at them with a knife or machete. It sends shivers down my spine and it sends shivers down the spine of everyone in Townsville.

The crime situation in Townsville is completely out of control and that community has had enough. I now have had parents ringing me saying that they are not sending their kids to university in Townsville next year because they fear for their safety. I now have families uprooting their entire family, giving up their jobs and moving out of the community in fear for their safety. That is a disgrace and a blight on this government. Over a period of five years and, in the minister's own words, after \$600 million being spent on youth justice, we are seeing no change.

*(Time expired)*