



Speech By  
**David Crisafulli**


**MEMBER FOR BROADWATER**

---

Record of Proceedings, 23 February 2021

**MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Youth Justice**

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.00 pm): My contribution today will be centred on the Youth Justice Act, the need for reform and how we have said that this must be an issue that is discussed this week in parliament. I will not start without first pausing to reflect on those families who have been through so much pain. In recent times families have buried loved ones who were in the prime of their life. Before we debate this important issue we must pause and reflect on the tragic loss for those families of their loved ones.

We must also talk about the families whose stories may not make the news and may not be as tragic in nature but will still have a massive impact on their lives and livelihoods. I talk about the impacts of crime that are felt on communities every day. There will be young tradespeople from suburbs across this state, from Coombabah to Cranbrook to Cairns, who will wake up and go out to their front lawn to hop in a car to go and earn an honest day's pay who will not be able to do that. Their car may be missing. Their tools may be gone. Their car may have been taken on a joyride and burnt for the thrill of it. Their life will change. Their ability to earn a living will change. They will go through the rigmarole of insurance claims. They will have to ring a boss or a client and say that they are unable to do what they said they were going to do through no fault of their own.

There will be children in those same suburbs going to bed whose parents will have to assure them that everything is okay, despite the fact that their house had somebody raid it in the days beforehand. They are impacts that young people do not get over. For those in this House who have been the victim of a robbery, and I am sure that is the majority of people in this House, when you walk into that place it is never quite the same. When you go to that drawer and you open it, the memory of what was there when you first walked into that place is there: the glass shattered on the floor and your items strewn across the ground. It is never quite the same.

We were told that this week was going to be the week that the government acted. Well, it has not. We said from day one that we wanted to see one thing put on the agenda and that was to restore breach of bail as an offence. We did not give a shopping list. We did not say, 'Here are our 30 demands otherwise we will not play ball.' We did not do that. We put one thing on the table and its cornerstone was consequences for actions.

**Mr Harper:** It was proven to fail and you know it.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** The member for Thuringowa walks on both sides of the street. He is an apologist in here but the community champion when he gives the other side of the story up north.

**An opposition member:** They are calling him out!

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** I will take the interjection. The community are calling him out because what they needed this week was action. We acknowledge that reform takes consultation, but for the government to not even introduce a bill at this point shows that they do not believe the issue is serious. The

government did not agree to the one thing that universally was called for and respected, and that is the return of breach of bail. Everyone on the front line, every police officer who spends the night trying to find a safe place for a young person to go back to, wasting hours of their time when they could be keeping the community safe, has called on the government to do this one thing.

I say to the victims of crime that we will keep fighting for this because we are serious about it. I say to those families who lost loved ones: your son or daughter was not in the wrong place at the wrong time; the criminal, who should have been in a safer place for the community, was in the wrong place. I say to those people who want to know that any good system has the ability to reform people early on in their journey before they fall into a life of crime—which is the view of the vast majority of people in this state because everybody deserves a second chance—that the revolving door of youth justice must end in this state. A 10th, a 15th and a 20th chance is where the community draws a line. They are not talking about stealing a KitKat, I can assure members. It has nothing to do with that. It took a very brave Police Commissioner to call that nonsense out. This morning the minister, who has been an apologist for weak laws, all of a sudden comes in playing the bullyboy card. I would have liked to have seen a little bit of that tough action directed at those offenders. I would have liked to have seen him stick up for people in blue uniforms.

We know that this is a serious matter. We know that the reform will take time. I have said to the government from day one that this is a problem not the making of the Queensland Police Service, this is not a problem the making of the individual groups on either side of the ledger who have campaigned for better conditions for young children when they are being detained or of victims' rights groups which have sought to ensure that the individual matters after their life is turned upside down; the government must understand that these are issues of its own making.

It dates back to a change in legislation in this place that was done in a ham-fisted way in 2015. I acknowledge the government was elected and it might have been surprised about that election, but the reforms that it put in place were ham-fisted. It has sought to make amends time and time again and the problem has got worse. Communities are crying out just to be heard, just to have the problem acknowledged. They want members who are willing to fight for them, not to fight them. They want members who are willing to stand up and acknowledge there is an issue and say the same things that they tell the crowds up there as in this building where it matters, where the decisions occur. Standing up and calling out breach of bail is what is needed.

**Mr Healy:** That's why we got re-elected.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** I hear the member for Cairns crowing about his win, somehow believing that that is a mandate for him to continue to do nothing on youth justice reform. May I suggest to the member for Cairns that his day of reckoning is coming, because his community wants somebody who does the straight talking up there to do the straight talking in here. Right now every one of the members who is serious about protecting their community and speaking out on their behalf would vote in accordance with what every person on the front line is asking for. They are not asking for young offenders to have the book thrown at them the first time. They are not asking for a system that does not allow people an opportunity to acknowledge the error of their ways. They are asking for a system that clamps down on those habitual, repeat offenders who are destroying lives.

When the government comes in here and says that there is only a handful of offenders, I suggest that that means it must be a much easier problem to solve than if there were thousands of them, but it involves the government being serious. Over the past half a decade we have seen a government that has spent all of its political capital saying that it is not a big issue, that youth crime does not matter, that the solutions are something that is beyond their reach. Right now we have put forward one reasonable suggestion and we will continue to advocate for it.

*(Time expired)*