




Speech By
James Lister

MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS

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ADJOURNMENT

Goondiwindi, Crime

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (6.24 pm): I rise to speak about the town of Goondiwindi in my electorate, which is a fabulous town.

Mr Stevens: A great town; the Royal Hotel.

Mr LISTER: There are plenty of good hotels. Goondiwindi has one thing that no other town can claim. Bernard Salt, the esteemed demographer, said that it is the greatest regional town in Australia. He said it outperformed all other Queensland country towns thanks to its surprise package of above-average income, demographic diversity, low unemployment, a cohesive community and well-performing public services such as schools and medical services, which is all true.

Mr Minnikin: And a great state MP.

Mr LISTER: I hope to do my bit; thank you very much, member for Chatsworth.

One of the difficulties that Goondiwindi faces is crime. Today I was sent an email by a resident of Goondiwindi, Mr David Parker, who urged me to speak about the matter of crime and the effects it is having on the community. It seems that night after night the same offenders are committing the same crimes—property crimes, theft, assaults and antisocial crimes. One of the sectors particularly affected is the Goondiwindi Regional Council. I know that the council staff are immensely proud of the work that they do to keep the gardens and facilities in good nick, but are they losing vehicles, structures and so forth to vandalism. That matter is causing a lot of consternation and concern in the community. I will read a short excerpt from the email that I received from Mr Parker. He said—

Most people I talk to and watch on social media are becoming very agitated and I have seen some very militant and aggressive posts on Facebook from time to time. We do not need Goondiwindi to return to the ways of the past with riots and retaliation among our communities, but my fear is I am seeing a smoulder from the local communities on both sides of the border that needs to be extinguished ...

In decades past in the town of Goondiwindi there have been vigilantes and riots. Those things are to be condemned. One of the things that gives rise to such condemnatory behaviour is people becoming frustrated if they feel that their property is not being adequately protected and their rights as law-abiding citizens are not properly recognised. Without wanting to offend standing order 231, I would say that this is a matter that we ought to consider and at the appropriate time I will have more to say on the matter.

I can say to the people of Goondiwindi that I understand. I hear your concerns. Today I have heard a government member decry the evil of using punitive measures to protect a community. I would say that we need to find the right balance and that is not it. I want to tell the people of Goondiwindi that I will do all that I can to fight for their community. We need to do what we can to rid them of the crime problem that is facing an otherwise great town.