




Speech By  
**Jennifer Howard**

**MEMBER FOR IPSWICH**

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### **YOUTH JUSTICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (6.03 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The Palaszczuk government is making a record investment in community safety: \$500 million in the youth justice system and the biggest investment in policing in over 30 years with an additional 2,025 police personnel to be delivered over five years. Of those police, 150 will be deployed to the Southern Police District, which includes Ipswich.

We are also backing our police and emergency first responders with stronger laws, and that is what this bill is about: building on the investments we have made and the results of our five-point crime action plan. We are making real progress, resulting in the lowest number of youth offenders in a decade. We know we need to do more, and our new youth justice laws will do that.

They will reverse the onus so that young offenders charged with serious indictable offences while on bail will need to demonstrate to the court why they are not at risk of reoffending and are not a danger to the community before they can be granted bail. They will give the courts power to seek assurances from parents and guardians that they will assist the young offenders to comply with their bail obligations when considering the granting of bail. They will enshrine in legislation that when a young offender commits an offence while on bail, the court will consider that as an aggravating factor and sentence them accordingly. It will allow courts to consider the option of electronic monitoring devices for 16- and 17-year-olds as a condition of bail.

These reforms are backed by expert advice and evidence based on a report of the former police commissioner Bob Atkinson into youth justice. He will also review the overall reforms after six months, which is an important part of the process. It is about doing more work with a small cohort of recidivist youth offenders who represent around 10 per cent of young offenders but commit about 48 per cent of youth crime.

I would now like to move on to the amendments to the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act contained in the bill, specifically the amendments relating to significant changes to assist police in dealing with hooning. I know in my community of Ipswich this is an issue that is raised with me by constituents regularly. There is a real problem with hooning in the Ipswich CBD and in some of the suburbs. People are worried about their safety and they are tired of the incessant noise from hooning vehicles throughout the night. It has to stop. I want to commend the police in our community who are very well aware of this issue and who do a fantastic job in working to stop this pest.

Queensland already has some of the toughest hooning laws in Australia, but we are taking additional action to help address this persistent problem that generates much community concern. The amendments in this bill broaden the owner onus provisions for hooning offences by allowing the evasion offence notice provisions in chapter 22 of the PPRA to apply to all other types of vehicle impoundment hooning offences. What does this mean in practice? This shifts the onus of proof onto the owner of the vehicle. The owner of a vehicle used in a type 1 hooning offence will be required to provide crucial information to assist police in conducting their investigations. That means that if the owner claims that they were not driving the vehicle at the time of the offence it will be up to them to prove it.

We have heard a lot of big talk from opposition members during this debate, but I think it is worth examining what they did when they were last in government. When the LNP had a chance to address youth crime, what did they do? They implemented 'destined to fail' measures like boot camps. They did not listen to the experts or evidence. In so many areas this was the hallmark of the Newman LNP government.

A total of \$16.7 million was wasted on their boot camp experiment that ended up breeding fitter, faster criminals. This boot camp experiment did not lead to a reduction in recidivism as promised. Further, the breach of bail, about which we have heard a lot during this debate, never existed under the LNP. The former government had introduced an unworkable law called committing an offence while on bail. It did not work as a deterrent; it was not regularly used by the courts given it was so ineffective. This law did not reduce recidivism; over 90 per cent of people convicted of the new offence reoffended within 12 months.

Our government invests in the front line. We take expert advice and we listen and deliver for our communities. While the LNP cut the Murri Courts right across Queensland when they were in government, these courts were getting real results right across Queensland and the Palaszczuk government reinstated them. I am delighted to see it up and running in my electorate of Ipswich. It has been extremely successful and they are doing a great job. In fact, in Ipswich we have many amazing organisations working with vulnerable and at-risk young people like the Ipswich Community Youth Service, who do an outstanding job helping to keep our young people on track and away from negative influences. ICYS has helped thousands of kids with training, education, housing, employment and referral to support services.

We also have Liworaji, who are doing an amazing job mentoring Indigenous young people in Ipswich high schools and providing opportunities for them to get into training and education. They also helped the department of child safety with cultural support for young people in care. Then we have the Domestic Violence Action Centre, who is helping high schoolers in Ipswich learn about respectful relationships and consent through their outstanding Being Heard educational programs.

The PCYC in Ipswich has a range of programs and training courses for young people such as the Braking the Cycle learner driver program and the renowned Project Booyah, which is getting terrific results in helping disengaged young people make better life choices. The vast majority of young people who come into contact with the youth justice system are able to get their lives back on track with a bit of guidance and support, but for the small cohort of hardened youth offenders who repeatedly commit crimes, who have no respect for the law and who endanger our community, we need tougher laws. This bill does that and I commend it to the House.