




Speech By
Hon. Leanne Linard

MEMBER FOR NUDGEES

Record of Proceedings, 26 May 2021

MOTION

Youth Crime

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (5.05 pm): I move the following amendment—

That all words after 'House' be omitted and the following inserted:

1. acknowledges the Palaszczuk government's record investment and measures to support community safety in Queensland; and
2. notes the recent legislative amendments to strengthen community safety laws in Queensland were supported by the LNP.'

All Queenslanders have the right to feel safe in their homes and communities. We expect young people to be law abiding and when they are not we expect them to be accountable. That is why we have invested more than half a billion dollars in more detention centre beds for offenders and in early intervention programs to stop offending in the first instance and to stop reoffending. We know that we must have programs to divert and we must have facilities to detain, and we are investing in both. This is in addition to more police on the ground. Community safety is paramount and community confidence essential.

Across Queensland our government and my department are investing in programs that hold young people to account and give them the opportunity to turn their lives around. We have invested in programs like: Transition 2 Success to get young people back into education and training to get a job; restorative justice conferencing to take responsibility and make amends to those victims affected by their offending; integrated case management to work intensively with young people and their families to address the drivers of offending; conditional bail programs; bail support programs; co-responder teams with police and youth justice; and on-country programs in Mount Isa, Townsville and Cairns. These are just some of the programs we fund to hold young people to account, divert young people from offending and keep our community safe, because community safety is paramount and community confidence is essential.

In addition to these programs, we have boosted capacity in our youth detention centres by 33 per cent with expanded capacity at Brisbane and Cleveland youth detention centres. We have built a new centre, the West Moreton Youth Detention Centre. We know there is no quick fix, no silver bullet to fix youth crime. We also know these initiatives are working. We have seen a 30 per cent drop in the number of young offenders across the state over the past 10 years. We know that most young people do not commit crime—one or two per cent. We know that, of those who do, most will never come back into contact with the criminal justice system after a first offence. We also know that this is cold comfort to those who have been affected by youth crime. It is 10 per cent of young offenders who are committing almost 50 per cent of offences, and it is this cohort that we are targeting. We heard clearly from the community that they want more done in relation to the 10 per cent of repeat offenders, and we listened. We will always listen and we will always act.

Under new measures announced in February this year, we have further strengthened the youth justice bail framework by: providing the court with an additional tool, the use of electronic monitoring devices as a condition of bail for recidivist offenders aged 16 or 17; creating a presumption against bail for youth offenders to show cause why bail should be granted; and codifying the existing common law principle that offending while on bail is an aggravating factor when imposing a sentence. These new laws send an even clearer message to offenders and the courts: the parliament and the community expect high-risk offenders to be kept off our streets.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Kawana will direct his comments through the chair.

Ms LINARD: Community safety is paramount and community confidence is essential. Contrast our strong response—our evidence based approach—with that of those opposite. The member for Burdekin beats his chest and says in this House, ‘It needs to stop and it needs to stop now.’ They did not have one when they were in government, so what is their magic fix now? While those opposite politicise a serious issue, while those opposite feed the fears of people in our community, we roll up our sleeves and take strong action. That is the difference between being in opposition and being in government. It is all care and no responsibility in the current opposition. Mind you, it was the same when they were in government.

Mr Millar interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Gregory is warned under the standing orders.

Ms LINARD: They had no plan and no idea—other than failed boot camps. Our government has a plan. Our government is making record investment to strengthen community safety. It is our government that passed strong legislation in this House—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Kawana will cease his interjections.

Ms LINARD:—just last month that even those opposite voted for. Instead of playing politics, why don’t you get on board!

Mr SPEAKER: A reminder to the minister and other future speakers: we will be directing our comments through the chair, not to those across the chamber.