




Speech By
Tim Mander

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

Record of Proceedings, 21 April 2021

YOUTH JUSTICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (2.20 pm): I rise to speak on the Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. We hear from this government all the time that they have kept Queenslanders safe, but when it comes to keeping Queenslanders safe from crime they have failed miserably. The member for Cooper and others opposite can talk all they like. They can talk about theory, they can talk about what they would like to achieve, but all have you to do is look at the cold, hard statistics. These are not statistics that the LNP provides but that the police department itself provides. Nearly every category of crime has increased dramatically since the Labor government came into power. It is even worse when it comes to youth crime. They can talk all they want, as they do, but let's look at outcomes and the cold, hard statistics. They do not lie and the people of Queensland are not fooled by that rhetoric.

Mr Harper interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Gerber): Pause the clock. Member for Thuringowa, cease your interjections.

Mr MANDER: He can go on all he likes, because I will enjoy that. This issue has dogged this government over the last six years and it will not go away. We will support this bill because anything is better than nothing, but it does not go far enough. Why does it not go far enough? Because this government continually favours those who commit crime, not those who are the victims of crime. They have the scales of justice totally out of balance. They constantly do that, and that is why they will never address this issue properly.

It is no coincidence that crime rates have increased over the last six years because when the Labor Party government came in they weakened the laws for all of the reasons I just mentioned. There are consequences to weakening the laws: people think they can get away with anything. That is the problem we have with young offenders at the moment. The member for Thuringowa may interject, but if there is an epicentre of youth crime in this state it is in his home town of Townsville—a man who, over the last six years, denied there was a problem and repeatedly said, 'We don't have a crime problem in this state.'

Mr HARPER: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence at that remark and I ask that it be withdrawn.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member has taken personal offence. Do you withdraw?

Mr MANDER: I withdraw.

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Order!

Mr MANDER: I withdrew. North Queensland is the epicentre of the youth crime issue we have in this state.

Mr Harper interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: If any member is casting doubt on the fact that I heard the member for Everton withdraw, please say it now and then I will promptly eject you from the chamber.

Mr MANDER: The *Townsville Bulletin* called Townsville 'Dodge City'. Their own newspaper called their town Dodge City because of the crime rate in this state. What does this government do? This government does not have a long-term plan: they have a kneejerk plan. They respond to whatever is happening at the moment. Initially there was no problem. 'Don't look here. There's nothing to see.' The local members continued to say, 'There's no issue here at all.' They were constantly at war with the newspaper. In fact, I have never seen so many editorials written against a local member than those written against the member for Thuringowa because of the ridiculous statements he constantly made.

Mr HARPER: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Again I take personal offence. They are incorrect remarks. I never said that. I ask him to withdraw.

Mr MANDER: I withdraw. What was their first great brainchild with regard to addressing the issue of crime? They sent out new police recruits—do you remember this one—to do a doorknocking campaign to remind people to lock their cars and lock their doors, so again it was the public's fault they were being broken into. There were new police recruits and this was the great new strategy. 'Let's go up there and address this issue.' It was absolutely useless and of course it had no impact.

What happens then is that as we go along the crime rate continues. We still have a youth crime problem, so what is the next thing they do? They appointed Major General Stewart Smith, who is a very respectable former member of the defence community. Why did they have to appoint him? Because the local members were useless. The three local members could not do what they were supposed to do, which was to stick up for their community, come back here and have the cabinet respond to the demands of their local members. Totally useless! That was the No. 2 plan, and of course that was not successful.

What was the No. 3 plan? The No. 3 plan was the five-point plan they issued at the beginning of last year. Why? It was another kneejerk reaction because everything they have done so far has not worked. It totally failed. What did the minister say at the time? In the press release relating to the five-point plan the minister said, 'Criminals, especially young ones, should fear the law.' Guess what, Minister? They do not fear the law. That is why they continue to offend and wreak terror through the streets of Townsville. Unfortunately for the rest of the state, the problem that continues in Townsville and Cairns has spread right across the state—

Mr Stevens: To the Gold Coast!

Mr MANDER: Right across the state to the Gold Coast. I take the interjection from the member for Mermaid Beach. The north side of Brisbane where I live has a youth crime problem. The member for Clayfield held a crime forum and over 200 people attended, and that is because people have had a gutful. They have had enough of being—

Mr Stevens interjected.

Mr MANDER: That is absolutely correct, member for Mermaid Beach. This government has absolutely no answers and they blame everybody else. In relation to a recent tragedy the Minister for Transport said that the victims 'were in the wrong place at the wrong time', again shifting the emphasis away from the people who had committed the crime.

Mr BAILEY: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence and ask that the comments be withdrawn.

Mr MANDER: I withdraw. The member for Stretton also had a big crime rally out his way, which was unusual, and again came out and said, 'There isn't a problem. We don't have a crime problem here.' That went over really well at a crime rally: 'We don't have a crime problem.'

When it comes to dealing with crime, particularly youth crime, the Labor government has zero credibility. They have had three or four or five different plans because each one has not worked. They is why they have to bring out another one. We will have another one in nine months time, no doubt about it. Another plan will come out and that will be the 3.5 plan, not the five-point plan. Is it not ironic that today we would speak about crime and the youth justice bill when this is the day that the member for Mundingburra's banning order ends in Townsville. Today he can go back to the Mad Cow. What type of example is this from a government that is trying to deal with crime? When one of their Townsville members gets involved in a scuffle and is issued with a banning order, what type of example is that?

This is a government that is not fair dinkum about crime. Until there are consequences for their actions, these young offenders will continue to do what they are doing. Imagine if you said to the average Queenslanders, 'Would you believe that a young offender can get picked up on a Friday night for a break and enter, get released the next day and then do the same thing the next night and there are no consequences?' How do you think that frustrates police officers? Despite all of the work that they do, we see absolutely no consequences for the actions of young offenders.

This government has zero credibility when it comes to dealing with crime and youth crime. As I said earlier, we will support the bill because something is better than nothing, but the government will never address the issues that Queenslanders are concerned about. Queenslanders want to be protected from those recidivist youth offenders. They want to be able to walk down the street without worrying about being assaulted. They want to sleep at night without worrying about somebody breaking in. They want to be able to be in their house without worrying about their car being stolen out of their garage.