



Speech By  
**Dale Last**


**MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN**

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Record of Proceedings, 24 February 2022

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT**

**North Queensland, Youth Crime**

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (2.19 pm): 'They drove at people playing soccer including children.' Those are the words of a witness to a chaotic scene in Townsville yesterday afternoon. It is the latest instalment in this rampage across the north by these juvenile offenders which is continuing unabated. It is a miracle that no-one was killed or injured yesterday by stolen vehicles on a soccer field being driven around by young thugs, putting innocent people's lives at risk—children, mums and dads who took their sons and daughters to soccer. Their lives were put in danger by these young offenders.

Members may well ask: what is being done about that? Unfortunately, nothing is being done about that. That is why I am standing up in this place today. Am I angry? I am reflecting the anger in that community. They have said enough is enough. They want some action. If ever we needed evidence that this government has taken its eye off the ball, that it has disregarded the north of the state, then we need look no further than the announcements this week of three new helicopters in the south-east and then today a task force to deal with juvenile crime in the south-east of the state. Wouldn't we love that in the north! That sends a clear message to North Queenslanders: they have been abandoned by this government in their time of need.

I have sat in this place this week and I have waited for the members for Cairns, Thuringowa, Townsville and Mundingburra to stand up and talk about this issue and go into bat for their communities. Where are they? They talk a big game in their communities, but they are mute when they come down here to Brisbane, and that is a disgrace because those communities need a voice.

**Mr HARPER:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. As usual, I take personal offence and I ask the member to withdraw.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): The member has taken personal offence. I ask you to withdraw.

**Mr LAST:** I withdraw. According to Phil, who recently contacted me about his experiences at the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre, he said, 'I am one of the people you mentioned who can't work again after going through the horror of that place. I honestly think management are hiding statistics of staff injuries.' Sarah contacted me on behalf of a family member who works there. She said, 'Lives are literally being ruined and nothing is happening which is as frustrating as it is heartbreaking.'

That community has a right to be upset. They have a right to be absolutely livid because just last week the youth justice minister visited the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre after yet another staff attack. Those staff do not go to work every day to be assaulted. They are not punching bags. They go there to do a difficult job and they deserve to be treated better. They deserve to be supported. They deserve to have the resources and the training that they need. The fact that the minister could only find one miserable, lousy hour at that centre says it all about the attitude of this government. They have abandoned North Queensland and they should hang their heads in shame.

*(Time expired)*