




Speech By
Dale Last

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

Record of Proceedings, 22 June 2022

INSPECTOR OF DETENTION SERVICES BILL

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (4.36 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the Inspection of Detention Services Bill 2021 and to provide a slightly different slant to many of the previous contributions. It has been more than five years since Walter Sofronoff QC delivered his report into the Queensland parole system, more than five years since the independent review of youth detention, over three years since the Taskforce Flaxton report was published and more than two years since the Productivity Commission inquiry into imprisonment and recidivism. Yet, despite all those reports and all that time, those opposite have missed the point. Let us make it very clear: there is not one Queenslanders who would condone the inhumane treatment or torture of people in detention.

Queenslanders will also not tolerate people being forgotten, especially by governments. Queenslanders will not tolerate people calling out for help and being ignored, especially when those people are some of the people we rely on to keep our communities safe. This government has failed to deliver for people who work in our prisons, community correction centres, work camps, youth detention centres and police watch houses. Since becoming shadow minister for corrective services, I have heard from corrections officers who are at breaking point thanks to a government that will not listen, will not respect them and will not pay them properly. As recently as yesterday I had a conversation with a corrections officer who had been bashed into unconsciousness in recent weeks and feared that they were going to lose their life. This person may never go back to work. These are the dangers that corrective services staff face on a daily basis.

On that side of the House we have at least two members who, according to their member details, have worked in correction centres—the member for Mundingburra and the member for Caloundra. Given that both of those members have worked in these environments—one of them has been employed by a union and one of them attended the public hearings on this bill—we would have to question why both of them would ignore issues raised by staff regarding safety.

These are not minor issues. According to Together Queensland, they include exposure to poisonous chemicals. The best they can do is a longwinded question from the member for Caloundra at a hearing which was shot down by departmental staff. All the while we have staff being seriously assaulted. We only have to look at the budget papers for confirmation that the rate of serious assaults on staff by prisoners has increased. The best the minister can do is to include a footnote in the department's SDS to say assaults are investigated.

Just like those opposite's so-called tough action on youth justice, their action on prisoners who assault staff amounts to little. We need to be doing a lot more to protect staff who work in those environments. Without the inclusion of the health and safety of workers in prisons, youth detention centres and other places of detention, this bill falls a long way short of the mark.