




Speech By
Dale Last

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

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PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT

Yarrabah, Youth Crime

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (2.00 pm): As today's *Cairns Post* put it, Yarrabah is echoing the same frustrations and outrage of Cairns and the greater Far North which is grappling with the youth crime epidemic. The chief executive of Yarrabah's health service, Suzanne Andrews, said that Yarrabah was like 'any community in the area ... we're all dealing with the same issue' and that issue is the growing crime epidemic, the length and breadth of Queensland. While government MPs do not want us to talk about crime, the fact is that the people of Yarrabah talk about feeling unsafe.

Far North Queensland is short of police, a fact echoed by Ian Leavers, the President of the Queensland Police Union, who told listeners to 4CA in Cairns that he identified their city 'as a priority where we need extra police'. He went on to say that when it comes to dealing with youth crime, 'It needs a lot of other organisations to actually get involved and start doing their jobs.' If Mayor Ross Andrew of the Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council is correct when he said, 'I think there's enough service providers out there,' why are things getting worse in Yarrabah and other centres? The short answer is because of the failings of this current government.

Police officers have expressed to me that the current cautioning procedures for children are too complex, and they have recounted that young offenders, despite being on bail for committing close to 100 offences, are still being given bail and free rein to continue on their merry way, tearing apart those communities.

Yesterday the member for Lockyer spoke about how the number of police per 100,000 residents has reduced and how proactive policing has reduced by 40 per cent. It is not just those on this side of the House who recognise the importance of proactive policing. When questioned about proactive policing at the estimates in 2020, the commissioner said, 'When you are responding, you are not proactive and preventing enough,' and she spoke of a 45 per cent increase in triple 0 calls. Those figures prove that our communities and our police need cooperation and collaboration in order to address youth crime. Despite the police minister admitting in 2018 that there were departments that were not pulling their weight, this government has failed to achieve that much needed cooperation.

The Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council is offering to coordinate services in that community, in effect, to do this government's job. In the interests of making Yarrabah safer, I am calling on the Premier here today and all the relevant ministers to heed their call because until such time those government departments work together—we are talking about Education, Child Safety, Youth Justice and Health—you will not address this problem. We know we have a school truancy issue in Yarrabah. There is a good starting point—early intervention. Get these kids to school because kids who go to school regularly are not out there committing crimes.