




Speech By
Dale Last

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

Record of Proceedings, 13 October 2022

MOTION

Youth Crime

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (5.09 pm): I rise in support of the motion moved by the member for Currumbin. In March this year I stood up in this place and talked about this very issue. I talked about the crime wave in Townsville and Cairns, a crime wave that has now become a tsunami which has washed through those communities and absolutely torn them apart. I will talk about some statistics in a minute. You only have to go to those communities today and talk to those people—the victims of crime, the business owners, the leaders in those communities—about the impacts that this juvenile crime wave is having on those communities to understand what I am saying.

Whilst this government continues to come into this place and talk down the effect that this government's failures are having on families, business owners and tradespeople, we are going to continue having a problem. For the minister to stand up in here and tell us that the youth justice laws are the strongest in the country, with record investment in this space, you have to ask the question: what are we getting for that? What are we getting for that in communities like Townsville and Cairns? It certainly is not delivering the outcomes that those communities expect.

If you want to talk about an example, the member for Nudgee on 22 June this year said, 'The number of youth offenders across Queensland is at its lowest level in a decade.' That got me thinking. Let's have a look at the figures of the last decade. Unlawful use of a motor vehicle by juveniles has more than tripled, including in the last 12 months—this is in Cairns—an increase of 72 per cent. In the last decade in the Far North Queensland police district, unlawful entry by juveniles has more than doubled, with an increase of 72 per cent in the last 12 months. They are on top of it! Let's not forget that—they are on top of it! There is no good news in Townsville: over the last decade, a 76 per cent increase of unlawful entry by juveniles, and a 64 per cent increase in unlawful use of motor vehicles by juveniles! The stats do not lie. The stats are painting a picture that is absolutely horrific, and this nightmare is being lived on a daily basis in those communities.

Every single day my office is contacted by victims, victims like Sarah Martin, who is moving house because she and her seven-year-old son are so scared. What do we hear from the ministers and the MPs on that side of the House? In Cairns and Townsville, there have been over 1,000 motor vehicles stolen in each of those communities so far this year—1,000! You only have to drive around those communities to see the evidence: the stolen cars on the side of the road, the burnt-out vehicles on the side of the road. We are talking about Queensland here. We are not talking about some war-torn country overseas; we are talking about Queensland.

What did the member for Cairns tell the *Cairns Post* on 1 October? 'It takes time to implement changes.' Member, where have you been for the last five years, and how much longer do you need to actually do something? The member for Nudgee told the same publication on 8 September that she was in Cairns 'not to tell the community about what they needed but rather to hear their concerns'. There are plenty of people up there telling the minister their concerns. It took a civilian, a victim of crime

herself, on two occasions to tell the minister. After that meeting, the minister told the *Cairns Post* that if the needs of the community were not being met it was her job to 'go away and argue for those resources' and that she knows that more needs to be done.

Minister, your opportunity arises today in this chamber in a few minutes time. We want to hear what your plan is. We want to hear what you are going to do to address this problem. It is one thing to say you are listening and it is one thing to say you are going to deal with it; it is another thing to deliver. As Kylie Lang said in the *Courier-Mail* on 1 October—

Queenslanders are dying, their loved ones left traumatised, and our taxes are being frittered away by a bunch of incompetents while juvenile criminals have the last laugh.

As the people of Cairns say—and it is displayed on a burnt-out stolen car being towed around the streets—'Enough is enough'. Queenslanders have had enough of living in fear, enough of their homes being broken into and enough of their vehicles being stolen.

(Time expired)