



Speech By  
**Jason Hunt**


**MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA**

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Record of Proceedings, 13 October 2022

**MOTION**

**Youth Crime**

 **Mr HUNT** (Caloundra—ALP) (5.45 pm): I rise to speak in support of the amended motion and make plain my unwavering support for our frontline workers who keep our communities safe—more so because I was one of them for 21 years. I know what it is like to holster a glock side arm and I am familiar with the dry mouth that accompanies that particular moment when you open a cell door to a hostile offender.

I must confess to be slightly taken aback by the original motion referring to an abandoned youth jail. It bears some explanation. When I left Caloundra on Sunday the Caloundra Police Station, with its adjoining buildings, was very much functional and full of police including, I might mention, the five extra police that started there last financial year and are already having a positive impact on community safety in Caloundra, Landsborough and Beerwah. The LNP were strongly of a view that this watch house project would not go ahead and are now apparently outraged that the project is not going ahead.

This government did not play base politics with the issue, but listened to the community without using disinformation. There were excellent meetings with community leaders and I thank the minister for her attendance at those meetings. There was departmental consultation through forums, surveys into letterboxes and, finally, an extensive doorknocking campaign into Golden Beach. In this very chamber the member for Ninderry said of the Minister for Police—

He spent four minutes going through a document from 2013 in which a department person recommended that a watch house be converted to a youth jail. Do members know what the difference was? Leadership!

He went on to say—

I call for this police minister to show some leadership like the former AG, the member for Kawana, did. Say no to this youth jail in Caloundra and give the police back their watch house!

He can, and he did and, member for Ninderry, you are most welcome. I thank both the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and the Minister for Police for their leadership on this issue and for listening to me and listening to the community in and around Caloundra. Let us be honest, the LNP has no credibility on law and order or the fiscal complexities of providing it. Their record of building new police stations is well known. With regard to consultation on crime, I recently found a *Brisbane Times* article of October 2013 and it is worth reading—

In a statement on Thursday, Mr Bleijie said Queensland Corrective Services had been 'consulted extensively' about the bikie-only maximum security unit.

That is news to me because I was working at the centre at that time and we found out about it on the tele that night. From the same article we read—

When asked how much it would cost to reopen the unit the Attorney-General Jarrod Bleijie said: 'We are currently working out the finer details.'

Mr Bleijie did not respond to questions about how many beds in the unit would be recommissioned.

Somehow the member for Kawana had consulted extensively with the department, but did not know how many prisoners would be in the unit or what it was going to cost. It must have been a peach of a consultative process. For the record, that particular failed extravagance cost the people of Queensland a fortune and collapsed after four months. What a huge blow to crime that was!

The last word on this really should go to the Queensland Police Service. The reality of this supposedly abandoned building is perfectly outlined by a recently retired deputy police commissioner who said—

The intention at all times had been for the Caloundra Watchhouse to be returned to the QPS as an operational police facility supporting operations in the rapidly growing southern area of the Sunshine Coast.

Further—

Modernisation, renovation and growth of the watchhouse capability was always going to be required to meet the needs of this growing part of the Sunshine Coast in step with the growth of the capability and capacity of the Caloundra Court House. This is in addition to the State Government's already announced Caloundra South Police Station for which planning is well advanced.

There it is: the building is not advanced but it is coming back bigger and better. On that note, I thank our frontline workers yet again.