




Speech By
Laura Gerber

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

Record of Proceedings, 13 October 2022

MOTION

Youth Crime

 **Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (4.58 pm): I move—

That this House notes the failure of the state government to combat youth crime resulting in:

- youth car theft out of control in places including Gold Coast, Toowoomba, Townsville and Cairns;
- businesspeople in places including Hervey Bay and Dingo being forced to board up their shops or close after multiple break-ins;
- innocent people being run down by stolen vehicles across Queensland including Redlands and Townsville;
- money wasted on an abandoned youth jail in Caloundra,

and calls on the government to act to protect Queenslanders.

Enough is enough. Queensland is in the grip of a youth crime wave, and this state Labor government is not acting and they are not listening. Queenslanders right across this state from Coolangatta to the Torres Strait are fed up with this government prioritising politics over people. The state Labor government has absolutely no idea and no plan when it comes to youth crime. The youth justice system is broken. As the shadow assistant minister for justice and youth, as a former prosecutor and as a mum, I know it. The police out there know it and—do you know what, Mr Deputy Speaker?—the youth criminals know it.

The Premier, her police minister and the youth justice minister have been idly sitting on their hands while youth car thefts rise out of control, innocent people are being killed by stolen cars and families are being terrorised. The human toll of this state government's inaction and weak laws over the last two years is 11 people—five innocent people and six juveniles. That is the human cost of this state Labor government's weak laws. I am going to read that into the record.

On 26 January 2021 in Alexandra Hills, Matthew Field, Kate Leadbetter and their unborn son, Miles, were heinously killed by a repeat juvenile offender. He was in a stolen car, he was drunk, he was high, he had a criminal history as long as my arm and he was out on bail. On 5 February 2021 in Townsville, Jennifer Board was tragically killed by a vigilante pursuing a juvenile in a stolen car. On 9 June 2021 in Bowen, a juvenile who was in state care at the time was killed after stealing a car from the care facility. On 14 February this year in Cairns, Bradley Smith—a passenger in a stolen car driven by a juvenile—was killed. There were six juveniles in that car, and four were allegedly on bail. On 7 June in Townsville, four juveniles were killed in a stolen car. On 26 September in Wynnum West—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. Member, resume your seat while I take some advice. I will issue general guidance to all members. If members refer to matters, the cases and the convictions need to have been finalised. If those matters are ongoing, they would be subject to the sub judice rules in the standing orders of the House. I ask members to ensure you comply with the standing orders.

Mrs GERBER: This is the human cost of Labor's weak laws and their failed youth justice bail legislation. On the Gold Coast there is a culture of crime, with teenage thieves banding together to scope out and stalk unsuspecting community members. They call it creeping. They are stealing whatever they want—cash, cars and valuables—and then boasting about it on social media. Mark said, 'These repeat offenders are just laughing at us and they're effectively being rewarded for bad behaviour.'

Andrew Farquharson is another victim of youth crime. He said he has been terrorised. These brazen youth crims posted a video on social media of the Farquharson home and informed other youth crims that it was an easy target. Andrew's daughters are afraid to go home. They are studying in Brisbane and they are afraid to go to their Toowoomba home because of the exposure they have had to youth crime. It is an absolute disgrace that Queenslanders are living in fear like this.

What more does this state government need before they take some real action to prevent youth crime tearing Queensland families apart? How many more people need to be killed before we see consequences for actions? How many more of these teens need to die before police are given powers to protect juvenile offenders from themselves? How many more Queenslanders need to lose their lives before the government releases the Bob Atkinson review into their failed youth bail legislation?

It is not just the victims of crime coming to me; it is the families of the youth criminals. They are in our offices and they are telling us they want to see these laws to protect their kids because they are afraid their kids are going to be the next statistic. It is not good enough that this state government is not doing anything. It is not good enough that their bail laws have failed Queenslanders and failed us so miserably. Queenslanders deserve to see breach of bail as an offence, we deserve legislative change, and police deserve the powers to be able to do something about youth crime in this state. It is tearing us apart. It is not just that people are dying, because the human cost of Labor's weak laws and their failed bail laws is that 11 people have died; we are seeing the flow-on consequence of that. Families are being torn apart by this crime wave, and that lies at the feet of this minister.

(Time expired)