




Speech By
Hon. Leanne Linard

MEMBER FOR NUDGE

Record of Proceedings, 22 June 2022

MOTION

Youth Crime

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (5.05 pm): I move the following amendment—

That all words after ‘notes’ be omitted and the following inserted:

‘the Palaszczuk government is ensuring Queenslanders feel safe in their homes and community by:

- (a) providing increased funding through the Palaszczuk government’s 2022 budget of \$78.8 million over four years which will be invested in reforms under the youth justice strategy to continue to reduce youth offending and keep the community safe;
 - (b) the Palaszczuk government’s 2022 budget which will invest more than \$3 billion to support better policing services in Queensland to keep communities safe from juvenile and adult criminal activity;
 - (c) the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice appealing on 16 June 2022 the sentence of a teenager who tragically killed two people on Australia Day in 2021; and
2. acknowledges the strong legislative amendments introduced and moved by the Palaszczuk government to strengthen community safety laws in Queensland were supported by the LNP.’

Youth offending, like crime generally, is a deeply complex issue with no quick or easy fixes, as those opposite discovered when in government. However, while the LNP travels the state politicising this issue, our government is resolutely focused on investing in the programs that divert young people from offending and in the facilities required to detain repeat offenders and hold them to account—to keep the community safe. Since being elected, we have invested more than half a billion dollars in new detention centre beds and early intervention programs and put hundreds of police on the ground.

In this year’s budget alone, we will invest over \$300 million in evidence based interventions and youth justice reforms to address serious repeat offending across Queensland. We know this investment is having results, with ABS data released this year showing the number of youth offenders across Queensland is at its lowest level in a decade. The same ABS data shows that young people make up a decreasing percentage of all offenders—down from 17 per cent to 12 per cent this year.

We know our investment is working to divert a majority of the one to two per cent of Queensland young people who come into contact with the youth justice system away from offending, but I know that this is cold comfort to any Queenslander who has experienced youth crime. We want every Queenslander to know that our government is focused on the small number of young offenders who commit a large number of overall offences and cause the community concern. We know we have more work to do to address and reduce their behaviour and the risks they take with their safety and the safety of others.

After last year’s tragedy at Alexandra Hills, our government made amendments to the Youth Justice Act which introduced the toughest bail legislation in the country. These amendments include a presumption against bail for serious repeat offenders and codifying the common-law principle that offending while on bail is an aggravating factor when sentencing. The legislation is clear and the

message to the courts is clear: if a young person is a risk to community safety, they should be remanded in custody—that is, detention. These changes have seen up to 100 additional young people in detention and in detention for longer. Our youth justice response to those who would put community safety at risk is the strongest in the nation.

While we take the tough decisions and we make the investment into evidence based interventions to stop the cycle of offending and get these young people back into education and a job, those opposite play politics, which brings me to breach of bail. Right now, police can arrest a young person on the spot without a warrant if that young person has not complied with their bail conditions. Under the LNP, there has never been a breach of bail offence. Their claims are misleading, deceitful and disingenuous. What the LNP introduced was a finding of guilt while on bail offence, or FOGWOB. Over the more than two years it was on the books, their FOGWOB offence resulted in 185 offenders being found guilty, 94 per cent of whom reoffended, and the court finding that detention could not be imposed. It was a complete failure—no further penalty! Those opposite know this, but they continue to mislead Queenslanders for political gain.

It is time for the LNP to come clean and be honest with Queenslanders. While we are taking serious and considered steps to intervene early, break the cycle of reoffending and target repeat youth offenders to keep the community safe, the LNP is putting forward proposals that have clearly failed in the past. A backward step to the LNP's failed FOGWOB offence represents a softer approach to youth justice and community safety in Queensland. That is not what the community want. They do not want a soft response.