



Speech By  
**Patrick Weir**


**MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 March 2022

**MOTION**

**Cairns, Youth Crime**

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (5.41 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the member for Burdekin, the shadow minister for police and corrective services, Dale Last. What a great police minister he would be. Crime is out of control in Queensland. It does not matter where you live; everyone has a story of stolen vehicles, home invasions, destruction of property, theft and assaults. All these crimes plus sexual offences and domestic violence are on the rise. Youth crime is at an all-time high with recidivist juvenile offenders thumbing their nose at authorities who are at a complete loss as to what to do to control these criminals, many of whom are not even in their teens.

North Queensland is suffering huge increases in the rates of youth criminal activity with appalling statistics of rises of over 110 per cent. In the last 12 months the Cairns Police Division has seen an increase in the unlawful use of motor vehicles of 64 per cent, with the last three months seeing a rise of 115 per cent. In the last 30 days 59 cars have been stolen. That is almost two per day. Unlawful entry is up by 90 per cent. From March 2020 to February 2021 there were 1,066 unlawful entries and from March 2021 to February 2022 there were 2,026 unlawful entries. In the past three months there has been an increase in unlawful entries of 115 per cent. What is this telling the people of Queensland? It is telling them that whatever this government is doing it is not working.

These rises in criminal activity are massive. They are a disgrace, and the three local members—the members for Cairns, Barron River and Cook—remain in denial, as we are hearing. They should hang their heads in shame. This is happening in their backyard to the very people they were elected to represent. The member for Cairns did say he had the answer to youth crime, though. It is simple really: get constituents to write a letter. Who should they send it to? The Premier, the Minister for Police and Corrective Services or home to mum perhaps? Crime is spiralling out of control and their answer is to write a letter! This situation requires some immediate decisive action. The members for Cairns, Barron River and Cook should go to the Premier and the minister and admit they got it wrong and reverse their opposition to making breach of bail an offence for young criminals.

The local community is crying out for help. They want some real action to stop this crime rampage and the devastating impacts it is having on their day-to-day lives, their businesses and their property. Another community rally against crime will be held on 2 April. I am sure both the Premier and the minister will be conveniently unavailable to attend.

The LNP has consistently stood up for victims of crime and in calling for some action from this government. This Palaszczuk government went to the last election campaign with one message and one message only with the onset of COVID. How often did we hear the Premier repeat this line, 'I am keeping you safe'? The people of Cairns, Barron River and Cook clearly do not feel safe—not in terms of their own personal safety or for the security of their property. Our policy strategies would have delivered protection for the community and the confidence to walk down the streets of North

Queensland without fear their car would be stolen or their home broken into. It does not matter how we look at the crime situation in Cairns and North Queensland; it is particularly bad. The Palaszczuk government's strategies are not working.

The people of North Queensland have been seeking the government's help to deal with youth crime for years and in return there has been nothing—only a worsening of the situation and no plan to improve the safety of residents or their property. This government places more importance on the rights of the offender than the victim. The offenders know this government is weak on crime and that there is no punishment for committing offences, so they are back out on the streets again as soon as they walk out of the police station door. The police are doing their job. They are making the arrests and then watching in frustration as these recidivist offenders are released to continue where they left off.

The impact on the mental health of the victims cannot be overstated, as the member for Toowoomba South said. They do not feel safe in their own homes. This is not acceptable. This is not Mexico City we are talking about; this is Cairns. Expecting that your house will be broken into or your car stolen should not be a way of life.

The members for Cairns, Barron River and Cook are failing their constituents. They are failing to do the job they were elected to do and that is represent their constituents.