




Speech By
Peter Russo
MEMBER FOR TOOHEY

Record of Proceedings, 22 June 2022

MOTION

Youth Crime

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (5.25 pm): I rise to support the amended motion and specifically the proposition of breach of bail. It might be an uncomfortable truth, but Queenslanders never had an offence of breach of bail for young people. Not under the LNP, not under the National Party, not under the Country Party, not under the Independents and not even under the squatter conservatives has there been a breach of bail offence for young people.

I can tell honourable members that there are several ways that a young person may breach their bail including failure to comply with a curfew and failure to reside at an approved address. Today police can arrest a young person on the spot without a warrant if that young person has not complied with their bail conditions. They can even be arrested if police reasonably suspect they are likely to breach a bail condition before the breach has happened.

The LNP created an offence for committing an offence while on bail for an offence called finding of guilt while on bail, as the youth justice minister has already explained this. It was an absolute nonsense and it is time for the LNP to come clean and be honest with Queenslanders. The LNP's law did nothing to deter or reduce crime while it was on the statute books between March 2014 and June 2016 and the courts were left to process the charges in circumstances where no punishment could be imposed. As has already been mentioned, only 185 juvenile offenders were convicted of the offence under the LNP. Of these, more than 90 per cent reoffended within 12 months and 94 per cent within two years. This law meant the offender could receive a lesser penalty because the court could not treat an offence committed while on bail as a circumstance of aggravation.

While we are making a concerted effort to target repeat youth offenders, the LNP is putting forward proposals that have failed in the past or, in the case of breach of bail, have never existed. I am proud to be part of a government that is investing in programs clearly aimed at ensuring Queenslanders are safe in their homes and communities. In and around my electorate of Toohey, government funded programs aimed at preventing offending behaviour or reoffending include Transition 2 Success, which is designed for young people involved in, or at risk of contact with, the youth justice system, helping to re-engage them with education and training. Participants complete nationally recognised certificates to develop positive behaviour and life skills. This assists them to find and keep employment, re-engage with the community and work towards a positive future.

Family-led decision-making gives Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families whose children are in contact with the youth justice system a stronger voice in decisions about their children. It involves the young person, their family, community organisations and youth justice staff working together to reduce offending. Community Youth Response and Diversion provides alternative pathways to support young people. It places an emphasis on after-hours support, cultural mentoring, bridging to flexi school and family-focused intensive case management for young people at risk of reoffending. This side of the House is committed to creating a safe place for all Queenslanders. Those opposite are simply committed to misleading the people of Queensland, playing politics with our most vulnerable residents.