




Speech By
Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR HILL

Record of Proceedings, 27 October 2022

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT

Far North Queensland, Youth Crime

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (2.49 pm): Far North Queensland centres are suffering from a constant, massive youth crime wave that is affecting everyone in these communities. We are always hearing the government spin doctors trying to portray themselves as taking a tough stand, but the reality is people have had an absolute gutful. It has become that bad that, at the Local Government Association of Queensland's annual conference, youth crime was discussed heavily, culminating in a motion from the Mareeba Shire Council to establish diversionary facilities on remote state owned properties for wayward youths. The majority of state councils voted in favour of this motion because they are constantly being hammered by victims of youth crime.

The vote sends a clear message in support of KAP's relocation sentencing policy to be an alternative option for the courts when dealing with juvenile crime. The current system has proven to be a dismal failure. Relocation sentencing provides an opportunity to break the current cycle that turns habitual juvenile criminals into adult criminals. Sending youth to Cleveland detention centre, which costs Queensland taxpayers up to \$1,500 a day, is a badge of honour for them.

To put this further into perspective, 95 per cent of youths sentenced to the Cleveland Bay Detention Centre reoffend within the next 12 months. Relocation sentencing can be delivered as a real alternative and for a fraction of the cost. Relocation sentencing would give magistrates the power to send youth to remote locations, teach them values and skills such as droving, how to build cattle yards and cattle troughs along with other proven, workable programs.

Anyone who believes that youth who commit these crimes are innocent are under an illusion. They know right from wrong and know exactly what is right under the law. Homes are being ransacked, cars stolen and burned, businesses destroyed, and elderly residents are scared to leave their homes. Based on Queensland Childrens Court data, under siege cities—many of these in North Queensland—have experienced a massive increase in theft related and violent crimes. Theft related charges almost doubled from 6,500 in 2014-15 to 12,902 in 2020-21. Break-in charges rose from 4,250 to 8,200 in that same period while robbery and extortion related crimes tripled.

The state government data also shows youth becoming more violent with overall 'acts intended to cause harm' charges rising from 1,350 to 2,390. The KAP's relocation sentencing policy should be implemented as a real alternative to bring this crime crisis to an end.

(Time expired)