




Speech By
Adrian Tantari

MEMBER FOR HERVEY BAY

Record of Proceedings, 14 March 2023

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY SAFETY BILL

 **Mr TANTARI** (Hervey Bay—ALP) (3.36 pm): I rise to make my contribution to the Strengthening Community Safety Bill before the House today. This bill is about putting community safety first. The main objective of the bill is to give effect to the announced legislative reforms and to strengthen youth justice laws by ensuring there is tougher action on youth crime and its causes. For those who choose to continue to do harm to our communities, this bill will ensure they will be dealt with by the full force of the law. The key changes this bill will bring about include targeting serious repeat offenders, tackling the complex causes of youth crime and supporting community safety to respond to serious offending within our communities.

As a member of the Economics and Governance Committee that undertook the review of the bill, from 87 submissions and hearings held across Queensland we heard about the level of frustration from many who lived within these communities. We heard opinions on what solutions should be adopted to curtail the behaviours of a small minority of repeat youth offenders. The committee also heard how youth crime is a complex issue that impacted not only victims but also the families of the perpetrators and the wider community. Additionally, submitters spoke about substance abuse, mental health issues and family breakdowns as causal factors to the likelihood of a young person committing a crime. They spoke about the prevalence of social media as a catalyst for narcissistic self-promotional behaviours with all its dire consequences. We have all seen its effect on the victims who we acknowledge must be supported.

As stated in the committee's report No. 41, many submitters believe that the bill was too strong, it was too punitive and it went too far. Others believed the bill did not go far enough. This just shows the complexity of the issue we are debating here today. This bill will strengthen our youth justice laws. We know that, statistically, 17 per cent of youth offenders are committing 50 per cent of the crimes. These new laws will further target those serious repeat youth offenders who put community safety most at risk. By setting a new declaration of serious repeat offenders, tougher sentencing principles to protect community safety must be applied to these offenders.

Breaching bail will be a criminal offence for young offenders for the first time this century. Further, there will be several other measures such as those relating to motor vehicles by ensuring that the penalties for unlawful use of a motor vehicle are increased through the amendment of existing penalties; and through the introduction of a number of circumstances of aggravation, including where an offender has published material of their offending behaviour on social media.

Like many members, in my electorate I have spoken to victims of crime about their experiences and how the government is addressing those behaviours. In the electorate of Hervey Bay, the government is implementing further programs to break this cycle. Already, intensive case management programs target chronic young offenders and their families, the Transition 2 Success program is working to prevent at-risk young people entering the criminal justice system and multiagency collaborative panels are working across government and non-government organisations to coordinate response services. A new rapid response co-responder team will be put to work in Hervey Bay, alongside

high-visibility targeted patrols as well as packages to support victims of crime and make further investment in community safety. These programs have a single aim: to prevent young people from engaging in criminal activities. These programs provide support to young people and the families of those who have already offended, they address the underlying causes of youth crime and, most importantly, they support the victims of crime.

I thank the Minister for Youth Justice and the Minister for Police for their continued support for the Hervey Bay electorate in working with the departments to address crime faced by my community, because we know that there will always be crime. There always has been and there always will be crime committed by those who choose not to follow our laws. We would not need a police force if that was not true, but we do, and I thank the men and women of the Queensland Police Service, particularly in Hervey Bay, who are doing a great job in making their presence felt in their community and in tackling these offenders head-on. I thank my community and small business owners, like Aggie and Kim from Seega Rent a Car, who last September took the time to speak with Minister Linard and me about their experiences. Their input, like that of many others, is the foundation of these new tougher laws and our community thanks them for that.

I acknowledge the officers of the department of youth justice in my electorate as well as the ambos and the volunteers who deal with the traumas created by the actions of the serious repeat offender cohort. I know that they all do tremendous work in very difficult circumstances. They are the real heroes on the front line. They are the ones who work every day to keep our community safe and our community thanks them.

I thank the committee chair, the member for Logan, and the deputy chair, the member for Mermaid Beach, and the spirit of bipartisanship shown by committee members during our deliberations. I thank the committee secretariat, who worked overtime to ensure hearings were held across the state. It was a mammoth effort that was completed with utter professionalism. Well done.

This bill is legislation that acknowledges the impact that youth crime is having on our community. That is why these new youth laws will be tougher than those anywhere else in Australia. The Palaszczuk government has listened to the community and has now acted, and with these new laws community safety will be strengthened. I commend this bill to the House.