




Speech By  
**Amanda Camm**

**MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY**

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Record of Proceedings, 15 March 2023

### **STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY SAFETY BILL**

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (11.53 am): From listening to the contributions that I have heard over the last sitting days, I would have to say that I do think some members of this House live in a fairyland. When we talk about a cohort of young juvenile repeat offenders, these criminals—and they are criminals—are causing such havoc in the community. They have taken people's lives and loved ones, they have brought fear into people's homes, they have stolen cars, they have impacted people's businesses every single day, they have impacted people's family lives, and ultimately they have put at risk community safety. One job a state government has is looking after community and public safety. We heard the Premier, before she took her leave, announce that violent juvenile car thieves will face 14 years jail in a suite of increased penalties aimed squarely at keeping the community safe. Then we see the legislation that we are debating here and it is not even close to what the Premier has committed to the people of Queensland. Once again, the Premier and the minister have bowed to public pressure, to the negative PR and media and, more importantly, to the opposition which has been governing from this side of the House and calling for breach of bail since it was taken away in 2016.

**Government members** interjected.

**Ms CAMM:** I see members on the opposite side of the House laughing. I do not think it is funny. I do not think any victim of crime in this state would think this piece of legislation is funny.

In June 2016, Labor scrapped the LNP's breach of bail offence, made childhood findings of guilt inadmissible in court when sentencing a person for an adult offence, and reinstated the principle that detention should be the last resort and for the shortest appropriate period when sentencing children. When we tried to move amendments in this House to ensure that that could be returned into legislation, we were shut down. Reinstated into the Penalties and Sentences Act was the principle that imprisonment is a sentence of last resort and a preferable sentence allows the offender to stay in the community.

The cohort that we are talking about comes from complex backgrounds—we all agree on that—but what this Labor government has done over the last several years has actually created the cohort. I look to my portfolio as a spokesperson for the opposition on the child protection system. Many young people who are in the youth justice system come from the child protection system, a system that is set up to protect children—a system that is failing children in this state. When you look at the numbers and the correlation with children that come from the child protection system, after the support and intervention by this Labor state government, they are the children who were continuously failed and are now youth repeat offenders. They have turned into hardened criminals.

I refer to some crime stats from North Queensland. The member for Burdekin and many members on this side of the House travel to Townsville and Cairns to represent the interests of Queenslanders, and many times we have debated the statistics in this House. I reflected on Hansard to find that on 16 March, which will be one year tomorrow, I stood in this House and represented the good people of

Townsville, Thuringowa and Mundingburra because their own local state members were not standing up for victims of crime. Their own local state members were not taking meetings with their constituents who were tired, scared and fed up with the inaction of this state Labor government.

In January alone in Townsville, there were 88 cars stolen; in Cairns, 73. In the period from when this legislation was brought into the House up until now, 222 cars have been stolen in Townsville and 193 in Cairns. Today we are debating and asking questions of the Premier about what this government is doing in regards to the cost of living, and the best the Premier can come up with is, 'We are giving a rebate to your electricity bills.' What is the Premier and the members representing North Queensland doing to alleviate the increased cost of insurance—

**Mr Healy:** Ignoring you!

**Ms CAMM:** I will take that interjection.

**Mr Healy:** Ignoring you!

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Bush): Member for Cairns!

**Ms CAMM:** I will take that interjection.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, members!

**Ms CAMM:** I will take that interjection. The member for Cairns is ignoring me, as he is ignoring his own constituents in Cairns. Those constituents are contacting our shadow minister for police and contacting our other shadow ministers because we have been standing up in this House since the election, calling for breach of bail offences, calling for action and the imposition of consequences, and calling for this government to not go soft on crime. When we go to Cairns for regional parliament, I look forward to meeting with the member's constituents. They always provide me with a very warm welcome when I go to Cairns.

I have heard many members in this House talk about the investment in children and youth services. I would like to reflect on my own community of Mackay and the Whitsundays and its youth service, YIRS. I met with the Minister for Youth Justice two years ago. Since then I have taken representation of the local community to the member for Mackay, Julieanne Gilbert. We have not seen an increase in funding for that service in a decade. This government talks about early intervention, supporting young people, supporting young people with complex needs, yet for my community of Mackay, Isaac and Whitsundays there has been not one increase in funding in the last decade but the footprint has increased. The department has increased the service agreement with no extra funding. My local community's service is now using reserve funding and making a loss of \$60,000 a year to support young people—young people with complex mental health, young people known to Child Safety, young people known to Youth Justice. I wish that it did not fall on deaf ears. It would be fabulous if, at the end of this debate, my local youth service received some of the funding that I have heard those Labor members opposite talk about receiving for their communities. When it comes to making decisions I hear a lot about evidence-based decisions, but that is certainly not what I see.

I also want to address some comments that were made with regard to victims of crime and what this government is doing when it comes to community safety, in particular in relation to the cost of living. Insurance prices based on postcodes in Mackay, Townsville and Cairns have gone up in some cases by 20 to 30 per cent. That is for car insurance and house insurance. What is this government's response? What is the response from those local members? We cannot blame the Scott Morrison government anymore. We cannot blame Campbell Newman anymore. My question to the Premier and to those ministers opposite is: what are you doing to support and help the victims of crime before the full force of this legislation takes effect? We know much of it will not work because they were just fluffy announcements. We have seen that evidenced by the lack of tracking devices, the statistics, the numbers of those youth offenders who have not been detained and who have been released early, the ongoing costs, the fear that has been brought about in our local communities and the lack of response we see by this government.

The LNP will always be tough on crime. The LNP will always hold perpetrators of crime to account. The LNP will also always listen to Queenslanders. We hear them. We understand the challenges they face. If this legislation makes no impact and if this government is brought back to this House to remove detention as a last resort, as we have called for, once again we will demonstrate to the people of Queensland that we are governing from opposition.