




Speech By  
**Brent Mickelberg**

**MEMBER FOR BUDERIM**

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### **STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY SAFETY BILL**

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (6.34 pm): Here we are debating the Palaszczuk Labor government's latest insipid response to Queensland's youth crime crisis, a crisis that is gripping communities from Coolangatta to Cairns, including communities on the Sunshine Coast that I represent. Our communities, despite what we might have heard from the Premier, are at breaking point. Queenslanders have had enough. Queenslanders have had enough of hearing about murders and stabbings on the evening news every single night, they have had enough of having their cars being stolen or their houses broken into and they have had enough of the vandalism and wanton violence that is besetting our communities.

Queenslanders should feel safe in their homes and in the community, but right now they do not. Right now, for good reason, Queenslanders feel abandoned by the Palaszczuk Labor government. What has the state government's response been to this cry for help? In early January, in the aftermath of yet another Queensland's tragic death at the hands of an alleged young criminal, what did the Premier do? When Queenslanders needed her what did Annastacia Palaszczuk do? She did not turn up for work in early January when Queenslanders needed her and she has not turned up to parliament with laws that the Queensland people need now—let alone the ones that she promised on 29 December. Perhaps if the Premier had listened to the community and had recalled parliament in early January and taken decisive and timely action to strengthen youth crime laws those Queenslanders who have lost their lives at the hands of alleged young criminals in the months since might still be alive.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr MICKELBERG:** Those opposite do not like it, but do members know who does not like it more? The people of Queensland! On 29 December last year the Premier promised that violent juvenile car thieves would face 14 years jail when they break the law. One would think that this bill would provide the legislative framework to implement that promise. Does this bill provide the framework for that? The answer is that this bill does not provide that legislative framework. The maximum penalty that violent juvenile car thieves will receive under this legislation is five years, not 14. The Premier and her ministers have the hide to come in here and defend the Premier's broken promise. It is a broken promise despite what we may hear.

Queenslanders know that the Palaszczuk Labor government is not genuine about tackling the insidious problem of youth crime. Queenslanders know that this tired, third-term Labor state government is more interested in how things look rather than how things really are. The Premier and her minions are more interested in spin than substance. Labor members like the members for Townsville, Thuringowa, Keppel and Springwood all ignore their communities' cry for help when it comes to youth crime and they come in here and attack the LNP with some ideological crusade.

**Mr HARPER:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Once again I find the member's contribution offensive and I ask him to withdraw.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Lui): Member for Buderim, the member for Thuringowa has found your comments offensive. Do you withdraw?

**Mr MICKELBERG:** I withdraw. The people of Thuringowa, the people of Townsville, the people of Keppel and the people of Springwood find the government's inaction on youth crime offensive and they are being held to account, held to ransom, by young criminals because this Palaszczuk Labor government will not act. They will not make the hard decisions. When the going gets tough people like the Premier go missing in action. Queenslanders deserve better. We do not have to look too far to see proof that those opposite do not have their heart in tackling the youth crime crisis. Why is it not the minister for youth justice or the Attorney-General bringing this legislation? After all, they are both directly responsible for the provisions addressed by this bill, while the Minister for Police is not.

Minister Linard's charter letter specifically states that she is responsible for leading 'the development of initiatives to prevent youth crime and improve outcomes and reduce demands in the youth justice system.' Therefore, Minister Linard is responsible for leading the government's response to youth crime but, because she does not really support these measures, it has fallen to the Minister for Police to introduce them.

Ministers say that their new-found support for breach of bail is in response to community feedback. As they do so often, those opposite are trying to pull the wool over Queenslanders' eyes. They do not believe in cracking down on repeat youth criminals, they do not believe in taking real action to stem the youth crime crisis and they do not believe in the very measures they say they now accept are needed in the form of a breach of bail offence.

Queenslanders do not have to take my word for it. Let us look at the Attorney-General's own words. In March of last year the Attorney-General said, 'We know what does not work when it comes to young people—and that is called the breach of bail offence.' In June last year, she said 'breach of bail did nothing to reduce crime'. What has changed or is the minister just going to vote in support of a beach of bail offence because it now suits her political objectives? What about the Minister for Youth Justice? In June last year, Minister Linard ruled out reinstating breach of bail as a crime, saying that most youth offenders who breach bail conditions were put in detention anyway.

So once again I ask, what has changed? The answer is that the political winds have changed. While those opposite might not be worried about tackling youth crime they are most certainly worried about their own jobs. That is why we are here today debating a bill that members of the Palaszczuk government do not believe in. They will vote for it anyway because if they do not they will be looking for a new job in 2024.

Queenslanders have had enough and residents in my electorate of Buderim have had enough. They want real action to tackle the youth crime crisis. It is good that the government have finally come in here and decided to make breach of bail an offence after saying for eight years that it would not work, but that is only one small part of the solution. We need to see real consequences for the small group of young people who choose to break the law. Serious repeat young offenders need to know that when they break the law they will be held to account. That is not happening now but it should.

The state government should be unshackling the judiciary by removing the sentencing principle that detention should be a last resort. Too frequently that principle is used to justify releasing young offenders when they should be held in detention both for their own benefit and to ensure that community safety is placed first. We should be ensuring that young offenders, alongside those who are at risk of offending, are given access to meaningful and effective early intervention programs. The government say that they are spending \$1 billion on such programs, but they cannot tell us what is working and what is not. It took the LNP to ask for the Auditor-General to review the government investment in early intervention programs and their effectiveness. That is not good government from this Palaszczuk Labor government.

We know that during the term of this government the percentage of serious repeat young offenders has increased from 10 per cent to 17 per cent so the problem is getting worse. The number of offences has increased. The offences committed by young offenders are becoming more dangerous, with 22 per cent of young offenders charged with acts intended to cause injury in 2021-22, which is up from 13 per cent in 2018-19. If we look at those young offenders held in custody we can see there has been next to no improvement in outcomes. The percentage of young offenders held in custody who were 'totally disengaged from education, training or employment' was 52 per cent in 2018 and it is 52 per cent in 2021. Despite the rhetoric of those opposite, on nearly every single measure things are getting worse, not better.

In my community, things are getting worse; they are not getting better. Last week, countless residents from Sippy Downs, Brightwater and Buderim took the time to meet with me at my mobile offices. Without exception, the No. 1 issue that they raised was youth crime and its impact on our

community. In Sippy Downs, residents are sick and tired of young criminals stealing cars, breaking into houses and destroying important public assets such as playgrounds. Sippy Downs resident Matt told me about enduring years of drug dealing, car surfing, burnouts, brawls in the streets including instances where knives have been pulled, theft and wilful damage. Matt tells me that, despite reporting every single instance to the police and the department of housing, incidents in his street are 'increasing in frequency and ferocity'. Matt tells me that such instances are understandably highly alarming to the young families that live in Sippy Downs.

In Mountain Creek, local residents told me they are sick and tired of young hoons waking them up at all hours of the night and of close calls where young offenders have driven through median strips and down footpaths in stolen vehicles. In Palm View, residents spoke of drug use and assaults. In Buderim, local business owners are at their wits' end dealing with theft and drug dealing. Buderim business owner Hamish told me of cars being ransacked and tools stolen, and of almost daily calls to the police asking them to deal with assaults, theft and drug use occurring in the vicinity of his business. Our community has seen police cars speeding past young kids walking to school as the police try to deal with young criminals who think that they are above the law. It is simply not good enough.

Our police are trying to do the best they can in a broken system. The courts are applying the flawed laws that the Palaszczuk Labor government have implemented in their reckless crusade to weaken Queensland's youth crime laws. The consequence has been an increase in the very types of crime that our community rejects. It is time for this state government to put community safety first. Bleeding hearts are not going to keep our community safe. Rather than media releases like this one, with hollow promises that will not be kept, the Premier needs to demonstrate real leadership and real action to tackle the youth crime crisis. Real consequences for action are what is needed which is why the—

*(Time expired)*