




Speech By
Brent Mickelberg

MEMBER FOR BUDERIM

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MOTION

Palaszczuk Labor Government; Youth Crime

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (5.43 pm): After that, I am starting to think the Premier might have been right. Maybe the member for Mackay would not have been a better health minister than the last one. Maybe the member for Keppel might not have been a better minister for youth justice than the former one—the failed one at that.

It is time for the state government to start putting community safety first. Bleeding hearts do not keep our community safe. It is good that the government has finally decided to make breach of bail an offence after saying for eight years that it would not work. They copied the LNP's breach of bail legislation word perfect. They thought that would get them off the hook. They thought that that one part of the solution would get them off the hook, but the reality is that they need to do more.

Those opposite come in here and talk a big game, but if they are genuine about addressing youth crime in their communities, they can get on board and support the LNP's position to remove detention as a last resort within the Youth Justice Act. That is what magistrates are using to release young criminals early. They are sentencing in accordance with the government's legislation. If those opposite are serious about addressing that problem then they can come in here and support the LNP's position on that.

In 2015-16 the member for Keppel supported the weakening of youth justice laws, abolishing breach of bail and bringing back detention as a last resort. In 2019 the member for Keppel proudly lavished praise on amendments that 'remove legislative barriers that may contribute to children being refused bail'. Just last year the member for Keppel came in here and said, 'We know that breach of bail does not work. Please give us something new.'

What changed? The political winds changed. But it is all hollow from those opposite. Families and small businesses in places like Yeppoon and Rockhampton know that this Labor state government is weak on crime. Families and small businesses know that people like the member for Keppel say one thing in Central Queensland and another thing down here in Brisbane. Families and small businesses know that people like the member for Keppel put their own political ambition ahead of the welfare of the communities that they represent—communities like Yeppoon and Rockhampton, and communities on the Sunshine Coast.

Ms LAUGA: Mr Acting Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock.

Ms LAUGA: I take personal offence to that statement and I ask the member to withdraw.

Mr MICKELBERG: I withdraw. Communities right across Queensland are living the youth crime crisis which sits squarely at the feet of weak Labor state government ministers and Labor state members like the member for Keppel—Labor state members and ministers who have systematically weakened youth justice laws—

Ms LAUGA: Mr Acting Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Resume your seat, member for Buderim.

Ms LAUGA: I take personal offence at the statement made by the member for Buderim and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: I am going to take some advice. Neither the Clerks at the table nor I heard personal references. There is no point of order.

Mr MICKELBERG: You would have thought, given the member for Keppel had five minutes to speak, that she would have talked about her solutions to the youth crime crisis gripping Central Queensland such as in Yeppoon and Rockhampton. There is pretty understandable community concern in those areas. It is well understood. What did the member for Keppel do? She came in here and spent two minutes talking about herself—two minutes making herself the victim while mothers in Yeppoon have their car stolen with their baby in the back seat. How does that support the community? How is the member for Keppel fighting for her community? She is not. She is not because she is beholden to those weak Labor ministers opposite. She does not fight for her community because she is more interested in her own political ambitions. That is simply not good enough.

Ms LAUGA: Mr Acting Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Resume your seat please, member for Buderim.

Ms LAUGA: I again take personal offence at the member's statement and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Buderim, take a breath. You will withdraw and put your comments through the chair.

Mr MICKELBERG: I withdraw. Queensland small businesses are being held to ransom by young criminals who ransack their shops, frequently without consequence. Yeppoon business owners whom I recently met with showed me how they leave their empty tills at the door every night so that young criminals can see there is nothing there to steal. Even with that action, young criminals still throw bricks through their front windows with monotonous regularity.

The data supports the way they are feeling. 2022 was the worst year on record for unlawful entry offences in Yeppoon. Some 213 break and enters were recorded there last year, up 39 per cent from the year before. No matter how we cut the numbers, the facts do not lie. Crime is increasing in Keppel. Let us look at the data for the Capricorn district in the last year. Car theft is up 252 per cent. Break and enter is up 100 per cent. Assaults are up 148 per cent. We heard from the shadow Attorney-General that the number of youth offenders fell every single year under the LNP government. Crime is worse under Labor and Labor members of parliament, like the member for Keppel, are not prepared to fight for their communities. They are not prepared to fight for their communities and they have decided—

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Resume your seat, member for Buderim. What is your point of order, member for Keppel?

Ms LAUGA: Mr Acting Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take offence to the member's statement and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: The member has taken personal offence, member for Buderim. I ask you to withdraw.

Mr MICKELBERG: I withdraw. Labor members of parliament have presided over a systematic weakening of youth justice laws in this state over the last eight years, and it is communities like Yeppoon and Rockhampton that are paying the price—communities that deserve better from a local member like the member for Keppel, who is abandoning them.

(Time expired)