




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR JORDAN

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STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY SAFETY BILL

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (11.48 am): Once a month on a Friday evening around 180 young people in my community gather at the YMCA Springfield Central Community Centre. They meet to play some intense games of basketball and volleyball, play some fierce online gaming comps, screen-print T-shirts or get creative with hip-hop dance and DJ'ing, whilst enjoying free pizza and a drink from our terrific local Domino's crew. They are there as a result of the incredible team from REKON Youth and supported by the wonderful Fana and Shelleigh Lole from Lole's Barber Shop. REKON offer community connection, diversionary programs, mentoring and training. Their mission is to empower young people to lead successful lives and to build a thriving community. I could not be more grateful for their work. The YMCA Springfield Central Community Centre was initially earmarked as a general community centre, but through strong advocacy from me and local stakeholders, this centre has become a dedicated youth-focused community space, aimed at engaging young people and providing them with that safe space. I want to thank YMCA Brisbane for their significant commitment to this centre.

In Flagstone, a growing community in my electorate, local developer, Peet, has developed a dedicated youth strategy based on input by young people in the community. This youth strategy is not just a document; Peet is investing financially to encourage organisations to undertake youth activities and projects which engage young people in a positive manner. At Orion Springfield Central, one of our major shopping centres, a new group called Y2Tribe, led by the dedicated Edgar, is quietly connecting with young people to hear their stories and to better understand what is happening in their lives and what support they need especially if this support is not being offered in their family environment. I recently met with Dr David Lakisa and Wayne Lakisa through their organisation, Talanoa Education. They are engaging our young Pacific Islander and Maori youth. Wayne, a former educator in youth detention, brings an incredible wealth of knowledge, experience and insights into understanding youth and education within our justice system, and I was so pleased to receive his suggestions and advice.

I provide these five examples because I believe they demonstrate that my community recognises the need to engage our young people and has a willingness to intervene early to prevent them from offending through boredom or perhaps as a result of more serious trauma, broken homes or underlying medical and learning difficulties. These examples are evidence that we want young people to succeed, to not offend and certainly to not reoffend. It gives me hope that, despite everything, we continue to believe that these young people are worth saving, and I do believe that this is our Labor government's view as well: every young person is worth saving. It is why we already have record investment and are increasing this investment in youth justice programs to tackle those complex causes of youth crime, whether it is in the prevention and early intervention space, whether it is in programs we know are already working and where we are seeing results, programs such as the Community Youth Response Diversionary Program, restorative justice conferences and Transition 2 Success programs.

However, we also recognise that there is a cohort—around 17 per cent—of young offenders who are committing 50 per cent of crimes. The government has increased our efforts on these serious repeat offenders with more intensive case management and intensive bail support for young people and their families. Our communities deserve to feel safe and, like many, it concerns me greatly when I see videos

of crime online in our local communities. I truly believe that most young Queenslanders do the right thing and we should continue to have faith in them, but for that small cohort who, despite our best efforts, continue to pose a threat to community safety, then we need to respond. It is certainly what I believe the majority of my community is seeking from us as legislators, and we must listen and we must act.

We already have presumption against bail provisions, however, through this bill, we are introducing new laws including: a workable breach of bail provision; strengthening conditional release orders by extending the maximum period from three months to six months; a new declaration of serious repeat offender; and increasing penalties for stolen vehicles. We will also expand the number of offences with a presumption against bail.

I do not believe that anyone from our side of the chamber wants to see young people incarcerated. It is why we are doing everything we can to intervene early—we are seeing great success with most young people, the majority of whom do not reoffend—and to also work intensely with those young people who continue to be troubled. However, I do not shy away from the victims of crime in my community. I worry deeply about the residual trauma they carry when their homes are invaded, their property is stolen, and when there is potential or real violence perpetrated against them. I have and will continue to meet with and engage with individuals in my community who wish to share their experiences with me so I can offer ongoing support and assistance.

I also want to thank our Neighbourhood Watch groups in Springfield and Jimboomba police divisions who I work really closely with and I know are proactive in the space of community, as well as, of course, our wonderful local hardworking police.

The bill before us is necessary, but it is not being done in isolation. More and significant funding to tackle the complex causes of crime, early intervention programs, more support for victims of crime and boosting our police resources are what is required. This is what a responsible government does, a government that not only listens to and cares about the victims of crime but also understands and wants to address the complexities of youth crime and is determined to act. I commend the bill to the House.