



Speech By
Dale Last

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

Record of Proceedings, 25 October 2023

MOTION

Townsville, Youth Crime

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (5.00 pm): I move—

That this House notes:

- (a) the dramatic increase in car thefts, attacks by offenders on police officers and the growing community concern about the impact of crime throughout Townsville;
- (b) comments by the members for Townsville, Thuringowa, and Mundingburra that the government's policies to combat crime are effective despite increasing threats to the community;
- (c) notes the comments of south-east based Labor members, including the members for Capalaba, McConnel, Bundaberg and Gaven, downplaying the extent of crime;

and calls on all three Townsville members to explain to the people of their electorates why the Labor government has failed to support policies to curb the youth crime crisis in North Queensland and respond to demands to ensure community safety.

Just when we thought the crime problem in the north could not get any worse, we have the events that unfolded in that community over the last week: stolen cars driving at police vehicles at high speed; elderly residents assaulted in their own home and their vehicle stolen; and, would members believe, last night the Townsville Civic Theatre locked down because of a stolen vehicle hooning around the front. It is out of control. One asks the question: where does it stop? More importantly, where are the members for Townsville, Mundingburra and Thuringowa? In Thuringowa last night a stolen ute collided with a motorcycle. It drove over the rider of that motorcycle. Three juvenile offenders—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. Resume your seat while I take some advice. Member, firstly, I would like you to assure the House that the matters you are referring to are not sub judice. I would also like you to reflect upon the advice I gave when I was Acting Speaker about mentioning matters that have occurred where it is likely that a charge will be laid but before that charge has been laid.

Mr LAST: I will move on. Townsville is ground zero again. QPS figures to the end of August paint a horrifying picture for that particular community. In the last year the number of juveniles charged for assault, serious assault, unlawful entry and unlawful use of a motor vehicle is the highest in 22 years—and it is not changing. In the last 30 days in that community, five cars have been stolen every day; more than 11 homes and businesses have been broken into every day; and more than nine people have been assaulted every single day. Stolen cars are chasing police vehicles. We have images of stolen vehicles being driven past the police watch house and, today, being driven past the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre. These young offenders are getting more brazen.

Ms Richards interjected.

Mr McDonald interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members for Redlands and Lockyer!

Mr LAST: Then today we had the bombshell revelation that the cupboard is bare. When it comes to how the government is going to deal with this juvenile crime problem, the cupboard is bare.

Mr McDonald interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Lockyer, you are under a warning. I would ask you to leave the chamber for an hour.

Whereupon the honourable member for Lockyer withdrew from the chamber at 5.03 pm.

Mr LAST: That this government has run out of ideas should be ringing alarm bells for Queenslanders. What hope does that give them moving forward? What hope does that give the victims in this state who are having their homes broken into and their cars stolen?

This weekend there are community meetings being held by the Premier and her cabinet ministers. I certainly hope that Townsville residents take the opportunity to go along and tell their stories and demand some answers. They are not getting any answers and they are not getting any action from their three local members, you can be sure of that. I cannot wait for the contribution from the member for Thuringowa. The government would have us believe that it is on top of crime, but the figures do not lie. The figures are there in black and white. As we say on this side, there needs to be consequences for actions. These offenders need to be held to account because there is genuine fear in that community for their personal safety.

As I like to say, you cannot buy your way out of this problem. The Premier has stood up in this place on a number of occasions and talked about the investment this government is making in this space. Still we are seeing crime spiralling out of control. Still we are seeing houses being broken into, cars being stolen and people's lives being put at risk. That has to stop. We have a business in Townsville today that outlaid millions of dollars to buy a parcel of land on which to house their vehicles because they fear that their vehicles are going to be stolen. Families have been in my office and have made the decision to sell their family home and move out of fear for their safety. These are the repercussions of this crime wave that is going on in that community.

Our police are burnt out. We know that there are fewer police on the street under the watch of this police minister. The city of Townsville and Queensland as a whole deserve better. They deserve to have a government that is going to ensure their safety. They deserve a government that is going to hold these offenders to account. In 12 months time Queensland will vote.