




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

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STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY SAFETY BILL

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (11.35 am): I rise to contribute to the debate on this long, much awaited bill. I will get to the flaws of the bill, but in following the member for Bundaberg I find it astonishing that the member did not even mention the victims of crime in Bundaberg. He did not even mention the victims and hardworking police officers who do everything they can each and every day to stay safe. The region that I represent is part of the Wide Bay as well, just like Maryborough and Bundaberg. Look at the statistics for January: other theft, 586; unlawful entry, 207; unlawful use, 82. That was just in one month alone.

That was the month the Premier decided, 'Hang on a minute. It's all getting a bit tough in 'medialand'. We'd better do a change.' This is the Premier standing up after those horrific deaths because communities are outraged just like my community of the South Burnett has been for years. Police officers have been outraged for years because of the failings of this Palaszczuk government. What did the government do? The Premier decided to stand up and say, 'I'm going to have a 10-point plan.' That has all come unstuck this week, hasn't it? Because we know that one of the principal parts of the Premier's so-called 10-point plan—after all of the other point plans she has announced in the past—cannot even work. We know that it has completely turned to dust during this debate because it is obvious—and the government has actually admitted—that they cannot and will not be able to lock kids up for the amount of time the Premier stood up and said. On 29 December the Premier actually said on Twitter, 'Violent juvenile car thieves will face more jail time and sentencing will be strengthened as part of a suite of increased penalties to keep the community safe.' What a load of rubbish! It has not happened. It is not in this bill, and both the Premier and the minister have had to come in here and admit it.

Look at them all over there! The member for Bundaberg did not even talk about the victims. He did not even talk about the hardworking police officers. The reason is because members on the left, like the member for Bundaberg, do not want this bill before the House. You see them one after another forgetting the victims of crime, forgetting people like the poor young man who sat in a park in Kingaroy playing his Gameboy when a group of violent repeat youth offenders—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): Member, I am conscious of sub judice. I want to double-check with you. You are confident it is not before the courts?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I am. Violent offenders dragged him out of the car. They stole his car, they threw his mobile phone away and then he had to limp home covered in blood. This is a highly functioning autistic young man from my community. His father contacted me.

We need to be tough on crime. Do we need to help out these youths from my community who do not have a good family life? Absolutely we do. That is exactly what we need to continue to do, but for the repeat violent youth offenders enough is enough. The victims in our community have had enough. The community members have had enough. Our police officers, who are doing everything they possibly can to stem this, have had enough.

Why are we here? It is because in 2016 the Labor government passed the youth justice amendment act which removed the hard work that we had brought in in 2014. They removed breach of bail. They restricted the right of police to arrest for breach of bail. They rendered inadmissible child criminal histories when no conviction was recorded. They imposed the requirement that a detention sentence be used as a last resort, and that is why I support my good friend with his amendment in relation to bringing that back. They reintroduced sentencing reviews and abolished the boot camps.

Mr Harper: That worked, didn't it?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I will take that interjection from the member for Thuringowa and I will tell the House why. Because it was Townsville—

Honourable members interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I take that interjection because he is on a warning, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I ask that you rule in that regard.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Nanango, I did not hear the interjection but I will warn all members on a warning that if they are interjecting and I see that—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, I will caution you not to reflect on the chair. Any member who is on a warning and interjects will be thrown out.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. The member for Thuringowa clearly yelled out across the chamber. I will not reflect on your decision, but this is the member who had to come into this House this morning and apologise for doing the same thing yesterday.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, you are welcome to write to the chair if you believe that my ruling was not correct. I have made a ruling on that decision though.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I want to clarify, firstly, that you did not call the member in relation to the matter and she resumed her seat so I am presuming that the member for Nanango has concluded her speech.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order and I will not hear any more points of order on this. Member for Nanango, you still have some time left for your speech. Do you wish to continue?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I absolutely do. Labor government members and ministers want to shut down this debate, and that is why they are going to guillotine this debate tomorrow. They know it is an embarrassing indictment. For the member for Thuringowa to once again tell a bare, blatant mistruth in this House that he has not interjected is just a load of rubbish.

Mr HARPER: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Once again, I take offence at the member's remarks and I ask her to withdraw. They are offensive.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Nanango, the member has taken offence. Further, I will caution you again that I have made a decision on your former point of order and I would encourage you to move on in your speech.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Like I was saying, we are here in this House because members like the member for Thuringowa—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Nanango, you need to withdraw.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Sorry, I withdraw. We are given such a little amount of time to talk about issues that are important in our community, and we are standing here today because of members like the member for Thuringowa. He does not understand the victims of crime, the hardworking police officers or the hardworking ambulance officers who have to pick up these bloodied people who are bleeding from being stabbed in their homes. I had a police prosecutor in my own community who woke up with a brick to his head.

I will tell the House why this is happening. It is because seven years ago this government changed the laws, and those juveniles who were 12 at the time have grown up in the system and they are now over 17 years old. I see the members for Maryborough and Thuringowa giggling and pulling faces at me, and I think that is ridiculous.

Mr SAUNDERS: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find that very offensive. I was not talking about the member for Nanango. Who would?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Nanango, the member has taken offence and I ask that you withdraw.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I withdraw.

Mr POWELL: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Whilst the member for Nanango has withdrawn her comments—

Ms Boyd: No, she hasn't.

Mr POWELL: She has.

Ms Boyd: She has not.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members, I will hear the point of order in silence.

Mr POWELL: I believe the comments made by the member for Maryborough in his final statement were very disparaging of the member for Nanango. If she is not going to take offence, I certainly will and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, you cannot take offence on someone else's behalf. I will ask for no more points of order on that matter and we will come back to the member for Nanango.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I have withdrawn and I will withdraw again. I will say this. It is an indictment on the government that it does not take this issue seriously. We have been calling for bringing back breach of bail as an offence for years and years and years. I could read pages and pages and pages from history with all of these statements, including from the police minister, the youth justice minister, the Acting Leader of the House right now and the member for Bundaberg. I have got quotes right here.

They came into this House and they ridiculed it as a political stunt, as something that will never work and should not work. Then, to get the Premier off the front page of the paper for not showing up to Toowoomba and not showing up to Goondiwindi the other day and to make sure this bit of bad news for the Premier goes away, she decided to do the biggest backflip I have ever seen in my 10 years in this parliament. The Premier came in here and actually pretended that the breach of bail amendment was not our exact words. The Attorney-General actually stood in the House and tried to justify why their amendment was different to the amendment that we had brought into this House. I do feel for the Attorney-General because she does not want this law. It was obviously part of the PowerPoint presentation that went to the cabinet to say, 'We need to keep the LNP quiet because they are right on this issue. They are right.'

Mrs Gerber: She got the drugs.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I will take that interjection. The Attorney-General and the other left in the cabinet got what they wanted and that is in relation to the increasing of the drugs that are now going to be flowing into this state. If they do not think it will increase crime in our community, well, I have got something coming.

I want to finish on this next point, even though there is so much more. I received a letter from a constituent, Paul, who shared his experience with youth crime. He wrote to me—

One year ago we joined the victims of crime via an armed home invasion, the knife, just as sharp as his words and intentions. This is something we would rather forget, instead, it remains and is reinforced as we watch the news every night.

He went on to say—

Thank-you to all our frustrated police who dedicate themselves, risking life and limb, to catch these alleged thieves only to watch as many are released and unleashed to terrorise and reoffend again.

That is the feeling of my community. That is what is happening on a daily basis because this government is soft on crime. This is one small step, but we need to go so much further to protect our communities.