




Speech By
Hon. Di Farmer

MEMBER FOR BULIMBA

Record of Proceedings, 22 August 2023

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Walker, Mr H; Youth Crime

 **Hon. DE FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business, Minister for Training and Skills Development and Minister for Youth Justice) (10.04 am): I begin by paying tribute to Mr Hugh Walker, who was a much loved friend and neighbour in my community who lost his life in a house fire over the weekend. We send all of our condolences to his wife, Julie, and his family.

The Palaszczuk government is absolutely committed to community safety and community confidence that what we are doing to address youth crime is based on evidence. It is why earlier this year the Premier committed to public reporting for youth offending. As a result, there are four new measures in the 2023-24 service delivery standards for Youth Justice: the rate of young people aged 10 to 17 years who have contact with Youth Justice per 10,000 population; the proportion of young people declared a serious repeat offender under the Youth Justice Act 1992 out of all young people with a proven offence finalised; the average daily number of young people in detention centres, rate per 10,000 population; and the cost per young offender supervised in the community per day.

The new measures were published on the department's website on 2 August 2023 and will be updated biannually on the department website. The important figures we already know about relate to the drop in the number of youth offenders with a proven offence. They include a drop of 35 per cent over the last 10 years; a drop of 30 per cent over the last five years; and a drop of three per cent over the last three years.

On top of these and other broader measures, I have committed publicly to an evaluation of each of the early intervention and prevention programs which are part of our \$1.4 billion investment in addressing youth crime. I have said clearly that if we find that any of these programs are not working we will stop doing them.

As part of our rolling program of evaluations, we are already seeing some excellent results. This is why, since taking on the youth justice portfolio again, I have been so pleased to announce additional funding for some of these initiatives, such as the additional five youth co-responder locations on top of the eight already operating across the state. Since their inception our youth co-responder teams have seen over 67,000 young people, with a 95 per cent compliance rate. There is an additional \$56.8 million, which includes funding for 47 additional positions for our 16 intensive case management locations across the state. These programs are aimed at our most serious repeat offenders, and we have already seen a 51 per cent decrease in the frequency of reoffending and a 72 per cent decline in assaults against the person.

These two programs are part of a tranche of early intervention and prevention programs aimed at addressing the complex causes of youth crime. In fact, of the \$1.4 billion we have invested, over \$664 million is invested in youth justice programs. They include restorative justice conferencing; Transition 2 Success; fast-track sentencing; the conditional bail program; Community Partnership

Innovation Grants; Community Youth Response and diversion; Youth Justice Taskforce; early action groups; PCYC; intensive case management; the JTYouGotThis program; Mount Isa transitional hub; the Specialist Youth Crime Rapid Response Squad; strengthening bail laws resourcing; Townsville Community Youth Response; Townsville Street University; the vehicle immobiliser trial; watch house support; Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce; youth co-responder teams expansion; the youth drug and alcohol treatment service; bail monitoring and bail support; electronic monitoring; enhanced youth and family wellbeing; Youth Development Partnership Fund; family-led decision making; Framing the Future—Project Booyah; Intensive Bail Initiative; and On Country. These are real, rolled gold early intervention programs.

We are committed to community safety, and the community needs to know that what we are doing is based on evidence. We will continue to fund programs and services that the evidence tells us are effective in reducing reoffending and increasing community safety.