




Speech By  
**Fiona Simpson**

**MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE**

---

Record of Proceedings, 15 March 2023

**STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY SAFETY BILL**

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (3.45 pm): I heard the previous member talk about the need for honesty in this debate and yet we have a Premier who has publicly talked about harsher penalties that are not harsher penalties when we look at the black and white of the legislation. The Premier has misled Queenslanders already. This is after eight years in the job.

**Ms Richards** interjected.

**Ms SIMPSON:** She is dropping the ball and ignoring the genuine fear of Queenslanders. Once again, I hear Labor members belittling the fear of Queenslanders. They have no idea. That is why it has got to this point. The fact it is so serious now is that there has been eight years of systematic failure by this government to address the issues.

What we have now are hardened young criminals who have gone through the system and have not had the appropriate intervention points in the justice system because this Labor government under Premier Palaszczuk watered them down about seven years ago. What we are seeing is not the consequences of inaction but the consequences of the deliberate action to remove the breach of bail provisions, to make detention a last resort, to tie the hands of the judiciary where detention may have been a more appropriate solution and to not ensure that the early intervention programs were achieving what they needed to achieve.

I support early intervention, but what we have not seen coupled with that is transparency and action. When there is a progression from lower level crime to very serious crime and people getting away with crime time and time again we then have hardened criminals. At that point it is very difficult to intervene. What we see is the fruit of the deliberate action of this government to water down the law. Now they have made it so much harder.

We heard the Labor member for Redlands trying to downgrade the genuine fear that people in the community have faced.

**Mrs Gerber:** Saying it is playing politics.

**Ms SIMPSON:** Saying it is playing politics. Let me read from what a constituent—not a politician—who was a victim of crime said. Let us not forget that these are everyday Queenslanders. The constituent said—

We visited my mother in Maryborough. Two weeks ago in town we stayed the night and we were robbed by a juvenile offender early Saturday morning—4.30 am. He took the brand new iPhone 13 and keys to our Prado and tried to steal my Hyundai car.

He goes on to give a shout-out to the Maryborough police and the job they did. How upset and intimidated his elderly mother is. Whether she is elderly or not, it has completely destroyed her right to safety in her own home. Living in fear—yes, there are Queenslanders living in fear and still we hear the bleating from Labor members who think it is all made up. It is not. These are people's stories.

In Nambour, in the seat of Nicklin, I have walked down the street and talked to people. Nambour is next to my old hometown of Yandina. I went to high school in Nambour. I grew up around the area. In the last few days, as well as previously, I have talked to people who have said, 'I work in Nambour. I feel too scared to go to my car on my own after work at five o'clock in the afternoon.' They have seen a deterioration in safety. People's fear and actual incidents matter, but once again we have heard Labor members downplay this, as if it does not matter that people are living in fear.

**Mr Power:** That's just lies. Why would you say something like that? It does matter—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Martin): Order, member for Logan!

**Ms SIMPSON:** It does matter.

**Mr Power** interjected.

**Ms SIMPSON:** I have been listening to members opposite—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, member for Logan!

**Mr LANGBROEK:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member, what is your point of order?

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I draw your attention to the fact that the member for Logan has used unparliamentary language and I ask that he withdraw it.

**Mr POWER:** I am not sure, but I am happy to apologise for the good order of the House.

**Ms SIMPSON:** There are people everywhere throughout Queensland living in fear of crime—not because of some made-up media story but because they have experienced it. This lady was telling me that, as a worker in Nambour, she fears walking to her car on her own after work at five o'clock in the afternoon unless someone can walk with her. That is a genuine issue.

I ask the government to explain what the actual police strength numbers in Nambour are. We know that about eight years ago the actual police strength numbers were 30. I would like to ask them what the actual police strength is today. They must answer that question, as they must answer that question in relation to other police stations throughout the Sunshine Coast and Queensland, because we have found they have tended to fudge the actual police numbers that are available to meet crime. At the same time police numbers are downgraded, they have watered down the laws with regard to juvenile justice. You have to have the suite of measures this government took away, and we are fighting to see them restored.

We have just seen an Olympic backflip from Premier Palaszczuk with regard to breach of bail. Didn't that set the cat amongst the pigeons when it came to what was happening internally in Labor. They did a little backroom deal. 'We'll water down drug laws in order to give you breach of bail,' so the left and the right can feel like they have had a win. You cannot deny, whatever the machinations are behind closed doors, the public machinations of members from the Labor side who were completely opposed to bringing back breach of bail. There is a conga line of embarrassment on the Labor side, but they are not genuine unless they go about putting other measures in place such as my colleague the member for Burdekin and other colleagues have outlined with respect to other measures to help with this particular issue.

At the start of this year Queenslanders experienced horrendous examples of youth crime, including home invasions and loss of life such as we saw in North Lakes and as we saw later in some of the suburbs of Brisbane, but where was the Premier? Certainly, she was not going to break her holiday overseas. Premier Palaszczuk just did not turn up to work in January. She took time off for weeks when Queenslanders needed her. So much for keeping Queenslanders safe. That was just the political spin she wanted when it was convenient for her at an election. But when the rubber hits the road on this issue of juvenile crime, her intervention to water down the laws and seeing the fruit of the deliberate watering down of the laws, where was the Premier? She was on holidays. Extraordinary! She appears to be a part-time Premier when there is a red carpet involved. It is unfortunate that when people's lives were at risk the Premier was nowhere to be seen.

Ultimately, we have seen the worsening impacts of youth crime over a number of years. The crisis has reached higher levels than we have seen even in the past. Many communities have been struggling with this in the last few years. The Premier was missing in action and has been disingenuous with respect to the laws that we now see before the House, particularly with regard to the so-called penalties the Premier says she is bringing in. We heard a very clear legal treatise from my colleague who, on the basis of other legal analysis, found that the level of increased penalties the Premier referred

to is actually a mistruth. The Premier promised that violent criminals would receive harsher penalties, including a maximum penalty of 14 years in jail, but that is not what she has delivered based on the laws currently before the House when looked at in context with the accompanying legislation.

Let us have truth about the issues that have occurred with the watering down of juvenile justice laws in Queensland. Let us give Queenslanders what they deserve, which is the right to be safe and to feel safe and not to be ridiculed by those opposite when they do not think those things matter until their own political hides may not be safe. The only time they care about safety is when there is a bit of heat under their proverbials and therefore we start to see them backflip with respect to one law. There needs to be far more to fix this broken system.