




Speech By
James Lister

MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS

Record of Proceedings, 24 May 2023

MOTION

Palaszczuk Labor Government; Youth Crime

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (5.33 pm): I rise to speak in favour of the motion moved by the member for Clayfield and implacably against the ragbag of excuses and irrelevances introduced by the youth justice minister which do more to shine a sidelight on the fatal disconnection between word on the street and the community and this government than anything else that we could do on our own.

Do members opposite have any idea what it is like for people in Goondiwindi to every single night have to work out how they will secure their place so they are not home invaded and so that their cars are not stolen? Does anybody opposite understand what it is like for a small business owner who works hard to generate wealth for themselves, to employ others and to generate taxes to have that business ram raided and to have their vehicles stolen? Do they have any idea what it is like for the tradie in Goondiwindi who has his ute stolen and all of his tools and the ute burnt or pushed into the Macintyre River? Do they have any idea what impact that has on their business, on their livelihood? Do they have any idea what happens to the elderly gentleman who is seriously assaulted so that the keys to his car can be taken by juveniles for a joy ride? Do they have any idea what it is like for their community to experience assaults, deaths and murders by young offenders because of the weakness of the laws that the government had the temerity to introduce almost a decade ago?

We are now reaping the bitter fruit of going soft on youth crime. We have seen a generation of youth offenders who have no respect for the law, the community or themselves, thanks to the watering down of laws by this disgraceful Palaszczuk government over years. Members opposite have drenched themselves in shame and still refuse to admit it. This government is very disconnected from what is happening on the ground in rural communities. When I look across to the other side of the House I see many heads down, because they know that at the next election the people of Queensland will pass a very harsh verdict on this government for persistently refusing to accept that it has done the wrong thing and that good people who live by and uphold the law and their communities are entitled to sleep safe at night. I am tired of hearing from the Palaszczuk Labor government that we need to balance the rights of offenders with the rights of communities to be safe. There is to be no balance there. Communities have the right to be safe. People have the right to be safe in their own homes. People have the right not to be assaulted or murdered or have their cars stolen or their business invaded.

Every time members of this government say that it is a complex issue and that we need to take into account the rights of offenders, they forsake the people of Queensland, who are entitled to their protection. When young offenders are allowed out night after night to commit the same offences night after night, there is no balance. It is a disgraceful departure from the role of government to look after the good people of Queensland.

It does not surprise me, really, that this government has persistently looked after the interests of offenders. I refer to the amendments to the Youth Justice Act through which the government brought back breach of bail—I am told, as a result of a deal between the left and the right of the Labor Party.

Didn't the right get diddled? The right wanted breach of bail brought back and the left said, 'Well, we'll do it if you give us watering down of drug laws.' What happened? The reforms have not resulted in any extra custodial sentences for juveniles. They are still laughing, aren't they? It is rather like the vegan farm invaders. What did the government do about that sort of lawlessness? Some of those people were juveniles. They were given just a slap on the wrist, because at the heart of this government is a compact with criminals. It is a compact with the bleeding-heart lefties who do not believe that people in communities like Goondiwindi should be able to sleep safe in their beds at night.

We also know that this government is wringing its hands over the plight of youth offenders and wants to raise the age of criminal responsibility. As if things are not bad enough now!

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr LISTER: I take that acknowledgement from the member for Nanango. She understands what youth crime has done to her community. This government persists in wanting to feather the nests of juvenile offenders.

No-one wants to see juvenile offenders in prison, but if the question is, 'Are they locked up or allowed to commit the same offences night after night in my communities?' the answer should be, 'Lock them up.' We will never see that from this government. This government is fatally disconnected from what people want. They want to sleep safe in their homes at night. They want to make sure that their cars are not stolen over and over again. They do not want the cost of living to impact them more because they are paying double for their insurance due to the rampant crime that this government has failed to do something about. I will stop at nothing to hold this government to account and to remind the people in my electorate every day about the forsaken nature they have under this Labor government that thinks criminals should come first.

(Time expired)