




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR KAWANA

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STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY SAFETY BILL

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.31 pm): Can I say at the outset on debating juvenile justice laws in the state of Queensland that Queenslanders absolutely deserve better than what they have at the moment. When reflecting on the speech given by the senior minister of the Palaszczuk government, I note that she could not utter the words ‘breach of bail’, yet if we listen to the Premier and the police minister ‘breach of bail’ is now the cornerstone of Labor Party policies to fix this issue in Queensland. However, the left wing of the Labor Party, like the minister we have just heard from, could not utter the words ‘breach of bail’. She talked about therapeutic programs and this and that for the kids, but she could not mention ‘breach of bail’.

We know why. It is because they have spent eight years campaigning against breach of bail, and now it is in their legislation. We attempted to introduce an amendment in 2021, but they rejected our implementation of that. They denied us the opportunity to do it but now they have copied it word for word. It was the quickest amendment that parliamentary counsel have had to draft because they just grabbed the LNP amendment from 2021 and gave it to the Labor minister to introduce.

Promises are hollow in this Palaszczuk government. When we talk about youth crime, we talk about victims. We talk in the LNP about the impact that youth crime and all types of crime is having on the victims in Queensland. I am known for always putting the rights of the victims before the perpetrators, and I will continue to do that in this bill today with my contribution.

Who could forget the statement issued on 29 December 2022? The Premier was under all this pressure to have something. Just before she got on the plane and travelled to Paris for five weeks, she had to have something to announce so they rushed the Premier out just after Christmas and announced this 10-point plan that they developed on the back of an envelope. This is not a 10-point plan for victims of crime; this is a 10-point plan for a political fix for a Labor government that is known to be soft on crime. The very first sentence of this press release states—

Violent juvenile car thieves will face 14 years’ jail in a suite of increased penalties aimed squarely at keeping the community safe.

It is there in black and white in the Premier’s press release that she issued—‘juvenile car thieves will face 14 years’ jail’. Now we find out—and the government did not want to tell anyone—that the Youth Justice Act does not apply to that because they cannot give a 14-year maximum sentence. Why did the Premier not disclose that to Queenslanders when she made that announcement? Why did she not tell the people of Queensland that that promise could not be kept? Guess what. I suspect the Premier did not even know because this was rushed so the Premier could announce it before she jumped on the jet to travel to Paris where she could drink Chandon. That is the priority of Anastacia Palaszczuk, the Premier. Her priority was a political fix on 29 December before she jumped on a jet and left Queensland for Paris. That was the reality of it and that was what that announcement was all about.

Premier Palaszczuk said that the 10-point plan is all about keeping people safe. Well, it is not. Premier Palaszczuk promised to keep Queenslanders safe. There is nothing more unsafe than a Palaszczuk Labor government promise, and that is what has been exposed. The very first test of their laws failed. Even the Attorney-General has not stood up and explained to Queenslanders this untruth, this mistruth—

Ms Fentiman: Yes, I did.

Mr BLEIJIE: Oh, you did explain the mistruth, did you? I take the interjection when the Attorney said that, yes, she did explain the mistruth in the press release. Thank you for the honesty, Attorney-General, in saying that the Premier did tell a big white fib in her press release issued on 29 December. What the Premier announced on 29 December will not apply to juvenile offenders in the state of Queensland. This big tough approach that Minister Ryan keeps going on about is a falsity, just like he conned the Pullen family when he said he was going to have tough laws for their family and it worked out they did not apply. That is exactly the same here. They promise these big tough laws and they will not even apply in the situation.

The reason juvenile justice is out of control in the state of Queensland is the Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill from 2015. What were the policy objectives of that bill? To remove breach of bail as an offence for children and to reinstate the principle that detention should be a last resort. That is when the Palaszczuk government watered down the youth justice laws in the state of Queensland and that is why Queenslanders are suffering the consequences of those weak laws eight years later. Make no mistake about it: they have spent eight years weakening the juvenile justice laws in the state and now our communities are living in fear. People in our communities are afraid to go out at night. They are unsure of where to leave their keys at night—at the front door, in the garage, on the bedside table or just left in the car so the criminals can take the car because they do not want to be broken into so their car keys can be stolen.

This was a political fix for a Premier who has a big problem. She was the one who championed through this parliament the weaker laws we have seen in the last eight years. We have seen broken promise after broken promise. Nowhere in Queensland is immune to this, including my own community in Kawana. Since this debate started three days ago, I have again looked at all of the community forums—Meridan Plains community board, Bokarina Beach, Wurtulla West Neighbourhood Watch. All have had stories from the last three nights of young people trying to break into cars, homes being broken into, bus shelters being smashed and destroyed, and young kids running amuck at midnight. That is the society we are living in at the moment.

We have had knife attacks in Kawana. I met a victim recently who after two years has still not got funding from Victim Assist. They say there is a two-year wait now to get any assistance that he is owed in my community. We are seeing cars being broken into. We are seeing antisocial behaviour from young people. We are seeing businesses in the Kawana community being terrorised by young kids. Graffiti is up. We have had crime issues in Wurtulla, Bokarina Beach, Bokarina, Minyama and Meridan Plains. The list goes on. We have hooning. I have attempted to get CCTV cameras on Creekside Boulevard but it is state government versus council. Who is responsible? I do not care. Someone just fund it and get CCTV cameras on roads like Creekside Boulevard so we can stop the hooning and the car accidents because someone will lose their life on that road.

We have the Balin Stewart Foundation. Young Balin was killed tragically in a knife attack. His parents, Michael and Kerri-Lyn, have set up this foundation and the #binthebladeforbalin campaign. I absolutely support that foundation and the incredible work they are doing since their son's death in trying to spread the message around knife crime and to #binthebladeforbalin.

We are seeing all our communities across Queensland being terrorised by young offenders. It is time that there are consequences for actions. Yes, we are supporting these laws, but we think they should go further. We believe that if a young person is before a judge and the judge believes they should go to jail, then they should go to jail. The magistrate or judge should have the option to send that person to jail. However, under the Labor laws which they weakened and introduced in 2015, detention was reintroduced as a last resort so that a judge or a magistrate has to look at anything but detention—therapeutic camps, wellness camps, maybe send them to Wellcamp; I don't know. Anything but jail. There has to be consequences for actions absolutely—

Mr Harper interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: Every member of the Labor Party, including the member interjecting, should hang their head in shame—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): The member for Thuringowa will cease interjecting.

Mr BLEIJIE:—that they all voted to weaken the laws from 2015 which have led to the youth crime crisis we have in the state of Queensland. It is time to put victims before perpetrators. It is time for perpetrators to accept responsibility and have consequences for their actions.

Mr Harper interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Thuringowa is warned under the standing orders.

Mr BLEIJIE: It is time for the Labor government to admit that they got it wrong when they got rid of provisions like breach of bail and detention as a last resort. Those are the issues that Queenslanders want talked about. It is time to stand up for victims in this state!