




Speech By
Jonty Bush

MEMBER FOR COOPER

Record of Proceedings, 23 August 2023

MOTION

Vehicle Theft

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (5.17 pm): I rise to support the amendment to the motion put by the minister, but I have to start by saying that I do not disagree entirely with the original motion circulated by the member for Burdekin. There are two elements to the member's motion. The first is recognition that vehicle crime has increased in some places in Queensland and it calls on members to express concern for that. That is correct. Motor vehicle theft has increased recently in some places in Queensland. Here in Queensland we publish all of our crime statistics so no-one is trying to hide the fluctuations in crime that Queensland experiences, like every other jurisdiction does. Crime statistics have a long history of rising and falling. This is the pattern of crime trends that occurs globally and it has been occurring for centuries. There are a number of reasons why that happens. The most notable is that in most Western countries, including Australia, it is becoming easier and safer to report crimes to law enforcement. We want victims to come forward to report crime. We should not react with fear when, as a result, reported crime increases. That is not to say that we are unconcerned. Of course we are concerned; we are all concerned. Any crime, including vehicle theft, is an insult and a threat to a vibrant community. No-one here denies that.

The third part of the original motion calls on members representing these areas to join their communities in supporting strategies to reverse the crime crisis. My electorate, like others in Brisbane, is not immune to crime. I will meet with locals who have experienced crime any day. I am happy to work with locals who are victims who want to reverse the impacts of crime and who have experienced that crime. I have spent the best part of 23 years working with victims of crime. It is so offensive to me to have members opposite make assumptions about what members here may or may not have done. It is extremely ill-informed.

Here is what we know drives down crime. It is intervening early, ensuring that all Queensland children are engaged in school as soon as they are ready. The recent announcement by the Palaszczuk government of free kindy is already driving up those enrolments. It is working with people to understand and treat the root cause of their offending behaviours like keeping young people in school, reducing suspensions and exclusions, the creation of flexi schools and centres to make school feel safe and working with offenders while they are detained so they come out a better version of themselves. Programs that are often criticised by those opposite as being soft on crime are the programs that have been evaluated and the programs that work. Just because the Leader of the Opposition cannot understand them or because he cannot sell them does not change the fact that these are the programs that have been independently evaluated to work not just here but everywhere. The opposition do not want to talk about evidence because that does not work with their narrative and they cannot score any votes from it.

To highlight the political nature of this motion for the benefit of the House, the member for Burdekin comes in here and puts forward motions relating to youth crime and vehicle crime. However, not once do I recall him putting forward a motion relating to violence against women. One in three women experience violence at the hands of their partners and one in five women experience sexual violence. Where are his motions relating to that? Where is the member for Burdekin's concern for the women in Queensland who continue to experience violence at egregiously disproportionate rates? Why talk in a complete and comprehensive way about crime when he can just cherry-pick a figure that speaks to a particular crime type, extrapolate that across the whole state and call it a crime crisis?

The amended motion refers to the importance of the victims' voice, and I want to lend my support to that sentiment. The importance of speaking with victims in a genuine way, in a meaningful way, where victims can be supported and where their experiences can influence government policy is so critical. I know it does not feel like it when someone suddenly becomes a victim of crime, but Queensland has regularly led in the victim support space. I am truly encouraged by the additional steps that the Attorney-General has announced today including the employment of a victims commissioner. It is because of Labor's responses to victims of crime that I chose to join this party. I am proud to be a member of a government and I am proud to be a member of a political party that prioritises the needs of victims here in Queensland.