




Speech By
Julianne Gilbert

MEMBER FOR MACKAY

Record of Proceedings, 24 May 2023

MOTION

Palaszczuk Labor Government; Youth Crime

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (5.38 pm): I rise to speak in support of the minister's amendment and to oppose the opposition's motion. Unlike those opposite, the Mackay community is proud of our youth and is doing everything possible to support them to become the best people they can be and to reach their full potential. For those youth at risk, we want to help them change their possible path into crime. I am pleased that the Palaszczuk government supports those at-risk youth in my community with programs such as Booyah and Transition 2 Success. I extend my sincere thanks to those in my community who work with our young people to help them gain confidence, develop healthy relationships and consider further education, training or employment options. They begin to have positive opinions of themselves and start making good choices about their physical health. This has positive flow-on effects to their mental health.

Young people take a hard look at their past and their future and it is amazing the changes in attitudes from their first week to graduation. It is heartwarming the way the young people support each other, develop strong positive bonds and see a positive future for themselves. The change in the young person's attitude helps mend tensions in relationships with their parents and guardians.

The Mackay co-responder team is also guiding young people away from crime. Youth justice officers and police officers engage with vulnerable young people at night in the CBD and across the city.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Member for Nanango.

Mrs GILBERT: They assist young people at risk to link up with services. They are the circuit breaker before crime occurs.

I thank Aunty Veronica Ahwang, the staff at Mackay PCYC, community businesses and departmental officers who support these programs. I know that the member for Whitsunday will support me in these comments because she has been effusive in her support at a Booyah graduation. On 18 May—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member, please resume your seat. Member for Nanango, you are warned under the standing orders. I have warned you repeatedly to cease interjecting and you have not taken those warnings.

Mrs GILBERT: The member would want to hear this. On 18 May, the member for Whitsunday was quoted in the *Courier-Mail* saying, 'Mackay has some of the lowest youth crime rates.' I am glad that she is on our side—on team Palaszczuk. Youth crime is about support and outcomes, not grubby politics.

Mr Head interjected.

Mrs GILBERT: Have you finished? Thank you. Youth crime is a complex issue that requires ongoing adjustments to our strategies in line with what evidence shows us. We have listened to the community and we are taking a tougher approach to youth crime, putting community safety first by targeting serious repeat offenders.

Thank you to those opposite for naming me in their motion because it gives me the opportunity to share with them some of the latest data from the Mackay LGA. For the year ending 31 December 2022 compared to the year ending 31 December 2001 there has been a decrease of 38 per cent in the number of proven offences committed in Mackay by 10- to 17-year-olds and a decrease of 23 per cent in the number of distinct 10- to 17-year-old offenders, with at least one proven offence committed in Mackay.

As I have outlined, there are a range of programs that we are implementing in Mackay and they are having the best possible effect. There are bail support services and restorative justice. I know for victims of crime that these statistics are cold comfort. That is why as a government we know that we need to support victims of crime. We on this side of the House also know that it is important—as the member for Whitsunday on team Palaszczuk knows—

Mr Head interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Callide, you are warned under the standing orders.

Mrs GILBERT:—to have positive programs in place to support the youth in our communities. I support the amendment to the motion.