




Speech By
Laura Gerber

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

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MOTION

Vehicle Theft

 **Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (5.42 pm): We have just heard the member for Townsville try to talk tough on crime when it is his community that is racked by youth crime. In Townsville there has been a 95 per cent increase in motor vehicle theft. Queenslanders have heard it all before from the member for Townsville, yet crime continues to rise under Labor. In the last year alone, 200,000 Queenslanders had their cars stolen or were broken into or were robbed. That is a 25 per cent increase. That is 200,000 victims of crime that this government has failed. When we are talking about car thefts, we know that more than half of car thefts in Queensland are young criminals—54.6 per cent in fact—who know that their rights are greater than the rights of the victims: Labor's generation of untouchables. They are not just stealing these cars; they are using them as weapons. These young criminals are ramming police cars. They are running at police, not running from them.

Why are we here? How did we get to this point? We got to this point because eight years ago the Palaszczuk Labor government made a decision to water down our laws and it made that decision—that conscious decision—and that has created a generation of young offenders, a generation of young criminals, who know that their rights are greater than the rights of victims. They have no respect for police, they have no respect for our justice system and they have no respect for the courts. Do not take my word for it: the latest data shows that juvenile reoffending in Queensland is now at 69 per cent. That means that seven out of 10 young criminals are going on to reoffend. The rate of Indigenous kids who are reoffending has also increased. They are now 11 times more likely to have contact with the youth justice system than non-Indigenous kids. Youth are responsible for 54.6 per cent of car thefts, 53.3 per cent of break-ins and 33 per cent of robberies. These are not just numbers. These are not just statistics. These represent victims of crime who have not had a voice under this Palaszczuk Labor government—a government that refused to meet with these victims today, a government that has refused to listen to them.

Under the LNP, Queensland will not be a playground for young offenders. We will rewrite the Youth Justice Act to ensure there are consequences for actions. We will unshackle the judiciary and remove detention as a last resort, and we will ensure there are gold standard early intervention programs to turn kids around and put them on the right track, because kids should be given a second chance. The system should be able to support kids to turn their lives around to become valuable members of society, and there are excellent programs out there doing just that. In my own community of Currumbin there is a program run by Fight 4 Youth and it is making a real difference to the lives of kids. It runs a number of programs, but one of its most successful programs is its suspension program. It takes kids who are suspended and is turning them around, keeping them off the streets and from a life of crime. At estimates the youth justice minister said—

If any member ... has any proposals or any evidence-based programs that can assist to address this complex problem, I would welcome those ideas.

In fact, she gave a commitment at estimates to meet with Fight 4 Youth, to contact it and learn more about its program. Well, three weeks later, Minister, Fight 4 Youth is yet to hear from you or your department. I urge you—

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Comments will come through the chair.

Mrs GERBER:—to keep your commitment. Those opposite are all talk and no action. This government is all about the optics and it does not care about victims of crime, because if it did the youth justice minister would have stuck to her word. She would have contacted Fight 4 Youth to better understand how this amazing program is turning the lives of youth around, but the government does not actually care.

Cairns needs the LNP's Yolonde Entsch. Thuringowa needs the LNP's Natalie Marr. John Barounis is needed by the people of Maryborough. Keppel needs Nigel Hutton and Redlands needs Rebecca Young. These communities need these candidates to turn the tide on crime. These candidates are standing up for victims in those electorates. Where are the local members standing up to talk on behalf of victims? We cannot hear them. They are not out there. They were not out there meeting with victims of crime today. They were not there speaking with people about their true suffering. These people have been to hell and back, yet the state Labor government refuses to listen. It is more concerned about optics than it is about victims of crime.