



Speech By  
**Hon. Leanne Linard**


**MEMBER FOR NUDGE**

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Record of Proceedings, 21 February 2023

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Youth Crime**

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.03 am): Community safety has always been and remains a top priority of our government. Queenslanders have the right to feel safe in their homes and their communities. However, we know from listening to community that some Queenslanders do not currently feel safe. They do not feel safe because of the actions of a small cohort of serious repeat youth offenders. Our government has a track record in taking action in response to youth crime.

Since 2017 we have invested heavily in early and intensive intervention programs to reduce offending. We have also invested in new and expanded detention centres and additional staffing. Two years ago we strengthened our youth bail laws and, as a result, more young people deemed by the courts to be a risk to community safety are being held in custody and being held for longer. We are making progress. However, I acknowledge this is of little comfort to residents personally affected by youth crime.

Last Wednesday I joined the police minister in Toowoomba to listen to the community about the issues with youth crime currently being experienced. Once again, our government is listening and acting. As the Premier has announced, we will take new, tougher action to further protect community safety and tackle the complex causes of youth crime. Our government will introduce new laws to further target the serious repeat youth offenders who put community safety at risk.

While we target these serious, high-risk offenders, we will continue to fight the complex causes of youth crime through early intervention, investing \$100 million in new funds for urgent action to help break the destructive cycle of youth crime. This includes diversionary and intervention programs designed to prevent and reduce youth offending, including our on-country programs, multiagency collaborative panels, overseeing intensive case management of serious repeat offenders, and co-responder teams made up of police and youth justice workers patrolling the streets when and where needed.

We have also expanded alternative education and vocational training for those in and at risk of entering the youth justice system and added more teachers to our youth detention centres because we recognise the key role education plays in producing better life outcomes. This overall investment is critical because evidence shows clear connections between youth offending and childhood trauma, family violence, drug and alcohol abuse, untreated mental health issues and inconsistent schooling.

Youth crime is a highly complex problem, but the Palaszczuk government is absolutely committed to working collaboratively with police, stakeholders and the community to achieve a balance between helping young people turn their lives around and holding serious youth repeat offenders to account for their actions. First and foremost though, our focus is and always will be community safety.