




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR HILL

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STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY SAFETY BILL

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (5.01 pm): I rise to give my contribution to the government's Strengthening Community Safety Bill. Sadly, this bill falls under the category of too little, too late. The government has completely ignored pleas from Queenslanders to fix youth crime over the past eight years and are scrambling to force through a bill that will do little to address the current crisis. In other words, the horse has already bolted. A complete overhaul of our system is the only hope to fix it. This is simply a propaganda bill that allows the government to make sweeping statements, pat themselves on the back, tell everyone that they are doing a tough job on crime and, 'We are fixing everything,' when the reality is that homes are being ransacked, cars are being stolen and burned, businesses are being destroyed, and elderly residents are scared to leave their homes while juvenile criminals are filming themselves committing crimes, posting it on social media and laughing at the current system. Queenslanders have absolutely had a gutful.

The KAP will be introducing strong amendments to this bill, including removal of detention as a last resort, youths to be tried as adults for offences such as murder and rape, mandatory minimum sentencing for particular offences such as unlawful use of a motor vehicle, burglary, break and enter, and relocation sentencing.

At the Local Government Association annual conference, youth crime was highest on the agenda where a motion from the Mareeba Shire Council was put forward to establish diversionary facilities on remote state-owned properties for wayward youth. The majority of the state councils voted in favour of the motion. This vote sends a clear message in support of KAP's relocation sentencing policy to be an alternative option for the courts. The current system has proven to be a dismal failure.

The recent Productivity Commission report confirmed the government spent \$219 million in 2021/22 on youth detention services, double the previous year, yet the latest Childrens Court of Queensland's annual report warned of a chronically underfunded and understaffed Forensic Child Youth Mental Health Service. Yet, the government's solution is to do more of the same and spend hundreds of millions of dollars on new detention centres where they say they are receiving treatment just to get exactly the same outcome. Sending youth to detention centres is a badge of honour for them which costs Queenslanders up to \$1,800 a day. To put this further into perspective, 95 per cent of youth sentenced to Cleveland Youth Detention Centre reoffend within 12 months of being released. Albert Einstein once said, 'Insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.' That is a pretty good description of this government's approach to youth crime.

We need drastic measures to break this cycle, and the KAP have continually put forward tangible solutions, and relocation sentencing is a part of that solution. Relocation sentencing would give magistrates the power to send youth to remote locations, teach them values and skills and deliver workable programs. A relocation sentencing policy should be implemented as a real alternative to bring this crime crisis to an end and give magistrates another option. Youth would be given the opportunity to have a life and a purpose and not just aspire to be the best criminal they can be by the time they reach adulthood. I encourage the House to support the KAP's amendments which will be introduced by the member for Hinchinbrook.