




Speech By  
**Shane Knuth**

**MEMBER FOR HILL**

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Record of Proceedings, 19 April 2023

**MOTION: YOUTH CRIME**

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (5.19 pm): The motion moved by the member for Traeger seeks to introduce relocation sentencing as an alternative to traditional juvenile detention. This would see recidivist youth offenders ordered by the courts to serve long-term sentences in highly rehabilitative environments in remote locations. This is being proposed as it has been proven, particularly in the past five years, that the system in place now is not working. We are quite frustrated. I know that Queenslanders, particularly the victims of juvenile crime, are frustrated. It is more or less ruining people's lives. We see cars stolen and burnt and businesses destroyed. Elderly people are too afraid to leave their homes, fearful that they could be bashed or harassed. As reported the other day in Mareeba's *Express* newspaper, an 86-year-old was taunted by youths, laughing and joking. These offences occurred after the government introduced a bill that was supposed to resolve all of these problems. A 2023 *Courier-Mail* article titled 'Queensland crime booming: Damning new stats revealed for your region' states—

Crime numbers have risen across Queensland and returned to pre-pandemic levels, new figures show, as experts offer explanations for the likely causes.

The bill has not resolved the problem. We are offering an alternative, and it is a good alternative. It was disappointing to hear the minister state earlier that the government will not even trial this alternative. He referred to other measures that have nothing to do with relocation sentencing, which we have pursued for the past four years. They have nothing to do with it. Their attitude is, 'Let's dismiss anything else. What the government has is sufficient and is working.'

Over the past few weeks we have seen that the government bill is not working. There are allegations regarding torture. As I mentioned, elderly people are being taunted and harassed. A newspaper article outlines that a driver was injured after kids threw an object from a stolen car. These kids are laughing about this. The sad part is that they are also laughing at these changes. They did not say, 'Oh, we can't commit crime anymore; they are going to come down hard.' They could not care less.

Another solution the government has put forward is to build more detention centres. Young people are committing crimes to get into detention centres, so that is not a solution to this serious problem. Ninety-five per cent of youths sentenced to the Cleveland detention centre—it costs \$1,500 a day—reoffend within 12 months.

As the member for Traeger mentioned, youth crime was discussed heavily at the Local Government Association of Queensland's annual conference, culminating in a motion from Mareeba Shire Council to establish diversionary facilities on remote state owned properties for wayward youths. Ninety-five per cent of the state's councils voted in favour of this motion because they are constantly being hammered by victims of youth crime. It is happening all over the state. They are sick of it.

This motion sends a clear message about support for relocation sentencing. We can reject it in here, but 95 per cent of councils across the state support it. They want another option, because the options we have are not working. The previous and current governments' youth crime policies have proven to be a dismal failure. Relocation sentencing will resolve this problem. We call on the government to trial this initiative and to support the motion.