




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

Record of Proceedings, 21 February 2023

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Youth Crime

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (10.00 am): The Palaszczuk government has a plan to keep the community safe and tackle the complex causes of crime and serious repeat offenders because the community does deserve to feel safe and there must be consequences for young people who offend. Most importantly, we must reduce offending through prevention and early intervention because intervening early is proven to help reduce the long-term cost of crime, both to victims and to offenders who otherwise get caught in a cycle of reoffending. As part of the significant package the Premier has announced today, we are investing in community-based initiatives that support young people to access alternative pathways out of offending. We have to keep these young people off the streets; we have to help them feel safe at home.

There are programs like the Midnight Basketball initiative in Cairns, which gives young people the opportunity to spend their Friday nights in a healthy, safe and fun environment playing basketball with high-profile players. We are providing over \$4.2 million to establish a Street University in Townsville. Street University initiatives have helped young people find better pathways, and so far across these Street Universities they have seen a 50 per cent reduction in drug use amongst young people, a phenomenal outcome that is only going to get better now we are expanding it to Townsville.

We are supporting existing community justice group initiatives like the Thursday Island group which runs the Zenadth Kes Boxing Club. The boxing club has resulted in a decrease in crime committed by young people whilst also promoting a healthy lifestyle and, importantly, educating young men on domestic and family violence prevention. We are expanding on-country programs by providing a further \$4 million to provide culture-based rehabilitation for young First Nations people including supervision by on-country elders.

I am also very pleased today to announce a \$5 million investment to establish community-led, place-based justice reinvestment initiatives that will address the underlying causes of youth crime and reduce First Nations over-representation in our system. Justice reinvestment is an emerging field which seeks to redirect funds away from detention and towards support and intervention of young people and their families at risk of falling into the youth justice system. Our investment will complement the announcement made by the Albanese government last year of \$81 million for First Nations initiatives.

We know that whilst on remand young offenders do not have access to the programs they need and the resources that help them in their rehabilitation journey. That is why our \$14.8 million fast-track sentencing pilot will identify the causes of delays in finalising Childrens Court matters, ensuring faster finalisation of matters which means young people spend less time on remand and more time serving their sentences with the programs that will help them. The youth justice fast-track sentencing pilot will be independently evaluated at the conclusion of the program. These initiatives will provide the community with the safety they expect and deserve whilst also reducing offending through prevention and early intervention.