




Speech By
Steve Minnikin

MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH

Record of Proceedings, 14 March 2023

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY SAFETY BILL

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (5.22 pm): There are a lot of things you can buy in life, but one thing you cannot buy is time. We have had eight years of this government, which is now in its third term. We are now at the point where we have to ask what we have to show for it. In the Premier's own words, over a billion dollars has been spent on a particular area of social policy, and what do we have to show for it? Under Labor's watch, the number of serious repeat offenders has increased from 10 per cent to 17 per cent.

Late last year I held a crime forum in my own Chatsworth electorate. It was held in the Scouts hall at Gumdale, which holds about 90 people. I put the word out, as most of us would do, on Facebook and social media and said, 'If you're interested, please sign up.' It was a non-ticketed event; I simply asked people to say if they would turn up to the crime forum. A couple of policemen from the Wynnum station gave up their time to attend, which we appreciated. To make a long story short, those 90 spots were gone within 24 hours.

One comment made to me at the end of the forum absolutely broke my heart. The forum went for about 90 minutes. After I wrapped it up—the way I roll is to start on time and end on time—a lady said to me, 'Where do I hide the keys? I have heard two different schools of thought. Do I hide them in the bedside drawers or do I leave them on the kitchen bench or on the table?' We have heard previous speakers talk about the reasons that conundrum has entered people's hearts and minds.

The reality is that there are some good members on the government side of the chamber—there are—but if you wanted to see the Labor Party divided like nothing else, you would only have had to be a fly on the wall around 28 December last year. I will not go into the horrific specifics; what happened in the northern suburbs of Greater Brisbane on 26 December last year has been well documented. In the game of politics, the one thing you have to have is an ability to read the dial. Undeniably, in my humble opinion, the dial on youth crime changed after the tragic events of 26 December. That is tragic in itself.

There are people who were victims before that incident. Only a week later around Newmarket another tragedy occurred. For some reason in society, people are drawn to a particular issue which is the sum of the moment. This has been the reality no matter where you go in Queensland: Cairns, Townsville, no doubt Mount Isa—I have not been there lately—and out west. We are all hearing it, but where I live I actually sense it. When I conduct a mobile office, the two topics raised are the cost of living and youth crime. You can probably throw a nickel over the two. They are overwhelmingly the two issues being raised.

I return to the Strengthening Community Safety Bill. I almost felt embarrassed watching the TV on that Sunday night when the Minister for Sport, the member for Sandgate, was sent out on ministerial detail. It was a bit like what happened with Rachel Nolan years ago when she said, 'No, we're not selling Queensland Rail' but then literally a matter of hours later she had to say that, yes, it was for sale. It was the same with the member for Sandgate: 'Breach of bail? Absolutely no way, Jose.' He echoed the

thoughts of several ministers in cabinet: 'Absolutely, unequivocally, we ain't going back to that—no siree.' What did we see on the news literally 24 hours later? It was a road to Damascus conversion of the highest order.

The simple facts of the matter are that we have been saying repeatedly that breach of bail is not a silver bullet but is part and parcel of a package of reforms that need to be adopted by the Labor government. I find it incredulous that we have a Premier who has been missing in action—an MIA Premier. She is meant to be a lawyer, but she did not even get the right briefing in relation to maximum penalties. She could not even get that right. That hastens me to think that, if I go back to 28 December, this is—yet again—another example of policy on the run. You have spin doctor after spin doctor—spiv after spiv—who would have gone, 'Hold on. We don't have a community societal problem here; we have a political problem.' That is the one reason that everyone on that side of the chamber should hang their heads in shame.

There are good men and women on the government side and they know that this issue is biting everywhere, including in their own electorates. For some members to have the temerity to say, 'There's nothing to see here; everything is tickety-boo,' defies all logic. One good thing is that the words of every member who has made utterances such as that are recorded in *Hansard*. You can bet your bottom dollar that in 19 months, 18 months, 12 months and leading up to the election period that will come out and haunt them.

The member for Everton made a sage point when he said that the Labor way is to simply throw ever-increasing amounts of money at a problem. We have had over \$1 billion spent on youth justice measures—and for what? We have seen an increase in crime. It defies all logic that here we are, yet again, with another 10-point plan. We have had other multiple dot point plans and what has it achieved? It has achieved one thing. I have to be fair: you do not see it happen all that often with the ALP. Normally they are a little bit like the Praetorian Guard—externally we are the enemy but internally they put the shields up—but the cracks have absolutely been there for all to see.

We now have the 'accidental Premier' who, in the minds of many of her own cabinet ministers, has overstayed her welcome. We have the left splintering with the right. The old guard—Centre Unity—does not know what it wants to do.

A government member interjected.

Mr MINNIKIN: I hear the interjection from the member who knows what it is like to lose at around about 20 past seven on election night. That sense is coming back again or otherwise you must have been living under a rock. There are very few things that I agree with the Premier on, but when she made the comment that none of that backbench is going anywhere this term she probably was right, because all we have to do is listen to the parrot speeches that they are handed from their masters. They do not even believe half the words that come out of their mouths. This is a party that has absolutely overstayed its welcome. It has been there for three terms and is bereft of ideas. The left is leaking like sieves. There was the PowerPoint that came out a matter of hours after the cabinet meeting. I would have loved to have been a fly on the wall for its caucus meeting. It must have been an absolute corker.

Government members interjected.

Mr MINNIKIN: The fact that those opposite are starting to get a bit hot and sweaty says it all. The fact of the matter is that the ALP has been in power now for eight years. Youth justice has absolutely become—in addition to its budget blowouts, in addition to cost-of-living blowouts—its Achilles heel. The sad fact is that half of the backbench such as the member for Hervey Bay and the member for Thuringowa have no idea what is coming. Here they go. They get their speaking notes, they get up, they get the little easel, they rabbit it off. They cannot even speak off the cuff for 10 simple minutes. The fact of the matter is this: we have had failure after failure after failure. We have a government that is a third-term out-of-puff government. We have a Premier who has well and truly checked out, but do not take my word for it. Take her own cabinet. Take her own caucus. Half of them want her gone. Half of them absolutely would not know if it is night or day. They have failed.