



Speech By  
**Tim Nicholls**

**MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD**

---

Record of Proceedings, 22 August 2023


## **APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**

### **APPROPRIATION BILL**

#### **Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)**

#### **Appropriation Bill**

#### **Education, Employment and Training Committee, Report**

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (4.21 pm): I want to make some comments in relation to the report on the employment and small business, training and skills development, and youth justice portfolios. I will start by reflecting on the comments just made by the minister. We have a minister who is so bereft of ideas and solutions to the youth crime crisis, which is plaguing Queensland and has developed under her watch, that when she stood in this place to talk on the report she said that we should have used estimates to answer her questions about what our solution is for the youth crime crisis. This minister is so totally incompetent that she has no ideas of her own. She wanted us to come to estimates to provide her with the answers. She spent some of the time answering questions by saying, 'You tell me what you think the answer should be.' That is a failure of government. That is a failure of the last eight years. Since 2015 we have seen the systemic weakening of our youth crime laws and that has led to the explosion of youth crime now being experienced by Queenslanders up and down this state.

The minister mentioned ChatGPT and preparing speeches. Anyone who listened to her opening speech in estimates, her answer in question time this morning and then her speech this afternoon would recognise that she does not need ChatGPT because she just recycles the same speech time and time again, giving no new answers and no new information. The only thing we found out from the minister is that the percentage of serious youth offenders has increased from 10 per cent two years ago to 17 per cent last December and 20 per cent this August. That is what we have learned from this minister. The minister said that there has been a reduction in the total number of young offenders and so on. What she did not mention is the absolute number. The absolute number of young serious repeat offenders has gone up. Bob Atkinson's report shows that the number increased from 369 in 2018 to 461 in 2021, which is a 26 per cent increase in absolute numbers. According to an answer to a question on notice on June 2023, the number of serious repeat offenders has increased from 501 to 660. We do not want cagey answers about percentages and numbers. The absolute number of serious repeat offenders has gone up and this minister has been responsible for it over that entire period.

Let us think about what the minister has done successfully in the past. We would all remember the youth bail houses. A sum of \$30 million went down the drain because this government could not run them and it cost them three consultancies: an Ernst & Young report, a validation report and then another Ernst & Young report at a cost of over \$100,000. That is what this government does when they come up with a new answer that obviously does not work.

Another interesting statistic that came out of the estimates process relates to electronic monitoring devices. Members will remember that we were going to use electronic monitoring devices to deal with it all and increase the cohort. The first plan, that is, the 2021 plan, if I recall correctly, was going to use electronic monitoring devices and I think a grand total of less than 10 were ever employed. We now find that zero electronic monitoring devices have been fitted in the new trial areas of Cairns, Mount Isa and Toowoomba. Zero devices have been put on people. That was another interesting snippet that came out of the estimates process on 2nd August.

Crime is getting worse. In absolute numbers, serious repeat offender numbers are getting worse. The percentage rate is also getting worse. We also found out that the thing that is working is breach of bail as an offence. Oh dear! Breach of bail as an offence is the one thing that is actually working. The minister said—

Under our breach of bail laws—

Not only is she plagiarising, which is bad enough; talk about ChatGPT—

we have seen 402 unique young offenders charged with a total of 1,681 charges of breach of bail. I would say that those figures, under anyone's terms, would be successful.

The only policy that they have used that is actually having a demonstrably useful affect is the LNP's breach of bail policy, which they hijacked word for word. They are the ones who should be in jail for stealing policy. This government continues to fail to deliver the safety and security that Queenslanders demand and deserve from an increasingly chaotic government.