




Speech By
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ADJOURNMENT

Toowoomba, Youth Crime

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (7.06 pm): Unfortunately, today I rise to again talk about youth crime in my community. As people know, we now have breach of bail, for which the LNP had been fighting for some time. However, it is only the first plank of what is required. I suggest that the government needs to look at unshackling the judiciary and removing detention as a last resort. I am more than happy to trust the judiciary to make a good sensible decision in the interests of the safety of my community. They do not need the guidance of this House. If it is inappropriate to incarcerate then they will not incarcerate. However, they should not be told that they cannot, particularly with recidivist offenders who are causing much distress in my community.

Recently in Eastville, Cafe 63 was broken into. The video footage shows someone with an axe smashing the till. They smashed the safe. They caused a load of damage that made it very difficult for the business owner to operate the next morning. Obviously that has impacts on employees and it has impacts on customers. There are so many impacts. Unfortunately, that business is not alone. This is not uncommon. In the week before this sitting week, the front door of Aromas Cafe was smashed, causing thousands of dollars worth of damage. They ransacked the place, causing a great deal of distress to the people who work there. Customers are shocked that this is the community we now live in.

Probably the worst incident occurred at the Gowrie One Stop Convenience Centre. The owner saw somebody driving off in a stolen car. He saw what was going on so he literally stood in front of the car, to try to stop them driving off. The person who was in possession of that stolen vehicle drove straight into him and then drove down the road with him claspng desperately to the bonnet so that he did not get killed during the incident. That is what is going on in my community and the solution is very simple: it is boots on the ground.

I have been trying to find out from the police exactly how many police we have. This police minister will not give a straight answer. Recently I was told that it was too difficult and too much work to work out how many police were available to be rostered during the month of January. When I run my business, my payroll tells me how many people worked for me in that month, so I do not see why it is so complicated. The people of Toowoomba deserve to know that they are protected by the thin blue line with boots on the ground.