



Speech By  
**Trevor Watts**


**MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH**

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Record of Proceedings, 25 October 2023

**MOTION**

**Townsville, Youth Crime**

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (5.42 pm): What we have just heard is Labor's voice in Brisbane when we should have been hearing Townsville's voice here in this chamber. The people of Townsville need a strong advocate to come and represent them in this place. The people of that city have absolutely had enough of this crime crisis. We know what caused this crime crisis. It all started when the gates were opened and the legislation was watered down. We are told there is no policy. Let me suggest one policy. Section 18 of the *Youth Justice Benchbook* states—

A child should be detained in custody for an offence, whether on arrest, remand or sentence, only as a last resort and for the least time that is justified in the circumstances.

That right there is the problem. The judiciary have their hands shackled by this government. The police have their hands shackled by this government. The government will not give them the legislation that will remove these people from the streets and stop new victims being created night after night. Whether it is a tomahawk in the chest or a machete up your nose, these people are running rampant through the state. This started when police numbers were being cut by those opposite. The number of police has been going down—

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr WATTS:** They were not sacked; they were put into a different department. Get your facts right. The simple fact is that the numbers of police have been going down under this government. The legislation was weakened by this government. The judiciary is shackled by this government. What we see is victim after victim after victim coming forward—whether it be from Townsville or a myriad towns across this state. This has spread because this government cannot control the crime cancer it created by unleashing these juveniles. We now have a generation of criminals bred by this government's weak legislation. They are now reaching maturity and they are going into the adult system. Finally, we might see them being able to be incarcerated after they have had multiple victims.

We know that their programs did not work. I want to read something else as well, because section 19 says—

A child detained in custody should only be held in a facility suitable for children.

This government's plan was so bad. They were so disorganised. They created this crime crisis and then they started incarcerating young children into police watch houses. They have actually started to build an extra watch house to incarcerate these children. What kind of rehabilitation are they going to get in that place? What is the chance of reducing recidivism in that place? This crime crisis has been completely created by the Labor Party. They have tried calling in the military. An ex major has done a report. They have had report after report after report. Nothing has been implemented that has been effective because they fundamentally do not believe it.

They would not come and listen to the victims in my community. They were too afraid to hear from real Queenslanders—unless it was a procured environment where they could control who was allowed to talk to them and what they were allowed to ask. We see people who are getting subsidised to put bars on their windows and deadlocks on their doors—when the bars and the deadlocks should be in detention centres that are suitably designed and built for children. If they did not come in with such a chaotic policy setting back in 2015 and 2016, they could have built the correct facilities, they could have made sure the children were getting the rehabilitation they needed and they could have unshackled the judiciary and allowed them to do their job and remove these criminals from our streets.

In the middle of a crime crisis, we see the cost of living going up everywhere. People across Queensland should check their house insurance and their car insurance. I dread to think what it is in Townsville. In Toowoomba it is bad, but in Townsville it is a crisis. What is car insurance like in Townsville for a young person who needs to get to their job in the morning? What about the deadbolts they have to buy out of their hard-earned cash or the bars they need to put on their window to try to feel secure? All this government needs to do is unshackle the judiciary, give them the ability to detain these people and punish them appropriately.