




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 15 March 2023

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY SAFETY BILL

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (4.42 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Strengthening Community Safety Bill and in doing so want to reflect on the member for Maiwar's comments. It is all very well and good for the member for Maiwar and the Greens to go out there and talk down what this government is trying to do.

Mr Berkman: It's the Greens talking it down? Did you read the submissions?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Order!

Mrs D'ATH: What the Greens should have been doing over the last few years that we have been in government is backing in—

Mr Berkman interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mrs D'ATH:—what we are trying to do, which is to try to find balance in such complex situations. We do need to make sure that the community is safe and that it feels safe. First and foremost the community must feel safe. We do not want elderly people feeling like they need to lock themselves in their homes to feel safe.

Mr Berkman: But you're going to criminalise more kids.

Mrs D'ATH: We also need to—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Maiwar, your interjections are not being taken. Could you cease your interjections, please.

Mrs D'ATH: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. We also need to make sure that we are doing what we can to deal with those who are committing the most serious offences and who are committing 50 per cent of the crimes which only makes up 17 per cent of those young offenders. That is why these laws have been specifically targeted towards those serious repeat offenders to try to change the direction in which their future is heading. For the Greens to take their position ignores all of the investment this government has made and continues to make to try to change the direction of these young kids' lives going forward. What is really important is not just the time they spend in detention but what we do to support them through the process while they are in detention and those wrap around supports as they leave detention as well. That is what we need to be doing. That is what this government is doing—investing in those diversionary programs and those supports.

Mr Berkman: While proudly locking up more children!

Mrs D'ATH: It was the Palaszczuk government—

Mr Berkman: Proudly!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Maiwar, you are warned under the standing orders. Your interjections are not being taken. I asked you to cease them. You are now warned under the standing orders.

Mr POWER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I think your restraint is really admirable and you could continue to do it, but he clearly wants to get kicked out—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Logan, please resume your seat.

Mr POWER:—and I think that is disappointing.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Logan—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members on my left. Member for Logan, you are now warned under the standing orders.

Mrs D'ATH: I did take personal offence to the comments that the member for Maiwar made and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Maiwar, the member for Redcliffe has taken personal offence at the comments that you made and I ask that you withdraw.

Mrs D'ATH: He's ignored the ruling, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Maiwar—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Maiwar—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. You have been asked to withdraw comments, not withdraw from the chamber.

Mr Berkman interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Maiwar—

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Deputy Speaker, I—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Maiwar, I ask you to withdraw from the chamber under standing order 253A for an hour.

Whereupon the honourable member for Maiwar withdrew from the chamber at 4.46 pm.

Mrs D'ATH: The point I was making before I was interrupted by the member for Maiwar is the fact that we need to put strong laws in place and we need a clear message to the community that there are consequences to offenders' behaviour, but we also need to be investing in community programs and diverting young people away from crime, and that includes these serious offenders. We know that this particular cohort are coming from very complex home lives and circumstances. Many of them have been exposed to addiction, to violence, to sexual assault, to domestic and family violence and we need to be looking at all of these issues to support these young people away from crime. That is why I am very proud that as the health minister we are investing in a whole lot of programs, not just through the court process but through our Better Care Together programs, expanding community based treatment services like the Assertive Mobile Youth Outreach Services, establishing new early psychosis services and acute crisis response teams and providing specialist clinical and liaison in-reach services to new and existing Headspace centres across Queensland in partnership with the Commonwealth government. We are also investing \$16.4 million to expand our existing forensic mental health services and youth services and investing \$1.76 million in Project Solus, which is an initiative to identify and manage young people with mental health issues at risk of grievance fuelled violence. We will also deliver a new 10-bed alcohol and drug residential rehabilitation facility for young people in Cairns in the second half of 2024.

These are just some of the initiatives that we are investing in to try to change the path which these young people are on. I do want to acknowledge the great work that our Queensland Police Service does and the investment that we are seeing in my local community with the mobile police beats, the CCTV cameras, the hooning measures and also the great work that they do at our PCYC with Project Booyah. I want to acknowledge our youth justice workers and the work that they do, particularly on the Transition 2 Success program. That is seeing success. That is seeing kids diverted away from crime.

That is in contrast to when the LNP was in government and introduced their boot camps. Kids were reoffending and going back into those boot camps multiple times. Millions of dollars were wasted on not reducing crime. In fact, the reoffending rate was extremely high. While I acknowledge our police, our youth justice workers and our child safety workers, I also acknowledge great organisations like the Redcliffe Area Youth Space and Chameleon Youth Housing which work with these complex youths each and every day. They support them to get an education, get into employment, get into housing and on a much better path. I acknowledge the work we are doing in investing in community safety, around

more resources to help seniors secure their homes, subsidising vehicle immobilisers to help prevent car theft and, of course, increasing assistance for victims of crime. These are important initiatives which I do not think should be overlooked when we talk about what we are trying to do with this bill and these new offences and sentencing options in this legislation.

I oppose the removal of detention as a last resort. It is an overreach, as it was when the opposition was in government. In relation to the offence they call breach of bail, they are misleading the public. For years and years they went out there and said, 'We will bring back breach of bail', but they never implemented breach of bail as an offence. They had an offence for an offence. You had to commit an offence, be charged with that offence and then you were committing an offence for committing that offence. It is contrary to double jeopardy laws. The courts were scathing about that offence. The former attorney-general was good at bringing in bad law that the courts were critical of, that did not work and deliver the outcomes that they claimed. We are bringing in the accurate breach of bail offence that applies to adults. It will apply to young people. We are doing it the right way. We are doing it in a considered way. We understand the complexity. We are delivering it in a balanced way to make sure we have those tough laws but at the same time we are putting in place the measures, the programs, the funding and the resources to divert these people and put them on a better path. I commend the bill to the House.