




Speech By
Adam Baillie

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

Record of Proceedings, 11 December 2024

MAKING QUEENSLAND SAFER BILL

 **Mr BAILLIE** (Townsville—LNP) (9.59 pm): I am proud to rise in this chamber today to support the Making Queensland Safer Laws because I, like all of the residents of my wonderful electorate of Townsville, want to see fewer victims of crime. I am proud to support this law because the people of Townsville, like all Queenslanders, have the right to feel safe in their homes, at their work and in their communities. My journey to this place began with a commitment to bring about a change in Queensland's youth justice laws, which wrongly put the rights of young criminals before the rights of victims.

Under Labor, Queensland's suburbs became youth crime war zones. Our homes and places of work were under siege from a generation of repeat offenders who ran riot and robbed us of our safety. Since I began my journey to this place I have met hundreds of people who have personally been a victim of crime and now are too scared to go about their lives in our community. Without any doubt, crime is the first, second and third issue to be raised by residents who want to feel safe in their homes and to live their lives without fear of being carjacked while driving on our roads, assaulted on our streets or having their feeling of security taken away forever after a young person breaks into their home and steals their car. As I doorknocked thousands of doors during the recent campaign, it saddened me to see local residents spending thousands of dollars during a cost-of-living crisis to safeguard their homes with cameras, security grilles and gates so they could attempt to protect what is theirs and sleep safely in their home at night.

I listened to harrowing stories in my electorate. I heard from one resident, Lysa, who had been broken into and had her car stolen multiple times. She eventually gave up on owning a car and now uses scooters as her mode of transport in an attempt to prevent further break-ins so she can feel safe in her home.

I heard from Emma, a local GP. After a busy week of serving our community she went to do her weekly shopping. At 11.30 on a sunny Sunday morning in a busy car park she was pulled out of her car by her hair. The alleged young female offender was well known to police. The car Emma was driving was only two weeks old. It was the replacement for Emma's original car, which had been stolen and written off only five weeks earlier. It was only by way of good fortune that an off-duty police officer was present and witness to the event that someone was able to intervene, and on this occasion the carjacking was unsuccessful. The alleged offender was detained.

I met Noelene, an 81-year-old resident who returned home on a Friday afternoon with groceries for the week in the boot of her car. While unloading the groceries young offenders pulled up, jumped in the vehicle and began driving her car away. It contained her purse, which she was still holding on to. They dragged her along the road until she reluctantly let go. Her neighbours ran to her aid and Noelene spent the night in hospital.

I have heard from parents who have had to comfort children who do not feel safe at home and children asking parents if the bad people, or bandits, are coming back to take the car again before they go to bed every night. I have heard from families like Toni and John's, who moved house in an effort to see their children feel safe enough to sleep in their own beds after being left traumatised after being woken up by intruders in their bedroom, only to suffer the same misfortune in their new home.

As a resident of Townsville, it is now common practice when stopped at traffic lights to lock your doors to protect against carjacking attempts and to look left and right after the lights turn green before entering the intersection in case there is a stolen vehicle about to run a red light. Many residents across the community have shared that they have changed where they shop for fear of their own personal safety. I have met with elderly women like Susan who have resorted to arming themselves with a box cutter in their purse for protection in case they get accosted as they negotiate their way across the car park.

This is the mess the former Labor government has left the state of Queensland in—a state where parents have to reassure their children each night that they will be safe as they attempt to put them to bed; a state where the most vulnerable feel like prisoners in their own home; a state where people are being forced to move house, no longer feeling safe in their own home after being targeted repeatedly by young offenders. The Making Queensland Safer Laws will see young offenders who commit adult crimes do adult time.

We know that the youth who commit the most serious offences are doing so deliberately. We know they prey on the vulnerable. Make no mistake; they know exactly what they are doing. It is our job as elected members of this place to protect the communities which we are elected to serve. As the first bill introduced in the 58th Parliament, this bill demonstrates the importance that we on this side of the House place on honouring our commitment to Queenslanders to have these laws in place by Christmas.

These proposed laws, which were overwhelmingly backed by Townsvillians and Queenslanders alike across the state at the election, will address the failures of those opposite who allowed youth crime to run rampant in our communities for nearly a decade under their watch. The Making Queensland Safer Bill contains many elements that will address the youth crime crisis that has been plaguing Queenslanders and align our justice system with public expectations. Of note, it includes: removing detention as a last resort; putting the rights of the victim before the rights of the offender; and adult crime, adult time. The Making Queensland Safer Bill means that a judge can consider whether it is an offender's first offence or 70th offence and hand down sentences in line with community expectations. The Making Queensland Safer Bill will ensure that serial repeat offenders who commit serious crimes receive the time they need away from the social cohort that saw them commit those crimes and have the best opportunity to be rehabilitated.

When I grew up discipline began at home. If there was a lack of discipline at home, it was found at school. If ultimately it was missing at school, the police would get involved. Over the years the ability to provide discipline has been taken away from our schools and even our police. The legislation determines the outcomes and sets what our judicial system can hand down as punishment. The Making Queensland Safer Bill will remove those offenders who are committing the most serious crimes in our community. In most cases they are also the ringleaders. The police know them by name, and they know that every time they are released the community is going to suffer. Queenslanders knew they could not trust Labor to be tough on crime, which is why they backed us on this side of the House to deliver action. We made a commitment to Queensland that if elected we would have these laws in place before Christmas. I am proud to be part of a government that does what it says it would do and delivers on its commitments. I am proud to support this bill. It represents the tough on crime approach that Queenslanders have been pleading for. While those on the other side refused to deliver it, we will and we are.