




Speech By
Hon. Dale Last

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

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MAKING QUEENSLAND SAFER BILL

 **Hon. DR LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, Minister for Manufacturing and Minister for Regional and Rural Development) (4.08 pm): I rise to speak to the Making Queensland Safer Bill 2024 on behalf of the thousands of victims of crime I have spoken to since my election in 2015. I have lost count of the number of times I have stood up in this place to speak about this issue, to be their voice in the Queensland parliament. I can say to all those victims that your voices have been heard and today a bill will be passed which takes into consideration your concerns and your issues. This demonstrates unequivocally that the Crisafulli LNP government is taking action and delivering on the promise we made during the recent election.

Time after time, residents have gathered to tell their stories, I have attended protest rallies in places like Townsville, I have been in places like Cairns to hear from victims, and we have heard during the course of this debate many of those stories from members of parliament. This bill—to introduce Adult Crime, Adult Time, to remove the principle of detention as a last resort and to ensure victims are included on the Victim Information Register—is important. It is a first step and there is more to come. Over the coming months members will see the intervention strategies, the programs and the policy rollout which underpins this particular bill that we are debating today.

Let me be very clear: this is the first step of many. While those opposite were in power, there were more than 5,000 charges of assault laid against juveniles in the Northern police region. While those opposite were in power, almost 7,000 charges of unlawful use of a motor vehicle were laid against juveniles in the Northern police region. Again while those opposite were in power, more than 12,300 charges of unlawful entry were laid against juveniles in the Northern police region. These numbers represent real people—real victims—and in many cases they will live with the lifelong impacts of those offences on individuals, families and businesses.

Let's talk about that suffering. There is an undeniable financial effect, but it is more than that. It is about a soldier who served his country who said that he felt safer on the streets of Mogadishu than on the streets of Townsville. The defining moment for me in this whole sorry campaign was that image in Townsville of police vehicles being driven under code 2 authority—lights and sirens—being chased by stolen vehicles. Think about that. How could we get that so wrong? What does it say to that community when police vehicles are being chased by stolen vehicles—when they are being rammed, when police officers' lives are being put at risk? It is about that single mum who contacted my office after her car was stolen and burned who could no longer drive her kids to school. She had to catch a taxi every day to take her kids to school.

Those opposite had multiple opportunities to address this issue. We raised it constantly. We spoke about it constantly in this place. Instead, in just three years we saw the number of serious recidivist offenders increase by nearly 25 per cent. Many will remember the former member for Capalaba describing the youth crime crisis as a media beat-up. What some may forget is that more than eight years ago the police minister told the people of Townsville that they—and I quote from the *Townsville Bulletin*—'had themselves to blame for the sky-high crime'.

The good news is that Queensland has a new government that puts the rights of victims ahead of the rights of offenders. We know that there is a great deal more work that needs to be done, but this is an important first step and it will send a very loud and very clear message right across Queensland that we are serious about doing something about this issue.

This government is making Queensland safer as a priority, and we are doing that because of consultation with communities across this state and because of the clear mandate given to this government by the people of Queensland on 26 October. This bill is step 1 in restoring community confidence. We have always maintained, since day one, that there needs to be consequences for actions. When these laws come into effect and those first offenders are sentenced under these new provisions, people will soon come to realise that there is a new government in Queensland and that we are serious about doing something about this. We have always maintained consequences for actions, and that is what is underpinning this particular legislation.

I could go on, but I am mindful of time. I fully support this bill before the House. I commend it to the House. I am proud to be able to stand here today and say finally to all those victims that we are doing something about it.