




Speech By
Hon. David Crisafulli
MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

Record of Proceedings, 28 November 2024

MAKING QUEENSLAND SAFER BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Premier and Minister for Veterans) (11.28 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Childrens Court Act 1992, the Criminal Code, the Youth Justice Act 1992 and the legislation mentioned in schedule 1 for particular purposes. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights. I also table a statement of exceptional circumstances. I nominate the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Making Queensland Safer Bill 2024 [203](#).

Tabled paper: Making Queensland Safer Bill 2024, explanatory notes [204](#).

Tabled paper: Making Queensland Safer Bill 2024, statement of compatibility with human rights [205](#).

Tabled paper: Making Queensland Safer Bill 2024, statement about exceptional circumstances [206](#).

I rise to introduce this bill, the first bill we will introduce in the 58th Parliament of Queensland, as we said we would. It represents an important promise to the people of Queensland to restore safety within our communities and to deliver a fresh start for Queensland. Our top priority is turning the tide on Queensland's youth crime crisis and making Queenslanders safer. Queenslanders deserve to feel safe in their communities, their homes and their businesses. Queenslanders have spoken, and this bill is a direct response to the mandate given to us by the people of Queensland. The bill amends the Childrens Court Act 1992, the Criminal Code and the Youth Justice Act 1992 to hold young offenders to account and recognise and support victims of crime.

The centrepiece of our laws is the introduction of Adult Crime, Adult Time to ensure young offenders who commit serious offences face adult-level consequences for their actions. Under our framework, young people convicted of 13 prescribed offences, including murder, manslaughter, wounding, robbery and unlawfully entering or using vehicles, will face the same minimum, maximum and mandatory penalties that currently apply to adults in the Criminal Code. For example, a young offender who is found guilty of murder will be subject to mandatory life imprisonment with a mandatory minimum non-parole period of 20 years, just as an adult offender would be for taking the life of a Queenslanders because the life they have taken should not be minimised.

Consistent with adopting adult sentencing, the bill also extends the maximum duration of probation orders from two years to three years and also removes restorative justice orders as a sentencing option for young offenders convicted of the prescribed offences. Although not a part of the bill, we are also establishing an expert panel, to commence from early 2025, to provide advice to government on offences which could be included in the future as part of the Adult Crime, Adult Time framework.

The Making Queensland Safer Laws are the first strike back against a youth crime crisis but they will not be the last. I say to members of this House: we will continue to make sure that Queenslanders know they will have a government that listens and responds where future change is needed. As we committed, we are putting victims at the centre of youth justice.

The bill removes from the Youth Justice Act 1992 both the principle of detention as a last resort and the principle that a non-custodial order is better than detention for promoting a child's reintegration into the community. The bill mandates that courts sentencing young offenders must give primary regard to the impact of the offence on the victim. Previously, courts were required to balance various factors, with the impact on the victim being only one among many considerations. This will require the sentencing court to give greater regard to the impact on the victim over other factors when determining the appropriate sentence, putting victims at the centre of youth justice.

We are also streamlining the process for victims of youth crime and reducing the burden for them in accessing important information. The bill does this by removing the requirement for a victim or family member of a deceased victim to opt in to the eligible persons register to be kept updated on the offender's custody movements, including release dates. The amendments move to an opt-out model for direct victims and immediate family members of deceased victims so that those persons do not need to apply to be placed on the register.

Consistent with our government's focus on transparency and upholding victims' rights to access and participate in the justice process, we are moving to fully open the Childrens Court for victims, their families and the media, as we said we would because the former changes were not going to be sufficient. This expansion is achieved by two changes. First, the bill extends the right to attend proceedings to relatives of victims who are not deceased and are not representing other victims, ensuring broader inclusion of those impacted by crime. Second, it removes the court's discretionary power to exclude victims' representatives and accredited media from proceedings on the grounds of preventing prejudice to the proper administration of justice or for the safety of any person. Importantly, courts will retain powers under other laws and its inherent authority to exclude individuals for contempt, maintaining necessary safeguards for judicial proceedings.

We are also reforming the admissibility of childhood criminal history, enabling courts to be provided with a complete and transparent account of an offender's history when making sentencing decisions. The bill amends the Youth Justice Act to provide that police cautions, restorative justice agreements and contraventions of supervised release orders which occur after commencement will appear on the child's criminal history when sentenced as a child. If you wipe out someone's life, if you wipe out the feeling of safety in the community, you do not deserve to have your record wiped clean when you turn 18. The amendments also provide that a child's criminal history will be admissible when the person is being sentenced as an adult for up to five years after the outcome for the last childhood offence.

The bill also creates a pathway to manage offenders who turn 18 years of age to immediately transfer to adult correctional facilities. Under this new framework, detainees will be transferred to adult custody within one month after they turn 18, regardless of whether they are on remand or sentenced. This will ensure adult offenders are detained in adult correctional facilities and not in youth detention centres designed for children.

In keeping with our commitments, all reforms, except for those related to the eligible persons register and to criminal histories, will commence on assent. The reforms relating to the eligible persons register and criminal histories will commence in 2025 via proclamation to enable essential operational and implementation activities to occur.

For too long Queenslanders have been calling on their government to deliver real action on youth crime and that government did not listen. This bill delivers on that call, sending a clear message to young offenders that crime will not be tolerated in Queensland and that, under this government, they will face consequences that are commensurate to the gravity of their actions.

The bill delivers a decisive step in our commitment to community safety and placing victims at the centre of our justice system. This commitment to ensuring consequences for offenders is matched with our commitment to ending the cycle of violence. That is why we will also deliver gold standard early intervention and rehabilitation programs to put young people back on the right track. This balanced approach will ensure that, while there are serious consequences for certain young offenders, there is also a pathway for rehabilitation for those who take it.

The timeframes to pass the bill before Christmas accurately reflect our election commitment. This will be a government that listens and acts and a government that finally delivers a safer Queensland. This will be a government that has at its focus a safer community and fewer victims of crime. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading



Hon. DF CRISAFULLI (Broadwater—LNP) (Premier and Minister for Veterans) (11.35 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee.