




Speech By
James Lister

MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS

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ADJOURNMENT

Southern Downs Electorate, Crime

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (9.59 pm): I rise to inform the House of the spate of crime that has occurred in the wonderful town of Goondiwindi in my electorate of Southern Downs. I am sensitive to the sub judice principle and I am not certain whether or not there have been any offenders apprehended and whether there are any processes going before the court, so I will not speak about the events specifically. I will say that Goondiwindi, in spite of it all, remains a fabulous town. It is a tight-knit, successful, prosperous community. It is an independent community and it is one which, in spite of this crime, is still a great place to visit.

It makes me very disappointed to hear that when the crime sprees which occur from time to time happen—particularly when offenders are slapped on the wrist and let out or they emerge with a sentence which does not restrain them from being on the streets to commit crimes—it makes the news and people say, ‘I don’t want to go there because it’s a dangerous place.’ That is one of the many impacts that the community of Goondiwindi, particularly the business community, feels when stories of crime emerge like the one that we have had recently.

The people of Goondiwindi have been very clear with me about their expectations in terms of reform of the law to ensure their community is safe. Over many years the Queensland government has failed to keep the people of Goondiwindi safe. What is necessary is for offenders to be locked up. Anyone who says locking up offenders is not the answer needs to go to Goondiwindi and confront the people who have had their home invaded on many occasions or their car stolen and so forth. Saying that locking up offenders is not the answer is saying that the community must tolerate crime until Labor’s social policies have dealt with its causes. It will take a long time to fix a decade of going soft on youth crime.

Any measures that are introduced and are successful will take time to deliver fruit. In the meantime, to stop the cycle of crime we must imprison offenders and lock them up so they cannot continue to commit the same crimes over and over again. I know for a fact that in Goondiwindi there have been many cases where offenders, particularly juvenile offenders, have gone before the court and been released almost immediately. Think about the effect that must have not only on the community, on victims, but also on the police, who work so hard to identify these offences, apprehend offenders and put them before the courts, to see them out on the streets again with a slap on the wrist and reoffending against good people who deserve protection from this crime. I think that police would not be resigning as quickly if their morale could be supported by supporting what they do.