




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL
APPROPRIATION BILL
Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)
Appropriation Bill

Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee, Report

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (6.09 pm): I often hear members of the Labor government, ministers in particular, talking about vulnerable people. Just now I heard the minister refer to vulnerable people. I can report to the House that in my electorate the definition of a vulnerable person is somebody who is a law-abiding citizen and lives in Goondiwindi, Warwick or Killarney. It is somebody who works hard to put food on the table, who works hard to provide for their families and who works hard to acquire their possessions. It is somebody who works very hard in small business to provide a service or who runs a small business so that they can provide a service, provide for themselves and pay taxes, which ultimately pay for the salaries of people such as politicians and the people we need to work in government to deliver services.

How they became a victim is a story of Labor's failure in youth justice. In my electorate of Southern Downs, nobody is listening to the stories that the Miles Labor government is telling about youth justice or the statistics on crime. Whom are they kidding? When you walk down the street of Goondiwindi or Warwick, every second person you talk to wants to raise the issue of crime. Either they have been a victim of crime themselves or someone they love, or are close to, has been a victim of crime, and in many cases they have been a victim of crime on multiple occasions. They may have had their home invaded three or four times. They may have had their vehicle stolen two, three, four or five times. They may have had their business invaded. I would say they are the victims, not the people that the Labor Party like to talk about.

In the estimates hearing, the Minister for Small Business was asked, 'What is the government doing to support businesses that have been victims of crime?' His response was that there is a \$5,000 grant available for the installation of CCTV. Try telling that to the small business owners in Goondiwindi, such as the owners of the Five Star supermarket who have had their premises ramraided three times. Each time, it has cost a minimum of \$20,000 to complete the repairs—four times the amount of the grant. An offender, no doubt either on bail or having been released with no custodial sentence, has gone back to steal a vehicle again and then used it to ramraid the business premises of a hardworking small business operator. If it costs \$20,000 or \$30,000 to fix, what will their insurance be like? What will the insurance be like for the person in Goondiwindi who has to pay triple to insure their car now because of the rampant crime in the area because of this Labor government?

In terms of small business and youth justice, this government has been a complete failure. Earlier tonight I heard a Labor member of parliament say that we are doubling down on the weakest, most vulnerable people in our society when we say that youth offenders and others need to be locked up. When you have been soft on crime for 10 years, you reach the situation where you have to lock people up so that they cannot commit the crimes night after night, which is what is happening in Goondiwindi.

People are scared. They cannot sleep at night because their home has been invaded so many times. Every twig that snaps outside could herald somebody coming and kicking their door down. There are people who think, 'How am I going to let somebody into my house so they don't damage it? I will leave the car keys where they can find them so they don't assault me.' We are hearing about increasingly violent assaults where offenders are breaking into motel rooms and people's homes and pre-emptively assaulting them savagely so they can steal their car keys.

Anybody who says that locking up offenders is not the answer and that the Labor government has the solutions has not spoken to the people in my electorate who are victims of crime. Thanks to the weakness of the Labor government on youth crime, the only way at the moment to stop the cycle of crime is to lock up offenders. Nobody likes to see that but, if the question is, 'Should offenders be prioritised and allowed to get out over and over again so they can commit the same crimes over and over again or should they be locked up?' then the answer is that they should be locked up. I am waiting for this Labor government to confess that that is what has to happen, but we need to show them the door in '24 to fix it.