




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR COOPER

Record of Proceedings, 13 February 2024

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Crime

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (2.10 pm): Like everyone in this House, I want to express my sorrow and heartfelt condolences to the family of Vyleen White for their tragic loss. While I cannot speak for them, I can speak as someone who has experienced the grief of losing family members to violent crime. I have received that knock on the door from police. I have felt the shock, the disbelief, the fear and the anger—a grief unlike any, a grief complicated by public interest and political intrusion. Across this chamber, we all have personal reasons for being here. For me, one of my central missions as an MP has been to amplify and empower the voices of victims of crime, but I also came here to help the parliament navigate the difficult path towards the reduction of crime.

While the work this Labor government has done has not been without complexity, I stand here proud of the steps we have taken to support victims and prevent crime. As the Premier has said, it is about prevention, it is about intervention and, when absolutely necessary, it is about detention. We have: appointed an Interim Victims' Commissioner; invested \$200 million to support victims of crime; invested millions to keep students at school and intervene when we know they are showing signs of going down the wrong path; expanded the operation of our co-responder teams; delivered investments to help seniors secure their homes; provided \$15 million in crime prevention grants; and stood up a new bipartisan Youth Justice Reform Select Committee.

For the past 20 years I have had a front row seat to the worst of humanity, but I have also seen us at our best. I recall supporting in court a mother whose son had died as a result of a single stab wound—an injury delivered by another young person who was an associate of the victim. The trial was over, the jury had rendered their verdict and the families of both the victim and the offender were piling outside of the courtroom. I watched as these two mothers embraced and wrapped around each other unprompted and said, 'I'm sorry.' It is that spirit of fellowship and common humanity that I think we need more of in this place.

That is the strong and consistent feedback we have been receiving through our work in the Youth Justice Reform Select Committee. The vast majority of witnesses and submitters to the committee have been clear—that creating long-term, sustainable change lies in bipartisanship. I ask members in this place to reflect on those sentiments before they seek to attribute political blame for horrific acts so they might obtain some advantage for their side.

I also ask the same members to reflect on the role their own policies might play in exacerbating the issues that we are all trying to address. The evidence tells us that to keep kids away from a life of crime we need to make sure they have a quality education. You do not deliver that by closing schools. The evidence tells us that we need to provide families with housing. You do not do that by slashing the budget for social housing construction. The evidence tells us that you need kids to have access to high-quality health care. You do not do that by sacking health workers, closing child and youth mental health services or slashing NGO funding.

I am proud to be part of a government that is delivering more schools and teachers, investing in homes and delivering the biggest uplift in health workers and health services that Queensland has ever seen. I stand on this side of the House because I have witnessed Labor's commitment to victims of crime. I have witnessed what we can do when we operate from our values and lead all Queenslanders to work together. I hope that all other members will join us in this endeavour.