




Speech By
Jonty Bush

MEMBER FOR COOPER

Record of Proceedings, 21 August 2024

MOTION

Crime Statistics

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (5.43 pm): I rise to speak against the opposition's motion and to support the amended motion. I want to start by recognising this House's interest in the plight of victims of crime because the issue of community safety is complex and it should be above politics. It is actually an area that really calls for a long-term bipartisan approach. If only there was a mechanism, say through parliament, to achieve a bipartisan agreement on youth justice and a victims strategy for Queenslanders!

Something that former police commissioner Bob Atkinson said during the youth justice and victim select inquiry was how he found it did not help to talk about the statistics; that even though the Queensland overall crime trends are following the global trend of year-on-year decline, it is not helpful to say that when a person or their neighbour has been broken into or they are reading about it, and I could not agree more. What victims need from us as leaders is hope. They want unity, certainty, information and action—action like appointing a victims commissioner to provide strategic advocacy for all victims in Queensland, introducing a financial assistance scheme to get people back on their feet, investing in innovative sentencing models that cater to the very needs of victims and introducing an Australian first free counselling service for victims of property crime. That is the action that our government has taken.

It is really easy to take crime statistics and make them say almost anything, and I find it incredibly disingenuous when they are cherrypicked and used in the way those opposite use data to create a picture that Queensland is inherently unsafe, that young people are to be feared and loathed, and that there is no value in victims coming forward because there is no help. I have watched those opposite perpetrate those lines. It is a damaging line to take. It is lazy. It is the lowest form of exploiting our most vulnerable and it deserves to be called out.

Queensland is pretty transparent in the reporting of our crime data, which is released annually through the RoGS national dataset. I say to the member for Lockyer that nothing is made up. Does he have any idea of the data verification process that agencies have to go through before publishing? While I accept that not everyone loves data, anyone who understands policy analysis recognises the importance of interrogating the data to understand the full story. Even my 11-year-old knows how to ask why. If those opposite ask anyone in the victims of crime sector why the recorded number of victims is going up the response they would get is this. It is because victims feel more confident than ever before to report because there are now a number of alternative reporting measures to remove the barriers to report crimes, because we have expanded the definition of crimes like coercive control to capture a broader pattern of behaviours, and because the stigma associated with being a victim has reduced due to the great work of our victim advocates. I am not suggesting that is the whole story or that that is positive or negative, just that it gives us clues to what is happening behind the data.

The obsession that the LNP has with associating Queensland's children with all crime, labelling them as young terrorists and referring to them as the worst of the worst is not helping. That there is a person sitting opposite who openly confessed that he planned to pick up seats off the back of crime should concern us all. Now the LNP's shadow youth justice minister has stated that sentencing under the LNP's proposed policy could be upwards of life if manslaughter is involved.

Mrs Gerber interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Member for Currumbin, you are warned.

Ms BUSH: The only thing upward of life is the death penalty. Is that what they are foreshadowing under an LNP government? There is a saying that we all know and use, but there is a second and a lesser known part to the statement which goes, 'It takes a village to raise a child, but the child who isn't embraced will burn the village down to feel its warmth.'

Mr Millar interjected.

Ms BUSH: We are the village.

Mr Millar interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, member for Gregory.

Ms BUSH: We are the village. In fact, we are the village chiefs.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Direct your comments through the chair, member.

Ms BUSH: It is time that the LNP joined us in investing in policies that actually work, not just slick slogans, glossy brochures and empty promises.