




Speech By  
**Lance McCallum**

**MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA**

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Record of Proceedings, 12 December 2024

**MAKING QUEENSLAND SAFER BILL**

 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (3.14 pm): Everyone deserves to feel safe, and must be safe, in their home, their workplace and their community and as they go about their daily lives. I want to acknowledge the impact of crime on victims and the need for there to be a stronger focus on their needs to reflect the individual circumstances of each victim. I also want to acknowledge all victims in this House, in our communities and in our Bundamba community. I want to particularly acknowledge the family of Vyleen White—Victor, Cindy, Julie, Brodie and Brianna—who have joined us in the chamber today. I want to acknowledge their incredible strength and resilience and what they have done for our community—putting our community ahead of their grief. They know that I truly appreciate the time that we have been able to spend together.

At the October general election Queenslanders had their say. The Labor opposition supports strong action and tough laws that have the practical effect of protecting Queenslanders. We have heard from communities across the state and we want to work in a responsible and constructive way with the government on this issue, which is an extremely complex issue, with the aim of making sure the best possible laws are enacted—laws that work, laws that actually deliver the outcomes they are drafted to achieve. At the same time, under the Westminster system of democracy, we as an opposition will hold the government accountable for delivering on their promises and help ensure the best possible evidence-based prevention and early intervention programs are continued where they are working, are implemented when new ones arise and have the effect of preventing and diverting young people from entering the youth justice system in the first place or, if they are already in it, diverting them away from crime.

Debates in this place tend to be so binary. Part of that is driven by partisan politics—you are red, you are blue; you are one, you are zero. Part of it is driven by the system that we have here where we can only vote yes or no on legislation. Sometimes the complex issues, such as the one that we are debating today, need to be explored in a much more nuanced fashion. That is why we debate them. That is why we get up and we make our speeches. That is why we move amendments. That is why we have a contest of ideas. I implore every single member of this House to take a moment to think about the complexity of the issue we are trying to draft the best possible law for for Queenslanders; to take a moment to go away from their partisan position, to contribute in a way where we can collaborate together as a parliament to come up with laws that will achieve safer communities, which is something that we all want. This is not a binary proposition; it is complex and the solutions are complex.

The content of this bill only goes some way to addressing the issues we are trying to confront. That is reflected in the policies the government took to the election. They talk about gold standard intervention, but none of those measures, none of those policies, are in this bill. Only some of the government's election policy platform is in this bill.

I want to talk about the process undertaken in relation to the bill before the House, and I refer to what the government took to the election. Plenty of other speakers have made the point that the bill makes substantial changes to the youth justice system that were not canvassed with the public during

the election campaign. This is major reform that goes to the structure of our youth justice framework. Just as we respect the fact that the government won the election, the government has a duty to respect the fact that the constituents of 41 of the 93 electorates in this state did not elect LNP candidates. I hope that the government respects and acknowledges that as part of the democratic process inside and outside of this House, whether on this bill or on any other bill.

In the short time that stakeholders had to consider the 52 pages of this bill, they raised serious and responsible concerns that the bill will have unintended consequences. In fact, the committee report states—

Due to time constraints, not all submissions to the inquiry are reflected in the committee's report...

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It is noted that no external consultation was undertaken regarding the contents of the Bill prior to its introduction. This was highlighted by some submitters in the evidence provided to the committee.

That comes from the government part of the report, not from the statement of reservation or the dissenting report. By raising these concerns, which I do not need to repeat as part of my contribution to the debate, the Labor Party is giving voice to the many stakeholders who called out the lack of adequate consultation on the bill. They include VictimConnect, the Law Society, the Bar Association, the Victims' Commissioner, the Independent Ministerial Advisory Council and the Queensland Homicide Victims' Support Group. For me, probably the most compelling evidence came from the Homicide Victims' Support Group. Their submission stated—

Firstly, we urge the Government not to rush through key pieces of legislation. We recognise that the Government did state it would be a priority, but victims of crime have had a lifetime of Governments doing things to them and when legislation like this is rushed it can have unintended consequences and it can also trigger victims who already distrust Government.

That is why the Labor opposition has moved some amendments and raised these issues. We have always said that we will not get in front of the government's agenda, which they have a mandate to deliver. However, serious reservations have been raised about the process and the scope of the bill.

Labor's amendments to the bill are responsible. They are moved in good faith to try to improve the outcomes of the legislation and its operation in our communities. I ask the government to seriously consider supporting our amendments and, ultimately, a better outcome for Queensland. The evidence shows that there is no silver bullet to this. We do need targeted prevention, intervention and detention when required. Fundamentally, the government has a duty to do everything possible to protect Queenslanders from becoming victims and to provide support to those who are impacted by crime. That was this government's promise to Queensland. It is what they took to the election. It is what this bill is about. It is what they will be judged on.