




Speech By
Laura Gerber

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

Record of Proceedings, 21 August 2024

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

Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee, Report

 **Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (4.14 pm): We know that Queensland is in the grips of a youth crime crisis and that those opposite do not know how to fix it, but the estimates of the youth justice portfolio were a new low for the Miles Labor government. In the last Youth Justice Strategy 2019-2023, this Miles government set itself a key performance indicator to reduce reoffending by five per cent. It failed that KPI. The data tells us that youth reoffending actually went up by five per cent over this period. So what target did the estimates reveal this government has set itself in the new 2024-2028 Youth Justice Strategy? You guessed it: Labor has scrapped the target to reduce youth reoffending altogether in the new Youth Justice Strategy, pointing instead to the SDS which maintains the status quo.

The estimates also revealed—and this really comes as no surprise—that the government's 72-hour transition plans, as meagre as they are, are also not effective. In fact, the estimates revealed that of the 976 young people who spent time in detention in 2023-24 less than half of them received a 72-hour transition plan—less than half. The government also admitted that it has failed to provide plans, like it promised, to all serious repeat offenders. On average, 28 per cent of serious repeat offenders are being released without a 72-hour transition plan and, of those with a plan, 18 per cent reoffended within three days and 72 per cent reoffended within the month.

It could not be clearer that the state Labor government's 72-hour transition planning for young offenders being released back into our communities is not working. This is a shocking failure by this government. These young people need intervention and support to keep them on the right track when they are released from detention to stop the pipeline of reoffending, because we know that 91 per cent of youths released from detention reoffend within a year. Is that any wonder when half of them are released without the government's signature 72-hour transition plan? I wonder: will this government adopt LNP policy once again and support our \$175 million Staying on Track program to provide 12 months worth of intensive support to every single youth who is in detention and released into our community? Will it support LNP policy once again and do that?

We know that serious repeat offenders have increased over 62 per cent over the last three years—a shocking figure given how many times this Labor government has said it is targeting serious repeat offenders. During estimates I gave the minister an opportunity to accept that things are not currently working and to back the LNP's policies—including Adult Crime, Adult Time—but the minister did not because those opposite are not serious about keeping our communities safe. Only the LNP has a plan to restore consequences for action. Adult Crime, Adult Time will hold young offenders to account and restore consequences for action in our Youth Justice Act. At the other end of the spectrum, our

Staying on Track program will ensure the pipeline of reoffending is stopped. It will ensure that every single young offender gets a plan—12 months worth of support and rehabilitation both in detention and post release—to ensure we stop the pipeline of reoffending and turn those young lives around. We will do this because a youth crime sentence should not be breeding better criminals like it is under Labor currently.

Then there is the Cairns youth detention centre. In the budget earlier this year the Cairns community was handed a line item with no funding, saying instead that it was subject to commercial negotiations. At the last estimates the government said it would reveal where the Cairns detention centre is going to be located. At this estimates, do you think it told the Cairns community where the detention centre is going to be? No, it did not. Cairns residents continue to be in the dark on the location of the new youth detention centre.

As a final point, estimates uncovered that Labor ministers are picking winners for significant funding rather than basing funding on departmental advice. This saw the Ted Noffs Foundation and Johnathan Thurston Academy receive two significant procurements each and one to Big Bounce. This is a clear disregard for the Auditor-General's recommendation that the government strengthen its investment and procurement practices to ensure that all investment decisions are based on sound market analysis, with the rationale for decisions clearly documented in line with evidence. Only the LNP has the right priorities for Queensland's future. Only the LNP will bring forward the Making Queensland Safer Laws to ensure our communities are kept safe from the youth crime crisis started by Labor.