




Speech By
Michael Crandon

MEMBER FOR COOMERA

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MAKING QUEENSLAND SAFER BILL

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (11.51 am): I rise to put on record my concerns and the concerns of the people of the Coomera electorate about the youth crime crisis that has instilled fear into many Queenslanders. The Making Queensland Safer legislative amendments we are debating in this place are intended to hold young offenders, particularly serious offenders, to account by ensuring courts are considering the impacts of offending on victims and can impose appropriate penalties that meet community expectations.

There were 46,130 finalised proven offences by young people in 2023-24, resulting in an increase in the number of victims, and there has been an increase in the rate and volume of violent offending committed by young offenders over the years. That rate has increased by 8.3 per cent since 2019, with the number of proven violent offences increasing by 21 per cent, from 2,616 to 3,169, over that time. This violent offending includes murder, manslaughter, serious assault and robbery.

Alarming, the average number of proven offences per young person rose to 14.1 in 2023-24 compared to 7.8 in 2019—almost double. Year-on-year data shows that in 2023-24 there was a 12 per cent increase in proven offences over the previous 12 months, which was an additional 4,975 offences. Looking further back in time, we have seen a 51 per cent increase over the last five years, which was an additional 15,649 offences, and a 98 per cent increase over the last 10 years, amounting to an additional 22,866 offences. Contributing to the overall increase in proven offences were increases in unlawful use of motor vehicle offences—an additional 3,672 offences over five years. That data is for Queensland as a whole.

Closer to home, for the northern Gold Coast residents, when we look at Queensland court registry regional data for Logan-Gold Coast—that incorporates Beenleigh, Beaudesert, Southport and Coolangatta courthouses—for 'unlawful use vehicle count for child defendants' cases' we see a massive increase. To demonstrate that increase, I have compared the 24 months from July 2016 to June 2018 with the data for the 24 months from July 2022 to June 2024. In the period July 2016 to June 2018 we saw a total of 465 youth defendants. In the period July 2022 to June 2024 that figure has exploded to a total of 1,587 youth defendants, a 341 per cent increase. Why am I comparing unlawful use vehicle offences? It is obvious. As has been attested to in this debate, the unlawful use of a motor vehicle is a major contributing factor in the commitment of serious offending, including causing death and/or serious injury to innocent Queenslanders.

The bill amends the Childrens Court Act 1992, the Criminal Code and the Youth Justice Act 1992 to provide that adult mandatory minimum and maximum penalties apply for 13 prescribed offences—that is Adult Crime, Adult Time—including for murder, manslaughter, dangerous operation of a vehicle, unlawful use or possession of a motor vehicle, aircraft or vessels, and unlawful entry of vehicle for committing an indictable offence. The bill also provides that, for young offenders, the principle of detention as a last resort is removed and primary regard must be had to the impact of offending on the victim in sentencing.

The amendments to the bill also mean that cautions, restorative justice agreements and contraventions of supervised release orders will be placed on a child's criminal history and, for a period up to five years, making admissible a person's child criminal history, including dangerous operation of a vehicle, when they are sentenced as an adult. The amendments to the bill will also expand access to the Childrens Court for relatives of victims and the media, and default to an opt-out requirement for victims on the eligible persons register.

The bill also amends the Youth Justice Act to enable the transfer of youth detention inmates to adult prisons upon reaching 18 years and to ensure 18-year-old offenders who breach community-based supervised youth justice orders and are sentenced to custody, or remanded by a court, are admitted to a corrective services facility rather than a youth detention facility.

Communities across Queensland were let down by the former Palaszczuk-Miles Labor government, which weakened youth justice laws, creating a generation of youth offenders who see themselves as untouchable. Queenslanders deserve to feel safe in their homes, workplaces and communities, but in communities across Queensland right now they do not. The Crisafulli government is putting the rights of victims ahead of offenders' rights and making it crystal clear to youth offenders that if they commit an adult crime they will serve serious adult time.

Importantly, the tough provisions contained in the bill complement plans for gold standard early intervention and crime prevention to ensure there are fewer victims of crime. Significant investments include \$175 million for the Staying on Track program, providing 12 months of post-release support where organisations will work with young people while they are in youth detention centres, bridging the transition to community, offering stability and a pathway to education and employment over the year after release.

There will be an investment of \$50 million for nine Regional Reset programs, which are early intervention residential programs to provide 24/7 intensive support for at-risk young people who require a higher level of care than some community-based programs can provide. A young person can be referred to this service by schools, police, Child Safety or parents. The programs will be delivered across Queensland, including the Gold Coast-Logan region.

There is \$80 million for Circuit Breaker Sentencing—a three- to six-month court ordered rehabilitation program as an alternative to detention. Two programs will cater for up to 60 young people at any one time. There is \$100 million for gold standard early intervention, to support community-led initiatives focusing on reducing crime and boosting education, training and/or employment. It will include \$50 million for a kick-starter program to fund new ideas and \$50 million to expand proven initiatives, with key performance indicators and regular reporting.

There will be \$40 million for two youth justice schools to divert young offenders from crime, and \$40 million for four crime prevention schools to re-engage students who have fallen out of mainstream schooling and are at risk of falling into crime. One of these schools will be delivered on the Gold Coast by Men of Business, based in Southport.

It is worth noting that the northern Gold Coast is home to two gold standard programs that deserve recognition. First, Everything Suarve, or Esuarve, is a program that has succeeded in turning around the lives of young men whom some considered lost. I know that Esuarve will be a big part of the gold standard early intervention programs that the Crisafulli LNP government is committed to providing for youth in our northern Gold Coast-Logan community.

The second is Toogoolawah School, an alternative or 'second chance' school that has been doing amazing work for 35 years in one form or another. I have seen Toogoolawah grow over the years to now have around 120 students up to year 10, with Toogoolawah aiming to offer years 11 and 12 for students by 2026. Watching Toogoolawah boys over the years become valuable members of our community in their adult life is nothing short of inspirational. Last Friday I had the pleasure—for the 12th or 13th year—to witness the graduation of another 20 boys and to hear their stories, from both the teachers and the boys themselves. Once again, I presented two awards to two of them for their dedicated commitment to the task at hand. That commitment has changed their lives. I also had the opportunity to speak and, with trembling voice, I thanked the school faculty for their passion and commitment. In congratulating the boys, I made the point to the families and supporters in attendance that the successes of this alternative school curriculum not only change the lives of these boys for the better but also change the family dynamic and the community they live in.

I think it is worthwhile circling back to the reasons for our commitment to Queenslanders: the real figures that are on the rise. The most recent available figures are very telling. The number of reported offences committed by juvenile offenders in Queensland from 1 January 2024 to 30 November 2024

was over 50,000 and the number of identified serious repeat offenders in Queensland is only 400, of which 28 are on the Gold Coast and 46 are in Logan City. These youth offenders are the target for some of the gold standard programs. Some of them will pay the price for their crimes. Some of those crimes will be adult crimes and they will serve adult time.

In conclusion, 2022-23 ABS data confirmed there were almost 290,000 victims of crime in Queensland—more than in New South Wales or Victoria who have much larger populations. These victims are not just numbers; they are Queenslanders. They have lost their lives, been victims of assault, had their homes broken into or had their cars stolen in that time. I commend the bill to the House.