




Speech By  
**Nigel Dalton**

**MEMBER FOR MACKAY**

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Record of Proceedings, 12 December 2024

**MAKING QUEENSLAND SAFER BILL**

 **Mr DALTON** (Mackay—LNP) (4.02 pm): I stand to speak on the Making Queensland Safer Bill, and what a great pleasure it is. I heard every day during the campaign that this is what Mackay wanted—a fresh start. Many in the House will know that I was a police officer and in this role I served the community by visiting victims and assisting them with getting advice and support. Often I was given the opportunity to hear the backstory to the crime. At this point it would be remiss of me not to thank the police officers in Mackay and the support staff in general duties, detectives, commissioned officers in management and the whole of the Mackay police district. To say that they do a wonderful job is an understatement.

Let me describe one lady I visited and I think members will agree that she needs strong laws to protect her from youth crime. Erika is in her late 80s. She lives alone in a modest ground floor unit in the heart of South Mackay and she has been broken into four times recently. I will give a little bit of background. Erika was a Jew in Germany just before the Second World War. Through some careful planning by her father, her family was spared the concentration camps but her father did die during the war. After the war she saw Joseph Stalin while he was organising the blockade of Berlin and the subsequent Berlin Wall was built as a result. Erika and her brother left Germany soon after to seek a better life in the USA. Later they moved to Australia—to Hobart first, then to Katherine in the Northern Territory and then to Mackay where she nursed for at least 30 years.

Erika had never been a victim of youth crime up until this point in her senior years. The first break-in at her house was when she was taking an afternoon nap on her living room chair. Youths entered through the unlocked door and stole cash, her wallet and her phone. She woke as they were leaving as she screamed something maybe not so polite in German. Erika was advised by the police to lock her door from then on. Erika did but weeks later the youths returned and broke through the door, terrifying Erika. This time they left with jewellery worth hundreds of dollars. Erika then organised to have some deadlocks installed and the frame of her door fixed. Erika's next break-in was a month or so later when they forced these new locks. Thankfully, she was not at home this time; she was in hospital.

During one of my visits as a police officer in the crime prevention office, Erika told me that she imagined the next time the youths came to her home she would be killed. When interviewed on 8 August 2024 when the now Queensland Premier was visiting Mackay, Erika referred to her break-in and said, 'Whenever I think of this I start shaking. It is affecting my health.' On the same Channel 7 media bulletin, the current opposition leader and former premier said—

Youth crime has turned a corner and is approaching record lows in most parts of the state.

Well, not in that part of the state where Erika lives, and not in the suburbs of Beaconsfield, North Mackay, Glenella, Andergrove, Slade Point or South Mackay—or Cairns, Townsville, Mount Isa or Rockhampton. Do I need to continue?

Even this week, Matthew and Cassandra from North Mackay let me know of an alleged break-in which resulted in the theft of their vehicle. Not only do they allege that their vehicle was stolen, but the offenders allegedly stole the Christmas presents sitting under the Christmas tree that were intended for their grandchildren. These presents had been purchased during the year and were recently wrapped for this Christmas celebration. Cassandra said—

I love Christmas and I love my family and I love putting a lot of time and effort into selecting gifts they will love—and for every single one of them to be stolen by these scumbags is disgusting. Some of these gifts will mean nothing to them—what do they want with a canvas photograph of my daughter's cat. Or size 1 Bluey pajamas?

The laws that the LNP are proposing will protect people like Erika, Cassandra and Matthew because there will be consequences for actions. There will not be a chance for the same youth to return to the same victim and continue the terrorising behaviour.

The Crisafulli government is putting the rights of victims ahead of the offenders and making it crystal clear to youth offenders that if they commit an adult crime they will serve serious adult time. Just because the police are getting better at catching these offenders does not mean we remain with a status quo. We need to strengthen the bail laws, we need consequences for actions and we need to intervene early in the lives of vulnerable children. We need to also break the cycle of reoffending and help the young people reintegrate into the community, giving them every opportunity to turn their lives around and be a responsible member of society. We need the Making Queensland Safer Laws now. We do not need to hear statements like what Cassandra said recently: 'Currently these scumbags know they're untouchable.' I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kempton): Just before I call the next speaker, I advise members of the House that television pool cameras will be filming portions of the second reading debate of the Making Queensland Safer Bill this afternoon.