




Speech By  
**Ray Stevens**

**MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH**

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**MAKING QUEENSLAND SAFER BILL**

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (4.36 pm): Adult Crime, Adult Time—a so-called slogan that we have turned into legislation here in this House. I have to say thank you for that slogan because that little slogan has put the LNP on this side of the House in government for the next four years. For 10 years—10 years—the Labor Party ignored the fact that crime was a serious issue out there, particularly in regional areas and, I must say, particularly in the area of Townsville. For a long, long time, the three Labor members who held seats in Townsville denied there was an issue. They might have said something up in Townsville, but they just denied it every which way when they came into this House. The legislation that they brought in to weaken the laws was the genesis of a lot of this youth crime because between 2012 and 2015, there were isolated incidents, not the crisis that put us into government in the election that we have just had. Instead of those three deniers, we now have three great LNP members in Townsville. I thank them all for their commitments.

One other area of particular note for me was the seat held by another youth crime denier, the former member for Capalaba, who basically said it was a media beat-up. It is just wonderful that we now have a good member in here from the LNP who knew it was not a media beat-up as he actually suffered from youth crime. It is just wonderful to have that member here in this House. His election is proof that youth crime is a major issue in this state which the former Labor government totally ignored. Not only did they ignore it; they started it from 2015 when the leftie, woke side of the Labor Party decided that they had to water down the laws and allow these kids to run out and commit crimes without any consequence. That is why crime grew and grew.

I can remember that a number of years ago when I spoke to senior police they said that there were about 400 of these recidivist young criminals statewide. Now they tell me there are around 1,000 recidivist criminals statewide. They also tell me that 80 per cent of them can be rehabilitated to be good citizens but that there will always be 20 per cent who will remain bad to the bone for the rest of their careers. They are the ones we have to sentence using Adult Crime, Adult Time to make sure they do not repeat their offences in our communities and make our communities scared.

The Mermaid Beach electorate has suffered from kids who are repeatedly running amok and who are in a revolving door through the Magistrates Court because the laws were weakened by the then Labor government. That will be fixed in parliament this week, before Christmas. We will not procrastinate, like opposition members are trying to do with their amendments seeking to stall the legislation to try to repair the damage they did to themselves through the youth crime crisis. This law will be through parliament before Christmas. It will be followed by other remediating measures as we go on to make sure the youth crime crisis is addressed properly over the longer term—that means treating kids with gold standard early intervention and re-education so that they can become good citizens of our community and not frighten communities right across Queensland.

**Mr McDonald:** Taxpayers, not lawbreakers.

**Mr STEVENS:** Exactly; correct. We will turn them into good citizens and that will help them in their lives. A lot of them do come from dysfunctional homes—we understand those sorts of matters—but then get into peer groups that take them out and teach them a bit of ‘fun’ for the night in terms of breaking into houses, stealing keys, stealing cars and driving recklessly. At the moment under the Labor laws, a lot of the older ones are fairly smart and send the young kids in as they know that the young kids cannot be incarcerated. They grab the car keys and out they go for their joy rides. Personal friends have had their cars stolen, and it is just devastating for them. They cannot understand why the government of Queensland cannot address this problem.

As we have heard from former police officers who are now members on this side of the House, it is frustrating for the police as well. There is a revolving door for these kids whom they spend a lot of resources catching. There are chases on the highway—all sorts of terrifying incidents that are correctly reported by the media. If they did not report on them there would be silence, which the Labor Party would be happy about. The moral standing of the police has been absolutely damaged by the repetitiveness of youth crime and it is why officers are leaving the service in droves. Most of them are LNP members here in the parliament—only kidding! The reality is: this is a serious issue for the police. The bill we are passing this week will go a long way in supporting them and the jobs they do. It will make sure that the kids they catch stay out of communities for an appropriate time for the crimes they commit.

In Mermaid Beach, there was one street in particular where vandalism and cars being stolen had not stopped, so the whole street put in cameras and got the council to put in cameras as well. This all had a major cost. We have spoken about the cost of insurance and other matters that are adding to the cost of living for people right throughout the community. The people of Mermaid Beach absolutely appreciate this law going through and support it 100 per cent.

I met with two parents who had respected professional careers who said, ‘We have to have our third child locked up and kept out of society. He will either kill himself’—he was about 13 at the time—‘or kill some other people.’ They begged me, as their local member, to try to have this kid put away, out of society. That is a very sad indictment. These people had two great kids, and the third one got into the wrong group and behaved incredibly badly. They could not manage him. That is the sort of problem that we will have to address as a government, and we will in a very short time.

It was mentioned in one of the speeches from the Labor Party that in our period in government from 2012 to 2015 we did not do much for the bikies. As a member who had the bikies hit town and surround a police station, I can assure that member that our VLAD laws—brought in by the then attorney-general—made all those bikies leave town. Since Labor came back to government, guess what? They are all back. They are not wearing their colours—they are all wearing Versace—but they are distributing drugs on the Gold Coast. That is due, again, to soft-on-crime Labor. That should be their slogan because it is absolutely correct. They should be supporting this bill, rather than being negative about the whole thing. They should own up to their mistakes of the last 10 years. They should own up to why they are now on the opposition benches. The view from over here is a lot better. I am really enjoying seeing the member for Logan on that side of the House after a number of years. I think he has been in the parliament for 10 years. All of those members over there were party to the cover-up—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Martin): Order, members! Stop quarrelling across the chamber.

**Mr STEVENS:** Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker, for your protection. All of those members over there were in denial and covering up—‘There is no crime issue here’—yet communities were all telling us a different story. Even in lovely Mermaid Beach, we had a serious crime problem. I hate to think what the poor members from Townsville had to put up with. Now they are here to fix up the problem. I thank the members from Townsville. Enjoy your time in parliament. We will see this bill pass.