




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

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MAKING QUEENSLAND SAFER BILL

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (3.24 pm): Today I rise to speak on the Making Queensland Safer Bill. At the outset, I express my gratitude to our leader and now Premier, David Crisafulli, for his support, encouragement and outstanding leadership over the past four years in opposition and now during this past month in government. I also want to acknowledge the hard work of Deputy Premier Jarrod Bleijie, David Janetzki, the parliamentary team and all others who worked so hard to secure this fresh start for Queensland. Congratulations are also in order to all my colleagues who have been re-elected and to the newly elected members who have joined us here on the government side of the House.

On a personal note, I want to thank Deb Frecklington for her efforts in bringing the Making Queensland Safer Bill to the House so swiftly. I recognise her marathon efforts as a former leader of the opposition. The member for Nanango steered us through the challenges of the COVID pandemic. Her continued hard work and contributions as a shadow minister throughout the last term are significant. One could say that she maintained the foundation that we have built on through the last term to secure this term of government. Member for Nanango, your work ethic and poise are an example for us all. You are not just a great member; you are a true stateswoman and absolutely worthy of the high office of Attorney-General.

This legislation and the Crisafulli government more broadly are committed to restoring safety, justice and accountability across Queensland. This bill reflects the mandate entrusted to us by Queenslanders to clean up the chaos left by the previous government and to address the systemic failures that have led to our current crisis in community safety. For too long victims have been without a voice while offenders have taken advantage of weak laws. These laws declare that we will restore safety to our communities and ensure those who break the law face appropriate consequences.

Under successive Labor governments, Queensland's justice system has been crippled by policies that prioritised the rights of offenders over the rights of victims. Looking back to 2015, it is worth noting that Labor has form on soft laws. In 2015, one of their first acts was to wind back the LNP's significant laws that were designed to address the activities of criminal gangs in Queensland. Our election promise is simple: if you commit heinous crimes then you will be held accountable. We are the LNP: a party that believes in consequences for actions; a party that believes in the principle of personal responsibility.

Over the past two years, as I have knocked on doors and met with constituents, I have heard countless stories from victims of crime. One local business owner shared how their bakery has been repeatedly targeted by young offenders. Those offenders are well known to the police. In fact, the entire family is known to the authorities. However, there is no clear legal pathway to take meaningful action. Another of my constituents, Peter Lloyd, had his home broken into in July. He shared with me that not only does he feel unsafe in his own home but also he struggled with the financial burden of repairs as

his insurance did not cover all the costs. Like so many other Queenslanders, Peter should not have to pay for Labor's weak laws.

Just three days ago, another constituent, who lives just across the street from my office, told me that their home had been burgled again. It was the third time in less than 18 months. On two prior occasions cars were also stolen. Understandably, they are a little frustrated. Personally, I too have been a victim of youth crime. Over two years ago, a group of eight young people broke into my garage, rifled through my vehicle and stole anything of value. Fortunately, they were caught the next morning after foolishly using my stolen credit card at McDonald's, just half a kilometre away. However, as in so many other cases, the offenders were already known to police. Frustratingly, those young people, well known to police and the justice system, simply walked away with little more than a slap on the wrist.

A few weeks later, a case worker from the Youth Justice Centre at Logan called and asked if I wanted to engage in a restorative process with one of the offenders, a 15-year-old girl from Sunnybank. This young girl, sadly, came from a family that desperately needed help. Labor's youth justice and child safety systems had failed her and her siblings. Queensland's youth justice system is failing young people, victims and the community at large.

Some members in this House have raised concerns about the toughness of these laws, citing human rights concerns—I acknowledge that there have been submissions made to that effect throughout the hearing process. One of my constituents—in fact many of my constituents, constituents like Eric—feels the legislation does not go far enough. He has suggested we should increase and mandate minimum sentences. While the LNP's approach includes tougher laws, it is equally focused on providing early intervention, support and rehabilitation for young people who need to get their lives back on track. I am so pleased to see that the member for Currumbin has been appointed as the Minister for Youth Justice and will be overseeing the policies that we have announced in respect of restorative justice.

I am especially proud of Marco Renai and the team behind MOB—Men of Business—based in my electorate of Southport. For more than 14 years, Marco's dedication has transformed the lives of hundreds of young men through discipline, support, love and encouragement. Each year, the majority of these young men graduate, secure a job, obtain their driver's licence and find a pathway to a better future.

In closing, I just want to say that rules matter. Rules should mean something. The ambiguity and leniency that have characterised our legal system in recent years have been both confounding and confusing for our young people. As a father of four boys I know only too well that young people need boundaries, clear rules, guidance and an understanding of right from wrong. This legislation provides that clarity and reinforces the values of responsibility and accountability. I commend the Making Queensland Safer Bill to the House.