




Speech By
Robert Skelton

MEMBER FOR NICKLIN

Record of Proceedings, 17 April 2024

MOTION

Crime, Media Reporting

 **Mr SKELTON** (Nicklin—ALP) (5.31 pm): I rise to speak in support of the amendment moved by the government to the motion. It is incumbent on all of us in this place to do everything we can to make sure that Queenslanders feel safe in their homes. We need to present our arguments based on facts. We need to highlight and lift up programs that are working. We need to back those on our front line and give them the tools they need to do their jobs. I am proud to be a part of a government that is relentlessly listening and delivering for Queenslanders. Those opposite choose to come in here and use the limited time they have to talk about comments on social media. They do so because they do not have anything of substance to contribute. The LNP want to use youth crime and youth justice as a wedge to divide our communities. They are not interested in doing the work required to combat youth offending. They are not interested in putting in place the long-term solutions based on better health and education outcomes for our young people to break the cycle of youth crime while taking steps to deal with hardcore repeat offenders to ensure that our communities are kept safe.

We know that our programs are starting to make a difference. We are hiring more police than ever, filling 2,000 new positions. We have charged more than 4,300 young offenders with more than 7,900 offences to ensure that people are held responsible for their actions. We have expanded the range of offences which attack a presumption against bail for young offenders who commit serious offences whilst on bail. These are the immediate steps that we have taken to increase community safety.

We are also making the necessary investments in a comprehensive youth justice reform program to address the complex causes of youth crime. We have allocated \$288 million for our youth engagement and reform program, including \$120.9 million for six new campuses of the Queensland Pathways State College; \$27.3 million for specialised alternative learning programs; \$56.9 million for intensive education case management for students known to youth justice; \$8.6 million for 12 additional court liaison officers who work with students appearing before the courts to help them get back to their education; \$45.4 million to create 50 new flexi spaces in high-need schools, with dedicated teachers to provide extra support for students who experience difficulty staying positively engaged in their regular classroom; and \$29.1 million for First Nations engagement and attendance programs. These are the types of early interventions and programs that make a real difference and I am proud to be a part of a government that has done the work to see them implemented.

Those opposite think that they are going to solve youth crime with some slick ads and glib lines. Six months out from an election, they still cannot outline what their plan for crime is. Once they finish their five slogans, they are out of puff. They hope that Queenslanders will forget that they cut 110 senior police officer positions and that they slashed \$10 million in youth justice funding—brutally cutting the programs that stopped young offenders reoffending. They think that people will forget that they made our Police Service pay for their own body worn cameras. I am proud of what is being delivered locally,

with new police stations in Aura, Nambour and soon in Cooroy. These are real investments that make a real difference to increasing community safety across the Sunshine Coast, and we are only just getting started.

I am proud to stand alongside my colleague the member for Caloundra in calling for a new police helicopter for the Sunshine Coast. I encourage everyone on the Sunshine Coast to get on board, sign my petition and have your say. They can find it on my website. Let me say this: police helicopters are a much better deterrent to youth crime than glossy brochures and overproduced television ads. Those opposite are more interested in coming in here to get their grab for the nightly news. I will keep listening and delivering for my community.