




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR CAPALABA

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MAKING QUEENSLAND SAFER BILL

 **Mr FIELD** (Capalaba—LNP) (3.48 pm): Mr Speaker, 26 January is supposed to be a day of celebration. It is the day when we can celebrate the nation that Australia has grown to become. For my wife and me, it will forever be the day that three members of our family were taken from us by an uncontrollable, unstoppable, untouchable repeat youth offender.

Across Queensland, families have been shattered, lives irreparably changed and communities torn apart by the rampant youth crime crisis in this state. These are not just numbers rapidly increasing on a sheet; these are people—real people. These are fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, neighbours—outstanding members of their communities who should still be with us. Their absence is a stark reminder of what happens when governments fail the people they are here to represent.

My family were failed. The family of Emma Lovell were failed. The families of so many more victims have been failed. Ten years ago, the former Labor government's move to water down Queensland's youth justice laws created a generation of untouchables—weak consequences for young crims allowed them to offend, reoffend and devastate lives and livelihoods with impunity. Had that decision not been made, one can only wonder how many victims, communities and families, just like mine, would still be intact today.

The revolving door of Labor's failed youth justice system will forever be the legacy of those opposite. In the last financial year alone, there were 46,130 finalised proven offences by young crims—a 12 per cent increase on the previous year, a 51 per cent increase in the past five years and a 98 per cent increase in the last 10 years. Those opposite had let down victims, communities and even young offenders themselves.

During the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee's inquiry into the Making Queensland Safer Bill, we heard accounts from Queenslanders whose lives had been devastated by youth crime. Jillian Joyce, an Australian Army veteran, shared with the committee that she felt safer while on deployment in a conflict zone overseas than she does in her own community. Is this the Queensland that those opposite can be proud of, a state in which even our veterans do not feel safe? Jillian's sentiment echoes across the state, including in my electorate of Capalaba where locals have spent the last decade living in fear. They are tired of it and they want change.

There will be change. We took our Adult Crime, Adult Time policy to the election with a promise of legislating our Making Queensland Safer Laws before Christmas. We will deliver that promise.

I was following the debate in the chamber last night and I was astounded. I was astounded by the behaviour and the contributions of some of those opposite. I am astounded that those opposite have moved to delay the introduction of these laws. Truth be told, I am not really that surprised. Why is it now that the members on that side of the House are attempting to look proactive on the issue of youth crime?

Mrs Frecklington: They had 10 years.

Mr FIELD: Those opposite had 10 years to make change, instead they chose to sit on their hands and close their eyes to the tragedies occurring across the state—charter boat; what charter boat? Youth crime crisis; what youth crime crisis? After all, it is not just a media beat-up.

When Matt, Kate and Miles were taken from us, former premier Palaszczuk was on the scene, cameras in tow. The then premier drove past our home with then police commissioner Katarina Carroll. The media took their photos at the corner of Allenby Road and Finucane Road—the scene of the crime—and then the then premier drove past our place again on the way back to 1 William Street. Only Katarina Carroll, the former police commissioner, stopped at our home to express how sorry she was that something like this could ever happen.

If the former Labor government wanted to give the perception that they would crack down on youth crime, they had the chance for a brief time. Our family knew the reality. There was almost zero contact with the government. I do not believe the member for Murrumba even knew who I was when he fronted the Voice for Victims rally earlier this year.

Those opposite spent the last decade in office promising change but never delivering. This LNP Crisafulli government will deliver change. We will deliver justice for victims—justice for victims past, present and future. The people of Queensland knew what we were offering. They delivered us the mandate to legislate the Making Queensland Safer Laws. The passing of these laws will put in the past Labor's soft-on-crime approach and give Queenslanders the justice and protection they deserve for the future.

These laws will send a crystal clear message to young criminals committing adult crime: you will serve adult time. How can it be that a young criminal with over 130 offences on his rap sheet can receive only six years jail for taking three lives? Strike me down, last week we saw that failed youth justice system again. Another criminal who stole a car and wiped out and killed three people received a sentence where he only needs to serve 60 per cent of a six-year sentence before he is allowed to walk back out on the streets. I assure you that the lives of Michale Chandler, Kelsie Davies and Sheree Robertson are worth more than that. The lives of every Queenslanders killed by an out-of-control young crim are worth more than that.

These laws are just as much about rehabilitation and justice as they are about punishing offenders. These new laws will open up the Childrens Court to allow victims, their families and the media more transparency throughout the judicial process. This is an important change and one that Queenslanders told us was desperately needed.

One issue that I noted during the election was the number of victims who had been kept in the dark about the whereabouts of their perpetrators. Some were released back into the very same community, and their victims were not told until after the fact.

This government understands that prevention is as vital as accountability. That is why we are investing in early intervention and rehabilitation programs to turn the tide on youth crime. We have initiatives like: Staying on Track, a \$175 million program offering 12 months of post-release support to help young people rebuild their lives with stability and purpose; Circuit Breaker Sentencing, an \$80 million program providing an alternative to detention with targeted rehabilitation for up to 60 young people at a time; and community-led crime prevention, a \$100 million investment to empower local initiatives that address the root causes of crime, focusing on education, training and employment. Among others, these are real meaningful steps to break the cycle of offending and give young people the chance to choose a different path, a path that shows them the way ahead is by honest work and the determination to build a good life for themselves and their families.

The bill is also about restoring trust in our justice system in which Queenslanders have lost faith. The former government's catch-and-release program created great frustration among our police, who are working to try to keep our community safe. Recently, I paid a visit to the Capalaba police station with the Minister for Police to listen to the concerns of the police on the ground in our community. Morale is at an all-time low.

The Queensland Police Union has voiced its support for the tough provisions in this bill, including the Adult Crime, Adult Time approach. They know firsthand the devastating impact of youth crime, with over 13,000 motor vehicle thefts reported last year, despite numerous police enforcement strategies to curb the rising number of thefts. For many, the theft of their car means the loss of income. During the campaign, locals and Queenslanders from every corner of the state expressed to me how they have been impacted. I heard from teenagers who worked hard to save money from their part-time jobs to purchase their first car—it should be a time of joy—only to have it stolen months down the track.

Insurance premiums are skyrocketing, hurting the hip pockets of Queenslanders already struggling under the cost-of-living crisis. Do those opposite truly believe this or is it just about a media beat-up? My family's story is just one of many. Every life lost, every victim impacted, is a reminder of why this bill is so critical. We owe it to those who have suffered, to those we have lost and to future generations of Queenslanders to make Queensland a safer place.