




Speech By
Hon. Steven Miles
MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Youth Crime

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Premier) (10.04 am): Since the House last met Queensland has been rocked by an awful, heinous crime. No family should ever go through what the White family has. Every Queenslanders is thinking of them, especially Vyleen's husband, Victor, and their young granddaughter, who witnessed the crime and rushed to get help for her grandmother. I would like to thank our police, including Detective Acting Superintendent Heath McQueen, who so quickly apprehended an alleged offender and alleged accomplices. I would like to thank Dr Ademola Afolabi, who rushed to render medical assistance, and the community recovery team who have been at the Redbank Plains Town Square supporting community members impacted by crime in their community at their local shops.

I know that Queenslanders are angry. They want to feel safe to go about their business, to duck down to the shops for some last-minute groceries without fearing for their safety. I do too. No young person should be carrying a knife. No young person should use a knife to incite fear.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, can you assure the House this is not sub judice in terms of persons charged with the crime?

Mr MILES: I can, Mr Speaker. No young person should use a knife to incite fear or to harm another person. Too many of these young people are involved in gangs. Too many are stealing cars to commit crimes. We can always do more and do better—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, I am sorry for the interruption. Members to my left, I do not need any assistance regarding matters of the House in terms of sub judice. I am listening. I would appreciate it if I can hear the statement in order to make that determination.

Mr MILES: We have introduced some of the toughest laws in the country to hold offenders to account, and we are investing hundreds of millions of dollars into targeted serious repeat youth offenders, tackling the complex causes of crime and boosting community safety. We are listening to victims and providing the supports they tell us they need such as more financial support for victims and their families, including distress payments, and a dedicated Victims' Commissioner. A retired police officer, Mr Jon Rouse, is acting in that role right now so we can provide hands-on support to victims as soon as possible. We have more police on the beat. We will keep targeting offenders, and if there is more we need to do we will do it.

That is why yesterday I asked the Police Commissioner to attend cabinet. I asked her to share with us their intelligence about these disturbing trends and tell us what more the government can do. Our government's response to youth crime must keep a laser focus on community safety. Any changes

we introduce need to make sure the public has confidence they will be protected from violent offenders. Kids on bail do not get to hang around the streets. We are going to make sure they are turning up to school, turning up to work and participating in the bail programs the court requires.

We have funded dedicated youth co-responder teams, a partnership between police and youth justice, which patrol the streets and engage with those people at risk of offending and those on bail. We are going to give them every chance to get back into school, but if they turn that down we are going to take immediate action. That includes the greater use of electronic monitoring. That is what the Police Commissioner asked for and it is what we will deliver. The Commissioner explained that knife crime is a growing problem. That is why we need to limit access to knives and similar weapons like tomahawks, axes and machetes. Retailers need to act quickly to limit access to these weapons, so we have brought the start date of—

Mr POWELL: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. There is a bill before the House that deals exactly with what the Premier is raising. I believe he is pre-empting debate on that bill.

Mr SPEAKER: I am listening carefully. I believe the Premier may potentially be foreshadowing other bills, and that is why I am listening carefully. I am going to allow it for the moment, but I am keen to listen to the contribution of the Premier.

Mr MILES: We need police to be able to identify concealed knives in more places, like shopping centres, and when kids are caught with knives there will be tougher punishments. I have asked police later this week to bring to parliament some examples of the types of weapons they have confiscated so that members can see for themselves what police are dealing with. Shopping centre owners and managers also need to do more to make sure shoppers feel and are safe. Security guards, CCTV and lighting can make a real difference. I have reached out to the Shopping Centre Council of Australia to discuss some practical measures to make the places we shop safer. That might include free security audits by police and minimum security standards for shopping centre managers.

The public also has the right to know what is going on in our court system. We want journalists to be able to cover these stories without letting the world know about things like a child's history of abuse or mental health reports. I also believe that victims' families should be able to attend court—again, with proper safeguards. Victims' families deserve to see what happens when the court considers the fate of someone who harmed or killed their loved one. It is that simple. Some have criticised me for my remarks regarding the courts. Let me be clear: I absolutely respect our judicial officers and their independence, but community safety is a complex issue and it should not be the case that one part of the system cannot be questioned or critiqued.

I am pleased that the House already has a mechanism in place to find bipartisan support on youth justice. The Youth Justice Reform Select Committee has been doing good work hearing from Queenslanders and stakeholders right across Queensland. I would like to thank the member for Noosa and the committee for their work. It is important that we capture what they have learned and that it informs future responses. That is why we will ask the parliament to support the committee providing an interim report by 27 March.

Queenslanders deserve to be safe. We will continue to do everything we can to ensure they are. It is my promise to Queenslanders that we will always listen—to Queenslanders, to our police, to the experts—to deliver a better, safer Queensland that we can all be proud of.