




Speech By
Hon. Steve Minnikin

MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH

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MAKING QUEENSLAND SAFER BILL

 **Hon. SJ MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (Minister for Customer Services and Open Data and Minister for Small and Family Business) (11.26 pm): I too rise to make a contribution to the Making Queensland Safer Bill 2024. I too would like to place on the record, like many members have done in this debate thus far, and acknowledge the fine advocacy work both before his time as an MP and now during his time as an MP of the member for Capalaba, Russell Field. I had the privilege of doing a fundraiser for Russell several months ago where I was pretty much exposed to his real story in the raw. I did a whip-round and about another 20 people and I do not think there was a dry eye in the house.

To the member for Capalaba: you have actually stood by your convictions for months and months, pounding the pavement with your great team; you have given a great inaugural speech; and you have also not adhered to your roster. I observe lots in this chamber and I have observed the member for Capalaba, whose roster has expired. He has not left the chamber. He is that invested in doing the right thing for Queenslanders. Sir, I applaud you, through the chair.

I would like to make this contribution more from the heart tonight. I could go through the things that we will do when this bill is actually passed. I will just pick up those key elements for the record. The key elements of the bill include Adult Crime, Adult Time, as we well know; a prioritisation of victims' rights; the changes to sentencing; the youth justice reforms; and media and victim access.

What I would really like to do in the remainder of my contribution is speak of my journey with the people that I represent in Chatsworth—the things that have moved me over the last several years. I can distinctly recall sitting in that chair over there in 2016 when these laws were watered down. I know that, back then, I was warned, as I normally am, by the Speaker of the day for interjecting and saying, 'You will rue these watered down changes. They will come back to haunt you. It may not be next year and it may not be in two years, but, mark my words, they will come back to bite.'

Not only did they bite the ALP; unfortunately, they have bitten pretty much those the length and breadth of Queensland. There are two primary motivators in life. One is fear and one is greed. I can honestly say, hand on heart, from the hours and hours I have spent at mobile offices engaging with my Chatsworth residents, that I have never before felt the level of palpable fear in the electorate that I am proud to serve that I have felt in the last three or four years. People are scared to death. I have never seen that level of fear in all of my years of serving.

Around 12 months ago I conducted my own field test to get a pulse or gauge in the community. Here is what I did. My electorate office is opposite Westfield Carindale. There is a prominent national sporting goods retailer contained therein. I walked over there during a lunchbreak and said I would like to buy a baseball bat. I was told at that store, 'I'm sorry, sir, we are out of baseball bats.' I was not deterred. I have told this story in the past.

I then drove to their other store at Cannon Hill. I again walked in asked, 'May I buy a baseball bat?' only to be told yet again, 'We have sold out.' I said, 'To save me time, can you make sure there is a baseball bat available somewhere in the Greater Brisbane area?' There were none. I then rang

someone from Queensland Baseball to find out whether there was a connection between this uplift in baseball bats being purchased and there was not. There was a one per cent increase in memberships in the previous 18 months. Why were baseball bats sold out pretty much throughout Brisbane? The answer is fear, fear and fear.

Three years ago I held the first of at least half a dozen crime forums. They were conducted by the fine men and women of the Queensland Police Service. The first was at the Gumdale Progress Hall. It was of course free and it was booked out—60 people—in literally 60 seconds. I then upped the ante for the second, third and fourth forums and held them at the Belmont bowls club where, for fire regulations, you can have about 120 people attend. They were booked out within a day. People were wanting information but they also wanted to vent. They wanted to let people know exactly what things were like.

I will always remember a lady who was at the second forum at Belmont bowls club. She had lived in the area all of her adult life. When the strapping six-foot-two senior sergeant said to her, 'Maybe things are not quite as bad as you are thinking,' she said, 'With respect, sir, the difference now is this. For many years I was aware you would get the odd robbery around the area—no-one is delusional—but the difference now is that I am aware of people who are being threatened with a 40-centimetre machete. They are slashing first and then asking where the keys are.' The die has changed. The level of brazenness has changed.

The other example I want to put on the record is of the tradie I met from Tingalpa. He met me at the Belmont Road Shopping Village. He asked if he could see me a week later in my Chatsworth electorate office. He was built like Thor. We was six foot four and full of muscles. He probably could have had a perpetrator in one hand and crushed them. This gentleman came and saw me and within a matter of about 12 minutes was a blithering wreck. He broke down in front of me in my electorate office. Why? He was a tradie. He had Bosch tools that were stolen from the back of his ute. He had insurance to cover them. He replaced them. What happened? Two months later they were stolen again. They were stolen for a third time within nine months. He was absolutely crushed. He left the state. He is now working south of Kingscliff. He is a tradie—a guy who was built like you know what—but he was absolutely broken. He was broken by the fact that he was absolutely powerless.

The other exhibit I would like to put on the record is this. I am very proud, like many in this chamber on both sides, no doubt, that I try to help out my Meals and Wheels group and do the odd run whenever I can. I wish I could do more. I do about three or four runs per year. In my case it is the green run because it picks up most of my electorate through Carindale. Over the last seven years I have noticed something that is bordering on absurd. When I drop off meals, particularly in unit title complexes, to elderly ladies in particular, they sometimes have a PIN code to get the keys to get through the flyscreen door, the security door and the main door. In some cases for some people on the green run there are six keys to get through six different deadlocks. They are like fortresses. This is in Carindale, Tingalpa, Ransome, Wakerley, Camp Hill, Carina and Carina Heights—the area I grew up and lived in for most of my life.

About 7½ weeks ago, including the two weeks of pre-poll, the situation was absolutely undeniable. There was my Labor opponent, my Greens opponent and me strategically, as I always am, just outside the six-metre mark—the last person to have contact with people. There was dialogue. In the great Western democracy that we live in, the Labor Party candidate was doing her thing, the Greens candidate was more often than not missing in action but occasionally would be doing his thing and then they would get to me. The simple words people spoke were, 'Youth crime; it's a big issue in this area.' They would stop in their tracks. They would pivot 180 degrees and come back.

It absolutely flummoxes me, after listening to the contributions of members opposite, that many of them are in complete denial. They do not need a script. They do not need speaking points. The reality is that you feel it in your heart. You know your electorate. For years people have been screaming at the now opposition, which was over here for nine years, to do something about it. They had many years after they watered down the laws to change things, but they refused to do anything tangible. The palpable fear in the electorate, from Cape York to Coolangatta, was widespread and they paid the price.