




Speech By
Adam Baillie

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

Record of Proceedings, 10 June 2025

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Townsville Electorate, Youth Crime

 **Mr BAILLIE** (Townsville—LNP) (2.55 pm): I love all of the references to driving. I know that Queenslanders are embracing the LNP being in the driver's seat.

Many on this side of the House are aware of the struggles we face in Townsville with regard to youth crime. Townsville knows that, after a decade of Labor weakening laws, the impact has been disastrous. Labor did not just weaken laws in relation to youth crime; they weakened several other laws that are also significantly impacting livability in our beautiful part of the world. The challenge of public intoxication and antisocial behaviour that often accompanies it is not a new problem for many communities across Queensland. Under Labor public drunkenness and public urination laws were revoked, paving the way for the antisocial behaviour that has been plaguing our great city for years. It is only getting worse. The member for Burnett, as a member of the committee reviewing the legislation change, wrote in a statement of reservation at the time—

Many of the committee's other recommendations do not recognise the reality: that the community expects to be able to use public spaces and for them to be free from begging, public intoxication and public urination while utilising these public spaces. The committee's report does not reflect what many see as a disproportionate response to these offences and will be seen as a continuation of a soft on crime Government that fails to plan.

Mr Deputy Speaker Krause, you will not be surprised that antisocial behaviour has continued to escalate and is impacting the safety and security of my community in Townsville. By removing the ability for first responders to intervene early, the people Labor claimed these reforms were designed to help have been let down, as has our community. Right now if you walk down our CBD you will be confronted by groups of people drinking in the street, accosting other members of the public as they try to go about their day. During the day these groups get drunker, louder and more violent. Rather than being able to intervene early, as our first responders have been able to in the past, they are forced to wait until a callout escalates into a much more serious situation, sometimes involving other victims. As the offences get more serious, more first responders and resources are utilised and our hardworking service providers, who are already stretched, are stretched further. The impacts are not theoretical; they are lived daily experiences for our residents and business owners alike.

Some of our city's most dedicated business operators have reached out to me to share their experiences. In an email to me, business owner James wrote—

We have witnessed daily incidents of aggressive behaviour, vandalism, and intoxicated individuals loitering in front of our premises ... I regularly remove blood stains, vomit, faeces and urine ... Customers are being deterred, staff feel unsafe, and despite calls to police and support services, the problem persists.

This is from Rebecca, who has worked in Townsville's CBD for nearly 20 years. She told me—

I now tell guests to avoid walking alone at night. My team has to escort one another to their cars ... many (customers) left with complaints of 'drunk and aggressive people' outside our doors. Security patrols are limited, and even they've sought shelter in our foyer at times.

The perception of safety is evaporating. It is not just hurting our businesses; it is hurting my city's reputation. Some businesses in the CBD have now reached into their own pockets to pay for private security resources to conduct early morning patrols in an effort to keep them, their staff and their customers safe. Our CBD is suffering, and the problems are now spreading to other parts of the city. Christine wrote—

For five years, we've watched people gather at the bus stop across the road to drink, urinate, argue, and loiter. Guests are visibly concerned. Families walk onto the road to avoid the footpath. Police attend, but often just talk and leave them. Nothing changes.

These stories are frustrating—not because they are rare but because they are now commonplace. We must restore safety, order and dignity to our public spaces. Townsville deserves better and I will continue fighting to help deliver solutions for my community.