




Speech By  
**Corrine McMillan**

**MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD**

---

Record of Proceedings, 20 May 2025

**MAKING QUEENSLAND SAFER (ADULT CRIME, ADULT TIME) AMENDMENT  
BILL**

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (8.53 pm): I rise tonight on behalf of the opposition to contribute to the Making Queensland Safer (Adult Crime, Adult Time) Amendment Bill. Everyone in this chamber wants Queenslanders to be safe. Every Queensland, whether they live in the cities, the suburbs or the regions, has a right to feel safe in their homes, in their communities and in their daily lives. For the laws we pass in this place to truly make our communities safer, they must be built on evidence, on consultation and on transparency. This bill fails on all three counts.

From what we have seen throughout the committee's consideration of this bill, and this government's response to calls to release the expert advice, it is clear this is policy based on popular slogans and ideology, not on evidence. This legislation is being pushed through the parliament without the public release of the Expert Legal Panel's advice, without research evidence and without meaningful public consultation. The government have the power to release that advice tonight, yet they choose not to. I wonder why. If the advice is so robust, if the evidence supports these changes, why not release it and allow the public to see it tonight?

Throughout the committee's consideration of this bill, victims, legal experts, advocates and community organisations have all called for this advice to be made public, and the government continues to govern in secret. We want to see the advice because these changes are in direct contrast to global research around how to keep communities safe. This bill has been developed behind closed doors. In committee hearings, none of the stakeholders asked had received information from the expert panel. Throughout the consideration, the only witnesses to have received information from the LNP's Expert Legal Panel were the minister's Department of Youth Justice and Victim Support and the Queensland Police Service, who both reflected on this advice as cabinet-in-confidence.

This is the list of stakeholders that have not received that advice: the Queensland Law Society, the Queensland Human Rights Commission, the Youth Advocacy Centre, the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak, the Victims' Commissioner, QCROSS, the Community Justice Action Group and the Queensland Police Union. When these organisations appeared before the committee, they said the same thing, 'We haven't seen the evidence. We don't know why these 20 offences were selected.' That is not how you make good law. That is not how you make Queensland safe. As Aimee McVeigh from QCROSS put it during committee hearings—

All of us have not had the opportunity to look at the evidence the government is relying on to argue for this policy and, on the face of it, all evidence points to this not improving community safety.

Katherine Hayes from the Youth Advocacy Centre asked the question—

Why were these 20 offences chosen, especially when some already carry life imprisonment? The public deserves an answer.

The Victims' Commissioner also expressed concern over the lack of transparency and its impact on victims of crime. Early intervention programs and proper investment in those programs are the key to breaking the cycle of crime, and many stakeholders used their submissions to remind the LNP government of this.

Despite the Premier claiming these laws are bolstered by early intervention, there is no evidence that any new programs are up and running. Tenders have been released, but nothing has been delivered. There are no new services for the young people who most need support and clinical intervention to prevent offending or for the victims who need care and healing. There is almost no new funding of substance. During the hearing the minister's director-general confirmed that the funding provided represents less than half of one per cent of the funding pool.

The early intervention programs, which the Crisafulli LNP government is currently relying on, are the programs of the former Labor government—Labor's Youth Co-Responder Teams, Labor's intensive bail initiatives and Labor's Transition to Success. All of these were started and funded by Labor. This bill will be extraordinarily expensive to implement. Instead of investing in wraparound services, family case management, early intervention and victim support, the LNP is doubling down on these punitive measures. The Justice Reform Initiative made it clear in its submission that expanding punitive responses without investing in what works is a poor return on investment and will not reduce crime or victimisation. My community knows it and Queenslanders know it.

There are also several infrastructure capacity issues that were raised by multiple stakeholders that need to be addressed which will ultimately be supported by proper modelling. However, there is no clear modelling to explain how the government plans to manage the increased detention that will result from this bill. We already have overcrowded facilities. Where is the plan for expansion? Where is the money? Where are the resources for the frontline staff who will bear the burden? The LNP has passed laws without planning for the consequences.

Without an independent legislative review, as called for by the stakeholders, this is nothing more than a social experiment—nothing more than a social experiment. Stakeholders like QATSI CPP sounded the alarm on who is most likely to be at the core of this social experiment. It is young First Nations children, young people living with a disability, young people who have experienced trauma, and victims who have been sold hollow promises. There is another contribution from the Victims' Commissioner that speaks to why it is so important to recognise these young people. I quote—

Victims rightfully expect genuine, meaningful effort to be made to increase protections and reduce the risk of harm to others. This includes identifying and managing the factors which contribute to the 'pipeline' of young people who commit offences, and requires a focus on primary prevention and early intervention towards those factors which increase a child's risk of engaging in offending behaviour.

It is a statement that, although simple, is considered and measured. The lesson for the government is that they need to deliver on these primary prevention and intervention programs to support those young people most at risk of becoming involved in the youth justice system instead of just making hollow promises—hollow promises to victims, hollow promises to Queenslanders.

The first tranche of these laws were rushed through parliament last year. We are now seeing the government returning to fix the unintended consequences from their own legislation—consequences that could have been avoided if they had consulted thoroughly the first time. Here we are again—another bill, no transparency, a lack of community engagement, same mistakes, same secrecy, same concerns from stakeholders and legal experts.

Premier David Crisafulli promised Queenslanders integrity and transparency, so where is it? Why is this advice still cabinet-in-confidence? Why were these offences chosen? What do victims actually want? What are the community expectations? Where is the evidence to show that these laws meet them? I can tell members that, in my electorate of Mansfield, the community expects more than headlines and slogans, and victims expect more than headlines and slogans. They expect transparency, they expect the government to consult experts and they expect laws that actually make us safer—not just sound tougher, not just rhetoric, not just slogans.

The opposition supports laws that are evidence based, transparent and properly resourced. We support strong early intervention programs, support for victims, accountability and rehabilitation, and laws that are made with the community. That is why Labor has introduced amendments that are about transparency, accountability and putting victims and victim-survivors first. That is why we are advocating for monthly victim data reporting, an independent review of the laws, the release of the Expert Legal Panel advice, and implementing *The ripple effect* recommendations.

The Labor opposition will be moving amendments to the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 to: recognise harm to victim-survivors in sentencing; treat rape against children as an aggravating factor; restrict use of 'good character' evidence in sentencing; and prevent courts from drawing an inference from the lack of a victim impact statement. These amendments reflect expert consensus, community expectations and our commitment to meaningful, victim focused reform.

In closing, the Labor caucus will not stand in the way of the Premier fixing the laws that he has botched, but we will judge the government for its secrecy and we will judge them on the effectiveness of these laws. My electorate of Mansfield is watching. My electorate of Mansfield is ready to see that your laws are going to fail.