




Speech By
Hon. Daniel Purdie

MEMBER FOR NINDERRY

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Queensland Police Service, Female Officers; Youth Crime, Legislation

 **Hon. DG PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (2.21 pm): I take this opportunity to acknowledge an important milestone that the Queensland police celebrated yesterday: 60 years since the first sworn female officers were inducted into the Queensland Police Service. The induction ceremony of eight female officers took place on 31 March 1965 at Petrie Terrace depot in Brisbane, heralding a significant step forward in the evolution of the Queensland Police Service. I offer my personal congratulations to all female officers who have served or continue to serve with distinction.

Today is an important day in the Crisafulli government's continuing commitment to the fight against crime in Queensland. In line with our promise to Queenslanders last year, we will be introducing legislation to extend the range of offences included in our Adult Crime, Adult Time laws. Relying on expert legal advice, we believe there are valid and compelling reasons to take action against further criminal behaviour to ensure that those who commit offences face the consequences. After a decade of watering down laws, creating a generation of untouchable offenders benefiting from Labor's derelict approach to crime, it is now time to reverse the trend and put the rights of victims ahead of the rights of offenders.

There are two proposed offences that I want to draw to the attention of this House: using a motor vehicle to damage an emergency services vehicle; and endangering police while driving a motor vehicle. Both proposed offences cover the situation where motor vehicles, mostly stolen, are used as weapons against police or other emergency services workers. Those who are seeking to protect the community become the victims of criminal behaviour. I recall that on a recent visit to a Townsville police station at lunchtime a traffic branch officer was rammed by an offender in a stolen vehicle and taken to hospital. Previously there have been incidences in Townsville where a VKR comms call has sent every police officer in the district code 1—that is, the most urgent duty driving—back to the station to hide from young offenders in stolen cars who were hunting them. That is unacceptable and it has to change. It is not normal.

In what civilised society is such behaviour accepted? In what civilised society should the rights of these offenders take precedence over the rights of those they sought to injure or intimidate? The answer is simply none. Once again, while situations such as these became normalised under the former Labor government, we are committed to turning the tide on recidivist young violent offenders. As I have indicated, there have been 53 instances in the past year of the ramming of police vehicles—the targeting of police with deliberate acts by thugs with little regard for the safety of those under attack. These laws will protect frontline emergency services workers from being ruthlessly targeted by juveniles who have no fear because there were no consequences for their actions.

Our incredible emergency services workers deserve better protection from those who recklessly and intentionally use a motor vehicle as a weapon. We support our police and will ensure those who endanger their lives are held accountable. Only the LNP can be trusted to strengthen our legal and youth justice systems. We know that this next tranche will help bring down the number of victims of crime. This is just the next step in our comprehensive plan to make Queensland safer. The Acting Police Commissioner has reiterated his support for these reforms, saying—

We see this behaviour all too often, and while our officers are tactically trained to respond, a motor vehicle can cause serious harm to anyone in its path. The Queensland Police Service welcomes the proposed new law holding reckless juveniles to account.

I challenge those opposite to support these measures, and in particular to put their support behind those who have pledged to protect and assist the community and admit that the policy prescription of the last decade failed to restore the balance in favour of victims, not the offender. This is a challenge to the Leader of the Opposition to show some leadership and bring his rabble of a team with him. We saw what happened just before Christmas when those opposite, as has been reported, were tearing each other apart when it came to giving the people of Queensland the tough laws they had been calling for, to give our police the tough laws they have been screaming for.

The former government was the creator of the youth crime crisis in Queensland. Those opposite did not just sit by and watch it happen; they continually watered down the laws and caused it to happen, tipping the balance of power away from police, victims and communities and towards young repeat violent offenders. I call on the Leader of the Opposition and all those opposite today to support our police and support our laws.