




Speech By  
**Hon. Glenn Butcher**

**MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE**

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

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (4.32 pm): Queenslanders deserve to feel safe and be safe. We will not stand in the way. The Labor caucus has taken a position—one grounded in responsibility and accountability. We will not block the Premier's laws because Queenslanders deserve laws that work. Let us be crystal clear: we are not here to pat the Premier on the back for doing the bare minimum. We are here to clean up the mess that he made in the first place by not including these new offences before Christmas.

This legislation—the so-called second wave of the Making Queensland Safer (Adult Crime, Adult Time) Amendment Bill 2025—is not a masterstroke of policy; it is an admission of failure, a public confession that the first wave of laws was botched, rushed and also incomplete. Let's be honest: the LNP government is back in this House, with its tail between its legs, fixing its own mistakes. The first time, they fast-tracked the process, they steamrolled the committee and they ignored the stakeholders and here we are, once again, cleaning up a legislative shambles of the LNP.

Why are we debating a six-page bill to fix a single number that could have been addressed months ago? Why do they sneak amendments into an entirely unrelated corruption bill? Why is this the fourth time since December that we are changing the Youth Justice Act? This is not strategic reform; it is chaos, it is government by patchwork and it is policy via press release. This piecemeal approach is not governance in Queensland; it is crisis management and it is costing Queenslanders.

They promised to fix crime by Christmas. Remember that? They used big slogans and bold words, but when we asked them to explain how and why the first list of offences was selected they went silent. The word on the street—and from our whistleblowers—is that the LNP were blaming each other behind closed doors for leaving out critical violent crimes like attempted murder and rape. Let me be clear: the Labor opposition supports strong laws, but strong laws must be smart laws. They must be evidence based. They must be strategic. The LNP's approach is none of these things.

When we get to early intervention—the real work of crime prevention—the LNP talks a big game but, when it is stripped back, what is there? Nothing. At committee, the director-general could only name two tiny programs—one in Rockhampton and one in Townsville—a couple of hundred thousand dollars in a system that is crying out for serious investment. The rest? It is still in the future, still in tenders and still in the too-hard basket for this government.

Meanwhile, what is keeping this broken system afloat? The answer is Labor's programs—Labor's Youth Co-Responder Teams, Labor's intensive bail initiatives and Labor's Transition to Success. That is the truth. The LNP are riding on Labor's coat-tails while claiming credit for the work that they have not even done.

Let's talk about detention—both the infrastructure of and the capacity in our jails and our watch houses. The LNP passed laws they were not prepared to enforce. They have no plan to handle the influx of youth into detention—no modelling, no clarity and, once again, no strategy. The Wacol Youth Remand Centre—a Labor project—will help but it will not solve this crisis. Where is the Cairns facility? Where is Woodford? What does the pipeline look like? They do not know because they have not planned for any of it.

The director-general flip-flopped in the committee hearing, saying that it is too early to model the impacts but then admitted that they are modelling every single day. I was confused and so was the committee. The Queensland Police Service said they have considered watch house impacts but also that it is too early to tell. This is not preparation; this is absolute confusion. We cannot legislate our way out of a capacity crisis in our jails and in our watch houses. We need the infrastructure. We need planning. We need coordination. This government has done none of that.

This is what Labor demands. Firstly, we demand monthly victim and offence data. The Premier promised, as we have heard many times, that he would resign if victim numbers did not drop, and then he buried the data. Queenslanders deserve that transparency. Our amendment would make monthly data tabling mandatory.

Secondly, we demand an independent statutory review of the 2024-25 laws. It should after 18 months, be publicly released and be oversighted independently—no more marking your own homework.

Thirdly, we demand the release of the Expert Legal Panel advice—all of it, not just some of it—the past, the present and the future of where they are going. If this advice is so compelling, why the secrecy? If it supports the LNP laws, table the documents. Queenslanders are not buying this cloak and dagger nonsense anymore.

Fourthly, we demand real reform for victims. The LNP keeps saying that they put victims first, yet they have been sitting on critical sentencing recommendations since December. The Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council gave them a road map—and they have done nothing with it, so Labor will act. We moved amendments to the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 to ensure the justice system reflects community standards and supports victim-survivors. Our amendments recognised the harm to victim-survivors in sentencing; treated rape against children as an aggravating factor; restricted the use of 'good character' evidence to shield perpetrators; and prevented courts from drawing negative inferences when victims do not provide an impact statement.

These reforms are about integrity. They are about justice and they are about standing with those who have suffered. This is not just about the law; this is about leadership. Right now, the LNP government is showing none of that. They are governing by headline, not by evidence. They are reacting, not planning, and they are hiding the truth instead of trusting the public. We will not stand in the way of laws that aim to make Queensland safer, but we will expose the hypocrisy, the chaos and the cowardice of those opposite. This second wave of legislation is not a triumph; it is a retreat, a correction, a clean-up job that never should have been necessary if they had got it right in the first place.

Yes, we support fixing the mess, but don't you dare pretend that this is strengthening government. It is a scramble. It is a shambles from a government that is out of depth and out of ideas, and in the future they will be out of time. I commend our amendments to the House.