



Speech By
Hon. Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

Record of Proceedings, 17 September 2025

MOTION

**No Confidence in Minister for Youth Justice and Victim Support and Minister for
Corrective Services**

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (6.11 pm): I rise to support the no-confidence motion moved by the opposition leader with respect to the Minister for Corrective Services. I would have thought that if the government were so focused on looking after their member and amending the motion then all of the ministers would be put in charge of defending the Minister for Corrective Services, but what do we see? We see backbenchers defending the minister rather than her colleagues who sit with her around the cabinet table. You would have thought they would be up-front defending her.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BUTCHER: I take hubris—

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Pause, member for Gladstone. Members, we are nearly there. Let's hear the member for Gladstone in an orderly fashion.

Mr BUTCHER: Under Minister Gerber's watch, Queensland's corrective services system has become an absolute laughing-stock and a ticking time bomb. The truth is stark: this minister has lost control. She has lost the support of her department and frontline services, and now she has lost the ability to keep inmates behind bars. Even her Youth Justice director-general ran away to another job. Despite his evidence at estimates, whistleblowers told the opposition that he wanted out. He could not stay there. There were five prison abscondments in one month in North Queensland. That is not a mistake; that is a pattern of dysfunction, negligence and outright failure as a minister.

Just when we thought this portfolio could not fall any further into chaos, we find out that prisoners have been absconding again—not to run for their lives but to run for a snack. That is right: reportedly, inmates from a low-security facility left custody to go and pick up some chicken. Did somebody say KFC? We all know that the member for Kawana loves chicken—he loves rats as well, I believe—but letting prisoners out for KFC is an absolute joke. Minister Gerber said absolutely nothing about it. Under this minister, security has become so lax that prisoners treat the perimeter like a drive-through. While officers are exhausted and their facilities are at capacity, we have prisoners walking out for a Zinger box. This is not corrective services; it is a comedy hour.

Let's be clear: these escapes are not isolated. They are evidence of an overstretched and mismanaged system. On 7 May this year two inmates absconded from Townsville. On 27 and 29 May two absconded from Palen Creek and on 1 June a prisoner made a break on a tractor, like it was a scene from *The Fast and the Furious*. On top of that, I am advised that during the minister's estimates hearing she would have known of another prisoner absconding that very day. Reports suggest that at 4 pm on the day of the hearing it was discovered that a prisoner had absconded. The minister was surrounded by the commissioner and other QCS officials until eight o'clock that night. Worse still, at

around 7.30 that night the minister took a dixer from the member for Thuringowa on low-security abscondment—while this prisoner was still on the run, and the community did not even know yet. There was no notice of the latest absconder until QCS issued a statement later that night—conveniently, after the minister had finished her hearings. Isn't that strange?

A government member: Deliberately delayed.

Mr BUTCHER: Deliberately delayed; I take that interjection. This is not embarrassing; this is dangerous. The public expects prisoners to be kept in prisons, not out buying chicken or joy-riding through regional Queensland on a tractor.

The fact that the minister has refused to front up every time to take responsibility and explain these failures is an absolute disgrace. This is the same minister who is accused of bullying and intimidating departmental officers, who are routinely abused by her and whose director-general had to flee to another job. It is the same minister who left Far North Queensland in limbo after scrapping the proposed youth detention centre in Edmonton, providing no budget, no site and no reasons. It is the same minister who is presiding over the most ridiculous and reckless period of security breaches in Queensland's correctional history. This is not just a minister who has lost control of her portfolio; this is a minister who has lost the plot. We are asking for a plan to fix it. All we get is spin and slogans from the minister.

Mrs GERBER: Mr Acting Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence at those bullying comments and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Member, the minister has taken personal offence. Would you withdraw, please?

Mr BUTCHER: I withdraw. Frontline staff deserve better, the community deserves better and this parliament should demand better. That is exactly why we have moved this motion tonight.