



Speech By
Hon. Laura Gerber

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

Record of Proceedings, 16 October 2025

JUSTICE, INTEGRITY AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Report

 **Hon. LJ GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Youth Justice and Victim Support and Minister for Corrective Services) (3.25 pm): The committee reviewed the QFCC's annual report for 2023-24. That is the period that the annual report covered and that is the period that those opposite, Labor, were in government. It covers the work that the QFCC did over that period, and the findings and the recommendations that the QFCC made were over the period of 2023-24. It paints a sorry picture of the previous Labor government. I will pick up on two points. Page 9 of the committee's report states—

In Queensland, more children and young people are being held in watch houses for longer periods.

The annual report of the QFCC details that in February 2023 there were young people who had been detained in a watch house for a period of 25 to 32 days. In February 2023, young people were in a watch house for up to 32 days. I can update the House that today—right now—there are three young people in the watch house and the longest they have been is four days. That is a fellow in Cairns who is waiting to be transferred right now. He has a bed in detention. Every single one of those youths waiting for transfer has a bed. However, under those opposite, youths languished in watch houses for up to 32 days. Do members want to know why? The report drops a pin on it. The report drops a pin on when that happened. It happened because the Labor government failed to invest in the infrastructure—failed to build detention centres—and then transferred 17-year-olds out of the correctional system and into the youth justice system without having the capacity to deal with it. That is why we had the watch house crisis, and this report lays it bare. The Crisafulli government opened Wacol in April 2025. That is how we got those numbers down. That is why we no longer have youths languishing with adults in watch houses, as this report lays bare. For 32 days Labor let youth remain in adult watch houses.

With regard to Labor's model in 2023-24, the second part of this report says—

The Queensland model of youth justice is not effectively rehabilitating offenders.

If we go to the QFCC's annual report we see that they in fact did a whole report on exiting youth detention and preventing crime by improving post-release support. They found that the Queensland Labor government abysmally failed in their 72-hour plans. It followed the Auditor-General's report in 2023-24 which said that 72-hour plans are not based on any evidence, that they are not rehabilitating and that they are failing youths left, right and centre. The QFCC in their annual report recommended that the government fund 12 months of intensive rehabilitation. Did Labor do it? That was recommended in 2023-24. Labor did not do it. Did they fund the 12 months of intensive rehabilitation that the QFCC called for in this report? No, they did not. The Crisafulli government is. We are delivering that for Queenslanders, we are delivering that for young people in our detention centres, and we are delivering that for our Queensland communities.

We have funded 12 months of rehabilitation support for every single youth who exits a detention centre to ensure there is proper planning to stop the cycle of reoffending that was left to fester under the former Labor government. The recommendations are all here, and they failed to implement them. This is an abysmal report card for the previous Labor government. It sets out what they should have done and what they failed to do.

The Crisafulli government is delivering for Queenslanders. We are delivering our Staying on Track program, which provides every single youth with 12 months of rehabilitation. It was recommended back in 2023-24 and Labor failed to do it. They refused to do it, but they allowed the youth crime crisis to spiral out of control.

The other aspect this report covers is the crossover cohort—that is, the crossover of child safety and youth justice. The report unveils that, under Labor, almost 30 per cent of the serious repeat offenders were in the care of the state. That was a pipeline into youth justice under the failed former ministers opposite me, including the member for Bulimba, who is about to address this report. I hope she deals with her failures to implement those policies. It is a damning indictment on the former Labor government.

Ms McMILLAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance in relation to the words of the minister. She mentioned a very small number of young people in detention, one of whom is waiting to be transported. That is clearly a breach of their privacy. That student should not be able to be identified, and I would suggest it be taken out of *Hansard*.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McDonald): Member for Mansfield, there is no point of order. If there is an issue, you can write to the Speaker and Hansard to have that addressed.

Mrs Gerber interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Currumbin.

Mrs Gerber interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Currumbin, you are warned.