




Speech By
Martin Hunt

MEMBER FOR NICKLIN

Record of Proceedings, 11 December 2025

JUSTICE, INTEGRITY AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr HUNT** (Nicklin—LNP) (3.47 pm): I move—

That the House take note of the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee Report No. 18, 58th Parliament, *Oversight of the Queensland Ombudsman*, tabled on 5 September 2025.

I rise to speak on the oversight responsibility of the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee for the Queensland Ombudsman and the Inspector of Detention Services. Our committee's role is to monitor and review the performance of these offices, examine their reports and bring matters of concern to the attention of the House. This year we considered the Ombudsman's 2023-24 annual report. We held a public hearing in February with the Ombudsman, Deputy Ombudsman and executive director of corporate services.

Whilst the process and report highlighted a damning decade of decline under the previous Labor government, particularly related to prison management, youth detention and overcrowding issues, Labor's big gun, the member of Gaven, was sent in to distract and deflect, asking irrelevant questions during the hearing about modelling for the Adult Crime, Adult Time laws—laws that they supported. They did not say, 'We cannot support these laws until the LNP sorts out all our issues of prison overcrowding and dysfunction in the youth justice system that saw the children in watch houses debacle.'

The committee heard evidence of previous staff shortages at Cleveland, with children confined to cells for long hours and unable to access programs or schooling. The Labor members did not mention at all about their failure to model or plan for the bringing of 17-year-olds out of prisons and into the youth justice system, how it completely broke that youth detention system and saw young children languishing in watch houses, as indicated in the reports.

The Ombudsman's report on prison overcrowding published last year and referenced in his report remains relevant. High-security prisons were operating under modified unit routines where prisoners were out of their cells for only three to four hours a day. While the new Lockyer Valley centre will provide some relief, the long-term lesson is that infrastructure must keep pace with demand, as opposed to the last decade of decline under Labor, as highlighted in this report.

The member for Gaven came along to the hearing and had to try her best to make it sound like the first four months of the LNP government was the problem. Remembering that the hearing was in February this year, this is a desperate attempt at deflection.

We will continue working towards fixing Labor's decade of decline with the wonderful work being done by our Minister for Youth Justice and Victim Support and Minister for Corrective Services over the last year. The Crisafulli government is turning this broken system around.

I think there are many Labor members on the speaking list. It will be interesting to see if, when speaking to this report, they will reflect on the issues their time in office caused—maybe a bit of a mea culpa, some sort of acceptance and responsibility, or whether they will try to deflect and speak on irrelevant issues, as they have done with the last couple of reports.

In 2023-24, the Ombudsman's office responded to 11,479 contacts, they received 6,295 complaints and finalised 1,047 investigations. Of the 178 recommendations made for improvement, 177 were accepted by agencies, which is a clear sign that the office's recommendations are both practical and respected.

The Ombudsman also provides proactive support to agencies. Last year, more than 2,600 public officers undertook training, with 98 per cent reporting improved decision-making capability. These efforts mean fewer disputes arise in the first place and service delivery to the public is improved. A significant development during the reporting period was the expansion of jurisdiction under section 12A of the Ombudsman Act which now allows investigations into outsourced government services. This was a gap for too long. Outsourcing by the previous Labor government often left accountability blurred. This reform ensures Queenslanders enjoy the same protections, no matter who delivers the service.

On finances, the Ombudsman reported that the office remained within budget in the 2023-24 year and expects to do so again this year. Additional funding has been secured to meet the expanded jurisdiction and the new inspection responsibilities. The committee welcomes this prudent financial management.

I thank my fellow committee members for their commitment, the secretariat for their excellent support, and Ombudsman Anthony Reilly and his staff for their cooperation and dedication. I will hand now to the Labor members to see if they can make some excuses about the time of their decade of decline.