




Speech By
Natalie Marr

MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

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

 **Ms MARR** (Thuringowa—LNP) (4.40 pm): I rise today representing victims of crime and the people of Thuringowa with the commitment to advocate for the Making Queensland Safer (Adult Crime, Adult Time) Amendment Bill 2025, a transformative piece of legislation that delivers justice for victims, restores safety for our communities and holds serious offenders accountable. This bill is for every Queenslanders who has been scared, every family broken by violence and every person wanting a justice system that is on their side. We are at the edge of real change, and I am proud to support it.

This bill will ensure youth offenders who commit serious crimes, including sexual offences, violent offences and offences that cause fear in our community, can face serious consequences for their actions. The Adult Crime, Adult Time amendment bill is a direct response to a decade of failure under the former Labor government—a period marked by spiralling crime rates and a justice system that was embarrassingly soft on offenders. Under Labor, there were 46,130 finalised proven offences by young people—a 98 per cent increase over the last 10 years. This was a decade of Labor weakening our youth crime laws, creating a generation of hardcore repeat offenders who were left to terrorise communities across the state with absolutely no consequences. Our communities were also being told by Labor that we did not have a crime issue.

During the public hearing the member for Bulimba, the former minister for youth justice, was desperate to silence any discussion of her government's legacy—and what a legacy it was: youth crime surged by 35 per cent in some regions, carjackings doubled, home invasions skyrocketed and reoffending rates hit a staggering 70 per cent. These are not just numbers; they are lives destroyed, families broken and communities terrorised. Labor may wish to bury the truth but Queenslanders have not forgotten. This bill is important to them because now they have a government that has been listening to them—an LNP Crisafulli government delivering on its promise of putting victims first.

The opposition's response to this bill is nothing short of disgraceful. They have chosen to attack the Expert Legal Panel, respected professionals who consulted widely and listened to victims, rather than engage with the crisis at hand. The panel has done the work and we are now acting on their advice, as we promised. In formulating their advice, the Expert Legal Panel considered the seriousness of the offence, whether the use of violence associated with offending behaviour was likely to cause serious harm and the risk of serious consequences to the victims and to the community.

The panel has recommended the inclusion of 20 serious offences including arson, torture, kidnapping, trafficking in dangerous drugs, rape, attempted rape, sexual assault, ramming a police vehicle while driving, and attempted murder. The impacts of these offences are deep, long-lasting and often have serious consequences for victims. The inclusion of these new offences into Adult Crime, Adult Time shows a priority by this government for community safety and ensures community expectations are being met, to strengthen laws rather than weaken them and to put the rights of victims

before the rights of offenders. This is just the beginning. We have a lot of work to do. The panel will continue their review of other offences. This ongoing work will ensure our laws remain robust and responsive to community needs and community expectations.

The victims who spoke at these hearings, who relived their trauma to beg for change, do not care about the opposition's political posturing. They want the stabbings to stop. They want the robberies to end. They want to feel safe again. Yet the member for Bulimba and her colleagues barely mustered a single question for these victims. Why? Are they ashamed of their decade-long failure or do they simply not care? Our communities have had enough. They are demanding tougher penalties, and this bill answers their call.

Let's talk about what the Adult Crime, Adult Time amendment bill actually does. This legislation introduces a fundamental principle: if you commit an adult crime, you face adult consequences. It targets the worst of the worst of youth offenders who commit serious indictable offences—crimes like armed robbery, threatening violence, sexual violence or manslaughter. Under this bill, these offenders can be tried and sentenced as adults, ensuring penalties reflect the gravity of their actions. Courts will have the power to impose sentences, with no more hiding behind juvenile leniency. This bill also mandates that judges consider an offender's full criminal history so serial offenders cannot exploit the system any longer.

For the worst offenders, it introduces presumptive sentencing, meaning they must prove why they should not face adult penalties. This is justice that bites, and it is what Queenslanders deserve. This side of the House is fiercely unapologetically tough on crime and we make no apologies for putting victims first. We know that no matter how much safer our streets become—and they will become safer under this government—for some it is already too late.

The pain of losing a loved one to a violent crime is a wound that never heals. I will never forget the Redlands hearing where I met a man who survived a brutal stabbing. His voice trembled as he described the agony of his injuries, the slap on the wrist approach that was the norm for the Labor government, and the hollowed-out existence he now endures. Beside him sat his partner, her face a mask of helplessness, knowing she could do nothing to ease his torment. These are the people we fight for—the victims, the forgotten, the broken. Their stories must drive us, not the excuses of those opposite.

Yes, this bill is tough on youth offenders and it has to be. For 10 years, Labor's leniency—handing out warnings for stabbings and community service for carjackings—created a generation of repeat offenders who laughed at the law. Don't tell me I am wrong for supporting this bill. I want to stop these kids from thinking it is okay to pick up a knife, to steal a car at gunpoint, to terrorise a neighbourhood, all because they believe they will face no real consequences. This bill shatters that illusion. It tells every would-be offender, 'If you commit a serious crime, you will pay a price. If you don't want to do the time, don't do the crime.' It is a simple message and it is sinking in.

The opposition has to hide behind the Human Rights Commission submission, but their arguments fall apart under scrutiny. They claimed that tougher penalties might infringe on youth rights. Yet, in the same breath, they conceded that community safety is a fundamental human right. These contradictions only strengthen our case. The right of a Queenslanders to live without fear outweighs the excuses of those who choose to break the law. The commission's concerns are noted, but they cannot override the urgent need to protect our communities. The people of Thuringowa have carried the burden of the soft law approach for far too long. They expect me to fight for their rights, and I will not let them down. Tough decisions have to be made. Tough laws have to be introduced. I am here today to tell the residents of Thuringowa: I hear you and I stand with you.

Let's talk about results because this bill is already making waves. We heard from a Townsville defence lawyer that he has seen it firsthand. Courts are starting to reflect the principles of this legislation, with judges handing down sentences that are starting to align with community expectations. We also heard from one submitter that young offenders are talking about this bill. They have heard about Adult Crime, Adult Time and they are rattled. We were told that historically these kids have not been going out knowing what laws they are breaking. When asked the question at the hearings, 'Do these kids know what the consequences of their actions are now?' The answer was unequivocal: 'They do now.'

Youth workers report that kids are hesitating before picking up a weapon because they know the consequences are real. This bill is not only about consequences for actions, being tough on crime and putting victims first; it will eventually act as a deterrent and it will assist in making our streets safer. This legislation is not about punishment; it is about prevention, protection and restoring faith in justice. It is about telling victims they are seen, heard and valued. It is about stopping the next assault, the next robbery, the next senseless tragedy. The Adult Crime, Adult Time amendment bill is our commitment to Queenslanders. We will fight for your safety, we will honour your pain and we will build a future where justice prevails.

I call on every member of this House to stand with the victims, to stand with our communities and to stand for what is right. Pass the bill; make it law. Let's reclaim our streets and give Queenslanders the justice they demand. I support the Making Queensland Safer (Adult Crime, Adult Time) Amendment Bill.