




Speech By  
**Rob Molhoek**

**MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT**

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

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (9.03 pm): It has been an interesting day listening to many of the speakers from the opposition side of the House. We have heard probably more slogans from them than they have accused us of. Earlier we heard the member for Cooper roll out some quotes that she suggested we needed to take seriously. I would like to remind members of the opposition that laws are not static. They are living instruments. You are never going to get every single piece of legislation perfect at the start. Before Christmas we rolled out some essential changes that we promised the electorate of Queensland we would undertake. Then we realised that there was more to do. I want to congratulate the Minister for Youth Justice and the Minister for Child Safety.

**Mr Power** interjected.

**Mr MOLHOEK:** I am not taking that interjection.

**Mr Power** interjected.

**Mr MOLHOEK:** You have had your say. Another quote that I would like to put on the record is: 'Reform is not a one-time event, but a continuous process.'

**Mr Power** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr O'Shea): Member for Logan, I would ask you to address your comments through the chair.

**Mr MOLHOEK:** We also heard the member for Cooper suggest that she was going to share some proverbs with us, but there was not a single one. I would like to share Proverbs 21:15, which states, 'When justice is done, it brings joy to the righteous but terror to evildoers.' That is what these laws are designed to do: to remind young offenders in Queensland that, if they get caught in the process of serious crime, there are consequences. It should bring fear into their heart. It should serve as a reminder that there are consequences for doing the wrong thing.

For too long people across our state and Southport have felt unsafe in our homes and communities. We have heard the stories from all across Queensland—stories of lives turned upside down by youth crime. In some towns people have started sleeping with crowbars and baseball bats beside their bed. In others, families are spending thousands just to install security doors, lights and cameras. In fact, I have installed cameras for no other reason than I was told that it was a wise thing to do. I am not quite sure how they are going to protect me from youth offenders.

I have been a victim of crime. About two years ago six young people from Logan travelled down on the train and then on the light rail. They then wandered through Southport and burgled my house. They entered my house. They rummaged through my car. They stole my wallet and a whole lot of other things out of the car. They then wandered down the road to McDonald's and purchased some Macca's

at about 11 o'clock with my credit card. That tipped the police off as to whom they were because they had footage. They caught them the next day, but there were no consequences. I was never reimbursed for the out-of-pocket expenses and the replacement of things that I lost.

It was suggested to me that perhaps I would like to engage in Labor's—I think I heard the member for Mansfield talk about the redemptive processes and programs that Labor ran so successfully—juvenile justice system where I got to meet one of the offenders, a 16-year-old girl they caught. It took three months of rescheduled meetings to get to that point. When I finally met with the young girl—she came with her mother—it broke my heart. The person I met was a young girl who had been in and out of foster care. Her mother had had multiple partners. There was domestic violence involved. She and her sister were back in another foster care home. They had been uprooted from all that they loved and all they had become familiar with into another environment. So what did she do? She made friends with the only people who would take her in, and they happened to be a group of people who were actively engaged in youth crime.

I am really pleased that this week we have announced an inquiry into the child safety system and youth justice practices because there are far too many young offenders in that system. They are not getting the support, as much as the member for Mansfield wants to wax lyrical about the great programs that Labor introduced. This will be the fourth inquiry. I have read all three reports: the Forde inquiry, the Beattie government's CMC inquiry into child safety practices, and then the Carmody report. What have we seen? We have seen a system that has continued, heartbreakingly so and sadly so, to deteriorate and let down our young people and families in Queensland and victims of crime because we have not been able to address those many complex issues that need to be looked at and dug into quite seriously.

It has been somewhat galling today to hear Labor member after Labor member talk about slogans, but I think their slogan today uses the word 'botched' as many times as it can. They have had the best part of 30 years of successive Labor governments to fix this system. There have been a few times when we have been in government and we had a fair go at trying to make changes, we did the Carmody inquiry, but they have had 30 years. I would ask the member for Mansfield what they were doing over the last 10 years. Where was their advocacy when the young people of Queensland needed tougher laws and a better system and victims needed better support and greater certainty that they would be safe in their own homes.

Then we heard from the member for Murrumba, who talked about the three problems he has with this legislation. He did not talk about the three solutions he has or three ideas on how to improve it. His whole speech was, 'I want to talk about the three problems I have with this legislation.' I think it would be fair to ask whether he is going to support this bill. Is that a reasonable question to ask? I did not hear great support for the bill; I heard criticism of these changes.

We may have to come back at some stage in the future and bring in other reforms. Legislation and laws are a living process, and we have seen that in so many areas of society. We never anticipated computers, technology and the impact of social media. We have had to change legislation in the past few years with regard to police powers over electronic devices, which were never foreshadowed in the past. We have had to make amendments to health legislation around vaping and tobacco related products because we never envisaged they would change either. Does that mean it was botched? No, it just means we are all involved in a process of evolution and change. We need a government that will change and adapt, be honest about what is going on, stand in front of the people of Queensland and make a commitment to make improvements to the laws to protect Queenslanders, particularly in their own homes.

This is important legislation. I was going to go through all of the extra offences and the other issues this bill addresses, but we have heard from many members in the House today at length about what those reforms mean and what some of those laws cover. It is also important to realise that we have built in important safeguards. This is not just a one-size-fits-all approach. The courts will still be able to consider each case individually. We have built into the legislation respect for the human rights of victims. I believe that is important. I commend the ministers, because I know it has really been a team effort. I commend our team for the incredibly hard work they have done in just a very short time in government. We have been here six months. Labor has been here for the best part of 30 years. After six months look at the reforms we have brought in. Queenslanders today feel much safer in their homes because the LNP government that was elected last November has followed through on its commitment and continues to keep its promises. We will continue to work harder for Queenslanders and ensure people are safe in their own homes.