




Speech By  
**Trevor Watts**

**MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH**

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Record of Proceedings, 21 May 2025

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

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (4.21 pm): I rise to make my contribution on the Making Queensland Safer (Adult Crime, Adult Time) Amendment Bill 2025. We have heard a lot from the opposition, the Labor Party, saying, 'You have to come back and fix up the bill.' That is clearly not true. It was always the case that we would continue to improve the law in this area to make sure that it is fit for purpose to protect the people of Queensland. There is no higher order of business than ensuring that the electorate we represent is safe. If honourable members go and speak to the people on the street—and I listen to them all the time and have conversations with them; they know that under Labor crime rose exponentially—they will see that they know what happened. We had meetings in Toowoomba and the premier of the day, Annastacia Palaszczuk, would not even come and face the crowd.

I do not need an expert panel to tell me that if someone is going armed to cause fear, they should be treated as an adult. At the point people see them in their lounge room with a machete, I think they are past being treated as a child by the justice system of this state. If they are threatening violence so that they can take people's property, if they have attempted murder or are an accessory to murder, if they have assaulted a pregnant person and killed or have done grievous bodily harm or transmitted a serious disease to an unborn child—who in their right mind would think these are the acts of an innocent juvenile? This is someone who deserves to receive the full punishment of the law.

Damaging an emergency vehicle when operating a motor vehicle—I want to be clear on this one. Our Police Service are battered and bruised by the management of the Labor government that allowed this crime crisis to spiral out of control. I will be attending the 40 for Fortey, which is held in recognition of an officer who lost his life whilst trying to protect those in my community. If someone has stolen a car, often by breaking into a house, often by carrying a weapon, often by threatening violence, and they damage an emergency vehicle while operating that motor vehicle, surely nobody would suggest they should be treated as a child. Endangering a police officer when driving a motor vehicle—we have had police officers who have faced severe injury because of the crime crisis caused by the Labor government and we owe them the protection of this House and part of that is a consequence for actions. If someone is endangering a police officer while driving that vehicle—that is, bumping up the kerb, swerving towards them, trying to intimidate them and stopping them from protecting the community of Queensland—they have forfeited the right to be judged as a child.

If someone has raped a person, attempted to commit rape, assaulted with intent to commit rape, sexually assaulted in circumstances involving any part of the mouth while armed in company or involving penetration, is anybody thinking these are crimes that should be treated as child crimes? Kidnapping, kidnapping for ransom, deprivation of liberty, stealing a vehicle or a firearm for use in another indictable offence, attempted armed robbery, arson, endangering particular property by fire, trafficking in dangerous drugs—is there anybody who thinks that the person who has committed any of these offences deserves the protection of this House and to be treated as a child? I do not and I do not

need an expert panel to tell me that those crimes should, at the discretion of the judge, be able to be punished with an adult sentence. The judge or the magistrate can still look at the circumstances, can still understand exactly what has happened and can make a judgement as to what is appropriate. What the community feels is appropriate is that when the judge thinks they were acting as an adult, they should be able to be punished as one.

I think of the relatives and friends of poor Robert Brown, a 75-year-old man who was standing in broad daylight in the middle of Toowoomba outside the biggest regional shopping centre in Queensland. After going to the shops to buy his girlfriend a Valentine's card he was assaulted and killed in our main street. Does anybody think that is a serious crime and the juveniles involved in that incident should face penalties as an adult? I for one do.

We have had other incidents involving machetes and tomahawks and people intimidating people. We have had people threatening small children who were terrified of being kidnapped and all of this has gone on under the watch of this Labor mob opposite who now come in here and start saying, 'Where's the evidence?' Every time I go out on my street corner the evidence is there. It is there when I talk to my community and listen to what they are saying. They want the judgement of adult penalties for people who commit these most serious and adult crimes.

Just to be clear: those opposite say, 'You come in here and you have had to adapt this and do that.' The member for Miller was going on about patching up. We are not patching up. This law will be consistently adapted to be fit for purpose to ensure the people of Queensland are safe. Until such time as they are, we will come back in here and we will bring new and improved changes to make the people of Queensland safe. I will quote the former dean of Harvard Law School, Roscoe Pound. He stated—

Justice cannot afford the paralysis of perfectionism; it must be forged in the fire of practical reform.

Let me tell honourable members that the people of Queensland want some practical reform rather than people with machetes standing in their lounge room. If the opposition think that is okay and we should let them out on bail after they have broken into someone's house with a machete in their hand, let them vote for it. Let them stand up in the community and say, 'I think it's okay. If someone is in your lounge room with a machete, give them the car keys, let them go. Sorry your children are wetting the bed for the next five years because they are absolutely terrified to go to sleep.' All of that has been caused by the policies of the previous Labor government. They must take responsibility for it. However, they come in here and criticise us for bringing forward these amendments—and there will be more amendments. Until the people of Queensland feel safe in their house there will be more, so let's not pretend we said this would be fixed by Christmas. We said we would begin the process of unwinding 10 years of chaos and crisis that was caused by the Labor government. That is what we said we would start unwinding by Christmas and we have and we will continue to do so.

I look forward to hearing from the Leader of the Opposition. I want to see him stand up and take responsibility for the thousands of crime victims as a result of the people who were allowed out under their watch because the laws were weakened by them. I heard a couple of people bleating on about watch houses being an inappropriate place. Nearly seven years ago I tried to expose the disgrace that was the Labor government locking up children in Townsville and transferring them to Roma Street Station in Brisbane and giving them Kentucky Fried Chicken, no education and isolating them from their families. I tried to expose that. They were so embarrassed they would not even let me go and have a look, but eventually they were exposed for it. Now the hypocrites in the Labor Party come in here and start saying that it is something to do with us. They have left this mess. We will fix this mess not only by making sure we have strong laws where people who commit the most serious of crimes will be treated as adults but also by making sure that we have great early intervention, making sure we have post sentencing programs, making sure we have appropriate facilities to look after the people who have been incarcerated while we are protecting the rest of the state from the harm they would do and the victims they would cause. Those are the things that we will bring back in here. Members of the Labor Party should be ashamed of standing up and trying to confuse people about what is going on here. These laws will be strong under the LNP and we will reduce crime under the LNP.