



Speech By  
**Bree James**

**MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER**

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Record of Proceedings, 4 March 2026

**MOTION**

**Victims of Crime, Data Reporting**

 **Ms JAMES** (Barron River—LNP) (5.58 pm): The cheese has well and truly fallen off the cracker over here. They are now accusing our police of fudging figures. I rise to support the amendment to the motion. Across Far North Queensland there is a simple expectation that families share; that is, that people want to feel safe in their homes. They want to know that their children can sleep at night without the fear of someone breaking into the house. They want to know that their car will still be in the driveway in the morning. They want to know that their small business will not be smashed and looted again. During Labor's decade in power that basic sense of safety was taken away from far too many Queenslanders. In 2023 alone, 289,657 Queenslanders became victims of crime. That is nearly 300,000 victims.

**Mr Smith** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Bundaberg, you are warned.

**Ms JAMES:** Nearly 50,000 break-ins occurred across the state and more than 34,000 of those were people's homes. This is the one place people should feel safe. These are not just statistics; these numbers represent frightened families, exhausted police officers and communities that felt ignored by a government that refused to listen—a government that weakened the laws so youth criminals faced detention as a last resort and there were fewer consequences for their actions. In Far North Queensland we felt it firsthand. We have been feeling it for years and we are tired. I have spoken to residents who have had their cars stolen more than once, business owners who have arrived at work to find broken glass on the floor yet again, and parents who told their children to sleep with their bedroom doors locked or not to ride their scooter to school in case it got stolen—all of this while Labor MPs say this is a media beat-up. Tell that to the victims.

This was created by 10 years of poor policy decisions. In 2016 the Labor government weakened the Youth Justice Act. They made detention a last resort, they removed breach of bail as an offence and in 2019 they weakened the bail laws even further, allowing more repeat offenders back into the community. The result was predictable: repeat offenders committing crime after crime. In Cairns robberies more than tripled, with a 319 per cent increase during Labor's decade in power. That is not a small policy failure; that is a decade-long collapse in community safety.

I want to address the member for Cairns. For years he sat on the government benches while these laws were weakened. He voted for them. For years he defended the policies that allowed youth crime to spiral in our region and for years he failed to stand up for the people of Far North Queensland when they needed leadership. When your community is hurting you do not dismiss their concerns. When crime is rising you do not—

**Mr HEALY:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take offence. It is grossly inaccurate and I ask the member to withdraw.

**Ms JAMES:** I will withdraw. When your community is hurting you do not dismiss their concerns, and when communities and families are frightened in their own homes you do not stay silent while your government weakens the law.

**Mr Healy** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Cairns.

**Ms JAMES:** Interestingly, he is speaking up about it now that he is not in government. He is even advocating for liquor licensing changes that he could have advocated for when he was in government, but he sat silent and now our city is filled with antisocial behaviour. The Crisafulli government is taking a very different approach.

**Mr Healy** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Cairns, I will not caution you again.

**Ms JAMES:** We are restoring consequences through Adult Crime, Adult Time laws. Those laws are now being expanded to over 45 serious offences including rioting, domestic violence, strangulation and conspiring to murder. More than 4,000 youth offenders have already been charged under these laws, sending a clear message that serious crime will have serious consequences because in Queensland the rights of victims must always come before the rights of criminals.

We are also strengthening police powers to protect our business precincts. New designated business and community precinct laws will give police stronger powers to move on and ban repeat offenders from key commercial areas. These reforms will also extend Jack's Law wandering powers into those precincts to keep weapons off our streets. This is all about protecting small businesses, workers and families who deserve to feel safe in the places where they live and work. There are now also more police in Far North Queensland than at any point in the past 12 years. The member for Cairns celebrated the delivery of 47 police in four years. In just 15 months we have delivered more than 199 police for Far North Queensland. This is the difference between excuses and action. Far North Queensland is strong and resilient, but resilience should never be mistaken for acceptance. Keeping Queenslanders safe is not optional; it is the first duty of any government. It is a duty this government will never walk away from.