



Speech By  
**Bree James**


**MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER**

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Record of Proceedings, 23 April 2026

**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**

**Far North Queensland, Crime**

 **Ms JAMES** (Barron River—LNP) (3.01 pm): For a decade the people of Cairns and Far North Queensland have lived with the consequences of a justice system that was watered down, weakened and softened, which created a generation of hardened criminals. For the past 18 months, those opposite have had the audacity to sit in this chamber and speak in our communities and complain about crime like it is something they did not play any part in.

Let's be very clear: crime did not happen overnight. For years, Labor weakened laws, reduced consequences and ignored the warning signs. When the system started to fail, they refused to act or even acknowledge there was a problem, saying it was just a media beat-up. That is the truth. Contrast that with the LNP Crisafulli government. We are not hiding from the problem. We are not excusing it. We are certainly not pretending it will fix itself.

Unlike those opposite, we also understand this fundamental principle: without consequences there is no deterrence. Fixing this is like containing a plague that was allowed to spread for too long. We cannot restore order with a single action; we have to isolate the source, strengthen the system and stay disciplined in the response.

Something pretty extraordinary happened here in the parliament today. One would think strengthening our crime laws would be something we could all agree on. One would think the member for Cairns would have voted for stronger laws to help the crime crisis we have in Far North Queensland, but, no, he did not. Labor did not either. They do not believe in tougher penalties for people who commit crimes. They do not believe that we need stronger antisocial behaviour laws when our city is under constant attack from disgusting behaviour. They do not believe that we need tougher laws on drugs. They do not believe that youth should be in detention. They believe that the age of criminal responsibility should be over the age of 14, which would have seen kids who had stolen a car and killed people in Queensland not charged. This would be an absolute disgrace.

We believe in tougher laws, and that is why we just passed these new laws in parliament today. I thank the ministers for listening to us and for acting. One would think that strengthening crime laws, giving police more tools and having tougher consequences and stronger protections for the community would be a basic point of agreement, but those opposite voted against it. They voted against stronger penalties, stronger enforcement and the very measures needed to restore order in our communities.

We will not be soft on crime. There will be more tough laws to come, and I am sure those opposite will not support them. Bail reform needs to happen. Too many youth offenders are getting bail and breaching it within hours and terrorising our streets because of Labor's failed soft laws. If someone breaches bail they should go to jail, no second chances. That is why, along with many of my colleagues from the Far North and North Queensland, I am pushing for hard bail reforms next.

I can assure the House that there is a lot more on my and the government's list. Our ministers are working hard, and I cannot thank them enough. Cairns deserves better than what the Labor Party ever delivered in Far North Queensland. Far North Queenslanders know that I have their back. The LNP Crisafulli government will continue to make the tough decisions required to make our communities safer.