

Speech By

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BREACH BAIL, GO TO JAIL AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Dr ROWAN (Moggill—LNP) (7.43 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Breach Bail, Go to Jail and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2026. The legislation before us tonight is a significant and landmark reform. It reflects the Crisafulli Liberal National Party state government's determination to restore safety where Queenslanders live, to stand with victims of crime and to ensure that serious repeat offenders face real consequences for their actions. Queenslanders have made their expectations clear: they want to feel safe in their homes, in their businesses, in their cars and in their communities. They expect that when a person is granted the privilege of bail and then commits another serious offence there will be a clear and meaningful consequence. For too long, that confidence was undermined. Queenslanders watched as serious offenders were given countless opportunities, only for more people to become victims of crime.

The Crisafulli Liberal National Party state government has listened and we are acting. This legislation sends an unequivocal message: if you are on bail and commit a qualifying serious offence, you will face a mandatory minimum sentence of 12 months in custody. That sentence must be served in actual detention or imprisonment. It is a clear consequence for serious offending committed by a person who has already been granted bail. This legislation also introduces a higher threshold for certain youth and adult defendants seeking bail after allegedly committing a serious offence whilst on bail, unlawfully at large or after failing to appear. Before granting bail in those circumstances, the court must have a high degree of confidence that the person will not commit an offence whilst released.

These reforms are directed at serious offending. They are not about a technical breach of a bail condition such as missing a curfew; they are about responding to people who commit qualifying serious offences whilst on bail, unlawfully at large or after failing to appear. This legislation also removes the mandatory requirement for police officers to consider diversionary options before commencing proceedings against a child. Police will retain the discretion to consider diversion, where appropriate, based on the circumstances before them. Together, these measures represent another important step in the government's commitment to make Queensland safer.

I want to acknowledge and thank the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Integrity, the Hon. Deb Frecklington MP, for her leadership in bringing this important legislation before the House. I also want to acknowledge the Premier, the Hon. David Crisafulli MP, and the Minister for Youth Justice and Victim Support, the Hon. Laura Gerber MP, for their commitment to delivering the stronger laws and broader reforms that Queenslanders expect. This builds on the government's Adult Crime, Adult Time reforms. It forms part of a comprehensive approach that includes stronger laws, more police, early intervention and rehabilitation, because making Queensland safer requires us to act at every point—to intervene early, to hold offenders accountable, to support victims and to give those who have offended a genuine opportunity to change.

The former Labor government had a decade to act. It had a decade to listen to Queenslanders who were frightened, frustrated and demanding that their safety be taken seriously, but Labor ignored all of those concerns across Queensland. Instead, Labor weakened Queensland's youth justice laws. In 2016, Labor removed the offence of committing an offence whilst on bail for young offenders and

made detention a last resort in sentencing. As the consequences became increasingly apparent following these changes, Queenslanders were left asking why their government had made those choices. Labor subsequently reinstated a youth breach-of-bail offence in 2023, but only after years of defending its earlier decision and dismissing calls for stronger action. Queenslanders remember countless Labor ministers and Labor members of the then government telling them that breach-of-bail laws did not work. They remember the excuses and the changing positions and they remember the real consequences for families, businesses and communities across our state.

Under the former Labor government, far too many Queenslanders became victims of crime. They deserved a state government that listened and acted sooner. The question for Labor today is not simply what its members say about this legislation in this chamber; it is about what Labor would do in government. Queensland Labor's published policy platform states—

Labor will repeal legislation which fetters judicial discretion by imposing mandatory minimum sentences for criminal offences.

Those are Labor's own words. They directly raise the prospect that these reforms would be repealed under a future Labor government. The Labor opposition cannot expect Queenslanders to ignore its record or its published policy. Queenslanders are entitled to a clear answer: will Labor guarantee that it will keep these laws, or will it follow its own party platform and repeal them? After a decade in which Labor weakened laws and failed to keep Queenslanders safe, there is every reason for the community to question whether Labor can be trusted to maintain these reforms.

The Crisafulli Liberal National Party state government is taking a different approach. We have listened to Queenslanders and we are delivering the stronger laws they have called for. We are also backing the frontline police officers who work every day to protect our communities. More than 2,100 new police officers have been delivered since October 2024 and Queensland now has more than 13,000 police officers for the first time in the state's history. Importantly, a strong response to crime must also look beyond the moment an offence is committed. If we can help a young person make better choices before they become entrenched in serious offending, that matters. If we can support someone leaving detention to return to education, training or employment, that also matters.

Every young person who turns away from crime is a potential future victim spared the harm that crime causes. That is why the Crisafulli LNP state government is investing significantly in early intervention and rehabilitation. This government is committed to prevention, to rehabilitation and to early intervention programs. There has been a significant investment in alcohol and drug programs and family programs as well as mental health services. We will continue to invest in early intervention and rehabilitation. As one example, our $50 million Kickstarter program supports community-led initiatives that help young people at risk of reoffending reconnect with education, develop life skills and build a more positive future. Through our Staying on Track program, our government is also investing in intensive support for young people after detention including mentoring, family support and pathways into education, training and employment. These investments sit alongside our stronger laws. Accountability and rehabilitation have an important role in building safer communities.

In the electorate of Moggill I have seen the value of this approach through the work locally of Reason to Thrive. Reason to Thrive recently received funding through the Crisafulli LNP state government's Kickstarter program to deliver its Equine Assisted Learning life skills program. The program supports young people aged 10 to 17 through animal care, outdoor learning and mentoring. Working with horses helps participants develop skills in emotional and behavioural regulation, communication and confidence. I was pleased to welcome the Hon. Laura Gerber MP, Minister for Youth Justice and Victim Support, to see the program in action at Kholo and to hear from participants about the positive outcomes they are experiencing. It was a great opportunity to see how a community-led program can connect with young people, provide them with practical support and help them build skills that can make a difference in their lives. I want to thank Michelle Beatty, Julie Tom and the whole team at Reason to Thrive for their dedication to the young people they support and for the work that they do with schools, families and the wider community. Their program is an example of what early intervention can look like in practice—local people working with young Queenslanders to give them guidance, support and a reason to make positive choices.

The Crisafulli Liberal National Party state government understands protecting the community means being prepared to take decisive action against serious offending, while also investing in the programs that can prevent crime and reduce reoffending. That is the comprehensive approach Queenslanders voted for, and it is the approach this state government is delivering. This landmark legislation places community safety and the rights of victims at the centre of our response. It sets clear consequences for qualifying serious offences committed on bail and strengthens the test applied when certain repeat offenders seek bail. Queenslanders have waited long enough for a government prepared to take action. The Crisafulli LNP state government is delivering on its commitment to restore safety where Queenslanders live. As such, I commend the bill to the House.