



Speech By
Hon. Laura Gerber

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

Record of Proceedings, 12 February 2026

JUSTICE, INTEGRITY AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Hon. LJ GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Youth Justice and Victim Support and Minister for Corrective Services) (3.21 pm): Listening to members of the opposition quote from the report of the Inspector of Detention Services, one would think they were talking about something contemporaneous. One would think they were quoting about events at a given point in time and that that point in time is now, but the Inspector of Detention Services went into those detention centres in 2023 and 2024. All of those damning quotes that those opposite are talking about relate to their own record of critical staff shortages, of leaving youths in situations in detention centres because they failed to staff detention centres.

Opposition members stand here and try to spin it like it is a point-in-time narrative, like it is happening right now and they never knew about it, but they did know about it. Do members know how they knew about it? They knew about it because the Inspector of Detention Services directly referred it to the then minister, the member for Bulimba. The Inspector of Detention Services tabled it and referred it to the minister under section 17(b)—that there was a serious risk to the security, management, control, safety, care or wellbeing at the detention centre as a result of that minister's leadership. They said a detainee had been subjected to torture or cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment. This was in 2023-24 under Labor.

Labor left our youth detention centres understaffed, unsupported and unable to function safely. The Cleveland Youth Detention Centre inspection report has laid bare a system that was in crisis under Labor. It was a system in crisis because the former Labor government failed to support staff, failed to maintain our detention centres and failed to ensure youth were in an environment that promoted safety and rehabilitation. Under Labor there were critical staff shortages. They were widespread. Youth detention centres were routinely under-resourced. There were not enough staff in those detention centres to support the youth. The report lays it bare. The quotes from those opposite are quotes from 2023-24.

A government member: Under their watch!

Mrs GERBER: Under their watch! The report found repeated failed mandatory observations of youth at risk of self-harm, sometimes simply because Labor did not put enough staff on to escort or monitor youths. Medical care was often deferred, with appointments frequently cancelled, because Labor failed to put enough staff in the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre to escort or supervise the youth. Perhaps the most damning aspect of the Inspector of Detention Services' report is that it found that separation rooms were soiled with unknown substances that looked like urine and blood. In one case the report found that a youth was forced to urinate into a floor drain because the centre was so critically understaffed that there was no staff member to escort that youth to a bathroom. That is a damning indictment of the Labor government. They have the hide to stand up in this chamber and try to sheet that disgusting, awful record back to us. It is abominable. They should be ashamed.

It was not a sudden deterioration; it was slow and well documented. The Inspector of Detention Services raised it time and time again with Labor, but they chose to ignore it and do nothing. Instead, they come into this chamber, two years later, and say it is really concerning. They should have dealt with it back in 2023-24, when the Inspector of Detention Services raised it.

Queenslanders deserve better and the dedicated frontline workers who carry the burden of this in our detention centres deserve better. They deserve better than the way they were treated under the previous Labor government. Our detention centre workers deserve to be supported by the state government with the resources and the tools they need to not only keep that detention centre safe but also rehabilitate those youth. Detention centre workers care about youth in detention centres. They care about rehabilitation. They are there because they want to ensure there is not a revolving door. They want to ensure those youth do not end up back in the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre. They want rehabilitation. The Crisafulli government is delivering the Staying on Track program, which provides every single youth in detention with 12 months of support so they are not set up to fail, like they were under Labor by being dumped straight back into communities.

The Crisafulli government is committed to rebuilding a youth detention system that is focused on rehabilitation and the safety of our workers, is staffed properly and keeps our communities safe. That is far from what our community got under Labor. This committee report lays it bare. It is a damning indictment of Labor. The Crisafulli government is getting down to the business of fixing Labor's mess.