




Speech By
Hon. Laura Gerber

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Youth Crime, Response

 **Hon. LJ GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Youth Justice and Victim Support and Minister for Corrective Services) (2.33 pm): Queenslanders were promised action to turn the tide on the youth crime crisis in this state after a decade of decline under Labor, and I am proud to say that we are a government that listens to Queenslanders and we are a government that sticks to our promises. We are delivering on our plan to restore safety to Queensland communities with tougher laws, more police and new youth crime-fighting early intervention and rehabilitation programs.

I am really proud to update the House today that we have delivered 47 new early intervention programs right across Queensland under our Kickstarter grants. From learning trade and vocational skills like carpentry and barbering to engaging in intensive family mentoring or education sessions, each program is regionally focused and tailored to meet the needs of their local community. That means more at-risk youth are now starting to head away from a life of crime and into education, training or employment. They are now receiving the support and guidance they need to turn their lives around to head towards a brighter future. Ultimately, do members know what it means? It means fewer victims of crime in this state. It means that fewer youth are going to become serious repeat offenders.

Opposition members interjected.

Mrs GERBER: I hear those opposite laughing, because under them youth crime was a joke. It spiralled out of control. Under our government we are seeing fewer youths become serious repeat offenders because intervening early is crucial to breaking the cycle of crime. We know that under the former Labor government during the past decade there was a severe lack of investment in effective early intervention programs, with the number of serious repeat offenders rising year on year under Labor. That is what we are changing, and that is why we will keep delivering new early intervention programs to stop crime at its roots.

We are also delivering our new intensive rehabilitation program, Staying on Track, right across the state. For the first time, youth offenders leaving detention receive 12 months of rehabilitation. They are partnered with a mentor while in detention and receive tailored support alongside their family to help them get back on track to make sure they do not end up in the rinse-and-repeat cycle of crime like we saw under the previous Labor government. Instead, they are on a pathway to education, to employment—a pathway of hope.

I can also update the House today that there have been more than 1,000 visits inside youth detention centres in Queensland by Staying on Track mentors in the first three months of this program. That means that youth offenders are finally receiving proper intensive support inside detention so they do not go on to reoffend when they are released back into communities. That is a huge change in the way our detention centres are operating. Previously in Queensland under the Labor government there was a measly 72 hours of support for a small cohort of youth in our detention centres, and it did not

work. It failed. It failed our Queensland communities and it failed the youths. We are delivering the change needed to make our communities safe again and to reduce victims of crime, and we will continue to work every single day to achieve that goal.