




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

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EXPANDING ADULT CRIME, ADULT TIME AND TAKING A STRONG STANCE ON DRUGS AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms MARR** (Thuringowa—LNP) (4.47 pm): I rise in strong support of the Expanding Adult Crime, Adult Time and Taking a Strong Stance on Drugs and Anti-Social Behaviour Amendment Bill 2026. As the member for Thuringowa, I am proud to stand here today on behalf of the hardworking families, business owners and communities of Townsville who have waited far too long for the Queensland government to put victims first and deliver real consequences for crime. This bill is exactly what Queenslanders voted for—stronger laws, more accountability and safer streets. It strengthens our criminal justice system in three clear and powerful ways: expanding Adult Crime, Adult Time to 12 more serious offences, replacing Labor’s failed drug diversion regime with a new framework that holds repeat offenders to account, and giving police the practical tools they need to tackle antisocial behaviour in our designated business and community precincts. Minister Gerber’s explanatory notes and second reading speech make the case crystal clear: this bill is part of the Crisafulli government’s Making Queensland Safer plan—our direct response to years of community outrage over youth crime.

Under the previous Labor government, victims of crime skyrocketed by 193 per cent. Car thefts, break-ins, robberies and sexual offences all surged. The average daily number of serious repeat youth offenders rose by 64 per cent between 2018 and 2023. What was Labor’s response? It was to weaken the laws, make detention a last resort, remove breach of bail as an offence and put offenders’ rights ahead of the rights of victims. We are fixing all of that. Our first tranche of Adult Crime, Adult Time laws in 2024 already covers 13 of the most serious offences. The results speak for themselves: more than 4,000 youth charged with over 19,000 offences under this scheme; a 7.2 per cent drop in victims across the state; a 17 per cent drop in serious repeat youth offenders; and a 27 per cent drop in proven Adult Crime, Adult Time offences. We are telling youth offenders that the world has changed, because community expectations now demand real consequences.

Following advice from the independent Expert Legal Panel, which carefully assessed the level of harm, violence, victim impact and risk to community safety, we are adding 12 more serious offences to the Adult Crime, Adult Time schedule. These include: riot; aggravated indecent treatment of a child; abuse of a person with an impairment of the mind; conspiring to murder; aiding suicide; disabling or stupefying a person to commit an indictable offence; choking in a domestic setting; endangering safety in a vehicle with intent; administering poison with intent to harm; aggravated assault occasioning bodily harm; and unlawful stalking. The regime is also extended to attempts, conspiracies and accessories after the fact. These are not minor infractions; these are violent, calculated and deeply damaging crimes. Under this bill, children who commit adult crimes will face adult penalties. The impact on victims is front and centre in our sentencing, and our communities deserve nothing less.

The bill also takes a strong stance on drugs. Labor’s police drug diversion program became a revolving door. Thousands of repeat offenders faced no real consequences, sending the wrong message that illicit drug use was somehow tolerable. The new illicit drug enforcement and diversion framework strikes the right balance: one genuine opportunity for eligible first-time or low-risk individuals

to complete a health focused diversion program but clear accountability for everyone else through penalty infringement notices and prosecution pathways. Repeat offenders and those with prior serious drug convictions will face the full force of the law. This recalibrates the system, offering deterrence where it is needed and help where it can work.

It is the antisocial behaviour measures that will hit home hardest in Townsville. The bill introduces targeted police powers in designated business and community precincts. Police will be able to issue move-on directions of up to 24 hours. They will have expanded banning notices and the power to require name and address in connection with these directions. Jack's Law handheld scanning powers are extended without senior officer approval in these precincts. These tools directly address the unacceptable risk that antisocial behaviour poses to patrons, business owners and everyday residents of our community. From the perspective of the local community of Townsville, these changes cannot come soon enough.

On 9 April, the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee public hearing in Townsville heard evidence from local leaders and residents that was powerful and unanimous. Mayor Nick Dametto and the Townsville City Council spoke forcefully about the daily toll on our city. Business leaders from the Townsville Chamber of Commerce and shopping centre managers described how antisocial behaviour and drug fuelled chaos are driving customers away and threatening livelihoods. They told us in no uncertain terms that families no longer feel safe in their own CBD or local centres. The community statement session was particularly moving. One long-term resident and business owner said, 'We've had enough. Our elderly residents are intimidated, our kids can't play safely and our businesses are closing early because of the constant disruption. This bill is what we've been begging for.' Another mother stood and declared, 'I want my children to grow up in a Townsville where they can walk to the shops without fear. Adult crime must mean adult time—no more excuses.'

These are not isolated views; they represent the overwhelming sentiment of the Townsville community. People are exhausted by smashed windows, loitering, aggressive begging and the fear that grips our public spaces. They want safer streets and no more stats. That is why the antisocial behaviour measures in this bill are so critical for Townsville. Move-on powers, expanded banning notices, name and address requirements and extended handheld scanning in designated precincts will give police the practical ability to act swiftly in our CBD, shopping centres, parks and community hubs.

On drugs, the new framework is balanced and firm: one genuine chance for low-level first offenders through health diversion but clear penalties and prosecution for repeat offenders—no more revolving door. Our community wants businesses to thrive without the constant threat of disruption. This bill delivers exactly that: practical frontline tools for police to restore order and public confidence in the places where Townsville families gather every day.

The Crisafulli government is delivering what we promised: more police, stronger laws and a justice system that protects the innocent and deters the guilty. This bill is tough, targeted and long overdue. Gone are the days when weak, spineless Townsville Labor MPs stood in this place, looked our community in the eye and told us there was no crime problem, all while they protected their Brisbane mates and their precious political narrative. They turned their backs on victims, dismissed terrified families and sold out our streets just to keep their inner-city bosses happy. Those days are finished. We are done with excuses, done with the denial and done with the weakness. Today Thuringowa and the greater Townsville region have a strong representation that puts our community first. We will never apologise for demanding safer streets, tougher laws and real action for the people we are proud to serve.

The real question now for the Labor Party is simple and direct: will they vote in favour of this bill and stand with victims and Queensland communities, or will they once again choose to be on the side of the offenders, just as they did for years in government? Queenslanders are watching closely. The people of Townsville and every regional community deserve to know whether Labor have learnt from their failures or whether they will continue to put criminals first. Let us listen to the people of Thuringowa and every regional community across Queensland. Let us pass this legislation and restore safety to our streets. I commend the bill to the House.