

Speech By

Wayde Chiesa

MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK

Record of Proceedings, 22 April 2026

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

Mr CHIESA (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (4.32 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Expanding Adult Crime, Adult Time and Taking a Strong Stance on Drugs and Anti-Social Behaviour Amendment Bill 2026. This is an important bill. It goes to the heart of one of the most fundamental responsibilities we have in this place—that is, keeping Queenslanders safe. At the end of the day, the debate is not theoretical, it is not abstract; it is about real people and real communities dealing with the real consequences of crime.

This bill forms part of a broader set of reforms that are responding to what Queenslanders have been telling us for some time now. My experience during the Hinchinbrook by-election was that that message came through loud and clear. People told me they were frustrated. They told me they were concerned and, more than anything, they wanted to feel safe again in their own communities. They had seen what happened over the previous decade. Let me be clear: under 10 years of the former Labor government victim numbers rose by more than 193 per cent, and between 2018 and 2023 serious repeat offenders rose by 64 per cent. They are not just statistics; that is a failure. It is a failure of policy, a failure of leadership and a failure to back the people of Queensland.

In just 18 months we are starting to see the benefits of the Crisafulli government's focus on crime. Through stronger laws like Adult Crime, Adult Time, Jack's Law and Daniel's Law, by adding 1,600 new police recruits—making the police force now over 13,000 officers—in addition to the largest investment in early intervention and rehabilitation in Queensland's history, we are seeing a shift. Victim numbers have decreased by 7.2 per cent. We are beginning to stabilise what had become a deeply entrenched problem. We are starting to see the impacts of what we have been focusing on after the decade of decline.

What I know from my time before coming into this place is we had former Labor ministers and former Labor members coming to North Queensland and Townsville and coming up with every single response and excuse as to why crime was increasing. They never said anything about the weakening of the laws—they did not say anything about that. They kept talking about fanciful other reasons. That is why I am in this place. This is important.

The community of Hinchinbrook tells me very clearly that more needs to be done. They are right—we know that. We know that more needs to be done to reverse 10 years of Labor inaction. We all know that it will take a lot of work to turn around 10 years of weak laws, 10 years of running from the problem and 10 years of excuses as to why crime was spiralling out of control.

I want to take a moment to reflect on what I have heard directly from my community. A common theme comes up time and again—frustration. There is frustration that offenders are cycling through the system without meaningful consequences. This is why this bill matters. It sends a clear message that serious harm will carry serious consequences.

Turning to the bill itself, there are three key elements. Firstly, in respect of the expansion of Adult Crime, Adult Time, the bill adds further offences to the regime and, importantly, adds 12 serious offences. They involve violence, coercion, exploitation and deliberate harm to victims. That is a significant step, and it is the right one, because harm is not limited to completed offences. Intent matters, preparation matters and the risk posed to the community matters. When someone is involved in serious criminal conduct—whether they carry it out or play a role in enabling it—there must be accountability.

Secondly, the bill makes important changes to drug policy. It moves away from Labor's failed three-strikes diversion system—a system that allowed offenders multiple chances without consequence—and replaces it with a framework that restores accountability while still providing pathways for rehabilitation. Queenslanders understand this: support where it is needed but consequences where they are deserved.

Thirdly, the bill strengthens police powers through the creation of designated business and community precincts. This is about giving our police the tools they need to intervene early before situations escalate. We have heard clearly through the committee process—including in Townsville—that businesses, workers and communities are crying out for exactly this type of support. The bill has not been rushed. It has been referred to the committee. Submissions were received, hearings were held and feedback was received—and rightly so. After careful consideration, the committee recommended that the bill be passed. At the end of the day, this bill is about one thing—fewer victims—and that is exactly what Queenslanders expect us to deliver.

I acknowledge that there are differing views on this bill. There are those in the Labor opposition who want to talk about weakening the laws, who want to talk about raising the age of criminal responsibility and who want to talk about watering down consequences, but I will be very clear: the Crisafulli government are laser focused on reducing victim numbers. The Labor opposition are laser focused on weakening the laws. We cannot go back to what it was like. I will tell members exactly why crime was out of control under the former government. They were weak on crime, they did not back our police and their weak laws created a generation of serious repeat offenders—that is their legacy. I can only imagine what the situation would look like today if we had not stepped in and introduced stronger laws.

I also want to take the opportunity to raise an issue that was put to me consistently during the by-election and that is the issue of bail. Time and again I heard from people who were frustrated by offenders breaching bail conditions and facing little consequences. I made it clear, and I will continue to say it in this place, 'If you breach jail you should go to jail,' because more than 50 per cent of youth offending is being committed by individuals who are already out on bail. Bail is a privilege—not a right—and when someone repeatedly thumbs their nose up against the law there can be only one response: accountability, consequences and action. As a regional member, I also want to emphasise that these issues are not confined to our cities; they are felt just as strongly, if not more strongly, in communities like Hinchinbrook where a single incident can ripple through an entire town, where small businesses are already under pressure and where community confidence is everything.

In closing, this bill is about restoring balance, it is about putting victims first, it is about backing our police and it is about ensuring those who commit serious crime face serious consequences. We are starting to see progress, but we know there is more work to do and we will continue to do that work every single day to reduce victim numbers and restore safety to Queensland communities because Queenslanders deserve nothing less. I commend the bill to the House.