

Speech By

Wayde Chiesa

MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK

Record of Proceedings, 25 August 2026

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Crime, Bail Laws

Mr CHIESA (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (2.31 pm): During the Hinchinbrook by-election, one of the clearest messages I heard from my community was that they wanted more action on crime. They could see Adult Crime, Adult Time was starting to make a difference, but they also told me very clearly that there is more to do. One issue that came up time and again was bail. People were sick and tired of the revolving door. They were sick and tired of seeing offenders arrested, released on bail, breach that bail, offend again and create another victim. My community told me that bail has to mean something and they were right.

Queensland did not arrive at this point by accident. Under the former Labor government victim numbers rose by 193 per cent. Labor repeatedly weakened our youth justice laws, they removed breach of bail as an offence for youth, they reinstated detention as a last resort and they watered down consequences, and they did it proudly. As a result, the number of serious repeat offenders increased by 65 per cent between 2018 and 2023—from 442 to 728. In 2022-23, that group was responsible for 55 per cent of all proven youth crime. That is Labor's legacy.

In our region the problem is very real. Recent figures showed youth offenders breached their bail conditions more than 12 times on average over a single year in 2025—more than 12 times. At what point does a bail condition actually become a condition? At what point do we say enough is enough? To victims whose home has been broken into, whose car has been stolen, whose business has been smashed up or whose family has been terrorised, that is not a statistic; that is their life. That is where Labor completely lost touch with communities like mine.

When North Queenslanders raised the alarm, the then Labor government told them they were wrong. Labor MPs described the youth crime crisis as a 'media beat-up'. We had the now Leader of the Opposition complain that television news was 'addicted to CCTV footage of crime'. Think about how that sounded to a family sitting at home watching footage of their own car being stolen. The problem was not CCTV. The problem was crime and the Labor Party's weak laws.

North Queenslanders do not need to be lectured about what we were seeing with our own eyes. They need a government prepared to listen to them and act. This is the difference with the Crisafulli government. We listen. When Queenslanders tell us more needs to be done, we keep working. This is why we have committed to Breach Bail, Go to Jail—

Ms Bush interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Member for Cooper!

Mr CHIESA:—as the next phase of Adult Crime, Adult Time. Breach of bail was born in the regions. It is the voices of regional Queenslanders who will see this legislation become a reality. This government has listened and we will deliver the toughest bail laws in the country. If an offender is given bail by the court and then goes out and commits another serious offence there must be a consequence. Bail is a privilege. It is not a licence to keep offending. Those opposite can and will criticise—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr CHIESA:—like they are now—every move this government makes on crime, but all of a sudden they have rediscovered their concern for youth justice from the safety of opposition.

Ms Bush interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Cooper, you are warned under the standing orders.

Mr CHIESA: When it comes to crime they have no credibility—zero. Ultimately, the debate should not be about the Labor Party. It should be about the victims. I have spoken to victims of crime across my community. For some, what happened to them lasted minutes, but the consequences for them have lasted a lifetime. An offender may eventually finish their sentence but victims never truly do. They live with the trauma. They might replace their car or repair the door. They might put cameras around their home. Do you know what they do? They check every noise at night. They change the way they live. This is why the starting point must be community safety and the rights of victims. Stronger bail laws are only one part of what this government is doing. We are delivering stronger laws. We are putting more police on the front line. We are investing in early intervention because stopping a young person entering a life of crime in the first place is far better than dealing with the consequences later. We are investing in rehabilitation. We need all four.

We are seeing the signs that this is working. Victim numbers are down by 9.6 per cent, but we are not declaring victory. We know there is more to do. Driving through the region recently I was reminded of the Labor Party's legacy. Around our sporting fields and parks are enormous rocks placed around the perimeter. They are not there to beautify the park. They were there to stop stolen cars being driven across the fields and ovals. Think about that: communities having to spend money putting physical barriers around the parks our kids play in because stolen vehicles were being driven through them. These rocks are a physical reminder of what happened when the Labor Party lost control of community safety.

The people of Hinchinbrook have told me clearly what they expect: keep going, make bail mean something, put victims first and restore consequences for actions. That is exactly what I will continue fighting for and that is exactly what the Crisafulli government will continue to deliver.