

Question on Notice

No. 88

Asked on 24 February 2021

MR R KATTER asked the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister Multicultural Affairs (HON L LINARD)—

QUESTION

With reference to claims made earlier this month that the Palaszczuk Labor Government's five-point action plan has since March resulted in a 23 per cent decrease in the numbers of youth offenders—

Will the Minister confirm that the reporting period to which the government is referring was in the middle of a global pandemic that resulted in total community shutdowns, which naturally had a dramatic downward effect on the ability of offenders to be out on the streets committing crime?

ANSWER

The Palaszczuk Government has invested more than \$500 million to curb youth crime since 2017.

The five-point action plan, launched in March 2020, furthers the Palaszczuk Government's commitment to crack down on youth crime and is directed at the highest-risk offenders. I also note that on 9 February 2021, the Premier announced additional reforms to further protect the community from serious recidivist offenders. To implement this commitment, on 25 February 2021, the Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 was introduced into Parliament. The Bill addresses the offending behaviours of this target group, with a focus on strengthening the youth justice bail framework. Standing Order 231 prevents further discussion of the Bill as it is currently before the house, and I refer the Member to the speech of my colleague the Honourable Mark Ryan MP, Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services, as he introduced that legislation.

Evidence shows our reforms and investment are working. Between 2018 and 2019, there was a 13 per cent reduction in the number of youth offenders – down from 5,868 in 2018 to 5,099 in 2019 (769 fewer youth offenders).

Between 2019 and 2020, there was a further 16 per cent reduction in the number of youth offenders – down from 5,099 in 2019 to 4,304 in 2020 (795 fewer youth offenders).

In total, there was a 27 per cent reduction in the total number of youth offenders from 2018 (5,868 youth offenders) to 2020 (4,304 youth offenders).

The 23 per cent reduction referred to in the question by the member is for the 2018-19 financial year compared to the 2019-20 financial year. These reference periods are not 'in the middle of a global pandemic', as COVID-19 lockdowns occurred in only a portion of the 2019-20 reporting period.