



Dale Last MP
Member for Burdekin

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Media Release – Will the true numbers please stand up?

Burdekin MP and Shadow Minister for Police & Corrective Services, Dale Last MP, believes we aren't being told the full story when it comes to youth offenders and has the documents to prove it.

As a part of the Estimates process, Mr Last submitted questions to Police Minister Mark Ryan seeking information on youth crime and, when compared to other information provided by government, Mr Last says the data "does nothing but muddy the waters."

"I have no doubt the confusion is a deliberate ploy of the Palaszczuk government and has been going on for quite some time," he said. "Back in December 2020, Minister Ryan confirmed in writing that there were 500 'recidivist juvenile offenders in Townsville.'"¹

"Because Minister Ryan, the Premier and the Member for Thuringowa kept referring to a group of 10% of young offenders who are responsible for 48% of all youth crime, I asked more questions. On March 25th, in response to a question in parliament, the Minister for Youth Justice advised that this 10% was made up of 344 offenders, 305 of whom were still aged 11 to 17."²

"In May, when asked for more details, the Minister for Youth Justice simply advised that the 305 offenders lived in a range of 122 postcodes including areas in Townsville but basically stretching throughout the state."³

"In the lead up to this year's Estimates Hearing, I asked the Police Minister the exact same questions I asked prior to the December hearing. His response this time was that there were 350 'recidivist youth offenders' in Townsville."⁴

Mr Last said the differing answers caused confusion which made the issue of youth justice almost impossible to address.

"All that is clear from the different figures is that the government has decided there is an almost infinite number of groups when it comes to youth crime," Mr Last said. "We have this so-called 10%, then we have recidivist offenders and there's obviously offenders who are recidivist **and** in the so-called 10% and then there is probably another group who aren't in either list."



“So, if there are 305 members of this so-called 10% and 350 recidivist youth offenders in Townsville alone, what is the total number of offenders? The information that the Labor government itself has supplied may as well be written in a foreign language.”

“Previously, the government said a recidivist offender was someone who committed two or more offences in the same calendar year. Some of these young offenders would qualify in less than an hour.”

“It shouldn’t matter if an offender commits two crimes in June or one in November and another in February. If they repeatedly offend, they should be treated as a recidivist offender and treated as such.”

“The victims of these young offenders don’t care what group they are in; they want the offending to stop, and they want the offenders held to account. Until the Labor government is up front and honest with Queenslanders, we really don’t know the scale of the problem, so solutions are almost impossible to find.”

“We do know for a fact that the number of offences committed by youth offenders in Townsville has increased by over 25% in the three years from 2018 to 2021. That is, most likely, the number of offences proven in court so, without doubt, the numbers are really much higher.”

“From local MP’s, through to the Police Minister and the Premier, we are constantly told that youth crime problem is a community problem. It’s time the Palaszczuk government was honest with the community and told us the real extent of this problem rather than trying to deny its existence through confusion.”

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