

NICK DAMETTO

Member for Hinchinbrook



MEDIA RELEASE

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Labor's youth crime spend lacking bang for buck

THE State Labor Government's decision to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on new youth detention centres in Queensland will do little to curb the state's youth crime crisis, says Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto.

Mr Dametto said it beggared belief the government was intent on blowing more than \$320 million on expanding, building and staffing new youth detention centres and other initiatives aimed at reducing reoffending, which had largely proven to be a failure.

"The plan to construct a new 32 bed youth detention centre at Wacol, at an estimated total cost of approximately \$150 million, seems like a ludicrous spend. That's just over \$4.6 million per bed," he said.

"To upgrade the existing Brisbane Youth Detention Centre will cost \$27 million to expand their capacity to 16 more beds. True to form, Labor are throwing money at a problem hoping it will go away. Surely, I'm not the only one struggling to find value for money in this.

"Instead of considering Katter's Australian Party's youth relocation sentencing policy, which would be a far cry cheaper and more effective way of reforming young offenders, they've decided that building bigger holding cells and funding a few diversion programs is the answer."

Under the KAP's policy, magistrates would be given the ability to effectively banish young offenders from the community in which they committed the crime.

They would be sent to an approved low security facility located in a remote location where they would become involved in programs that would see offenders taught to work on the land where they would learn life skills that would help them become contributing members of society upon their release.

Ankle bracelets would be used to help manage escapes from the property, but security would be mainly through distance and isolation. An incentive system, based on a merit system, would allow the offenders to feel a sense of achievement and accomplishment. This would include completing competencies that would go towards certificate III and IV qualifications.

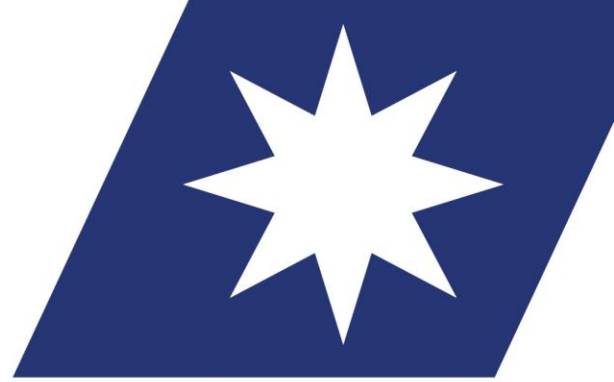
A young person in a Queensland detention centre costs the State about \$530,000 per year or \$1455 per day.

Under the KAP's proposed relocation sentencing structure, the cost per detainee would be far cheaper at around \$90,000 per year.

"Relocation sentencing would help break the cycle when it comes to youth crime, where young offenders spend most of their time bouncing in and out of juvenile detention," Mr Dametto said.

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“I note that part of the government’s youth crime funding announcement includes \$19.2 million over four years for Townsville. You would only need a fraction of that sort of investment for relocation sentencing.

“Labor keeps telling us that boot camps don’t work but when they won office in 2015, they did everything that could to ensure the former Newman Government’s boot camps failed. In all fairness, the LNP boot camps were set up in a rush and by the time they started to function there was a snap change of government.

“By contrast, the KAP’s proposal is a back-to-basics plan to reform our wayward youth and we think the people of North Queensland, who are suffering from the scourge of youth crime, will agree.”

—ENDS—

Photo caption:

Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto inspects the remnants of a burnt out car on Saunders Beach, north of Townsville.

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