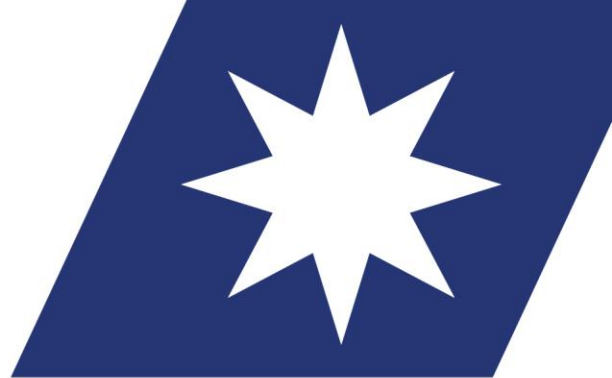


NICK DAMETTO

Member for Hinchinbrook



MEDIA RELEASE

24/7/19

Taxpayers foot bill for Labor's youth crime mess

QUEENSLAND taxpayers cannot keep paying to clean up the State Labor's Government's youth crime mess, says Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto.

Mr Dametto said recent media reports that revealed juvenile delinquents cost Queensland taxpayers \$600,000 in less than six months to fix damage caused by them in detention centres should be "an urgent wake up call for the government".

"Taxpayers would no doubt be outraged by that figure and it's obvious the Palaszczuk Government's approach to juvenile detention isn't working. We can't keep spending money hand over fist expecting to fix this problem. Something needs to change," he said.

"We've got a youth crime crisis across Queensland and Katter's Australian Party has the solution with Relocation Sentencing."

Mr Dametto and fellow KAP Member Robbie Katter recently met with focus groups and traditional owners in Mt Isa to further develop the party's Relocation Sentencing policy, where magistrates would be given a new option to move young offenders away from their current social groups and into an environment where they will be given the opportunity to reform.

Young offenders 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.

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.

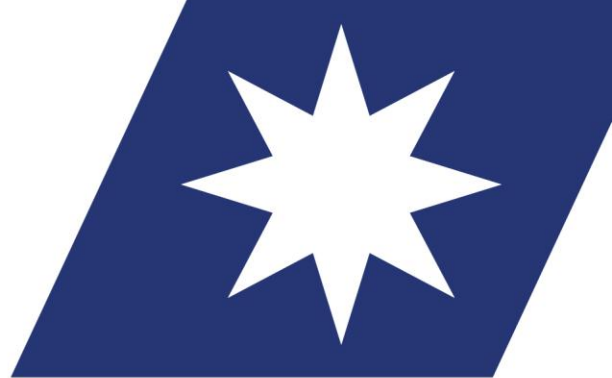
"During the Mt Isa meeting, we learnt what path this policy needs to take. I believe the crucial point government policy makers are missing is they are taking a one-size-fits-all approach to youth crime," Mr Dametto said.

"One comment that stuck out in my mind from the meeting was if people want to better themselves, they likely need to remove themselves from their current anti-social environment. This may mean making the tough decision of leaving friends and family behind."

The juvenile delinquent damage bill follows Labor's announcement in April that it will spend more than \$320 million on expanding, building and staffing new youth detention centres and other initiatives aimed at reducing reoffending.

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“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,” Mr Dametto 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, especially after this week’s reports on the damage bill racked up by these young offenders.”

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 an estimated cost of 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.

“I note that part of the government’s previous 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 Queensland, who are suffering from the tidal wave of youth crime, will agree.”

“Instead of considering our party’s policy, which would be a cheaper and more effective way of reforming young offenders, Labor continue with this broken system that is helping no-one. It’s time they put community safety first.”

—ENDS—

Photo caption: Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto surveys a burnt-out car on Saunders Beach.

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