

NICK DAMETTO
Member for Hinchinbrook



MEDIA RELEASE

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Labor makes token gesture towards crime fight

AN on-the-ropes State Labor Government appears to have finally conceded to what is needed to win the fight against North Queensland's youth crime problem, says Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto.

Mr Dametto said he was wary of Labor's new suite of anti-crime policy measures announced today that would see young indigenous offenders sent away to do an "on country" cultural rehabilitation program, 24/7 police strike teams, changes to bail laws and funding for "community-based crime action committees" in cities across regional Queensland.

"This announcement is an abrupt change of tune from Labor, who until recently, refused to even acknowledge there was a crime crisis in the North," Mr Dametto said.

"It's hard to think this is not just a cynical election ploy to appease voters in the North ahead of an election in October, but then again, it would be very difficult for anybody to ignore the current crime statistics. Katter's Australian Party has been consistently advocating on behalf of crime-affected residents for years about this issue. Labor had more than enough opportunities in this term of parliament to implement our policy of relocation sentencing but instead turned their noses up at us and the community.

"Of course, the irony here is that it was Labor who softened the youth bail laws by making it more difficult to keep a young offender in custody by adding an additional layer of special consideration, particularly if the child is under 14 years. Now it seems they want to reverse their own legislative stuff ups."

Mr Dametto said a lot of the ideas that Labor is using align with the KAP's relocation sentencing policy, which would be the "short circuit" required to get young offenders "back on track".

"At the crux of our policy is getting young offenders away from the bad influences that contributed to their criminal behaviour in the first place by sending them to a remote property west of Mt Isa where they will get back to country, learn life skills on the land and at the same time, reform," he said.

"It's about reprogramming these young offenders so when they come back, they can reintegrate into society and become productive members. With that said, it is encouraging that Townsville's Labor MPs are working with the One Community One Standard group members on their proposal

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for a 13-week on-country rehabilitation program for young offenders. I hope the government listens and implements what this group are suggesting.

“The real KPI for Labor will be when there is not an average of 16 homes broken into and almost five cars stolen each day in Townsville, as we saw last month.”

Mr Dametto is sponsoring a parliamentary e-petition by Take Back Townsville co-ordinator Julianne Wood calling for the government to make significant legislative changes to introduce tougher penalties for offenders, including juveniles, so that law-abiding citizens can live in peace.

Since being launched on December 17 last year, the e-petition has already amassed more than 8000 signatures.

To view the petition, click [here](#).

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Photo caption

Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto is wary about Labor’s new suite of anti-crime policy measures announced.

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