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State Labor soft on youth crime, State LNP out ideas: KAP

Katter's Australian Party (KAP) candidate for Callide, Adam Burling, says finding practical solutions to tackle youth crime is high on his agenda, as the level of offending reaches flashpoint in some central Queensland communities.

Following a community meeting convened in response to a spate of offending in the region, Mr Burling said residents were determined not to lay the blame solely on offenders, but look at the upstream factors contributing to young people turning into youth offenders.

"You see groups of kids wandering around at night with not much of a home life and getting into trouble, but they've responded when someone reaches out to them, small gestures like picking them up and taking them for a feed.

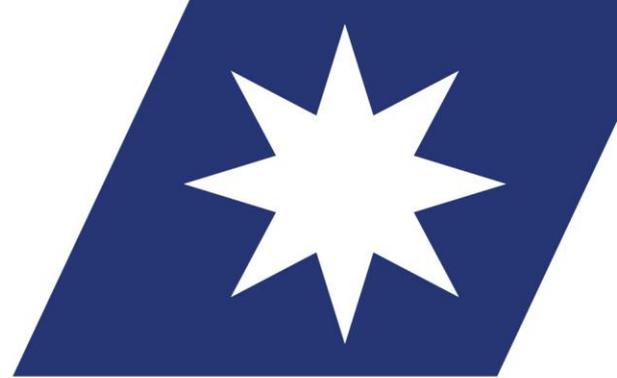
"That kind of intervention can help in preventing the problems, however, we need to get in there early and put effort into diversionary activities so we can set these kids on the right path.

"Developing strategies for these kids by giving them something to build their self-worth around, showing them that they are valued and even teaching them a work ethic are some of the things we can work on as a community.

"Residents have spoken about bringing together the leading groups in the community and looking at what we can do in terms of recreation and education, to find role models they can look up to."

"I'm not saying I have all the answers, but I think together and with the right kind of leadership, we can address some of the community safety issues we are seeing emerging now."

Mr Burling said he's realistic about what local interventions can achieve, and says he supports the KAP's policy of relocation sentencing as a long-term solution to breaking the cycle of crime for repeat offenders.



"When it gets too late for community-based interventions, say once they're around 15 and already committing a lot of serious crimes and it's become a game to some of them by then, that's where the KAP policy of re-location sentencing comes into play."

KAP's Deputy Leader and Member for Hinchinbrook, Nick Dametto MP, said during his recent trip to the Callide electorate it became evident the youth crime crisis was the number one state-wide issue on Queenslanders' minds.

"Queenslanders are tired of being let down by the State Government and their failing youth justice system," Mr Dametto said.

"This week, we have now heard that the State Labor Government is considering raising the minimum age of detention from 10 to 14, which given the situation does not come close to meeting the community's expectations.

"If you have the capacity to do the crime, you are old enough to do the time and deal with the repercussions.

"This proposal is ludicrous it just means 10- to 13-year-old offenders will have more years to continue breaking the law with no real consequence.

"If 10- to 13-year-olds are no longer admitted to detention, then where will these offenders go?

"The Katter's Australian Party is calling on the State Labor Government to allocated \$15 million in this year's state budget to trial our Relocation Sentencing Policy which has been designed to be a harsh deterrent for recidivist offenders to break the cycle of youth crime.

"Relocation Sentencing gives juveniles an opportunity to reform through the ability to learn real life skills that will help them reform and plug back into society with a purpose after serving their time.

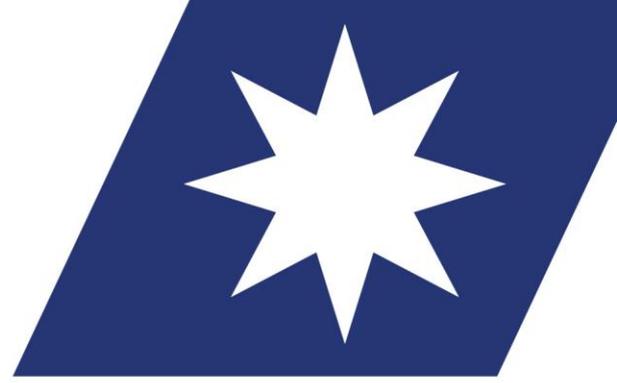
"Raising the minimum age of detention will only create another two-year hall pass for youth offenders who are well down the road of becoming career criminals."

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For comment from Adam, please call 0407153452

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