



Speech By  
**Mark Robinson**

**MEMBER FOR CLEVELAND**

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**YOUTH JUSTICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION (INCLUSION OF 17-YEAR-OLD PERSONS) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (4.26 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the Youth Justice and Other Legislation (Inclusion of 17-year-old Persons) Amendment Bill 2016. The bill broadly seeks to move 17-year-olds from the adult justice system into the juvenile justice system. I note that the stated objectives of the bill are: to increase the upper age of who is a child for the purposes of the Youth Justice Act 1992 from 16 years to 17 years; and to establish a regulation-making power to provide transitional arrangements for the transfer of 17-year-olds from the adult criminal justice system to the youth justice system.

The LNP opposition has taken the view that we will not be supporting the bill. We do not believe that this measure is in the best interests of the youth and adults who are currently in respective systems and of those who will enter the system in the future. Further, the cost of implementing the bill would be substantial without accompanying reforms such as diverting young people from the criminal justice system to effective alternative programs that reduce offending and reduce the number of young people in custody on remand. Without such reform, a dedicated new youth detention centre would potentially be required, at an estimated cost of \$400 million. The estimated cost to government for the day-to-day operational costs associated with the inclusion of 17-year-olds in the youth justice system is up to \$44 million per annum. I note that the bill was scrutinised by the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee. The committee, after due consideration, could not reach agreement on the passage of the bill, with the LNP committee members providing a statement of reservation.

I want to address just for a few minutes the related issue of youth violence and our juvenile justice system and a local application. Local Thornlands teenager Matthew Stanley was tragically killed in 2006 at age 15 from a violent incident at a teenage birthday party in Alexandra Hills in Redland City. Matthew was hit and killed by a drunken 16-year-old in what was described as a one-punch death or a coward's punch death. The attacker was convicted of manslaughter and committed to juvenile detention. Over the years Matthew's father has shared some concerns that he has held with the juvenile justice system and how it dealt with the perpetrator and also with his family and that ultimately it did not adequately deal with the circumstances and the perpetrator as he felt it should. Paul Stanley went on to establish the Matthew Stanley Foundation to try to prevent such incidences of youth violence and we have learnt much since then about youth crime, youth violence and running our youth juvenile detention centres.

Following Matthew's death we saw the emergence of campaigns to educate children and adults about youth violence. The One Punch Can Kill campaign and Walk Away Chill Out initiative have been important to Clevelanders and all Queenslanders. I have spoken a number of times in this House about the work of Paul Stanley. I am proud of him as a father and an advocate for dealing with conflict in a peaceful manner. On 23 September just this year the Matthew Stanley Foundation commemorated the 10th anniversary of Matthew's death. A large portrait of Matthew was unveiled at the Alexandra Hills Hotel on 23 September. I was honoured to attend the unveiling alongside Paul Stanley, members and

supporters of the Matthew Stanley Foundation, the artist and local dignitaries. Artist Bastian Allfrey did an amazing job of capturing the likeness of Matthew. Also in attendance was Deputy Mayor Wendy Boglary and former member for Cleveland Phil Weightman, who is the chairman of the board of trustees for the Matthew Stanley Foundation, and I want to acknowledge Phil for his role with the foundation. Paul Stanley has worked tirelessly conveying his antiviolence message to students across the state, including our own local schools in Redland City. The Walk Away Chill Out campaign has been extremely successful in highlighting the devastating consequences of violent and antisocial behaviour. Paul's work has no doubt prevented a number of young people from committing violent crimes and entering our juvenile detention system. In conclusion, I do not support the changes put forward in this bill.