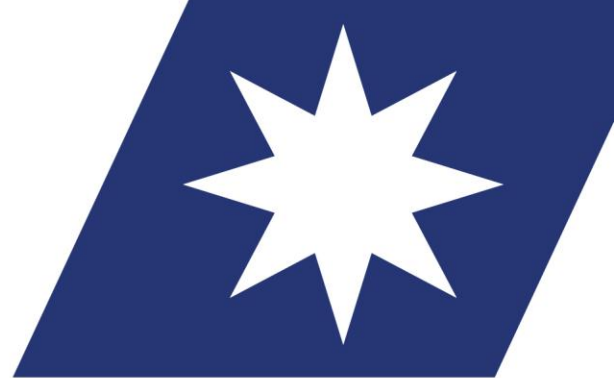


**ROBBIE KATTER**

Member for Traeger



## MEDIA RELEASE

April 4, 2021

### LABOR ACCUSED OF "GASLIGHTING" THE NORTH

The Palaszczuk Government's deficient response to North Queensland's relentless youth crime crisis is being predicated on misleading facts and data about the severity of the situation, Katter's Australian Party MPs have warned.

KAP Leader and Traeger MP Robbie Katter said since 2015 the cherry-picking of data had been Labor's go-to response to any criticism levelled on the issue, demonstrating the huge disconnect between the Government and the communities affected.

As recently as last month Labor MPs were in Cairns spruiking a reduction in local youth crime of 13 per cent in the 12-month period to November, 2020.

In a Ministerial statement, Barron River MP Craig Crawford said the reduction was the result of Labor's 24/7 co-responder teams, which had been rolled out in Cairns in May, 2020.

"What's great about this \$5.2 million initiative, though, is that it's not only Cairns that's benefited but other areas, including Townsville, Brisbane, Rockhampton and Logan and I understand it will be expanded to even more areas this year," Mr Crawford said at the time. <sup>1</sup>

"It's also just one part of the Palaszczuk Government's five-point plan announced last year to tackle hardcore repeat offenders, and follows a record investment of more than half a billion dollars in youth justice reform."

Minister for Youth Justice Leanne Linard also claimed, when queried by Mr Katter, that there was "evidence (Labor's) reforms and investment are working". <sup>2</sup>

"Between 2018 and 2019, there was a 13 per cent reduction in the number of youth offenders – down from 5,868 in 2018 to 5,099 in 2019 (769 fewer youth offenders)," the Minister wrote in her reply to the Traeger MP's Question on Notice.

"Between 2019 and 2020, there was a further 16 per cent reduction in the number of youth offenders – down from 5,099 in 2019 to 4,304 in 2020 (795 fewer youth offenders).

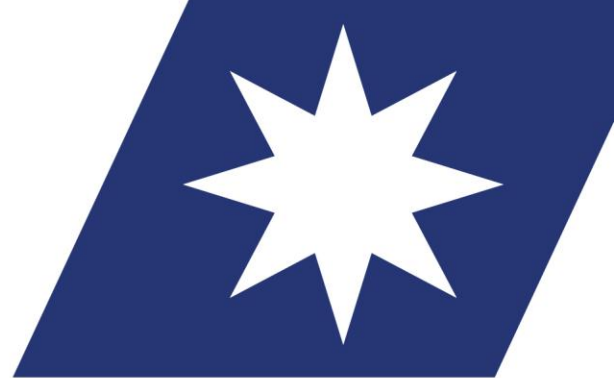
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<sup>1</sup> <https://statements.qld.gov.au/statements/91689>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/documents/tableOffice/questionsAnswers/2021/88-2021.pdf>

## ROBBIE KATTER

Member for Traeger



## MEDIA RELEASE

Mr Katter said the 2019-20 year was a write-off with regards to analysing normal social data due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent state-wide lockdowns.

However Minister Linard said concerns raised about COVID-19's impact on the data were irrelevant as "COVID-19 lockdowns occurred in only a portion of the 2019-20 reporting period".

Even the Australian Bureau of Statistics, when detailing statistics from 2019-20 that showed youth crime rates across Australia were at their lowest recorded levels, warned that the data was compromised by COVID-19.<sup>3</sup>

Mr Katter said the news that Labor was "solving" youth crime in North Queensland was a surprise to him, and the majority of people in the region.

He said Labor was essentially playing "silly-buggers" with the facts, and that it was offensive the Government thought people wouldn't catch on.

"Another day, and another statistic gets rolled out by our Labor MPs up here in the North or by the Ministers on George Street in Brisbane", he said.

"I feel like the whole of North Queensland is getting 'gaslighted' by Labor – we tell them there's a serious issue and we need help, and they tell us we're wrong and find some obscure set of data to show us why.

"It's outrageous, and we are all sick of the propaganda."

According to official Offence Data (related to 10-17 year old child offenders), as published by the Queensland Police Service in their annual Statistical Reviews (2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17) and by the Queensland Government Statistician's Office in their Crime Report, Queensland (2017-18 and 2018-19), the realities of the youth crime crisis in Queensland are as follows:

- **2014-15: 43,621** total charges were laid against child offenders (10-17 years old)
- **2015-16: 45,329** total charges were laid against child offenders (10-17 years old)
- **2016-17: 49,741** total charges were laid against child offenders (10-17 years old)
- **2017-18: 51,050** total charges were laid against child offenders (10-17 years old)
- **2018-19: 48,786** total charges were laid against child offenders (10-17 years old).

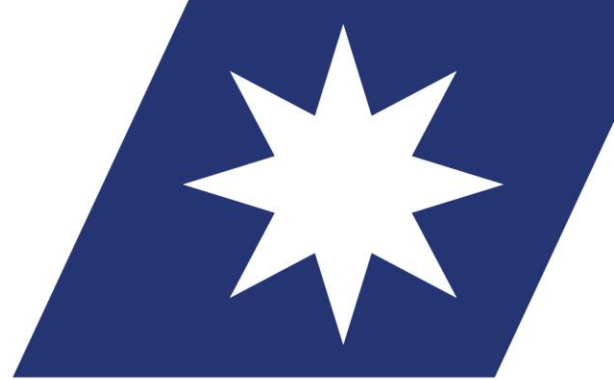
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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/recorded-crime-offenders/latest-release#youth-offenders>

**ROBBIE KATTER**

**Member for Traeger**

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## MEDIA RELEASE

- **No data has been made publicly available for 2019-20.**

Further concerning figures, from the same data sources previously referred, show there have been the following youth-related offence increases in Queensland:

1. **Unlawful use of a motor vehicle offences have risen by about 59.9%**, when comparing the 2,133 offences reported in 2014-15 to the 3,411 reported in 2018-19
2. **Unlawful entry offences have risen by about 27%**, when comparing the 5,056 offences reported in 2014-15 to the 6,424 reported in 2018-19
3. **Other theft offences have risen by about 23.4%**, when comparing the 8,581 offences reported in 2014-15 to the 10,588 reported in 2018-19.

Mr Katter said North Queensland had been left uninspired by Labor's Youth Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021, and that he feared crime would continue to erode quality of life for all communities without drastic action.

—ENDS—

**Media inquiries: Morgan Oss, 0428 772 544**