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**MEDIA RELEASE**

# **Last calls for North Queensland trial of Centrelink Crackdown on Crims**

Shadow Minister for North Queensland, Dale Last, has called on the State Government to work cooperatively with the Federal Government to ensure a measure in the recent budget is adopted to help tackle crime in North Queensland.

The Federal initiatives are not due to commence until March next year, but Mr Last said North Queensland would make an ideal area to trial the reforms.

"The Premier has said in the past that she was open to ideas on how to address crime so there is absolutely no reason not to embrace this help from the Federal Government," Mr Last said.

"Major General Smith is working hard on recommendations and it looks like his ideas will help address crime but we need to look at every opportunity available to get crime under control."

The measures would see serial fine defaulters have amounts deducted from Centrelink payments and passed to the State Government.

People with outstanding arrest warrants would have payments for new benefits rejected, and for existing recipients, would face having their payments halved or frozen if they did not turn themselves in.

"Labor has been soft on crime and tax payers shouldn't be footing the bill for that," Mr Last said.

"The attorney-general wants more consultation and more details so why not host a trial here in North Queensland."

There has been some opposition to the measures with claims the most vulnerable in the community would carry the burden but Mr Last believes there are sufficient safe guards in place in the proposal.

"We are talking about people with fines and arrest warrants issued by our legal system so the Attorney General should support this if she supports the Queensland legal system."

"We have the Treasurer and the Premier saying the Federal Government is short funding them but here is up to \$1.2 Billion on offer and they say they need to think about it," Mr Last said.

**ENDS**

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