



LIBS VOW TO THROW BOOK AT KID CRIMS

David Killick

The Liberals have promised to “throw the book” at children who commit criminal offences, particularly young “crimfluencers” who post and boast on social media.

The Commissioner for Children and Young People, who was not consulted, said punitive, populist policies did not work.

Premier Jeremy Rockliff and Minister for Police and Emergency Services Felix Ellis on Friday announced a “strong plan to crack down on crime”.

It includes a police strike

force targeting children who offend, tougher penalties for those who are “boasting and posting” about offences on social media, and more police.

And road rage will become a separate offence.

“There’s a new generation of criminals bragging about theft, assault, hooning and worse on social media platforms like TikTok and Snapchat and it’s disgusting,” Mr Rockliff said.

“They don’t care about their victims, they incite copycats, and they think they’re above the law.

“This has to stop, so we’re going to do everything we can

to throw the book at them.

“We will introduce new laws that makes it a specific aggravating factor that a court must take into account when sentencing offenders who post and boast about committing a crime on social media.

“We will also crack down on hooning, road rage and vehicle theft.

“We will introduce a new offence for road rage, double penalties for dangerous and reckless driving and motor vehicle stealing and make it easier for vehicles to be forfeited to the Crown or crushed.”

Crime has increased by

about 25 per cent over the term of the Rockliff government and youth crime was up 35 per cent last year.

Mr Ellis and the Premier denied the policies would simply put more children into the Ashley Youth Detention Centre — which the Liberals promised to close two and a half years ago because of ongoing human rights abuses.

The Liberals did not consult with the Commissioner for Children and Young People Leanne McLean while developing the policies.

“It is disappointing that punitive tough on crime rhet-

oric is being promulgated after the recent Commission of Inquiry in Tasmania, which demonstrated irrefutably that our systems have failed to protect children and to keep them safe from harm,” she said.

“These statements have no place post-Commission of Inquiry. They show blatant disregard for the rights of children and our obligation as adults to care for them and to support their development.”

“Punitive, populist, tough on crime announcements might make for good media, but they do not make Tasmanian communities safer.”

A coalition of community service organisations and justice advocates including Anglicare, Mission Australia and TasCoss called for a new approach.

They said what was needed was a reduction in the number of children on remand, the expansion of diversionary options for child offenders and for sentencing principles to focus on rehabilitation and ensuring jail is a sentence of last resort.

Legislative Council member Meg Webb accused the Liberals of “punching down on vulnerable Tasmanian children”. “Today’s reprehensible dis-

play of populist vote chasing obliterates the credibility of any government led by Jeremy Rockliff overseeing the implementation of the Commission of Inquiry recommendations,” she said.

Greens leader Rosalie Woodruff agreed.

“The Liberals’ rhetoric on youth crime is revolting. In announcing their planned ‘Strikeforce’, Jeremy Rockliff referred to “juvenile career criminals” — this is simply fear-mongering at the expense of young people.”

And independent candidate for Bass Jack Davenport ac-

cused the Liberals of fear-mongering

“Vilifying children in a state that has seen the most shocking abuse carried out within the youth justice system, fatally undermines the sincerity of the Tasmanian government and stains the moral legitimacy of the Liberals beyond recognition,” he said.

“How many successful prosecutions have taken place against state servants for child sexual abuse?

“How many of the 81 state servants stood down for concerns of sexual abuse have been sacked?”