



Speech by

**Hon. M. FOLEY**

**MEMBER FOR YERONGA**

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Hansard 4 August 1998

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**  
**Rights of Victims of Crime**

**Hon. M. J. FOLEY** (Yeronga—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for The Arts) (9.45 a.m.), by leave: I take this opportunity to inform the House of one of the first justice initiatives undertaken by the Labor Government to address an area neglected by our predecessors, namely to shift the focus of the criminal justice system back towards victims. On 23 July, at the Victims of Crime Association office in Fortitude Valley, I launched a discussion paper on the Criminal Offence Victims Act, an initiative designed to strengthen the rights of victims of crime. Community forums will be held throughout Queensland to ensure that the Government receives a wide range of views on how best to achieve this aim. For too long, victims of crime have found themselves on the outer in the criminal justice system.

In 1995, the Criminal Offence Victims Act introduced a set of fundamental principles of justice for victims of crime. Our aim, through the launch of the discussion paper and community forums, is to give those principles teeth and to ensure that the principles operate in a fair and practical way throughout the justice system. The principles include: informing victims when an offender is due for release into the community; informing victims if an offender has escaped custody or an alleged offender has absconded before trial; informing victims about the sentence imposed on an offender and the date on which it comes into effect; and advising victims about the progress of investigations—for example, the name of the person charged and the charges laid, the date of court proceedings and any reasons for not pursuing a charge, changing a charge or accepting a plea to a lesser charge.

This initiative is about a change in culture when dealing with victims of crime. Close consultation is being held with crime victims, prosecutors, police and correctional officers to ensure that the reforms are practical and fair. People wishing to make a submission have until 4 September and can obtain a copy of the discussion paper from the Policy and Legislation Division, Department of Justice, PO Box 149, Brisbane, Queensland, 4001. I lay on the table of the House a copy of the discussion paper.

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