



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

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CORRECTIVE SERVICES AND PENALTIES AND SENTENCES AMENDMENT BILL

Mr KNUTH (Burdekin—IND) (8.51 p.m.): Quite often we sit in this House and debate Bills that will have far-reaching effects on the people of Queensland. That is an onerous task and more often than not we are torn between party loyalties and electoral attitudes. These philosophies and attitudes clash with a great deal of regularity and it disappoints me to say that party loyalties often win, to the disillusionment of the electorate.

With this Bill, Parliament has a rare opportunity to deliver good, bipartisan legislation for all Queenslanders. I believe that Parliament's main objectives to the people of Queensland are to provide education, effective health care and employment opportunities and, above all, it has the responsibility to protect the freedoms of all law-abiding citizens of Queensland. I for one am sick and tired of listening to the news every day only to hear stories of violence, rape, murder, robbery and child abuse. Not only do I have to listen to the news, I have to listen to the news that one member of my own family was murdered not more than two weeks ago. So I speak from the heart and I mean what I say.

I am sick to death of the perpetrators of crime calling for justice from inside the penal system or, more immediately, from the halls of justice—the courts. I ask members: where was the concern for justice when these people so deliberately performed their acts of criminality on people who were guilty of nothing but endeavouring to be righteous members of their own communities? How often do we become sick in the guts reading about sad stories of family break-ups because the victims are unable to come to terms with the intrusion and violation of their lives by unwelcome acts of violence? I for one will no longer tolerate these criminals who refuse to accept responsibility for their crimes. If people cannot handle alcohol, do not drink. If someone is a madman on drugs, do not take them. If someone needs help, seek it.

The outrage in the community is extraordinary when a stray dog bites a jogger, attacks a child or terrorises a postman. The dog is put down; an animal that has no concept of right or wrong is put down. But when it comes to dealing with violent crime committed deliberately by people, more often than not they are taken to with a feather duster. Queensland families deserve better and expect better from our Parliament.

I know the Labor members of the House have the numbers to defeat this Bill. I also know that if some of the Labor members were given the opportunity, they would support their electorate and vote for this Bill. I now challenge the Labor Leader and Premier of this State to give his members the chance to vote with their consciences. However, before he responds I would like to share with members a real story about a real child. While the debate on truth in sentencing continues in Parliament, I have documented the following evidence in the case of the murder and rape of a 12-year-old girl, Sian Kingi. Sian Kingi was just short of her 13th birthday when she met her mother at a Noosa shopping centre. Sian was riding her pushbike home from school when she spoke to her mother in the car park at the Noosa shopping centre. Little did Sian's mother know that the last words she would hear from her daughter were, "See you at home, mummy."

Approximately 400 metres from the shopping centre, Sian was stopped by a middle-aged woman, Valmae Beck, who asked Sian to help look for a lost dog. Sian's innocence prevented her from knowing the dangers that awaited her for just being helpful. While searching the park for the lost dog, Sian was lured into an ambush. She was grabbed from behind by a man three times her age and 10 times her strength. He placed masking tape around her mouth, legs and hands, then piled her into the

back seat of his and his wife's vehicle like a worthless sack of potatoes. Only God knows the fear and confusion a 12-year-old girl experienced.

But worse was to come. The husband and wife transported Sian to a secluded forest, the tape was removed from Sian's mouth so she could answer questions—sex questions so disgusting and perverse that the current censorship laws would not allow them to be published in any forum outside a court of law. Valmae Beck and Barry Watts then proceeded to sexually molest Sian, a 12-year-old schoolgirl who should have been home having dinner with her family.

While Sian's parents are pacing the house worried sick for their daughter's safety, Sian was being raped and sodomised. This was such a deliberate act that Barry Watts and Valmae Beck knew, like any criminal does, that the evidence should be disposed of to conceal their connection to the crime.

Mr Feldman: You should stop there.

Mr KNUTH: For the sake of Parliament, I cannot really repeat what happened. The victim in this case was not an innate object, it was a 12-year-old schoolgirl, Sian Kingi, a human being. Barry Watts and Valmae Beck disposed of the evidence by brutally murdering the 12-year-old girl—an act so distasteful and so brutal that Valmae Beck locked her dog in the car to prevent the dog from witnessing this gruesome act.

The pain was finally over for Sian, but her mother and father had to wait another three weeks before their worst fears were realised. But their worst fears would not have prepared them for the way in which their 12-year-old daughter's life was stolen from them. When Valmae Beck and Barry Watts were finally arrested, Queensland witnessed unprecedented public protests outside the Noosa courthouse—normal, everyday people who found the crime committed on Sian unacceptable and at the highest level of abhorrence.

The clear message is that we do not want these animals, and animals like them, as part of our society. One would expect Barry Watts and Valmae Beck at this stage to display some remorse considering the crime that they committed. However, this was too much to ask. The only remorse shown by Barry Watts and Valmae Beck was the remorse of being caught. This is supported by the words of Watts to his wife, and I quote, "Nice"— expletive—"wife you turned out to be dobbing your husband in." I removed the swear word from that sentence. Beck responded, "Barry, you wanted to do it again, you remember?", to which Watts replied, "And so did you." Both Watts and Beck then proceeded to concoct a defence of insanity, and still displayed no remorse. This self-imposed denial is still with Watts today, who hails his innocence from the confines of prison.

Sian was not the only victim. Sian's parents were denied the joy of watching their 12-year-old daughter grow to womanhood. They were denied the joy of sharing birthdays, Christmases, Easters or just family outings with her, because Valmae Beck promised Barry Watts sex with a blond-haired virgin. The victims do not stop there. The impact on communities is far too extensive to detail in Parliament, but we know that it exists. I know that even the most well-intentioned and vigilant communities, whether through local government, the Federal Government or State Governments, cannot promise a crime-free environment. The ill-informed and ill-conceived social agendas of some of the factions of the Labor Party have seen to that. However, as members of Parliament we can promise and commit ourselves to ensuring that animals like Beck and Watts are never allowed to share the freedoms that they so deliberately stole from Sian and her family.

Mr Paff: She changed her name.

Mr KNUTH: That is true, she did change her name and I can let the House know that she is trying to get parole right now.

I ask honourable members to share a quiet moment with Sian and allow their consciences to vote in support of the Bill. Many members present tonight may not have experienced a death in their families. Indeed, I pray that no-one does soon, but the day will come when one of us will. I ask all honourable members to consider the grief that they will experience, which is the grief that many mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, husbands and wives are experiencing today throughout Queensland. As I said before, one of my own family members was murdered not more than two weeks ago. I ask the House to consider the pain and the suffering that families involved in such crimes have to endure and how, for the rest of their lives, they will miss someone they loved because of the animalistic acts of some human beings who have no consideration for life.

This Bill has nothing to do with the perpetrators of small crimes. It is about people who commit crimes to satisfy their own sick lust and sin. That is what we have to consider. I would never support a Bill that would lock up perpetrators of minor crime for the rest of their lives. However, I do support locking up the animal-like criminals who commit horrific crimes in our society. Enough is enough. I ask honourable members just this once to forget about political loyalties and exercise a conscience vote.