



Speech by

Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Hansard Wednesday, 20 May 2009

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Victims of Crime

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.18 am): The Bligh government is committed to ensuring victims of crime have access to the support they need to recover and get their lives back on track. Providing greater support for victims is part of our commitment to a fair and safe Queensland. There is no doubt that being a victim of crime is one of the most horrific experiences a person can go through and can impact on every aspect of a person's life. An act of violence in particular can have a devastating effect, often felt not only by the victim but also by their family and friends.

This government is determined to do everything it can to help reduce these effects and enable victims to get back on their feet. That is why the Bligh government made a commitment last year to overhaul the existing victims compensation scheme and replace it with a more efficient and compassionate system that will make life easier for victims of crime. The new Victims Financial Assistance Scheme aims to cut red tape so that victims can access the support and assistance they need as soon as possible. The new scheme is moving away from a focus on a lump sum compensation figure to instead identify the actual financial assistance required for treatment and support to help victims recover as quickly as possible.

Today I will be releasing for public comment a draft bill of this new scheme—the Victims of Crime Assistance Bill 2009. The draft bill expands the categories of victims eligible for assistance. It also establishes interim emergency assistance and reduces backlogs in the existing system. While the global financial crisis is placing immense pressure on all budgets, this government will not compromise on essential services for the most vulnerable members of our community. To the contrary, through this new scheme we will provide assistance for more people who have suffered at the hands of criminals. From today the draft bill can be downloaded from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General website. I look forward to receiving feedback, with consultation open until 12 June.