



Speech by

Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Hansard Tuesday, 23 November 2010

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Deaths of Vicki Arnold and Julie-Anne Leahy

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.20 am): The deaths of Vicki Arnold and Julie-Anne Leahy on the Atherton Tablelands in August 1991 have confounded family, friends and investigators for almost two decades. Police initially determined that the deaths were the result of a murder-suicide, a conclusion supported by two subsequent coronial inquests. Despite these findings, the case has been the subject of continued speculation and query, with a chorus of voices questioning the conclusions of numerous investigations. These voices have urged authorities to reopen investigations into the deaths and initiate a third coronial inquest in the hope that further light can be shed on the circumstances of the deaths of the two women concerned.

Most recently, the member for Mulgrave, Curtis Pitt, last month provided the House with a detailed summary of his views on this case. He has also made detailed representations to me on behalf of the Arnold family, who have long held the belief that Vicki Arnold was not capable of committing the actions that had been ascribed to her. I also met with family members at the Innisfail community cabinet in February this year and heard their concerns firsthand.

This has been a complex case that has required significant deliberation on my part as I assessed the public interest in directing the State Coroner to reopen a coronial inquiry. I can announce today that, after giving proper consideration to all relevant matters, I have decided to refer the case to the State Coroner. I have today written to the Queensland State Coroner to direct that an inquest be reopened into the circumstances surrounding the deaths of Vicki Arnold and Julie-Anne Leahy. The timing of the inquest will be a matter for the State Coroner.

I have also notified family members of my decision, which may bring for them some end to the conjecture and speculation surrounding the case. While the reopened inquest may not deliver a conclusive finding, it may provide clarity and hopefully some closure for family members.