




Speech By
Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

Record of Proceedings, 1 November 2016

ADJOURNMENT

State Penalties Enforcement Registry, Restitution to Victims of Crime

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (6.43 pm): Is it fair that victims of crime should have to wait six years for court ordered compensation to be paid to them? Absolutely not! This rot needs to stop and I call on the Treasurer to fix it.

The State Penalties Enforcement Registry, otherwise known as SPER, is a joke. The system needs to be overhauled so that it is fair dinkum, rather than punishing those who do the right thing and leaving those who do not thumbing their nose at them. How can it be that courts make orders for debtors to pay up, but those who are owed money cannot get any information from SPER about when they are going to see a single dollar?

My constituents, Mr and Mrs Andy and Laurel Leach of Maroochydore, have gone through the court process to recover funds. The court has ordered that the offender pay restitution but, six years later, the Leaches still have not received any money. To make matters worse, they are unable to get any information from the State Penalties Enforcement Registry about what action is being taken to recover the moneys that are owed to them. For victims such as the Leaches and many others, to wait for such a considerable length of time for compensation can cause them distress. They need to receive the payment that the court has deemed is due to them so that they can move on and put the matter behind them.

In this situation, the privacy laws protect the offender. The victim is unable to find out any information from SPER about what enforcement action is being taken to recover the debt. The victim waits, unable to get an update on what progress is being made. That is completely unacceptable.

I believe that the collection process for court ordered restitution payments needs to be fairer so that victims of crime can receive timely payment of money owing to them. On their behalf, I have advocated for changes to the State Penalties Enforcement Act to ensure that there is a fair collection of restitution and for people to be made aware of progress. Unfortunately, the Treasurer has failed to adequately respond to my request for a reform of this system and, in particular, to the process of the collection of court ordered restitution.

This is not a just system. Those who have already been punished as victims of crime are being punished again by a system that is failing to deliver justice. I call on the Treasurer to fix the system, to deliver justice and to ensure that my constituents, and many like them, finally see fair restitution from this court ordered process.