




Speech By  
**Julieanne Gilbert**

**MEMBER FOR MACKAY**

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**LIMITATIONS OF ACTIONS (INSTITUTIONAL CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE) AND  
OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL; LIMITATION OF ACTIONS AND  
OTHER LEGISLATION (CHILD ABUSE CIVIL PROCEEDINGS) AMENDMENT  
BILL**

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (5.07 pm): I rise in support of the Limitation of Actions (Institutional Child Sexual Abuse) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. Like many Australians, I have seen played out in the media inquiries and investigations into cases of sexual abuse against children in institutional care by members of organisations that should be protecting young ones. It is a terrible history. In recent years, I have been invited to join members of Lotus Place at their remembrance day ceremonies. That has given me an insight into the true and very personal side of abuse. It is far more traumatic when you see the faces of those personal stories. Meeting Lotus Place members and getting to know some of them quite closely over the past two years, I have gained a better understanding of the pain and the damage done to that brave group of adults while children in institutional care. Through no fault of their own, those adults were placed in care as children and some as babies. I have met many adults who had lost both parents or one parent had died and their extended family was unable to look after them. Lotus Place members told me that when they were in care, the carers told them they were unwanted and they were treated harshly. Their carers did whatever they wanted to them with an attitude that no-one would ever care enough to stand up for that vulnerable group of people. Today is our opportunity to stand up for those adults and for all children.

Over the years the Queensland government has led the way in Australia in acknowledging the harm which has been suffered by the forgotten Australians and former child migrants in institutional care. From its early funding in 1997 for victims of crime in church run institutions to the establishment in 1999 of the Forde Commission of Inquiry into the Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions and subsequent inquiries, to its apologies to those who had been harmed, its redress schemes and memorials, the government has continued to have a strong role. It is time to do more.

When members of Lotus Place in Mackay talk to me about their experiences it is painfully clear that the emotional scars suffered will travel with them throughout their lives. Some adults have married, some have children and some have grandchildren. Others have not been so lucky. They suffer badly from these scars. The adults who from the outside appear to have fairly normal, happy adult lives when speaking of their childhood experiences have psychological pain which is sitting just below the surface. When I attended this year's remembrance celebration and ceremony the members of Lotus Place were relieved that they had been recognised, as the member for Waterford just said.

With the introduction of this bill to parliament they feel as though they finally have a voice. This bill is for adults living as survivors. This bill is a vital step in the recognition that society recognises their suffering and gives them an avenue to justice. This may help with the healing of the terrible damage done to them as children.

With the amendments flagged by the minister, this bill will give adults seeking justice the necessary legal pathways that have up to now been closed to them. I thank the Attorney-General, the member for Cairns, the department and the committee for their work on this bill. The forgotten Australians will not be forgotten in Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.