




Speech By  
**Tarnya Smith**

**MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY**

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Record of Proceedings, 24 May 2016

**PENALTIES AND SENTENCES (QUEENSLAND SENTENCING ADVISORY COUNCIL) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mrs SMITH** (Mount Ommaney—LNP) (9.06 pm): I will make a few comments on the bill, as I was on the committee that examined the bill. When this bill came to the committee, I immediately thought of Jack Thompson. A few years back Jack Thompson appeared in an ad the slogan of which was ‘the drink to have when you’re not having a drink’. Therefore, I refer to this bill as the Clayton’s bill, because it is a bill that will do nothing. This bill will achieve nothing other than cost the poor long-suffering taxpayers money.

The LNP members of the committee raised a number of concerns in our statement of reservation. Tonight, many of my colleagues have spoken about the cost of setting up the Sentencing Advisory Council. Non-government members have real concerns about the cost to taxpayers of \$1.8 million a year—I repeat, \$1.8 million a year—which will be the cost for the Sentencing Advisory Council to perform its functions.

The first function of the Sentencing Advisory Council is to, if requested by the Court of Criminal Appeal, state in writing to the court views on the giving or reviewing of a guideline judgement. Let us look at how that worked out previously. As my colleagues have said, from 2010 to 2012 the council was never once asked to perform that function. To me, that is not value for money. The committee received a briefing from the department. I asked one of the department staff—

Just out of curiosity, given the experience of other jurisdictions, how many requests for case guidelines would they be looking at? I wanted an understanding of how busy this council would be.

The departmental representative said that in relation to that particular function between 2010 and 2014 it was only asked for once in Victoria. This is where I question whether this is an efficient use of \$1.8 million of taxpayers’ dollars a year. We saw in Queensland over two years that this function was not requested once. When we compare that to other jurisdictions, we find that in Victoria over four years it has been asked for on only one occasion. By my calculations, in Victoria they are behind the eight ball at \$7.2 million over four years.

To me that is not value for money. That \$1.8 million could be much better utilised in my electorate. For years we have been trying to get the St Catherine’s Football Club clubhouse built and the Oxley United Football Club clubhouse built. It would cost less for both of those than the annual budgeted amount of \$1.8 million. The interesting thing with that is that that would provide employment, provide long-term viability for the clubs and get our kids active. It would satisfy three or four functions. That is value for money.

The second part of the statement of reservation regarding the functions of the Sentencing Advisory Council which causes me a little concern is obtaining community views on sentencing and matters relating to sentencing. The Department of Justice and Attorney-General could readily perform that function. Again, I am not seeing this expenditure of \$1.8 million of taxpayers’ money as value for money.

The one thing that my colleague the member for Broadwater and I felt strongly about was the recommendation of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee that the bill mandate the appointment of one woman as a member of the council. Appointment should always be based on merit, on unique qualifications and the experience that each member brings. I will not stand in this House and support something that does not open up opportunities for all people and is not based on merit.

In summary, it is my view that the introduction of this bill will achieve nothing, which is the hallmark of this do nothing, asleep at the wheel, Labor government. Stop wasting Queenslanders' time and stop wasting Queensland taxpayers' money.