




Speech By  
**Hon. Mark Ryan**

**MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD**

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Record of Proceedings, 9 August 2017

### **CORRECTIVE SERVICES (NO BODY, NO PAROLE) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (9.35 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Corrective Services (No Body, No Parole) Amendment Bill 2017. This bill reflects the Palaszczuk government's commitment to victims of crime and their families and our promise to swiftly implement the Sofronoff recommendations. Not only will this bill incentivise prisoners incarcerated for some of our most heinous crimes to cooperate with police in identifying the location of victims' remains, but ultimately it aims to provide closure to the families of the victims of homicide related offences.

No-body no-parole is a recommendation of the Sofronoff review, but it also stems from the tireless advocacy of those who fought to bring their loved ones home, allowing them to properly grieve and say goodbye. It is for this reason that I would like to take a moment to acknowledge all the victims' families who have advocated for this legislation, and none more so than Fiona Splitt. Fiona is in the gallery tonight along with her daughter, Lisa, and sister-in-law, Tania. Leanne and Gary Pullen are also in the gallery tonight. I would acknowledge their advocacy for this legislation.

I met Fiona in March in Cooktown. I was immediately struck by her dedication but also her passion for these laws. In March in Cooktown I said to Fiona, 'We will get this done.' I am very pleased that we are able to deliver on this tonight. Fiona has fought for almost two years to introduce laws in Queensland that would see those convicted of murder who refuse to assist police with information regarding the location of the remains of a victim denied parole.

Today not only recognises Fiona's dedication to ensuring those who were convicted of her husband's murder face consequences for not disclosing where the remains are, but her legacy will be that other families will benefit from her not giving up in what, I can only imagine, would be some of the most agonising and difficult times of her life. Fiona, on behalf of those Queenslanders who will benefit from this legislation, thank you. Thank you for remaining strong. You will be remembered as a result of this legislation. I know that I speak for Fiona when I say that this day means so much to her and her family. What started as an individual mission to bring her husband home has manifested into advocating for all victims' families and pursuing government to introduce legislation that would go some way to provide grieving families the opportunity to properly say goodbye.

This government recognises the significance of this legislation, with the bill building on the largest reform of Queensland's parole system in decades. No-body no-parole provides that the Parole Board Queensland must refuse to make a parole order for a prisoner serving a period of imprisonment for homicide or a homicide related offence, unless the board is satisfied that the prisoner has cooperated satisfactorily in the investigation of the offence to identify the location, or the last known location, of the body or remains of the victim and the place where the body or remains of the victim may be found. In practice, this will be directed at instances where the body or remains of the victim have not been located at the time of the parole hearing—that is, if the victim is missing at the time of sentence and if the victim is still missing at the time of the parole application, the provisions in this bill will be enlivened.

The bill also establishes a process for assessing a prisoner's cooperation and provides that the Parole Board must take into account the following: a report of the Police Commissioner, or delegate, about whether the prisoner has cooperated and which evaluates the prisoner's cooperation; the capacity of the prisoner to cooperate; the record of the court in relation to the offending, including any sentencing remarks; and any other matter which the board considers relevant to its consideration. In preparing the report, the Commissioner of Police, or delegate, must evaluate the prisoner's cooperation in the investigation of the offence and include information relating to the nature and extent of the prisoner's cooperation, the timeliness of the cooperation, the reliability of the information provided and the significance and utility of the cooperation.

The bill also provides for the retrospective application of the amendments and captures the following: a parole application where the prisoner is convicted and sentenced for the relevant offence post commencement of the act; a parole application where the prisoner was convicted before commencement but sentenced after commencement; a prisoner who was convicted and sentenced prior to commencement and the parole application is to be made after commencement or was made before commencement but is not yet determined at the time of commencement; and, finally, a prisoner who was convicted, sentenced and released to parole but then returned to prison before or after commencement and the parole order is subsequently cancelled.

I trust that this bill, if passed by this House, will provide some comfort, some closure, to those families who have not been able to finally say goodbye to victims of homicide related crimes. I acknowledge again the advocacy of all of those families out there who have had to endure a period of time which is just so terrible, so sad. I trust that this bill will bring closure to them. I commend the bill to the House.