




Speech By  
**Ray Stevens**

**MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH**

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

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (5.51 pm): There are occasions in this parliament—and tonight is one—when I am very proud and very satisfied to be a legislator and a member in this parliament. The joint approach—and I am hoping that tonight every member of this House supports this bill going forward—shows that brinkmanship and political argy-bargy does not necessarily have to be part of our role here in this parliament to bring about a better Queensland, which is what we are elected to do. This particular piece of legislation, the no-body no-parole laws, is a demonstration of the fact that our role as Queensland MPs is primarily to bring about a better Queensland.

It was in my office in Mermaid Beach sometime in 2015 that I received a very unusual—for me—email from Cooktown. Fiona Splitt sent an email through to the Mermaid Beach electorate office. We get a lot of emails, as members would be aware, and some of them are a bit ‘crackpotty’ and some are a bit ‘different’. However, this particular email made enormous sense and, I felt, had enough imprimatur behind it to take it forward. I spoke to our then attorney-general, the member for Kawana, in relation to this particular—

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

**Mr STEVENS:** Correct. I thank the member for Kawana. I spoke to him about no-body no-parole and said how much it should be part of Queensland law. Parole is very much a reward—it is not a right—for people who have wronged society in return for good behaviour and rehabilitation. There is no way that anyone can say a prisoner is fully rehabilitated if he is keeping a major secret to himself in that he knows where the body of someone’s loved one is and yet he is not prepared to come forward with that information but still seeks parole.

The no-body no-parole law that we have here before us tonight is absolutely eminently appropriate. I thank Fiona Splitt for bringing this matter to the parliament’s attention as well as all of her supporters, other people and other victims of crime because they bear the grief for a lifetime. There is no way that a person who has committed these crimes should have their sentence reduced for good behaviour and rehabilitation if they know, or possibly could know, where a body is located and if they can bring about some final closure for those left here on the earth, who will grieve for the rest of their lives.

The objectives of this bill are predicated on strengthening our parole laws by making parole for certain offences conditional on satisfactorily cooperating in investigations and attempting to identify or find a victim’s final resting place so that the body or remains may be recovered. The bill has been a long time coming—as I said, from 2015. Unfortunately, we slipped into the abyss of opposition shortly after March 2015. To his great credit, the now shadow minister, the former attorney-general, chatted with me about the matter. Just like with the four-year terms, he brought these matters to a head in the House. I am so pleased and I congratulate the Attorney-General for taking it further, and we will see it pass into law this evening and then go to the Governor for assent. I believe it is a great night for the Queensland parliament to see this law enacted and I am pleased that I am part of it. The bill has been a long time coming.

The issue of bringing emotional closure for those victims in knowing a victim's final location will finally be resolved tonight after the LNP first announced their support for the review in late 2016. It was my LNP counterparts in this House who, as part of the debate on the bill to adopt the new parole review—the Corrective Services (Parole Board) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill—moved to legislate the no-body no-parole laws as an amendment to that bill in May 2017. We could have had these laws in place a fraction earlier. However, the fact is that what we have before us tonight is a wonderful effort. It is reform that my LNP colleagues and I have actually helped the Palaszczuk Labor government come to the table with. We pushed the Attorney-General and the Premier at every opportunity to acknowledge that the families of the victims of homicide deserve the opportunity to say goodbye to their beloved family members one final time at the location of their passing. I commend this bill to the House.