




Speech By
Ros Bates

MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

Record of Proceedings, 9 August 2017

CORRECTIVE SERVICES (NO BODY, NO PAROLE) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (5.41 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Corrective Services (No Body, No Parole) Amendment Bill 2017. In November 2016 the LNP released our no-body no-parole policy in Queensland. Our policy was based on the idea that, by making parole release for certain prisoners linked to their satisfactory cooperation in identifying a victim's final location, prisoners will have a reason to assist in finding and recovering the body or remains of a victim. This would apply to offenders serving a prison sentence for murder and conspiracy to commit murder where the murder has been committed. This would have put Queensland in line with South Australia, as Western Australia, Victoria and New South Wales were actively considering no-body no-parole laws.

We knew these were reforms that were needed as soon as possible. We introduced this policy because Queenslanders needed this to happen. Time and again, we saw other states and territories taking action to introduce strong parole reforms. All these families want is an end to their uncertainty and a chance to find out how their loved ones spent their final moments. Families just need to be able to say their goodbyes.

Many in this House have had the privilege of meeting Bruce and Denise Morcombe who stood with the LNP when we announced our policy. No-one will ever forget Daniel Morcombe and nor should we. In Queensland these changes were instigated through a parliamentary e-petition from Fiona Splitt of Cooktown, who lost her husband, Bruce Schuler, in 2012. Bruce's killers are behind bars, but Bruce's body has never been recovered. Fiona has been a tireless advocate for this reform and, like her, other family members of Queensland homicide victims where the body has never been recovered just want a chance for emotional closure. These are common-sense reforms and need to be enacted as soon as possible.

The LNP has always worked to provide safe and livable communities. In government it was the LNP which introduced an array of much needed reforms to balance the scales of justice in favour of the victim not the perpetrator. It was the LNP which increased funding to victim advocacy organisations to ensure those who had been wronged had someone to advocate for them. It was the LNP which gave an additional \$2 million to organisations that support victims of crime and an additional \$750,000 over three years to the Women's Legal Service. It was the LNP which brought in the ability for victims to read a victim impact statement before a sentencing court if the victim chose to and it was reasonable in the circumstances.

We on this side of the House can proudly stand on our record in delivering safer communities for our constituents. That is why the LNP announced our support for the no-body no-parole reforms in late 2016 and why we will provide bipartisan support to this legislation. I trust that the government will consider the amendments put forward by the LNP this evening.