




Speech By  
**Hon. Dr Steven Miles**  
**MEMBER FOR MOUNT COOT-THA**

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### **CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (3.23 pm): I will not talk for long on this topic because I do not have to. It is not complicated. Every single day that this gay panic defence exists is another day a killer could walk away without a murder sentence. Every day that this law is still on the books is another day we say to our LGBTIQ community that their lives are not worth as much as heterosexual lives. It is absurd, it is disgusting and it is homophobic. Unwanted sexual attention does not warrant murder. Ask any woman whether she has been approached by a man or men when it is clear that she did not want them to and it is highly likely she will say yes. However, it is highly unlikely that she has killed them for it. This defence says a man can kill another man for hitting on him and avoid a murder charge.

This is not some archaic and unused law; it still has teeth. Wayne Ruks' body was found by a parishioner going to mass on 4 July 2008. The two men accused of his murder claimed Mr Ruks made a homosexual advance on them when they were sitting on a bench in a Maryborough churchyard. The two men admitted to tackling him and then kicking and punching him for several minutes while he was on the ground. He died from internal bleeding. Those men got lenient manslaughter sentences instead of murder. They did not even have to prove that Mr Ruks was gay and, in fact, admitted that he never touched them. The idea that this man just might have been gay—might—and was in the vicinity of two straight men carried enough weight for them to be sentenced for manslaughter instead of murder.

This injustice did not go unnoticed and I want to thank Father Paul Kelly. It was his little church in Maryborough where this occurred and he has been campaigning to have this rule abolished ever since. Today over 290,000 people have signed his change.org petition. Thousands of people have been involved in the campaign to have this unjust rule removed from our books by signing Father Kelly's petition, campaigning, participating in the consultation process and engaging with the community and the media. Today we can show them that they have been heard. Today here in this parliament we can honour Father Kelly's efforts and those of his parishioners and hundreds of thousands of supporters. They should not have had to go to those lengths. If this bill passes it will be a great victory for people power and for the power of online organising platforms like change.org.

On a personal note, I want to congratulate my friends Nathan and Karen on their efforts on this campaign. They should be very proud of their success here today. We are acting on a recommendation from an expert committee tasked with reviewing the issue by the previous Bligh Labor government. The LNP turned its back and failed to act on these recommendations while it was in power. It is the Palaszczuk government that is standing up for LGBTIQ Queenslanders—doing what is right and what is just. There is no such thing as gay panic; it is just another term for hate. I urge all members to support the bill.