




Speech By
Tim Mander

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

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CORRECTIVE SERVICES (NO BODY, NO PAROLE) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (4.44 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Corrective Services (No Body, No Parole) Amendment Bill and the amendments to be moved by both the government and opposition. This is a policy that we have championed for some time. This is a policy that the LNP has led the way on. In November 2016 the LNP released a policy dealing with what has now been dubbed no-body no-parole following similar moves interstate. As has already been stated by previous speakers, these changes were instigated by a parliamentary petition established by Fiona Splitt of Cooktown—and I acknowledge her presence tonight with her family—whose husband Bruce Schuler was murdered in 2012 and, despite the successful conviction of the two suspects, his body has never been recovered. I, along with everybody on this side of the House, acknowledge Fiona's presence and commend her on her determination to see justice done in this area.

Like Fiona and the Queensland Homicide Victims' Support Group, we believe that more needed to be done to rebalance the scales of justice in favour of the victims and their families. This was subsequently also recommended by Walter Sofronoff in his review of the parole system. Whilst we will be supporting this bill, we lament the fact that these laws were not passed in parliament over two months ago when the government brought its first tranche of reforms to the parole system. We simply could not understand why this reform was not a priority. We also believed that there was an oversight in that bill—one that needs to be rectified—and I am happy to see that both the minister and the shadow minister have put forward amendments to address that oversight.

I want to speak a little bit about that particular amendment and the reason for it. As has already been mentioned tonight, Gary and Leanne Pullen are in the gallery and I acknowledge them. I acknowledge the pain that they have gone through with the loss of their son. My wife and I were very fortunate to share a table with the Pullens at a victims of homicide support group night not that long ago and what struck my wife and I is that this was a family who was an everyday Queensland family who had been rocked by an incredible tragedy in their lives. There was a lot in common between the two families in that the Pullens had four children—they have three girls and a boy—like our family.

Their son's name was Tim and they lost him in a criminal act some five years ago. To further the pain and horror of losing a son and brother in such terrible circumstances, this family has not been able to close the final chapter in this ordeal by putting their son to final rest as his remains have never been located. That is because the perpetrators never divulged what they did with Tim's body. There was a glimmer of hope when they agreed to a plea bargain. The family agreed to a downgrading of the charge—a gut-wrenching decision for the family—on the proviso that the culprits would reveal where Tim's remains were. After speaking to the Pullen family, they described that process as a charade. The two men who were eventually convicted of accessory after the fact took police out to some remote locality and stated, 'We disposed of Tim's body out here somewhere.'

What sort of comfort does that give the family, a family that felt incredibly let down because they agreed to a plea bargain thinking that they would find the remains of their son? Two of those perpetrators, as I mentioned, were charged with accessory after the fact of manslaughter. These two

men were directly responsible for the dumping of Tim's body somewhere. These men should not be rewarded with early release when they have not fully and properly cooperated with the police and the family to advise them of where the remains of their son now lay.

Leanne and Gary have been relentless in this fight not just for no-body no-parole but to ensure that the definition was widened to make sure that their son's killers and those associated with that crime would be covered by this legislation. They have travelled down from Mackay to be in the public gallery tonight. I want to read an excerpt from a letter that Leanne has written to give us a bit of an insight into what these people have been through—

For our family to respectfully be able to say our goodbyes to Tim we need to be able to locate his remains so that we can hold a funeral. We truly don't believe that we have really started the grieving process—

this is five years after he was killed—

as we are living in such surreal circumstances. Burying a child has to be any parents worst nightmare but can you imagine if we were to go to our grave without having said our goodbyes to Tim—that is just inconceivable.

Further Leanne says—

We plea with you that you have this legislation passed now with an amendment to cover accessory after the fact to manslaughter to hopefully put a stop to other families having to suffer the anguish and torment that our family is faced with each and every day.

I am very, very pleased to be part of a parliament that looks like it will not only support the no-body no-parole legislation but also bring in the amendments that will help justice be delivered for the Pullen family.

When you talk to Homicide Victims' Support Group members, a group that of course nobody wants to be a member of, you hear about the pain that is associated with the tragic loss of their loved one through an horrific crime, but that is exacerbated a hundredfold when they do not know where the remains of their loved ones lay at the moment. This legislation will provide offenders with an opportunity to show their remorse for their crime by rebalancing the scales of justice in favour of victims trying to find closure in the tragic circumstances of losing a loved one. How can an offender possibly say that they have been rehabilitated if they have not been open and declared to the loved one's family where the remains of the person that they killed unlawfully are?

This is a tribute to those families that have fought hard and long for this legislation. I pay tribute to the families that are associated with the Homicide Victims' Support Group who come together to find some comfort for themselves but, as importantly, to provide comfort to others who have been the innocent victims of horrific crimes. Nothing will bring back those victims of violent crime, but maybe just a little bit of comfort will be provided when they know that the people who have been responsible for the unlawful killing of their relative will not be rewarded with early release if they have not cooperated with the police with regard to the revelation and the discovery of where their loved one's remains are. We support the bill enthusiastically and we look forward to bipartisan support.