




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 24 August 2017

MOTION: MINISTER FOR CORRECTIVE SERVICES

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (6.30 pm): I rise to speak in opposition to this motion. The police minister has already stated that he has contacted the Pullens and apologised to them. Today the police minister has put out a statement stating—

All decisions by Parole Board Queensland and its President are made independently and without political interference ...

However, he goes on to say—

While I cannot interfere with decisions of the independent parole board, personally I do feel disappointed in the decision.

I can understand why the Pullens feel the way they do.

He further states—

As I have previously stated, the President of the Parole Board Queensland made it clear to me that any decisions that the Parole Board had made for future granting of parole would be reviewed in-light of the new 'No Body, No Parole' laws.

The Corrective Services (No Body, No Parole) Amendment Bill 2017 was passed by Parliament this month, but is yet to be assented.

I understand that the Parole Board Queensland review has now been finalised.

I do empathise with Leanne and Gary Pullen. I know that right now is a very difficult time for them, as it has been over a number of years, but having heard this decision today from the Parole Board they will be feeling distress at that decision of the Parole Board. We do need to remind ourselves that those decisions are made by an independent body and the timing of those decisions is made independent of government. That does not make it any less distressing for the families and the victims in these circumstances, but importantly it is that independence that we must remind ourselves of.

It is difficult when this parliament passes laws that we know will make a difference in people's lives but that sometimes those laws do not capture certain circumstances. There will always be those times where someone is not captured by those new laws and does not benefit from those new laws. Having said that, I am proud of the laws that this parliament has passed. I am proud of the no-body no-parole laws that this government introduced. They are good laws and they are also laws now that mean that anyone who has been granted parole, if they breach those parole orders and they return to prison, will be captured by these laws and the Parole Board will be required to apply these new provisions in considering any future parole applications.

I do take issue with the comments from the member for Aspley in that they did not make Queensland safer. They are good laws. We should all be proud of that. We were not dragged kicking and screaming to introduce these laws. They were recommended out of a comprehensive review by Walter Sofronoff and my department undertook extensive work to consult on what those laws should look like—looking at other jurisdictions and trying to develop the best model going forward, not simply just picking up one jurisdiction and saying, 'That looks good. Let's do that one.' Rather, we actually

looked at the best model going forward. Even though we did all of that, we still recognised that there was a gap there and we moved an amendment, as did the opposition, to strengthen them even further to give us the strongest no-body no-parole laws in this country.

Every homicide victim's family that I talk to and every stakeholder that I talk to acknowledge that they wanted the opportunity to go to a parliamentary committee and put submissions on this issue. They wanted to make sure that the laws were not rushed and we got it right, and that means sometimes not everyone benefits from those new laws. I will finish with what I started with: we certainly empathise with the Pullen family right now and the distress that they are going through. The police minister has apologised. The police minister has done great work in his portfolio and continues to stand up for our emergency service workers, our corrective services and our police every single day. We need to remind ourselves when we are having this debate and let the people of Queensland know that these are good laws that will help many, many families into the future. We should be proud of those laws. I oppose the motion before the parliament and I ask that those across the chamber also oppose it.