




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 26 October 2017

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Sentencing Advisory Council

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (10.04 am): I rise today to announce details of the Palaszczuk government's next two referrals to the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council. After being abolished by the LNP government, the Sentencing Advisory Council was re-established by the Palaszczuk government as part of our commitment to evidence based policy. The council's research and reports help ensure we have a fair and effective justice system. It is also the role of the Sentencing Advisory Council to undertake inquiries on matters referred to them by the government.

Two weeks ago I advised the parliament that I would be making a reference to the council regarding the penalties for criminal offences involving the death of a child. I can advise that the terms of reference have now been finalised after consultation with the council and will be released on the council website today. This review is in response to community concerns that court ordered penalties may not reflect community expectations when it comes to crimes against our most vulnerable. The death of any child is heartbreaking, but when it is at the hands of another person we must ensure that the community's views on the issues are reflected in the justice system.

This referral to the Sentencing Advisory Council includes in its terms of reference: considering and analysing penalties currently imposed; determining whether these penalties reflect the particular vulnerabilities of children; identifying trends and anomalies in sentences for crimes arising from a child's death; comparing Queensland's sentencing approach to other Australian jurisdictions; and consulting with the community and key stakeholders to gather their views on these issues. The Sentencing Advisory Council is required to report back by 31 October 2018. The community rightly expects children to be protected and for a convicted offender to be punished in a way that reflects the seriousness of the crime.

The second Sentencing Advisory Council referral that will be released today relates to the options available for community based sentencing orders, imprisonment and parole options. This referral delivers on the government's commitment to implement the recommendations from the Honourable Walter Sofronoff QC's Queensland Parole System Review final report. The Sentencing Advisory Council will report back within 18 months. The timeframes for the report back of these references have been at the request of the council based on the wideranging scope and the significance of these two referrals. The community must have faith in the criminal justice system and these two referrals will encourage and maintain public confidence in court sentencing options.