




Speech By
Daniel Purdie

MEMBER FOR NINDERRY

Record of Proceedings, 12 February 2019

ADJOURNMENT

Cuthbert, Mrs S

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (7.16 pm): On 27 July 2017, at around 5 pm, one local Coolum family's life changed forever. Sharon Cuthbert, wife of Michael and mother to Shylar and Makayla, had just arrived home from work and was getting out of her car when she was hit and killed by a vehicle. I can clearly remember that night. It did not take long for word to filter through the police ranks where I was working at the time that the driver had extensive history and there were allegations that he had returned a positive slider test for amphetamine.

Sharon was a well-known and much loved member of the local community. She worked at the Noosa council and over 1,000 people attended her funeral. Since being elected as the local member of parliament, I have come to know Michael well and I am in awe of his strength and courage. If I was in his shoes, I do not know how I could go on. I do not know how he gets out of bed every day, but he does; he does it for his girls.

Last week, the offender, who has extensive history, was sentenced in the District Court for the charge of dangerous driving causing death. That offence attracts a maximum penalty of 10 years in jail or 14 years with a circumstance of aggravation. However, in this instance he was sentenced to just 3½ years and will be eligible for parole in just 12 months.

Michael contacted me straight after the sentencing. I can understand why he and his family are furious with that result. They have received a life sentence. In one heartbreaking moment, they lost a wife, a mother, a sister and a daughter.

Let us be clear: I am not talking about someone who causes an accident because of a momentary lapse in concentration. I am talking about offenders who have a long history of callous disregard for other innocent road users; offenders who blatantly ignore the law, putting the lives of others at risk; offenders who should not be on the road in the first place.

After speaking with Michael, we launched a petition calling on the Attorney-General to appeal this inadequate decision. That petition has now received over 5,100 signatures. This clearly shows the wider community shares our anger. On behalf of Michael, his daughters and all of Sharon's family and friends, along with the wider community who have joined our campaign, I call on the Attorney-General to appeal this sentence for justice for Sharon and to ensure another family does not have to endure the same suffering and pain that Michael and his family have gone through over the past 18 months and to ensure the sentence not only reflects community expectations but acts as a deterrent to those who show a callous disregard for other innocent road users.

(Time expired)