




Speech By
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**CRIMINAL CODE (NON-CONSENSUAL SHARING OF INTIMATE IMAGES)
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (3.44 pm): This bill is critically important in putting another nail in the coffin of the culture of victim blaming that still exists in some quarters today. It changes the dialogue around revenge porn and non-consensual image sharing from, ‘Why did you take the photo?’ to making it clear that consent is non-negotiable. I am incredibly proud to be a part of the government passing this legislation and I really hope that it receives unanimous support in the House.

Once upon a time it was acceptable to ask victims of sexual assault in a court what they were wearing or about their underwear, as if a short skirt or lacy undergarments are some kind of unspoken justification for the deplorable act of rape. Today, thanks to the tireless efforts of many outspoken advocates, the tide is turning and victims are receiving the support they so deserve. It is important to note that this legislation sends a clear message to victims of these kinds of crimes: you are not responsible for having your trust violated. The perpetrators are responsible for violating it. It puts the blame squarely where it belongs—on the perpetrators of these disgusting acts—and they can now look forward to up to three years in prison.

The next generation—my son, my daughter and their peers—will grow up with devices everywhere—in their pockets, in their schools and in their homes. They are already ubiquitous in society, so we know that many people—and not just young people—use their devices already for the creation of intimate images. It is very unlikely that the taking of these images will stop, and indeed why should it? There is nothing wrong or criminal in sending an intimate image to a partner of your choice. Some 200 years ago young lovers would send each other letters when parted by distance because those were the tools that they had at their disposal. Today, people have digital devices fitted with cameras and can exchange intimate images in an instant and we need to legislate accordingly. The parliament needs to ensure that people who violate the trust of their intimate partners face the full force of the law.

Sadly, there are many examples of why this legislation is needed in Queensland. However, today I also want to paint the contrast of how attitudes have been changing over the last few years. Over the last few years we have seen that the release of intimate images knows no socio-economic barriers. Just last week the richest man in the world, Jeff Bezos, was threatened with sextortion and he chose to go public rather than submit to the blackmail. The fact that he felt able to do this shows how far our society has come in understanding that victims deserve our support, not to be interrogated about why these images were taken at all.

A few years ago, things were very different. I recall looking on horrified when Oscar-winning actress Jennifer Lawrence had images that she had shared with her long-term long-distance partner released globally by a hacker in a disgraceful violation of her privacy and autonomy that came to be known as The Fappening. Websites all over the world were filled with mocking for this woman who had been treated so poorly and brought so low. Over and over again in the media she was asked why she took the photos at all and she replied, not unreasonably, that in her long-distance relationship she

wanted her partner to be thinking of her, not looking at other material easily accessible on the internet, and I think that we can all understand that. Sharing intimate images with somebody is an act of trust and people who have this trust violated deserve nothing but our support.

Last week I met with my local Mount Ommaney police officers Ben and Peta about domestic violence and the meeting coincided with internet safety day. We spoke as not only internet safety advocates but also parents of young children and both officers emphasised strongly to me the importance of not allowing digital devices in the bedroom of your children. That night I took the opportunity to discuss the no devices in the bedroom rule with my son and my daughter aged seven and nine. I also decided to explain why. It was an uncomfortable discussion—there is no getting around that—but I do not believe that I can protect my children or the children of Queensland unless they know what is out there. At their tender age, they are yet to fathom the kinds of disgusting predators who may decide to engage with them online.

I am so happy to see that the legislation states categorically that children under the age of 16 are unable to provide consent. Last week, police personnel in digital content spoke about some harrowing images they have had to see in the course of dealing with child abuse. Also last week on ABC Radio one officer spoke about how a 12-year-old girl had shared a compromising image online with someone, who then threatened to share that image with her parents. That girl was then coerced into performing degrading and intimate acts on film and could be seen sobbing throughout. The officer who had to watch this material was very disturbed. For that little girl and every other victim of this heinous crime, I say that this legislation is for them.

I want to finish with one message from the video that the QPS shared with us last week. Children need to know that, if they are ever the victim of this crime, their mums and dads love them, believe in them, and forgive them. There is nothing that our children should not be able to share with us, because the perpetrators of these kinds of crimes thrive on this shame and secrecy. I say to kids to please not try to get out of trouble by getting in even deeper and sending more images, to please know that their mums and dads love them and that the only person who is going to get in trouble is the monster who is trying to hurt them.