




Speech By  
**Joan Pease**

**MEMBER FOR LYTTON**

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Record of Proceedings, 1 May 2019

**CRIMINAL CODE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL; CRIMINAL  
CODE AND OTHER LEGISLATION (MASON JETT LEE) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (12.07 pm): I stand to speak in support of the Criminal Code and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. Like my colleagues before me, I acknowledge Hemi Goodwin-Burke's parents and grandparents who are in the gallery today. I too offer my sympathy and condolences for the heartache that they have experienced. I am truly sorry that you and others have experienced such tragedy in your lives.

Keeping communities safe is a key objective of the Palaszczuk government. We have a demonstrated track record through the investment of significant funding to reform child and family support services that assists parents and families. We have also strengthened the child protection and foster care system to keep young vulnerable Queenslanders safe from abuse and neglect. We are making wideranging reforms to improve the blue card system and implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

The Palaszczuk government has also acted to strengthen the laws applying to child sex offenders. Great progress is being made in our fight to protect children, but there is more work to be done and everyone in our community has an important role to play in protecting our most vulnerable asset, our children. The Palaszczuk government wants justice to be done, justice for the victims and justice for those left behind, their families and friends. We want to see strong sentences imposed when people take the lives of our most vulnerable—our children, our elderly and the disabled. The community must have confidence that this state has a criminal justice system that is robust in its protection of the most vulnerable members of our community. Some of the most vulnerable members of our community are of course our children. Every child has the right to be safe and to live in a home free from violence. Every adult needs to remember that being a parent and a carer is not a right: it is a responsibility and indeed a privilege.

The Palaszczuk government recognises that there is significant public concern over whether sentencing for criminal offences involving the death of a child meets community expectations. These deaths result in a deep sense of sadness for the death of a vulnerable child and a desire to ensure those responsible are held to account. As a result, the Attorney-General requested the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council to review the adequacy of penalties imposed on sentence for criminal offences arising from the death of a child. QSAC plays an important role in ensuring our sentencing laws are up to date and meet community expectations. The year-long review undertaken involved extensive consultation and research which culminated in a thorough evidence based report. It was called *Sentencing for criminal offences arising from the death of a child: final report*.

This report made eight recommendations and presents four areas of advice to improve sentencing practices and community understanding in relation to sentencing for child homicide. These reforms will mean that should someone abuse a position of trust they have in relation to a vulnerable person, demonstrate a callous disregard through the refusal to obtain medical treatment, inflict

prolonged mental and physical suffering through persistent violence and that vulnerable person dies as a result of reckless indifference to human life, the offender can expect to be charged with murder and, if convicted, will be sentenced to life imprisonment.

I know that many people have contributed to the development of this bill. I acknowledge QSAC for its extensive and informative body of work and indeed thank and acknowledge all stakeholders for their input and commitment. To the committee that worked on this, I know that it was a great body of work that they undertook, so I thank them for that. I particularly thank the family members who advocated so long and hard for changes to our law to ensure that sentencing adequately reflects community expectations and to work harder to provide support to victims' families when they go through some of the most difficult times, particularly when they are in the justice system. I commend the Criminal Code and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 to the House.