




Speech By
Julianne Gilbert

MEMBER FOR MACKAY

Record of Proceedings, 30 April 2019

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

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (4.40 pm): I rise to speak on the Criminal Code and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. From time to time we see in the media reports of children being murdered or horribly injured by a person who should be taking care of them. There is a display of genuine shock and horror from the community, sometimes public displays of flowers, toys and cards; at times there are public vigils where grief for the children is expressed, along with support for the family and a commitment to protect children. Most members of the community just get on with their lives. For the parents, family and friends of the child or children it is not so simple. Their lives and hearts have been shattered into a million pieces and they will never be fully whole again without their beautiful children.

The community of Mackay has witnessed firsthand the ongoing grief of the courageous Goodwin-Burke family. Shane and Kerri-Ann and family had their precious Hemi brutally taken from them by a person they trusted and considered to be a close friend. They had acted as responsible, caring and loving parents. They were duped by a terrible predator. I am not going to give him the privilege of having his name mentioned in parliament. A man who can torture a child does not deserve to have his name spoken. The pain for Shane and Kerri-Ann was exacerbated when Hemi's killer had his charges downgraded from murder to manslaughter. They know that their baby boy's life was worth more than the sentence handed down.

It was after the trial, when they started the journey of justice for their baby, that I first met the beautiful, caring Shane and Kerri-Ann. Their pain is palatable, etched on their faces. They are the most brave and dignified couple I have had the pleasure to meet. Shane and Kerri-Ann have used this terrible tragedy to protect all other children. Since Hemi's life was taken they have worked tirelessly, lobbied, printing 'justice for Hemi' stickers, banners and T-shirts, they have written numerous letters to politicians from both sides of the political spectrum and they have conducted statewide petitions. One thing that they have never done is give up. They are fighting for all children. Along this journey they have had tremendous setbacks and disappointments with the legal and court system. They are determined to keep Hemi's memory in the public arena to save other children.

Shane and Kerri-Ann have never let an opportunity slip by to lobby. They heard the Premier was in Mackay. They tracked her down to the office of the worksite for the Mackay Ring Road where she was inspecting initial works with the former member for Mirani, Jim Pearce, and me. The police alerted the Premier's staff that there were protestors out on the roadside. We took a look out and we saw it was Shane and Kerri-Ann. Because of their tenacity they had a roadside meeting with the Premier and they told their heartbreaking story.

Because of the lobbying of Shane and Kerri-Ann, and other families sadly in the same position, on 25 October 2017 the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice referred an inquiry to the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council to review the adequacy of penalties imposed on sentences for criminal offences arising from the death of a child following significant and ongoing community concern about whether such sentences are meeting expectations. As a result, here we are today debating the Criminal Code and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. This bill is for all the families, all the children and all the vulnerable citizens across Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.