




Speech By
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

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

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (2.08 pm): I rise to speak on the Criminal Code (Non-consensual Sharing of Intimate Images) Amendment Bill in relation to the changing times and changing technology that I have witnessed over my established period of residency on this earth. The member for Chatsworth mentioned the time when the Polaroid hit town. I remember that a lot of young blokes—it was not me—had a lot of fun with the Polaroid when it arrived in town.

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mr STEVENS: First of all it was black and white and then came colour. I take the interjection from the member for Clayfield.

Having a photograph passed around from person to person then was a little different to today when images are passed around on the World Wide Web. That is the difference today. All of these people who have sexual images on their devices are exposing themselves to the World Wide Web. There are people out there far more experienced than I who can hack into these things. The dangers lie in the first instance in taking the images and having them on the World Wide Web.

To be frank, I have great concerns about bringing legislation into this House that is going to be ineffectual. As we have heard from speakers in this debate over the last two days, we are all supportive of legislation to assist in combatting the non-consensual distribution of sexual images, but the legislation I like to see introduced in this House has to be efficacious in all cases. I have sincere concerns, and the minister will allay my concerns in summing up, about the ability to prosecute in this changing world of technology.

I understand the minister earlier in her contribution to the second reading stage said that she took on board the committee's request for a three-year review of this legislation. I would go further and suggest a sunset clause on this legislation because the technology will change so much in that period of time. It is not enough for government bureaucrats to monitor the changes in technology. In three years time we can be guaranteed that technology far greater than what we know about today will be available for the passing of this information and these illicit photographs. Every week or two there is new terminology—whether it be Tinder, Facebook or Twitter—around which I have no hope in Hades of ever keeping up with, but the younger generation is finding new sites all the time, is pursuing the latest technology and will find a way to circumvent certain matters for prosecutions and that concerns me greatly.

The sentiment behind this legislation is absolutely spot on. The work that has been done is spot on. However, I like to see legislation brought into this House which is enforceable. I make reference to the bikie gang laws that came in under the Bligh government a number of years ago which resulted in no prosecutions whatsoever. We are all supportive of this legislation and we are all supportive of making it effective. Even my good self on my Facebook site 'Ray Stevens MP' had a very—

Mr Minnikin: Chicken dance?

Mr STEVENS: No, it was a scene with a lovely mermaid on the Gold Coast, snapped by my good wife at the Gold Coast sand-sculpting festival on the weekend. A lovely mermaid is sitting next to me—two mermaids in the picture—and one might suggest that is a picture that might draw considerable concern and ire out there in the current me-too community. We have to be careful about which images are posted to our own sites. To that end, the bullying that carries on over some of these images is of major concern.

Mr Power interjected.

Mr STEVENS: I take the interjections from the member for Logan—consistent, annoying, repetitive and ridiculous interjections from the member for Logan. However, I am broad enough and strong enough to take his bullying with a grain of salt because I am a little impervious to—

Mr Nicholls: A badge of honour.

Mr STEVENS: Thank you, member for Clayfield. When the member for Logan starts to bully me, it is a badge of honour. I appreciate that. I am impervious to those matters, but a lot of sensitive, young people growing up have concerns about images and their place in society. They do not have the same amount of hard skin that I have developed over my number of years. I would like to be assured by the minister in her summing-up that this legislation will be reviewed or something will be done to cope with the new technology and images coming through.

It always concerns me how the media will respond to these matters. Had this legislation been passed several years ago, the then member for Redlands probably would not have missed out on preselection and consequently appearing in this House. Quite clearly, the then member for Redlands had non-consensual photos of himself—and I refer to what was commonly referred to as the plonking incident—circulated to certain sections of the media. Today the person who circulated those non-consensual images would cop up to a three-year jail sentence under this legislation. However, in those days it went willy-nilly first of all, I believe, to the Labor Party and then straight off to our good friends in the media who enjoyed the opportunity to further criticise political behaviour of some politicians when it was actually non-consensual passing of images—pretty ugly images, I can assure the House; quite revolting really—which should not have been passed in the first place.

That led to the demise of that particular member of parliament through preselection processes. The greatest warning for all members of this House is that politics is all about timing. Had that particular member been a member as of tomorrow, then those images may well not have been circulated to those great responsible members of the fourth estate, the media, who with glee published them. Are there any restrictions? I understand there are no exemptions for politicians being picked on in this legislation, but are there any consequences for the media who gleefully set upon these sorts of images for different purposes to spread the word and sell a few newspapers or TV shows around the place?

I am very supportive of the attempts in the legislation before the House today to stamp out the portrayal of images. However, the only way in my view that we will achieve that is through an education process. I call upon the education minister, who is deep in conversation over there, to put in place programs throughout Queensland schools to identify the negativity involved in placing yourself on the World Wide Web with images that tomorrow may be used to your great disadvantage. Prevention, in my view, is far better than the cure that this legislation proposes here today.