




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR HILL

Record of Proceedings, 1 May 2019

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

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (3.37 pm): I rise to speak to the two Criminal Code bills that are before the House. I support the Criminal Code and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019 that has been introduced. The bill seeks to increase penalties to reflect the nature of the crimes. I truly believe that it achieves that goal.

The Criminal Code and Other Legislation Amendment Bill will amend the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 to provide that, in sentencing an adult offender convicted of the manslaughter of a child under 12 years, the court must treat the child's defencelessness and vulnerability, having regard to the child's age, as an aggravating factor. The bill will also amend the Criminal Code to expand the definition of murder to include reckless indifference to human life and increase the maximum penalty for failure to supply necessaries from three years imprisonment to seven years imprisonment and reclassify the offence as a crime.

Any life is precious and anyone taking a life, whether it is an adult or a child, should be treated in the same manner by our legal system. As the previous speaker just said, there is nothing more precious to us than our children. When those lives are taken, it destroys the lives of the families forever. It is a great loss. It is great to see that there is bipartisan support in the parliament and particularly in the committee to strengthen these laws. This is probably the biggest, most important issue that will ever come our way because it is devastating to those families and the entire community.

Just to add to that, I am aware of three families in the far north whose young adult children have been killed in hit-and-runs. There is a massive petition going, which has over 21,000 signatures at the moment, because when someone hits a person and then takes off, leaving them there is almost considered to be murder. It is great to see that there was bipartisan support in the committee. These bills will bring about welcomed, important and long overdue changes to sentencing regarding these crimes. Others have been overlooked such as what I was just saying regarding hit-and-run laws. Queenslanders have shown that they want action to implement tougher laws for crimes, particularly the killing of innocent children, but they would also like to see stronger hit-and-run laws be implemented in this House.

I firmly believe in these tougher laws that have been introduced in this House. However, I bring to the attention of the House that they need to go even further in relation to those hit-and-run laws. That needs to be taken into consideration. I commend the bill to the House.