




Speech By
Stephen Bennett

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

Record of Proceedings, 22 October 2019

CIVIL LIABILITY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (5.27 pm): In continuing the reforms and amendments proposed by the bill, we acknowledge that work has already begun to address and deal with some of the impacts of institutional child sexual abuse. This is a difficult subject and piece of legislation for us to deal with today; however, we have an obligation to those Queenslanders who need our support in continuing the staged implementation.

We know that the Civil Liability and Other Legislation Amendment Bill endeavours to improve the capacity of the justice system to provide fair access and outcomes for people who have experienced child sexual abuse and who elect to progress a claim for civil damages, dealing with the amount of time which has passed since the abuse occurred. I note today that Labor has adopted our amendment to extend the definition of 'abuse' to include physical abuse and not just sexual abuse. This is good news and is a result of lobbying by victims and our work in highlighting the same amendment when the second reading debate commenced in June, some four months ago.

Labor has also extended the definition to 'psychological abuse'. This is supported by many of the lobby groups. It is not yet clear how our other amendment will be responded to, but we look forward to the minister making a comment during her speech in reply. It is important that we highlight that it has taken two years to get to this point. We as parliamentarians must deal with all recommendations in a timely manner.

In speaking to the bill, I renew my calls for immediate action to address youth sexual abuse, particularly in Indigenous communities. We all recall the tragic suicides of five Indigenous girls across the country over nine days. The government must take more urgent action to prevent further suffering and deaths. It is horrifying to hear how the lives of so many young people have been cut short. Clearly, more needs to be done to prevent this from continuing.