




Speech By
Cynthia Lui

MEMBER FOR COOK

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CRIMINAL CODE (CHILD SEXUAL OFFENCES REFORM) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (3.44 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Criminal Code (Child Sexual Offences Reform) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2019. The bill was introduced into the Legislative Assembly and referred to the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee on 27 November 2019. I acknowledge the committee chair, Peter Russo, the committee members and the secretariat for their hard work in the examination of the bill. On 3 December 2019 the committee invited stakeholders and subscribers to make written submissions on the bill. Twenty-six submissions were received. On 10 December 2019 the committee also received a public briefing on the bill from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General. The committee received written advice from the department in response to matters raised in submissions. The committee held a public hearing on 17 January 2020.

The objectives of the bill are to implement recommendations of the *Criminal justice report* of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse; to implement recommendations of the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council's report, *Classification of child exploitation material for sentencing purposes*; and to create new offences criminalising the possession, production and supply of anatomically correct lifelike child replicas used for sexual gratification. The government consulted widely on the bill and the recommendations of the *Criminal justice report* were informed by extensive public and private consultation undertaken by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Subsequent to that report being released, consultation on its recommendations was conducted by key legal and non-legal stakeholders between December 2018 and February 2019. Further feedback was sought from stakeholders in April 2019 in relation to recommendations 44 to 51.

I will now deal with some of the issues raised with the committee during its examination of the bill. From 2012 to 2017, the royal commission undertook a comprehensive inquiry into institutions' responses to allegations of child sexual abuse in Australia and made 409 recommendations across various reports. The *Criminal justice report* was released in August 2017 ahead of the royal commission's final report in December 2017. It contained 85 recommendations for reforms to the Australian criminal justice system that were aimed at providing fairer and more effective responses to victims of child sexual abuse, including child sexual abuse in an institutional context. The June 2018 Queensland government response to the royal commission's recommendations accepted or supported in principle more than 240 of the recommendations, including some of those from the *Criminal justice report*. The bill contains amendments to implement a number of key recommendations from the *Criminal justice report*.

Our children are our future, but they are also our most vulnerable. As a mother of three and like any parent I believe it is important that we do all that we can to protect our young people from child sex offenders in our society. I stand here today wholeheartedly supporting this bill. Our most vulnerable need us to make decisions that put all the right mechanisms in place to make sure that they are safe from harm and that they are safe from predators who lurk in our communities. We need this place to be

a much better and a much safer place—a wonderful place—for our children to be raised in. Children should never be placed in situations that rob them of their innocence. The effects of abuse are long term and for many they last a lifetime. We need strong mechanisms in place to keep everyone accountable so that we can continue to protect our children well into the future. I commend the bill to the House.