




Speech By
Hon. Mark Ryan

MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD

Record of Proceedings, 20 May 2020

JUSTICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services) (3.02 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I would like to begin by commending the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee chair, Peter Russo, the member for Toohey, and the members of the committee. As this bill has been well ventilated in the chamber I will speak to only a couple of the amendments that are important to my portfolio area and my community. The policy objectives of the bill are to amend criminal and civil law legislation within the justice portfolio to provide fairness, legislative clarity and the improved administration of justice and operational efficiency in court and government processes.

The first amendment I will address provides clarity in relation to the penalty for unlawful stalking; that is, a circumstance of aggravation applies to unlawful stalking directed at a law enforcement officer when or because the officer is investigating the activities of a criminal organisation consistent with a circumstance of aggravation in section 359. This is a very important deterrent. Our law enforcement officers do outstanding work on behalf of our community. They do at times attract attention and inappropriate, threatening and illegal conduct from criminal elements in the community. An appropriate circumstance of aggravation that enhances the penalty for illegal conduct directed towards our law enforcement agency sends a strong message to criminal elements that our community and the parliament will not tolerate that behaviour and that there should be appropriate penalties. It also sends the message to our law enforcement agencies that we support them, we think they should be treated with respect and they should be protected in the role they perform.

The next amendment relates to the Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act and corrects an anomaly with respect to prisoners returning to custody from parole suspensions and clarifies its application to those serving periods of detention while being held in custody at a Corrective Services facility. It is very important for that regime to be robust and to ensure that any gaps are appropriately closed. This scheme is the best in the nation. It was the first scheme of its type. It is the strongest and most comprehensive scheme. Jurisdictions around the country have copied our scheme because it is effective. It does ensure community safety. It is appropriate for us to continue to review its operation to ensure that any gaps are closed.

The other amendment in relation to the Peace and Good Behaviour Act includes criminal activity. This is about making stronger legislation even stronger. It is a good amendment, and it ensures that appropriate considerations are given by the court when making orders under that act. It has my strong support.

I note there was extensive consultation not only in the preparation of the bill but also by the committee. That reinforces this government's approach to administration; that is, this is a government of consensus and a government of consultation. We listen to people, we take on board their comments and feedback, and we make changes where appropriate. That is not only a credit to this government but to our Premier's leadership as well—unlike the predecessor to the Premier, who ignored everyone,

fought with everyone and did not listen to the community and important stakeholders. The approach that our government takes around consultation and consensus is certainly something I am very proud of.

I want to speak generally about the processes associated with the amendments to the Coroners Act. This is about making sure that justice is delivered and that, where appropriate, further investigations can be conducted to provide closure to families. In speaking to this particular amendment I want to pay tribute to the work that the Queensland Police Service does in assisting the Coroner but also, more broadly, in ensuring that justice is delivered no matter how much time has passed since the original crime was committed.

In acknowledging that I pay tribute to our cold case investigation team. This specialist team in the Queensland Police Service has been recognised time and time again as the leading cold case team in the nation. They have solved the oldest cold case in Australian history and an appropriate arrest was made in that particular case. They have the sole duty of reviewing cases that are not solved, reopening those cases, reinvestigating, finding the perpetrator where possible and providing closure and justice to the family of a loved one who was taken in tragic circumstances. I pay tribute to that team in the Queensland Police Service and I give my support to the amendments to the Coroners Act.

I know that sufficient work has been done by the committee and the government in respect of this particular bill. It supports the good work of this government. It makes stronger laws even stronger, and I encourage all members of the House to support this bill.