




Speech By
Samuel O'Connor

MEMBER FOR BONNEY

Record of Proceedings, 20 February 2020

ADJOURNMENT

Hit-and-Run Laws

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (6.26 pm): Tonight I would like to share with this parliament the story of a young life changed forever with a penalty that nowhere near matches the crime and to call for an appeal to fix this injustice. Last year Preston Potter was a 16-year-old excited to start his adult life. He is a proud Biggera Waters resident, with his parents, Shona and Gavin. Preston loved his footy, playing for the Parkwood Sharks, and he was set to start a plumbing apprenticeship. He liked a laugh, was a good mate and was a role model for his two younger sisters.

That all changed last June when he was hanging out with his friends at their grandma's house. They got hungry and crossed the road to get some food at the servo. While he was making his way across, Preston was struck down by a driver high on ice. Even more outrageously, the driver was speeding in an unregistered car. He drove off, leaving Preston for dead on the side of the road—a hit-and-run.

Luckily a trainee nurse was in the area and tried to resuscitate him before the ambulance arrived. Shona has said that it was this kind stranger performing CPR who saved his young life. The ambos then worked on Preston for hours on the roadside, finally putting him into an induced coma. The injuries to his head caused so much bleeding that the Potter family were told they should not see him once he arrived at the hospital. Being a mum, Shona, of course, did not listen. Nothing was stopping her from seeing her son, no matter how battered and close to death he was. That was the start of many months within our hospital system.

Preston spent week after week having multiple surgeries and rehabilitation for his brain and legs. He can walk again now but is deaf in one ear and may never be able to see normally again. Preston has severe and permanent brain damage. He is not the same person he was before. What sort of punishment would the driver receive for changing this young man's life forever? They received a \$500 fine and just a one-month suspended licence. That is half of what someone gets for using a phone while driving—and this was not the first time this driver has been charged with drug driving either. He could be back on the roads in no time if there is no change to this sentence.

The Potter family and my community are angry. Their hearts are broken by this soft sentence. They have gone to the Premier, Police Minister Ryan, the Attorney-General and the Queensland police themselves at least three to six times each. I table the email response sent to Shona by the Attorney-General's office last week and the *Gold Coast Bulletin* report from the court.

Tabled paper: Media article, undated, titled 'Driver's fine "a kick in guts"' [319](#).

Tabled paper: Email, dated 13 February 2020, from the Office of Attorney-General, Hon. Yvette D'Ath, to Shona Potter regarding investigation and prosecution of Robert Thomas Summerville [320](#).

Time is running out. Tonight I call on the Queensland Police Service to initiate an appeal. All the Potters want is for the punishment to fit the crime. They deserve justice for everything their son has lost.