




Speech By
Daniel Purdie

MEMBER FOR NINDERRY

Record of Proceedings, 27 May 2021

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Watts, Mr B

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (2.56 pm): On 27 November 1987, a Friday afternoon in late spring, a beautiful 12-year-old girl left her mother at the local shops in Noosa for a short ride home. Sian Kingi could not take the same walking track as her mum because it was too sandy for her bike. It was not a fateful decision, because two evil individuals had taken fate out of the equation. Valmae Beck and Barrie Watts had seen her ride this track before. They had used that reconnaissance to devise Sian's abduction, rape and murder. The sadistic perpetrators were waiting. As she approached, Valmae Beck said to Barrie Watts, 'Here she comes.'

The following events are too horrific for me to retell and they still haunt our community, the detectives who worked the case and, mostly, her parents, who live in my electorate. I have spoken to them all recently. Former police commissioner Bob Atkinson remembers every detail of the investigation and tells it like it was yesterday. Neil Magnussen, the officer in charge of the Sunshine Coast district CIB at the time, emotionally recalls reluctantly agreeing to Sian's mother's request to be told every detail of the atrocities committed against her daughter. Former detective Earl Seymore cannot talk about it, opting to pen me a letter, in which he says—

The circumstances surrounding Sian's death can only be described as horrific, due to the nature and number of wounds she suffered ... All evidence indicates Sian was subjected to horrific pain and suffering. Other Police and I believe that in the history of crime in Australia, this murder was the worst to have occurred up until that time.

News overnight that Barrie Watts has applied for parole has sent shockwaves through my community, the police and Sian's family. Everyone I have spoken to who has intimate knowledge of the case are adamant Barrie Watts should never be released. All, including Sian's parents, who I spoke to again this morning, have grave concerns for the persons living in any community Barrie Watts may be released into. The sentencing judge said to Watts, 'The vulgar crime shows you to be an evil man void of any sense of morality.' 'The sentence for murder is life in prison and in my view the sentence should mean just that,' the justice said.

Detectives who worked on the case are convinced there are other unsolved matters he is yet to admit to. If Watts is given parole what precedent would this set? How many other child killers will be released while they still represent an unacceptable risk to the community? Will we be having this discussion about Brett Cowan, Daniel Morcombe's killer, in years to come? Bob Atkinson said last night, 'Some offenders lose the right to ever be reintroduced back into society.' Barrie John Watts is one of those offenders. As Justice Kelly said back in 1990, 'The sentence for murder is life imprisonment, and in my view the sentence should mean just that.'