




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY

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PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT

Forensic and Scientific Services

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (2.18 pm): The issues found in the *Shandee's Story* podcast produced by the *Australian* have quickly been shown to be much broader than just Shandee's case. The work of expert forensic biologist Dr Kirsty Wright is something we can be thankful for in terms of raising the issues with the Queensland forensic lab. Here is what has been found: in an analysis of 20 months worth of samples when a man's penis was swabbed, often in a sexual assault or rape case, in over 50 per cent of samples no DNA could be found. According to Dr Wright, that number should equate to 100 per cent.

How is a sexual assault victim in the state of Queensland to have any confidence in the forensic lab or in the fact that justice is not being impeded by the incompetence of this lab, the incompetence of Queensland Health and the incompetence of the minister? Dr Wright has also found that the threshold for detecting DNA in Queensland is twice that of New South Wales and much higher than the threshold recommended by the manufacturer.

The minister asked for evidence of this claim on Tuesday. I now table that evidence for the minister's benefit.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Australian Journal of Forensic Sciences*, titled 'Variation in forensic DNA profiling success among sampled items and collection methods: a Queensland perspective', 2021, Vol. 53, No. 6, 612-625 [484](#).

It is from a paper written by the Queensland Police Service's forensic section analysing 20 months worth of DNA profiling information released from the Queensland Health lab from February 2018 to September 2019.

This issue has been ongoing in this state for years. Every minister should be concerned about this issue. This means that it is highly likely that samples with lower levels of DNA will get sidelined and not fully tested. I do not pretend to understand the science behind DNA testing, but what I, and many across this state, am certainly aware of is that if someone like Dr Kirsty Wright, who is significantly credentialed, comes out with these findings then the government should take note and should take action.

This government continues to pay lip-service to Queensland women about women's safety. It continues to pay lip-service to victims of sexual violence, sexual assault and rape. When it comes to safety, this lab's failing is impeding the judicial process. It is impeding the work of the Queensland Police Service and preventing prosecutions. It is ensuring and facilitating those who commit sexual offences get off scot-free. We call on the government to undertake—and I note the minister's response in question time this morning—a full, independent, external review. It should not take Dr Kirsty Wright to write to the CCC before we see action from this government.