




Speech By  
**Amanda Camm**

**MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY**

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**VICTIMS OF CRIME ASSISTANCE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT  
BILL**

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (4.08 pm): Respect for victims certainly was extended by members on this side of the House. I made a contribution to this House after being contacted by a young woman who had been raped by two men. The DNA sample that was taken and sent to the DNA lab showed no DNA, not even her own. Dr Kirsty Wright listened to the contribution I made. She contacted me and offered her services as somebody independent. She has since offered those services to multiple victims of rape across this state—a victim from Toowoomba, a victim from Townsville and a victim from the Gold Coast. I will not be lectured to by those opposite who say that this side of the House does not listen to victims. In fact, had it not been for this side of the House, there would not have been a commission of inquiry into the DNA lab. Subsequent reports after the final report was handed down meant there needed to be a reopening of the inquiry.

The government needs to listen when the opposition stands up and speaks about serious matters. It needs to listen when the member for Nanango asks questions in the House; when the shadow Attorney-General, the member for Clayfield, asks questions in the House; when the opposition leader asks questions in the House. It should have listened when I stood and asked questions in the House of the Attorney-General and the Minister for Women, who frankly sat silent when it came to victims of rape and victims of heinous crimes across this state where the justice system failed them. They were denied justice because of the lack of oversight and this government's failings over the last eight years.

We know what the findings of the commission of inquiry were. We recognise that there have been failings from both sides of politics over the course of the last 15 years. We understand that. The opposition leader was able to stand up and take accountability for the time we were in government, but nobody opposite has. Now we will continue to call for a standing commission of inquiry for victims of crime, who are still out there suffering post-traumatic stress, who are wondering whether their retesting will deliver them justice, who want oversight and who have no confidence—zero confidence—in the current process because nobody has been held to account.

In this contribution I also want to recognise the braveness of Vicki Blackburn, the mother of Shandee Blackburn, from the Mackay community, part of which I represent. I know Vicki and we were able to recognise and remember Shandee earlier this year. The Leader of the Opposition came and made a contribution, and thanks go to Hedley Thomas for his investigative reporting. Had he not done that, this government would never have been held to account for what would be one of the most significant instances of maladministration in this nation's history. Those opposite should be ashamed not just for today and not just for years past, but for what will probably be the next decade of a failure to deliver justice to so many across this state. To those victims of crime I say: we stand with you and we will continue to call for accountability, transparency and a commitment to ensure that justice is served.

There are rapists walking free. Potentially there are people behind bars who should not be there. However, first and foremost, there are victims who are terrified—terrified because they know their perpetrators are out there and they know that justice has not been delivered. We have a Police Service that knew something was not right, continued to speak up and were not supported.

I would like to also acknowledge that part of this bill that recategorises the acts of domestic violence for special assistance payments and my earlier contribution around the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence which, sadly, feels like it is increasing. It is a sad day when we have to actually debate, discuss and support the need to increase funding because the rate of heinous crimes committed is continuing to increase and so more needs to be done.

In closing, I want to acknowledge all of the work done by members of both committees that considered the bill. I know some of this work is very confronting and challenging, as things often are across my portfolio. I will say that with over 103,000 samples of DNA that are required to be retested potentially impacting over 37,000 cases, this side of the House will not stop. We will continue to call for a standing commission of inquiry. Just like we have seen before, time and time again we will see the government succumb because of the pressure from the negative press and because of ministers not wanting to meet with victims. They have not wanted to meet with some of the rape victims I have met.

The opposition will continue to stand with Queenslanders. We will continue to stand up for the right priorities for Queenslanders. We will do that with integrity and a sense of justice. We will stand up for hope over fear.