



Speech By  
**Brittany Lauga**

**MEMBER FOR KEPPEL**

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## **MONITORING OF PLACES OF DETENTION (OPTIONAL PROTOCOL TO THE CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE) BILL**

**Ms LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (11.56 am): The purpose of this bill is to facilitate visits by the United Nations Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture to places of detention in Queensland. The subcommittee has the ability to conduct visits to Australia under the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture, OPCAT. The Commonwealth government ratified OPCAT on 21 December 2017 and the subcommittee is established under article 2 of OPCAT and has made a mandate to visit places of detention and make recommendations to state parties concerning the protection of persons deprived of their liberty against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The bill provides a consistent framework to provide the subcommittee with access to places of detention in Queensland and information to assist the subcommittee to fulfil its mandate under OPCAT.

Adjacent to my electorate of Keppel we have one of the largest places of detention in Queensland, the Capricornia Correctional Centre. I am pleased that this bill will give the United Nations subcommittee the ability to visit the Capricornia Correctional Centre and to make an assessment of the way in which that centre works.

The bill will also remove legislative barriers that restrict physical access to inpatient units of authorised mental health services under the Mental Health Act 2016 or to the Forensic Disability Service under the Forensic Disability Act 2011. OPCAT is an international treaty that supplements the 1984 United Nations Convention Against Torture. OPCAT aims to prevent the torture and other ill-treatment of persons in places where people are deprived of liberty. It also establishes an international inspection system for places of detention.

OPCAT was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in New York on 18 December 2002 and it entered into force on 22 June 2006. Australia signed OPCAT on 19 May 2009 and ratified it on 21 December 2017. In broad terms, Australia's obligation of monitoring places of detention is separated into two components: firstly, periodic visits by the subcommittee to places of detention under Australia's jurisdictional control for the purpose of making recommendations to prevent torture and other ill-treatment of persons who are detained and, secondly, the nomination of a domestic body or bodies to act as an NPM to regularly inspect and monitor the treatment of persons in places of detention across the country.

The bill focuses on the first of these and will bring greater transparency and public confidence by establishing a standalone legislative framework to facilitate a consistent approach to UN subcommittee visits to places of detention in Queensland. There is no torture at Queensland prisons. The custodial correctional officers and people who work in our prisons right across the state do a fantastic job of maintaining safety and security and running a really tight operation.

I think one of the great benefits of this bill is that the United Nations will be scouring through Queensland prisons and looking at the way they are operated and that will show the United Nations just how well Queenslanders operate our places of detention. Our prisons and other places of detention are

publicly owned, they are unionised and they have very high safety standards. The policies and governance structures in place to support our prisons are tight. The technology that we use in our prisons is the best in the world. Our prison system operates on a restorative justice model with a focus not only on retribution as places of punishment where people are detained as a result of committing crime; they also use a restorative justice model. In Queensland we take very seriously the role of prisons in the rehabilitation of people who commit crimes. The health of prisoners and the people who work in prisons is taken very seriously.

Therefore, I am looking forward to the United Nations entering Queensland's places of detention and seeing firsthand just how well Queensland manages and runs its prisons and places of detention. This will actually help create best practice around the world. This will shine a light on how best to run places of detention and perhaps provide an opportunity for other countries to see just how well Queensland does it and also how they could improve their own systems. This will help provide to the rest of the world evidence of how things should be done in their own countries.

While I rise to speak about places of detention, I want to make particular mention of how proud I was to witness the swearing in of eight custodial correctional officers last week at the Walter Reid Cultural Centre in Rockhampton. They are very excited to be starting their careers as CCOs at the Capricornia Correctional Centre, which is a wonderful centre. It is one of the safest in Queensland. It has a large staff of CCOs and cultural liaison officers who not only do a fantastic job of keeping the community safe but also have a very strong focus on the rehabilitation of offenders at the centre. I acknowledge Phil Alley, Ryan Basham, Carmen Baxter, Adam Hudson, Aklesh Kumar, Megan Myers, Meghan Roberts—we had a conversation about the 'H' in her name—Kelly Ryan and Matthew Solace who were all sworn in last week at the custodial correctional officer graduation in Rockhampton.

I also acknowledge the manager of operational training, John Stencil, for the fantastic work that he does at the centre in training the new CCOs; the co-ep training coordinator Darren Clarke; the senior training officers and custodial operations manager, John Bobbledeck and Christopher Davies; and all of the supporting trainers whom I would like to mention today in this place: Sarah Harvey, Renee Resin, Brook Atkinson, Hudson Zilke, Matthew Christensen, Gerard Lawson, Shane Roberts, Jerome Granfel, Tod Martin, Brad Richards, Kurt Madement, Geoff Bird, Marcus McIver, Geoff O'Brien, Melissa Abbott, Darren Bartlem, Selwyn Toby, Blair Toby, Joe Abud, Alannah Irwin, Katrina Adams, Eden Stanton, Andrew Cross, Alex Bullay, Rebecca Clifford, Katherine Keeler, Leanne Smith, Paula Goslin and Morgan Chisolm. All of those people play a fanatic role in passing on their expert knowledge and experience to the new officers who have undertaken the intensive training program. I know that the trainers put their hearts and souls into passing on their knowledge and experience. They also take great pride in the graduates on their graduating day. They are incredibly proud to see officers graduate from their program and as they take their first shifts at the Capricornia Correctional Centre.

This bill will shine a light on Queensland's ability to run effective and safe prisons. It will shine a light on the fact that we do this very well. Other countries around the world will be able to see exactly how well Queensland does this following the passing of this bill and the entry of the United Nations into our prison systems. I commend the bill to the House.