




Speech By
Bryson Head

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Record of Proceedings, 13 September 2023

JUSTICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr HEAD** (Callide—LNP) (2.54 pm): We welcome the adoption of Sophie's Law with the passage of this bill to recognise unborn children who die due to criminal offences. We acknowledge the tireless campaigning of Sarah and Peter Milosevic who determined the tragic loss of Sophie nine years ago should not be forgotten but should lead to changes in legislation to recognise her. Their work included a petition calling for Sophie's Law that has been signed by over 135,000 people. They have met with ministers and MPs, including the good member for Lockyer, Jim McDonald, who championed their call for change and direct advocacy.

While it has been a long journey for Sarah and Peter in getting the government to introduce Sophie's Law, it is one we recognise as a tribute to Sophie and to see justice for other unborn babies who might meet a similar fate in the future. The bill does propose to better recognise the deaths of unborn children that have occurred due to criminal conduct. This amendment has been discussed in detail by the good member for Lockyer. I want to comment on his work in fighting for his community. We all come to this parliament to make change and fight for our communities and to see better outcomes for the state. It is great to see a member so passionate for his community, a member who has fought for something for so long who is finally seeing this day come along. For those who want to understand more about this story I recommend you listen to the speech of the member for Lockyer earlier today.

Also in the bill are some changes to postal voting. In the last state election 30 per cent of the 57,000 rejected votes could have been counted, which is about 17,000 votes. That is a huge number of votes that were essentially thrown out; that is people who were participating in our democratic process who missed the opportunity to have their say in their electorates. This is a change that we certainly welcome. We know how tight some elections can be and this could very well change the fate of governments into the future.

I note my disappointment in the language being used in regard to a birthing parent. They are mothers or mothers-to-be. Women have fought hard for their rights in this country and in this state and they are currently getting treated like second-class citizens in the electorate of Callide by the government because to date we still have no maternity services across 14 hospitals. If we want to look after women in Queensland, let us not change the definition of them, let us look after women all the way through.

This bill is an omnibus bill so there are 30 acts amended in the one bill. This limits the opportunity for feedback from stakeholders. There is a lot that we could have spoken about across the board on other aspects of the bill. I want to say just how powerful it would have been if Sophie's Law could have been a standalone bill. A lot more members in this House could have spoken about stories that are as powerful. There could have been more opportunity for it to be discussed and for it to see the light in the media et cetera. That said, I thank everyone for a very healthy debate, one that is genuine with a bipartisan approach. We commend the bill to the House.