




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

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JUSTICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (5.57 pm): I rise to contribute to the Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Like others on this side of the House have talked about, it is a very large omnibus bill which covers much ground. The one thing I will agree on with the current Attorney-General is the fact that, yes, governments of all colours and persuasions do introduce omnibus bills, but this government's new record from two weeks ago and how large and irrelevant the different topics are being tacked onto different bills is something that I think is deeply concerning for openness, transparency and accountability in this great state of ours.

This very large omnibus bill—not as large as the one we were covering here two weeks ago—covers much ground. It amends 30 acts and four regulations across many issues that are unrelated and, quite frankly, should be dealt with by specific bills. Included in this bill today are changes relating to the operation of courts and tribunals, the regulation of the legal profession, the conduct of civil proceedings and electoral matters, just to name a few.

With so many issues wrapped up in this one bill it has reduced the ability for all parties in our legislative process—the stakeholders, the committee members, the members of the public—to properly have their say and to contribute. Of course, that is just a sign of this tired, third-term Palaszczuk Labor government that has run out of ideas and is struggling to put forward any legislative agenda.

However, my contribution today will focus on a very positive part of the bill which is fully supported by the Queensland LNP opposition. We also know that the former attorney-general—and I will acknowledge the former attorney-general now health minister's contribution to this bill because had it not been for that former attorney-general we would not be standing here today debating the insertion of Sophie's Law into this bill. I will get to the member for Lockyer, who was the one, along with Peter and Sarah Milosevic—and I will talk to them in a moment—who was successful in lobbying the former attorney-general to get this up. Their lobbying to the current Attorney-General when she was previously attorney-general was very disappointingly unsuccessful—

Mr Janetzki: It went nowhere for years.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON:—and it went nowhere for years. I take that interjection. I met with Peter and Sarah many times in relation to that. It was just unbelievable to see the closed door approach of the former attorney-general who is currently the Attorney-General again. I give all credit where credit is due to the former attorney-general now health minister for her contribution to making sure that Sophie's Law comes before the House. Would we have liked our own bill called Sophie's Law? Absolutely!

Ms Boyd interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I did not hear that interjection.

Ms Boyd: Do a private member's bill.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Order, member!

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: For a government member who has never spent a minute in opposition it surely shows the chaos and the crisis from this government. It never ceases to amaze me.

Government members interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I will take that interjection. They do not think the matter is important enough to actually draft a piece of legislation for years and years. That is someone who has never seen a minute in opposition and it shows; the community can see it. It is absolutely mind blowing.

Ms Boyd: Get some tips.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: The member for Pine Rivers has so much to say. No wonder there has been leaking to the *Courier-Mail*, the *Australian* and everywhere else. We now know where it has come from.

Ms BOYD: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find the member's comments personally offensive and I ask her to withdraw.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: So did the Premier. I do withdraw.

It is important today that we do acknowledge what I think is just incredible. Through the hard work and tenacity of many people in a terrible situation part of this bill will enact Sophie's Law, a law which will recognise unborn children who die as a result of a criminal offence. This is a law which has been a long time coming for both Sarah and Peter Milosevic and their family and community who have spent years tirelessly campaigning since the tragic loss of their baby Sophie. As I said, I have met Sarah and Peter and I want to give them a massive shout-out. I have met them many times. I want to pay them my greatest respects for their courage, strength and tenacity.

As we have heard, Sophie lost her life just six days before her due date on 29 August 2014 when a drug driver slammed into her parents' car. Sophie's Law is her legacy. I acknowledge the work of the member for Lockyer, Jim McDonald, who worked alongside—and continues to work alongside—Sarah and Peter to help bring this law into fruition. I did see Sarah and Peter when they came in to submit on one of the many occasions. They were talking to many people on level 3. I want to read into the record Sarah and Peter's submission to the committee. They said—

The impact on a family that loses a child because of someone else actions adds another layer of grief, there was no justice for us. He lost his licence for 5 months and a \$950.00 fine for the cost of a life, this law reform while it doesn't bring your child back at least you know that your baby counted. She received a birth Certificate, death certificate and was count as a death on the road toll, the only place she wasn't counted was in a court ...

The bill amends the Criminal Code to enable indictment for an offence committed in relation to a pregnant woman. It allows for the name and description of an unborn child to be stated in the indictment regardless of the age of that unborn child. I note in the committee hearing Sarah went on to say—

... having your child acknowledged as an unborn child and not a fetus, which is not a very nice term when you are going through what we have been through, gives a sense of healing. I talk to a lot of women who have lost children.

She went on to say—

... having that acknowledgement of your child helps in the healing process. It helps you to heal and grieve and to know that your child mattered, just as much as they mattered to you.

I can say to you Sarah: Sophie does matter and that is why we are debating this bill in Sophie's memory today.

The Victims of Crime Assistance Act will also be changed to expand the definition of victim to include a person who suffers harm because they would, if an unborn child had been born alive, have been a family member of the child. It will expand the eligibility for funeral expense assistance for the funeral of an unborn child whose life is destroyed by a criminal offence. This law is an important change which we recognise as a tribute to Sophie and to ensure justice for other unborn babies who may, sadly, meet a similar fate in the future.