




Speech By
James Lister

MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS

Record of Proceedings, 29 November 2023

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

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (3.50 pm): I rise to make a contribution on the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. Mine will be confined to the situation facing victims of crime who want to access the assistance scheme provided for under the existing legislation and enhanced by this bill. A week or two ago, a very brave constituent of mine came to see me in my office. To her great credit, she wanted me to speak in the House and to identify her; however, I think to do so might impinge upon the sub judice rule for some trials which are still underway. I am sure she knows who she is. I would like to pay tribute to her and thank her for her bravery and fortitude in coming to me to explain what happened to her in the way of a very traumatic experience as a child—child sexual abuse and abuse at the hands of her relatives. I will leave it at that. She came with a number of concerns. The one which is most pertinent to this debate is the amount of time that victims face in obtaining the compensation and financial assistance provided for under this legislation.

I am advised that, once someone's status as an eligible victim is clear, it can still take years for an assessor to be allocated to that person's case to even look at their eligibility. I think waiting for years serves to reinforce the trauma and the disadvantage that victims have experienced. We all would see, in the broadest sense, this scheme as providing a bit of justice to victims. We all know that justice delayed is, in effect, justice denied. I say to the government: these enhancements are merited—and obviously the opposition and I will be supporting them—but please bear in mind that the scheme is only good as it is efficient. One which leaves victims of crime hanging for years without the vindication and the reassurance that the financial compensation they would get provides them with is not really worth the name.