




Speech By
Jessica Pugh

MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

Record of Proceedings, 14 March 2023

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY SAFETY BILL

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (4.39 pm): It depends if you are one of my kids and you are in trouble, but thank you very much for your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Every Queenslander deserves to feel safe in their home and in their community, on this I am sure every single member of the House can agree. I rise to speak in support of the bill. I would like to begin by recognising the excellent work of the committee. They have done a great job not just in working through the particularities of the bill but also looking at future areas that can be examined as part of the overall solution to what we all know in this place to be a complex problem.

I thank the members of my community groups such as Sinnamon Park Neighbourhood Watch and Jindalee Neighbourhood Watch for their feedback. I was able to attend some of the meetings during the consultation phase and seek their feedback on the legislation, which was very helpful. In addition, I also met with community members and hosted some community catch-ups, as I often do, with local police. During my consultation, as I am sure many members would have experienced, there were very consistent themes coming from members of my community around providing victims with support. I like to think that at their core all members of this House are motivated strongly by looking after victims and minimising their current and future trauma. It is fair to say that in many regards government departments and systems are now making big strides in a number of ways in becoming supportive and trauma and victim aware. For example, the Mental Health Select Committee recently provided trauma support to witnesses. Our police are investing significant resources into supporting DV survivors and providing upskilling and trauma informed policing. In fact, on Monday I attended the start of the training for upskilling our police in this work, which includes as part of the modules on the training course best practice for trauma in response to the *Hear her voice* report. We know that our police and other government agencies are doing fantastic work in this space.

I would like to refer to the committee report as to how we can better support victims of crime in the Strengthening Community Safety Bill going forward and how that can be examined as an outcome of the report examining the legislation. As stated in the report—

Following consultation on the Bill with Queenslanders who had been affected by youth crime, the committee considers it would be opportune for the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee to conduct a review of the Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009 (VoC Act), with a view to considering enhancements to the VoC Act designed to better assist victims of acts of violence, by providing support and financial assistance in a timely manner to avoid compounding the distress suffered by them.

In this proposed review, consideration could be given to a) expanding the eligible victim's category to include home invasion enabling these victims access to financial support to recover from the act of violence, b) mapping the victim's experience through the (VOCAA Financial Assistance) application process to identify ways to reduce the burden on applicants, and c) reviewing the Charter of Victims' Rights—to identify common complaint themes from victims to inform future sector training needs.

Further, we consider it would also be beneficial for the Queensland Police Service (QPS) to review the way in which it supports victims. While the community want accountability and consequences for the offender, there is also the need for a victim to be heard and included throughout the investigation and prosecution of their matter in a timely manner.

There will be many different contributions as I think almost every member of the House wants to speak on this bill. As I touched on earlier, I had some fantastic community consultation sessions. I have fantastic local police who are doing a wonderful job, but can I particularly thank my two local Police Beat cops who come out to almost every mobile office—Coffee with a Cop, a lot of us call them—Ben Harm and Lisa Easton. They have been mainstays in my community for many years. Along with many of their colleagues, they always come out for Coffee with a Cop community consultation sessions. They really do an amazing job in my community and I thank them for their tireless work. I am so glad that the bill has such strong support and I commend it to the House.