




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

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JUSTICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (12.26 pm): I rise to speak to the Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I will start with the provision of the continuous monitoring of JPs by the Queensland Police Service. This year I have had an awful lot to do with my JP community in the electorate of Mount Ommaney. I was privileged to be able to host three morning teas and personal development sessions for the JPs who reside in or serve the Mount Ommaney community. We were able to have an information session where they once again updated their skills through the training provided by JPs in the Community. It is a fantastic service that I am sure all members are familiar with. We had a couple of hundred JPs attend that event. I know that from time to time we all give out certificates in our community to our JPs, but I was really blown away by the number of years of service by JPs in my electorate of Mount Ommaney, which is just one out of 93 electorates in Queensland. I suspect members would not be able to guess—I certainly could not—the number of years of service. It was not 100 years of service. It was not 500 years of service. This year the JPs of Mount Ommaney were collectively awarded over 1,000 years of service to the community.

Mrs Gilbert: Overachievers!

Ms PUGH: We are indeed overachievers. I take that interjection from the member for Mackay. I have over 1,000 JPs in the Mount Ommaney community, many of whom are very active. As the member for Bulimba outlined, they often give up their time on weekends or late nights. At the Mount Ommaney Shopping Centre they are led by Noelene. That is 1,000 people out in the community holding a very high position of trust. The government has signed off on the role they perform and said, 'This is a trustworthy person to whom you, member of the Queensland public, can entrust your private information and who will respect your privacy and give you the due care that you deserve.' I know that every single one of the wonderful JPs in my community is deserving of that trust.

I think these provisions, to ensure continual update is received, are very important. Generally speaking, we know that people who are JPs or who apply to be JPs are very law-abiding people. By their very nature, they are applying for a volunteer role that is process driven and rules driven. That is why they attend those community update information sessions even though the work that they do is volunteer work. They are doing that work pro bono, as it were. I have an anecdote that is not scientific at all. Earlier this year my JP morning tea was attended by 100 people. I must admit that I was a little concerned about everybody being quiet so that we could do the information update presentation. Although there were 100 people all having a good chat, as I approached the microphone it was about as quiet as this chamber. People were incredibly well behaved. A hush came over the room and for the next 45 minutes they listened in absolute silence because, as I said, JPs are generally a law-abiding group.

The continuous monitoring process for JPs that is part of these legislative changes is appropriate and fair recognition of the responsibility that JPs have within our community. They are signing sensitive documents each and every day. This is an appropriate measure due to the high degree of trust that the

community place in them. It is important to note that JPs are often alone with people. JPs can be invited into a person's home to help them with their paperwork. Sometimes people attend the home of a justice of the peace to have their paperwork signed.

A practice that I have undertaken since I was first elected is that when somebody volunteers to become a JP and signs up I call them and thank them for volunteering and ask them why they have signed up to be a JP. I have made the following observations. In my relatively brief time as a local member, I have found that JPs in our community are getting younger. It is a professional service but it is done by volunteers.

I have been finding that many JPs are signing up now for professional reasons. They are doing it in conjunction with the work they do and while they are fully engaged in the workforce. When I was first elected, I found it was very much something people did to give back to the community as they were closer to retirement age. I have said repeatedly—and I will keep saying it—it is a professional service but it is provided by volunteers.

I take this opportunity, as I have done in my community, to thank the more than 1,000 volunteers who serve my community. Whether they answer the call late on a Friday night from someone desperate to get paperwork done or like Brian Tovey answer a knock on the door in the middle of the night from the police because that is his posting, they do an outstanding job. They have served Queensland collectively for over 100 years and they have provided Queenslanders with a trusted service that we can all rely on. This legislation ensures that they continue to be held in the high esteem they deserve. Trust for the community is reinforced with the legislation.

In the time that I have left, I will touch on the amendments to the Criminal Code to allow for an indictment for an offence committed in relation to a pregnant person, which allegedly results in the loss of a pregnancy, list the name of the baby. It is important to note that this inclusion is determined on a case-by-case basis, with factors including the wishes of the parents. This is important because it allows every family to make that decision depending on their particular circumstances. It is very much in keeping with the idea of trauma centred care and listening to the voice of women.

I commend the bipartisan way that members of parliament have worked on this important and very sensitive piece of legislation, including the current and former members for Lockyer and the current and former attorneys-general. It allows the court to consider the loss of that pregnancy as an aggravating factor in specific circumstances.

I was reflecting on the preparations that I made for my babies the week before they were each born. On my laptop I have a copy of the letter I wrote a week before my daughter Elyse was born. She had a name many months before she was born. I have a copy of the letter I wrote to the midwives and doctors who helped deliver her. Her name is in that letter. She was in every way that week and in the many weeks before my daughter. I know that if were in similar circumstances to Sarah and Peter that I would have wanted to have the option to have her name included.

I say to Sarah and Peter, who join us in the gallery today and who lost their baby girl Sophie in such horrible and unimaginable circumstances, that we are so sorry. I and all members in this parliament are very sorry for your loss. I cannot imagine your ongoing grief. It is very special and always blows me away when people like Sarah and Peter are able to turn their grief and their loss, which would be enough to break many of us, into something positive and make our community a better place by advocating for change. Sarah and Peter have been able to do exactly that. I know that every member of this House would join me in commending them for their bravery and persistence over many long years. I thank them for joining us in the gallery today.

In the very brief time I have left, I point out how pleased I am to see that there can be financial provision made for the funeral costs of such losses of an unborn child. This places victims at the centre of these changes. It is about trauma-based, trauma informed legislation. I think that is why this legislation is strongly supported by all members of the House. That is why these changes are so important. I certainly commend this bill to the House.