




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

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

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (4.14 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the bill before the House. I begin by thanking the committee for their hard work on this sensitive bill. In particular, I note the lived experience of our good friend the member for Cooper and the experience that she brings to this issue. I always say—and other members have noted—that parliament is always enriched by having members with varied life experiences, and this bill has benefited greatly from the member for Cooper's experience. That said, all of the committee members worked diligently along with the secretariat to bring this very important bill before the parliament. I know my community will be very supportive for reasons I will now share.

I would like to share some observations from a family in my community with whom I met many years ago, early in my first term. A young woman had previously been a victim of rape in her own home and she was struggling greatly in the aftermath. Her mental health was incredibly impacted and it was no exaggeration to say that, for her, some days getting out of bed was a monumental achievement.

I did not originally meet with this young lady; I met with her mother, who was deeply worried for her wellbeing and so came to see me. One of the things I remember all these years later from the things her mum said to me is that, because the crime occurred in their home, the colour of the walls in the room where the rape occurred were triggering and upsetting to the young lady because it reminded her of the rape. Essentially, lying down in bed to go to sleep at night triggered her memory of the events. I thought what a terrible experience for this young woman to have to relive every night just as she is trying to go to sleep. I thought for a moment about how I would feel in the same scenario and I have to say it made absolute sense to me when her mother explained it to me like that.

Although this family of course did receive funding at the time from Victim Assist, there were many things that needed to be paid for. That funding did not extend to items like this in this particular case because they felt other things were more important. As a result, the mum felt she would need to pay for these things herself so they could have those additional mental health supports, which she needed for years going forward.

With the extra money that is provided for in this bill, families like this are going to have additional funds for therapy and other requirements. It is going to enable them not to have to dedicate their own financial resources to recovering from these awful and heinous crimes.

I note that currently the act can provide for items like internal painting or replacing a piece of furniture like a bed in specific circumstances like these or that it could be included for consideration in a submission for funds if that particular item may be of therapeutic value to the victim. I note that these additional funds as provided for in the bill will be supportive of that. I think of this family when I hear about that particular part of the legislation. I am so very pleased about it.

As I said, that particular aspect is something that would not particularly have occurred to me prior to speaking with this amazing mum, who was and is an amazing advocate for her family. I still see this family often out and about in the community. I am so pleased to share with the House that this brave young lady is making a wonderful recovery. I will also say that both the current and the former attorney-general and their teams listened carefully to the issues that this family raised and I thank them both very much for that.

Being a victim of a crime is an isolating experience that people can only truly understand if they have been through it. For that reason I am very grateful for the member for Cooper and her ongoing wisdom around issues like this. I often find myself seeking her counsel on these issues. I believe that this is a fine bill that is going to have strong support in my community. I commend the bill to the House.