




Speech By
Linus Power

MEMBER FOR LOGAN

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

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (6.34 pm): I rise to support the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I know that as members of parliament we often meet with those who have been affected by crime and we see in their eyes, on their faces and in their tears, and sometimes feel in their hugs, how much that hurts them. This legislation seeks to help victims of violence recover from those acts by giving them financial assistance but also—and I will speak about this later—giving them a symbolic expression by the state of the community's recognition of the injuries they suffered.

I want to speak about a very brave woman in my electorate who contacted me after she had been woken in her manufactured home by her small dog, only to discover there were people in her front room. This is something that we want to happen to no Queenslander and something that we work every day to try to ensure happens less and less. In some ways this woman refused to let this bring her down because she organised—and I will call her 'R', because I have not been able to ask whether she wants her name used in this context—in the community hall at her manufactured home park a meeting of all of the residents. They came together to hear from both me and Constable Lou from the Crime Prevention Unit at Logan and to talk about security for the park and security for elderly people in general. This was a person who had been hurt but who was determined to make things better.

I want to reflect here on the symbolic expression 'to make people whole'. That day in that hall, with every resident of the manufactured home park coming together to listen to the things we could do to keep each other safe and to express their thanks through applause and hugs for 'R', we saw a display of that expression 'to make whole' and I know it made an enormous difference. I think I will treasure the email she sent thanking me and Constable Lou for the work we put in to ensure something positive came out of something that was so negative. That is what she was doing: taking something extremely negative in her life and trying to make it positive for both herself and others, and I think that is simply incredible.

I do note there is an extraordinary amount of politicisation of this issue. I know there is an election coming up so members opposite want to perhaps mislead on this issue. I think we need to, as the member for Cooper said, carefully and judiciously look at the issues and try to make things better for ordinary Queenslanders. That is what we are here for.

I was really disappointed to hear the opposition spokesperson on this issue, the member for Nanango, speak about the change to the way crimes against the person are recorded in terms of the numbers and the statistics. When we are talking about statistics, it is important to examine their background. The source was cited in the committee report. It is the *Crime report, Queensland, 2021-22*. It is a very large document; I have it stacked here beside me. Honourable members do not have to read

very much—and I urge the member for Nanango to perhaps pick up the document and read it—because on page 2 it reveals the change in police recording of offences in Queensland. It states—

From 1 July 2021, a change in recording practices was implemented by the Queensland Police Service, requiring police officers to record within QPRIME all criminal offences associated with domestic and family violence (DFV) incidents that come to their attention. Consequently, 2021-22 presents as a break in the time series for DFV-related variables that are based on recorded offences data.

The report gives this example—

If there was an existing domestic violence protection order ... a breach of that order was recorded for the offender but the associated offence (e.g. assault)—

and these are crimes against the person—

may not have been recorded.

The member for Nanango either had no idea about this change or sought to mislead this House and mislead the people of Queensland. The report goes on further to say—

If there was no DVO in place, the police created an incident record and may have issued a temporary protection order. If the victim declined to support prosecution, the offence may not have been recorded in QPRIME.

Again, that is something that the member for Nanango either was indifferent to or—

Ms Boyd: Ignorant.

Mr POWER: Yes, or ignorant of or perhaps not willing to make Queenslanders understand the difficult and real challenges of statistics that we and the police face. The Queensland Police Commissioner made this change to ensure that when a person is assaulted in their house—and very often it is a woman—that is recorded as an assault so that every Queenslander knows that that is an assault. We also have to understand that in just those years domestic and family violence assaults increased from 7,984 to 22,293. We know that in the year before 2021-22 there were significant problems with domestic and family violence assaults, and this change in recording is a very important change that this side of the House absolutely supports. When an assault occurs it should be recorded as an assault, and that means it is over 80 per cent of the change. Is any of that reflected in the talking points of members of the LNP when they talk about this?

I also want to commend the Attorney-General and the Minister for Police, because they absolutely backed the fact that when a woman is assaulted in a domestic and family violence incident it is recorded as an assault. Would they have been aware that there are those in our community who would seek to misrepresent those figures? They absolutely would have, but were they brave enough to say that when a woman is assaulted in her own house by her own partner that should be recorded as an assault because we want to stop those assaults? Yes, they were. I want to commend both the Attorney-General and the police minister, and especially the commissioner, who did this brave thing. However, we need the sophistication to read to page 2 of the document to understand that. If we do not, we are letting down the people of Queensland and we are not trying to challenge the real figures that are a part of the challenge that we have.

I also want to point out that this means from the period from 2012 through to 2015 those assaults were often not recorded. If I was being flippant or political I could perhaps say that the then police minister or attorney-general perhaps wanted those things not to be recorded as both a domestic violence incident and an assault. I will not say that, but it is the responsibility of those opposite to make clear that those assaults were not recorded and that this government is ensuring that an assault is recorded as an assault in our police numbers. That is very important.

I will say, though—and this may come across as a bit harsh and a bit political—that in this bill we seek to represent the symbolic expression of the state of the community's recognition of the injuries suffered, in this case, by those assaulted in a domestic and family violence incident. There are instructions that every police officer record every incident of assault in QPRIME and we recognise those injuries suffered, but from 2012 to 2014 that was not the case. If we are doing this and if we are serious about the symbolic expression of our state in recognising real and profound damage caused by assaults, I think the most profound damage by domestic and family violence assaults, recognising those injuries suffered by victims, is that we must recognise the important steps that were made to change the recording of victims and not be flippant about it and pretend that it is something it is not. I also want to recognise the member for Cooper, who spoke earlier in this debate. I think everyone on all sides thinks that attacking someone who has suffered from crime during a debate on helping the victims of crime was deeply inappropriate.

(Time expired)