




Speech By  
**Rob Molhoek**

**MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT**

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

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (12.21 pm): I rise to make a short contribution in respect of the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill that is before the House. It is always interesting to hear the reflections of those in this chamber. I, too, am a victim of crime. Eighteen months ago, my car was parked in my driveway and it was broken into. Six young people were involved in the burglary. While it was not a particularly traumatic event for me, I understand that those sorts of incursions and events impact people in many different ways. On that occasion, for me it was inconvenient. By the time I replaced keys, had damage to the car repaired and replaced a few items that were stolen, I was probably out of pocket by a few thousand dollars, which my insurance company did not cover. I put it down to just one of those horrible life experiences that happen. I am fortunate enough that I have good friends and family and I think I am a fairly robust individual, so I was able to move on fairly easily from the incident.

However, I did receive a call from the police about the matter. They caught the six young people, who were from the south side of Brisbane and had made their way down to the Gold Coast. One of them was a 14-year-old girl who was a part of that gang. It was suggested that I might like to meet with that young person as part of the youth justice restorative program. I thought that would be an interesting experience and if there were an opportunity to have some positive influence over that young person then I was not prepared to let that go by. I thought it would be an insightful experience. It took three or four months of phone calls and emails to organise the first meeting with that young person at the Logan Youth Justice Centre. On one occasion I made a special trip up only to find that the young person did not turn up. The meeting was rescheduled and I attended again.

It was heartbreaking. The young girl walked in with her mum. I heard the story of the mother's multiple relationships and several cases of domestic violence. She was a young person who had moved house several times, moving in and out of public housing and private rentals. She has three other siblings, including a sister from the same dad who had been in and out of foster care. In my heart I just wanted to encourage that young person and do what I could to help them. I thought I was pretty easy with the conditions that I applied. I went so far as to find that person what she described as her dream job, as she had turned 15. Unfortunately, she was never able to take up that opportunity because they had to move again. The mother was in crisis again. As I stand in this House and I hear the debate around these issues, I think it is important to remember that we are talking about people. We are talking about families and young people whose lives have been destroyed.

The small loss that I endured was nothing to me, but I do know that for many victims of crime the impact is significant and people's lives are changed. One afternoon, in the back of Ashmore, I met four families in the car park of an apartment complex. In the space of two weeks, on different nights, four cars were stolen from that complex. Each incident involved people entering homes and taking keys off

kitchen benches or dining room tables. Those people were traumatised to the extent that they were holding a community meeting to talk about the additional security measures they could put in place to protect their complex.

This legislation is important. I am pleased that one of the recommendations is the appointment to the board of someone with lived experience. I think that is an important step forward. I am also extremely pleased that Jon Rouse has been appointed as the Interim Victims' Commissioner. Jon Rouse would have to be one of the most decent human beings I have ever met. I have had the privilege and pleasure of knowing him through his work and engagement with Bravehearts over many years. He has been a guest speaker at some of our functions for White Balloon Day, now known as Bravehearts Day. He has attended many of those functions. I note that he is currently on the board of the Daniel Morcombe Foundation, which says a lot about the heart of the man and his concern for young people. His record of involvement with Task Force Argos is well known to everyone. Some of the accounts of his involvement there and the initiatives he has pioneered are simply outstanding. They have been world-changing. They have led to the capture and detection of some fairly significant bad people in our community and in other parts of the world, for that matter. I wish Jon well. I am sure all of us in this House are extremely pleased to see someone of his calibre appointed to that role.

I note that throughout the various inquiries there were a number of submitters, and I am pleased that Bravehearts was one of those. It is a cause that is close to my heart. I have spoken many times about my involvement with Bravehearts. I note also that Di Macleod, the director of the Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence, also made submissions to the inquiry. She had some very important things to say about trauma informed and victim-centric therapy and support. There is so much more needed in that space.

Time and time again we hear the same thing in relation to victims of domestic and family violence and people struggling with mental health issues. We have heard from the Mental Health Commissioner in previous inquiries, documentation and through their strategic plan that the most important thing we can do is put a roof over a family's head and provide them with stability. I reflect on the young person who was involved in the burglary of my home. Here is a young person who has probably lived in about six or seven different houses over the past 10 years. That does not provide for a healthy lifestyle, a positive outlook or a sense of security. When I asked her about the group of young people with whom she was involved, she told me that she had only become involved with them because she had recently been moved from the school that she loved and had been at for a number of years, she had been cut off from all of her friends because her mother had to flee domestic violence—yet again—and now the only people who would befriend her were this bunch of kids who basically led her astray. I believe there are many good young people whose lives are being destroyed simply through relocation and multiple placements. We need to do better and we need to do more in respect of supporting those many young people.

In closing, I want to acknowledge the great work of Gold Coast Community Legal Service. There are so many great people in our state who support victims of crime. It was my pleasure to host their AGM at my office a couple of weeks ago. In their annual report, they reported that last year they provided free legal assistance to nearly 3½ thousand individuals and families just on the Gold Coast. We need those community organisations and services to continue the great work that they do in supporting victims of crime and victims of family and domestic violence and the many other challenges that people face or struggle with in terms of just needing good solid advice and guidance.