



Speech By  
**Sandy Bolton**


**MEMBER FOR NOOSA**

---

Record of Proceedings, 9 May 2023

## **MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

### **Community Safety**

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (3.05 pm): Anzac Day gives us the opportunity to reflect on those who gave their lives for the freedoms we have. I often wonder what they would think about the challenges we face today and how we are handling these. Victims of crime relay the reality of the impacts from perpetrators and the trauma. The horrendous behaviours of a few are leaving victims and their families reeling. Their hurts are profound. Our communities grow angrier every day because we as politicians are not doing enough to deter crime and the judicial system is failing with inadequate sentences.

Just as our service men and women and their families were not supported through their trauma, leaving broken bodies and minds that dominoed through generations, even with the best intentions and efforts, we are facing another generation of pain—physical, mental and financial. This then dominoes again to the next generation. Increasingly, we are trying to fix so many wrongs done by Queenslanders to Queenslanders. As a compassionate, educated society, we attempt this through reconciliation, compensation, rehabilitation, restitution and expanded support services. As the demand grows, so do the costs. We meet this demand through increasing taxes or taking funding from other areas. We live the ramifications daily of rationalising, decreasing, maximising or leaving it to the supply-demand chain, which has failed, for example, with our housing. As we work to rehabilitate offenders and fix the wrongs of our and their pasts, including intergenerational alcohol abuse and violence, we must deal with the present.

Remote diversion sentencing, relocation sentencing and restorative justice options—where victims can tell their offenders how their lives have irreparably been changed forever—are underfunded or have not been supported. As legislators, against advice we increase penalties in desperation, knowing it is not the answer; however, we do so to give the judicial system extra powers in response to the pleas from our communities. We rely on advice and recommendations from experts, investigations, task forces, committee inquiries, data and those with lived experience. We know that, for this small cohort of repeat offenders, there are many years of work ahead. Funds will need to be spent not only on these perpetrators and their families but also on the environment that contributed to their criminality, as well as on their victims and their families.

We must look to those who gave their lives for us and ask what they would advise. Maybe they would say to reflect on each of our own responsibilities in the mix of what is happening. Blaming governments, politicians or political parties can only go so far regarding the behaviours of ourselves, our children and our choices. Through our own actions of increasing self-entitlement, overconsumption and lack of responsibility, we are all contributors—what we purchase; what we waste, just look at our landfill; our commentary online and off; and our own addictions and beliefs that detract from parenting with boundaries, care and rules. We are both part of the solution as well as the problem.

Most of us come from a lineage of those who served our country. I know what my father, my grandfathers and my great-grandfathers would say if they were here today—that we need some tough love and that as MPs we need to set an example by sitting down and coming up with a solid bipartisan agreement. We need solutions instead of rock throwing, positioning and wedging. We do not have to sacrifice our lives as they did; we just need to step up. We need to move beyond what has become a very tired rhetoric of blame to one of truth in relation to our past, the now and future.

As we debate the Path to Treaty Bill this week, truth-telling should never be one-sided or narrow, nor relegated to an Indigenous/non-Indigenous narrative. It should include truths from all of us in this parliament. We are proud Aussies with histories and forebears that went above and beyond so that we can now work together in freedom and safety to find a path forward. If this includes uncomfortable discussions around the contributors to crime, including our own behaviours and responsibilities in this chamber, and why in our lucky country a small proportion of Australians are increasing their enormous wealth whilst more and more join what is termed 'the new poor', so be it. Our Anzacs and forebears who fought for our freedoms would expect nothing less from us, nor will the elders past and present of the traditional custodians of these lands, winds and waters in which we all share. We can do better and must. Thank you.