




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY

Record of Proceedings, 19 March 2024

FORENSIC SCIENCE QUEENSLAND BILL

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (12.00 pm): On 9 February 2013 in my home town of Mackay, Shandee Blackburn was murdered. I would like to place on record my very deep and grateful thanks to Vicki Blackburn and her daughter Shannah who have never given up since that fateful night. They have continued to advocate on behalf of not only their own family and the community but all victims of crime across this state. The maladministration that was brought about by the culture and the cover-up of the forensic lab will forever be regarded as one of the biggest malpractices ever overseen by a state Labor government. This is the worst that has been seen not only in the nation but internationally. Our reputation internationally was tarnished, in particular the way it interacts with the criminal justice system. I would like to acknowledge Dr Kirsty Wright for her courage, tenacity and commitment. I would also like to acknowledge Hedley Thomas for his journalistic reporting and his attitude of never giving up.

I would like to place on record my thanks to and acknowledgement of the victims of crime I have met in my portfolio, in particular a young woman I met in Toowoomba whom I will call Rose to protect her identity. I met her after she reached out after what was a very violent rape. I was privileged to be able to sit with her for an afternoon to hear her story and review her police file. After I shared her story in this House, she was contacted by Dr Kirsty Wright, who provided her own expertise to Rose so she could communicate with the Queensland Police Service and seek to have her evidence retested.

Like many others in this state, she has been failed by the forensic lab, failed by the maladministration of this government and failed by the lack of integrity and the toxic culture that has been allowed to breed in the Public Service, particularly in this forensic lab. I would like to thank her and other victims of crime and let them know that we have heard you, we believed you and we took your voices up, but it was only through their courage that we were able to do so. I would like to acknowledge the committee, which sat through significant details that I think would have been hard to hear. In particular, I would like to acknowledge my colleagues for their statement of reservation.

I have very little confidence that this government can oversee all of these recommendations put into place to bring back any kind of sense to the forensic lab. I certainly hope that champions like Vicki Blackburn and other victims, with the advocacy of the Queensland Police Service, continue to hold this government to account just as we here in the opposition do. We will not forget and we will continue to fight and stand up for those victims of crime who were failed by the Palaszczuk-Miles Labor government.