




Speech By  
**Deb Frecklington**

**MEMBER FOR NANANGO**

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## **VICTIMS' COMMISSIONER AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE REVIEW BOARD BILL**

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (2.56 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Victims' Commissioner and Sexual Violence Review Board Bill 2024. I wish to align my comments with those of the shadow minister, the member for Whitsunday, and her detailed examination of this bill. I thank the committee members who put so much time and effort into the examination of the bill before the House. It is harrowing to have to listen to the terrible, tragic stories of victims in Queensland. As opposed to what the member for Thuringowa was just talking about, yes there has been crime. There will always be crime, but, unfortunately, the figures tell the truth.

In 2015, there were 4,454 rapes and sexual assaults—4,454 too many. In 2023, there were 9,107. That is an increase of 104 per cent. In relation to assaults, in 2015 there were too many—8,135; but, in 2023, there were 57,863. That is an increase of 219 per cent. I do not believe that those opposite can come in here and say that there is not an issue with crime in this state. This is from a government that continues to promise more police officers but continues not to provide them. In fact—and I stand to be corrected—we have about 90 fewer police officers than we had even in 2020, let alone when we lost government in 2015.

As has been noted by many speakers, victims in this state do feel unsafe and they feel that they have been hung out to dry by this government. As much as the government likes to talk about community safety, we in Queensland know this. When each and every one of us are in our local constituencies in this state—when I am in Nanango, Murgon, Kingaroy, Esk, Toogoolawah, Kilcoy, Woolooga, Kilkivan, Proston, Durong, Quinalow, Crows Nest, Cooya or Yarraman; it does not matter where we go—there are victims of crime and they are hurting. All members know that. Members cannot come into this House and think that there are no victims out there needing a hand.

It took the LNP's commitment—and I note the member who mentioned this before—to appoint a Victims' Commissioner for this government to act, once again leading from opposition, governing from opposition and giving solutions to the government.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Members can laugh all they like, but it was the LNP that committed to appointing a Victims' Commissioner. We also know that with the watering down of the laws—and we have heard this over and over again in this chamber—going right back to 2015 and 2016, whether it be the watering down of the youth justice laws or the failure to roll out the recommendations of the *Hear her voice* report, Queenslanders have not been protected. I have stated the 213 per cent increase in victims since 2015. Quite frankly, the government have no-one to blame but themselves. We know that this is a government that likes to announce things and talk about things but never actually follow through and deliver. As I say, I really do want to thank the shadow minister for her contribution.

I also want to acknowledge the contribution of other people particularly in the domestic violence space in my electorate—those hardworking, frontline people who deal with this on a daily basis. No matter what time of the day, they are there to help. I want to talk about CTC and Centacare in Kingaroy and the South Burnett. Laurel Place in Murgon does an incredible job counselling and supporting DV victims. It is a much needed service and it does a huge amount of work.

We also must acknowledge that the issue for victims in rural and regional Queensland is that they cannot just reside in a safe house in their own community. If you are escaping a domestic violence situation or you are a victim of serious sexual assault or assault in your community in some of these small towns, you cannot just be put in a safe house in that local town because the perpetrator knows where you are: you are just up the street. That is why all of our small rural and regional towns often end up with victims of crime, assault and sexual assault being sent all over the state. We must provide more support and services to these incredibly hardworking DV workers who are out there each and every day looking for more help.

As I have done in this House many times, I want to give a big shout-out to Graham House in Murgon. They do an incredible job. I met with the organisers who run a men's behavioural program. People from all over my electorate go to Graham House to attend that program. I really want to see that program continue because it is much needed.

Whilst the bill before the House appoints a Victims' Commissioner and talks about the Sexual Violence Review Board, it is important that everyone in this House acknowledges that there is an issue. On the ground people need to know where they can go. It is important to note that a report will be tabled and should be tabled because the voices of those victims should be heard right here in this parliament by all members of parliament no matter what side of parliament they sit on. Each and every one of us has a duty to stand up and represent those constituents of ours who are suffering.

Again, when it comes to rural and regional towns, I met a lady through the incredible services of one of our providers in Kingaroy who had to move with her two young children to a safe house in Rockhampton. For those of you who know the distance between Kingaroy and Rockhampton, it is many hours away, but that is the closest support for that person and her children to get to a safe space. That is what they have to do. There are many victims in this state. We must make sure that we are doing everything we can to control crime in this state. I suggest that the only way we can drive down crime in this state and prevent these horrific assaults from happening is to change the government.

I want to touch on the systemic issues that have been highlighted through this committee process—none more so than the DNA disaster. It is very clear—and I said it in the House just in the last sitting week—that this DNA disaster, which was overseen by the current Attorney-General, who was the then attorney-general and the then health minister when this debacle was happening, could very well result in thousands of cases—

**Mrs D'ATH:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence and ask that the member withdraw.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I withdraw. The absolute disaster that is the DNA lab disaster, which was presided over by the then Palaszczuk government attorney-general and the then Palaszczuk government health minister who is now the Miles government Attorney-General, could very well result in thousands of cases being overturned. That is on the public record. We know that this is a disaster of the Palaszczuk-Miles government's own making. Why? It is because they refused to listen to victims of crime. Enough is enough. This government must get its head out of the sand when it comes to victims in this state. As I have just said, each and every one of us in this House has a role to play in this space but none more so than those failed ministers of the Miles government.