



Speech By  
**Jessica Pugh**

**MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY**

---

Record of Proceedings, 30 April 2024

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

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (12.39 pm): I am pleased to rise to speak on the Victims' Commissioner and Sexual Violence Review Board Bill and, in doing so, I express my profound admiration for all of the victims who have contributed to this bill in its myriad forms. In my time as a local member—and I know that many members of the House share this experience—I have been privileged to have many members of my community share their experiences with me, in particular of sexual violence where we have recently seen a lot of legislative reform, and their thoughts on how we as a government and as a state can improve the experience of victims going forward. I can see that many of their thoughts and ideas will be supported in this legislation, which I am pleased to note has bipartisan support.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Pause the clock. Member for Logan and member for Theodore, take your discussion outside please. Member for Mount Ommaney, you have the call.

**Ms PUGH:** Thank you for your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker. Many members of my community will be pleased to see the permanent introduction of the Victims' Commissioner and the establishment of the Sexual Violence Review Board. The bill will also implement recommendations made by the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce in its second *Hear her voice* report regarding women's and girls' experiences across the criminal justice system.

The bill builds on our government's ongoing work to continue to call out and criminalise dangerous behaviours like stealthing, revenge porn and coercive control, to name just a few advances we have made in this parliament recently. I am pleased to note that this bill has bipartisan support because I know that every single member of this House, no matter where they sit in the parliament, wants to support victims of crime and ensure their rights are promoted and protected, which is central to the criminal justice system.

The permanent appointment of a Victims' Commissioner will ensure that the voices of victims of crime are heard and that enduring systemic improvements continue to be made to improve the experiences of victims especially, but not exclusively, in the criminal justice system. I join with other members of the House in thanking Jon Rouse for his service since last year in this very important role. The Victims' Commissioner role will be focused, as I said, on those systemic issues impacting victims instead of representing victims at an individual level.

In line with the taskforce findings, the Victims' Commissioner will not provide services and support to individual victims so that the Victims' Commissioner can remain impartial, because it is all about providing systemic improvements that will improve the lives of hundreds, if not thousands, of victims going forward on matters that impact victims of crime. They can certainly be issues within the criminal justice system, but they can also be issues that sit slightly outside, including service supports and other matters that impact on victims of crime and their families, because we know that it can often have an effect on the whole family. Victims will also continue to receive advocacy services and financial assistance through those other important government services like Victim Assist Queensland.

Often when you meet with somebody who has been the victim of a crime, they will bring support people with them. It is that network that they build around themselves that can be incredibly crucial to getting them through that difficult time. Often those support people are family or friends who walk that journey with the victim metaphorically, or sometimes even literally holding their hand to make sure they get through the process. Almost every single one of these people has had good ideas about not only how their personal experience could have been improved but also how the whole system could have been improved. This makes perfect sense because their ideas are informed by their lived experience and also by their strong desire to see an improvement for future victims. They do not want the next person's experience of the criminal justice system to be as traumatising as the event that led to them becoming engaged with the criminal justice system in the first place. I am sure we have all heard stories, unfortunately—I know that I have—where that has been the case. With those few words, I am very pleased that this bill has bipartisan support and I commend it to the House.