




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

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VICTIMS' COMMISSIONER AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE REVIEW BOARD BILL

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (3.45 pm): I support the Victims' Commissioner and Sexual Violence Review Board Bill 2024. I agree with the member for Moggill when he says there is always more we can do for victims and we should always be listening to victims. I think there would be no MP of any persuasion in this House who, when they learn somebody in their electorate has been killed or injured or hurt, whether they have been injured physically or psychologically by anything, does not feel a deep sense of pain when people in their electorates suffer those things. Whether they are caused by crime, car accidents, fires, domestic violence, diseases—whatever causes that death, pain and suffering—you want to try to understand it, and you want to try to comfort those people who are impacted. Like most members of this parliament, I have made efforts when I have learnt of these things in my community. Whether you hear about them on the news or hear about them on social media or you hear them down at the local sporting club or wherever, you try to reach out to those people who have been impacted to offer support, to listen and to try to understand their situation to see if there are things we can do differently or better, if there is anything that can be done at all.

I know it is sometimes frustrating for members of parliament that when you hear about something and you reach out to police or health services or try to make contact with victims of various things sometimes they are restricted in the information that they can share with you. However, where you can identify people, you reach out and offer that support. Some people do engage and look for practical support and want to share what has happened to them and want to look for ways so we can stop that from happening again, and other people choose not to do that. However, I think it is really disingenuous of the opposition to suggest that there would be any single member in this parliament who would not care about victims of crime or victims of anything in their community and in their electorate. The one thing I would say about all members of this chamber is that they are all caring people who care about people in their communities.

I want to acknowledge some of the organisations that support people who are victims of crime and sexual violence and domestic violence in my community, particularly the great folks at the support service Zig Zag Young Women's Resource Centre, the recently established Small Steps 4 Hannah Foundation after a tragic event, and the World Wellness Group which supports refugee and multicultural communities, many of whom are not just victims of crime but victims of torture. I want to acknowledge the great focus at Stepping Stone Clubhouse. We know that people with mental illness are much more frequently victims of crime rather than perpetrators of crime. I also want to acknowledge Beyond DV, another great organisation which is supporting people affected by domestic violence.

In all of this discussion around victims, I want to acknowledge the member for Cooper. I have reached out to her on many occasions. I note her personal experiences and her strong advocacy over many years, so she brings a great deal of insight into this parliament and I have always valued that, and I want to thank her for her ongoing advocacy.

One of the people I connected with following a violent incident in my electorate was Ben Cannon. I want to thank him for meeting and engaging with me. I thank him for the work he has done with Voice for Victims. It is important that we listen to the voices of victims. This bill establishes the Victims' Commissioner which I believe Voice for Victims called for. This body will be totally focused on providing ongoing support for victims and for systematic improvements for victims. Similarly, one of the things I really like about the Sexual Violence Review Board is its focus on the ongoing systematic review and improvement to the system. It is probably a little akin to what happens in the Office of the Health Ombudsman where there is ongoing systematic reviews of our systems. Oftentimes there are things that could be done better or things that should not be done at all, but we live in a system whereby unless somebody initiates a complaint sometimes things do not change. You need these ongoing reviews so I think these two things are a good step forward.

When I look at the evidence-based Community Safety Plan for Queensland, one of the things I am pleased about is that it is focused on a holistic approach that looks at how to deal with the things that ultimately will prevent crime. Ultimately, if you deal with these things, you actually make society better for everyone. It is focused around educational engagement—free kindy, free TAFE, the expansion of the great Pathways colleges, which has a campus in my electorate. We know that if we can get kids engaged in education and keep them engaged for as long as possible, the outcomes across society—as well their lives—will be better. I acknowledge the government's massive increase in funding for Speld which supports people experiencing learning differences. We know that a very large number of people who are in the criminal justice system have literacy and numeracy challenges.

The plan also looks at the prevention of domestic violence. We heard shocking statistics today of the number of people involved in youth justice who have been victims of domestic violence or have witnessed or been impacted by it. As the chair of the select committee into opportunities to improve mental health and alcohol and other drug services in Queensland, I am pleased with the focus of the Better Care Together plan. We will continue to do all of those things that, ultimately, help you to prevent crime. We have to do all that is outlined around policing and the criminal justice system and, importantly, there is support for victims. I think every victim would say categorically that if we could have no victims that would be the ultimate outcome.

The Leader of the Opposition talked in his matter of public interest statement today about people taking responsibility. I note that the opposition have made a lot of noise about their making Queenslanders safe legislation which apparently, if they win the election, will be law by the end of the year.

Mr O'Connor: Thanks for the ad!

Mr KELLY: I am very happy to give you the ad because I think what you also need to do, member for Bonney, is actually explain the laws to the people of Queensland. Let me take people through the legislative process. If the election is held on 26 October and there is a change of government, what will we have? One sitting week before the end of the year.

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr KELLY: Member for Everton, it is great for you to interject having been a member of the Newman government that smashed piece of legislation, after piece of legislation through this chamber.

Mr Mander interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Pause the clock. Member for Everton, you are warned under the standing orders.

Mr KELLY: The member for Everton smashed piece of legislation after piece of legislation through this parliament without any due respect for parliamentary process and that had an impact on our community. This is the signature piece of legislation that those opposite are taking to the people of Queensland but they are not going to show it to the people of Queensland? They are not going to give us any insight into what that would be? Is that how the Crisafulli government would be conducting itself? I think the people of Queensland would be rightly deeply concerned about that.

The Leader of the Opposition does not take any responsibility for the damage of the Newman government. Let us talk about the changes that the opposition made in their mercifully short period of time in government that had massive impacts on our community and contributed to youth crime. They defunded and gagged community organisations, many of which supported victims of crime and also victims of domestic violence. Shutting down schools and TAFE is not a good way to help people to re-engage with education or to keep them engaged with education. They shut down the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program—a program that helps young people who are having difficulty getting into the workforce get into the work. Those are things they did. They shut down youth mental health services, cut police, cut child safety. Those are things that you do. This bill is what you do, if you believe

in this—you support victims of crime and domestic violence and victims of sexual assault. I certainly support victims at every single turn I get in my community and in the legislative work that we do in this parliament. I will continue to do that, as will every member on this side of the chamber. I commend the bill to the House.