




Speech By
Hon. Leanne Linard

MEMBER FOR NUDGE

Record of Proceedings, 5 March 2024

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Victims of Crime, Legislation

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Innovation) (10.00 am): Ensuring victims' voices are heard is a priority of the Miles government. That is why this week I will introduce the Victims' Commissioner and Sexual Violence Review Board Bill. The bill will achieve the government's commitments to implement the recommendations of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce: to establish the permanent Victims' Commissioner to promote and protect victims of crime, and to establish the Sexual Violence Review Board to identify and review systemic issues in relation to the reporting, investigation and prosecution of sexual offences in Queensland. The establishment of a permanent Victims' Commissioner is another important step for Queensland in acknowledging the rights of victims of crime.

The Attorney-General will write to the Victims' Commissioner, once appointed, to request that they conduct a review of the Charter of Victims' Rights to consider whether additional rights should be recognised or if existing rights should be expanded. The establishment of an independent board will also provide greater support to victims of sexual violence through focusing on improvements that can be made to the criminal justice system to better understand potential barriers to reporting sexual violence and identify opportunities to continually improve investigation and prosecution processes.

In September 2023, the Queensland government appointed Mr Jon Rouse to the role of Interim Victims' Commissioner ahead of legislation to establish the permanent Queensland Victims' Commissioner. Since his appointment, Mr Rouse has met with over 150 stakeholders from victim support services and criminal justice agencies, as well as victim-survivors of crime and families of deceased victims. An online survey also received 470 responses from the community, including victim-survivors. This consultation is driving a program of work to promote the Charter of Victims' Rights and develop accessible resources for victims of crime to understand their rights, the criminal justice process and how to access support.

Consultation has identified that most victims are not aware of the Charter of Victims' Rights. A website, to be hosted by the Victims' Commissioner, is also being developed to help guide victims as they navigate through the criminal justice process. Mr Rouse and his team will continue to meet with victim-survivors of crime in the coming months ahead of the appointment of a permanent Victims' Commissioner. These reforms will have an indelible impact on ensuring that the systems we have in place provide the greatest possible support to victims of crime and that their voices are heard.