




Speech By
Melissa McMahon

MEMBER FOR MACALISTER

Record of Proceedings, 6 March 2024

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (2.56 pm): I rise to make my contribution to the committee's report into the inquiry to support provided to victims of crime. I would like to acknowledge the victims and the victims' advocacy groups that contributed to this inquiry, the individual victims who made submissions and presented before the committee, those victims who could contribute and those who could not because the system had failed them.

From the outset I acknowledge that this is a system that I have navigated or attempted to navigate. I have been referred to, and been a client of, the Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence, the Logan Centre Against Sexual Violence and No More. Despite the assistance provided by those three groups, it is still not a system which can be easily navigated. I will admit from the outset that one of the reasons is that no two victims are the same. The support that victims require is not the same. In any system that attempts to meet the needs of a large number of people who have extremely individual needs and requirements there are always going to be difficulties. The system will always have trouble coping, but that does not stop us in this House from wanting the system to do more and meet the needs of more people, because victims do need assistance.

I acknowledge the recommendations of this inquiry, including the recommendations that have been put into effect, the recommendations that have been subject to legislation in this House to be put into effect, and the work that needs to be done by all of our government agencies, particularly those that deal with victims of crime. There is a need to have trauma informed practices and processes in almost every department, not just the police and Health. A victim needs to navigate a number of different agencies. It could be Housing; it could be Education. We do not expect every single one of our Public Service workers to have undergone trauma informed training. That is somewhat impractical. But to know that in these departments there are properly and thoroughly trained people who know how to best assist a victim of crime and acknowledge the idiosyncrasies that come with being a victim of crime will make that journey so much easier.

In my process, I have not been and will not be afforded justice. I will not be afforded closure, but what I want to know—and what all victims should know—is that we have an opportunity to be heard and an opportunity to receive the support and the ongoing counselling that we need. Certainly, some of the changes that we have made to Victim Assist Queensland will go some way with that. I acknowledge the work that the current inquiry is doing and I thank the chair for welcoming me to participate as a member of that inquiry, even if it was just for a day. I think there are things that many people in this House need to be made more aware of in terms of the impact to individuals, not just as punchlines or slogans. Victims of crime deserve that. They deserve more. As a government, I will continue to fight for more. I commend the report to the House.