




Speech By
Samuel O'Connor

MEMBER FOR BONNEY

Record of Proceedings, 30 April 2024

VICTIMS' COMMISSIONER AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE REVIEW BOARD BILL

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (4.06 pm): Domestic and family violence is far too common in my community on the Gold Coast. We were the first area selected in the state for a specialist DV court in Southport because we have unacceptably, shamefully high rates of what is our most important challenge to overcome as a society. I know the vast majority of my community want to see change, so they will welcome this bill. Queenslanders generally will also welcome this change because there have, of course, never been more victims of crime than under this decade-old Labor government. Labor's law and order legacy is a 219 per cent increase in assaults, a 173 per cent increase in robberies, a 54 per cent increase in break-ins and a more than doubling of the number of rapes and sexual offences.

This bill will establish the Victims' Commissioner to promote and protect the rights of victims across Queensland and the Sexual Violence Review Board to identify and review systemic issues. I want to particularly thank Di Macleod and her team at the Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence for their submission to this bill and for the incredible work they do generally to support women who are victims of sexual, domestic and family violence in our city. Their submission highlighted how this bill does not fully implement recommendation 18 of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce to have a commissioner specifically focused on the victims of domestic, family and sexual violence and on First Nations victim-survivors.

The department noted to the committee that, while the bill before us does not include a provision for a deputy commissioner, the Victims' Commissioner will have nothing stopping them from appointing a deputy commissioner. This is a good idea, as a number of stakeholders raised, and it should be a priority for the appointed commissioner once they have started setting up their office.

I also want to pay tribute to the incredible team led by Lucy Gregory at another vital frontline service in my area, the Domestic Violence Prevention Centre Gold Coast. I acknowledge the comments they made in their submission about the appointment of the commissioner and the language in this legislation, particularly around consent.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Under the provisions of the business program agreed to by the House, the time limit for this stage of the bill has expired. I call the Attorney-General to reply to the second reading debate.