




Speech By
Margaret Nightingale

MEMBER FOR INALA

Record of Proceedings, 29 April 2025

**CRIME AND CORRUPTION (RESTORING REPORTING POWERS) AMENDMENT
BILL**

 **Mrs NIGHTINGALE** (Inala—ALP) (8.26 pm): I rise to speak on the Crime and Corruption (Restoring Reporting Powers) Amendment Bill—a bill we said we would support and that we have seen play out in our parliament as a shambolic act by this government. The member who just spoke described the ‘this and that’ components of the bill that are concerning us—well, that is our job. The ‘this and that’ components of bills are important and need to be given due consideration. They are not something that you tack onto a bill as an afterthought; they are relevant to our interests in this place. That is what the government is doing with these amendments that have nothing to do with the long title of the bill—the ‘this, that and the other’ components that the member referred to.

We are again seeing this inadequate government with an empty dance card desperately trying to find a partner so they can be seen on the dance floor, but no-one wants to dance with them because they are out of step. So, instead, they are dancing by themselves like Elaine from *Seinfeld* in a display that looks less like a dance and more like a warning signal—an uncoordinated and out-of-time attempt at governing. It would be laughable, if it were not so shameful. It is shameful that this government is actively and indefinitely delaying protections for women and vulnerable people—an act that is akin to condoning the very acts of harassment and discrimination that the protections are designed to prevent—protections that support women, victims of discrimination, victims of harassment.

Like many women, I have seen harassment and discrimination in the workplace. Those vulnerable to victimisation deserve protection from this behaviour and they deserve it now, not at some future time yet to be determined. Just a couple of days ago I was speaking with a woman who told me of the terrible treatment she received in the workplace, a woman who needed to take time off because of domestic and family violence. She needed to move so that she could stay alive and she needed time off from work to do that. She no longer has that job, which means she cannot afford her rent and is now facing homelessness. These protections would have protected her. She came to me to tell me her story because she wanted to be on someone’s radar. She did not want to be just another name on a list of victims if the perpetrator found her. On the eve of Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month, now more than ever is the time to put these respect at work protections in place.

I have heard from young women in my electorate who are calling for their government to do more to protect them. I associate myself with the remarks of the member for Greenslopes. Like my colleague, I saw the harassment that often took place in the workplace when I was a nurse. I witnessed quite extensive episodes of harassment and even sexual violence at the workplace that occurred over extended periods of time throughout the preceding years. Like most women, I have experienced this harassment firsthand. Harassment, particularly towards our vulnerable, needs to stop and we can do something about it. We need to make workplaces safe to ensure that our workplaces, through our positive duty, have procedures that will prevent occurrences rather than just respond to them.

Workplace victims are not the victims that this government cares about. They do not care that people are at risk of harm in the workplace, and this is evidenced by their delaying the very protections that protect the most vulnerable, the most at risk, from becoming victims in the future. There is a great deal that can be done—that should be done—that this government has the responsibility to do, but they will not because they are out of step, because they do not care about workplace victims and it is time that they did. It is time for this government—

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to two points of order, if I may. The first is relevance to the long title of the bill and the second is that I take offence to what the member is saying and I ask her to withdraw.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr O'Shea): Member for Inala, you were being relevant because you were addressing the amendment, but the member has taken offence to your comments so I would ask you to withdraw.

Mrs NIGHTINGALE: I withdraw.

Mr RYAN: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Can I seek clarity about that ruling? I know the Speaker has been very clear with his rulings in the past that 'personal reflection' has to be a personal reflection; it actually has to be directed at a particular member. From my listening to the member speaking, she was making a general remark.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Madam Deputy Speaker, in response to the honourable member's contribution, it was very clear that the member in her statements was implying that I do not care about workers at work. I did let her go on for many times before I decided to stand on a point of order.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have made my ruling and the member has withdrawn, so we will just move on.

Mrs NIGHTINGALE: The Attorney-General may feel like she is the whole of government, but—

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. It is convention in this House that once a member withdraws they cannot continue their speech with 'but' and then make an excuse for the withdrawal.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Inala, you can resume your speech. However, remember that withdrawals do have to be unqualified.

Mrs NIGHTINGALE: Thank you for your guidance, Madam Deputy Speaker. As I was saying, this is a government that has demonstrated that it is not serious about protecting workers, that it is not serious about protecting those vulnerable to discrimination and harassment in the workplace. If it were serious, it would not have added this amendment to a bill that is unrelated. I urge the government to show its interest in workers and to act now to protect workers.

Mrs Frecklington: Get some experience.

Mrs NIGHTINGALE: This is a serious issue. This is not something that is laughable. This is a serious issue. There are people at the moment who are subject to harassment, and workplaces should have a duty to prevent that harassment. These protections would have ensured that there was a duty to prevent harassment, to put measures in place that protect our workers, that protect our women. They would have protected the very woman who came to me telling me she had lost her job because there were no protections for her.

Mrs Frecklington: There's the Commonwealth Anti-Discrimination Act to start.

Mrs NIGHTINGALE: I take the interjection because clearly the Attorney-General does not consider that there is anything additional needed to protect workers in Queensland. I am saying, just like many of the workers in my community are saying, that they want this government to do more, to stand up and support them and to protect their rights.