



Speech By
Hon. Tim Mander

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

Record of Proceedings, 16 September 2025

**PENALTIES AND SENTENCES (SEXUAL OFFENCES) AND OTHER
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

Second Reading

 **Hon. TL MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Sport and Racing and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (8.38 pm): I rise to speak on the Penalties and Sentences (Sexual Offences) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. It is interesting to follow the member for Bancroft. We enjoyed his reflections on his morning in the courtroom, or a couple of mornings there. I do not know the purpose of the reflection. He spoke about hanging around the courtroom which basically has nothing to do with this particular bill. It just shows that when you are in opposition you have a bit more time than normal, and I honestly do not know what the purpose of that was, yet they make allegations about us being tardy in bringing things to this parliament.

I congratulate the Attorney-General for bringing this very important matter to parliament when those opposite had time to do this. It is amazing how all these 'problems' have been created in the first 10 months of a new government and complaints have come from the other side about things not happening quickly enough—

Mr Perrett: It is disingenuous.

Mr MANDER: I take that interjection from the member for Gympie; it is disingenuous. That is exactly what it is. They lose all credibility when they speak that way because it has absolutely—

An opposition member interjected.

Mr Perrett: It is disingenuous.

Mr MANDER: I take that interjection again from the member for Gympie. I honestly do not understand where they are coming from. This is a government that is acting in 10 months, compared to 10 years of decline and—

Mr Stevens: We are delivering.

Mr MANDER: I take that interjection from the member for Mermaid Beach. We are delivering and making the fresh start that Queenslanders have been asking for. This bill is a great indication of our unwavering commitment to victims and the people of Queensland as compared to sympathy and empathy for perpetrators, who just do not deserve that. This government has made a very firm commitment, and this is one of the bills that really brings it home.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr Boothman interjected.

Mr MANDER: I thank the Attorney-General and the whip for their encouragement. Are you smiling because you are trying to encourage me?

Mrs Frecklington: I am enjoying the glasses.

Mr MANDER: You have to improvise sometimes and these glasses are very helpful. I thank the member for Whitsunday for lending them to me!

This bill introduces new sentencing provisions that better reflect community expectations and implements recommendations from the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council report into sentencing for sexual assault and rape in Queensland. The sentencing of offenders found guilty of rape and sexual assault must reflect the seriousness of these offences and their lifelong impact on victims.

QSAC made 28 recommendations which led to four specific legislative amendments to the Penalties and Sentences Act that are captured in this bill. There were new recommendations around the statutory aggravating factor. The Queensland community understands that sexual offending against children is amongst the most heinous crimes that can be committed. The bill reflects community expectations by making amendments to require courts to consider the age of victims aged 16 and 17 as an aggravating factor when sentencing for sexual assault or rape. It indicates to the court that sentences for these offences should be higher when committed against a child. I could not agree more with that. This is another example of how the Crisafulli government is putting victims first, recognising that sexual offences committed against our vulnerable children are more serious.

The second aspect of the bill talks about good-character evidence. This bill delivers important, overdue reforms to good-character evidence when sentencing for sexual offences. The bill clarifies the court should only consider good character established by problematic types of evidence, including character references and evidence of a person's contributions or good standing in the community, if it is relevant to the offender's prospect of rehabilitation or risk of reoffending. It goes without saying that if you have been sentenced on a sexual offence you obviously do not have good character; nor should you be relying on references that would somehow seek the court's sympathy when you have committed such a heinous crime. Under our laws, a sexual offender will not be able to rely on the evidence that they are a 'good bloke'. They will have to make sure any restricted evidence directly relates to their prospect of rehabilitation or risk of reoffending, which are appropriate factors for a sentencing judge to consider.

The third thing this bill looks at is the recognition of harm to victims. The bill expands the purposes of sentencing to include the recognition of harm done by an offender to a victim. This is incredibly important. We know that this harm can be profound, with potentially lifelong impacts, particularly for children, who are vulnerable and impressionable. Again, this shows that we are putting victims first by making sure that a court can impose a sentence for the purpose of recognising the impact of the offending on them and the harm it causes.

The fourth major aspect of the bill talks about the victim impact statement. The bill clarifies that the court cannot infer from the absence of a victim impact statement or any other details of harm that a victim has not been harmed by an offender. This is an important change which supports all victims in their right to choose whether to provide a victim impact statement to the court by ensuring a sentence will not be reduced merely because they did not provide one where another victim did because of the trauma that is often associated with making these types of statements.

I commend the Attorney-General, the Crisafulli government in general and the team of ministers who are responsible for standing up for victims' rights and reducing the number of victims that we have. This is another bill that goes towards achieving those goals—

Mrs Frecklington: It is all about supporting victims.

Mr MANDER: I take that interjection from the Attorney-General; it is all about supporting victims. This is something that drives her and her colleagues the Minister for Police, the Minister for Youth Justice and the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence. All of those ministers are very committed to the task that has been given to them. This is another way of making sure we put victims first, by improving the sentencing process for them. I commend the bill to the House.