




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

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CORRECTIVE SERVICES (NO BODY, NO PAROLE) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (5.26 pm): I rise to address the Corrective Services (No Body, No Parole) Amendment Bill 2017. By way of background, I should provide some context as to how we have come to be here today debating this legislation. At the outset I certainly want to acknowledge many families who have championed this legislation on behalf of their loved ones and the many people who have signed petitions and written letters to many MPs in this House. I would also like to acknowledge those who are in the public gallery here this evening.

On 28 November last year the Liberal National Party leader, the Hon. Tim Nicholls MP, announced that a future LNP government would deny parole to convicted killers if they refused to assist in revealing the location of their victims. The LNP's no-body no-parole policy announcement at that time was welcomed by friends and families of such victims. In making that announcement, the Liberal National Party gave a commitment to the people of Queensland that they would do so in consultation with families, victim groups, the Parole Board and key organisations involved in the Queensland justice system.

At that time under the LNP's proposed commitment, such laws would apply to offenders serving a prison sentence for murder or conspiracy to commit murder where the murder has been committed. In order to grant parole, the Parole Board would be required to be satisfied that the offender has cooperated satisfactorily in the investigation of the offence to identify the location, or last known location, of the remains of a victim.

The LNP was also keen to make it clear that this was not a retrospective measure—clearly articulating at the time that the policy would apply to criminals who have not yet been released from jail on parole and therefore not apply to those already on parole or out of jail. I would like to acknowledge that the Palaszczuk Labor government indicated their intention to act. I certainly acknowledge the Labor government for the work they have done in this area.

I note that in the Sofronoff *Queensland Parole System Review Final Report*, which was released in November 2016, some time was spent comparing the application of such laws both in the South Australian context and in the Northern Territory. I ask the House to consider the following observations made in the report. In relation to the Northern Territory model it observed—

1198. The 'no body, no parole' legislation is designed to help victims' families and to provide a strong incentive for offenders to cooperate with authorities. A system similar to South Australia's, which focuses more broadly on cooperation with the investigation, has the potential to provide more benefit to the community in incentivising cooperation of all kinds, including the location of the body.
1199. Withholding the location of a body extends the suffering of victim's families and all efforts should be made to attempt to minimise this sorrow.

1200. As a matter of theory, such a measure is consistent with the retributive element of punishment. A punishment is lacking in retribution, and the community would be right to feel indignation, if a convicted killer could expect to be released without telling what he did with the body of the victim. The killer's satisfaction at being released on parole is grotesquely inconsistent with the killer's knowing perpetuation of the grief and desolation of the victim's loved ones.

Furthermore, I specifically note and bring to the House's attention recommendation No. 87 of the report which recommended—

The Queensland Government should introduce legislation, similar to that in South Australia, which requires the Parole Board to consider the cooperation of a prisoner convicted of murder or manslaughter and not release the prisoner on parole unless the Board is satisfied that the prisoner has satisfactorily cooperated in the investigation of the offence, including, when relevant, by assisting in locating the remains of the victim of the offence.

I have no doubt that the proposed legislation will provide an incentive for prisoners to assist authorities in finding and recovering the body or remains of victims and deliver on some of the aforementioned intent. There is no doubt that providing some comfort, certainty and closure to the families of such victims is important, and I believe such measures are needed from both a public policy and legislative perspective.

The Queensland parliament would not be debating this legislation today without the leadership provided by the Liberal National Party as well as the leadership of the Labor government, and I acknowledge the Attorney-General on this issue. I would encourage the government to adopt the amendments which the LNP shadow minister, Ian Walker MP, will move as part of this debate. I acknowledge that the Attorney-General has foreshadowed she will be adopting some of the LNP's amendments. However, there are additional amendments which should be given due consideration and I would encourage the government to do that as part of the debate here this evening.

Grief and loss are very powerful human emotions. I remember during my medical training a supervising psychiatrist at the Prince Charles Hospital emphasising to me that significant suffering which occurs amongst those who do not have the option of grieving and then realising adequate closure can lead to further additional long-term psychological harm and other issues that can be with people for many years as far as additional harm to their physical and psychological wellbeing. This legislation is vitally important. I offer my support for it and I acknowledge the bipartisan outcome which will be achieved with this legislation this evening.