

## **Victims of Crime – Amendment Bill Speech**

**Mr <MARTIN>** - Mr Chairman, a lot of what I was going to say has already been said by the previous two members who have spoken. I think I will make a brief contribution because I probably had more inquiries and I suppose concern expressed to me about this particular item in the Budget than any other. I will limit my remarks because I know the bill is coming forward and I will certainly make a more substantive contribution at that time.

**Ms Thorp** - We have 22 more items to go through.

**Mr <MARTIN>** - It could be a late night.

**Ms Thorp** - Eleven more hours at the rate we are going.

**Mr <MARTIN>** - We still have next week too.

**Ms Thorp** - There are other things to do too.

**Mr <MARTIN>** - The reality is that there has been widespread condemnation of this decision by all of the stakeholder groups that have already been mentioned by the previous two members. There is concern and condemnation expressed by welfare providers, by various associations and unions representing State officers and employees. In fact leading members of the ALP have been condemning this decision.

[3.45 p.m.]

At the Estimates Committee the minister was pretty unconvincing in his defence of the decision. He was not able to provide any documentation of examples of roting other than articulating the one which the Leader referred to in the letter from the Premier. That was the reason publicly given by the minister straight after the Budget but again we have seen no documentation relating to that. What became clear is that in formulating this decision there was no consultation with stakeholders and it came as a shock to all the key stakeholders when they heard about this decision in the Budget.

I think what caused the most concern at the Estimates Committee was the fact that the only thing that we could assume from speaking to the minister was that the sole justification was budgetary. He needed to find money to fund the other projects. That is not a satisfactory reason to give to the people who will miss out because of the decision to scrap most of the compensation available to victims of crime.

Another thing that dismayed me was the minister's admission that the decision to maintain the sexual assault provision was politically motivated. It was an admission that keeping the \$2 000 was a way of keeping that lobby group happy. I do not know which political Einstein decided that providing \$2 000 to a victim of sexual assault will keep anyone happy. As the honourable member for Murchison said, it is quite an insult to cap it at \$2 000. I cannot imagine anything worse than being the victim of a sexual assault. But when you compare it to other equally abhorrent crimes of violence this decision does not make any equitable sense.

**Mr Dean** - Which is more serious, a minor sexual assault or the shooting of Les Cooper for instance, who was almost killed?

**Mr MARTIN** - I cannot weigh it up. I think that any sexual assault is abhorrent but you have other examples.

**Ms Forrest** - They are both life-changing events, that is the thing.

**Mr MARTIN** - Absolutely. Your life would never be the same after either event. How you justify a victim of a sexual assault being compensated whereas Les Cooper will not be eligible if this change is passed beggars belief. To me the tragedy and the inequity of the decision is highlighted by the Les Cooper case and the knowledge that an officer being shot while on duty will not be eligible. He is unable to work but the workers compensation fund provisions mean a 15 per cent drop in income. This does not make any sense. I will look very closely at this bill when it comes before this House. I cannot see myself supporting it when it does.