

DRAFT SECOND READING SPEECH

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Corrections Amendment Bill 2018

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Madam Speaker, this Bill fulfils the Government's election commitment to ensure a member with policing experience is represented on Tasmania's Parole Board.

Just as we did in 2015 when we legislated to ensure a victims of crime representative on the Parole Board, we are amending the legislation to ensure a member with policing experience is similarly represented on the Board.

The Parole Board carries out a vital function in our community. Once a prisoner is eligible to be released on parole, it is the independent Parole Board that determines whether or not to release the prisoner.

An individual with policing experience will bring a unique set of experiences to the Board which are relevant when considering whether a prisoner should be considered for parole.

In determining whether or not a prisoner should be released on parole, the *Corrections Act 1997* lists a number of factors that the Parole Board is to take into consideration, including the protection of the public, the rehabilitation of the prisoner, and statements provided by the prisoner's victims.

We believe a former police officer's views will be helpful in considering applications for parole which inevitably involves the parolee reintegrating back into the community.

The Parole Board currently comprises three members, but this Bill provides for a fourth member of the Board. A fourth member of the Board raises the possibility of votes being deadlocked, and the Bill will ensure that the member presiding at a meeting will have the casting vote where the number of votes is equal.

As I mentioned, the addition of a fourth member of the Parole Board adds to recent reforms to the makeup of the Board. In 2015, amendments were made to the *Corrections Act 1997* to require one member of the Board to have knowledge and experience of victim of crime matters. This was an appropriate step to ensure that a member with insight into victim-related matters could be part of the Board's decisions.

In the Parole Board's 2015-2016 *Annual Report*, the then Chairperson of the Board said that it had been useful to have a designated member of the Board giving a voice to victim related matters. The Chairperson went on to say that it is important that the Board's composition reflects the importance of victims' issues.

Madam Speaker, the Hodgman Liberal Government is committed to keeping Tasmania safe, and this legislation to include a member with policing experience is an important measure to ensure community safety remains at the core of any Parole Board decision.

Madam Speaker, I commend the Bill to the House.