

27th February 2017

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To The Research Director, Legal Affairs & Community Safety Committee.

I applaud the recommendations being made to fast track the implementation of new domestic violence laws through Parliament. This is truly urgent, and we all need to step up and act as one to stamp out domestic violence and ultimately domestic homicide. *Any* act of domestic violence is the path to domestic homicide.

In 2010 my niece and goddaughter, Bianca Faith Girven, was murdered at the hands of her then partner. A senseless act of violence, affecting the lives of all in my family, all that knew her and more particularly taking away the mum of her young son Ziggy who was just 20 months old at that time.

Had Bianca been alive today, I know she would be advocating as I am, as her mother Sonia Anderson is, to firm up laws that may assist in reducing risk of domestic violence and ultimately domestic homicide. Bianca was a strong advocate for women's rights and actively worked in the community supporting young women at risk of domestic violence.

Bianca is our personal loss. And sadly she is one of many as this gut-wrenching reality of increasing loss of life due to domestic violence is spread far and wide across our state, affecting so many Queensland families. And these are heinous deaths, often reeking with deplorable violence.

Words – 'enough is enough' .. 'not now, not ever'. They are only words unless we all **stop the talk** and **start to act** to make the laws work for victims and their families.

I am pleading with you now. Put victims first.

- 1) Bail should never be an automatic assumption for domestic violence perpetrators. away the automatic assumption of bail being granted in domestic violence situations.
- 2) Victims and their families must be alerted when either bail or parole is being considered for a perpetrator, alleged or otherwise. Victims and their families have the right to be safe, to live without constant fear and to have the opportunity to make plans to stay safe. We need to empower victims, not shut them out.
- 3) Consider the option of GPS tracking devices. Demonstrate proactively that Queensland considers the safety of victims as a priority.

I urge all Members of the Parliament to support these changes being introduced in the Bill.

Regards