



Speech by
**Mr DENVER
BEANLAND**

MEMBER FOR INDOOROOPILLY

Hansard 11 November 1999

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (FAMILY PROTECTION) AMENDMENT BILL

Mr BEANLAND (Indooroopilly—LP) (2.32 p.m.): I rise to speak in view of the proceedings that occurred before lunch today. The Government's surprise amendment, which was introduced and first sighted by the Opposition this morning, changes the whole thrust of the legislation. It is a very significant amendment indeed. I am very concerned about the way in which it was brought in. I am concerned about the fact that no notice was given of this significant amendment and that there has been no real community consultation on it. I am concerned about the fact that the other amendments to the legislation, which we debated last night and this morning and which have lain on the table for some five months, did not include this particular amendment, which was circulated by the Minister only this morning once the second reading debate on the Bill was completed and as we moved to the Committee stage.

Therefore, the Opposition will be dividing on the third reading, even though we supported the original amendments to the domestic violence legislation that were put forward by the Minister and the second reading of the Bill. Anyone who reads the Hansard will see why a number of Opposition members feel particularly strongly about this issue and the process—or the lack of process would be a more appropriate way of putting it—that has occurred in this instance.

At lunch, someone reminded me of what used to happen when the former Government was in power. Even though we normally went to great lengths to ensure that Independent and Opposition members were suitably briefed, if something came up at the last minute and the Opposition spokesman had not been briefed on it, there was certainly a great furore. Opposition members would complain about the fact that they were not fully briefed and that the amendments were not available for some days prior to the debate so that they could consult people and so on. None of that has occurred in this instance—far from it.

As I say, there was plenty of time to bring in the amendment separately or to put it in the original legislation. With respect to the Minister—and I do not want to belabour the point—I do not know why it was not among the original amendments. That has not been explained at all. It seems in all likelihood that the Minister intended to bring this matter forward when the original amendments were introduced, or at least at some time since, so that it could have been lain on the table of the House or at least circulated to the members. A ministerial statement on the matter could have been made. There are a number of ways that the Minister could have handled the situation so that members of the Parliament and the community were aware of this significant amendment to the legislation.

I will not go through all the arguments that were raised earlier. I simply put on the record the reason for our opposition to the third reading of the Bill in this instance, even though we supported the second reading and the amendments to the legislation, with the exception of the late amendment that was moved by the Minister.
