



Speech by

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Hansard 9 March 1999

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Ms NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (10.19 a.m.): Yesterday was International Women's Day—a celebration in Australia of 70 years of struggle to reach some level of equality. International Women's Day is also a day of reflection not only to applaud our past sisters for their stamina and courage but also to reflect on the continued atrocities to women that still occur in Australia and around the world. Although women in Australia have come a long way in achieving their goals, there is still a long way to go. If any message were to be received loudly and clearly from the Townsville women it would be that we should celebrate the solidarity and collective anger of women and be politically active in standing up against male cruelty and violence.

The tragic death of Maria Giannikos was lamented by Dr Betty McLellan, who spoke for Maria. She stated that Maria was killed by her husband because she was a "bad, unfaithful, uncaring wife and mother", who goaded her "poor" husband into killing her. The daily media reports presented Maria's husband, Nick, as a "good upright citizen" who was hardworking and caring but whose patience was stretched beyond endurance by his faithless wife. Bad Maria, poor Nick. Nick was telling the story; Maria was dead.

Nick was found not guilty of murder but guilty of the lesser charge of manslaughter, for which he will serve three years in prison. Everyone spoke for Nick, both publicly and privately. Maria was rendered irrelevant and invisible. The psychiatrist, in his professional opinion, said that poor Nick—wait for it—was suffering from fragmentation. Is that not a pathetic defence for murder? As a mother, I constantly feel fragmented, but I do not kill anybody.

What about the Victorian woman and her adult son who were charged with the murder of their husband and father? After 13 years of continued and horrific violence at the hands of her husband, Heather Osland and her son, David, killed Frank Osland after another particularly bad night of violence and abuse. David, who struck the blow which killed his father, was found not guilty—a just decision. Heather was found guilty of murder and is presently serving 14 and a half years in prison.

On International Women's Day in Townsville women united in thinking of Maria and Heather and the thousands of women like them, and renewed their determination to maintain the rage and continue to fight for justice for women and children.
