



Speech by

DIANNE REILLY

MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT CONFERENCE

Mrs REILLY (Mudgeeraba—ALP) (7.16 p.m.): On Wednesday, 5 September I opened Australia's inaugural conference on domestic violence and sexual assault on behalf of the Premier. The Seeking Solutions Conference at the Parkroyal Hotel at Broadbeach was attended by more than 400 delegates from government and non-government agencies and women's services from throughout Australia and overseas, and a further 100 had to be turned away. The conference was organised by the combined Women's Crisis Services and the Gold Coast Sexual Assault Support Service and attracted a high calibre of speakers and experts in the field of domestic violence.

Speakers included Kirsty Sword Gusmao; Professor Robert Connell of the University of Sydney, the author of *Men and Male Roles* and *Masculinities and Violence*; Associate Professor Ruth Busch from Waikato University in New Zealand; Jackie Huggins, the Deputy Director of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit at the University of Queensland; Dr Diana Russell, Professor of Sociology from San Francisco; and also many other noted and experienced presenters.

I think it is very significant that the first such conference to be held in Australia was held on the Gold Coast in Australia's sixth largest and fastest growing city. It is significant because it shows that the Gold Coast is a progressive and courageous community, one that is prepared to tackle the issue of domestic violence and sexual assault head on. As I told conference delegates, I had mixed feelings about this conference. On the one hand, I was delighted that we had the energy, the drive and the commitment to hold an event such as this but, of course, on the other hand I wished we did not have to have it at all. I wish, as I am sure all honourable members do, that this scourge of society did not exist in our community, but I know that we cannot turn a blind eye and pretend that domestic violence does not exist. Domestic violence does exist; sexual assault does occur and it cannot be tolerated.

The Beattie government is committed to working with the community and with all stakeholders to reduce domestic violence and sexual assault and their effects on society. The Safe Families Safer Communities policy and action plan establishes the framework for a whole-of-government response to domestic and family violence. The domestic violence legislation amendment bill circulated earlier this year for public comment aims to extend coverage of the act to include people who are abused by their relatives, people who are abused in informal care relationships, and people who are abused within intimate personal relationships such as dating. The commitment of \$10 million to the PPP, the Positive Parenting Program, is working to help Queensland families break the cycle of poor parenting, lack of information and childhood abuse.

A lot more is being done. A lot more still needs to be done. Those who attended the conference and shared information and sought solutions are to be commended and those who organised the conference are to be congratulated. I particularly want to congratulate Di McCleod and Betty Taylor on the enormous efforts they put in and the very professional and well managed conference that they held.
