



Speech by

Hon. J. FOURAS

MEMBER FOR ASHGROVE

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. J. FOURAS (Ashgrove—ALP) (3.47 p.m.): There is an old English saying: a woman, a dog and a walnut tree; the more you belt them the better they be. I say that because National Party members opposite live in that old English world. Its opposition to this legislation is disgraceful. I was in this parliament at a time when Queensland was the only state in Australia which did not fund women's refuges fully, because the National Party of the day believed that funding women's refuges aided family breakdown. That was just unbelievable. I was also in the last parliament when we debated legislation that agreed with the concept that the Criminal Code was not the best way to deal with domestic violence and violence in the home. When it was applied to same sex couples—Sodom and Gomorrah—the whole parliament exploded. I have never seen more disgraceful and disgusting speeches made in this place than those made at the time by the member for Gregory and the former member for Southport. Of course it started down the back with the One Nation members. It was like a wave. It went from One Nation to the National Party. In the end the contamination actually ended up with the Liberal Party, which got caught up in it. In all my years in parliament that was probably the most disgraceful debate that I have ever seen.

We accept the fact that we cannot use the Criminal Code for dealing with matters in the home because one group or another would be excluded from it. This legislation is including other groups. It takes time for some people to understand that the world is changing, that values are changing and that we live in changing times.

I remember when I was involved in a committee dealing with a community centre that ran a women's refuge. A man rang me and said that he was a member of the Labor Party and he wanted to see me, to which I agreed. I asked him what he wanted. He showed me his membership card and told me that he wanted me to find out where his wife was as he thought she had gone into a refuge. I told him that a refuge is just that: it is for people seeking refuge. I told him that I was sorry, but if he gave me a letter I would take it to her. I asked him why he wanted to know where she was. He said, 'Because I want to go and see her, put her across my knee, pull her panties down and give her a good smack to bring her back to her senses.' That is the sort of old society of people in the National Party and they cannot understand that times have changed.

This legislation is only playing catch up. It is legislation that is in every other state. It is legislation that everybody sees as necessary. This legislation actually catches dependent people such as the elderly and people with a disability, just as it does with people in a heterosexual or de facto relationship. Significantly, it will apply to young people in dating situations.

It is important that we understand that those people opposite are going to oppose this legislation—and I am not talking about the Liberal Party because I have the impression that it is going to support it and I am sure that it will. In all the years that I have been in this House the position of National Party members has been one of putting their heads in the sand. As another member of the Labor Party said, they have tried to suggest that there is no prostitution. They have tried to see that we do not have other types of sexual relations or a different sort of society. They want to say that we have a society that is not changing.

Ultimately, the time has come for the National Party to become contemporary. The time has come for the National Party to encourage members to enter this House who understand the dynamics

and the reality of today's society. Until it does that, it will not be relevant, it will not be contemporary and it will have no place in any future government of this state. I commend the minister for her legislation.
