



Speech by

JO-ANN MILLER

MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mrs MILLER (Bundamba—ALP) (11.56 a.m.): Domestic violence is a problem within my electorate of Bundamba. Not a week goes by when I or my hardworking electorate officers, Steve Axe and Michael Bertram, are not requested to assist constituents with domestic violence problems. We have seen women and children, some battered and bruised, with only the clothes they stand in seeking assistance to have their domestic violence problems addressed, and assist them we do. We have to organise emergency housing if we can or assist them to relocate to a relative's home in the short term or to a local caravan park. We help them complete Centrelink application forms. We help them access food parcels through the Gleaners, the Shiloh Church, the Goodna Youth Accommodation Service, Operation Kinder Community, which is run by Reverend Dell Foreman, Goodna Anglicare and other agencies. We help clothe them with the great assistance of Anne and her team at St Vincent de Paul's shop at Goodna.

We also contact counsellors expert in domestic violence issues and, in some cases, organise for the children to change schools and then assist them with their uniforms. We also help by filling out Department of Housing application forms so that, in the long term, the family will have a place to call home. Our local churches and neighbourhood houses at Goodna and Riverview, our local community organisations and my office all band together to help people in domestic violence situations. One man who helps out not only in words but also with his actions by moving people in his four-wheel drive and trailer is Gerry Hulett. Many families in our community have been grateful for his assistance over a number of years.

Domestic violence is an evil in our community. People do not have to live with the fear of domestic violence, because all people are entitled to live their lives free of the fear of violence and abuse, including emotional abuse. The legislation before the House today expands the existing legislation to cover family members, people with disabilities, the elderly in our communities and people in dating relationships. These amendments are timely as they acknowledge that our communities are different to what they were when the domestic violence legislation was first enacted, that the structure of family life has changed and that relationships within those structures have changed as well.

In my electorate of Bundamba I see an increasing number of grandparents with the sole responsibility for and care of their grandchildren. I know of cases where, out of care and compassion for their grandchildren, grandmothers and grandfathers have fallen out with their sons and daughters over the care and welfare of their beloved grandchildren. Indeed, on Tuesday evening I was at the Redbank Plaza talking to a most wonderful grandmother, Joanna, who now has the sole care of her grandson and granddaughter, and she does a wonderful job in looking after them.

I also know of cases in which adult family members have come back to live with elderly parents, causing much distress to their household. I know of cases in which elderly people are getting ripped off financially and have become emotionally scarred by family members, often causing great trauma for them in the later years of their life.

Domestic violence affects all sectors of society and it affects all age groups. It affects the rich and the poor, the well educated and the uneducated, and it crosses multicultural boundaries. This bill is really about all of us living in a less violent world. It is about safer communities, safer relationships and people feeling safer in their own homes. Legislation such as this, combined with the great government programs such as the Department of Housing's Urban and Community Renewal Program, the police

beats in our suburbs and the Health Department's new health centre in Goodna working in partnership with our churches and community groups will make my electorate a better place to live in, a safer place for families and a good place for our older people to live out their lives.

Indeed I believe that the Department of Housing's Urban and Community Renewal Program in Dinmore, Riverview and Goodna has had an influence in lowering the incidence of domestic violence in these communities. Living in a hot box in 40 degree heat in an Ipswich summer with the old man out on the grog and the kids hot and bothered is certainly not good. These urban renewal programs, which have added outdoor decks, covered carports and some landscaping, in my view have helped families live outdoors in the hot weather resulting in less violent, happier and more tolerant family situations.

In conclusion, this bill is an important bill being debated on International Women's Day. I congratulate all the women in Ipswich who will be celebrating today, particularly at the big event tonight in Darcy Doyle Place. The Ipswich sexual assault service and other groups do a great job in organising this and other events in our city on International Women's Day. I say thanks to them for doing such a great job. I commend the bill to the House.
