



Speech by

Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; ESTIMATES G

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (3.34 pm): It is with pleasure that I rise to speak in the parliament to the report of Estimates Committee G and, in particular, to address some issues in regard to women's policy. It is a great year: we are celebrating 100 years of the vote for women in Queensland. As has been noted, while there are things to celebrate there are still many issues that we need to pursue in order to ensure that women have the best opportunities to live full, healthy and happy lives.

Ms Nelson-Carr: How many women have you got in the National Party?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wallace): Order! The member for Mundingburra!

Miss SIMPSON: This should not be a party political issue and I am very disappointed that is the way that the member wants to interject. I wanted to address an issue that should be one that is addressed across the community with a bipartisan approach.

Ms Nelson-Carr: Well you should have good representatives.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mundingburra will cease interjecting.

Miss SIMPSON: It has been 100 years since women gained the right to vote; have a little respect.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member for Maroochydore to address the chair.

Miss SIMPSON: We have women suffering from domestic violence—

Ms Nelson-Carr interjected.

Miss SIMPSON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I am disappointed that there are women in this House who are laughing about the issue of domestic violence. That is very poor and I am quite disgusted. This is an issue that should be approached in a bipartisan way, not in a frivolous manner by a member opposite. We have women in our community who need to have this issue addressed as a bipartisan issue. We do not need others trying to turn it into a frivolous matter. That is very disappointing.

I want to acknowledge the work of a group in our community on the Sunshine Coast. Its members put their hands in their pockets, went out into the community and got great support. They were able to build three houses to help domestic violence victims in the area of Noosa. I am referring to a church group that enlisted the wider support of the community along with Noosa Shire Council. Noosa COC along with Noosa Shire Council and numerous businesses recognise that the way forward on this issue is to address the issue across party lines, across the community; not with a face of abuse in the public arena and not with a face of abuse in private either.

I want to acknowledge the work that they did because I believe it is a model for other communities. The future is one where we value people; one where we recognise that there are those who suffer in private and they need public help to build the facilities and send a clear message that violence is not acceptable in any community. I believe that the work in this particular community deserves recognition. But there are other domestic violence services and other people across the Sunshine Coast and Queensland who are on the front line assisting women and men who are in times of trouble.

Sexual assault is also a matter of concern in our community. I am disturbed that there is still not an adequate, coordinated approach to help minimise the trauma of, firstly, when people go through sexual assault and, secondly, when they go through the legal process and the follow-up with government medical officers or GMOs. I know that there have been attempts in the past to coordinate it, but they have fallen through. Many times there has been a lack of female GPs available to act as GMOs, but there is altogether a lack of appropriately trained people on hand to ensure that the time frame it may take for women to be seen and consulted—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Maroochydore, I have given you some leeway but I would remind you of standing order 236 on relevance. I hope you will address the estimates before the House.

Miss SIMPSON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I think you would understand that sexual assault against women is a women's policy issue, and this is something that has not been addressed in this estimates process. I think it is extremely relevant when it can take up to eight hours for a woman—or a man—to be seen by a GMO to have the necessary tests in order to capture the evidence that may lead to a conviction.

Ms Nelson-Carr interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Mundingburra, I warned you before. This is my final warning.

Miss SIMPSON: This is a women's policy issue. It should not be a matter of partisan debate; it should be one which engenders cross-party support to ensure that there is a better way forward than the one the system currently provides. If it takes eight hours for a woman to have a shower after she has been raped because she cannot see a government medical officer in time, it is not good enough. I do not accept the words of those who have guffawed and carried on during this debate that it is good enough. I want to raise this in the House at this time because it is still a failing system. It has not been addressed in the budget. I do want to raise this matter with the minister and the government and say that as a parliament we need to do better.