



Speech by

Hon. Margaret Keech

MEMBER FOR ALBERT

Hansard Thursday, 15 November 2007

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

White Ribbon Day

Hon. MM KEECH (Albert—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Women) (10.05 am): I would like to bring to the attention of my colleagues a significant day occurring later this month. The day of 25 November is a very important day recognised around the world. It is White Ribbon Day—the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. The Bligh government takes the very strong position that violent behaviour towards women is simply unacceptable. Sadly, the incidence of violence against women is still too high.

Recent research indicates that 42 per cent of Australian women have experienced violence by a previous partner. Of great concern is that eight per cent have experienced violence by a current partner. Shockingly, 46 per cent of women who had experienced violence by a previous partner said that their children had witnessed the violence. It is something workers in the Department of Child Safety see almost every day. Each day our child safety officers work with children and young people who suffer absolutely incredible trauma as a result of domestic violence.

International research is clear: when children live in a violent home the dreadful impact on their physical, mental and emotional development lasts a lifetime. White Ribbon Day reminds the community about the costs of violence against women. It is a strong reminder that everyone is affected by this issue—from the women and children who suffer as a result, to our communities and right through to the pressure this type of violence places on our police, justice and health systems.

White Ribbon Day provides an opportunity for men to show their commitment to stopping violence against women. The ribbon is a symbol of a personal pledge never to commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women. On 25 November hundreds of thousands of men and women in Australia will be wearing white ribbons. I encourage each of my parliamentary colleagues to join me in proudly wearing the white ribbon on that day.

We have delivered to the office of each member a White Ribbon Day pack, including a white ribbon and some information about what this important event represents. These packs have been supplied by the Office for Women, working with CEO Challenge. Let us all join together in wearing the white ribbon on 25 November as a reminder that eliminating domestic violence is everyone's responsibility.