




Speech by

Desley Scott

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

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DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE PROTECTION BILL

 **Mrs SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (4.50 pm): It gives me a great deal of hope for a better future for those in our community experiencing domestic violence to see this bill before the House today, the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Bill 2011. The incidence of domestic violence is on the increase and there is no community which escapes this dreadful scourge, no matter what level of privilege—right through to those who may be doing it tough. And, yes, I see it in my own electorate of Woodridge.

Whatever the reason, there is no excuse for the imposition of power, intimidation, physical violence, rape, financial deprivation, control and creating an atmosphere of fear and dread in any domestic situation. Women and children are more often the victims, and violence has led to many having to uproot to possibly a women's shelter, some not knowing who to turn to, spiralling into homelessness, loss of family stability for children having to change school, losing contact with friends, financial stress, and huge emotional trauma—loss of self-esteem and confidence—not to mention the legacy of physical abuse. Many perpetrators have continued to terrorise their victim, breaking court orders and sometimes taking out domestic violence orders themselves against their partner, who has been defending themselves or their children.

The measures contained in this bill have been brought about by consultation with many stakeholders such as domestic violence services, police, lawyers, our courts and community members. I believe that they will make a difference. I pause here to pay tribute to my own services in Logan such as Working Against Violence Support Service; Centre Against Sexual Violence; Murrigunyah, our ATSI counselling services for women; Relationships Australia; UnitingCare; ACT for Kids; Kingston East Neighbourhood Centre; our Department of Communities; Logan Women's Health and Wellbeing Centre; Family Relationship Centre; Centacare; our Police Service, particularly our Domestic Violence Team; Youth and Family Service; plus other services in Beaudesert, Gold Coast and Redlands.

In 2011 I attended the launch at the Coomera Police Station of the DV Web Link, which our local services, in conjunction with our police, constructed. This is a very comprehensive and easy-to-use tool to assist our services and covers the whole of Queensland. I spoke in this House soon after the launch to thank those who had worked on this impressive website.

I now turn to some of the initiatives which I believe will turn the tide in favour of the victim and families. It has always been so disruptive for the victim to flee the home. These laws strengthen the ability for police, who are usually the first on the scene, to better handle situations, and police will receive greater training on operational procedures and have improved resources.

Unfortunately for police who attend, incidents can be highly volatile and dangerous. Under this legislation, police can issue a notice of good behaviour towards the victim and may seek cool-down provisions, with the perpetrator having to leave the home for 24 hours. These are obtained by applying through the courts. Should the perpetrator continue with their aggressive behaviour, possibly being intoxicated with alcohol and/or drugs, police may seek through a magistrate up to eight hours detention, with a recording of conditions. For the more serious offenders, a magistrate must approve detention

beyond four hours and the perpetrator may be subject to directives not to re-enter the premises or a place of work and must attend counselling and/or intervention services.

In the case of Logan City, the services offered by the Youth and Family Service have been shown to be an effective means of assisting many perpetrators to overcome their offending behaviour. For those who disobey orders and continue their threats, with unfortunately sometimes victims coming to harm, the maximum penalty has been increased to three years imprisonment.

This bill will result in less disruption to families, in children exhibiting fewer emotional problems and in the victim retaining her local support networks. Should the perpetrator successfully be rehabilitated to be able to return to his family, maybe with ongoing counselling, it will lead to the repair of family and intimate relationships and, ultimately, more happy homes. I thank the minister for her continuing support of women and the family and thank those who gave their advice and input into this important bill. I commend the bill to the House.