




Speech by
Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE PROTECTION BILL

 **Ms GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (5.38 pm): I, too, rise proudly to support the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Bill. As many have said before me in the House, I can only think of one word when I think of domestic violence and the word that comes to mind is 'ugly'. The words 'horrific' and 'frightening' are also words that have been used here in relation to the innocent victims who are the ones badly affected by domestic violence. I am very happy to hear that this legislation is about better protection for those innocent victims. As we know, the legislation is about 20 years old. I commend the minister and her staff and the department for doing a very thorough analysis of this legislation and bringing into the House a bill that is now contemporary, up-to-date and focuses on the right areas. I welcome the enhanced definition so that different types of domestic violence now do not fall through the cracks, that we recognise a series of offences and that the behaviour is about dominating another person causing fear. That is what domestic violence is usually about. It is about dominating and it is about causing fear.

I welcome the enhanced police functions and powers. I do not envy the work of the police. I know that it is probably a most difficult case when they are called to a domestic violence incident. I think the changes in the legislation to the police powers and functions are fantastic. I think they will go a long way to better support those officers who do a wonderful job in the field. I think it is much more practical that we hold the perpetrators accountable, and there are now ousting conditions so they are not able to remain at the premises or enter the premises. I believe that increased penalties for breaches of domestic violence orders are long overdue. I really do welcome all of the changes that are contained in this legislation.

It does not surprise me that a lot of these situations go unreported. I have known many constituents, friends and other people who have suffered domestic violence. When you ask them why they put up with it for so long, they say it is because there is a sense of shame and stigma. Often they just say that it is so embarrassing to have to admit that they have been a victim of a domestic violence incident.

When I was a union official I spent a lot of my working life working against domestic violence and bringing the issue into the workplace. As the member for Nanango said, in many situations where women find themselves in a domestic violence environment the reason they do not leave is that they do not have economic independence. A lot of my working life has been about gaining for women the economic independence and confidence so that if they find themselves in these types of situations they can leave and have money to support not only themselves but also the children whom they have with them. We brought this issue into the workplace because often women had difficulty going into the workplace after they had had a bad night or, alternatively, they left work because no-one could understand. Once again, they felt embarrassed or shameful about having to front up at work with the bruises or the evidence of what happened the night before.

I am very proud to have been involved in great campaigns such as CEO Challenge Australia, and I was there when it was born. My hat goes off to Wendy Reid, the executive director, and the chair, Dianne Jeans. They do a wonderful job with CEO Challenge. The organisation is about recognising that domestic violence is an industrial issue and that we have to change the culture and recognise domestic violence for

what it is. I love the union campaigns that we had. Probably one of my favourite domestic violence campaign T-shirts states, 'You can't beat a woman.' It is a great play on words and I think that campaign was excellent.

Finally, I say thank you to all honourable members for supporting this. It is a really important bill. It is great to have bipartisan support. We are now at the end of the 53rd Parliament. All of us in this House should be proud to say that the last bill that we passed in the 53rd Parliament was a bill that improved the life of the innocent victims of domestic violence whom it seeks to protect. I say: well done, Minister. I most proudly commend this bill to the House.