




Speech by

Stephen Bennett

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

Hansard Tuesday, 30 October 2012

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, EDON PLACE

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (10.06 pm): It is with mixed emotions that I highlight the great work being done by the Bundaberg women's shelter, now known as Edon Place. It is a pleasure to know that this terrific staff and volunteers are in my community, providing service to women and their children experiencing domestic and family violence. Edon Place plays a pivotal role not only in service provision but also in the availability of valuable data and information through continuous consultation on policy matters at a state and regional level.

It is sad to see the number of women in our community, state and country who experience and continue to experience domestic and family violence. Domestic and family violence and sexual assault continue to be the most prevalent forms of violence against women. The costs to the community are expected to continue to escalate to \$15.2 billion by 2021 without appropriate action. We need to be reminded that domestic violence is about power and control. It can occur in many forms and can affect people of any age. Women continue to suffer high levels of both physical and psychological violence in intimate and wider family relationships in our community. Unfortunately, this horror can exist within our homes, or even with the people already in our lives. In fact, of the women killed each year through domestic violence, 60 per cent are at the hands of partners or ex-partners and 12 per cent by family members. The courage shown by women in deciding to leave the relationship is enormous. The huge risk of this decision means that their safety and the safety of their children are often in jeopardy. Research clearly shows that the most dangerous time for women is in the six months after they leave the abusive relationship.

The number of women accommodated in the crisis accommodation in Bundaberg remains constant, with an increase in children's numbers. For instance, 85 women and 155 children were accommodated last year. Non-resident clients continue to be a large part of the workload, with nearly 1,000 client contacts for a variety of crisis and/or domestic and family violence related issues and emergency relief. We must not forget about the children who have witnessed or have been exposed to domestic violence, which increasingly is being recognised as a form of child abuse. Edon Place is one organisation that is equipped to meet the demands of abusive relationships. Edon Place continues to support Child Protection Week by providing activities in the Bundaberg and district region. The centre has been involved in delivering the Love Bites program, a nationally recognised and highly regarded relationship violence prevention program for young people in Bundaberg and district high schools.

It is important to acknowledge the staff of Edon Place. Their level of passion, commitment and diligence must not be undervalued, as their supportive teamwork is instrumental in dealing with the confronting issues facing women and their children experiencing domestic violence.

I recognise not only the good work in my community but also the organisations and individuals who generously contribute and donate to Edon Place. These donations have assisted numerous women and children when they have needed help the most. I have met the staff and the board on several occasions and have been moved by the work done. I thank them on behalf of my community. I hope the work continues.