




Speech By
Rob Molhoek

MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

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ADJOURNMENT

White Ribbon Day

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (7.09 pm): Yesterday was White Ribbon Day—an opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to ending violence against women. Our government announced yesterday we would be providing an additional \$100,000 to DVConnect to extend its support and counselling services in response to the unprecedented rise in demand for these services. Unfortunately, domestic violence is one of the biggest issues affecting my constituents and the broader Gold Coast community. The Premier's Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence is working with Queenslanders to identify an effective strategy to combat this growing problem. Last month, the task force invited members of the public to share their stories and experiences. One of the most insidious things about domestic and family violence is that it so often occurs in private. The stories shared by Queenslanders are nothing short of horrifying. One revealed—

I am so sad and desperate and in so much pain and just don't want to be here anymore. It's too hard ... Every morning I wake up and try and find somewhere to put the pain. I cry inside the wardrobe, in the shower, on the floor under the kitchen sink.

Another said simply—

Boys need to be taught that women are not their property.

It is our responsibility as legislators and community leaders to act now—Queensland has had enough.

Last month I had the privilege of hosting a community lunch with Mrs Lisa Newman in support of two wonderful organisations in my electorate. We raised over \$5,000 for the Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence and the Domestic Violence Prevention Centre Gold Coast. Di Macleod and Amy Compton-Keen, the directors of these services, are two of the most incredible women I have met. Their commitment to raising the profile of domestic and sexual violence and improving the lives of those affected is unrelenting. When the Premier announced the establishment of the special task force, he also encouraged Queenslanders to participate in an online survey to gauge community attitudes. Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that most people turn a blind eye to or ignore domestic and family violence, and they identified that the community as a whole is responsible for supporting those affected by domestic and family violence.

Last week, I had the privilege of joining the Attorney-General in Southport to launch the new Southport Domestic Violence Duty Lawyer Service, giving Gold Coast families increased access to free legal assistance. This new service, operated by Legal Aid Queensland, will help families navigate their way through court processes while providing practical support during such a difficult time. When we were elected, we promised to make this state the safest place to raise a family. We are well on our way to realising this goal, but as a community there is just so much more work to do. I believe we have made some great strides forward in respect of child safety legislation and we have seen many reforms come through the House; this is the next challenge for us as a government.