




Speech By
Brittany Lauga

MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

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**DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE PROTECTION AND ANOTHER ACT
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (8.58 pm): I am delighted to rise to speak on this bill which is an important element of our government's package of reforms that will tackle the scourge of domestic violence on our state. This is a subject which I feel passionately about and one which no community in Queensland can escape from, including my own. In the 2014-15 financial year the Capricornia region recorded 3,777 domestic violence occurrences and 588 breaches of DV orders. Sadly, over the past five years the number of domestic violence occurrences in Capricornia has increased by 26 per cent, with domestic violence order breaches 68 per cent higher for the region compared with the rest of Queensland. These figures are shocking.

That is why in September of this year I called a high-level round table among Keppel's community leaders and stakeholders to discuss ways to tackle the growing issue of domestic and family violence and its destructive impact. The round table brought together key stakeholders from social services, the legal community, emergency services, health, community leaders and state and local government. I have been so heartened by the widespread determination and want to work together as a community to tackle this terrible problem.

I would like to acknowledge the work of Belinda Lindel and her team at the Rockhampton Women's Health Centre; Bev Schimke and her team at Rockhampton Women's Shelter; Superintendent Ron van Saane from the Rockhampton police, who is also a passionate White Ribbon ambassador; and all the people who are so dedicated and passionate about eradicating domestic and family violence in my community.

I acknowledge my brother, Lewis McKee, who is one of four White Ribbon ambassadors in Rockhampton and the Capricorn Coast. His commitment to eliminating domestic and family violence in our community is admirable. He wears his white ribbon with pride and raises awareness at local community events and forums that domestic violence is not okay—not now, not ever. He tells me that other men ask him about how they too can become a White Ribbon ambassador and take a stand against domestic and family violence. I am so very proud of you, Lew, for your commitment to ensure that all women live in safety, free from all forms of men's violence.

Domestic and family violence is everybody's business and only by working together can we hope to eliminate it. The community effort is one strand of a wide range of actions to tackle domestic and family violence and it is vital. However, we must also look at legislation, as we do here in the House this evening, and how we can reform penalties and court processes in order to protect victims and hold perpetrators to account. I am pleased that the amendments introduce a principle for the right for victims to have their views and wishes heard.

Domestic violence is, at its very heart, an ugly issue of control and domination of men over women. While I in no way want to diminish the experience of the small number of men who are victims

of domestic and family violence, the fact is that the majority of victims are women. Often this abuse can take the form of silencing a woman, making her fearful to express her views.

That is why it is so important that this legislation has a principle that victims of domestic and family violence do have their views and wishes heard if it is appropriate and practical. The minister has made very clear that this is not a victim impact statement. It is the introduction of an overall guiding principle that women be considered and consulted as part of the process and issues which relate to them and their circumstances. I commend the bill to the House.