




Speech By
Dr Christian Rowan

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Record of Proceedings, 15 October 2015

**CRIMINAL LAW (DOMESTIC VIOLENCE) AMENDMENT BILL; CORONERS
(DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE DEATH REVIEW AND ADVISORY
BOARD) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (12.19 pm): I rise to address the Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill 2015 and the Coroners (Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board) Amendment Bill 2015. I support the intent of the Coroners (Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board) Amendment Bill 2015. I support the intent of the Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill 2015 given that it will enhance relevant penalties and sanctions for those who commit acts of domestic and family violence. The rate and severity of domestic and family violence in Queensland continues to be problematic despite initiatives and efforts by community and government representatives over many years. Women and children must feel safe in their own homes. Estimated costs of domestic and family violence to the Queensland economy range between \$2.7 billion to \$3.2 billion annually. These figures are truly staggering. It was the LNP government that initiated the special task force chaired by Dame Quentin Bryce which produced the *Not now, not ever* report. I, along with my LNP colleagues, have given full bipartisan support to the Queensland government's response to the 140 recommendations.

Throughout my professional life as a doctor I have had to protect, report and manage some truly tragic domestic violence situations. As a medical superintendent in a small rural community I remember having to treat a female patient who had been attacked with a small tomahawk axe. The physical injuries healed with time but not the emotional scars for either the patient, her family or all the health professionals, including me, involved in her care. Alcohol was certainly a factor in the case of this violence and often illicit drugs such as amphetamines can also be involved. Whilst I acknowledge the Palaszczuk government's recent \$6 million investment in front-line prevention strategies, more still needs to be done with respect to alcohol and drug disorders, particularly access to alcohol, tobacco and other drug services across Queensland and in our hospital and health services.

I am particularly concerned about amphetamine type stimulants and the role they play in violence in our community, including domestic violence. There are varying stimulants: methylenedioxymethamphetamine, otherwise known as ecstasy; paramethoxyamphetamine, known as death; and amphetamine sulphate, speed, with often a purity of five to 10 per cent, base, with a purity of 40 per cent; and crystalline methamphetamine, ice, with a 90 per cent purity meaning it is highly addictive, often causing extremely dangerous psychoactive episodes of paranoia and psychosis leading to violence. Ice, crystalline methamphetamine, is neurotoxic and extremely cheap, with one point—which equates to 0.1 of a gram—selling for \$100 with users often consuming \$100 to \$200 per day compared with a gram of heroin at \$450 a day. Whilst supply reduction strategies, including policing and law enforcement, are important, greater investment is still needed in demand reduction and harm minimisation strategies.

I was recently a keynote speaker at the International Conference of Addiction, Prevention and Treatment in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. As an addiction medicine specialist I am particularly concerned about the wave of new synthetic stimulants coming from China and South East Asia over the next three to five years and what this means for Queensland and Australia and all forms of violence in our community but specifically domestic and family violence. Assistant Commissioner Mike Keating, from the Queensland Road Policing Command, said yesterday at the Australasia Road Safety Conference that one in 10 motorists are now testing positive to drug-driving compared to one in 50 seven years ago. Drug-driving is a growing public safety issue on our roads which must also be addressed.

Recently I hosted a roundtable forum on domestic violence in my electorate of Moggill with key stakeholders attending, including DVConnect, the Queensland Police Service, the Brisbane Domestic Violence Service and the LNP's shadow minister for communities, child safety and disability services, the member for Aspley, the honourable Tracy Davis MP. I thank the shadow minister for attending that forum. This local forum provided a key opportunity to discuss appropriate strategies for dealing with domestic violence, including the LNP's proposed Queensland Domestic Violence and Sexual Offences Disclosure Scheme. Any breach of an individual domestic violence order needs to be taken extremely seriously with appropriate actions taken, including imprisonment and periods of incarceration applied increasing via this legislation to between three and five years depending upon the circumstances. The Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill 2015 will ensure cross-jurisdictional alignment and consistency of application. There is clear evidence of extensive consultation in drafting this legislation with a range of individual stakeholder organisations and also service groups involved in managing this shameful stain on our supposed civil and humane society. Ensuring courts can take into account previous domestic violence related convictions is also an important measure.

The Coroners (Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board) Amendment Bill 2015 allows for the establishment of an independent body to review domestic and family violence related deaths. It is vitally important that a root cause analysis be undertaken when any such tragic incidents occur, allowing for system and service improvements to be identified in order to avoid future occurrences. Occurrences of domestic and family violence should never occur and a number of incidents in the last few weeks have been particularly tragic.

The intended board will have broad representational input, appropriate governance oversight and realistic reporting time frames. It is certainly time as a community that we eliminate all forms of domestic and family violence and I, along with the residents and other community leaders of my electorate of Moggill, will ensure that comprehensive strategies are implemented to end this shameful culture. Domestic and family violence is perpetrated by cowards. It is un-Australian and it will be not tolerated in Queensland, not now and not ever.