




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MACKAY

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Domestic and Family Violence

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (2.49 pm): One of the most heartbreaking things I see as a local member is the scared and worn out faces of domestic violence victims who come to me to seek help for themselves and their children. These people feel powerless—trapped in a violent relationship that they do not know how to get out of, scared by what their children are being exposed to at a young age and unsure of who or where to turn to.

That is why I felt an immense feeling of pride witnessing the inaugural sitting of the pilot specialist domestic violence court in Mackay on 20 November. On that day I saw couple after couple go through what would have been a particularly stressful process in a timely and efficient manner.

The implementation of the inaugural sitting came about as a result of the *Not now, not ever* recommendations made by Dame Quentin Bryce in her landmark report into domestic and family violence. I am extremely proud of the government's efforts in implementing all 140 recommendations made by Quentin Bryce. We have already seen the positive effects these changes have made in our community.

Domestic violence does not discriminate in terms of age, sex, race, social or financial status. Nobody should be losing their life at the hands of domestic violence. Yet, tragically, there have been 29 homicides in the last two years relating to domestic violence in the state of Queensland alone. While there have been decades of action and commitment in an attempt to eradicate domestic violence, the rates and severity of the crime have continued to rise. These statistics show how important it is that we all stand up and stop the behaviours and attitudes that are in any way accepting of and excuse family and domestic violence.

The inaugural sitting of the specialist domestic violence court that I attended in Mackay is just one example of the steps our government is currently taking to help realise our vision for Queensland to be free from domestic and family violence. Prioritising victim safety is a vital goal drawn from the three key pillars of the *Not now, not ever* report. A significant shift in community attitudes and behaviour, an integrated response system that delivers the services and support victims and perpetrators need, a justice system response that will be strengthened to prioritise victim safety and hold perpetrators to account make up the three key pillars.

Once again, I commend the Queensland government on its initiatives. With these plans in place, together we can end domestic and family violence.