




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR LOGAN

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

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (4.00 pm): I rise to support the minister's bills before the House and wish to educate the House. So many have spoken so well here today that I would like to focus on the needs of a particular part of our community that struggle to access our services and struggle to understand and make their way through our legal system.

Tolstoy wrote, 'All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.' I cannot truly say that all happy families are exactly the same. However, I do know that they share common traits. They find a way for all members of the family to have respect for each other and give each member of the family a right to be an independent human being and not seek to dominate and control other members of the family. Perhaps this is what Tolstoy meant when he said 'all happy families are alike'.

I also know in families where the respect for other family members breaks down that the causes are often complex and the solutions often unique. It is a difficult journey to return to a mutually respectful relationship when this respect has been removed. I know that for many Australians from a non-English background the road to build or restore mutual respect within couples and families is even more difficult. It is even more difficult when families have a traumatic refugee background that leaves the scars of past traumas embedded in the fabric of these families.

I recently met with the passionate staff at a very special centre. This centre assists refugees on their journey to find a safe place and success for their families. Last week I met with Access Community Services and saw how they lead fragile families through the journey from a dangerous refugee camp or settlement to Australia and to settlement, education, work and success. They recognise that families struggle with learning a new language, cultural norms and other things we take for granted.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Furner): Order! Member for Logan, could you please wait a minute. Members, please treat the member speaking with respect. I can barely hear him.

Mr POWER: I sat in with a class of Karen refugees who were previously settled in Malaysia who were learning how to manage new bank accounts and keep their family finances in order. We take these things for granted. They are things that without help create stress and difficulty for those who come from a cultural background where these things are not commonplace.

I have also visited Harmony Place in Yeronga where a small, passionate team focus on services for a culturally and linguistically diverse group. They have a special focus on mental health. They spoke of overcoming a cultural reluctance to admit to a mental problem and stigmas that carried over from other countries. They spoke of how specialist services worked to overcome stigmas and, in some cases, superstitions.

I also went with the minister to a domestic violence round table for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. I heard from a variety of peak organisations and individuals from these backgrounds the struggles that they have with domestic violence. Just like anywhere in Australia, there are families where respect breaks down. However, they have to struggle in a different way to overcome these things—there are cultural pressures and pressure not to admit difficulties within the Australian society.

This was made clear to me a little over a week ago when an African woman came to my office asking for assistance. This mother of eight children sat in tears in my front office. She explained her difficult situation. Naturally, without her permission I will not go into any details or reveal the country of her background. It was difficult for her to explain to a stranger in her limited English exactly what her situation was. Together we called DVConnect. For the benefit of members and all those who are listening, their number is 1800811811. We asked for a translator in her preferred African language. I cannot say that I understood the details of their conversation, but I could watch as her eyes dried, her shoulders straightened and she began to smile as she could express her difficulties in her own language. I do not know how her journey to finding a respectful relationship in this country will end up, but I do know that we in this country and in this society gave her a clear message—not now, not ever.