




Speech By
Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

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

 **Mr FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (12.16 pm): I rise to contribute to this cognate debate on the Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill 2015 and the Coroners (Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board) Amendment Bill 2015. When we consider that, over the past eight years, nearly half of all homicides have been linked to domestic and family violence, it really brings home to us why these changes are necessary. From 1 January 2006 to 31 December 2013, 180 deaths occurred as a result of domestic and family violence. Last night, the Attorney-General went through the recommendations of the *Not now, not ever* task force report and why this parliament needs to introduce these changes.

The Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill 2015 will amend the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012 to increase the maximum penalties for the offence of contravening a domestic violence order. It will also amend the Evidence Act 1977 to include the presumption that victims of domestic and family violence be regarded as special witnesses. That means that victims of domestic violence will have increased access to orders and directions that the court can make to support the giving of evidence by special witnesses, including, for example, giving evidence from another room and giving evidence via a videotape recording. By providing these changes for victims of domestic and family violence, those suffering from this insidious disease in our communities will have more confidence.

The last time I spoke in this chamber about domestic violence, I spoke from a personal perspective in regard to my own daughter, Sally. Since that time, copious numbers of people have contacted not only my office but also the offices of other parliamentarians telling their stories. I think it is important that people continue to come forward with their stories of domestic violence and the impact that that has had on themselves, their families and their communities.

Recently, a bright Indigenous young woman from Cairns named Renee delivered a speech at Cape York House at a Stand Up Against Domestic and Family Violence event. When she finished, there was not a dry eye in the place. Renee spoke of her parents growing up in a different era—a time when everything was kept secret, behind closed doors. She spoke about how it should not be a child's responsibility to hide knives, fearing that her parents' fights would escalate into violence or stand between them screaming for them to stop so that she could have one night of peace and be able to go to school and function the next day.

Members of the public are coming forward asking for help. My office received a phone call from a father who told an alarming story that bore striking similarities to that of the road rage of Tara Brown, which tragically led to her death. More recently, in the electorate of Bulimba, I was fortunate enough to attend with Di Farmer, the member for Bulimba, a Queensland African Communities Council dinner. At

that function I purchased a book titled *Prison to palace* by a Liberian-born lady named Lucy, which told her personal story of domestic violence, both in Queensland and Africa.

I note the submission of the Immigrant Women's Support Services which drew parallels to Lucy's book. This 55th Parliament is acting decisively in making incremental changes to legislation for a change—a change where victims, a change where fathers like myself, will be left without worry that our daughters will be treated with respect by males in their lives. We owe it to our current and future generations to remedy this insidious scourge which has infected our communities for far too long. We should be proud to leave a legacy as parliamentarians of this 55th Parliament that we have done our best to assist victims of domestic violence in Queensland. I commend the bills to the House.