




Speech By  
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**MEMBER FOR CLEVELAND**

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

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (8.24 pm): I rise to address the Domestic and Family Violence Protection and Another Act Amendment Bill 2015. On 28 February 2015 the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland released its report, *Not now, not ever: putting an end to domestic and family violence in Queensland*. The task force report recommended three specific amendments to the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012. These were that the amendments be made to require courts to consider family law orders when making a domestic violence order and also consider concurrent cross-applications at the same time and a later application and cross-application or order; to require courts when making a domestic violence order to consider whether an order excluding the perpetrator from the home should be made, having regard to the wishes of the victim; and to provide for victim impact statements to be introduced and for mandatory consideration by the courts in applications for protection orders.

In addition, the task force report recommended an overarching review of the act to ensure it provides a cohesive legislative framework that incorporates the reforms recommended by the task force. In making this recommendation, the task force identified issues for consideration in the review. These included two minor amendments—allowing victims and police to appeal a court's decision not to make a temporary protection order and allowing temporary protection orders to be made to protect a person who is seeking to be added to a protection order. The Queensland government response accepted these recommendations. In particular, the government committed to amend the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act so that courts must consider dealing with cross-applications at the same time; to amend the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act to require a court when making a domestic violence order to consider whether an order excluding the perpetrator from the home should be made, having regard to the wishes of the victim; and to ensure victims' voices are heard in all domestic violence related legal processes.

I will focus my short contribution and attention on the aspects relating to victim or survivor support, court support services and some local applications to my electorate of Cleveland. It would be remiss of any of us sitting in this House tonight to turn a blind eye to the fact that domestic violence occurs with alarming frequency in our society. Unfortunately, many instances go unreported. Keeping the situation hidden away only exacerbates the agony for the victims or survivors. Often helpless women and children live in fear of the next occurrence—violence that can be triggered by a number of factors including alcohol, anger, frustration, financial hardship, mistrust and jealousy, none of which of course is acceptable. Vulnerable women and children require support and understanding to enable them to be proactive about their situations. They need support to get their lives back on track and, most importantly, they need support to regain the confidence to establish a safe, strong and caring home environment—an environment where they no longer have to see and feel the tension, terror and aggression of domestic and family violence. When in government we began this focus on domestic violence—though

it had been going, as other speakers have noted, for many years and decades—and we continue it now in opposition, and it is good to see the new government continuing that work and some of the recent reforms that the LNP in government made. In terms of White Ribbon Day, if I may say on a personal level briefly, it has been an honour to join millions of men for a good number of years now on White Ribbon Day to make the pledge and as a male member of parliament to use this position to try to influence other men to follow suit and to be respectful of women. I have again joined with many men to sign an oath never to commit violence against women, never to excuse violence against women and never to remain silent about violence against women. This is my oath and I continue to ask that every Queensland man and Australian man make that commitment.

While domestic violence exists in Queensland and is rife in our society, I will continue to use whatever influence I have to challenge men to do the right thing and say no to domestic and family violence. Vulnerable women and children need support to survive the hell of domestic and family violence and to create a caring and fear-free home environment. The oath includes a statement to never be silent about violence against women. To this aim, previously in this House—and going back to the years 2009 and 2010—I have mentioned the good work of local Cleveland and Redlands city groups, such as the Bayside Domestic Violence Initiative, or BDVI; in more recent times WAVSS, the Working Against Violence Support Service, which has been fantastic in the Redlands; and Maybanke. These groups provide critical services in the prevention of domestic and family violence and support for survivors of domestic and family violence.

I mentioned the BDVI group, because it provided court support and assistance for victims of domestic violence at the Cleveland and Wynnum magistrates courts, among other services. Under the direction of the former president, Pauline Eglington, BDVI covered at least four electorates in south-east Brisbane: Lytton, Capalaba, Cleveland and Redlands. FIFI—Females in Finance Inc.—mainly through fundraising dinners in Cleveland raised a stack of money for BDVI. Over the years, they have been a fantastic group of women, particularly in that earlier period. In an 18-month period, the funding provided by FIFI's efforts assisted 238 applicants and respondents. It was a real honour to get the BDVI funding—firstly, emergency funding and then other forms of funding—from the government to supplement FIFI's efforts, but I would have to say that it was a sad time when this organisation folded as a result of a lack of funding from the previous Bligh Labor government. Unfortunately, at the time Minister Struthers needed a lot of convincing to continue the funding and we had to fight for it. It really is a lesson about us keeping our eye on the situation and ensuring continuity of support, whether it is Labor or the LNP that is in government. It was a very disappointing period to have to fight for that funding. I want to go on record and thank the member for Aspley, Tracy Davis, for her time when she was the responsible minister for renewing the funding. I never at any moment had to go and beg or raise the matter in the parliament. I only had to talk with her. The member was very supportive of the Cleveland court support and ensured that it was always there for those victims and those who had suffered domestic violence.

The Working Against Violence Support Service is the regional domestic and family violence service for Logan and the Redlands. It is a not-for-profit, non-government organisation that is funded by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services and governed by a board of management. The service was established in 1994 in the Logan region and it has been providing services for the past 21 years in Logan, Beenleigh and Beaudesert. In September 2015, WAVSS launched its newly funded service in the Redlands community. That service has been a great addition to the other services that we have in the area. In that regard, in a bipartisan spirit I commend the government for its work.

Maybanke is a fantastic domestic and family violence organisation that also operates in the Redlands. It provides shelter for survivors of family violence. From time to time I have had the opportunity to get some funding for Maybanke. I also want to thank the Gateway Church at Carindale for its recent gift of hundreds of dollars worth of nappies to Maybanke to support some of the women in the shelter who had little babies. I commend the people of Gateway Church and also the staff and volunteers of Maybanke.

Governments must not only provide the necessary resources to domestic violence programs but also ensure that its decisions do not lead to increased family stress. Without going into the bill, I just sound a note of caution in terms of the government's decision on North Stradbroke Island. Certainly, mass job losses will cause stress. It is my hope that we can be very careful not to provide additional family stresses and strains that will come with unemployment. I appeal to the government to think very carefully about its related decisions.

*(Time expired)*