




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR COOMERA

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

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (3.43 pm): I rise in support of these two bills that represent the next step in our campaign against domestic violence: the Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill 2015 and the Coroners (Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board) Amendment Bill 2015. I congratulate the committee for the fast turnaround of their reports and appreciate the amount of effort that they would have had to put in. Where are we now? The statistics are absolutely terrifying. An average of two people a week die in Australia from domestic violence. Last year 29 people died in Queensland from domestic violence. One in six women have experienced physical abuse, one in four emotional abuse and one in four of our children experience domestic violence. In fact, I have witnessed firsthand the aftermath of murder—a most terrible murder—and the effect that it had on my family, my wife and other close members of our family. We did not know about the domestic violence. In fact, we think the domestic violence had been going on for 25 years. It seems also that the perpetrator had previously committed domestic violence.

What is domestic violence? It is physical or sexual abuse, emotional and psychological abuse—and we think the abuse in relation to our family member occurred in the psychological area—economic abuse and other threatening, coercive or controlling behaviour. On the subject of economic abuse, I recently had a constituent come to see me for support for some programs that she was running for survivors of domestic violence. I have known this lady for many years. When she first came into my office she revealed to me that she had, in fact, been the victim of domestic violence for all of her married life. It was, in fact, economic abuse in her particular circumstances. She is working through it and as a result of that she is now doing wonderful work in the community to assist others who are survivors of domestic violence.

Where to now? If you are a victim of domestic violence there is more help now than ever before. The *Not now, not ever* report headed up by Dame Quentin Bryce is a big first step. It was the result of a bipartisan approach in this chamber. The report contains 140 recommendations, with 100 per cent taken up. Funding for programs and support has been significantly increased. Just recently we have seen the Re-focus app launched here on these premises. The app has various contact details and other advice. There is a danger for victims of domestic violence; it is important that if they are in a dangerous situation they should not download the Re-focus app. Perhaps a friend can do that for them. If you are a supporter of someone experiencing domestic violence, I urge you to download it so that you can help that friend. It is so important to have all of those contact details at your fingertips. For victims and supporters we also have a freecall number, 1800737732, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It is free, it is nationwide, it is confidential and it is a domestic violence support and counselling line.

The basic messages we are sending out to the community are these: if you are a victim, it is not your fault and we urge you to seek help and report the offence. If you are a perpetrator, stop now before it is too late for those you purport to love and for you because Queenslanders have had enough.

I attended a meeting with a young lady who spoke to me at one of the fairs that all of us go to. She asked me if she could speak to me about some domestic violence issues and I said of course. She had some transport problems so myself and my electorate officer went to her home. She had two friends with her. Each of them shared their horrific stories about what had gone on. She had basically been a prisoner in her house for five years. She was locked in the house with her children when the husband went to work and he unlocked the house when he came home and woe betide her if she had not done everything that she was supposed to have done; trouble would follow. She has finally escaped that. However, what still haunts me today—and it is something that we need to address—is the question she posed to me. She asked, ‘Why is it that mum and the kids have to give up everything to escape while the perpetrator gets to stay put?’ That is a very good question and perhaps it is one that we in this House have to address in the near future.

As I alluded to earlier, sometimes domestic violence starts out as something that is not that obvious to the outside world: controlling behaviour, mental abuse and so on. It gets very dangerous for the victim when that stops working for the perpetrator and the victim starts to push back, often culminating in physical abuse and, sadly, all too often, the murder of or suicide by the victim. We all know that the *Not now, not ever* report was the first step that we have taken and that there are other steps to come. In fact, these bills are the next step and, of course, there will be many steps further on. As a parliament, we will continue working on this issue to make sure that we deliver to the community what needs to be delivered. We will beat this scourge on our society. We will work with our communities, we will work with our police and judiciary, we will work with the business sector and organisations such as CEO Challenge and, of course, we will work with our children through school programs. And, yes, we will also work with perpetrators to try to get them to change their ways.

Finally, I remind everybody that White Ribbon Day is 25 November. I call on men everywhere to make or renew their pledge, as I will now. I swear to never commit, excuse or remain silent about violence against women.