




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman
MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Domestic and Family Violence

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (9.58 am): The Palaszczuk Labor government is investing in infrastructure right across Queensland including in social infrastructure in my own portfolio. One of the first announcements I made as minister was that our government would establish two new 72-hour crisis shelters—one in Brisbane and one in Townsville. These are the first government built and operated facilities to add to the shelter system in Queensland in over 20 years. But we know this system is under pressure.

I cannot imagine what it must be like to see a woman who has experienced violence who may be hurt, who is definitely terrified and needs sanctuary, and then to have to turn her away. Last week I stood in a room full of people who have to make that decision all too regularly. The Combined Women's Refuge Group presented me with a position paper and we discussed the pressure that they are facing with an increased demand for services. The group's paper, *More than just a bed. The contribution of women's refuges in Queensland*, sets out key principles and makes 18 recommendations regarding issues facing the refuge sector.

The sector has been historically under-resourced, and it will take time to repair. That is why I am pleased to advise that these two new shelters will be up and running by the end of the year. The new shelters will provide immediate safety and support for women and assist them to make decisions about their future. This will be on top of the \$21.3 million invested each year for accommodation for 56 shelters across Queensland, and of course KPMG is doing a broad-ranging audit of services for domestic and family violence. We will receive this next month and it will help determine future spending.

In the meantime we are investing in the infrastructure needed to ensure that the domestic and family violence support system can meet the recent surge in demand. We have recently seen a surge of sickening domestic violence in Queensland and, not surprisingly, this has led to a dramatic rise in calls to immediate crisis support services. Calls to DVConnect have nearly doubled, and that is a good thing, but we need to make sure they have the support they need to help women and children escaping violence. That is why we have further invested in the support infrastructure provided by DVConnect and Women's Legal Service. We must make sure that when people reach out for help we have the services they need.

I will continue working closely with the public housing minister, Leeanne Enoch, to ensure that DV support, shelters and public housing systems are working in an integrated system to help women move from crisis accommodation to affordable housing. I will continue to engage with organisations and the Combined Women's Refuge Group in tackling the scourge of domestic and family violence, and respond to their very informative and useful working paper. We are working through the road map provided by the *Not now, not ever* report, and we are determined to help victims of domestic and family violence.