




Speech By  
**Hon. Dr Steven Miles**  
**MEMBER FOR MOUNT COOT-THA**

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

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef) (5.47 pm): I am grateful to have the opportunity today to speak on another bill aimed at tackling domestic violence and I am proud that this parliament has been so strong on this issue. The horrific domestic violence attacks on women and children which occurred so publicly on the Gold Coast and here in Brisbane a couple of months back were shocking and devastating and I know that these deaths, so very public, were just the tip of the iceberg in terms of the level of violence against women that is occurring. There are 200 complaints a day to Queensland police. That is why the Palaszczuk government announced earlier this year that it will implement all 140 recommendations in Dame Quentin Bryce's landmark *Not now, not ever* report into domestic and family violence. One of those recommendations was ouster conditions. An ouster condition means that perpetrators instead of victims are forced to leave their family homes in the event of abuse or violence. Victims of domestic violence often have low financial resources and need to remain close to friends and family for support, so these changes may allow them to retain some fraction of normality in an incredibly stressful and terrifying situation. Why should the victim of violence be responsible for leaving? Our response to domestic and family violence is often addressed in terms of helping a woman escape violence and worse—the question, 'Why doesn't she just leave?' What would it take to leave your home? Think of the lack of available refuges and appropriate accommodation, how hard it is to obtain short-term accommodation when we know some rental agencies will not rent to women escaping domestic violence. Think of the effect this might have on your employment, on your finances.

If there are children involved, it becomes even harder. Think of their schooling being interrupted, their routine being upended. Think of them having to move away from their friends and support networks. Ouster conditions are not new, but they have had to be applied for. Over the past three years, only about 28 per cent of cases included them. This amendment to the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act for the mandatory consideration of ouster conditions along with ongoing support and counselling is a very important step towards empowering victims of domestic violence. This will not work for all victims. Sometimes an ouster condition is not appropriate. This could include situations where the victim does not want the perpetrator to know their location, and risk assessment plays an important part in this determination. Safety and security for women must be absolutely paramount, which is why magistrates will have the discretion to decide if an ouster condition is appropriate.

This bill is just one more step towards our goal of ending domestic violence. It is our firm belief that domestic violence is a violation of the basic right that we all have to healthy, supportive and safe relationships. We certainly have a long way to go, but the Queensland government is committed to the most comprehensive reform package ever initiated in Queensland and we are determined to follow it through. I commend this bill to the House.