




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 15 September 2015

CORONERS (DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE DEATH REVIEW AND ADVISORY BOARD) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (2.40 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Coroners Act 2003 to establish the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board and for other particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Coroners (Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board) Amendment Bill 2015 [[1067](#)].

Tabled paper: Coroners (Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board) Amendment Bill 2015, explanatory notes [[1068](#)].

This bill delivers on a major recommendation in the report of the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland, *Not now, not ever: putting an end to domestic and family violence in Queensland*. The government has already committed \$2.1 million over four years from 2015-16 to establish an independent Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board and increase staffing for the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Unit. This bill provides the legislative framework to ensure the board can effectively perform its vital functions.

The task force considered that there was a clear need for a specific domestic and family violence death review process able to comprehensively review domestic and family violence services, supports and systems and identify any failures or gaps that may have contributed to domestic and family violence related deaths. Consequently, this bill amends the Coroners Act to provide for the establishment of the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board to enable systemic review of deaths related to domestic and family violence to help prevent or reduce domestic violence.

Establishing the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board under the Coroners Act will ensure that the board's activities complement the existing coronial processes and the board can draw on the research and data capabilities of the Office of the State Coroner. The bill provides for the board's membership, with the State Coroner or the Deputy State Coroner to be appointed as the chairperson. The minister responsible for administering the Coroners Act will be required to appoint up to 12 members the minister considers appropriate but must reflect the diversity of the Queensland community and include at least one member who is an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person. Members will be required to have experience, knowledge or skills relevant to the board's functions—for example, individuals who have expertise in the fields of domestic and family violence, health and the justice system.

The functions of the board include: to review the circumstances that contributed to the death of any person who died as a result of domestic and family violence—this includes deaths that have

occurred prior to the board's establishment; to analyse data and apply research to identify patterns, trends and risk factors relating to domestic and family violence deaths in Queensland; to carry out research to help prevent or reduce domestic and family violence deaths in Queensland; to identify where services, both generic and specialist, worked well or failed, identifying key learnings and elements of good practice in the prevention of domestic and family violence deaths; to make recommendations to government for tangible improvements to systems, policies, procedures and strategies to try to prevent further domestic and family violence related deaths; and to monitor the implementation of recommendations.

The bill provides the board with the power to do all things necessary or convenient to perform these functions effectively including: engaging persons with appropriate qualifications to conduct research and prepare expert reports for the board; and accessing information necessary to perform its functions. Under the bill the board may give written notice to a prescribed entity who has custody or control of the information, requiring the person to give the information to the board and, if the information is contained in a document, to allow the board to inspect the document and take a copy of it. A maximum penalty of 100 penalty units may be imposed for failure to comply with the notice without reasonable excuse. Indemnity provisions have been included in the bill to ensure that a prescribed entity is not liable civilly, criminally or under an administrative process for giving the information.

The bill also allows for the board to enter into an arrangement about the exchange of information between a coroner and the board and with other jurisdictions about matters relating to the board's functions. These information-sharing provisions are critical to ensuring the board can effectively discharge its functions. To ensure the board is also meeting its objectives, the bill requires the board to provide an annual report in relation to the board's performance which must be tabled by the minister administering the Coroners Act within one month after receiving it. The board may also report to the minister administering the Coroners Act about matters arising from the performance of the board's functions.

The passage of this bill is central to ensure that the independent board working with the enhanced death review unit within the Office of the State Coroner can identify systemic risk factors that may place a person at increased risk of death or injury in a relationship, identify any existing gaps in services provided and how services and responses to victims of domestic violence can be improved with a view to reducing the number of domestic and family violence related deaths in future.

This bill provides a strong framework from which to effect real change and prevent future domestic and family violence deaths by delivering quickly on the government's commitment to implement key priority recommendations of the special task force. I look forward to working with stakeholders and experts in this area and I encourage them to participate in the parliamentary committee process. I am very pleased to commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (2.45 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Grace): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee.