




Speech By
Joan Pease

MEMBER FOR LYTTON

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CRIMINAL LAW (DOMESTIC VIOLENCE) AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (3.44 pm): I am pleased to speak in support of the Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2015. As a member of the committee that examined the bill, I would like to thank Mr Mark Furner, the committee chair, my fellow committee members and the committee secretariat for their hard work on this important bill.

Domestic and family violence is at epidemic levels in our community. I believe that all of our communities want to put a stop to this disgrace. Domestic and family violence has for too long been hidden away, kept secret amongst families, with victims often feeling that they are in some way responsible for the abuse. We all know that it is time we as a community stand united and say that domestic and family violence at any level is absolutely not acceptable.

Sadly, I am told by my local police that Wynnum currently has the highest rate of domestic violence in the Bayside region—not a proud statistic. We Baysiders know that it is not acceptable, and we as a community have banded together with the Wynnum and Manly Rotary to form an activism project. Our local faith and community groups, sporting clubs, schools, police and service providers are working together to raise awareness and to provide support to those affected. I am proud of my community's commitment to this important initiative and to be working alongside my fellow Baysiders.

The Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2015 is in response to the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland, which was chaired by the Hon. Quentin Bryce. The task force released their report, *Not now, not ever: putting an end to domestic and family violence in Queensland*, in February 2015. The government made a number of recommendations, including to increase perpetrator accountability, based on two recommendations in the Bryce task force report, following consultation with stakeholders through a discussion paper which was released in October 2015. The committee heard from victims and from organisations that represent victims. Often their stories were chilling and challenging. I thank those who gave evidence at the public hearings and made their submissions.

The recommendations of the Bryce report provide for the introduction of a circumstance of aggravation of domestic and family violence to be applied to all criminal offences so as to increase the maximum penalty for the offence—recommendation 118—and would mean that offences that indicate the intent of domestic violence should be met with harsher sentences. Further it recommended the creation of a new offence of strangulation. The Bryce report told us that the prevalence of strangling or choking conduct in a domestic setting is a predictive indicator of an escalation in domestic violence offending including homicide.

The bill amends the Criminal Code to create a new offence of choking, suffocation or strangulation in a domestic setting and will only apply if a person without consent chokes, suffocates or strangles a person with whom they are in a domestic relationship. I know that earlier the

Attorney-General gave further details and expanded on that information. This offence will carry a maximum penalty of seven years imprisonment. It is important to identify this conduct to assist in assessing risk to victims and increasing protections for them. It will also deter this behaviour.

The community and stakeholders made it clear that there must also be a system-wide change to ensure offenders are charged by police and to ensure there is intervention and support available for victims coupled with education, training and communication as imperative. Eradicating domestic and family violence from our communities is imperative. Putting in place protections for victims is imperative. Harsher penalties for perpetrators are also imperative.

I am pleased that there is support from both sides of the House on this important issue. I thank the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland for their report *Not now, not ever: putting an end to domestic and family violence in Queensland*. I look forward to continuing to work with my community and Lytton's own task force at the upcoming family fun day on 15 May at George Clayton Park. I am proud to be part of the Palaszczuk government, which has a vision to eradicate domestic and family violence once and for all. I commend the bill to the House.