




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MACKAY

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**DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE PROTECTION AND OTHER LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (4.36 pm): It gives me much pride to stand here today to speak in support of another bill to help stamp out the scourge of domestic violence in our state. As members of parliament we have all heard heartbreaking stories from constituents who have been victims of domestic violence. One constituent of mine, I will call her Mary today, would have a very different life story to tell if legislation like this and domestic violence legislation already brought before this House were in place during her childhood.

If the recommendations from the *Not now, not ever* report had been carried out when she was a little girl and the laws and community attitudes towards domestic violence were different, her family would be quite different. No more can we turn a blind eye and no more will violence be a family secret. Crucially, this bill implements further recommendations of the *Not now, not ever* report.

Mary grew up in a violent home. She escaped her home as a teenager when she met her husband, who took her away with the promise of a new life. Unfortunately for Mary, the new love of her life was a younger version of her father—a violent man who saw controlling his family with violence was his right in life. Mary, now as a grandmother, is fearful for her grandchildren. They are growing up in homes where their parents, her children, see violence in the home as a normal way of living. She was unable to shield her children and change their attitudes. Unfortunately, she has two sons who are in prison for perpetrating violent offences in the community.

At the time this bill was introduced to parliament and read a first time, shockingly there were already nine coronial investigations that had commenced into deaths that had occurred in domestic or family relationships in Queensland. One death is one too many. As with Mary's history, we need to take long-term action to end domestic violence. Perpetrators of domestic violence must be held more accountable and police and the courts need the tools and resources to help them save lives and protect victims. We need to break the intergeneration cycle in homes of families like Mary's.

This bill introduces legislation to allow information sharing between government and non-government agencies within integrated responses, with appropriate safeguards including protection for the sharing of information without the consent if a risk assessment indicates it is for the purpose of protecting the safety of a victim and their family. We need to change the attitudes of the perpetrators who think that it is okay and that it is their right to use violence in their home. We do not want to see any families slipping through the cracks. It is too late when stakeholders come together with their little piece of the puzzle of a victim's life and wonder why someone did not see the patterns, the warning signs, the key indicators when the whole story is placed together at a coronial inquiry.

This bill recognises the dignity of victims and has safeguards to prevent the inappropriate sharing of information. There is a penalty of 100 points and up to two years imprisonment. The bill assists victims when they go before the court by recognising domestic violence orders made in other jurisdictions through the National Domestic Violence Order Scheme. It requires courts to consider family law orders when making a DVO. Victims have suffered frustration when family law orders do not match up with the DVO. Children are at risk when the different orders are inconsistent.

I would like to congratulate the minister, her department and her staff for bringing this bill before parliament. I would also like to thank the work of the committee. For too long families like Mary's have suffered in silence. Hopefully, we will see a shift in community attitudes towards violence against women and children and make this everyone's business. We need to raise our boys so that they know that it is not okay to target women. We need to teach our boys how to live in happy, respectful relationships. I commend the bill to the House.