




Speech By  
**Hon. Leeanne Enoch**

**MEMBER FOR ALGESTER**

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

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business) (5.01 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2015. It is an unfortunate truth that domestic violence continues to be a blight on our community. In fact, on average Australian police deal with an estimated 650-plus domestic and family violence incidents every day of the year. That is one every two minutes. Going by those figures, police would have dealt with almost 500 incidents today alone. Despite the spotlight which has now been shone on the issue, despite the many forums across our state that we have all been part of, despite the marches in our communities right across the state against domestic violence—I attended the Logan walk against family and domestic violence with many other MPs and people from the community who are united against domestic violence—despite all of that, each week we are left with more stories of families that have been torn apart by domestic and family violence. Of course there are those cases we do not hear about where families live in fear at the hands of one of their own.

For Indigenous women in particular it is an even more harrowing story. According to the Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service, statistics indicate that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are significantly more likely to experience domestic and family violence than non-Indigenous women; furthermore, Indigenous women are 35 more times likely to be hospitalised for assault and 10 times more likely to die from assault than non-Indigenous women. This is an issue that acts to destabilise communities, disturbs and disrupts social norms and impacts families in a way that ripples across generations right into the future. In the case of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, domestic and family violence may occur in the context of complex kinship structures, which creates a further layer of complexity.

This has to stop and it has to stop now. I am proud to be part of a government which is standing up and saying 'enough is enough'. On that point I would like to commend my colleagues the Attorney-General and the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence for their incredible and tireless work in this area, ensuring that we are doing everything possible as a parliament and as a government to make sure that we do not see domestic and family violence across future generations. I would like to acknowledge the bipartisan approach to tackling this issue. We have heard everyone's stories across the chamber, and I know that we are absolutely together on this particular issue. It is important that communities across the state know that, when it comes to domestic violence, there is a united voice condemning the perpetrators.

One of the most important aspects of this bill is the creation in the Criminal Code of the new offence of strangulation in a domestic relationship, which is punishable by a maximum period of seven years imprisonment. Recommendations 118 and 120 of the Bryce report specifically provide that the Queensland government introduce a circumstance of aggravation of domestic and family violence to be applied to all criminal offences and consider the creation of a specific offence of strangulation. The importance of this amendment is twofold: firstly, it is a further deterrent to those who would physically

abuse their partner in a domestic relationship; secondly, this amendment recognises that this behaviour is not just inherently dangerous, but also a predictive indicator of an escalation in domestic violence offending. As my colleague Minister Fentiman has previously said in this House, we know that non-fatal strangulation is a serious predictive risk factor for future homicide, and the specific offence of non-fatal strangulation aims to improve the identification of such conduct, increase perpetrator accountability and improve risk assessment and management for victims.

This legislation further sets out that Queenslanders do not accept domestic violence. Introducing greater deterrents is one way that we can address this issue; changing attitudes is another. We have to make it clear to everyone that we will not tolerate violent behaviour towards a partner. This message needs to be strong and clear and broadcast far and wide, regardless of what community you may live in, in every part of our state and our country. Everyone in our community—young and old, men and women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous—need to understand that we will not stand for this kind of destructive behaviour. These amendments are part of the Palaszczuk government's broader work to stamp out domestic violence in our community, and I commend the bill to the House.