




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

White Ribbon Day

 **Mr FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (11.44 am): I rise to speak about an event held last year in my electorate. As a white ribbon ambassador since 2008 I was proud to host the event, which is becoming an annual event. The White Socks Walk 'n' Wheels was held on Saturday, 21 November last year at Ferny Grove State School.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! It is very early in the day and this is the second time I have had to ask members to keep conversation to a minimum, please.

Mr FURNER: The white ribbon event was motivated by men in the area to raise awareness and funds to address the unacceptable levels of violence in our community directed at women and their children. Often this violence affects entire extended families who are not even the primary targets of violent attacks. The psychological as well as physical and financial costs of domestic violence are still largely underestimated. The number of parliamentarians who have spoken about this scourge in our society has, in itself, generated an interest and the concern of predominantly women coming out and speaking about this issue. It is good to see in that respect.

When we talk about violence as a concept, it is important that we not make the mistake of limiting our understanding of it to only physical assaults. The spate of high-profile domestic violence killings that have been splashed across our newspapers and television screens are the end point of domestic violence, not the beginning. This Palaszczuk Labor government is committed to changing that culture. Domestic violence includes behaviours and actions that involve threats, mental and emotional blackmail, controlling conduct and disparagement. Far too often these kinds of actions have been accepted or overlooked in our society, because of either unexamined tradition or blatant male chauvinism.

Safety was the major theme of the Ferny Grove event. This included a public examination of the measures that both men and women take each day to keep safe. I have seen this exercise performed by others and I performed it myself during the event last year. The results are quite affecting and profound. I undertook the exercise on stage with butcher's paper. It involved listing the number of concerns that men raise—and that was very limited. I think there were only about two. When it came to the women raising their concerns, we ran out of butcher's paper. For many males present at the event, the realisation that many women take upward of 20 measures on a daily basis to ensure their own safety, while men undertake few or none and merely assume their own safety, was both alarming and educational. Clearly, we still have much to do. Perhaps a starting point for us males in this chamber is to admit the disparity in safety that exists, even today, between men and women.

It would be remiss of me to speak about the Ferny Grove white ribbon event without mentioning some of the people who made it happen. First, I mention the members of the community who showed up to take part and learn. I express my thanks on what proved to be an unusually hot November day. This year we are aiming at an event involving a candlelight vigil earlier in the year.

Second, I mention the major organisational supporters: DVConnect; White Ribbon Australia; Principal Brett Shackleton of Ferny Grove State School; the Hills District PCYC, Ferny Grove police; Gallipoli Barracks Defence Force personnel, who brought along their own Bushmaster and provided rides for the children during the event; Stephen Family Pastoral Company; Jetts Fitness Ferny Grove; Arana Leagues Club; Terry Kearney from Samford Valley Meats, who supplied the sausages for the event; Brook News, Brookside Shopping Centre; Flight Centre Arana Hills; Poshamocha; and Tam from TDS Group. Their contributions resulted in the event raising \$712.35 for White Ribbon Australia.

Thirdly, I thank my staff, particularly Ross Williams, and our organisers and speakers including Senior Sergeant Rob Colthorpe from the Ferny Grove police, Vanessa Baird, Graham Theaker, Laurie Fitzgerald, Ali and Cam Gibbs and presenter Michael Jeh.

Finally, I recognise the contribution of brave Indigenous woman Renee Williams, who told her story about how she was affected by domestic violence in her upbringing. In conclusion, I will quote the words of Martin Luther King Jr, who said—

In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies but the silence of our friends.