




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH

Record of Proceedings, 19 April 2016

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

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (4.25 pm): I rise in the chamber to contribute to the debate on the Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2015. Simply put, domestic violence is a complete scourge on society. In the debates last year and today, it has given me great solace to listen to the personal stories—some of them heart-rending—about domestic violence issues that members of this very chamber have experienced. I think back to last year, when I sat not too far from where I am standing today and had the privilege of hearing the member for Mudgeeraba, Ros Bates, give one of the most heart-rending speeches I have heard in my five years in this chamber. It was certainly from the heart and it resonated not just with members of this chamber but also with anyone else who cared to listen to it.

As we know, the bill before the House is in response to the 2015 *Not now, not ever* report. It needs to be noted that in 2014 the former LNP government established the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence that was chaired by the Hon. Dame Quentin Bryce. We are aware that, in total, 140 recommendations were made, including 121 directed specifically at government.

I am honoured to have the opportunity to provide a voice on behalf of the women and men of my seat of Chatsworth. Domestic violence is far more prevalent in society than many of us wish to admit. No matter how often I research and prepare for a speech such as this, I still find the statistics scary. Approximately one in six women and one in 19 men have experienced either physical or sexual abuse at the hands of their current or former partner. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, every year approximately 80 to 100 Australian women die at the hands of their male partners. That is a national tragedy and a national disgrace. It means that in Australia a woman is more likely to be killed in her own home by her own partner than anywhere else or by anyone else. During the period 2004 to 2012, approximately 44 per cent of Queensland's homicides were as a result of domestic and family violence. These statistics are alarming and they are way too high.

The bill being debated this afternoon will see recommendations 118 to 120 of the *Not now, not ever* report implemented. It will amend the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 to make provision for domestic and family violence to be an aggravating factor on sentencing. The bill will also see the Criminal Code amended to create a new offence of choking, suffocation or strangulation in a domestic setting. As many members in the chamber are aware, currently a person who unlawfully chokes, suffocates or strangles another person would likely be charged with common assault occasioning bodily harm, grievous bodily harm, torture, disabling in order to commit an indictable offence or attempted murder. The changes to the Criminal Code will see a new offence of choking, suffocation or strangulation of another person without the other person's consent; and either the person is in a domestic relationship with another person or the choking, suffocation or strangling is associated with domestic violence under the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012. This new offence will

attract a maximum penalty of seven years imprisonment. Finally, it will also amend legislation to allow a court to receive a submission from a party on what they consider to be the appropriate sentence or sentence range for the court to impose.

When one is elected and has the privilege of standing in this House to deliver speeches we cover a whole range of topics—some of them economic; some of them social justice. Some of them actually have ramifications that hopefully, when passed, will outlive our time in this hallowed chamber. The collective efforts of this 55th Parliament last year and, hopefully, what will take place again in the next hour or two make me extremely proud and privileged to be part of the 55th Parliament. We will bring into play laws that will go a long way to safeguarding both women and men in the years to come.