




Speech By  
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**MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH**

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

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (5.35 pm): I rise to also contribute to the debate on the Domestic and Family Violence Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. I wish to premise my contribution to the debate by paying credit to the work initiated, as has been said in this House before, by the former Newman government which, as we all know, established the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland on 10 September 2014. That was in response to concerns about the incidence of domestic violence in this state. As has also been mentioned by other members, the task force was chaired by the Hon. Quentin Bryce who, in February 2016, released the final report, *Not now, not ever: putting an end to domestic and family violence in Queensland*. Members would know that the report included 140 recommendations that were designed to provide Queensland with a strategy to stop domestic and family violence and also recommended a full review of the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012.

In a spirit of bipartisanship, as has also been said in previous speeches on this very topic in the past, it would be remiss of me to not once again welcome the Labor government's commitment in supporting the report and in accepting all government directed recommendations to see domestic and family violence become a key focus in Queensland. I commend the members opposite for their actions in government.

The bill that we are debating today has six main components, which include changes to police protection notices and related powers; enhanced requirements for courts' consideration in the imposition of domestic violence orders; the introduction of new information-sharing provisions, which I will speak about further; the implementation of COAG model laws for the automatic mutual recognition of DVOs across Australia and New Zealand; the seeking to enhance perpetrator accountability and to encourage behavioural change; and allowing the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the QPS to obtain copies of DVO court documents that are relevant to related criminal prosecutions.

On 1 June this year in an article in the *Courier-Mail* Deputy Police Commissioner Brett Pointing said that the Queensland Police Service responded daily to almost 200 calls to domestic violence incidents. I know that this has been said by other members in their contributions, but that figure of 200 calls daily to domestic violence incidents is an absolute tragedy. In that article, Deputy Police Commissioner Brett Pointing went on to say the following—

In half of our domestic-related homicides the victim and the offender were never known to police ... but it's not generally known by family and friends.

The article goes on to state that, over the past 10 years to January of this year, there have been 236 Queensland victims of domestic homicide. That is an unbelievable figure. That is an average of almost 24 domestic homicide victims a year. That figure is supported by another report that states, from May 2015 to May this year, sadly, there have been 23 domestic homicides. Research has shown that

nearly all of those deaths could have been prevented. Therein lies why, in a spirit of bipartisanship, we are supporting this bill.

In January 2015, the Queensland Homicide Victims' Support Group launched a pilot study and found that, although 80 per cent of surveyed family and friends may have held concerns about a loved one's relationship, just 37 per cent acted to report it to a professional agency. The State Coroner's Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Unit's Susan Beattie said only 27 per cent of reviewed deaths showed an active protection order against the offender while almost all showed a history of abuse. It is with these startling statistics that I, along with my colleagues in the LNP, support the government's bill. It is not a day too early to have the bill debated and I am pleased to see it brought to the forefront of this sitting week. Changes to police protection notices will require police to consider what action to take so they can provide victims with immediate and effective protection from domestic and family violence. Importantly, this bill will also see an expansion of the protection that can be provided by these notices and will streamline administrative requirements associated with them.

Furthermore, we will see more flexibility in the issuing and service of notices, such as expanding the existing power available to police to direct a person to remain at a specific place or be moved to another place for the purposes of the notice. Meanwhile, the bill amends provisions guiding the court's consideration of protection orders, such as making protection orders when a victim has been threatened or fears for their safety or wellbeing within the current definition of domestic violence. Courts will now be required to consider whether additional conditions may be necessary beyond the standard conditions to strengthen the protection of a victim or other named persons and they also take on board the comments that were made much earlier in the debate by the member for Glass House on this particular provision. They are well worth reading. Additionally, courts will also be required to focus on the protection required by the victim and determine the appropriate duration of an order, as well as increasing the minimum standard duration from two years to five years.

Amendments to the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act will see the introduction of an information-sharing framework proposal to provide an approach that allows information sharing to occur for risk assessment purposes. This framework will be limited to those specialist services with the necessary expertise to assess domestic and family violence related risks. I am particularly supportive of the national recognition of DVOs. While we have a number of states and territories in Australia, we are obviously one country and violence does not distinguish itself by some geographical line on a map. Domestic violence is indeed abhorrent regardless of where and when it occurs. It is indeed a national disgrace and has been kept under the carpet for far too long in Australian society. I believe it is imperative for the safety of victims and other named persons that we have consistency and protection which reaches past the transparent borders of each state.

The new part 6 of this bill provides for national recognition of domestic violence orders by establishing a national recognition scheme, including, importantly, providing for local orders to vary orders made in other jurisdictions and for those variations to be further recognised in other jurisdictions. This part will also provide for recognised interstate orders to be enforced in the same way as local orders, as well as the standardised administration of all DVOs in the manner agreed by COAG. Finally, this part will also enable the exchange of information between issuing authorities and interstate law enforcement agencies for the purposes of exercising the functions under the part or for a few law enforcement purposes. This is indeed crucial.

The last key change in this bill will look to improve perpetrator accountability and support behavioural change. While it is imperative to protect victims of domestic and family violence, it would be ignorant of us in this House to not work with perpetrators to assist them in changing their behaviours. As part of this amendment we will see maximum penalties for breaches of notices to be increased. The Weapons Act will be amended to provide that any weapons licence held by a respondent named in a notice is suspended for the duration of the notice. Very importantly, the name 'voluntary intervention order' will be renamed 'intervention order' to clarify that once an order has been agreed to by the respondent compliance with the order is not voluntary. Finally, we will see the ODPP and the QPS allowed to obtain copies of DVO court documents that are relevant to a related criminal prosecution and enable courts to provide documents to police where they are relevant to a related police investigation.

I am pleased to say these changes are a mature approach by both the government and the opposition and I am proud to see everyone here today working in a bipartisan manner. I had the privilege of bringing school students through this chamber during the lunch break today. I explained to them that the government and opposition do not always verbally debate in a heated manner as shown on the television news. I stated that sometimes—just sometimes—both sides of parliament agree on important matters. This is one of those milestone occasions when each member of the parliament can fondly look back, when the sun finally sets on their careers in this august chamber, and know that they played a part in bringing in important legislative changes which will potentially save lives.