




Speech By  
**Verity Barton**

**MEMBER FOR BROADWATER**

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Record of Proceedings, 19 April 2016

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

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (3.49 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the debate on the Criminal Law (Domestic Violence) Amendment Bill (No. 2). As a member of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee I want to acknowledge your work, Mr Deputy Speaker Furner, as the chair of this committee and of course the deputy chair, the member for Beaudesert, as well as other members of the committee and the secretariat. As the member for Lytton has touched on, it is heartening to see that there is bipartisan support for this bill as it moves through the second reading stage. Indeed, it is heartening to see that all members of parliament are able to come together and work together in a way that we really should on big issues like domestic and family violence. It was heartening that when the Newman government established the task force members of the then opposition and the crossbench were asked to participate and be involved.

Subsequent to the delivery of the *Not now, not ever* report, it is heartening to see that both the government and the opposition have been able to work together as we strive to make some very important changes in this area, because all members of this House, regardless of where we come from and what side of this House we sit on, would agree that domestic and family violence is not acceptable. It does not matter who you are, where you come from, what you look like, what you believe in or what you do: there is never a circumstance in which it is okay that you should be the subject of domestic and family violence. I very much look forward to continuing to work with all members of this House as we continue to educate everyone in our communities about just how important it is that we strive to rid our communities of this scourge that is domestic and family violence.

Over many years we have seen strong evidence which suggests that strangulation and attempted strangulation in particular are often a precursor to further violence to come. It is fantastic that we as a parliament are able to take these steps to identify strangulation and attempted strangulation as an offence because it means that we are able to identify families that will need additional support and victims who will need additional support and who will need us absolutely rooting for them. I also want to particularly acknowledge the contribution of the Women's Legal Service in this space and I also want to thank and acknowledge the Attorney-General for addressing the Women's Legal Service's concerns around the definition of 'domestic setting'. We can all appreciate how it could have potentially been misunderstood. As you would appreciate, Mr Deputy Speaker, we had an opportunity in the public hearing to get clarification from the department, but it is also very nice that we have been able to provide some clarification from the Attorney for the Women's Legal Service around what it is that a domestic setting actually means.

I want to quickly touch on the outcomes from *Barbaro & Zirilli v The Queen*. It has been longstanding practice in Queensland that both prosecution and defence counsel have been able to make submissions with respect to a range of possible sentences. That has, as I said, been longstanding practice within the legal fraternity in Queensland, but a High Court decision with respect to a Victorian

case put that in jeopardy where it said that it was not appropriate. I also acknowledge that there is bipartisan support for the changes that are being made that will in effect nullify the High Court's decision in Barbaro.

I also want to pay tribute to the amazing support services on the Gold Coast. It is an unfortunate reality that Southport is the busiest domestic violence court in Queensland. That is not a record that any of us on the Gold Coast should be proud of, but there are some amazing domestic and family violence services on the Gold Coast that do an absolutely fantastic job of not only supporting victims and their families but also working with perpetrators to ensure that they understand that what they did was wrong so that they do not do it again, because that is absolutely critical. Not only do we have to ensure that victims are safe; we need to ensure that those who are committing this violence appreciate that it is not okay and that our society says that it is not acceptable and work with them to ensure that it absolutely never happens again. Like all of my colleagues on the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, I absolutely welcome the support of all members of this House. I look forward to seeing the bill pass through the second reading stage in this House.