




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

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VICTIMS OF CRIME ASSISTANCE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL; BAIL (DOMESTIC VIOLENCE) AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (9.12 pm): After sitting in this chamber today and listening to the speech that preceded mine, I am extraordinarily proud to be an LNP member and to be taking up the fight for domestic violence victims and family violence victims all across this great state. The work that has been done by the shadow minister, Ros Bates; the shadow Attorney-General, Ian Walker; and the opposition leader, Tim Nicholls, has been incredible in terms of bringing in this piece of legislation, the Bail (Domestic Violence) and Another Act Amendment Bill 2017.

When we were in government we initiated the *Not now, not ever* report. Two years have passed since we have been on the government benches. If it takes an opposition to bring about change as we have had to do before in this House, then that is what we have to do. We do not have the resources of the government. We do not have the abilities of the government. We are in opposition. However, I am proud to be part of an opposition that wants to bring about change, that wants to assist people and affect people's lives.

As I sat in this chamber today it was so disappointing to hear from the state Attorney-General that there were unintended consequences, but there was no explanation for those unintended consequences. There was absolutely no explanation. Had there been an explanation that one could understand, we would all take that on board, but none was given. Along with the opposition leader and the member for Mudgeeraba, I would like to pay tribute to Dale, Bonnie and Sonia, along with their family members and friends, who are here in the gallery tonight.

We must tackle the growing scourge of domestic violence and family violence. We in the LNP make no apology for this bill, which, if accepted by those opposite tonight, will bring in tough new laws that stand up for the victims of domestic violence and the victims of family violence. As I have already stated, we led the way with the *Not now, not ever* report, but it is so disappointing to now be in opposition and see the slow pace of its implementation. We hear that only 46 of the 121 recommendations are being implemented, yet we heard from a speaker opposite just prior, 'This government accepts all the recommendations.' Why then are we not doing something faster about implementing them? That is what we are trying to do today.

Our bill has five key objectives. The first one is to reverse the onus of proof for bail; make it harder for bail to be granted for alleged offenders charged with DV related crimes. This means that the emphasis is on the defendant, on the perpetrator, to establish why they should be granted bail. We also wish to establish a DV alert system allowing for automatic notification when anyone the subject of a DV order is being considered for either bail or parole. This would give time, much needed time, for victims to prepare mentally and physically for their potential release. I understand from sitting in the chamber tonight that the government does not agree with this and I look forward to hearing the explanations for why because I simply do not understand that at all.

We also wish to implement GPS monitoring for high-risk offenders on bail. When the shadow minister, the shadow minister for education and I were at the International Women's Day breakfast, I am quite sure I heard the then acting premier say, 'We are a government that is implementing GPS trackers on domestic violence victims.' That is what we heard during that speech. Yet tonight in this chamber we have heard back-peddalling from that. We heard, 'We're going to put it across and have a trial or more consultation across a broader range.' How about we just start doing something for these poor victims of crime? Normally a perpetrator of domestic violence is an offender we want to have tracked because they often go back to the victim as they are aware of their situation. We need to start acting.

We also wish to introduce immediate appeal rights against the granting of bail, providing an urgent review of a granted bail application to a higher court. After listening to the debate tonight we also understand that this government does not agree with that, either. We wish to introduce mandatory reporting provisions to the parole system so that when a prisoner receives parole the victim of domestic violence can receive information about that prisoner. It is a common-sense piece of legislative change. I plead with those opposite to agree to these common-sense amendments.

Unfortunately, Queensland accounted for a quarter of all domestic violence related deaths in 2016. I have worked in the field of domestic violence as a solicitor in regional Queensland. I have worked with many women and men and their families who have been victims of domestic violence. I have spoken to the children; I have spoken to the grandparents; I have spoken to the aunts, the friends, the uncles, the people who are trying to help. This scourge of domestic violence needs to be stopped, so we should do whatever we can to assist these victims of both domestic and family violence. The people in the court systems need that assistance. The victims themselves need the reassurance.

A former magistrate in the South Burnett undertook research and reviewed 338 domestic violence applications across our region. We know that this is one of the biggest issues in the South Burnett court system. We understand there is a high prevalence of alcohol and drugs, but the most disturbing statistic that I heard from the magistrate was that 53 per cent of applications affected children.

We know that there is much work to be done to address any statistics in relation to domestic violence. That is why here in this House tonight we have a chance to pass some common-sense changes that will assist our court system, that will assist our police, that will assist the victims and that will assist the families of domestic and family violence. There are many agencies across my area such as UnitingCare Community, South Burnett CTC, Centacare South Burnett and the Salvos. They do all they can, but they need this legislation to support them. I have spoken to these people about this legislation and what they think. They support this legislation.

The objectives of our legislation are clearly in the public interest. We are trying to protect victims and their families. It is beyond belief and any understanding that the government members of the committee could not see past the politics and agree to the passage of this bill. If they had an excuse, we could understand. The legislation that the LNP are proposing is based on three things: laws and procedures already working in other jurisdictions; solutions offered by stakeholders on the ground; and, most importantly, recommendations of the *Not now, not ever* report which have so far not even been enacted.

I truly hope that members on the opposite side of the House realise the balance needs to be tipped in favour of victims and their families and the community in general. We urge you, as government members, to support the LNP's strong laws because the longer we wait, the longer vulnerable women and children will be put at risk.