




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

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

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (9.01 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Bail (Domestic Violence) and Another Act Amendment Bill 2017. Today is a proud day to be a member of the LNP opposition. Today we debate our legislation that will balance the scales of justice towards victims of domestic and family violence. As members know, I stand in this House as a survivor of domestic and family violence. I, like those who will be protected by our legislation, know what it feels like to be scared in your own home, to feel helpless, to be beaten and to fear the retribution that may follow. I know what it feels like to finally make a decision to leave an awful situation, because I did so almost 40 years ago. I know that we need to support those who make that same decision today and we need to keep them safe.

These laws will work. This is a bill based on working laws in other states. It is a bill based on ideas from the domestic violence sector. The legislation we are debating today reverses the presumption for bail in domestic violence related crimes such as serious assault, grievous bodily harm, deprivation of liberty, strangulation and kidnapping. It introduces a DV alert system to ensure victims and families are notified when someone charged with domestic violence crimes is being considered for, or who has been granted, bail. This DV alert system will notify victims and families when someone with a DVO is being considered for parole, even if the reason they are in prison is not related to domestic violence. Our laws introduce urgent appeal rights to the bail application process, meaning bail decisions will be stayed for up to three business days and referred to a higher court for urgent review. Importantly, our laws will allow GPS trackers to be fitted to an alleged offender as a bail condition by the court to ensure that victims of crime are better protected throughout the trial process, which can be lengthy.

I was heartened by the support of the families of the victims of domestic violence and non-government service providers during the committee's consideration of this bill. I told a story in this House about my domestic violence. Tonight let me try and do justice to some other brave women and their stories. Let me introduce to the honourable members in this chamber Dale Shales, Teresa Bradford's mother, who is sitting in the gallery tonight. Dale is a wonderful woman who has fostered many children in her life and now has the unenviable task of bringing up three grandchildren who no longer have a mother. Those opposite have not met Teresa Bradford's children. They have not listened to their heartfelt anguish over the death of their mother. These children were in the house when their father murdered their mother in cold blood. These children have all said time after time that they believe that if their father was never given bail then their mother would still be alive today. They knew their father was dangerous. They knew it was inevitable that he would hurt their mother again. Their little lives have been torn apart and they want justice for their mother too. They want to make sure that no dangerous offender who has been charged with indictable offences is let loose into our community.

You can argue bureaucratic tripe tonight about unintended consequences all you like, but the fact remains that the unintended consequence of Teresa Bradford's dangerous husband being given bail is the reason these children no longer have a mother. So, Attorney-General, turn around and face

Dale Shales, Teresa's mother, who is in the gallery and explain to her why you believe that this bill would not have saved her daughter and how you plan to protect another woman from the same fate as Teresa.

Tonight in the gallery is Bonnie Mobbs, the mother of Shelsea Schilling. Shelsea was the beloved daughter of Damien and Bonnie and loved sister of Chloe. Shelsea lived her young life in fear. She was terrified of Bronson Ellery and she tried to change her entire life to get away from him. She became a virtual prisoner at home because he stalked her and the family relentlessly. Bronson Ellery was in jail for an unrelated offence. Bronson Ellery was given bail and no-one in that entire family was notified of his release. Every member of Shelsea's family was part of that DVO, and not one of them was notified that he was out on parole. He was living two blocks from that family. He accosted a terrified Shelsea at Australia Fair. What short life she had was lived in fear. Her family still live in fear. Her family will never get over the loss of their beautiful daughter, and they are the ones with the life sentence. So, member for Stretton, turn around and face Bonnie and tell her why it is all too hard to have an alert system—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Elmes): Through the chair please, member for Mudgeeraba.

Ms BATES: Sorry. Through the chair, member for Stretton, turn around and face Bonnie and tell her why an alert system to save another family will not work. Explain to her, this grieving mother, why this government will not listen to her pleas tonight.

Tonight I also want to tell the House about Tara Brown. Her mother, Natalie Hinton, could not be here tonight because she is looking after her granddaughter—the daughter who will grow up without her mother. Tara was another woman who was let down by the system. She was known to DV services on the Gold Coast for 12 months and she was sent to numerous shelters and motels. She drove herself to her death, not knowing that her murderer was tracking her every movement. We have all heard the terrifying last moments of Tara's life, frantically trying to outrun her killer, frantically making calls to triple 0 and then finally being forced off the road, hanging helplessly upside down in her car, pleading for her life whilst Lionel Patea beat her to a pulp. Yesterday would have been Tara's birthday. Yesterday she should have been celebrating with her little girl. I know that the staff at the Gold Coast University Hospital are still traumatised by the injuries that Tara was admitted with. Those nurses who cared for her—and I know some of them—will never forget what they saw, and nor will Tara's parents.

Lionel Patea was a dangerous and violent man. If Tara had had a GPS alert or a DV alert system when he was bailed, then she may still be alive today. So, through the chair, I say to the member for Capalaba as another government member: turn and face these mothers who are asking for nothing more than that you honour their daughters and pass this legislation tonight. Tell Tara's daughter why doing nothing will save another child like her from growing up without her mother.

Tonight I want to pay special respect to Sonia Anderson, someone I am proud to call a friend, and all that she is doing to honour her daughter, Bianca, and Bianca's little son, Ziggy, who is growing up without his mother. A failed system failed Bianca. A failed system did not warn Bianca or her family. A failed system is still not working for Sonia and her remaining family members. Sonia is a rock of support for these new mothers who are in a club which none of them wanted to join. Membership of this club was not of their choosing. Terrible people did terrible things to their children. Terrible things continue to happen to Sonia's family, and we have an obligation to make it right tonight for these families.

Again I ask: when you had the opportunity to amend this legislation and do the work through the committee process, why are we now looking at lastminute.com? Turn around and tell Sonia that she wasted her time by giving evidence to a committee where the government members were already given their riding orders to try and stop this legislation. Tell Sonia why, when she was in the gallery, the government tried to have the legislation thrown out on technical grounds on the same question rule.

I say to the Attorney-General: you can make a difference tonight; you can give these mothers what they desperately crave and that is justice for their daughters, a legacy that they can hold on to, so that this does not happen to anyone else ever again. I am proud to be part of a party that is standing up for victims and making the changes we desperately need. The actions of those opposite in refusing to support victims and their families have been nothing short of shameful. I urge all members to support these reforms because, as Sonia Anderson said when she gave evidence, if we save just one life these laws will have worked.