




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Sexual Violence Awareness Month

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (9.56 am): October marks Sexual Violence Awareness Month. Sexual Violence Awareness Month provides an important opportunity to raise awareness of sexual violence and abuse in Queensland communities. We know that one in three women and one in six men will experience sexual violence in their lifetime. The latest data from the ABS has revealed that the number of sexual assault victims in Queensland increased for the fifth consecutive year. It is up 24 per cent since 2011. This is a national tragedy. Today we all wear teal ribbons to show support for victims of sexual assault and stand together to say no to violence in the community. It is an opportunity to let those affected by sexual violence and abuse know that they are not alone and they have our support.

The Palaszczuk government has invested funds to start to fill gaps where there had previously been no sexual assault services at all. New services have been established in Inala, Redlands, Ipswich, Moreton Bay, Mount Isa, Mackay and Toowoomba, providing vital support to victims to recover from sexual violence and improve their safety and wellbeing. Roma and Brisbane North will be the next locations for new services. We have the runs on the board, but I know there is more work to do to ease the pressure on these important services. When in power the member for Clayfield's savage cuts went deep into our sexual assault services. Wide Bay Sexual Assault Services was cut \$29,000, the Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence was cut \$34,000 and Logan MPs know that \$33,000 was cut from the Centre Against Sexual Violence in Woodridge.

There remains a huge task ahead to challenge and change the attitudes and belief systems that underpin violence against women. We are rolling out Respectful Relationships education in our schools and community based communications campaigns, including our youth focused campaign Stop the Hurting, obviously to help address these attitudes. Violence of any kind, including sexual assault or the threat of sexual violence, is totally unacceptable. I urge all Queenslanders to show their support and attend an awareness-raising event in their local area this month, because together we can send the message that sexual violence will not be tolerated in our communities.