




Speech By
Stephen Bennett

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

Record of Proceedings, 5 September 2018

MOTION

Domestic and Family Violence, Public Service Leave Provisions

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (5.22 pm): It is unfortunate timing that in National Child Protection Week it has come to light that public servant perpetrators of domestic and family violence are eligible for 10 days of domestic and family violence leave. This motion calls on the Palaszczuk Labor government to scrap this policy that rewards perpetrators of family and domestic violence. What this government should be doing is supporting the partners and children of these vile perpetrators, not giving the perpetrators the opportunity to take two weeks off.

Mr Butcher interjected.

Mr BENNETT: You are speaking soon, member for Gladstone. No-one in their right mind would think that giving wife-beaters 10 days of taxpayer funded leave to rehabilitate is anything but a bad idea. Victims—whether they are partners or children—need greater protection and offenders need to be held accountable. We need to empower victims to leave violent relationships and force perpetrators to break the cycle of violence that is tearing communities, families and children's futures apart.

Sadly, rates of domestic violence are still increasing. In the Queensland Police Service annual statistical review, breaches of domestic and family violence protection orders have increased by nine per cent. A total of over 25,000 breach offences were reported to police—an increase of almost 11 per cent from the previous year. All regions except for the northern region reported increases. Brisbane is up by 10 per cent and the central region is up 17 per cent. The Brisbane region recorded the lowest rate of breaches in Queensland while the northern region recorded the highest.

Given the state of domestic and family violence in Queensland, it is further distressing to hear that GPS trackers are continuing to be ineffective under this government. All GPS trackers are currently stored in Brisbane, meaning it can take three whole days to transfer a GPS bracelet to the Gold Coast. One worries how long it will take to get these bracelets to perpetrators located much further away in Queensland's north. These trackers also have failings such as being reliant on the 3G mobile network and being reliant on offenders charging their bracelets for two hours a day, and it is not even a condition of bail.

The greatest issue that has been revealed is that only nine bracelets have been fitted across the state, meaning that victims of domestic and family violence are not even being given the small benefit of this expensive and ineffective system. Rather than spending untold amounts on ineffective trackers and giving domestic and family violence perpetrators paid leave, the Palaszczuk Labor government should be getting on with the job and delivering the *Not now, not ever* report. The *Not now, not ever* report stemmed from a task force, as we all know, in 2014 which appointed former governor-general Dame Quentin Bryce to lead the groundbreaking reforms. Both sides of politics were represented on that task force as well as the crossbench. What is clear is that the *Not now, not ever* report does not recommend that perpetrators of DV receive up to 10 days of taxpayer funded leave each year.

In government the LNP introduced the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012. We funded new initiatives that provided safety upgrades to homes of victims. Under the LNP \$49 million was committed over five years to be invested in specialist domestic and family violence services to better meet the safety and support needs of children and their families and to strengthen links across domestic violence, child protection and family support services.

While Labor likes to talk about domestic violence, the LNP provides real support and real action to tackle this issue. No-one can understand how those opposite can defend this insidious policy position. This issue impacts far too many. As I said earlier, it is National Child Protection Week and the impact of domestic and family violence on children is an issue that is not to be overlooked. According to the latest statistics on child safety, nearly 6,000 children were subject to substantiation over the year, an increase of 148 kids. Sadly, the vast majority of this increase has come from a steep growth in substantiated cases from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Much more needs to be done to keep Queensland kids safe. Much more needs to be done to keep victims of domestic and family violence safe, and much more needs to be done to crack down on perpetrators of family and domestic violence. I am calling on the Palaszczuk Labor government and those making their contributions tonight to make domestic and family violence public servant perpetrators ineligible for domestic and family violence leave and to take more action to protect the victims of domestic and family violence.

The contributions from those opposite tonight have been really disturbing. How can they honestly stand up in this place and make a plea that giving 10 days paid leave under any guise is acceptable to the community? The community expects a lot more from this Labor government and the LNP would be providing that support.