




Speech By
Stephen Bennett

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

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PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (3.03 pm): We have now entered May, which is a time when Queensland marks Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month to raise community awareness of domestic and family violence and to send a clear message that violence of that sort will not be tolerated. However, it is increasingly distressing to see that not only is domestic and family violence continuing to plague Queensland communities; it is getting worse. One example is that, in the 12 months to March 2019, there were 28,099 breaches of domestic violence prevention orders. That is almost 30,000 times that victims of domestic violence were put at risk after they had trusted governments to protect them. Victims, whether they are partners or children, need greater protection and offenders need to be held accountable.

It is becoming clearer that Queensland's youth are also being impacted by domestic and family violence. Sadly, recently it was revealed that, in 2018, of 281,000 attempts to contact the Kids Helpline counselling service only 147,000 calls were answered, which means that only 52 per cent of those vulnerable kids were helped by the hotline. Sadly, family relationship issues and suicide related concerns were higher in Queensland than the rest of the nation, which shows that far too many in this state are impacted by domestic violence and we need help. It is disappointing that the government failed to help support the Kids Helpline when we called for the \$5 million shortfall to be matched. When in government, we introduced the Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Act 2012 and funded new initiatives to provide safety upgrades to victims who needed help in their homes.

It is also disappointing that the Palaszczuk government has the wrong priorities. In February it was revealed that Queensland failed to join the other states in using federal funding to monitor domestic violence perpetrators through GPS tracking. New South Wales, South Australia and Tasmania signed up to the preventive measures to protect DV victims from perpetrators, but unfortunately, under this Labor government, in Queensland those people will continue to roam our streets unencumbered. The government's failure to act on domestic and family violence is putting Queenslanders in harm's way, particularly women who are disproportionately victims of domestic violence.

I call on the minister to take real action on domestic violence and child safety, as Queensland's most vulnerable are continuing to suffer as a result of inaction. This issue affects far too many. More needs to be done to keep Queensland kids safe. Much more needs to be done to keep victims safe from domestic and family violence, and much more needs to be done to crack down on the perpetrators of domestic and family violence.

Last night I had the pleasure of attending the candlelight vigil held at Kangaroo Point. I thank Kay McGrath and guest speakers Karni Liddell, Jonty Bush and Natalie Hinton, the mother of Tara Brown, for their moving speeches and contributions to the night. I also mention the sponsors, CEO Challenge and QSuper, which are great organisations. I thank all the frontline services that help with this insidious problem in our community.