



Speech By  
**Adrian Tantari**


**MEMBER FOR HERVEY BAY**

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Record of Proceedings, 24 March 2021

**MOTION**

**Women**

 **Mr TANTARI** (Hervey Bay—ALP) (3.32 pm): I rise to record my support for the motion put before the House today by the Premier. Today I want to leave my contribution to the words and story of a young woman from Hervey Bay who, on hearing the stories of the past few days, outlined to me what her experience has been of being a young woman growing up in our country. This is her story, and I am humbled that she has given me the privilege to tell it in this place. She wrote—

It's 2021. I am 19 years old, and I have lived more experiences of sexual, emotional and physical abuse than you can count on one hand.

Not in the streets at 2am in the morning, drunk. Not wearing provocative clothing or acting in a promiscuous manner. Not of legal age. In my school uniform. In my pyjamas in bed.

Every single day, for two years I was sexually and emotionally abused on my school bus. An hour long journey each way. If I threatened to leave him, he would kill himself and write a letter leaving my name as his reason to go.

Sometimes he was nice, he bought gifts for my birthday. Other days he cried to me and said I couldn't leave him alone or he would die.

Other days when I tried to leave, he left bruises on my thighs to remind me I couldn't. Some days he called me pretty. Others, he would say I was looking chubby, and it wouldn't hurt to skip a few meals, so I skipped 3 and a half weeks' worth and collapsed down a flight of stairs.

Then one night, he took it further. That day he'd overheard me tell my friend that my parents were overseas and tonight I was babysitting alone.

He decided to let himself into my bedroom through the open window, to rape me. I spent all night in the shower scrubbing the skin he'd touched, trying to renew myself.

The same school. This time a boy I considered friend, asked to sit beside me on the bus on the way back from a sports event. I agreed thinking nothing of it until his hand slid down my shorts and he whispered "don't move" into my ear. I froze and couldn't breathe. I went home and scrubbed myself for hours until I was red raw.

**She went on to say—**

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am sorry. I'm sorry so many women like myself, still need to fight for this cause. We are tired. Tired of living up to these toxic, generational societal expectations and being treated like commodities. We are human just like you. I shouldn't be re-living my experiences through my words today. These are memories I tirelessly work to bury every single day.

But today, I write with hope that we will begin to educate our boys, our men, our girls and our women on what is just and right through the current and coming generations.

Her story, whilst shocking, is told because she, like many of her generation, are now calling out what happens today in our society on a daily if not hourly basis to them. They are our sisters, our partners, our wives, our work colleagues and our daughters who now need our support as they bravely tell their stories. To you, all I say is that I hear you and I will do my best to change this toxic culture for today and tomorrow. I commend the motion to the House.