




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA SOUTH

Record of Proceedings, 24 March 2021

MOTION

Women

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.10 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion before the House. I honour the courage of so many women who have recently spoken about their experiences, their harassment and their assaults. Brittany Higgins, honourable members from both sides of this House, community members and family have bravely spoken about experiences in their lives that never should have happened. Many of these experiences have been kept in silence for too long—unspoken, and quietly and painfully carried every day.

Enough is enough. The March 4 Justice rallies around the nation unveiled this fact. These rallies were held right across Australia, with 300 to 400 people marching in my home town of Toowoomba. I believe that over 40 towns or cities were represented across the nation. That is a true cry for national action. These last few weeks have provoked important conversations—long overdue conversations—in the workplace, in the public square and, most importantly, in homes. My wife, with a career in the performing arts, has shared instances of harassment with me that she has never shared before—experiences that she felt ashamed to share with me, her best friend since we were 18 years old. That is why this motion is necessary. It is necessary because this parliament has a responsibility to send a message.

This is not a partisan political problem. It goes beyond politics, but there are political and legal solutions. There must always be consequences for actions. The law can always be reviewed to consider how it can better respond to allegations of sexual assault with empathy, with care and with respect—all of which can be achieved without diminishing due process. We must also send a message that men must do better. It was nothing but pure depravity on display in Canberra by male coalition staffers. If that is the culture of our young men, we have a national cultural problem. Let there be a rising up of young men like BBC's Mason Black, who displayed outstanding leadership in speaking with the young men in his care.

Victims must feel confident in coming forward to share their experiences—to be acknowledged, validated and believed. A culture that enables silence must be changed. This is not a political issue to be managed that can just come and go or a political issue that disappears as quickly as it arrives, because it matters deeply to women—and it should matter deeply to all men, too.