




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

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MOTION

Women

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (2.19 pm): I rise to support the motion. I have been sitting here and thinking about exactly what it is that I want to say in my three minutes. I guess what I do really want to say is that in politics generally it is about timing and numbers. I think the timing is right that we as governments and parliaments around this country and around the world need to do something to call this out. The timing is absolutely perfect.

If we look at the numbers, tens of thousands of women around Australia and here in Brisbane in Queensland marched to say, 'Enough is enough,' and to have the roar of their voices listened to in huge numbers declaring that something needed to be done. I want to congratulate all of those women who took part in the march and say what an honour it was to be standing out there with all of my colleagues like the Premier and those opposite welcoming those women outside the parliament for a peaceful protest. It was disturbing when you read some of the signage that was made with their own hands, as were some of the words that were on those signs, and also disturbing are some of the accounts that we are hearing nearly every single day about what we are learning is happening under the carpet, hidden away, that is now starting to come out. We want to say to those people that they are not alone and they are correct in that enough is enough and that we do stand with them.

I know that we all have stories. Some of us have chosen to share them and some of us have not, but I know that we all would have a story to tell. I have spent all my life working for the equality of women, whether it is paid parental leave, domestic violence leave or equal opportunities at the Anti-Discrimination Commission. I am enjoying my role in education and I absolutely am determined to do what we can to improve education particularly in the area of consent and reporting. We must do better in terms of respectful relationships and the calling out of bad behaviour.

After the march one thing struck me. After the march I was listening to the radio travelling home and a radio commentator was interviewing a woman who had been in the march. They said, 'Okay, you've all marched, tens of thousands of you. What's changing? Where to now? What's going to happen?' They did not get the point. The point is: perpetrators beware. We will not be silent anymore. That is the point. The point is you can continue on the way you are. You can ignore the cultural change that is required. You can ignore the attitudinal changes, but women are uniting and saying, 'We will call this out now when it happens. We will no longer sweep it under the carpet,' because brave women are coming out all over the place. I end by saying this: perpetrators beware.