




Speech By
Jonty Bush

MEMBER FOR COOPER

Record of Proceedings, 1 December 2021

ADJOURNMENT

16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (7.25 pm): The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is an annual international campaign that kicks off on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and runs through this week until 10 December, Human Rights Day. Nearly one in three women aged 15 years or older around the world have been subjected to physical or sexual violence at least once in their lifetime. These are disturbing figures and yet unsurprising.

If you are a woman you know these figures intimately. In fact, many of the women here would be some of the faces behind those statistics. Even in positions of power, we are not immune to domestic or sexual violence. Hannah Clarke's story is just one that illustrates how violence, including fatal violence, can steal its way into any demographic. Women of all ages, education levels, income and employment status are impacted.

Yesterday, the report entitled *Set the standard: report on the independent review into Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces* was handed down by Sex Discrimination Commissioner Kate Jenkins. It found that one in three women working in the federal parliament workplace had experienced sexual harassment—one in three. The report makes 28 recommendations and it is my absolute hope that those recommendations are implemented as a full reform suite. As one of the interviewee's observed—

This is Parliament. It should set the standard for workplace culture, not the floor of what culture should be.

In contrast, being vulnerable does not protect one from harm either. In fact, we know that women with a disability, women in prison, non-English-speaking women, women on temporary visas, trans women and women in precarious employment are more likely to experience physical and sexual violence. This illustrates how the actions by perpetrators of violence against women are deliberate, targeted and controllable. We know this, because how many times do the family and friends of offenders come out and express their surprise following a domestic fatality? We all have a role to play in addressing this—every person. I am optimistic when I see the language in society shift away from being a women's issue and instead being framed far more accurately as men's violence towards women and girls. This is a men's issue.

Last Friday, I accompanied some champions in my community to the Premier's White Ribbon breakfast. During the discussion we heard how a small percentage of men are responsible for the majority of violence against women. For those who continue to say that it is not all men, I say that we know that it is not all men. We know it is a small number of men, but the problem is we do not know which ones they are. Not all men are violent, but all men benefit from men's violence against women. During this 16 days of activism I invite all members to consider this uncomfortable truth.