




Speech By
Hon. Meaghan Scanlon

MEMBER FOR GAVEN

Record of Proceedings, 24 March 2021

MOTION

Women

 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs) (2.31 pm): I rise to support the motion put forward by the Premier. I join with my Gold Coast colleague, Karen Andrews, in saying that I too have had a gutful of the way that the system continues to treat women in this country. I am the Minister for Youth Affairs and want to place on the record my contribution in relation to the huge numbers of young women in particular who every day are the victims of sexual assault. Every day they continue to be victims in this country because of a large proportion of male perpetrators.

I want to acknowledge the Minister for Education for her work and commitment to review the respectful relationships program within schools. At every school that I go to I hear from young women, and men as well, who want to know how they can engage in respectful relationships, in school and in their workplaces, in a dignified and respectful manner.

I acknowledge the shared stories that have been put forward by those opposite, by members of our front bench and by the backbench as well. I acknowledge also the women who have not been able to come forward and share their stories for many reasons. I think it is important in this debate that we acknowledge that there are still some very fundamental issues around why people do not share their stories, such as domestic and family violence. I think we are seeing some big issues at a national level around domestic violence leave and the need for women to be able to take leave from work to make sure that those perpetrators are held to account. I think it is also important that we acknowledge the gender pay gap and why it is women feel they cannot leave disrespectful relationships. There are women in the early education sector and in the aged sector who, unfortunately, due to finances have to put up with this appalling behaviour time and time again.

I also acknowledge that on both sides we have had some contributions about the need for women in leadership. I agree with the Minister for Health that there needs to be some systemic change around the way that people refer to women in positions of authority, both in this House and on boards. I have had instances where people have left disgusting notes on my car or they have written disgusting things online. During the campaign I had a volunteer from one of my opposing parties write the most vile content on community pages. When we continue to allow this sort of conduct to occur we make it okay for every other person in our community to continue with this behaviour. It is incumbent on everyone in this House to call out bad behaviour regardless of what political party they are affiliated with.