



Speech By  
**Melissa McMahon**


**MEMBER FOR MACALISTER**

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## ADJOURNMENT

### Queensland Women's Week

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (6.15 pm): As we approach the end of Queensland Women's Week I acknowledge the women, in particular the young women, who have attended events throughout the week here in Parliament House and in our local communities. In this Women's Week I would also like to acknowledge the women on whose shoulders I stand, those known to me who have guided me and to those who have been fighting for women's equality for centuries. I am here, I stand in this chamber with a voice and a vote, because they persisted.

Locally we celebrated with women from a variety of backgrounds and in my area the local students at Windaroo Valley State High School with their annual women's breakfast. I was pleased to be a guest speaker that morning. Mrs K, who organises the girls group at the school, spoke of the role that women played in her mother country Russia where women's day is actually a public holiday. On 8 March I attended the Beenleigh siroptimist breakfast where women from a range of occupations and businesses joined high school students from across Logan. It is always great to celebrate the achievements of other women.

While we celebrate this week, mostly this week we are tired. Women are tired. We have collectively fought for so long and yet women are still not safe. They are not safe on the streets, they are not safe in their homes and they are not safe in their workplaces. Events thrust into the national consciousness in the last month while in reality do shock us they also do not surprise us. Almost every woman has experienced a sense of fear walking alone. There is a reason we tell our daughters to carry their keys between their fingers as they walk to their car. How many men in this House have been counselled to do that? When we start at the workplace there is usually someone who takes us aside and points out the male colleague to avoid being left alone with.

Why do we have to keep having these conversations with our sisters and our daughters: be safe, look after yourself? When are the blokes going to step up and maybe suggest to their peers they should maybe be a little bit less creepy, a little bit less lecherous? When women have the temerity to speak out, to report, they are howled down, they are not believed and they are called liars. 'How could you make those accusations?', they say. 'Have a care to the reputational damage you cause when you point the finger,' they cry. There is no regard, of course, to the broken woman before them; and no regard to the broken child before them when the accused is their mate.

On 15 March women around the country will march. They will march in support of every victim who has not been believed. They will march for the women who did not have the strength to continue. They will march because there is so much more to do.