




Speech By
Amanda Camm

MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY

Record of Proceedings, 26 May 2022

EVIDENCE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (4.20 pm): I would like to keep my comments and contribution pertaining to the Evidence and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 predominantly to the matters relating to domestic and family violence and the videorecorded evidence as evidence-in-chief for domestic violence matters. This bill brings us up to the level of other states. In fact, within the first six months of my appointment to this House and to the shadow portfolio of domestic and family violence prevention, I had spoken at length with Queensland Police Service officers who specialise in domestic and family violence prevention who felt that this was well overdue in the state of Queensland. As we have seen, New South Wales brought this in many years ago, Victoria also began trialling the method in 2018, and South Australia introduced laws some two years ago. While it is a simple change in many ways around videorecording, it will have a significant impact when it comes to reducing trauma for victims of domestic and family violence.

One of the hardest things any victim can face, which I think we have all witnessed here in the House today, is retelling their story and reliving their trauma. At times, the culmination of that, in fact, can be to the detriment of a victim and not help them. I think that this legislation is very important. As is the nature of domestic and family violence, the power and control of a perpetrator can exert often well beyond the courtroom, as we all know. To have to sit in the same room as a person who has controlled your every move, who has controlled the way in which you react, respond, how you dress and how you speak would inhibit one as a victim in their ability to be able to tell their story truthfully without fear. We have allowed children this provision for some time across the state and, whilst different, the vulnerability of victims of domestic and family violence, predominantly women, should not be underestimated and that is why this is such an important change in our legislation.

I would like to also highlight the Queensland Police Service which outlined that some of their modelling shows significant time-saving and efficiency for frontline police. We know that that is very important, given the high demand sadly of callout that our Queensland Police Service have when it comes to domestic and family violence incidences across our state, and that it is only growing, including that police officers now will not have to take victims necessarily from their home or place of refuge in the middle of the night to be able to give victim statements. This is an improvement. I know that has been welcomed from services all across our state as well.

One thing I would like to highlight which I think has also been highlighted by my colleagues, the member for Currumbin and the member for Glass House, in regards to the use of recorded evidence as evidence-in-chief is the importance of properly trained officers in being able to gather that evidence and also to ensure that the resourcing and training is done in a trauma informed way. We know that that is the best way in which we can engage with victims of domestic and family violence, but ultimately it is also the best way that we can support them through what is a significantly traumatic process, and that also, when we want justice served, we certainly want as much detail and information that victims can share. This, I think, goes a long way to protecting victims through the judicial process.

We certainly encourage the attorney to ensure transparency in the trial to allow stakeholders to contribute to feedback and not be afraid of constructive feedback if there are ways to better improve. They are working in the system day to day. When I speak to court support workers, counsellors across our state, those within the Queensland Police Service and also victims and victim advocates, they are the real voice that we need to listen to, and it is our job as legislators to then put that into practice in a meaningful way.

Many in the House have spoken about it, and I know my colleague, the member for Buderim, will expand upon this, but I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the Morcombe family, Bruce and Denise, not only for what this legislation will bring in their quest to ensure victims and families are respected following the discovery of a victim to minimise their pain and the drawn-out process but also their ongoing education of our children, our families and our community, now nationwide. They are certainly influencing curriculum at a national level. It has left such a significant legacy to Daniel and also to their family and to other victims of homicide as well.